



NATIONAL REPORT FOR
Analysis 1
"Are we ready for Circularity?"

Romania
Contribution partners: INCDT and ACE-ES
Romania



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National tourism strategies in the countries already include targets and guidelines for circularity.

What national strategies exist at the country level in tourism?

Tourism is considered one of the most relevant elements that contribute to the economic and social development of a country. In Romania, in 2023, the tourism industry constituted 4.19% of the country's GDP¹.

Romania can be considered a tourist attraction, supported by a diverse geographical, historical and cultural heritage: the Danube Delta, the Black Sea, the Carpathian Mountains, rivers, lakes, forested areas. In addition, in Romania there are several world heritage sites protected by UNESCO, namely the Churches of Moldova, Maramureş, Transylvania, several Dacian Citadels and the Danube Delta.

National strategies in tourism sector:

1. At this moment, the Romania's National Strategy for Tourism Development 2023-2035² is in force.

This strategy focuses on three levels, to serve as a guide for the sustainable development of tourism in Romania:

- to further strengthen Romania as a well-known, world-class tourist destination throughout the year, as well as a destination that meets EU standards in terms of the provision of products and services;
- to value the people, tradition, places, natural and cultural heritage of Romania;
- to increase the visibility and reputation of Romania on the first-rate international tourism markets.

2. There is also a *Master Plan for the Development of National Tourism 2007-2026*³ - one of its objectives being: "Ensuring a sustainable development of tourism in a way in which its environmental, cultural and heritage riches are equally valued today and preserved for future generations".

3. *The National Strategy of Ecotourism Development*- context, vision and objectives - 2019-2029⁴approved in 2019. It has as a general objective:

"Affirming Romania's natural and cultural values, by creating and promoting a network of ecotourism destinations with national and international notoriety, which will contribute to improving the lives of local communities and preserving local natural and cultural resources".

4. *The Strategy for the development of spa tourism*⁵approved in 2019. As a development opportunity is mentioned: a green spa tourism in accordance with the

¹<https://www.statista.com/topics/7436/travel-and-tourism-in-romania/#topicOverview>

²[StrategiaNationala de Dezvoltare a Turismului 2023-2035\(1\).pdf \(mmediu.ro\)](https://www.mmediu.ro/StrategiaNationala-de-Dezvoltare-a-Turismului-2023-2035(1).pdf)

³https://turism.gov.ro/web/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/masterplan_partea2.pdf

⁴<http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/strategie-na-ional-din-30-mai-2019-de-dezvoltare-a-ecoturismului-context-viziune-i-obiective-2019-2029-emitent-219401.html>

⁵<https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/217931>

general positioning of the destination Romania - focus on green spa products: "the forest bathing".

National strategies in sustainable development:

1. *National Strategy for the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT of Romania 2030*⁶

Within GOAL 8: Decent work and economic growth, brief references are made to the tourism sector, mentioning the strategies in the field. There are no mentions of the circular economy in tourism.

Within GOAL 12: Responsible consumption and production, there is a short section on the Circular Economy, among others, it is mentioned that: "The transition to the circular economy implies a coordination of economic policies with those related to job growth in the sectors circular economy, increasing investment in specific sectors, developing social policies and innovation in the economy, combating climate change and its effects."

Are circular economies included in tourism strategies?

The Romania's National Strategy for Tourism Development 2023-2035 **does not include objectives and directions of action, regarding the circular economy in this sector.**

Instead, within the general principles of the Strategy, there is included Principle no. 3: "Sustainability as a general theme" - "it refers to environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development and it is necessary to ensure an adequate balance between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability".

The Master Plan for the Development of National Tourism 2007-2026**does not include directions of action, measures related to the circular economy.**

In the National Strategy of Ecotourism Development **there is no reference to the circular economy**, but there is included a domain, which aims at CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT: "... encouragement of green practices and stricter control over existing activities in protected natural areas and in ecotourism destinations..."

In the Strategy for the development of spa tourism **there is no reference to the circular economy.**

Do national strategies include guidance on circularity? If yes, which ones?

The National Strategy regarding the Circular Economy was adopted in September 2022. This strategy⁷ states that the improvement of the circular economy has the greatest potential in the following sectors (7 specific and 2 transversal sectors):

⁶[Strategia-nationala-pentru-dezvoltarea-durabila-a-României-2030.pdf \(edu.ro\)](https://strategia-nationala-pentru-dezvoltarea-durabila-a-României-2030.pdf)

⁷<https://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/strategia-nationala-privind-economia-circulara-13409762>

- Agriculture and forestry;
- Automotive industry;
- Constructions;
- Consumer goods such as food and beverages;
- Packaging (glass, paper, plastic materials, etc.);
- Textiles;
- Electrical and Electronic Equipment;
- *waste - transversal sector;*
- *water and wastewater - transversal sector.*

Tourism is not among these key sectors with relevance in the circular economy.

The main argument is that: "even if the economic contribution of the tourism sector is relatively high, the circularity of the sectors limited by the level of sustainability and circularity of the sectors with which tourism is connected, the most important of which are already prioritized, namely agriculture, construction and packaging".

The Action Plan⁸ for the strategy was adopted in 2023; this plan proposes and describes concrete actions to promote the transition to the circular economy in Romania.

The plan proposes a series of transversal actions as well specific sectoral actions. Transversal actions include measures on education and vocational training, research, development and innovation, green procurement and encouraging digitization, which are essential for facilitating circular transformation in the Romanian economy.

The plan also presents actions specific to the nine economic sectors⁹ that have been identified as the areas with the greatest potential for circularity in the Romanian economy. The sectors were selected based on their economic importance, environmental and health impacts, and circular economy issues and opportunities.

Thus, this plan can be considered as an important element of guidance; for each priority action, a detailed description of the challenges addressed by that action, the measures to be taken to remedy them, the entities responsible and involved, and the time horizon for their implementation is provided. Also included are examples of good practices that are relevant for priority actions, as well as tables for monitoring and evaluating progress in the implementation of the plan.

Countries have a policy on waste management and recycling in tourist destinations.

What waste collection policies do countries have?

Romania, known for its rich cultural heritage and natural landscapes, has experienced a significant rise in tourism over the past decades. This growth brings economic benefits, contributing 6.5% to the national GDP, but also poses environmental challenges. Romania's favorable climate and diverse natural resources support year-round tourism activities. However, tourism has been identified as a major source of anthropogenic pressure along the Romanian coastline, leading to environmental

⁸<https://cdn.juridice.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/0918Bis.pdf>

⁹See above these sectors

degradation and impacting the attractiveness of tourist destinations. Additionally, tourism is considered to be one of the drivers of marine plastic pollution in the Black Sea region.

Therefore, the greatest potential for circularity is the promotion of sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism that takes into account circular principles, from transport, to accommodation, recreation, food supply and waste reduction/prevention. One critical environmental concern is waste management in tourist destinations. In response, the Romanian government has implemented various policies and strategies to improve waste management and recycling, recognizing the necessity of sustainable tourism practices:

Romania's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030 (SNDDR) (Romanian Government, 2018) aims to achieve the transition to a CE in line with SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production. The strategy proposes the transition to a new development model by introducing elements of CE, increasing resource productivity, reducing food wastage and waste by reducing waste generation at all levels, increasing recycling and reuse, encouraging companies to adopt sustainable practices and integrate information on the sustainability of their activities into the reporting cycle, and raising public awareness of what it means to live in harmony with nature. By Government Decision no. 754/2022 to amend and supplement Government Decision no. 877/2018 on the adoption of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania 2030, the National Action Plan, a key document guiding the implementation of the NSDS 2030, was approved.

Senate Decision No. 3/2016 was adopted on expressing an opinion on the **Circular Economy Package proposed by the European Commission** and which attests to Romania's openness to the circular economy model. The aforementioned decision expresses Romania's intention to build a framework conducive to the implementation of the circular economy by transposing European legislation.

Thus, **Government Ordinance 92 of 2021 on the waste regime¹⁰** has fully transposed the provisions found in **EU Directive 2018/851/EC**. The aim of the ordinance is to align national legislation with European objectives regarding waste management. In this sense, the Ordinance contributes to the transition to a CE. The Ordinance also establishes new increased municipal waste recycling rates and new rules for the calculation of municipal recycling rates, providing a framework for sustainable material management and ensuring the protection, conservation and improvement for the quality of the environment, human life and ensures the use of prudent and rational management of natural resources.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan was approved by the European Commission in September 2021. It allocates €1.239 billion¹¹ out of a total of €29.2 billion for the development of modern waste management infrastructure (COMPONENT C3 - WASTE MANAGEMENT). Waste management projects under the plan must be completed by 2026. By 2024, 565 collection centres for small and

¹⁰ <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/ha3tsnbtgi4a/ordonanta-de-urgenta-nr-92-2021-privind-regimul-deseurilor>

¹¹ <https://mfe.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/6c5361a5fd58b7b22eddf8316192abc8.pdf>

medium-sized communities must be built, along with seven integrated waste collection centres. In addition, 14,000 digitised 'green islands' for the separate collection of all types of waste will be set up around residential buildings.

The National Waste Management Plan was adopted, with the strategic objective of promoting the transition to a Circular Economy within the framework of Romania's Development Strategy. **The National Waste Management Plan** was approved by Government Decision no. 942 of 20 December 2017 published in the Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, No 11 of 5 January 2018. Waste management plans at county and municipal level were adopted in 2021, identifying the measures needed to meet the objectives of the Circular Economy Package.

The National Waste Management Plan has set the following targets until 2030:

- Gradual transition to a new development model based on the rational and responsible use of resources, with the introduction of circular economy elements and the development of a roadmap;
- Reduce per capita food waste at retail and consumption level and reduce food losses along the production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses;
- Recycling 55% of municipal waste by 2025 and 60% by 2030;
- Recycling of 65% of packaging waste by 2025 (plastic 50%; wood 25%; ferrous metals 70%, aluminium 50%, glass 70%, paper and board 75%) and 70% by 2030 (plastic 55%, wood 30%, ferrous metals 80%, aluminium 60%, glass 75%, paper and board 85%);
- Separate collection of household hazardous waste by 2022, bio-waste by 2023 and textile waste by 2025;
- Establish mandatory Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for all packaging by 2024;
- Implement sustainable green public procurement practices in line with national priorities and European policies.

Therefore, the waste legislation is developed at a strategic level through European directives and transposed in Romania through dozens of laws, government decisions and ministerial orders. The legal obligations on waste management are scattered in many different pieces of legislation (laws, government decisions, ministerial orders, regulations and decisions), therefore difficult to follow and implement. At the same time, waste management is a costly legal obligation and the fines are also significant. The most important waste management legislation grouped in several relevant sections are:

I. National legislation

1. Waste regime

- *Government Emergency Ordinance no. 92/2021* amends the waste regime (GEO no. 92/2021) and repeals Law no. 211/2011 on the waste regime. The purpose of the Ordinance is to align the national legislation with European objectives in this area in order to contribute to the transition to a circular economy;
- *Law no. 132/2010* on selective waste collection in public institutions, as subsequently amended and supplemented.

2. Local sanitation service

- Law no. 101/2006 on the sanitation service of localities, updated by Law 99/2014, GEO 58/2016, GEO 172/2020;
- Order no. 82/2015 on the approval of the Framework Regulation of the sanitation service of localities amended by Order no. 520/2018.

3. Packaging waste

- Law no. 249/2015 on the management of packaging and packaging waste updated by: GEO no. 38/2016, GEO no. 50/2019, Law no. 99/2021, Government Ordinance no. 1/2021;
- Order no. 794/2012 on the procedure for reporting data on packaging and packaging waste
- GEO 74/2018 amending and supplementing Law 211/2011 on the waste regime, Law 249/2015 on the management of packaging and packaging waste and GEO 196/2005 on the Environmental Fund, approved by Law 31/2019 (amended by GEO 92/2021 on the waste regime);
- Decision no. 1074/2021 on the establishment of the guarantee-return system for non-reusable primary packaging;
- Government Ordinance no. 6/2021 on reducing the environmental impact of certain plastic products (single-use plastic).

4. Taxes and Contributions to the Environment Fund

- Contributions to the Environment Fund are regulated by GEO 196/2005, on the functioning of the Administration of the Environment Fund, amended and supplemented successively by several normative acts, including: Government Ordinance no. 31/2013 approved by Law no. 384/2013; GEO no. 39/2016; GEO no. 74/2018 approved by Law no. 31/2019; GEO no. 50/2019; GEO no. 108/2021; GEO no. 136/2021.
- GEO no. 196/2005 cannot be implemented without Order no. 578/2006 approving the Methodology for the calculation of contributions and taxes due to the Environmental Fund, amended and supplemented successively by several normative acts, including: Order no. 2413/2016; Order no. 1503/2017; Order no. 149/2019 amending and supplementing the Annex to the Order of the Minister for the Environment and Water Management no. 578/2006 approving the Methodology for the calculation of contributions and taxes due to the Environment Fund

5. Waste electrical and electronic equipment

- GEO no. 5/2015 - on waste electrical and electronic equipment amended by GEO 44/2019; GEO 93/2020;
- Order no. 269/2019 on the approval of the Procedure for establishing the registration, reporting, reporting frequency to the National Register of Producers, as well as the way of recording and reporting the information referred to in Art. 9 para. (4) and Art. 27 para. (6) of Government Emergency Ordinance no. 5/2015 on waste electrical and electronic equipment;
- Order no 417/2021 approving standards in the field of treatment, including recovery, recycling and preparation for reuse of waste electrical and electronic

- equipment;
- OM no. 1441/2011 - financial guarantee for EEE (electrical and electronic equipment) producers;
- Order no. 1494/846/2016 on granting the operating licence for collective organisations and approving the operating plan for producers fulfilling their obligations individually, for the management of waste electrical and electronic equipment - amended by Order No. 1274/2036/2020;
- Order no. 556/435/191/2006 (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy, ANPC) on the specific marking of electrical and electronic equipment placed on the market after 31 December 2006.

6. Waste batteries

- Government Decision no. 1132/2008 - on waste batteries and accumulators amended by GO no. 1079/2011; GO no. 540/2016; Law no. 203/2018; GO no. 478/2020;
- Order no. 669/2009 on the registration of battery producers amended by Order no. 825/2014 for the amendment of some normative acts in the field of waste management;
- Order no. 1399/2009 - record keeping and reporting of battery waste;
- Order no. 2743/2011 - authorisation of collective organisations for the management of battery waste - as amended and supplemented.

7. Other specific legislation relevant to waste management

- Decision no. 1061/2008 - on the transport of hazardous and non-hazardous waste on the territory of Romania;
- Decision no. 856/2002 - on the record of waste management and for the approval of the list of waste, including hazardous waste, amended by GD no. 210/2007;
- Order no. 1271/2018 on the registration of waste collectors at the UATs (territorial administrative units);
- Law no. 51/2006 on community public utility services (on the organisation and functioning of Intercommunity Development Associations -ADI), republished, with subsequent amendments and completions;
- Order no. 1362/2018 on the authorisation of OIREPs (organisations implementing extended producer responsibility obligations) amended by Order no. 1555/2020; Order no. 2190/2021;
- Order no. 2190/2021 amending and supplementing Order no. 1362/2018 approving the Procedure for the authorisation, annual approval and withdrawal of the right to operate of organisations implementing extended producer responsibility obligations;
- Emergency Ordinance no. 195/2005 on environmental protection amended by Law no. 123/2020; Law no. 140/2020; Law no. 90/2021;
- Decision no. 1265/2021 amending and supplementing Decision no. 788/2007 on the establishment of measures for the implementation of the European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) no. 1.013/2006 on shipments of waste;
- Law no. 181/2020 on the management of compostable non-hazardous waste;
- Order of the Ministry of Health no. 119/2014 approving the hygiene and public

health rules on the living environment of the population (includes measures on the location of composters, collection of waste medicines by pharmacies);

- Order no. 1226/2012 for the approval of the Technical Norms on the management of waste resulting from medical activities and the Methodology of data collection for the national database on waste resulting from medical activities.

II. The most relevant European Directives and their national equivalents

- Directive 904/2019 on the reduction of the environmental impact of certain plastic products (single-use plastic and not only) transposed by Ordinance no. 6/2021 on the reduction of the environmental impact of certain plastic products;
- Directive 849/2018 amending Directive 2000/53/EC on end-of-life vehicles, Directive 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators and Directive 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment;
- Directive 850/2018 on landfills (from the "Circular Economy Package");
- Directive 851/2018 amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (from the "Circular Economy Package") - partly transposed by:
 - o GEO no. 92_2021_on the waste regime;
 - o Law no. 249/2015 on the management of packaging and packaging waste updated by GEO no. 38/2016 and GEO no. 50/2019;
 - o GEO no. 196/2005 with subsequent amendments and additions;
- Directive 852/2018 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste (from the "Circular Economy Package") transposed by GEO no. 50/2019 amending and supplementing GEO no. 196/2005 on the Environmental Fund and amending and supplementing Law no. 249/2015 on the management of packaging and packaging waste, GO no. 1/2021 amending and supplementing Law no. 249/2015;
- Directive 19/2012 on waste electrical and electronic equipment transposed by GEO no. 5/2015 - on waste electrical and electronic equipment;
- Directive 98/2008 - transposed by GEO no. 92/2021 on the waste regime;
- Directive 66/2006 - transposed by GO 1132/2008 - on waste batteries and accumulators;
- Directive 20/2005 amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste transposed by Law no. 249/2015 - on packaging waste with subsequent amendments and additions;
- Directive 31/1999 - transposed by Decision no. 349/2005 - on waste disposal (repealed by Ordinance no. 2/2021 on waste disposal);
- Directive 1975/439 - transposed by Decision no. 235/2007 - on waste from waste oils (repealed and replaced by GEO no. 92/2021).

Implementation in Tourist Destinations

Infrastructure Development. To manage waste effectively in tourist areas, infrastructure development is crucial. Romania has made significant investments in:

- *Recycling Bins and Stations:* Installation of recycling bins in strategic locations

such as tourist attractions, parks, and beaches.

- *Waste Collection Services*: Enhancing waste collection services to ensure timely and efficient waste management.
- *Waste Treatment Facilities*: Establishing facilities for sorting and processing recyclable materials.

Public Awareness Campaigns. Educating tourists and local communities about the importance of waste management and recycling is essential. Romania has launched several initiatives, including:

- *Information Campaigns*: Distribution of informational materials and signage in multiple languages to guide tourists on proper waste disposal.
- *Community Engagement*: Involving local communities in clean-up activities and promoting environmental stewardship.

Collaboration with Tourism Industry. The success of waste management policies in tourist destinations also depends on collaboration with the tourism industry. Key measures include:

- *Green Certifications*: Encouraging hotels, restaurants, and other tourism businesses to obtain green certifications, which include waste management standards.
- *Training Programs*: Providing training for staff in the tourism sector on sustainable practices and waste management.

Effective waste management and recycling are vital for the sustainability of Romania's tourist destinations. While significant strides have been made through policy frameworks, infrastructure development, public awareness, and industry collaboration, ongoing efforts are required to address existing challenges. By leveraging innovative solutions and fostering a culture of sustainability, Romania can ensure that its tourist destinations remain attractive and environmentally friendly for future generations.

In order to increase recycling rates in Romania, several tools¹² have been implemented, such as:

- Economic instruments: taxes on non-biodegradable packaging materials, on imports of industrial oils, on imports of hazardous substances and on landfills.
- Legislation/coercive instruments: higher fines for incineration and illegal waste disposal, possibility for authorities to confiscate the vehicle used for illegal waste disposal, new fines for companies that do not audit their internal waste management processes and the EPR system.
- Administrative tools: new administrative structures and databases for waste management have been introduced, such as the Waste Shipment Register and the WTSIS - Waste Traceability Information System. SIATD is an online application for monitoring and controlling the traceability of packaging waste, which economic operators and local administrations must use to report packaging waste under the EWWR scheme. It will complement other tools, such as the new Waste Traceability Information System, introduced in 2022, in which all companies with recycling capacity must be registered. The system also contains information on the transport of waste in Romania.

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/report_ro_en.pdf

Countries have financial incentives and subsidies that individual countries offer for sustainable tourism projects.

Please outline some of the financial incentives in the tourism sector and VET in tourism and whether the incentives also include circular economy principles.

At national level financial incentives are identified in few public institutions like: Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism, other central public administration bodies, as well as local public administration authorities.

Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism: launched a state aid program in 2022 to facilitate the transition to EC in the manufacturing sectors, with a total funding of 8 million Euros allocated from the state budget. The program attracted a record number of applications. This confirms that there is an interest significant for the EC in Romania and the need for additional funding to accelerate the transformation and convergence of the Romanian economy with EU and OECD countries.

Different finances are assured by:

- ✓ **The National Recovery and Resilience Plan** provides grants and subsidies to *tourism businesses* that adopt sustainable practices.
- Measures to assure implementation of different activates are based on:
- ✓ Supporting new business models, such as the "product as a service" model (such as product-as-a-service (PaaS) in tourism, the services of pick-up and collection of second-hand products or repair services, for example by the provision of public funds or by the implementation of taxation measures.
- ✓ Incentivizing producers to ensure a closed circuit for their products and supporting tourism consumers to repair and reuse products, for the repair and refurbishment of hotel equipment and furnishings.
- ✓ Facilitating the coordination and collaboration of public authorities with organizations and actors in the circular economy industry
- ✓ Providing financial support for the creation of opportunities to develop specific skills for those workers who may be adversely affected by the transition to circular economy
- ✓ Financial incentives for businesses that achieve recognized sustainability certifications, which can boost their marketability and reduce operational costs.
- ✓ Collaborative projects between the government and private sector to develop sustainable tourism infrastructure and services (the development of eco-tourism resorts or sustainable transportation systems)

Measures to assure implementation of different VET activates:

- ✓ promoting consumer education to use less products and for a while longer, through awareness-raising actions and communication campaigns.
- ✓ training programs for disadvantaged groups social view, the development of a network of ecological schools, the transformation of agricultural high schools into vocational training centers etc.
- ✓ facilitating labor force transition/growth employment and participation in the labor market (Scholarships for students pursuing education in sustainable tourism and hospitality management; funding for vocational training centers that offer courses on sustainable tourism practices, eco-certification processes, and environmental management)
- ✓ financial aid programs for students enrolling in courses that focus on green

<p>tourism practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ financial support for tourism businesses that invest in upskilling their staff in sustainable practices, to product lifecycle management, sustainable resource use, and waste minimization. ✓ stipends and financial incentives for students and apprentices engaging in internships with a focus on sustainable tourism. <p>Financial incentives:</p> <p>EU's Green Deal funding programs which support eco-friendly tourism projects. Tax credits or deductions for investments in sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy sources, and energy-efficient upgrades. Access to low-interest loans for projects that promote sustainability in tourism, such as green building certifications or eco-friendly transportation.</p> <p>Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions for offer financial support for skills development.</p> <p>The state budget. Several actions that enable the integration of principles EC The Just Transition Fund for entrepreneurial support, which became available for Romania in December 2022, can be used to finance SME investments in diversifying the green economy in six counties: Dolj, Galați, Gorj, Hunedoara, Mureș and Prahova.</p>

Description of how the national analysis was carried out (from the questioners)
Provide a short description of steps, way of implementation, methods and tools used, and challenges faced... no. of questionnaires for tourism organisation and VET, carried out interviews, focus groups (include numbers)
<p>Analysis no. 1 was organized and implemented based on the specific Methodology, developed in the consortium for Activity A2.2.</p> <p>To carry out Analysis no. 1 in Romania, INCDT and ACE-ES Romania applied both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a variety of data with a high degree of relevance for the main topic of the analysis. Thus, the following tools were created and used:</p> <p>a) <i>The survey based on the questionnaire</i> - its administration was done online (based on a Google form).</p> <p>Two questionnaires were developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Questionnaire 1, applied to representatives from tourism and related fields; ✚ Questionnaire 2, applied to representatives of VET institutions, which prepare the workforce for tourism and related fields. <p>b) <i>The interview-based survey</i> - a semi-formal instrument was used; its administration was done face-to-face. The tool included predefined items allowing the interviewer to introduce the topic and leave the respondent free to come up with more qualitative information. Also, the interview helped us to deep the data collected through both</p>

online questionnaires.

c) *The focus group* was organized on April 5, 2024, in a hybrid format, the activity allowed obtaining opinions, suggestions, additional and valuable feed-back to the answers given through the 2 online questionnaires.

During the entire period of the application of research methods and tools in Romania, the main concerns of INCDT and ACE-ES Romania were the following:

- facilitating a balanced representation of the two groups of respondents;
- motivating them to provide relevant answers and opinions related to the topic of Analysis no. 1;
- presentation of the project and its activities, for better awareness.

For Analysis 1, two types of respondents were targeted:

- ✓ representatives from tourism and related fields;
- ✓ representatives from VET institutions who prepare the workforce for tourism and related fields.

a) *The survey based on the questionnaire*: total number of respondents: 43 people, of which 25 representatives from tourism and related fields and 18 representatives from VET institutions.

b) *The interview-based survey*: total number of respondents: 4 people, of which 2 representatives from tourism and related fields and 2 representatives from VET institutions.

c) *The focus group*: total number of respondents: 10 people, of which 5 representatives from tourism and related fields and 5 representatives from VET institutions being a balanced participation.

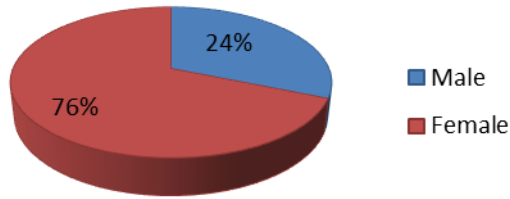
Analysis of general questions for both questioners (gender, age, company type or education, field of organisation or level of education)

Summary of the section's general question in questionnaires.

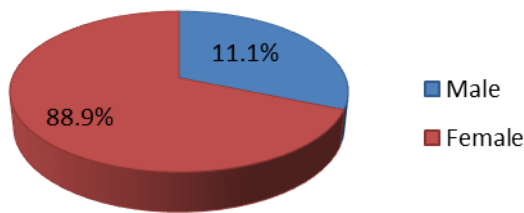
Gender

The survey let emerge a gender imbalance of the sample, filled in by a majority of women (76% for tourism representatives and 88.9% for VET institutions), double than the men respondents (24% for tourism representatives and 11.1% for VET institutions).

Tourism Organisations

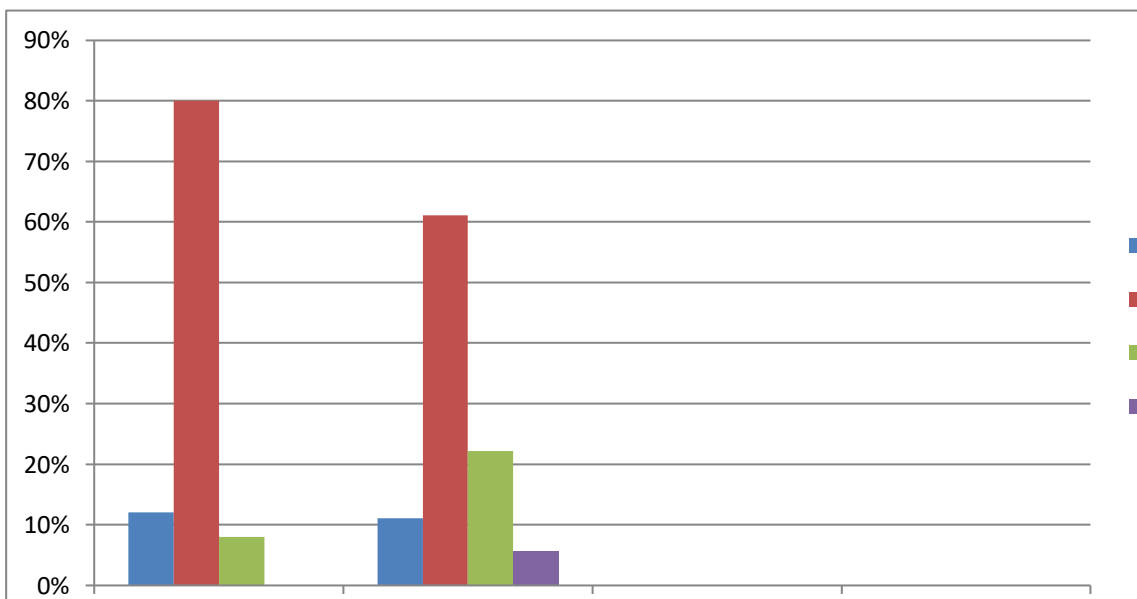


VET Institutions



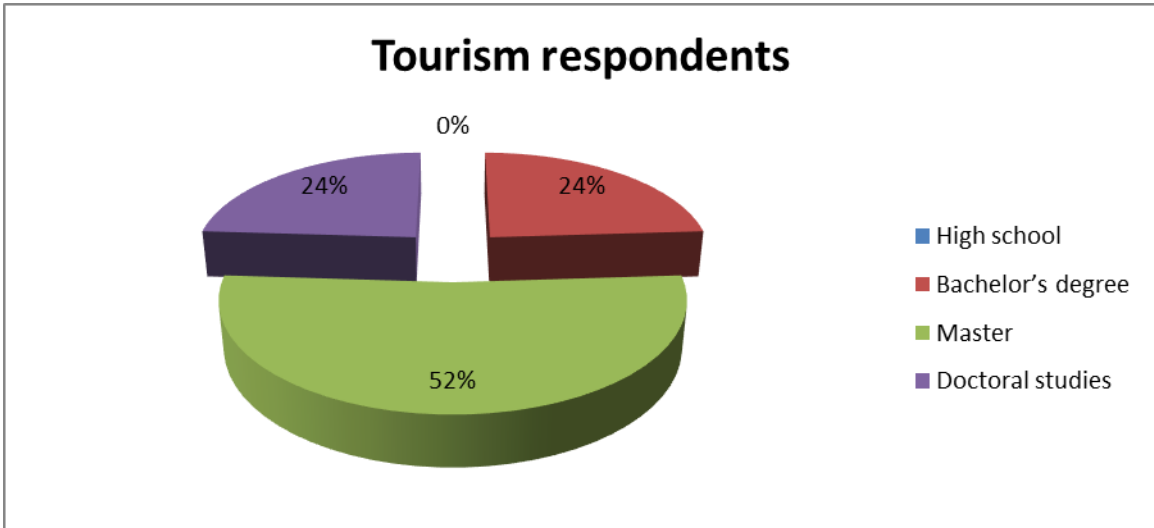
AGE

Regarding the distribution by age groups, four categories were used. Most of the respondents were between 36-50 years old (80.0% for tourism respondents and 61.1% for VET respondents), 22.2% of VET respondents were in the 51 – 60 years age range and only 5.6% (1 respondent from VET respondents) were aged >60.



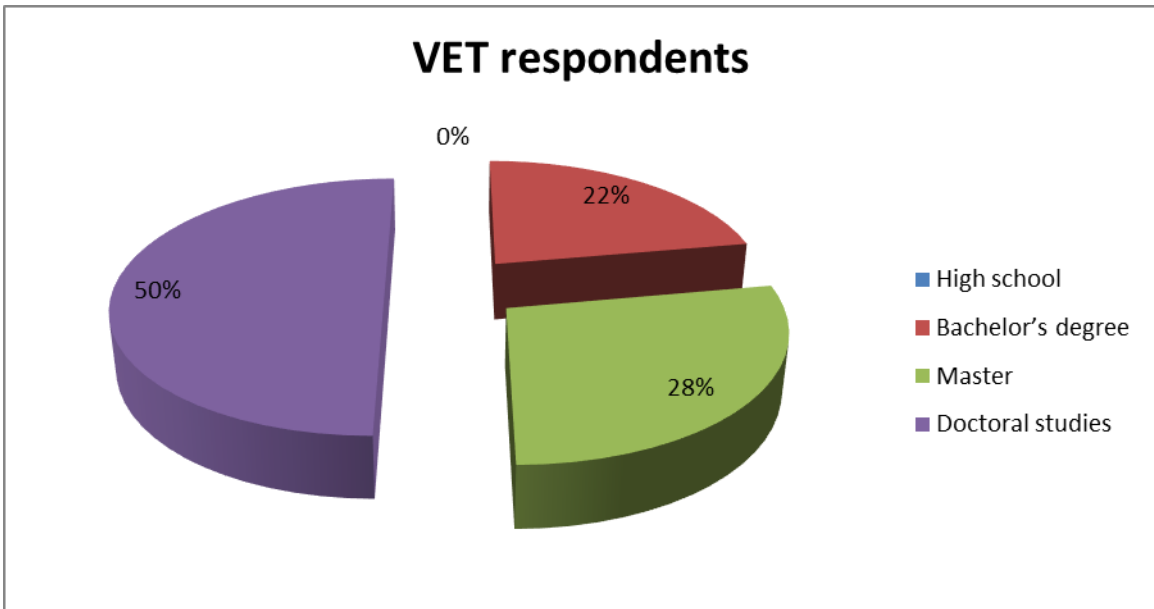
Background of participants

a) *level of education of tourism representatives:*



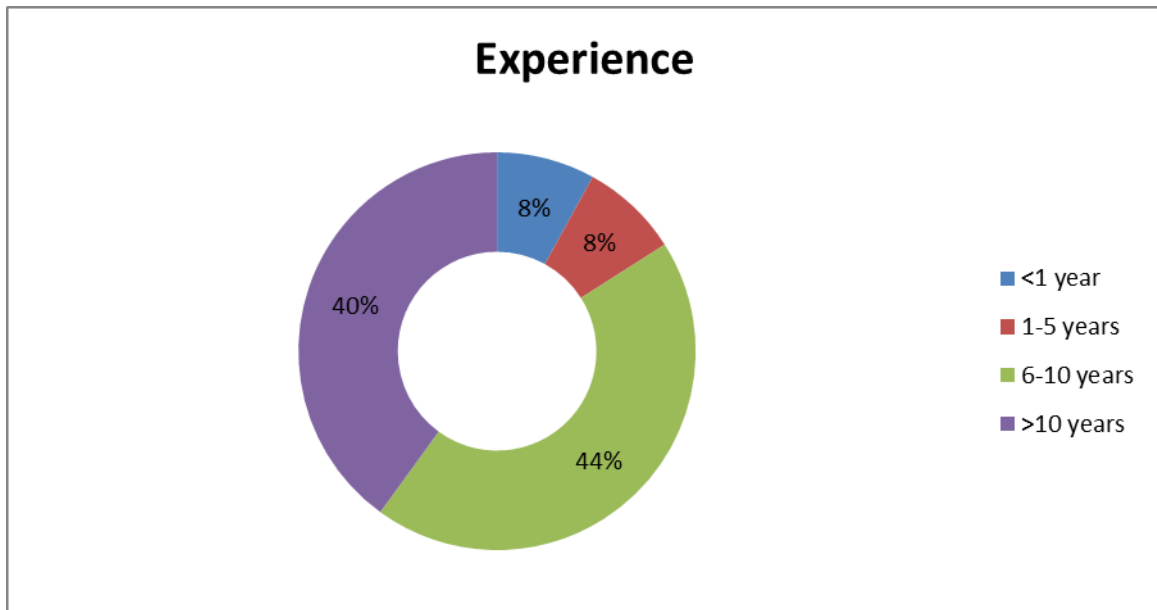
With regard to the educational level, more than half of the tourism respondents (52%) have a master's degree, followed by 24% of respondents with both bachelor's degree and doctoral studies.

b) *level of education of VET representatives:*



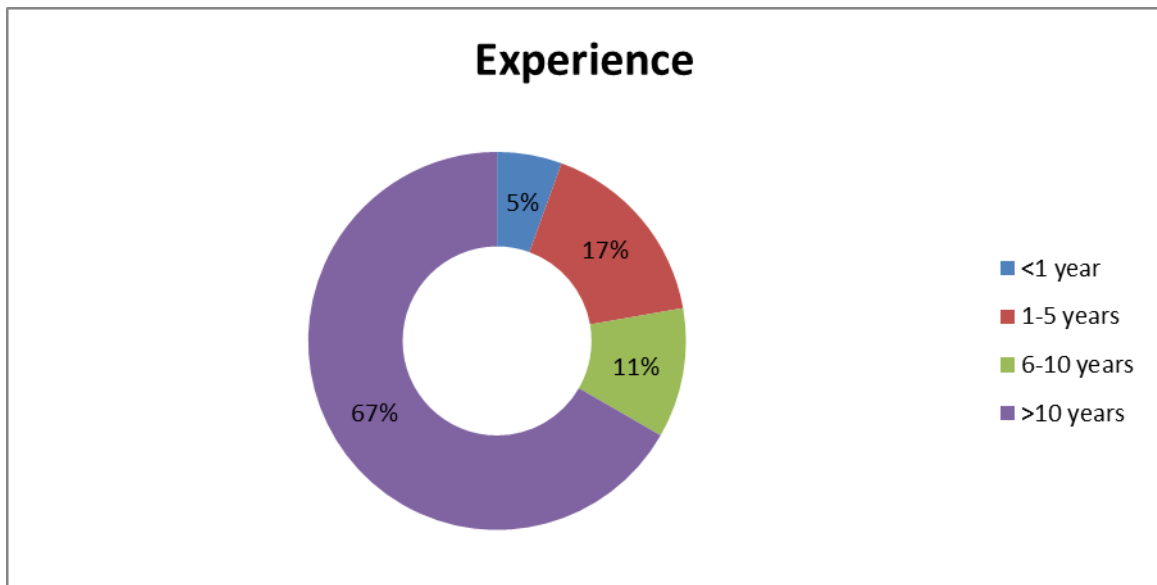
50% of VET respondents reported to have doctoral degrees, while 27.8% have earned a master's degree.

c) years of experience in the field of tourism representatives:



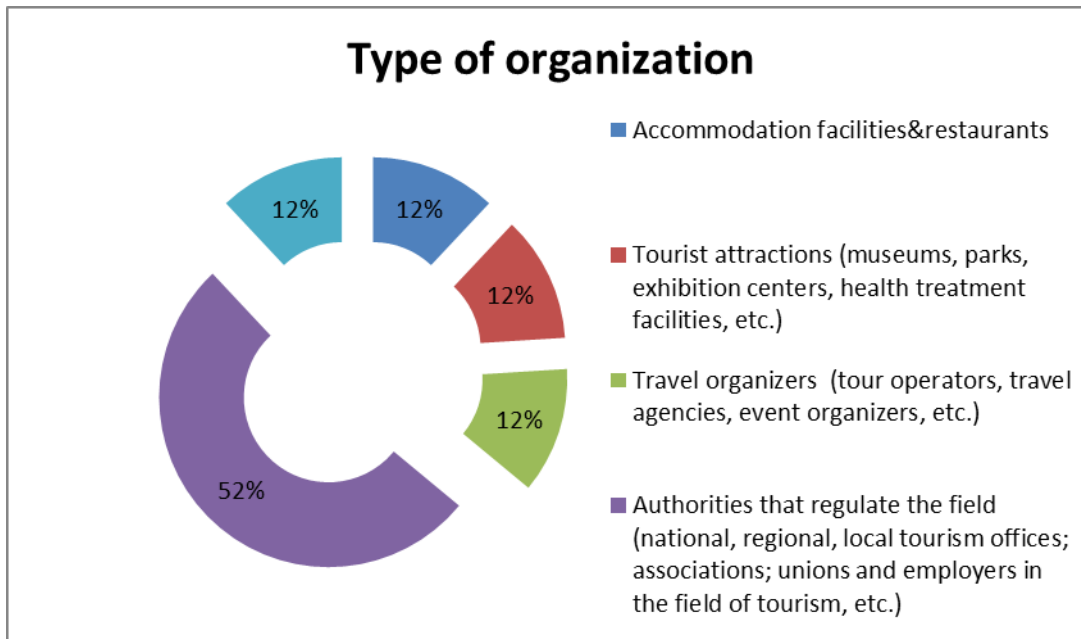
A percentage of 40% of respondents have more than 10 years of experience in tourism, and 44%, have between 6-10 years experience in tourism field.

d) years of experience in the field of VET representatives:



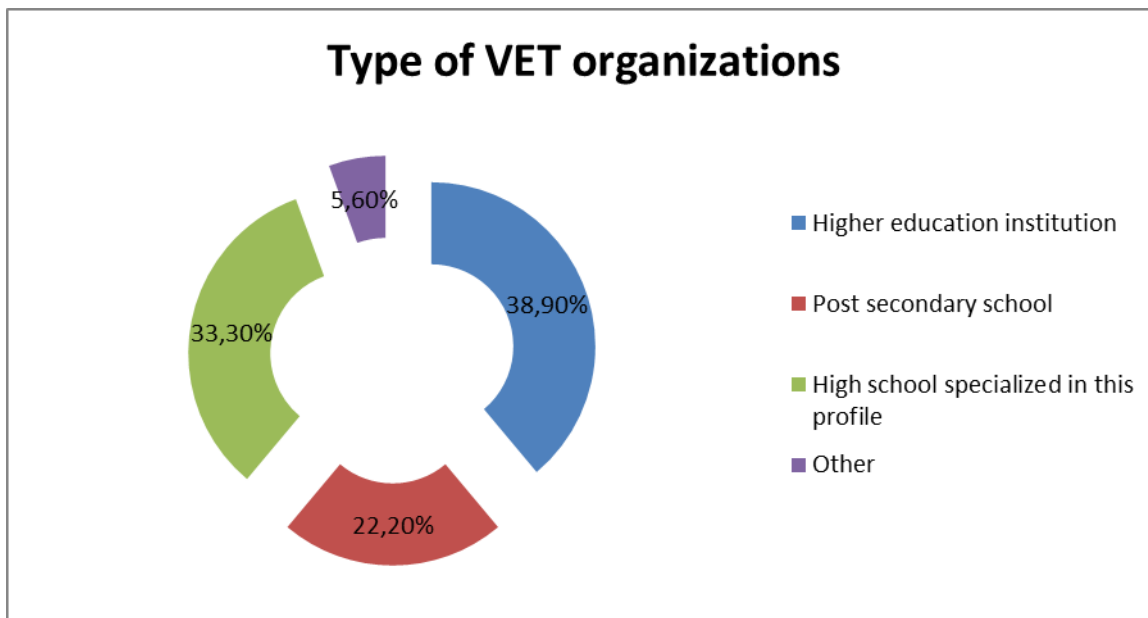
A percentage of 66.67% of respondents have more than 10 years of experience in VET, and 16.67%, experience between 1-5 years.

e) type of organization in tourism&related fields



12% of respondents are from accommodation facilities and restaurants, 52% are from authorities in the field, and 12% represent other relevant organizations.

f) type of vocational education and training institution (VET) in tourism and related fields



38.9% of respondents represent Higher education institution; 33.3% - High school specialized in this profile.

General Conclusions and Recommendations - as they resulted from the interpretation and synthesis of the answers received

Analyse the information collected (questionnaires, focus groups, interviews), present the data in graphical form, and interpret it.

Key findings derived from the analysis of feedback gathered through online questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussions:

1) Necessity of raising awareness about the circular economy within VET institutions

The responses reflect the perceived necessity of raising awareness about the circular economy within VET institutions, particularly in different contexts related to the tourism industry. Here's a detailed interpretation of the data:

Key Observations	5 Highest score	4	3	2	1 Lowest score	Interpretation
Your Organisation	61.11%	27.78%	11.11%	0%	0%	A significant majority (88.89%) believe that raising awareness about the circular economy is necessary within their organization, with over 60% strongly agreeing.
In the Tourism Industry, in General	83.33%	11.11%	5.56%	0%	0%	An overwhelming majority (94.44%) agree that raising awareness about the circular economy is necessary in the tourism industry overall, with more than 80% strongly agreeing.
In any Educational Institutions that Prepare the Workforce for this Industry	83.33%	11.11%	5.56%	0%	0%	Similarly, an overwhelming majority (94.44%) feel that it is necessary to raise awareness about the circular economy in educational institutions that prepare the workforce for the tourism industry, with more than 80% strongly agreeing.

Overall, the data indicates a strong consensus on the necessity of raising awareness about the circular economy. The highest levels of agreement are seen regarding the tourism industry in general and educational institutions preparing the workforce for this industry, suggesting a broad recognition of the importance of integrating circular economy principles into education and industry practices.

2) **Importance of awareness about the circular economy** within tourism organisations and VET institutions

a) **The general awareness for the circularity within the tourism organizations** varies across different sectors:

Key Observations	5	4	3	2	1	Interpretation
In the Organization they belong to	8%	24%	40%	24%	4%	Overall, there's a moderate level of awareness within own organization, with a significant percentage being neutral.
In the Tourism Industry	0%	8%	36%	44%	12%	Generally, awareness within the broader tourism industry is low, with a majority either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
In Educational Institutions that Prepare the Workforce for this Industry	4%	8%	24%	56%	8%	Educational institutions show some awareness, but a significant percentage disagrees with the statement about circularity awareness, indicating room for improvement in educational efforts regarding circularity within the tourism sector.

b) The responses reflect the perceived **importance of awareness about the circular economy in different contexts within VET institutions.**

Key Observations	5 Highest score	4	3	2	1 Lowest score	Interpretation
Your Specific Job/Workplace	50.00%	44.44%	5.56%	0%	0%	A significant majority (94.44%) believe that awareness about the circular economy is essential in their specific job/workplace, with half strongly agreeing and

						nearly the other half agreeing.
In the Organisation they belong to	61.11%	33.33%	5.56%	0%	0%	An even stronger majority (94.44%) feel that circular economy awareness is crucial within their organization, with 61.11% strongly agreeing and 33.33% agreeing.
In the Tourism Industry, in General	77.78%	22.22%	0%	0%	0%	An overwhelming majority (100%) agree that awareness about the circular economy is essential in the tourism industry overall, with 77.78% strongly agreeing.

Overall, the data indicates a strong consensus on the importance of circular economy awareness across individual job roles, organizations, and the broader tourism industry. The highest levels of agreement are seen regarding the tourism industry in general, suggesting a widespread recognition of the critical role circular economy principles play in this sector.

3) The extent to which the tourism organizations have incorporated the following circular economy practices in their business operations

Key Observations	Not at all	To some extent	To a great extent	Interpretation
Recruitment of Local People with Green Skills	56%	36%	8%	The majority of organizations are not actively recruiting local people with green skills, indicating a significant gap in leveraging local talent for circular economy practices.
Purchasing from Local Suppliers	28%	40%	32%	Organizations show a moderate to strong inclination towards supporting the regional economy by prioritizing local suppliers.
Fostering Business Linkages	4%	40%	56%	here is a strong effort to create synergies between tourism and other economic sectors within the region, suggesting a collaborative approach.
Purchasing from Certified Green Companies	44%	20%	36%	A mixed approach, with some organizations prioritizing green-certified suppliers while others do not, indicating varying levels of commitment.
Commitment to	40%	28%	32%	There is a moderate level of

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions				commitment to managing greenhouse gas emissions, with a third of organizations taking significant steps.
Solid Waste Management Practices	8%	48%	44%	Waste management practices are well-implemented, with a majority of organizations actively reducing, recycling, and composting waste.
Reduction of Freshwater Consumption	28%	48%	24%	Efforts to reduce freshwater usage are moderate, with nearly half of the organizations taking some steps in this direction.
Wastewater Management	44%	36%	20%	Effective wastewater management is less common, with nearly half of the organizations not addressing this issue.
Energy Efficiency	16%	44%	40%	A significant number of organizations strive to be energy-efficient, indicating a strong commitment to reducing energy consumption.
Utilization of Renewable Energy	60%	20%	20%	The use of renewable energy sources is limited, with the majority not adopting these practices.
Use of Green Products	36%	40%	24%	Organizations are moderately inclined to use green products, with some commitment to biodegradable and recycled materials.
Circular Economy Education Programs for Visitors	48%	20%	32%	Visitor education on circular economy practices is not widespread, though a third of organizations are actively engaged.
Employee Training on Circular Economy Practices	36%	44%	20%	Training for employees is moderate, with a need for increased efforts in education and awareness.
Obtaining Green Certification	68%	20%	12%	Very few organizations have obtained green certification, indicating a substantial area for improvement.
Support for Community Green Initiatives	56%	28%	16%	Support for local green initiatives is relatively low, with over half not participating.
Promoting a Green Culture in the Workplace	32%	32%	36%	There is a balanced effort to promote eco-friendly practices within the workplace, with a third of organizations fully committed.

Tourism organizations show varied levels of incorporation of circular economy practices. While there are strong efforts in areas like waste management and fostering business linkages, other areas such as renewable energy use and green certifications are lacking. Enhanced commitment and resources are needed to fully integrate circular

economy principles across the sector.

4) The Current Level of Awareness and Comprehension within Tourism Organization Regarding Efforts to Advance Towards a More Sustainable, Green, and Circular Economy

Key Observations	5 Highest score	4	3	2	1 Lowest score	Interpretation
Understanding the Principles and Benefits of the Circular Economy	24%	32%	20%	16%	8%	A significant majority (56%) of organizations have a good to very good understanding of circular economy principles and benefits, while a smaller portion (24%) has lower levels of comprehension.
Awareness of Environmental Impact and Potential Improvements	24%	24%	36%	12%	4%	48% of respondents are highly aware of their environmental impact and the potential for improvements through circular practices, though a substantial number (36%) have only moderate awareness.
Belief in Competitive Advantages and Benefits of Circular Practices	16%	36%	32%	16%	0%	A majority (52%) of organizations believe in the competitive advantages of adopting circular practices, with no respondents indicating a complete lack of belief.
Interest in Increasing Circular Economy Practices in the Next 1-3 Years	20%	28%	32%	16%	4%	A majority (48%) are interested in enhancing their circular economy practices within the next few years, though some (20%) show less interest.

The data indicates that tourism organizations generally have a solid understanding and awareness of circular economy principles and their environmental impacts. Many organizations recognize the competitive advantages of adopting circular practices and show a significant interest in increasing these practices in the near future. However, there is still a notable portion with moderate to low levels of awareness and interest,

highlighting areas for potential improvement and education.

5) Key Focus Areas of VET Organizations in Promoting Circular Economy Awareness and Workforce Preparedness

The data highlights the primary focus areas of VET (Vocational Education and Training) organizations in raising awareness and preparing a workforce capable of acting in the circular economy. The scores reflect the level of emphasis placed on each point. Here is a detailed interpretation of each focus area:

Key Observations	5 Highest score	4	3	2	1 Lowest score	Interpretation
Prepare Students to Implement Circular Economy Principles	88.89%	0%	11.11%	0%	0%	This is a primary focus, with the vast majority (88.89%) of VET organizations emphasizing preparing students to implement circular economy principles, such as reducing energy and water use.
Equip Students to Contribute to CE in Social Areas	72.22%	22.22%	5.56%	0%	0%	VET organizations also place a strong focus on equipping students to contribute to the circular economy in social areas, emphasizing cultural authenticity and inclusivity.
Teaching Utilization of Digital Marketing Channels	61.11%	27.78%	11.11%	0%	0%	There is a significant emphasis on teaching students how to effectively utilize digital marketing channels in tourism.
Enhance Awareness and Preparedness to Tackle Climate Change	83.33%	5.56%	11.11%	0%	0%	A strong focus is placed on enhancing students' awareness and preparedness to tackle climate change through sustainable practices.
Prepare Students to Address and Adapt to Climate Change	77.78%	11.11%	11.11%	0%	0%	Preparing students to address and adapt to climate change within the tourism sector is

Encourage Engagement with the Collaborative Economy	72.22%	16.67%	11.11%	0%	0%	another key focus area. VET organizations encourage students to engage with and benefit from the collaborative economy in tourism, highlighting its importance.
Prepare Students for Challenges from New Competing Destinations	83.33%	11.11%	5.56%	0%	0%	A strong emphasis is placed on preparing students to navigate challenges posed by new competing destinations that emphasize green and safe tourism practices, supporting circularity.

Overall, VET organizations primarily focus on preparing students to implement circular economy principles, address climate change, and engage with the collaborative economy, while also equipping them with digital marketing skills and awareness of sustainable practices in tourism.

6) Impact of Educational Programs on Preparing Tourism Sector Students for Circular Economy Roles – A VET Institutions Perspective

The responses reveal several challenges that educational programs for the tourism sector face in preparing students for a circular economy. Here's a detailed interpretation of each point based on the provided data:

Key Observations	5 Highest score	4	3	2	1 Lowest score	Interpretation
Integrating Green Job Creation Opportunities	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	5.55%	27.78%	There's a significant challenge in integrating green job creation opportunities, with a notable portion finding it very challenging.
Lacking Resources to	16.67%	27.78%	33.33%	5.55%	16.67%	Resources are insufficient to

Teach Circular Economy Principles							adequately teach students about circular economy principles, impacting their ability to enhance income and living standards.
Providing Practical Skills for Innovation	16.67%	38.88%	27.78%	0%	16.67%		There are difficulties in equipping students with practical skills for innovation, with a substantial proportion finding it challenging to a great extent.
Teaching Eco-friendly Transportation Options	16.67%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%	16.67%		Incorporating eco-friendly transportation options into courses is moderately challenging, with some educators finding it more difficult than others.
Embedding Preservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage	22.22%	27.78%	22.22%	11.11%	16.67%		Embedding the importance of preserving heritage presents a significant challenge, but with varying degrees of difficulty.
Teaching Circular Economy's Role in Quality of Life	16.67%	33.33%	16.67%	16.67%	16.67%		Teaching the impact of the circular economy on local residents' quality of life is a significant obstacle.
Educating on Value of Circular Economy Practices.	16.67%	33.33%	27.78%	5.55%	16.67%		Educators encounter barriers in teaching the value of circular economy practices, with mixed levels of difficulty.
Curriculum Lacks Content on Mass Tourism Drawbacks	27.78%	33.33%	11.11%	5.55%	22.22%		The curriculum inadequately covers the drawbacks of mass tourism and the shift towards boutique destinations, with

Mitigating Long-term Environmental Impacts	16.67%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%	16.67%	notable challenges. Incorporating discussions on mitigating environmental impacts is challenging, with varying degrees of difficulty.
Preventing Various Forms of Pollution	27.78%	38.89%	11.11%	0%	22.22%	Programs do not sufficiently cover pollution prevention, indicating a significant challenge.
Addressing Overuse of Natural Resources	22.22%	44.44%	11.11%	0%	22.22%	Addressing the overuse of resources is a major challenge, with a significant portion finding it very difficult.
Educating on Reducing Land Use Pressure	33.33%	33.33%	16.67%	0%	16.67%	Educating students on reducing land use pressure and preserving landscapes is notably challenging, with many educators rating it highly difficult.

Overall, these observations highlight several critical areas where educational programs in the tourism sector face challenges in preparing students for a circular economy, indicating the need for more resources, practical skills, and comprehensive curriculum content.

7) Assessing Readiness for Green and Circular Transition in Tourism Organizations and Vet Institutions

a) Assessment of the Level of Readiness for the Green and Circular Transition in Tourism Organizations

The chart evaluates the level of readiness for the green and circular transition in various aspects of tourism organizations. Respondents rated their readiness on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

Key Observations	5 Highest score	4	3	2	1 Lowest score	Interpretation
Need for Circular Economy Practices	28%	32%	16%	16%	8%	A majority (60%) of organizations acknowledge the urgent need to adopt circular economy practices to stay competitive.
Support from Partners	8%	20%	28%	20%	24%	Support from partners is relatively low, with only 28% indicating strong backing and a notable 44% indicating limited to no support.
Customer Environmental Concern	4%	24%	40%	20%	12%	Customers' environmental concern is moderate, with 40% indicating a middle-ground awareness and willingness to adapt.
Resources for Circular Practices	0%	20%	40%	20%	20%	No organization feels fully equipped with the necessary resources, with 60% acknowledging moderate to low readiness.
Knowledge of Required Changes	4%	28%	32%	20%	16%	Knowledge on implementing circular practices is moderate, with 32% feeling reasonably prepared but a significant portion (36%) feeling less confident.
Readiness of Suppliers and Customers	0%	28%	16%	36%	20%	There is notable apprehension regarding supplier and customer readiness, with 56% indicating moderate to low confidence.
Customer Willingness to Adapt	8%	20%	36%	16%	20%	Customers' willingness to change is mixed, with a plurality (36%) indicating moderate readiness and 36% indicating low to very low willingness.
Environmental Expertise Among Staff	4%	20%	32%	24%	20%	Organizations feel moderately equipped with knowledgeable staff, though 44% report having insufficient expertise.
Lack of Skilled Personnel	12%	32%	36%	16%	4%	A substantial percent (44%) indicates a significant skill

						gap among personnel, which could hinder the transition.
Flexibility to Change	4%	28%	32%	28%	8%	Organizations are moderately flexible, with 36% reporting low flexibility and 32% indicating a moderate ability to adapt.
Financial Resources for Eco-Friendly Changes	4%	24%	32%	16%	24%	Financial readiness is mixed, with 48% reporting moderate to low availability of funds for eco-friendly initiatives.
Creativity and Skill for Environmental Improvements	8%	24%	36%	28%	4%	Creativity and skill levels are moderate, with 36% feeling adequately prepared but 32% indicating lower preparedness.
Supportive Organizational Culture	12%	20%	32%	32%	4%	The organizational culture for eco-friendly changes is mixed, with 32% indicating support while another 32% feel it is lacking.

Tourism organizations show a varied level of readiness for the green and circular transition. While many recognize the need for circular practices and believe in their benefits, support from partners, customers, and suppliers is inconsistent. Organizations face challenges in resource availability, staff expertise, and financial readiness, indicating that while there is a moderate level of preparedness, significant barriers remain.

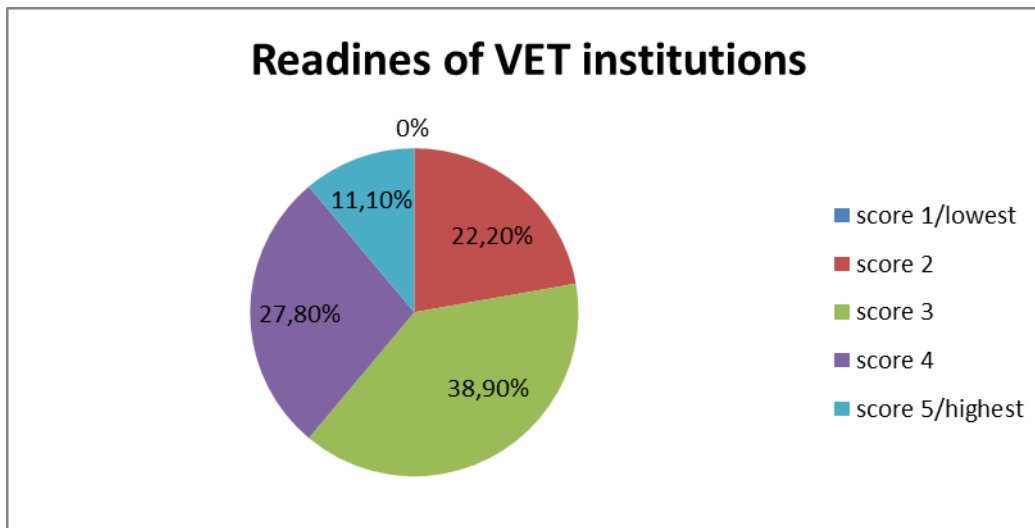
b) Evaluation of VET Institutions' Readiness to Provide Training and Enhance Awareness Among Graduates

The following chart illustrates the distribution of responses regarding the readiness of VET (Vocational Education and Training) institutions to offer training and increase awareness among their graduates on circular economy aspects. Here's a breakdown of the responses from 18 respondents:

- no respondents indicated that their organizations are completely unprepared, suggesting a baseline level of awareness or resources across all institutions;
- a small (22.2%) but significant percent of respondents acknowledges the need for such training but lacks concrete plans, indicating initial awareness without

actionable steps;

- the largest group (38.9%), these respondents have some plans and resources in place but have not fully implemented them, reflecting partial readiness and ongoing efforts;
- a considerable number of institutions (27.8%) have comprehensive plans and resources that are partially implemented, showing significant progress toward full readiness;
- a smaller group of respondents (11.1%) indicates that their organizations are fully prepared with complete plans that are entirely implemented and ongoing efforts, demonstrating the highest level of readiness.



The majority of VET institutions are in various stages of readiness to provide training and enhance awareness among their graduates about the circular economy. While a significant portion is moderately or very prepared, a smaller percentage is extremely prepared, indicating room for improvement and further development of comprehensive and fully implemented plans.

8) Impact of Barriers on Adopting Circular Economy Practices in Tourism

Main barriers that could impacted the tourism organisations to adopt circular economy tourism practices and the main obstacles that could prevent VET organizations from training and developing to raise awareness for circular economy for its graduates.

a) Main Barriers for Tourism Organizations to Adopt Circular Economy Practices

Obstacles	5 Highest score	4	3	2	1 Lowest score	Interpretation
Lack of information on how to implement circular practices	4%	48%	28%	16%	4%	A significant barrier, with 52% rating it 4 or 5, indicating that many organizations feel they lack necessary information.
Complex legal or administrative procedures	4%	44%	20%	24%	8%	Another major issue, with 48% giving it a high score (4 or 5), showing complexity in regulations is a notable obstacle.
Financial constraints	16%	44%	32%	8%	0%	Financial constraints are a major barrier, as evidenced by 60% rating it 4 or 5.
Not enough proven examples or models of circular economy practices	12%	48%	20%	12%	8%	Lack of proven models is a significant issue, with 60% giving high scores.
Technical challenges	16%	40%	40%	4%	0%	Technical challenges are a considerable barrier, as 56% rated it highly.
The high cost of complying with environmental regulations and standards	16%	24%	36%	20%	4%	Costs are a notable concern, with mixed ratings but 40% scoring it 4 or 5.
Lack of human resources	16%	36%	32%	12%	4%	A significant barrier, with 52% rating it highly.
No incentives or rewards for businesses that adopt circular economy practices	12%	36%	32%	12%	8%	Lack of incentives is a concern, with 48% rating it highly.
Low awareness of the circular economy	16%	40%	32%	8%	4%	Awareness is a moderate issue, with 56% scoring it 4 or 5.
Lack of commitment within our organization to adopt circular economy	16%	20%	40%	8%	16%	Commitment is an issue, with varied scores but notable concerns.

practices							
There's a risk in changing our business model to be more circular that we're cautious about taking	4%	16%	36%	12%	32%	High perceived risk, with 32% rating it lowest.	
Limited access to suppliers who sell sustainable products	12%	28%	24%	20%	16%	Access to suppliers is a moderate concern, with varied scores.	

b) Main Obstacles for VET Institutions in Training for Circular Economy Awareness

Obstacles	5 Highest score	4	3	2	1 Lowest score	Interpretation
The curriculum	11.11%	33.33%	27.78%	11.11%	16.67%	Curriculum adaptation is a concern, with 44.44% rating it highly.
Teachers and trainers unfamiliar with the circular economy	11.11%	33.33%	33.33%	11.11%	11.11%	A significant issue, with 44.44% scoring it highly.
Inadequate material base	27.78%	22.22%	27.78%	16.67%	5.56%	Major obstacle, with 50% rating it highly.
Pedagogical methods and training tools insufficiently adapted	16.67%	27.78%	33.33%	11.11%	11.11%	Notable issue, with 44.45% rating it highly.
Lack of financial resources	22.22%	33.33%	33.33%	5.56%	5.56%	Significant concern, with 55.55% rating it highly.
Insufficient industry collaboration	27.78%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%	5.56%	Major barrier, with 61.11% rating it highly.
Regulatory and accreditation constraints	22.22%	22.22%	27.78%	11.11%	16.67%	Significant obstacle, with mixed but notable scores.

For tourism organizations, the most significant barriers include financial constraints, technical challenges, and lack of information on implementing circular practices. For VET institutions, major obstacles are inadequate material base, insufficient industry collaboration, and lack of financial resources. Both sectors face challenges in awareness,

commitment, and adapting to new models, highlighting the need for targeted support and resources to facilitate the transition to circular economy practices.

9) Essential Support for Tourism Organizations and for VET Institutions

Concerning the most suitable type of support to enhance awareness and readiness for the circular economy in tourism and for VET organizations to be able to prepare their graduates for raising awareness for circular economy, the analysis of the perspectives offered by the two categories of respondents is presented below:

a) Support for Tourism Organizations, Companies, Providers

TYPE OF SUPPORT	Respondents from tourism organizations, companies, providers	Interpretation
1. counseling and advisory services on the circular economy	Very important/important 56%	Over half of the tourism respondents see counseling and advisory services as crucial, but it is not the highest priority compared to other types of support.
2. training programs focused on circular practices	Very important/important 76%	A significant majority of respondents value training programs, indicating a strong need for education on circular practices.
3. exchange good practices with other tourism organizations	Very important/important 76%	The same percentage as training programs, highlighting the importance of learning from peers and sharing successful circular economy practices.
4. financial support from national or international funds	Very important/important 88%	This is the highest-rated support type, showing a critical need for financial assistance to implement circular economy practices effectively.
5. networking with other organizations engaged in circular practices	Very important/important 80%	High importance is placed on networking, indicating that collaboration and knowledge sharing are essential for adopting circular practices.

For tourism respondents, the most suitable/desired ways of support are, in order of preference:

- Financial support from national or international funds
- Networking with other organizations engaged in circular practices,

followed by training programs focused on circular practices, exchange good practices with other tourism organizations.

b) Support for VET Institutions

TYPE OF SUPPORT	VET respondents	
1. counseling in circular economy	Very important/important 94,44%	Counseling is seen as nearly universally important, showing a strong need for guidance on incorporating circular economy principles into VET.
2. training programs	Very important/important 94,44%	Similar to counseling, training programs are also highly valued, emphasizing the need for comprehensive educational initiatives.
3. exchange of good practices	Very important/important 94,44%	Like tourism organizations, VET respondents highly value the exchange of good practices, indicating the importance of peer learning.
4. networking with other VET organizations on tourism	Very important/important 88,89%	Networking is critical for VET organizations, as it helps in building a community and sharing resources.
5. access to updated educational resources	Very important/important 100%	Every respondent considers updated resources essential, highlighting the need for current and relevant educational materials.
6. partnerships with industry	Very important/important 100%	Universal importance, reflecting the need for practical industry engagement to enhance VET programs.
7. financial assistance for curriculum development	Very important/important 94,44%	High importance, showing the need for funding to develop and update curricula to include circular economy principles.
8. technology and infrastructure support	Very important/important 94,44%	Emphasizes the necessity of technological and infrastructural enhancements to support circular economy education.
9. professional development for educators	Very important/important 94,44%	Indicates a strong need for ongoing educator training to effectively teach circular economy concepts.
10. student engagement initiatives	Very important/important 100%	Seen as universally important, highlighting the need to actively involve students in learning about the circular economy.
11. policy and regulatory advocacy	Very important/important 88,89%	Shows the importance of advocating for supportive policies and regulations to facilitate circular economy education.
12. online platforms for collaboration and learning	Very important/important 88,89%	Indicates the need for digital tools to support collaboration and knowledge sharing among VET organizations.

For VET respondents, the most suitable/desired ways of support are, in order of preference:

- access to updated educational resources
- partnerships with industry
- student engagement initiatives,

followed by counseling in circular economy, training programs, exchange of good practices, financial assistance for curriculum development, technology and infrastructure support and professional development for educators.

Face-to-face interviews and focus groups nuanced and brought a more in-depth perspective on the factual data, obtained through the online questionnaires. Thus, the following conclusions and opinions are worth taking into account, regarding the topic of Analysis 1 "Are we ready for Circularity":

- Integration of the concept of circularity in tourism in the didactic activity of teaching is not included in the learning activity process, as a different course, only by simple activities like supplementary themes for the papers they present when they discuss issues related to sustainability, there is observed a use of the circular economy term. Simple actions are also observed in "green week" & "other week" – when circular economy projects are discussed and presented among students.
- The development of workforce skills in green tourism is a critical need, but it lacks financial support through specific funding calls.
- Green skills is connected with the technological development for products and also for services that assumes development of the workforce is related also with this aspect. Awareness and concern for climate change, pollution and conservation of natural resources are growing globally. This awareness is expected to lead to an increase in demand for employees with green skills and knowledge.
- Organisational strategy for green and circular transition is essential concern for the entire organization has to be guided by the principle of focus and action in

doing what is proper for the planet.

The investment in the green and circular transition specific skills of tourism employees, as well as of teachers&trainers in VET organizations should be seen as a benefit, and not just as a cost.

What would you do differently?

- Incorporate practical experiences, such as internships, field trips, and project-based learning, where students work on real-world sustainability projects in tourism.
- Create mentorship programs where experienced professionals in green tourism mentor students and provide career guidance.
- Facilitate networking opportunities through industry conferences, seminars, and workshops.
- Use this feedback to continuously improve the curriculum and teaching methods.
- Promote lifelong learning by offering continuing education courses, workshops, and online modules for professionals seeking to update their skills in green tourism.
- Encourage alumni to stay engaged with the institution and contribute to ongoing sustainability initiatives.
- Launch campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of green tourism and the available training programs.
- Highlight success stories of individuals and businesses that have benefited from green tourism education.
- Engage with local communities to promote sustainable tourism practices and involve them in educational initiatives.
- Use community projects to demonstrate the practical benefits of green tourism and build support for training programs.

Fill in the SWOT analysis for your country based on the questionnaire 1 and 2 responses (including the most obvious strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats).

Instruction on how to fill in the SWOT:

Strengths: Questions that VET institutions or tourist organisations are marked as strongly agreeing on (things that they excel at).

Weaknesses: Question the VET institutions or tourist organisations marked as strongly disagreeing, present weaknesses, and identify areas for improvement.

Opportunities: Opportunities are an external factor that refers to opportunities to improve and give it a competitive edge/grow and expand of business (answers to questions 12, 13 and 14¹³)

Threats: Potential risks or challenges to the business's success (*examples for VET: declining student enrollment, budgetary limitation...*). can come from competitors, changing regulations, economic downturns, disruptive technologies, or shifting consumer preferences

¹³Only in the questionnaire for VET institution – experts.



