

“ADVANCE CIRCULAR” – Promoting Sustainable Tourism through Vocational Education and Training

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We are pleased to announce significant progress in the implementation of the transnational project **“ADVANCE CIRCULAR – Linking Tourism Industry with VET to Embrace Circularity”**, an Erasmus+ initiative designed to foster the integration of circular economy principles into the tourism sector and its related industries. The project emphasizes **transnational cooperation and knowledge transfer** by building strong links between the tourism industry and vocational education and training (VET).

Through the development of **innovative tools, educational resources, and good practices**, ADVANCE CIRCULAR seeks to bridge the gap between tourism stakeholders and training institutions, equipping a new generation of professionals with the skills needed to meet today’s sustainability challenges. Led by **INCDT (Romania)**, the consortium includes partners from **Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Spain**. Together, they aim to accelerate circularity in tourism through education, training, and innovation. Within this project, the partners have successfully developed several key tools designed to support the transition of the tourism sector and VET institutions towards circular economy practices.

Mapping the Scene & Creating Bridges – Building the Foundation for Circular Tourism

As part of **Work Package 2 – Mapping the Scene & Creating Bridges**, the ADVANCE CIRCULAR partners have carried out two important analyses designed to prepare the tourism sector and VET institutions for the transition to a circular economy:

1. **“Are We Ready for Circularity?”** – an analysis that identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges tourism stakeholders face in adopting circular practices.
2. **“Skills for the Green and Circular Transition”** – a study exploring the essential skills, competences, and attitudes needed to successfully move from a linear to a circular model, based on direct insights from key actors in the sector.

These studies create **bridges between education providers and companies**, strengthening dialogue and aligning training with real labor market needs. They also underline tourism’s potential as a **driver of circular value creation**, given its strong links with agriculture, food, transport, construction, and other sectors.

Innovative Tools for VET Institutions & Tourism Companies

Under **Work Package 3 – Tools for VET and Companies**, the project partners have designed **three innovative instruments** to support the transition:

1. **Practical Guidelines – “The Circular Economy: Moving from Theory to Practice”**, with separate sections for tourism companies and VET institutions, offering concrete measures, recommendations, and adaptable action plans.
2. **A Skills Taxonomy**, a structured framework that connects industry requirements with VET training programs, ensuring that future professionals are equipped with the right competencies for a green transition.
3. **A Digital Card Set based on the 5Rs of Circular Economy (Rethink, Redesign, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)**, including 40 cards with case studies showcasing best practices in tourism and related industries.

These tools, validated through **national seminars and piloting sessions**, strengthen organizational capacity, encourage innovation, and promote digital solutions to advance circular practices.

Training & Learning Environments – Empowering Professionals for Circular Transition

Through **Work Package 4 – Training & Learning Environments**, the consortium has developed tailored training resources and programs to build competencies in circular tourism:

- **A Training Pack with 5 modules** (*Starting Circularity, Principles of Circularity, Products & Services, Challenges & Solutions, Design Thinking Methods for Circularity*), complemented by a special section on **Digital Self-Learning Tools & Methods**.
- **A Transnational Training Program – “Tourism & VET in Tourism Advancing Circular: Exploring the Possibilities”**, hosted in Málaga (Spain), focusing on applying Design Thinking as a tool for creating new circular business and training models, brought together tourism professionals and VET representatives from all four partner countries.
- **4 National Training Sessions**, delivered in each partner country, where participants from the transnational program acted as trainers of trainers (ToT), sharing knowledge and methods with other professionals in tourism and VET.

Intangible Results

The project has generated significant intangible outcomes across partner organizations, practitioners, VET institutions, and the tourism industry. These include:

- **Enhanced organizational capacity and quality of work:** Partners have developed a deeper understanding of what circular economy entails in the tourism sector, fostering greater innovation, flexibility, and the ability to adapt measures to local needs.
- **Bridging education and industry:** VET institutions, responsible for preparing the future workforce, have been brought together with tourism companies and related organizations. This interaction strengthens dialogue, enables mutual learning, and aligns training with labor market needs, contributing to effective capacity building for the circular economy.
- **New ways of thinking and working:** Professionals are adopting circular thinking as a foundation for sustainable innovation, supporting the transition to a low-carbon, circular economy.
- **Skills and professional development:** Participants have improved their ability to implement circular economy principles, ensuring that both individuals and organizations can seize the opportunities offered by a more sustainable tourism sector.

With these results, ADVANCE CIRCULAR continues to raise awareness of the potential of the circular economy in tourism, empowering organizations to become **leaders in sustainable value creation**.

For more information and updates, visit: <https://advancecircular.incdt.ro/news/>