

Interreg Europe DETOCS Project Newsletter 7

Join the DETOCS Final Conference: *From Policy Learning to Policy Change*

On 15 October 2026, the Municipality of Middelburg will welcome policymakers, regional authorities, tourism professionals, and sustainability experts to Middelburg, the Netherlands, for the final public event of the **Interreg Europe DETOCS – DEcarbonising the Tourism Industry Post Covid-19 Support** project: "Saving Energy in the Tourism Industry: From Policy Learning to Policy Change."

As the DETOCS project comes to a close, the conference will showcase how four years of interregional cooperation have translated into tangible policy improvements supporting energy-saving across Europe's tourism sector. Participants will discover the project's key achievements, explore inspiring Good Practices from partner regions, and discuss practical solutions for accelerating the transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient tourism in line with EU Cohesion Policy and Europe's 2050 climate neutrality ambitions.



The programme combines keynote presentations, project results, regional success stories, partner discussions, and interactive breakout sessions focusing on energy efficiency, green investments, governance, stakeholder engagement, and capacity building.

In addition, on 14 October, DETOCS partners and their invited stakeholders will participate in a dedicated study visit in Middelburg, offering first-hand insights into local sustainable

tourism initiatives and providing an additional opportunity for networking and knowledge exchange ahead of the conference.

Whether you have been involved in DETOCS from the beginning or are looking for inspiration to strengthen sustainable tourism policies in your own region, this event offers a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, build new connections, and help shape the next generation of climate-neutral tourism policies.

[Read more about the event on our website](#)



(Above) Lange Jan, Middelburg (NL)

© Municipality of Middelburg

Inside this issue

DETOCS Final Conference in Middelburg.....	1
Regional Updates	2-5
About the project	5
Contact	5

Project Budget

Total Budget:	€1,980,883.00
Interreg Funds:	€1,567,416.40

Timeline

01 March 2023 – 31 May 2027

**Interreg
Europe**



Co-funded by
the European Union



Interreg Europe DETOCS
Project



@DETOCS_Project



[www.interregueurope.eu/
detocs](http://www.interregueurope.eu/detocs)

DETOCS



What Happens During the DETOCS Project 'Follow-up Phase'?

Although the core phase of DETOCS has concluded, the project's impact continues through its follow-up phase. Over the coming year, partners will monitor the implementation of their policy improvements, assess their regional impact, and continue working closely with policymakers and regional stakeholder groups. Regular progress updates will enable partners to exchange experiences and learn from one another, while those requiring additional support will develop targeted action plans based on the **Good Practices** identified during the project. This phase ensures that DETOCS results translate into lasting policy change and tangible progress towards more sustainable, low-carbon tourism across Europe.

Pictured above is the Nagyatád Thermal and Medicinal Spa in Hungary, where a geothermal system reuses spa waste heat to fully replace gas heating in key tourism sites in the area.

Regional Updates

Slovenia

In Slovenia, lead partner, the **Local Energy Agency Spodnje Podravje (LEASP)**, has continued monitoring the policy improvement achieved in the core phase and maintained dialogue with local and national stakeholders. No additional formal policy improvement has been approved so far, but the direction remains relevant: supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in tourism infrastructure and in more complex contexts, especially culturally protected areas.

Following the approved investment resulting from DETOCS activities, discussions continued with the Municipality of Ptuj on possible next steps. Particular attention was given to "invisible" solar PV systems in the protected city centre, where cultural heritage requirements must be respected. Examples from the Netherlands and Italy showed that renewable energy solutions can also be considered in heritage-sensitive areas. Further coordination with the Slovenian Institute for Cultural Heritage Protection and suitable funding sources are still required.



Regional learning continued through the final regional communication event, organised on 17 February 2026 at Stara steklarska in Ptuj, Slovenia, with 31 participants (*see image below*). The event presented DETOCS results, good practices and real-life examples from the Joint Thematic Guidebook. It was also used to hold a regional stakeholder board, where participants discussed possible next steps for Ptuj and other Slovenian regions.

Importantly, the event confirmed that DETOCS results are useful beyond the already reported policy improvement. Participants from different parts of Slovenia, including seven energy agencies, a national-level body responsible for grants in the energy field, and a research institute, discussed how good practices could be transferred to their own local policy instruments, development plans and investment ideas.

In the coming months, LEASP will continue monitoring relevant national calls and funding

sources that could support further measures in Ptuj and Municipalities, especially in sustainable tourism infrastructure, cultural heritage buildings, renewable energy, energy efficiency and Local Energy Communities.

Greece

The DETOCS project has successfully translated interregional learning into concrete policy action in Crete. Drawing on the knowledge gained through study visits, peer reviews and the exchange of Good Practices, the Managing Authority of the Region of Crete launched the "Green Enterprises in Crete" funding call, allocating €5 million to support tourism SMEs in reducing their environmental impact and carbon footprint. The programme encourages investments that improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reflecting the policy recommendations developed through DETOCS.

The initiative has already generated significant interest, with 122 tourism businesses submitting funding applications, demonstrating both the sector's growing commitment to sustainability and the value of interregional cooperation in shaping effective regional policies.

As DETOCS enters its follow-up phase, the **Region of Crete** continues to monitor the implementation of these policy improvements, while the **Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICh)** is preparing the next Regional Stakeholder Group meeting and further analysing the project's Joint Thematic Guide for academic publication. At the same time, discussions among regional tourism stakeholders continue to grow as Crete—recognised as one of the Eastern Mediterranean's climate change hotspots—works to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of its tourism sector.



Malta

As DETOCS enters its follow-up phase, Malta is focusing on ensuring that the project's policy improvements translate into practical action across the tourism sector. Over recent months, Malta's **Ministry for Tourism**, together with the **Institute for Sustainable Energy** at the **University of Malta**, has actively promoted the new policy measures to a broad network of

(continued on page 3)

public authorities, industry representatives, business organisations, and tourism stakeholders, helping maximise their visibility and uptake. At the heart of Malta's policy improvement is the creation of a [centralised online information hub](#) designed specifically for tourism stakeholders. The platform serves as a one-stop access point for information on available funding opportunities, training programmes, and practical guidance on implementing energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures. By making sustainability resources more accessible, the initiative aims to support tourism businesses in identifying suitable funding schemes and adopting greener operational practices.



The policy improvements were also showcased during the University of Malta's 4th Annual Research Expo (above), where DETOCS partners presented the project's achievements and highlighted one of its key findings: the need for more comprehensive data to monitor the environmental performance of Malta's tourism sector. Building on this recommendation, the Ministry for Tourism, together with the Malta Tourism Authority through its Tourism Observatory and with support from a Technical Support Instrument project, has strengthened the evidence base for future policymaking. A [new monitoring framework](#) comprising 29 sustainability indicators is being implemented in collaboration with the National Statistics Office. Covering areas such as electricity consumption, renewable energy generation, water use, waste management, and resource efficiency, these indicators will provide valuable data to guide future policy decisions and measure progress towards a more sustainable tourism sector.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate how DETOCS has supported Malta in moving beyond policy learning towards concrete implementation, combining improved stakeholder engagement, accessible support tools, and stronger evidence-based decision-making to accelerate the decarbonisation of tourism.

Finland

Following the conclusion of the DETOCS core phase, partners at **Thermopolis Ltd.** and the

Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia in Finland have focused on promoting its policy improvements and maintaining dialogue with regional stakeholders.

In January, the sixth Regional Stakeholder Meeting brought together representatives from tourism, education, regional development, and local authorities to discuss the updated South Ostrobothnia Regional Programme, which places greater emphasis on sustainable tourism through measures supporting internationalisation, digitalisation, sustainable tourism certification, nature-based tourism, and food tourism.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to present DETOCS Good Practices and the Joint Thematic Guide, encouraging stakeholders to explore transferable solutions for tourism decarbonisation. Project results were further disseminated through the dedicated DETOCS project website for the Council, and at the DETOCS regional seminar on the 3rd of February (pictured below), helping to raise awareness of the policy improvements among the wider tourism community.

As the updated regional programme has only recently been adopted, it is still too early to assess its territorial impact. Finnish DETOCS partners will continue monitoring implementation and engaging stakeholders to support the transition towards a more sustainable and low-carbon tourism sector.



Italy

Within the DETOCS follow-up phase, **Municipality of Campobasso** brought together regional stakeholders, local authorities, tourism representatives, businesses, and citizens to discuss the implementation of policy improvements supporting the decarbonisation of tourism and regional development. The Regional Stakeholders Board meeting, which took place in February 2026, focused on one of the region's most significant recent developments: the Municipality of Campobasso's participation in the GAL Molise Renewable Energy Community (CER). The initiative promotes the local production, sharing, and consumption of renewable energy, helping communities reduce energy costs while

Key DETOCS Learning Resources Support Lasting Policy Change

The DETOCS partnership has produced two key publications to help regions accelerate the decarbonisation of tourism: the Good Practice Brochure and the Joint Thematic Guidebook.

The **Good Practice Brochure** brings together inspiring examples from all 8 partner regions, showcasing practical initiatives that improve energy efficiency, reduce emissions, promote renewable energy, and encourage more sustainable tourism. It offers policymakers and tourism stakeholders transferable solutions that can be adapted to local and regional contexts.

Complementing this, the **Joint Thematic Guidebook** provides a comprehensive overview of sustainable energy technologies and management practices that can help reduce the tourism sector's environmental impact. Drawing on the expertise of the entire DETOCS partnership, the publication highlights proven solutions (e.g., solar PV, heat pumps, smart energy management systems, behavioural measures), while also addressing common barriers to implementation and presenting policy recommendations to support the transition towards climate-neutral tourism.

Together, these publications transform four years of interregional cooperation into practical resources for policymakers, tourism authorities, businesses, and other stakeholders. Both publications have been widely disseminated by the project partners and are available in the **DETOCS Project Library**, alongside other helpful DETOCS learning resources.

(continued on page 4)



DETOCS Good Practices & Policy Change

At the heart of the Interreg Europe DETOCS project is the ambition to transform tourism into a greener, low-carbon sector through interregional cooperation and policy learning.

Throughout the project, partners from Slovenia, Greece, Malta, Finland, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Netherlands exchanged **good practices** for sustainable tourism, ranging from renewable energy solutions and energy communities to sustainable tourism strategies and innovative visitor experiences. These practical examples have inspired concrete improvements to regional and local policy instruments.

By combining peer learning, study visits, and stakeholder engagement, DETOCS supports policymakers in developing evidence-based policy improvements that promote energy efficiency, decarbonisation, and more sustainable tourism.

accelerating the transition to a more sustainable and resilient economy.

Discussions highlighted how renewable energy communities can support the tourism sector by encouraging businesses to invest in clean energy solutions and benefit from national incentive schemes. Campobasso is contributing by making municipal infrastructure, including electric vehicle charging stations and photovoltaic installations, available to the energy community, while also identifying additional public buildings suitable for future renewable energy generation. The meeting (pictured below) also marked an important step in developing the Campobasso Wider Area Action Plan, with stakeholders providing valuable input on future priorities and opportunities for cooperation.



Bulgaria

The **Municipality of Burgas** in Bulgaria is translating the knowledge gained through DETOCS into concrete policy improvements by updating its Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development 2022–2030. The revised strategy incorporates new measures to strengthen energy efficiency, promote sustainable tourism practices, and support the decarbonisation of the local tourism sector.

To support the implementation of these policy improvements, Burgas convened its sixth Regional Stakeholder Meeting in February, bringing together around 50 representatives from local authorities, tourism businesses, cultural institutions, and regional organisations. Held alongside the Second Tourism Awards of Burgas, the event provided an opportunity to present the proposed strategic measures and gather feedback from stakeholders before the strategy's final adoption.

Discussions focused on practical actions to improve the energy performance of tourism infrastructure, increase the use of renewable energy sources, and reinforce Burgas' ambition to become a greener and more resilient tourism destination. By integrating the lessons, Good Practices, and interregional knowledge exchanged through DETOCS into its regional tourism strategy, Burgas is strengthening the policy framework needed to support a competitive, climate-friendly tour-

ism sector. The follow-up phase will continue to monitor the implementation of these measures and their contribution to the region's long-term sustainability objectives.

Hungary

DETOCS follow-up phase is supporting the implementation of Hungary's regional Action Plan through the development of a pilot Tourism Management System (TMS) cluster. Led by the **Central Danube Development Agency (CDDA) Nonprofit Ltd.**, the initiative aims to transform the existing Tourism Management System from an informal cooperation network into a structured governance model that promotes sustainable tourism development and strengthens collaboration across the region. During the follow-up phase, the pilot cluster model was developed, defining its governance structure, membership criteria, cooperation mechanisms, and shared sustainability objectives. Tourism stakeholders, services, and local assets within the selected pilot area were also mapped to identify opportunities for closer cooperation and establish a common vision for sustainable destination development.

On 8 July 2026, CDDA Nonprofit Ltd. organised a stakeholders' meeting, "Presentation of the Tourism Marketing System (TMS)" (pictured below), which marked an important step in implementing the Action Plan, bringing together regional stakeholders to discuss the area's sustainable tourism potential, strengthen partnerships, and explore practical approaches to addressing current challenges through improved cooperation and effective destination management.



Participants at the meeting were given the opportunity to gain deeper insights into the region's sustainable tourism potential, cultural heritage, and community assets, while strengthening relationships among stakeholders and fostering a shared vision for the future of tourism in the area. By establishing a stronger governance framework and encouraging collaboration among tourism actors, Hungary is laying the foundations for a more coordinated, resilient, and sustainable tourism sector that will continue to evolve beyond the DETOCS project's lifetime.

The Netherlands

In recent news, the **Municipality of Middelburg** has launched the **Warm Welcome with Closed Doors** pilot, encouraging retailers and hospitality businesses in the city centre to reduce energy consumption by keeping their doors closed whenever possible without compromising accessibility or customer experience.



Municipal representatives engaged directly with local businesses to promote simple energy-saving measures and better understand the practical barriers to their implementation. The pilot found that local independent businesses were generally more willing to keep their doors closed, while larger retail chains often cited corporate policies, customer expectations, accessibility concerns, and investment costs as key obstacles.

The initiative also revealed encouraging behavioural changes, with businesses increasingly influencing one another to adopt more energy-efficient practices. Meanwhile, discussions with entrepreneurs highlighted important safety and regulatory considerations, including emergency exit require-

ments and occupancy regulations, which must be addressed before the approach can be integrated into municipal policy. Through combining stakeholder engagement with practical testing, the pilot demonstrates how small, low-cost behavioural measures can contribute to energy savings while providing valuable evidence to inform future policy development for more sustainable tourism and retail environments.

Why DETOCS?

The Interreg Europe **DETOCS – DEcarbonising the Tourism Industry Post Covid-19 Support** project aims to support the recovery of EU tourism infrastructure sector following the Covid-19 pandemic, amidst the energy crisis, in a sustainable and low carbon way. Throughout the project, partners from Slovenia, Greece, Malta, Finland, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Netherlands have identified and shared best practices in sustainable tourism. These practices range from improving energy efficiency and self-sufficiency to introducing innovative, low-carbon tourism models such as virtual tourism. In addition, partners work to strengthen regional policies by facilitating capacity-building initiatives and encouraging the adoption of strategies proven effective in other regions. DETOCS has also supported tourism operators in adapting to the current energy situation by helping them reduce energy costs, increase operational efficiency, and implement renewable energy solutions.

By showcasing real-world examples and providing guidance on policy and practice, DETOCS empowers stakeholders to make informed decisions that drive sustainable development and resilience in the tourism sector. **Learn more about the Interreg Europe DETOCS project by visiting our [website](#).**



The Interreg Europe DETOCS project contributes to EU Cohesion Policy, and specifically to the “**Policy Objective 2 (PO2): A greener, low-carbon Europe**”, as it promotes clean and sustainable energy transition of tourism infrastructure. The four-year DETOCS project has a total budget of **€1,980,883.00**, with **€1,567,416.40** in Interreg Funds.

Project Partnership



GREEN



€
1.57 M
EU FUNDING



Mar 2023
May 2027

Local energy agency Spodnje Podravje (SI) - Lead Partner

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania - CIHEAM MAICH (EL)

Region of Crete (EL)

University of Malta (MT)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism (MT)

Thermopolis Ltd. (FI)

Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia (FI)

Municipality of Campobasso (IT)

Regional Energy Agency - Pazardjik (BG)

Burgas Municipality (BG)

Central Danube Development Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (HU)

Middelburg Municipality (NL)

The European Institute for Innovation-Technology (DE)

Contact

Tea Potocnik (LEASP)

Lead Partner

tea.potocnik@lea-ptuj.si



Interreg Europe DETOCS Project



@DETOCS_Project



www.interregeurope.eu/detocs