



DETOUR - Developing Resilient Tourism Ecosystems along Mediterranean Routes

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Supported by the EU programme SMP-COSME-2023-TOURSME— Transitioning to a more sustainable and resilient ecosystem – empowering tourism SMEs

Business development opportunity

Call for Expression of interest SMEs Training and Mentoring

DETOUR: “Developing Resilient Tourism Ecosystems along Mediterranean Routes” (November 2024 - September 2027) is a project co-financed by the European SMP Programme and is implemented by the Consortium of eight partners simultaneously in **Italy, Türkiye, Bulgaria and Greece**, along the Italian stretch of the Via Francigena, Lycian Way in Türkiye, Sultan’s Trail in Bulgaria and the network of mountain routes (Mounts Olympus, Kissavos, Mavrovouni) in Greece.

With a budget of **two million euros**, DETOUR – led by the Municipality of Fidenza (Italy) – aims to support tourism Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) in sustainability, climate change, digitalisation and development of tourism products. The project has three phases: 1. training of the key tourism stakeholders (August - November 2025), 2. tailored capacity building and consultancy for tourism SMEs along the selected routes (January - April 2026); 3. open call for financial support to SMEs for implementation of their innovative projects (January 2026 - May 2027).

This call addresses the second phase of the project and aims to provide SMEs with a training program and tailored-made mentoring to strengthen resilience and build capacity in sustainable and digital tourism practices. Training and mentoring costs of this call are covered by the project.

This call is addressed to:

Tourism SMEs settled in the following area:

- In Italy: situated along (or in the buffer zone of 10 - 15 km) of the Via Francigena from Pavia till Rome
- In Greece: situated in the areas of Mounts Olympus, Kissavos and Mavrovouni
- In Bulgaria: situated in the Thrace Tourist Region
- In Türkiye: situated along (or in the buffer zone of 10 - 15 km) along the Lycian way from Ovacık in Fethiye sub-province, Muğla province to Aşağı Karaman in Konyaaltı sub province,



Antalya Province. Turkish Hisarönü (Ovacık) to Aşağı Karaman in Konyaaltı, in the vicinity of Antalya

General Information of the call:

- Application opening: 08 September 2025, 12:00 pm (Brussels/CET time)
- Application deadline: 24 November 2025, 17:00 pm (Brussels/CET time)
- Programme duration: 01 January - 30 April 20226

The current call for "SMEs Training and Mentoring" targets a minimum of 80 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) — such as accommodation providers, food and beverage businesses, tour operators, tour guides, outdoor activities and similar services — located along or in the buffer zone of the selected walking routes in Italy, Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Greece. The course **offers training and mentoring programme** with the ultimate goal of supporting participants in developing their applications for innovative project proposals eligible for mini-grants of up to €25,000. Training and mentoring costs are covered by the project.

1. Training will cover the following themes:

- **Green Transition:** Emphasizing sustainable environmental practices, this area focuses on reducing the tourism sector's ecological footprint and promoting eco-friendly initiatives.
- **Digital Transition:** Highlighting the integration of digital technologies, this competence area aims to enhance online presence, data analytics, and the adoption of digital tools to improve tourism services.
- **Resilience and Inclusion:** Addressing the need for robust strategies to overcome challenges, this area fosters inclusive tourism practices that cater to diverse populations and ensure equitable growth.

2. Training will consist of a minimum of one online module of choice (self-paced) and mentoring:

- Module 1 - Developing Responsible and Diversified Tourism Offerings
- Module 2 - Green Transition and Sustainable Practices
- Module 3 - Resilience and Crisis Preparedness in Tourism
- Module 4 - Digital Transformation in Tourism
- Module 5 - Strategic Marketing and Communication in Tourism
- Module 6 - Inclusion in Tourism

3. Mentoring

Mentoring - personalised support to Small and Medium Enterprises via individual guidance and advice from trained experts.



This mentoring helps SMEs to apply the knowledge gained during the online training to their specific business context, develop innovative project ideas related to sustainability, digitalisation, tourism and improve services.

The mentors will work with SMEs, providing one-to-one support, answering questions, helping with project design, and giving practical advice.

4. Benefits of joining the course:

- Boost your skills and expertise in sustainability, digitalisation, and tourism resilience.
- Receive practical guidance from experienced professionals previously trained by DETOUR.
- Gain recognition as an EU-certified DETOUR SME
- Become a member of knowledge network and connect to the peers
- Visibility enhancement
- Receive tailor-made mentoring from the experts in the field of digitalisation, resilience, sustainability, project management
- Receive support in preparation of a proposal for the call for DETOUR innovative projects

5. To receive certification, the participant must complete:

- at least **5 hours of online training delivered in the national language** (completion of one thematic module of your choice) to be completed independently and at your own pace between 01 January – 30 April 2026.
- **5 hours of online or onsite mentoring with a tourism expert in the national language or in English** over 2 sessions, to be held between 01 January – 30 April 2026.



6. Who are we looking for?

- The business must be legally registered in one of the four DETOUR countries - Italy, Türkiye, Greece, Bulgaria (*Specific national requirements may apply—please consult the national call for details*)
- The applicant must work or demonstrate interest in working with walking or/and cycling tourism.
- SMEs must be based along one of the four DETOUR routes (or within a buffer zone) and be operating in the tourism value chain in the areas specified on page 1.

In particular:

- Accommodation providers (B&Bs, guesthouses, hotels, hostels, camping grounds, vehicle parks, holiday accommodations, etc) – [NACE code I5510, I55020, I5530](#).
- Food and wine producers (breweries, wine / cheese/ honey etc. production, etc) – [NACE code I5610, I5630](#)
- Restaurants and beverage serving structures (restaurants, catering, eateries, bars, etc) – [NACE code I5610, I5630](#)
- Service providers (luggage transport, spa and thermal facilities, bicycle rent services etc) - [NACE code N79](#)



- Local cultural, sport, museums, creative or entertainment organisations collaborating with tourism – NACE code [R90, R93](#)
- Tour guides and tour operators – [NACE code N79](#)
-  NB: For guides and tour operators, the only criterion is that they work with walkers/hikers/bicycle riders, not necessarily located along the routes or in buffer zone.
-  NB: If you're unsure whether your SME is eligible, please refer to the official requirements of the European Commission following the links provided next to each SME type.

7. Who is not eligible?

- Bankrupt, closing down, or under court administration
- Have committed serious professional misconduct or criminal offences
- Have failed to pay taxes or social security contributions
- Are involved in legal or financial troubles that could harm the EU's interests
- Non-registered or illegally operating enterprises

8. How to apply?

Fill in [the registration form](#), specifying:

- A short description of your business including your location and activity
- your motivation for participation
- Application deadline: 24 November 2025 17:00 pm (Brussels/CET time)

9. Training Timeline

- independent and self-paced online training: 01 January – 30 April 2026
- Mentoring sessions with experts (in parallel with online training): 01 January – 30 April 2026
- Submission of innovative project proposals for funding by 30 June 2026

10. Selection criteria

Eligibility of the participants will be evaluated by the evaluation committee composed of 6 members from the project member states based on the following criteria

1. Eligibility: SME status, location, relevance to walking tourism (25 points)
2. Motivation and willingness to innovate (25 points)
3. Diversity of sectors and geographic coverage (25 points)
4. Relevance to the field of DETOUR operation (25 points)

All applicants will be notified via email.

More information:

- For any questions, please write to: detour@comune.fidenza.pr.it