Delivering Efficient Sustainable Tourism with low-carbon transport Innovations - Sustainable Mobility, Accessibility and Responsible Travel

During this period of the COVID19 outbreak, tourism have suffered a lot in Europe. Demand for cycling and walking facilities and infrastructure has dramatically increased, as people have to spend more time in open spaces. Nature offers new and more diverse opportunities for the development of activities, which provide safety and social distancing.

Latvian Greenways became more popular during these difficult times, showing that the turn to non-motorised means creates new opportunities for tourism and more sustainable and human-centered mobility trends.

DESTI-SMART project gave us the opportunity to explore further other mobility topics, such as low-carbon initiatives, intermodality and accessibility. The exchange of experience activities and the identification of good practices during Phase 1 of the project, provide us with knowledge to move towards “smarter” and more sustainable tourism through the development of our Action Plan. A great success of this cooperation within the DESTI-SMART partnership was also the approval of a pilot action dedicated to testing of Accessible Greenways for Everyone On-Demand zero-emission smart mobility Service in the Vidzeme Region.
DESTI-SMART partnership: Progress so far!

DESTI-SMART Phase 1 was completed resulting in 9 Action Plans

The Launch Conference in Thessaloniki in September 2018 marked the beginning of DESTI-SMART. 10 partners from 9 countries, 9 partner destinations and one (1) advisory partner, become partners towards a common vision to promote sustainable mobility, accessibility and responsible travel and integrate them within the planning processes for sustainable tourism development and services.

Having completed Phase 1 of the project implementation, the partnership have successfully completed its activities, regardless the difficulties faced due to the pandemic COVID19 outbreak. All partners have organised their final Local Stakeholder Group meetings as planned, in order stakeholders of the transport and tourism sector to be informed about DESTI-SMART progress, stakeholders’ involvement in Action Plans’ implementation and expected results during Phase 2.

A virtual study visit organised by Horários do Funchal, Transportes Públicos S.A., Madeira, Portugal in September 2020 with great success and participation from both project partners and stakeholders.

The overall objective of DESTI-SMART is the combined improvement of transport and tourism polices at tourist destinations. This could be achieved by integrating strategies for sustainable mobility, accessibility and responsible travel within the planning processes for sustainable tourism development and services. The transition to a low-carbon economy is a major challenge for all project partners, through sustainable multimodal mobility, along with innovations, efficiency, resilience, policy learning and capacity building for local authorities in tourist destinations.
In total, **25 Good Practices** have been identified by the DESTI-SMART partners on the four (4) topics of the Project, 11 of which have been included in the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform:

1. **Bus&Bike Service** – Promoting innovative intermodality solutions in Madeira by Horários do Funchal, Portugal
2. **Latvian Greenways Network** - New and Unique Product for Visitors by Latvian Greenways Association, Latvia
3. **New adapted bus for residents and tourists with reduced mobility in Madeira** by Horários do Funchal, Portugal
4. **New public transport line increases accessibility and intermodality in Funchal for tourists** by Horários do Funchal, Portugal
5. **Three Towns Travel (3TT): Bournemouth, Poole & Christchurch** Sustainable Mobility-Residents & Tourist by Bournemouth University, UK
6. **Promoting accessible Tourism in Mallorca Island** by Mallorca Island Council - Environment Department, Spain
7. **A trip around the history of the city with OASTH’s Cultural Route Bus (50)** by the Major Development Agency of Thessaloniki S.A., Greece
8. **Hastings Funicular Railways, West Hill and East Hill Lifts Repurposing** by Hastings Borough Council, UK
9. **Integrated text-to-speech module, loudspeaker and wireless push button at bus stops for visitors** by Experience Bremerhaven, Tourism, Marketing and Events Company Ltd., Germany
10. **Promoting and enhancing bicycle-sharing for tourists and visitors in Thessaloniki** by the Major Development Agency of Thessaloniki S.A., Greece
11. **Sustainable Tourism Mobility in Balatonfüred** – Intermodal developments by Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency, Hungary

All Good Practices can be found at the project’s webpage:  
https://www.interregeurope.eu/desti-smart/good-practices/

Moreover, during 5th semester of DESTI-SMART, project partners had the opportunity to participate and present their experiences in the Workshop “Smart Mobility at Tourist Destinations” organised by the partnership within the framework of the **18th European Week of Regions and Cities** in October 2020.

The video recording of the workshop, along with all event’s recordings can be found in the EWRC webpage  
https://euregionsweek2020-video.eu/replay

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**Latvian Greenways Association focuses on developing and promoting non-motorised transport in Latvia**

Latvian Greenways Association is a non-profit foundation with the main aim to develop the former railway lines and adopt them for the use of non-motorized transport – cyclists, hikers, horse riding, skiing as well as people with special needs.

The Association has been established in 2015, following similar initiatives in many Western European countries, where thousands of kilometers of Greenways have been developed.

The Association has 12 members – Municipalities that have former railway lines and canal dams and former railway infrastructure on their territories: Aloja, Amata, Carnikava, Ergli, Gulbene, Limbazi, Ogre, Olaine, Ropazi, Rujiena, Jaunpiebalga and Vecpiebalga.

In Latvia there are about 2000 km of abandoned railway lines – both regular and narrow-gauge, many of whom have a great potential to become Greenways.

https://greenways.lv/
During Phase 1, all four (4) DESTI-SMART Thematic Workshops were held, focusing on the four (4) thematic topics of the project:

a) “Low Carbon Transport Systems and E-mobility” in March 2019,
b) “Intermodality for visitors at tourist destinations” in September 2019,
c) “Accessible Tourism: Accessibility for visitors with mobility problems” in March 2020 (online) and
d) “Cycling & Walking at tourist destinations” in September 2020 (online).

Thematic Workshop D, was held on September 9, 2020 and was the second workshop that was held online, due to the travel restrictions related to COVID-19 pandemic. The Workshop was organised by the Latvian Greenways Association.

Each Thematic Workshop was followed by the relevant webinars addressed to wider audience. Thus, the latest workshop was followed by a Webinar on “Cycling & Walking at Tourist Destinations” on October 29, 2020.

All video recordings of the webinars are available and free to assess on the DESTI-SMART channel on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNFkxYIVGRVoCTswyMyfBCQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNFkxYIVGRVoCTswyMyfBCQ)

Detailed reports for all Workshops can be found on DESTI-SMART website:

[https://www.interregeurope.eu/desti-smart/library/](https://www.interregeurope.eu/desti-smart/library/)

The main output of Phase 1 are the 9 Action Plans developed by each partner destination. The Action Plans resulted by the exchange of experience activities among the partners. Thematic Workshops, Webinars, Staff exchanges, Good Practices identified by the partners and the virtual Study Tour in Funchal Madeira, provided inspiration and ideas for the partners in order to develop their own Action Plans.

A great success for the project was the development, submission and final approval of three (3) Pilot Actions to be funded by the Interreg Europe programme: a) Major Development Agency of Thessaloniki S.A., Greece, b) Latvian Greenways Association, Latvia, and c) Pafos Regional Board of Tourism, Cyprus.

All Action Plans, including the approved Pilot Actions, will be uploaded in the project’s website by end of March 2021, after they receive the final comments and suggested improvements. DESTI-SMART is on the verge of Phase 2 were all partners destinations’ Action Plans will be implemented.
A Study Visit on Intelligent Transport Systems at destinations was held online on September 23, 2020, organised by Horários do Funchal, Transportes Públicos S.A. (HF), Funchal, Madeira, Portugal, partner of DESTI-SMART and project coordinator in Horizon2020 CIVITAS DESTINATIONS project.

Funchal is one of the most active cities in the CIVITAS network, being awarded CIVITAS city of the year in 2013 and one of the demonstration sites of the CIVITAS DESTINATIONS project. During the Study Visit, partners had the opportunity to learn about HF’s tourism-related initiatives and projects. Topics, such as the clean vehicle strategy for public and private fleet; Intelligent Transport Systems at destinations; Business models in tourism and mobility; intermodal transport experiences in Madeira, were also presented and elaborated, aiming in providing inspiration to the partners for developing actions for their Action Plans.

From the beginning, DESTI-SMART created a strong synergy with CIVITAS DESTINATIONS through their common partner. HF, as coordinator of the DESTINATIONS project, transferred its experience and knowledge to the DESTI-SMART partners. Within DESTINATIONS, 10 practical guidelines for smart and sustainable mobility in tourist destinations have been developed and – presented as a good practice in DESTI-SMART:

1. Bring the tourism and mobility sectors to work closely together
2. Enrich the tourism product: Promote mobility solutions as a benefit for enhancing the tourist product
3. Generate experiences: Design tourist experiences combining sustainable mobility modes i.e. cycling/pilgrimage, walking/architecture
4. Create an information hub: Provide electronic and print information about sustainable mobility options
5. Encourage PT operators to improve and promote their rural services to the tourist market: upgrade the experience and provide optional journeys
6. Involve Tourism stakeholders: Train hotel front office staff and other; hospitality professionals to provide primarily sustainable travel solutions to their guests
7. Combine transport modes: Create synergies between sustainable; mobility modes i.e. on PT card offer discount for bike-sharing, on bike-sharing card offer discount for electric car rental
8. Collect and share data between tourism and transport operators
9. Include the upgrading of sustainable mobility modes and infrastructures in the destination strategic planning
10. Reward tourism businesses for promoting green solutions, including sustainable mobility solutions
The 4th Thematic Workshop of the DESTI-SMART project, titled “Cycling & Walking at Tourist Destinations”, took place on September 9, 2020 through Videoconference. The Workshop was organised by the Latvia Greenways Association, Latvia with the contribution of the DESTI-SMART Project Management & Coordination Unit (MCU).

The purpose of the Workshop was the participants to exchange experience, present good practices, innovations and their own plans and priorities on initiatives facilitating Cycling & Walking for Tourists, providing cycling routes, Sharing bikes, promoting of Cyclo-Tourism, integration of cycling in urban/regional tourism mobility strategies and promoting ‘Greenways’ at partners’ destinations.

“Cycling and Walking as part of holiday travel is a rapidly emerging societal trend in EU-28” said Viachaslau Filimonau, representative of the University of Bournemouth, UK, advisory partner of the DESTI-SMART project. “Cycling tourism is estimated to have an annual growth in EU about 7%, with Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, France, UK, Belgium and Austria to be the key markets, while it seems that its popularity is growing in East-Central Europe” added Mr. Filimonau. As for the walking tourism he highlighted that “main purpose of walking is to maintain or improve physical and mental wellbeing rather than sightseeing. The exact magnitude of the market is unknown, however UNWTO refers to it as “rapidly growing”.

Cycling and walking infrastructure, e-bikes, cycling, walking and hiking routes for visitors/tourists within urban, rural and coastal areas, planning strategies and legislation for cycling and walking, the Greenways network, are some of the initiatives that the partners presented in the Workshop transferring their experiences from their countries.

Discussion followed among partners on potential actions for the promotion of Cycling & Walking that can be proposed in the project Action Plans and improvement of policy instruments, as well as capacity building regarding non-motorised transport modes planning.

The main conclusion of the workshop is that regional and local strategies and plans relatively recently have integrated policies on the promotion of cycling and walking. Particularly, cycling has not gain popularity yet as for commuting. Along with the adoption of low-carbon and e-mobility solutions, promotion of cycling and walking constitutes a great option towards sustainable mobility in tourist destinations, with significant environmental and health benefits for the destinations.

The workshop was followed by the respective webinar on October 29, 2020, addressing to a wider audience.
The DESTI-SMART Partnership application for a Workshop on “Smart Mobility at Tourist Destinations” was retained by the selection committee and the session became part of the official programme of this year’s #EURegionsWeek.

The Workshop on “Smart Mobility at Tourist Destinations” was held online on October 15, 2020. The Workshop presented interim results from relevant feasibility studies, interregional cooperation, exchange of experience, capacity building and policy development in sustainable and smart tourism mobility, towards Smart Destinations.

Presenters of the Workshop were:
- DESTI-SMART Interreg Europe project, on the role of Sustainable Mobility & Accessibility in Sustainable & Responsible Tourism, towards Smart Destinations
- Major Development Agency of Thessaloniki, Greece, on proposed seaborne transport system as a tourism product
- Hastings Borough Council, UK, on sustainable seafront strategy including proposals on low-carbon transport system for all
- Horrarios de Funchal, Madeira, PT, on CIVITAS DESTINATIONS project
- InnovaSUMP Interreg Europe project (led by Nicosia Municipality, Cyprus)

The main conclusion of the Workshop was that ‘Smart destinations’ should incorporate sustainable, green mobility, seamless travel services and accessibility for visitors, ensuring tourism for all. Smart mobility solutions enable destinations to better respond to changing travel behaviours by offering more relevant, integrated services (e.g. from door to door) and incorporating fast adaptation processes. Improving sustainable transport and tourism policies towards green and smart destinations, by integrating strategies for smart and sustainable mobility, accessibility for all and responsible travel, with sustainable tourism development, through efficiency, resilience, intermodality improvements, novel low-carbon transport systems, cycling and walking for visitors.

The workshop’s recording can be found in the #EURegionsWeek relevant webpage: https://euregionsweek2020-video.eu/video/smart-mobility-at-tourist-destinations
DESTI-SMART project active synergies with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

DESTI-SMART Project Partnership has identified and established synergies and links with the UN SDGs. In particular, the following synergies and links have been identified and established respectively:

**SDG 7 - AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**
- As a sector, which is energy intensive, tourism can accelerate the shift towards increased renewable energy shares in the global energy mix. By promoting investments in clean energy sources, tourism can help to reduce greenhouse gases, mitigate climate change and contribute to access of energy for all.

**SDG 9 - INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
- Tourism development relies on good public and private infrastructure. The sector can influence public policy for infrastructure upgrade and retrofit, making them more sustainable, innovative and resource-efficient and moving towards low carbon growth, thus attracting tourists and other sources of foreign investment.

**SDG 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**
- Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends.
- Investment in green infrastructure (more efficient transport, reduced air pollution) should result in smarter and greener cities for, not only residents but also tourists.

**SDG 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**
- The tourism sector needs to adopt sustainable consumption and production (SCP) modes, accelerating the shift towards sustainability. Tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for tourism including for energy, water, waste, biodiversity and job creation will result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.

**SDG 13 - CLIMATE ACTION**
- Tourism contributes to and is affected by climate change. Tourism stakeholders should play a leading role in the global response to climate change. By reducing its carbon footprint, in the transport and accommodation sector, tourism can benefit from low carbon growth and help tackle one of the most pressing challenges of our time.

**SDG 17 - PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**
- Due to its cross-sectoral nature, tourism has the ability to strengthen private/public partnerships and engage multiple stakeholders – international, national, regional, and local – to work together to achieve the SDGs and other common goals. Public policy and innovative financing are at the core for achieving the 2030 Agenda.
- The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), supported by a wide range of donors and in partnership with other international organizations, civil society, and the private sector, has been providing technical assistance in countries across the globe for more than 40 years. UNWTO’s knowledge and expertise in developing sustainable, responsible, and accessible tourism contributes to a better world.
**DESTI-SMART ACTION PLANS & PILOT ACTIONS**

The main output of Phase 1 are the 9 Action Plans developed by each partner destination. The Action Plans resulted by the exchange of experience activities among the partners. Thematic Workshops, Webinars, Staff exchanges, Good Practices identified by the partners and the virtual Study Tour in Funchal Madeira, provided inspiration and ideas for the partners in order to develop their own Action Plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTNER</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LP MAJOR DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THESSALONIKI, GREECE</td>
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<td>Action 1: Thessaloniki Urban Sea Transportation System</td>
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<td>Action 2: Upgrade and upscale of the Thessaloniki Resilient Strategy “Thessaloniki 2030”</td>
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<td>Action 3 – Pilot Action: ThessPass joint platform</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>PP2 AUTONOMOUS RGION OF SARDINIA, ITALY</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Action 1: Implementation of the Regional Action Plan for charging stations for electric vehicles</td>
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<td>Action 2: Implementation of the Regional Cycling Mobility Plan</td>
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<td>Action 3: Completion of the Intermodal Center of Oristano</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>PP3 EXPERIENCE BREMERHAVEN, TOURISM, MARKETING &amp; EVENTS COMPANY LTD, GERMANY</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Action 1 Low carbon transport “Climate Tour”</td>
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<td>Action 2 Installation of the Free Floating Bike Rental System</td>
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<td>Action 3 Purchase of a bicycle for people in wheelchairs</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>PP4 HORÁRIOS DO FUNCHAL, TRANSPORTES PÚBLICOS S.A., PORTUGAL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Action 1 Flexible bus transport solution</td>
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<td>Action 2 Sustainable Intermodal maritime connection</td>
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<td>Action 3 Low carbon transport working group</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>PP5 HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL, UNITED KINGDOM</td>
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<td>Action 1: Developing a sustainable seafront public transport service</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>PP6 MALLORCA ISLAND COUNCIL - ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT, SPAIN</td>
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<td>Action 1: Promotion of hiking activities in natural and mountainous areas for people with special needs</td>
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<td>Action 2: Improving accessibility at tourist facilities linked to walking activities</td>
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<td>Action 3: Promoting accessibility to the points of tourist interest by public transport and provide more sustainable and low-carbon means of transportation</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>PP7 LATVIAN GREENWAYS ASSOCIATION, LATVIA</td>
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<td>Action 1: Low-carbon transport system - Greenways adaption to electromobility</td>
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<td>Action 2 Intermodality improvements - Development of public railway transport routes and timetables to improve accessibility to destinations important for cycling tourism</td>
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<td>Action 3 Improving the accessibility of the environment by means of universal design for tourists at greenways &amp; mobility points</td>
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<td>Action 4 Updating smarter facilities in greenways for cycling and walking &amp; promotion for visitors</td>
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<td>Action 5 (Pilot Action) Testing of Accessible Greenways for Everyone On-Demand Service in Vidzeme Region</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>PP8 LAKE BALATON DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION AGENCY, HUNGARY</td>
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<td>Action 1: Mobility points at railway stations - Development of the intermodality measures</td>
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<td>Action 2: Reduction of traffic congestion in Balaton shore of Siófok - Low carbon transport system and changing travel habits of visitors to Siófok</td>
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<td>Action 3.1: Improving bicycle transport, Establishment of Resting places</td>
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Action 3.2: Building of a bicycle path in Alsóörs and Felsőörs. The Balaton Bike Circle continuance to Veszprém (Veszprém-Balaton will become the Culture Capital of Europe in 2023)

9 PP9 PAFOS REGIONAL BOARD OF TOURISM, CYPRUS

Action 1: Implementation of investment preparation for a proposed cable car/teleferic/aerial ropeway system for visitors at Neo Chorio community, as a low-carbon sustainable tourism mobility solution, towards procurement and delivery
Action 2: Enhancing Intermodality for visitors by closer cooperation and better coordination between transport modes at key nodes such as airport and bus station
Action 3: Establishing a policy implementation framework for accessibility provision for visitors with mobility handicaps (disabled, elderly, infirm, families with young children) at tourist attractions
Action 4:
a. Provision of Cycling facilities for visitors, such as signing and priorities, towards development and promotion of cycling tourism as low-carbon sustainable tourism mobility product and service
b. Promotion of walking tourism to explore Pafos urban and rural areas destinations at the pace chosen by tourists in accordance with their personal preferences and levels of physical fitness
Action 5: PILOT ACTION – Testing ‘Mobility as a Service’ (MaaS) for sustainable tourism, (MaaS4ST) with low-carbon smart E-Mobility multi-modal services for visitors to archaeological sites, including accessible tourism mobility facilities. Pilot introduction of electric scooters, e-bikes, e-carts for accessibility within sites, integrated use of existing electric minibus, charging station for e-cars

A great success for the project was the development, submission and final approval of three (3) Pilot Actions to be funded by the Interreg Europe programme: a) Major Development Agency of Thessaloniki S.A., Greece, b) Latvian Greenways Association, Latvia, and c) Pafos Regional Board of Tourism, Cyprus.

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<tr>
<td>1 LP MAJOR DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THESSALONIKI, GREECE</td>
<td>THESSPASS: Testing of a joint digital platform for Thessaloniki’s top tourism attractions and significant points of interest, fostering low-carbon, Sustainable and Active Mobility, Accessibility, and Responsible Travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 PP7 LATVIAN GREENWAYS ASSOCIATION, LATVIA</td>
<td>Testing of Accessible Greenways for Everyone On-Demand Service in Vidzeme Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 PP9 PAFOS REGIONAL BOARD OF TOURISM, CYPRUS</td>
<td>Testing of ‘Mobility as a Service’ (MaaS) for sustainable tourism, with low-carbon smart E-Mobility multi-modal services for visitors to archaeological sites, including accessible tourism mobility facilities; pilot introduction of electric scooters, e-bikes, e-carts for accessibility within sites, relevant use of existing electric minibus, charging station for e-cars, towards a ‘smart destination’</td>
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All Action Plans, including the approved Pilot Actions, will be uploaded in the project’s website by end of March 2021, after they receive the final comments and suggested improvements. DESTI-SMART is on the verge of Phase 2 were all partners destinations’ Action Plans will be implemented.
## NEXT EVENTS AND MEETINGS

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st partners meeting in Phase 2</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>DESTI-SMART Final Conference &amp; 2nd partners’ meeting in Phase 2</td>
<td>April 2022</td>
<td>Pafos Regional Tourism Board, Cyprus</td>
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**DESTI-SMART Interreg Europe Project Newsletter**

**MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION UNIT**

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[LeVer Development Consultants](http://www.lever-europa.com)

[EuroTrans Consulting](http://www.eurotransconsulting.com)

[Major Development Agency Thessaloniki S.A.](http://www.mda-sa.gr)

[Regional Autonoma De Sardigna](http://www.regione.sardigna.it)

[Hastings Borough Council](http://www.hastings.gov.uk)

[Department de Sostenibilitat i Medi Ambient Consell de Mallorca](http://www.dss.ama.cat)

[PAFOS Region Cyprus](http://www.pafosregioncyprus.org)

[BU Bournemouth University](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk)

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**Improving transport and tourism policies at destinations by integrating strategies for sustainable mobility, accessibility and responsible travel in sustainable tourism development, and through efficiency, resilience, intermodality, novel transport systems, cycling and walking for visitors.**

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**Delivering Efficient Sustainable Tourism with low-carbon transport innovations:**

- **Sustainable Mobility, Accessibility and Responsible Travel**