

CONCEPT PAPER – COS-TOURCOOP-2019-3-01

Resource Nodes for Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration in Tourism: Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism “RN-KECT”



Boosting sustainable tourism development and capacity of tourism SMEs through transnational cooperation and knowledge transfer

SUMMARY: Resource Nodes for Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration – “RN-KECT” proposes to act as gatekeepers to knowledge that can incentivize micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to optimize their sustainability. RN-KECT supports actions that transform project Associates into valuable investment targets, help them create jobs that contribute to local economic development, support them as they engage in new market spaces, capacitate them as suppliers in supply chains through sustainable practices, and align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, among others. RN-KECT provides the means to improve SME competitiveness and sustainability by:

- providing business support to SMEs and start-ups
- hosting a digital knowledge platform to share research, best practice, socio-economic data and market intelligence for relevance and accessibility
- promoting opportunities for mobility and knowledge-seeking visits among partners and their associates
- networking, coaching and mentoring to make sense of insights, innovations, solutions and best practices as well as available resources that help them grow.

RN-KECT promotes the entrepreneurial capacity of our target group - tourism-related public and private bodies, particularly SMEs, to jointly develop innovative solutions to challenges faced in the industry that might prevent their growth and stunt their development toward sustainability. Actions aim to boost capacity of tourism SMEs through transnational cooperation and knowledge transfer and by cooperating with providers of sustainable solutions for training and workshops. The network facilitating these outcomes takes shape through the creation of resource nodes strategically located in areas that are in most need of supporting growth phases and technological change and overcoming obstacles toward gaining market share of an industry whose receipts add up billions of EUR.

By means of open calls, the consortium will select 60 SMEs as project Associates. The pool of candidates will include SMEs, public bodies and/or public-private partnerships in the tourism sector to engage in training and become members of the Community of Practice hosted by the digital knowledge platform. Bringing together consortium core partners with a range of expertise, focus and visions defines RN-KECT as a transnational network to provide business support through workshops and trainings as well as an exchange of knowledge:

- The entrepreneurship education component of the project aims to capacitate SME owners as competent entrepreneurs, public body/public-private partnership personnel as competent intrapreneurs, and project Associates as a whole as extrapreneurs, able to collaborate to transform ideas and opportunities into products and services through EntreComp, the European Commission's framework for entrepreneurship education and training, aimed at enhancing their sustainability.
- The Community of Practice component supports the project's web of knowledge and the axis of communication between partners and among participants. The Community of Practice is a digital knowledge platform hosting a centralized repository of literature and other information aimed at helping its members grow and become sustainable while becoming familiar with the Global Goals – the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Community of Practice reinforces regional cooperation and peer learning in entrepreneurial learning, education and training in a structured manner.

The success of RN-KECT is predicated on the development of Resource Nodes embodied in the working environments of the consortium's ten core partners. This positions our partners as intermediary stakeholders in their own right, consolidating training and access to knowledge in a one-stop, centralized resource center in each of our partner countries that also serve as regional hubs of support for cross-border collaboration.

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