



**MAST**

**Interreg  
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ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM



## The MAST Opportunity!

Over the past year, the MAST project has taken a deep dive into the realities of sustainable tourism across the Mediterranean. Through field consultations, market analysis, and alignment with international standards, we've identified the real barriers facing small and medium-sized accommodations—and the growing demand from travelers for authentic, responsible tourism. This newsletter brings together key insights from the field, emerging trends in the tourism sector, and how MAST is seizing the opportunity to deliver simple, practical, and impactful tools to support sustainability where it matters most.

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MAST PROJECT  
FEBRUARY– JULY 2025**

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### PARTNERS:

**Lead:** University Of Urbino  
Carlo Bo (Italy)

**Project Partners:** Cenfim  
(Spain), 3win Action (Greece),  
University Of Primorska  
(Slovenia), Sarajevo Meeting  
Of Cultures (Bosnia &  
Herzegovina).

**Associated Partners:**  
Regional Agencies, Tourism  
Boards, Business Clusters,  
And Innovation Centres  
Across Participating  
Countries

## What we have achieved

# From Barriers to Benchmarks: What SMEs Need to Meet ISO 21401

## Environmental Sustainability

Barriers: High investment costs, limited technical skills, and complex certification processes.

## Social Sustainability

## Economic Sustainability

SMEs Need: Accessible funding, business planning support, and tools to measure results.

## On financial barriers to sustainability:

## Stakeholder Workshop in Heraklion

3 April 2025



Hosted by the University of Crete, this local engagement event brought together SMEs, authorities, and community actors to explore region-specific sustainability challenges and align them with the MAST Protocol and ISO 21401.

👉 **Read more:** [Local stakeholder engagement on sustainable SMEs accommodation](#)



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# What we have achieved

## Where the Market Is Heading

As the global demand for more ethical, environmentally conscious travel rises, sustainability has shifted from an added value to a competitive necessity in the tourism industry. A key takeaway from MAST's market research is this: **sustainability is now a decisive factor in traveller choice**, and a strategic opportunity for tourism SMEs.

## A Changing Landscape

Travelers are increasingly choosing accommodations that demonstrate energy and water efficiency, waste reduction, and community involvement.

## Barriers Facing SMEs

Despite many existing certification systems (ISO 14001, EU Ecolabel, Green Key, etc.), SMEs continue to struggle due to high costs and complex tools designed for larger enterprises, as well as a lack of user-friendly and tailored platforms.



## On measuring environmental impact:

*“ We would need clear goals ... for example, this year this much food waste and next year this many % less. But we cannot measure that, nor do we have knowledge and people to set proper standards/objectives for us. ”*

## The MAST Opportunity

The research highlights a clear **gap in the market**: the need for **simple, low-cost, ISO 21401-aligned tools** built for SMEs. Tools that not only assess sustainability, but also help **embed it into daily practice**.

MAST is responding to this gap with:

- A **custom-built Sustainability Protocol** tailored to SMEs
- A **Self-Assessment Tool** that is intuitive, scalable, and based on real user needs
- Training modules and workshops to **bridge the knowledge gap**
- A **community of practice** that promotes shared learning and collaboration across borders

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