WILL YOUR CITY BE THE **EUROPEAN GREEN PIONEER OF SMART TOURISM?**

FACTSHEET

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The European Commission is launching a new competition to award the title of **European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2024.** This award aims to recognise smaller destinations that have implemented successful strategies to boost sustainable tourism through green transition practices.

The European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism is the **successor of the European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) competition** which was first introduced by the European Commission in 2007 as an initiative to reward non-traditional, emerging sustainable tourism destinations in Europe. It is the equivalent of the European Capital of Smart Tourism award, for **smaller and sustainable destinations.**

The destination showing the most successful strategies or measures to boost sustainable tourism through green transition practices – and convincing the European Jury with an exciting programme for the year in which they hold the title – will be awarded the title of the **"European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2024".**

> Apply online via the website SmartTourismCapital.eu
> by 5 July 2023 at 17:00 CET.

WHAT IS THIS INITIATIVE ABOUT?

The European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism is an EU initiative, implemented by the European Commission, which will raise the profile of Europe as a tourism destination and will set up a network to share best practices among European destinations.

Sustainable travel has been steering the European tourism policy for the past years, led by increasing demand and expectations by the travellers and the local communities alike. While the COVID-19 pandemic had paralysed travel in the past years, it has been also a unique opportunity to reset, shift the cultural mindset and emerge more resilient.

The tourism sector is EU's third largest socio-economic activity and has a crucial role in contributing to growth, jobs and cohesion. It has an immense potential to grow further by enhancing visitors' experiences, creating new partnerships and cooperation opportunities as well as strengthening sustainability and innovation in Europe's cities and regions.

By awarding exemplary practices of sustainable tourism, the European Union wants to encourage green transition solutions and promote a more sustainable and innovative tourism model.

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WHAT MAKES A CITY A GREEN PIONEER?

A green pioneer city, for the purpose of this contest, is defined as a city which:

- implements green transition solutions to become a sustainable tourism destination
- manages / protects its natural resources fully respecting environment and biodiversity
- uses its territorial, social and human capital for the growth of its tourism sector, the prosperity of the city and better quality life for its inhabitants

WHY SHOULD YOUR CITY APPLY TO BE THE EUROPEAN GREEN PIONEER OF SMART TOURISM?

The title of European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2024 will offer a unique opportunity to get targeted communication and branding support for a year from a group of experts in the field. By means of extensive communication activities, the winner will be put on the sustainable tourism destination map and will gain visibility as a green pioneer of smart tourism in the EU.

In addition to a trophy, the winning city will receive a large tailor-made sculpture that will be placed in the city centre addition to a trophy, the city will receive a large tailor-made sculpture that will be placed in the city centre to mark their commitment to sustainable tourism.

Among other benefits, the city's promotional actions will be enhanced through the development of a short presentation video highlighting its achievements and an exhibition during a major EU tourism event or travel fair.

Being European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2024 will therefore allow the winning city to serve as an inspiration to other tourism destinations across Europe, enhance their city's profile as a quality travel destination, attracting visitors and generating economic growth in a sustainable way.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The competition is open to cities that:

- are located in an EU Member State or a non-EU country participating in the COSME and Single Market programmes[1]
- have a population between 25 000 and 100 000 inhabitants. For smaller countries with total population below 1 million, destinations with more than 5 000 inhabitants can apply

Please refer to the Guide for Applicants for detailed information on the eligibility criteria to be met.

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[1] Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39579; as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf

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HOW WILL THE WINNER BE SELECTED?

A call for applications will be launched in **May 2023**, with the deadline for applications set for July 2023. During a pre-selection phase, all eligible applications will be evaluated against a set of established award criteria by a panel of independent experts. On the basis of their evaluation, the Commission will establish a short-list of maximum 4 cities that will be invited to present their candidature in front of a European Jury who will select the European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2024.

Please refer to the Guide for Applicants for more detailed information on the application requirements and evaluation system.

KEY DATES

Launch of competition: **05 May 2023**

Application deadline: **05 July 2023 by 17:00 CET**

Evaluation period: **July – August 2023**

Announcement of shortlisted finalists: **September 2023**

European Jury meeting and announcement of winner: **November/ December 2023**

MORE INFORMATION:

Please read the **GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS** at **SmartTourismCapital.eu**

Contact us via **info@SmartTourismCapital.eu**

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