

Resilient Ecosystem for Empowering Tourism SMEs - PHOENIX 4.0

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The "Resilient Ecosystem for Empowering Tourism SMEs – PHOENIX 4.0," led by Arctur, has officially launched following its kick-off meeting on December 11–12, 2024, in Nîmes, France. Hosted by Open Tourisme Lab, the event laid a strong foundation for collaboration to strengthen European tourism, ensuring its resilience and future success in a global market.

PHOENIX 4.0 supports tourism SMEs, which make up over 90% of Europe's tourism sector and employ 12.3 million people. Tourism contributes 10% of the EU's GDP and drives economic growth, employment, and social development. SMEs are key to offering unique experiences and boosting regional economies but face challenges like over-tourism, seasonality, workforce shortages, and the need for sustainable, digital, and resilient practices. PHOENIX 4.0 addresses these issues to build a greener, smarter, and more resilient tourism ecosystem.

How Will PHOENIX 4.0 Help?

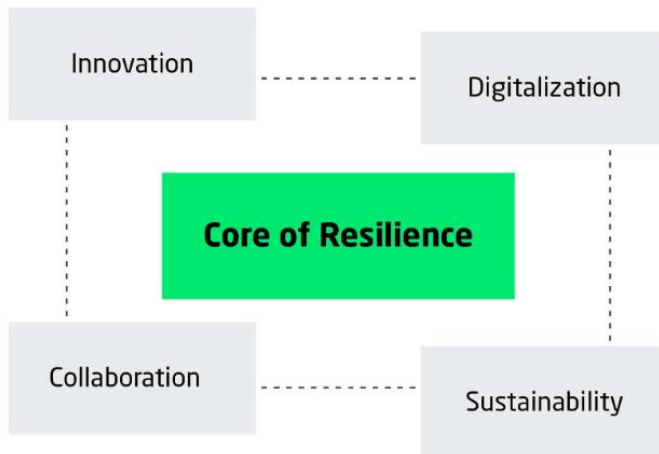
PHOENIX 4.0 will deliver tangible benefits to tourism stakeholders by training and supporting at least **120 SMEs** across Europe, fostering **cross-sector collaboration**, and supporting **45 collaborative projects** addressing challenges like circular tourism services, the green transition, data-driven tourism, digital innovation, and accessibility. It will also create the **Tourism SMEs Resilience Navigator**, which will provide sustainability and resilience indicators to deliver tailored consulting and technical support.

Addressing Key Challenges

PHOENIX 4.0 provides a comprehensive framework to help tourism SMEs tackle key challenges like environmental issues, fast-paced technological changes, and shifting consumer needs. The project focuses on four interconnected building blocks of resilience:

- **Innovation:** Encouraging creative solutions and new business models to address industry challenges.
- **Digitalization:** Equipping SMEs with advanced digital tools and skills to enhance competitiveness.
- **Collaboration:** Facilitating partnerships across sectors to foster knowledge-sharing and co-creation.
- **Sustainability:** Promoting eco-friendly practices and alignment with societal well-being goals.

Figure 1: The building blocks of Resilience



A Strong Consortium Led by Arctur

PHOENIX 4.0 brings together 8 partners from Slovenia, Spain, Iceland, France, Croatia, and Kosovo—bringing expertise from tourism strategy, training, and SME support. Led by **Arctur (SI)**, a recognized leader in tourism innovation and digitalization, this diverse consortium ensures an inclusive approach to empowering tourism SMEs with skills in sustainability, digitalization, and resilience. Key contributors include [Catalan Tourist Board](#) (ES), [The Iceland Tourism Cluster](#) (ICE), [Centre of Business Excellence](#) (SI), [Open Tourisme Lab](#) (FR), [Prishtina REA](#) (RKS), [AnySolution](#) (ES), and [Dubrovnik Development Agency](#) (CRO). With rich experience in EU projects, they work together to empower SMEs with the skills and tools to thrive in a rapidly changing tourism industry.

"At the heart of PHOENIX 4.0 lies a mission to foster collaboration, leverage innovation, and create synergies with key EU strategic projects," said Katarina Ceglar, Project Lead from ARCTUR, during the kick-off meeting in Nîmes, France.

Driving Collaboration for Long-Term Impact

Building on the successes of previous COSME/SMP initiatives, PHOENIX 4.0 is supported by 77 European stakeholders, including ministries, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), and other key organizations. This broad collaboration ensures a long-term impact and alignment with the [Transition Pathway for Tourism](#) goals to foster a sustainable, resilient, and competitive tourism sector. The project is proudly funded by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency ([EISMEA](#)) under the SMP-COSME programme.

What's Next for PHOENIX 4.0?

In the coming months, PHOENIX 4.0 will map trainers and launch the **PHOENIX 4.0 Academy** and **PHOENIX 4.0 Lab**. The Academy will provide SMEs with online courses on sustainability, digitalization, and innovation, while the Lab will offer consulting, technical support, and tailored resources to help SMEs scale and improve their environmental performance. Both initiatives will leverage the Tourism SMEs Resilience Navigator to provide customized guidance and impactful outcomes.

Stay tuned for updates and follow PHOENIX 4.0 as we shape a sustainable, resilient, and thriving future for Europe's tourism sector!

Links:

- [Phoenix 4.0 LinkedIn Page](#)

Acknowledgment

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