

# Project Concept Proposal

## **GASTROTOUR: Sustainable Gastronomy Tourism Routes**

**Call:** SMP-COSME-2026-TOURSME-01

**Programme:** Single Market Programme (SMP COSME) - Sustainable Competitiveness in Tourism

**Submission deadline:** 20 May 2026

### **1. Project Vision**

The **GASTROTOUR** aims to establish a **European Sustainable Gastronomy Tourism Route** that connects destinations, local gastronomy, tourism SMEs, producers, and sustainable mobility initiatives across Europe.

The project will develop a **transnational thematic tourism route focused on sustainable gastronomy and cycling tourism**, linking multiple European regions through a shared narrative of local food culture, heritage, and sustainable travel.

A key element of the project is the **WOGI EuroTaste Ride**, an 18,000 km cycling journey across Europe showcasing local gastronomy and sustainable food traditions. During the journey, gastronomy roadshows and community events will be organised in multiple European cities to engage tourism stakeholders and local communities.

Through these activities, the project will support the development of **local tourism ecosystems**, strengthen cooperation among stakeholders, and promote sustainable and innovative tourism experiences across Europe.

### **2. Alignment with the EU Call**

The project directly addresses the objectives of the **SMP-COSME-2026-TOURSME-01 call**, which aims to strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience of tourism SMEs by supporting the development of **sustainable tourism routes and associated ecosystems**.

The project contributes to the call priorities by:

- Creating a **transnational thematic tourism route**
- Strengthening **tourism ecosystems composed primarily of SMEs**
- Promoting **sustainable tourism and circular local economies**
- Supporting the **green and digital transition of tourism SMEs**
- Encouraging **cross-border cooperation and knowledge sharing**
- Diversifying tourism offers and promoting **slow tourism experiences**

The proposed route will integrate gastronomy, culture, local production, and sustainable mobility, contributing to the development of **innovative tourism products and experiences**.

### 3. Concept of the European Gastronomy Tourism Route

The project will establish the **European Sustainable Gastronomy Route**, a thematic tourism route connecting European destinations through local gastronomy and sustainable tourism experiences.

The route will combine:

- gastronomy tourism
- cycling tourism and sustainable mobility
- cultural heritage experiences
- local agricultural production
- community-based tourism

The route will operate as a **network of interconnected destinations**, each represented by a local ecosystem of stakeholders collaborating to deliver authentic tourism experiences.

The route will promote **slow tourism approaches**, encouraging visitors to explore destinations through cycling routes, regional food traditions, and immersive cultural experiences.

### 4. Local Tourism Ecosystem Model

A core innovation of the project is the creation of **Local Gastronomy Tourism Ecosystems** along the route.

Each participating destination will build a collaborative ecosystem composed of:

#### 1. Destination Management Organisations (DMOs / TDM)

DMOs will coordinate tourism development activities, facilitate collaboration between stakeholders, and contribute to the promotion and management of the tourism route.

Responsibilities include:

- tourism strategy alignment
- stakeholder coordination
- destination marketing
- visitor experience development

## 2. Tourism SMEs

Tourism SMEs represent the backbone of the ecosystem and may include:

- restaurants and gastronomy businesses
- accommodation providers
- tour operators and guides
- experiential tourism providers
- cultural and creative businesses

These SMEs will develop and implement innovative tourism services connected to the gastronomy route.

## 3. Municipalities and Local Authorities

Local authorities will support the development of tourism infrastructure and facilitate collaboration between tourism stakeholders and communities.

Their role includes:

- supporting tourism development strategies
- facilitating stakeholder participation
- enabling infrastructure improvements
- promoting sustainable destination management

## 4. Local Producers and Farmers

Local agricultural producers play a central role in developing **farm-to-table tourism experiences**.

Participants may include:

- farms
- wineries and breweries
- artisan food producers
- regional food cooperatives

These actors contribute to strengthening **short food supply chains** and authentic gastronomy tourism experiences.

## 5. Cycling and Outdoor Organisations

Cycling organisations and outdoor associations will support the development of sustainable tourism mobility.

They may include:

- cycling clubs and federations
- outdoor tourism organisations
- sustainable mobility initiatives

These partners help promote cycling tourism, sustainable transport, and healthy tourism experiences.

## **5. Project Objectives**

The project aims to achieve the following objectives:

### **1. Establish a European Sustainable Gastronomy Tourism Route**

Create a transnational tourism route linking European destinations through gastronomy, culture, and sustainable mobility.

### **2. Strengthen Local Tourism Ecosystems**

Build collaborative networks of tourism stakeholders that jointly develop tourism products and services.

### **3. Support Tourism SMEs**

Provide direct financial support and capacity-building programmes for tourism SMEs participating in the route ecosystem.

The project will support **15–30 tourism SMEs**, enabling them to develop innovative tourism solutions.

### **4. Promote Sustainable Tourism**

Encourage tourism models based on:

- local food systems
- short supply chains
- cycling tourism
- slow tourism experiences

### **5. Develop Digital Tourism Tools**

Create digital solutions to support tourism route management, visitor engagement, and destination promotion.

This will include an **AI-supported tourism platform** offering route mapping, personalised recommendations, and digital storytelling.

## 6. Demonstration Initiative

### WOGI EuroTaste Ride

The **WOGI EuroTaste Ride** will serve as a flagship initiative demonstrating the potential of the gastronomy tourism route.

The ride will:

- cover approximately **18,000 km across Europe**
- visit **multiple European destinations**
- organise gastronomy events and roadshows
- promote local food culture and tourism services

The events will bring together tourism stakeholders, local producers, and communities, helping to strengthen the tourism ecosystem in participating regions.

## 7. Consortium Structure

The project will be implemented by a **transnational consortium** composed of tourism organisations, research institutions, technology partners, and ecosystem facilitators.

### Proposed partners

#### Coordinator

Better Us Association – Slovakia

Alternative option:

World Gastronomy Network Ltd. – Hungary

European Gastronomic Innovation Nonprofit Ltd. – Hungary

#### Academic partner

University St. Kliment Ohridski

Bitola - North Macedonia

Role:

- research and impact analysis
- training programmes
- development of best practices

## **Technology partner**

Innowise Sp. z.o.o (Innowise Group) – Poland

Role:

- development of AI tourism tools
- digital route mapping
- visitor engagement technologies

## **Tourism ecosystem partners**

At least two additional organisations such as:

- Destination Management Organisations
- Tourism clusters
- Regional tourism boards

Their role will be to:

- mobilise tourism stakeholders
- engage SMEs
- support route development

## **8. Work Packages**

The project will be organised into four core work packages.

### **WP1 – Route Development and Ecosystem Mapping**

Activities include:

- defining the route concept and narrative
- mapping tourism assets and stakeholders
- establishing governance structures
- developing a route strategy and business plan

### **WP2 – Ecosystem Development and SME Support**

Activities include:

- stakeholder engagement workshops
- training programmes for tourism SMEs
- ecosystem networking activities

A **Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) scheme** will provide direct funding to tourism SMEs.

### **WP3 – Communication, Branding and Promotion**

Activities include:

- development of the route brand identity
- marketing campaigns and social media engagement
- organisation of gastronomy events and festivals
- digital promotion tools

### **WP4 – Knowledge Transfer and Best Practices**

Activities include:

- documentation of project results
- development of training materials
- preparation of case studies and policy recommendations
- dissemination through European tourism networks

## **9. Expected Impact**

The project will generate multiple impacts.

### **Tourism impact**

- creation of a new European gastronomy tourism route
- diversification of tourism experiences

### **Economic impact**

- strengthening of tourism SMEs
- increased cooperation within local tourism ecosystems

### **Environmental impact**

- promotion of sustainable mobility
- support for short food supply chains

### **Digital impact**

- development of innovative digital tourism tools

## **10. Project Duration**

Estimated project duration:

**24–36 months**

## **11. Estimated Budget**

Indicative project budget:

**EUR 1 – 1.5 million**

## **12. Next Steps**

1. Finalise consortium partners
2. Define pilot destinations and route segments
3. Develop a detailed work plan
4. Prepare budget and proposal documentation
5. Submit the project proposal by **20 May 2026**