

Information Letter for open call to SMEs to participate in Circular Economy for Regenerative Tourism (CE4RT) Project

Information Letter

Dear _____,

Thank you for considering participation in this research. My name is Dr Sophie Price, lecturer at Munster Technological University and lead researcher on the Circular Economy for Regenerative Tourism (CE4RT) project. The CE4RT project is an EU funded trans-national collaborative project supporting a network of tourism SMEs across five partner European hubs in the areas of Sustainable Practice, the Circular Economy and Regenerative Tourism. This letter aims to inform you about this research, what it entails and how the resulting data will be used.

What is this research about?

The focus of the CE4RT project is to provide tourism SMEs with the tools to implement regenerative practices as a long-term strategy within their region and to contribute to the continued resilience, viability and competitiveness of the industry. 80 SMEs from across the network will be chosen to participate in this project and will be provided with a suite of knowledge and training based on the specific needs and the readiness stage in the sustainable journey. This will be achieved through a range of activities such as training seminars, mentoring, coaching, community events and familiarisation trips (for selected SMEs). A repository of knowledge will be created and disseminated on various platforms, not just to the participating tourism SMEs, but will be made available for all tourism practitioners throughout Europe as well as higher educational institutions. An innovative methodology will be employed involving the concept of 'Leaders and Learners' with 2 SME participants chosen from each participating jurisdiction to act as leaders within the community for the facilitation and implementation of regenerative tourism practice. Tourism stakeholders from across Europe will be invited to attend a virtual conference from which the outputs of this project can be shared.

Your Involvement

As a participating SME, you will be required to conduct a Self-Assessment Audit using provided resources at the start of the process. Based on this audit, you will be directed towards training modules that will empower your SME to communicate your tourism offering while also maintaining the ethos, culture and heritage of your destination. Access to training, workshops, mentoring, coaching, certification etc will be included as part of the project. Guided by your local project partner, a starting point, milestones and goals will be decided. Constant self-administered monitoring via an online platform will be required.

How will the data gathered be used?

As a requirement of the funding organisation, the names of participating SMEs will be published on the project website. Information/data will also be shared with the grant awarding body (European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency - *EISMEA*) who may also publish general information accordingly.

The compendium of knowledge generated in CE4RT will be made available to a wider network of tourism SMEs; National Tourism Organisations; Certification training organisations; Further education institutions in the partner countries but also throughout the wider European network.

Results of this research will be disseminated via academic publications, conferences and workshops. In these publications, participants will be identified according to their business type and location (e.g. tour guide, Ireland). Data management procedures within this project will be in line with GDPR principles. All data generated as part of this project will be collected and stored appropriately.

This study has received research ethical approval from the MTU Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval No: **MTU-HREC-FER-22-014-A**, 20th March 2023).

What next?

Please read section 7 of the SME Call document (https://ce4rt.euproject.site/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Obligations_CE4RT_participants.pdf).

Please let me know by return email if you wish to take part in this research. If this is the case you are required to sign the statements at the end of this letter. You will be contacted over the next few weeks to arrange a suitable time to progress. If you require any further information or have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact me by email Sophie.price@mtu.ie

Dr Sophie Price.

Please tick the relevant box, sign below and return (this may be done using a digital signature, a scan of the signed form or returning by post).

	Yes	No
I agree to participate in this research and agree to the terms of section 7 of the Call document as detailed above.		

Signature: _____ Date: _____