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NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2026

RECIRCLE MED
Supporting the implementation of blue and circular tourism in the Mediterranean

Project Duration: 27 Months (01/04/2025-30/06/2027)
Total Budget: € 1,484,490
EU Interreg Funding: € 1,187,592
8 Project Partners
13 Associate Organizations
4 Receiving Destinations (Pilot Areas)

Our Mission

RECIRCLE MED **empowers Mediterranean coastal tourism destinations to lead the transition towards a blue and circular tourism model**, using **practical tools** and fostering **collaborative action.**

The **innovation** of the project lies in the integration of available tools from past successful projects – **INCIRCLE project (Interreg MED 14/20)** and **REBOOT MED (EMFAF)** – into **action plans** which will include solutions towards a blue and circular tourism model related, among others, to waste and water management issues, and **will be adapted to the receiving destinations participating in the project**.

Our Approach

RECIRCLE MED provides a structured, **step-by-step transfer process** to assist coastal destinations in **developing and implementing tailored local action plans.**

The project **activities** are grouped into **3 main phases:**
1. **DESIGN:** Integration of tools - development of the RECIRCLE MED Blueprint - design of the transfer methodology - identification and mobilization of stakeholders.
2. **TRANSFER:** Adaptation and implementation of the Blueprint at the receiving destinations - creation of Blue Action Plans for Circular Tourism - awareness raising and training.
3. **OFFSET:** Enhancement of the transfer outcomes visibility - promotion of their incorporation across different levels - facilitation of long-term sustainability and replicability.

RECIRCLE MED Receiving Destinations


Cefalù, Italy


Ohrid, North Macedonia


Pomorie, Bulgaria


Bar, Montenegro

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Partners' Meetings

Meet our 3rd Semester's Activities & Achievements







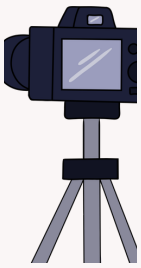
3rd Steering Committee Meeting
Romorie, Bulgaria

Project Partners held their third meeting in person, in September 2026, in Pomorie, Bulgaria. Hosted by the National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB), the partnership reviewed project progress and achievements to date, and prepared the next steps for implementation.









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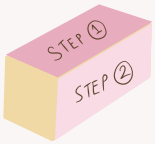
The Transfer Guide

For the transition from Blueprint design and implementation to action planning, territorial analysis and Capacity Building Workshops (CBWs) are suggested by the **Transer Guide,** aiming to bring together local stakeholders to better understand the results, share experiences and work collaboratively on shaping the next steps. In this way, local communities and stakeholders are being actively involved in the learning, dialogue and practical decision-making.



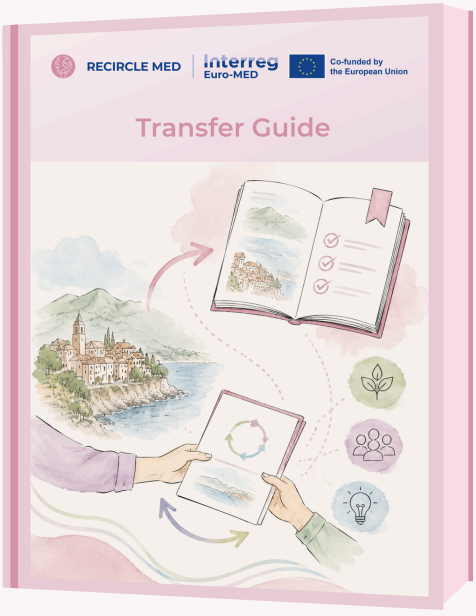
But...what is the RECIRCLE MED Tranfer Guide

The **Transfer Guide** aims to support public authorities and key stakeholders in applying the RECIRCLE MED approach within their own territories. The Guide presents a structured but flexible framework, enabling each destination to adapt the approach to its specific context, governance system and priorities. Its approach is based on **stakeholder engagement** (from planning to implementation) and **evaluation**, ensuring **ownership and long-term impact**.



Three steps of the Transfer Guide





RECIRCLE MED TRANSFER GUIDE

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Territorial Analysis & Local Capacity Building Workshops

RECIRCLE MED Territorial Analysis

The **Territorial Analysis** following the results of the Blueprint aimed to provide a clear picture of the destinations' current situation (e.g. tourism characteristic analysis, resources use review and key challenges and opportunities identification).

A **SWOT Analysis** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) was produced with the main elements of each destination.

A **Territorial Analysis Report** was finalised following the instructions conducting the necessary analysis for each destination. Furthermore it determined the necessary measures to be undertaken in each destination along with specific place-based recommendations.

Main Objectives of the Territorial Analysis

- To review and analyse data collected from the receiving territories and standardize them.
- To assess measures across seven thematic pillars.
- To analyse the consistency of existing local and regional tourism policies.
- To consider EU policy frameworks, ensuring coherence across governance levels.
- To provide clear, actionable, and territory-specific recommendations to guide each receiving territory.



RECIRCLE MED Local Capacity Building Workshops

The Mobilisation, Capacity Building and the Transferring Workshops are fundamental parts of the Project Activities to facilitate the transferring of the RECIRCLE MED Developments.

Following the Mobilisation Workshops during the first year of the Project, the **Local Capacity Building Workshops** took place from **May 2026** to **September 2026.**

Local Capacity Building Workshops took place at each receiving destination: Ohrid, Bar, Pomorie and Cefalù, to bring together local stakeholders and representatives aiming to strenghthen capacities for the implementation of blue and circular tourism, the adaptation of the Blueprint to the local needs and the implementation of the Local Action Plans.

The CBW were built on the RECIRCLE MED Blueprint methodology.

Purpose and Main Objectives of the Capacity Building Workshops

- Address local capacity gaps identified during the needs assessment.
- Provide targeted training on blue and circular tourism concepts and practices.
- Support the operationalisation of the Action Plan.
- Facilitate collaboration and feedback among local actors.
- Showcase practical tools and locally relevant applications.

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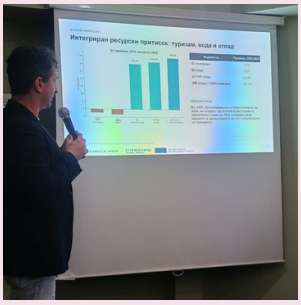
Local Capacity Building Workshops

Local Capacity Building Workshop held in Ohrid, North Macedonia

On 22 May 2026, the first Local CBW was organised in Ohrid. Following the participatory process participants identified several key areas requiring further support, including stronger destination-level coordination, clearer eco-certification and quality labelling mechanisms, enhanced support for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, and practical auditing systems. They also identified priority areas for the implementation of measures, including mobility, water, waste, energy, and technical support for the tourism sector to reduce energy consumption. The participants suggested that the Local Action Plan should focus on a limited number of realistic and noticable measures for achieving blue and circular tourism in the future.







Participation

- Public administration,
- Tourism enterprises & SMEs,
- Accommodation & hospitality-related businesses,
- Public utility companies,
- Higher education & research institutions,
- Civil society organisations,
- Business support actors

Local Capacity Building Workshop held in Bar, Montenegro

On 7 July 2026, the second Local CBW was organised in Bar. The main barriers on achieving blue and circular tourism identified by the participants were weak biodiversity protection & insufficient reduction of negative impacts, high volumes of inorganic waste, limited education and institutional capacity to apply circular economy principles in tourism. As part of the CBW, a list of proposed measures, organised by thematic pillar, was presented to support the preparation of the Local Action Plan that were primarily focused on water, energy and waste management, while also included mobility, circular resource management, governance, ecosystem restoration and cultural tourism innovation.







Participation

- Public administration,
- Environmental Institutions
- Local public utility companies
- Educational institutions
- Hotel sector representatives

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Meet our 3rd Semester's Activities & Achievements

Local Capacity Building Workshops

Local Capacity Building Workshop held in Pomorie, Bulgaria

On 3 September 2026, the third Local CBW was organised in Pomorie. Participants identified resistance to change, limited participation and engagement as key barriers. To address these challenges as well as inefficiencies at the touristic model nowadays, they proposed improving transport connections, strengthening institutional coordination and promoting tourism activities that build on Pomorie's natural assets. These actions would contribute to their vision of a cleaner coastline, more green spaces, greater environmental awareness and a more actively engaged tourism sector. Participants also proposed specific measures focusing on water efficiency, sustainable mobility, energy efficiency and nature-based tourism.





Participation

- Public administration,
- Elected representatives
- Community Cultural Centers
- Cultural institutions
- Educational institutions

Local Capacity Building Workshop held in Cefalù, Italy

On 18 September 2026, the fourth Local CBW was organised in Cefalù. Throughout the workshop, participants identified the lack of economic resources, the limited participation of stakeholders and the lack of data and monitoring as key barriers. The participants envision Cefalù as a destination that better respects its local community and natural environment, with institutions placing greater emphasis on environmental protection and territorial needs. To achieve this vision, they proposed measures across all pillars of the Blueprint, prioritising improvements in mobility, waste management and water management.





Participation

- Public administration
- Technical representatives
- Elected representatives
- Local Associations
- Educational institutions

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Participation in other Events

Meet our 3rd Semester's Activities & Achievements

1 RECIRCLE MED in the MED Sustainable Tourism Convention 2026 in Barcelona

RECIRCLE MED actively participated in the MED Sustainable Tourism Convention 2026, held in Barcelona on 18–19 June, bringing together participants working towards more sustainable tourism models across the Mediterranean. The project was presented during the panel on the transition towards a circular economy, while a representative of the UTH, Lead Partner of RECIRCLE MED, took part in an interview highlighting the project's objectives and contribution. The Convention also offered valuable opportunities to connect with other Interreg Euro-MED projects and Community4Tourism stakeholders, strengthening synergies.



2 RECIRCLE MED participated at Meditour 2026 in Agadir, Morocco

RECIRCLE MED participated in the Meditour Agadir 2026 Forum, held in Agadir, Morocco, from 18 to 20 June 2026, under the theme "Sustainable and Innovative Mediterranean Destinations". During the event, ASCAME presented RECIRCLE MED as an example of a project supporting the transition towards more resilient and sustainable tourism models. The project was highlighted for its contribution to integrating blue and circular economy principles into coastal tourism development, while promoting local engagement, innovation and cross-border cooperation across the Mediterranean.



3 RECIRCLE MED Presented at the 6th World Planning Schools Congress 2026

RECIRCLE MED was presented at the 6th World Planning Schools Congress (WPSC 2026), held in Finland from 29 June to 3 July 2026 under the theme "*Peripheral Visions – Rethinking Planning*". The presentation highlighted how the integration of circular and blue economy approaches can support the development of regenerative tourism models in Mediterranean coastal destinations, contributing to more sustainable and resilient territorial development.



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Other Initiatives

Podcast



Second episode of the RECIRCLE MED podcast series launched, **RECIRCLE MED Talks.**

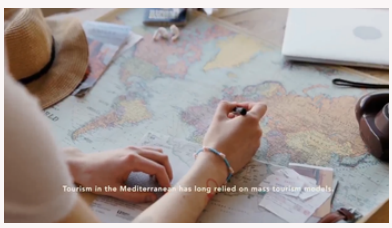
- **Georgi Petkov** (Pomorie's Fisheries Local Action Group)
- **Sofia Todorova** (Munincipality of Pomorie)
- **Nikoleta Papanastasouli** (Living Prospects)

The second episode of RECIRCLE MED Talks opens the conversation on experiences from Bulgaria regarding building Blue and Circular Tourism.

Project Video

The official video of the RECIRCLE MED project was prepared.

The video presents the project's shared vision and collaborative efforts toward advancing circular and blue economy solutions in the Mediterranean region, promoting sustainability, innovation, and cooperation across borders.









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What's next?



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RECIRCLE MED:
Where blue meets green.
Join the tourism circle!



Project Partners:

- University of Thessaly (Lead Partner, Greece)
- Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Spain)
- Energy and Water Agency (Malta)
- Municipality of Cefalù (Italy)
- National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (Bulgaria)
- Municipality of Ohrid (North Macedonia)
- Municipality of Bar (Montenegro)
- Living Prospects Development & Environmental Services Ltd (Greece)

Associate Organizations:

- Pomorie Municipality (Bulgaria)
- Municipality of Zakynthos (Greece)
- Association of Sicilian Municipalities – ANCI Sicilia (Italy)
- Tourism organisation of Municipality of Bar (Montenegro)
- Hydrobiological Institute (North Macedonia)
- Regional Association of Italian Towns in Lazio – ANCI Lazio (Italy)
- Municipality of Central Corfu and Diapontian Islands (Greece)
- Lebanese Center for Energy Conservation (Lebanon)
- Mediterranean Renewable Energy Centre (Tunisia)
- The University of Jordan (Jordan)
- Regional Fund for Science and Technology (Portugal)
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia (Serbia)
- Chamber of Commerce Industry and Services of Region Tanger Tetuan Al Hoceima (Morocco)



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The project is co-funded by the European Union in the framework of the Interreg Euro-MED Programme