

Terms of Reference

for procurement of consultancy services within the Project
“Sustainable Destinations Black Sea Network SUSDEST-NET”

1. PROJECT CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT “Sustainable Destinations Black Sea Network SUSDEST-NET”

Within the SUSDEST-NET Project, implemented through the Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin Programme, the Chisinau Municipality City Hall (CMC), as Project Partner No. 4, contributes to addressing common challenges in the region, such as excessive dependence on tourism, environmental degradation, insufficient infrastructure and the lack of coordinated governance structures, by promoting the adoption of ESG principles (Environmental, Social and Governance) at the level of tourist destinations.

The general objective of the project is the transformation of tourist destinations into sustainable, attractive and economically viable areas, at the same time strengthening regional cooperation and knowledge exchange.

CMC is responsible for the implementation of key activities at the level of the Chisinau Tourist Destination (CTD), which include stakeholder engagement and public information actions, baseline sustainability assessment and needs analysis, as well as the development of a Sustainable Tourism Destination Strategy and Plan specific to Chisinau Municipality.

These activities are designed to:

1. ensure the active participation of local stakeholders in the process of developing sustainable tourism strategies;
2. create a solid base of data and evidence regarding the current level of performance of the destination from the sustainability perspective;
3. define clear strategic directions of development;
4. establish priority actions adapted to the specific characteristics and needs of Chisinau Municipality.

CMC expects that partners, consultants or organizations supporting the implementation of these activities demonstrate relevant experience in the field of sustainable tourism, destination management, strategic planning and stakeholder engagement.

The budget allocated to CMC activities within the SUSDEST-NET project is EUR 223,245.22 and covers the implementation of stakeholder engagement and public information actions, the carrying out of baseline assessments, the development of sustainability plans, as well as the provision of tools, training programs and resources necessary for the efficient implementation of these activities. All expenditures are managed transparently and are aligned with the planned results and deliverables of the project.

The participation of the Chisinau Municipality City Hall within the SUSDEST-NET project allows the municipality to actively contribute to the achievement of regional sustainability objectives, capitalizing on transnational cooperation for the exchange of best practices, the adoption of innovative approaches and the demonstration of concrete examples of sustainable tourism management. The integrated approach of the project ensures that Chisinau Municipality not only strengthens its local tourism governance, but also benefits from the expertise and experience of other tourist destinations in the Black Sea Basin, generating a lasting impact on the local community in particular and on the region as a whole.

In this context, for the implementation in 2026 of the Project activities, the Chisinau Municipality City Hall is looking for a Partner who must be capable of carrying out data- and evidence-based assessments, contributing to the sustainability planning processes of the Chisinau

Tourist Destination and actively participating in cooperation initiatives at the level of the Black Sea Basin Region. Also, the Partner must have legal status, organizational capacity and previous experience in similar projects, in order to ensure efficient implementation and compliance with ESG principles.

2. BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PARTNER ORGANIZATION

The partner organization must demonstrate a solid combination of operational experience, strategic capacity and consolidated institutional frameworks.

First of all, institutional stability is required, which ensures the continuity of activities and the ability to collaborate efficiently with both public and private sector partners.

Another essential criterion is affiliation with relevant international organizations in the field of tourism, which guarantees the compliance of the initiatives with European and international standards and best practices. Experience in integrating principles of quality, sustainability and competitiveness into local projects represents a significant advantage, ensuring the relevance and impact of the implemented initiatives.

Also, the organization must demonstrate experience in strategic planning and public policy development in the field of tourism, including the development of tourism development strategies, marketing documents and promotion plans of tourist destinations, aligned with national and European objectives, as well as the capacity to translate strategic objectives into concrete actions.

Active participation in public–private dialogue and in the process of sectoral policy development represents another key requirement, including involvement in institutionalized platforms, as well as the provision of analyses and proposals aimed at improving the regulatory framework and stimulating investments in the tourism sector.

Practical experience in managing similar projects represents an essential criterion. The organization must have successfully implemented initiatives financed at national and international level, including the establishment of tourist information centers, the development and launch of national and regional tourist routes, destination promotion projects and professional training programs. This experience ensures the capacity to coordinate complex activities, manage multiple resources and generate measurable and sustainable community impact.

A transversal element of critical importance is the development of capacities of actors in tourism, through training programs dedicated to entrepreneurs, managers and young professionals, which promote innovation, market adaptation and strengthening of professional skills.

Finally, a firm commitment to sustainability is essential. The organization must integrate ESG principles into its projects, demonstrate experience in sustainability assessment and develop sustainable tourism development plans, with replicable results and long-term impact, thus contributing to the implementation of common strategies for sustainable tourism development at local and transnational level.

By fulfilling these criteria, the organization positions itself as a reliable and competent partner, capable of implementing complex projects with European added value and generating concrete and measurable results for local communities and for the tourism sector as a whole.

The assignment will be carried out by a legal entity (company, association or foundation) which has proven institutional, technical and professional capacity for the implementation of complex activities in the fields of sustainable tourism, destination management and strategic planning, within projects financed from public funds and European Union funds.

3. EXPECTED RESULTS

The general objective of this assignment is to support the Chisinau Municipality City Hall (CMC) in the efficient implementation during 2026–2027 of activities A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4, A1.5 and A.11 (the description of the SUSDEST-NET project is in the annex).

As a result of the implementation of this assignment, the following results are expected at the level of the Chisinau Tourist Destination (hereinafter – CTD) and the Project:

A.1.1 – Development of the Common Sustainable Tourism Policy:

- a. the creation of a Destination Management Committee (DMC) for Chisinau Municipality, formally established and functional, composed of 9–11 representatives of public authorities, tourism operators, environmental experts, civil society and the local community;
- b. the development of clear coordination mechanisms for the development of sustainable tourism at CTD level, aligned with regional, national and transnational objectives;
- c. a consolidated analysis of existing policies, strategies and regulatory framework in the field of tourism and sustainability relevant to Chisinau Municipality;
- d. policy recommendations and analytical contributions based on data and evidence, which support the integration of sustainability principles into tourism governance;
- e. improved alignment of local tourism policies with European and international standards on sustainable tourism;

A.1.2 – Organization of an online training session on the subject of sustainability

On this subject, Democritus University of Thrace (Partner No. 3) will develop and organize a synchronous online training course of 40 hours.

This course will cover the theoretical and practical aspects of sustainable tourism management and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which will be developed within the project.

The course will include online sessions with a group of expert trainers (8 in number), interactive workshops and group discussions.

A.1.3 – Identification, mapping and engagement of stakeholders:

- a. a comprehensive stakeholder mapping and an associated database, including public authorities, private sector, civil society, local communities and media representatives;
- b. a clear classification of stakeholders according to roles, interests, level of influence and degree of involvement;
- c. a transparent and inclusive stakeholder selection process, carried out through the launch of an open call and the functioning of an evaluation committee;
- d. increasing the level of stakeholder engagement through the organization of 4 workshops, individual consultations (one-to-one) and regional dissemination events;
- e. integration of consolidated stakeholder feedback into planning and implementation processes at destination level;
- f. strengthening public–private cooperation and co-creation processes in the development of sustainable tourism;

A.1.4 – Baseline assessment of the destination and needs analysis:

- a. a detailed assessment of the baseline level of sustainability of the destination Chisinau Municipality, carried out based on sustainable tourism indicators;
- b. identification of the main environmental, social, economic and governance gaps affecting tourism development;
- c. a structured needs analysis highlighting development priorities, risks and existing opportunities;
- d. improved institutional capacity to understand the current performance of the destination from the sustainability perspective and its development potential;

A.1.5 – Development of the Sustainable Tourism Destination Strategy and Plan

- a. development of a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy and Plan of the destination for Chisinau Municipality, aligned with the SUSDEST-NET Common Sustainable Tourism Destination Strategy;
- b. the Strategy and Plan must include clearly defined strategic objectives, priority actions, concrete measures and the budget required for implementation;
- c. identification of the roles and contributions of the involved partners, in order to ensure coordinated and efficient implementation;

- d. identification of a set of key performance indicators (KPI) and monitoring indicators, which allow tracking progress and evaluating impact;
- e. use of practical planning tools and datasets usable by both public sector and private sector actors;
- f. development of a coherent, realistic and operational framework, which will guide the development of sustainable tourism in the medium and long term;

A.1.11. Knowledge sharing and networking. Sustainable Destination Education and Collaboration (SDEC) platform (OER + Living Lab) and best practice repository. SUSDEST-NET.

- a) SDEC - Joint Requirement Analysis (the task involves conducting a joint requirement analysis to identify the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, ensuring ensure the SDEC platform addresses the diverse needs of the tourism sector – Partner no. 4 contribution);
- b) SDEC - Platform Design (OER Curation and Living Lab Framework Development) - Partner no. 4 contribution;
- c) participation in the SDEC Platform Development;
- d) participation in SDEC Testing;
- e) Creation of the Network – Memorandum of Understanding MOU - Partner no. 4 contribution;
- f) participation on creation and developing of the SUSDEST-NET Network – Strategy and Action Plan (a comprehensive strategy and 3-year action plan to guide the activities of the SUSDESTNET network.

In the end, these activities aim at strengthening the coherence, transferability and long-term impact of the SUSDEST-NET project results, both at local and transnational level.

4. DURATION AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES:

The duration of the mission will be correlated with the implementation calendar of the activities within the SUSDEST-NET project and will not exceed the total duration of the project.

The exact implementation calendar, the intermediate stages (milestones) and the deadlines for deliverables will be established through the contract and agreed by mutual consent with the Chisinau Municipality City Hall (CMC) as follows:

Activity and Type of Service	Technical Parameters	Expected Deliverables	Terms
A.1.1., including: 1) Development of the Common Sustainable Tourism Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of the Destination Management Committee of Chisinau (DMC), formed of 9–11 members, which will represent the project partners, local authorities, tour operators, experts in the field of environment, representatives of the community and decision-makers. The DMC will have the responsibility to supervise the implementation of sustainable tourism practices at the level of the destination and to ensure their alignment with regional, national and transnational objectives in the field of sustainable tourism. The DMC will function in accordance with the operational manual of the Destination Management Committees; - Analysis of the policies, strategies and the regulatory framework existing at national and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A detailed report which will synthesize the current framework of policies, strategies and regulations in the field of tourism and sustainability, at national and local level (including also translation into English language); - Analytical and technical notes which will offer policy 	May 2026

	<p>regional level in the field of tourism and sustainability;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in coordination meetings, working groups and consultation sessions with the project partners and with the stakeholders; - Elaboration of written analytical contributions, public policy recommendations and technical notes. 	<p>recommendations based on evidence and data (including also translation into English language);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft proposals for improvement of public policies, aligned with the objectives of development of sustainable tourism (including also translation into English language); - Consolidated recommendations for the adoption and implementation of sustainable tourism practices at intersectoral level (in English language). 	
<p>A.1.2 Organization and participation in an online training session on the subject of sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of the trainers from the Chisinau Tourist Destination for participation in online courses, developed by Democritus University of Thrace (Partner No. 3); - Ensuring the participation in the online, synchronous training course of 40 hours. This course will cover the theoretical and practical aspects of sustainable tourism management and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which will be developed within the project. The course will include online sessions with a group of expert trainers (8 in number), interactive workshops and group discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring the collaboration with the representatives of Democritus University of Thrace (Partner No. 3) in organizing the participation of the representatives of the Chisinau Tourist Destination in the online courses; - The list of the persons participating in the online, synchronous training course of 40 hours. 	<p>May 2026</p>
<p>A.1.3., including: 1) Identification and mapping of stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of the main interested actors from the public sector, private sector, civil society, local communities and mass-media; - Analysis of the roles, interests and level of influence of the stakeholders; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Database of stakeholders and main actors; - Stakeholder mapping matrix; - Stakeholder and main actors 	<p>May 2026</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of a structured map of stakeholders; - Launch and dissemination of an open call for the registration of stakeholders; - Establishment and functioning of an evaluation and selection commission of stakeholders; - Evaluation, selection and classification of the registered stakeholders; - Development of a comprehensive mapping of stakeholders and of an associated digital database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mapping report (including also translation into English language); - Digital map “Tourist Destination of Chisinau Municipality” – developed. 	
2) Stakeholder engagement activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization and facilitation of four participatory workshops; - Conducting individual consultations with stakeholders; - Collection, documentation and analysis of feedback and recommendations; - Integration of relevant contributions into the project implementation process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization and facilitation of 4 workshops with stakeholders and key actors, aimed at supporting consultation, co-creation and validation processes (at least 20 participants); - Video and photo recording, online streaming of the 4 workshops (YouTube); - Activity report, attendance lists and summaries of consultations (including translation into English); - Consolidated report on stakeholder engagement (including translation into English); - Development of proposals (PP4 contribution) to be included in the Common Sustainable Tourism Policy of the Black Sea Basin (including translation into 	May 2026

		English); - Development of proposals (PP4 contribution) to be included in the “Policy Recommendation Paper” (including translation into English).	
3) Public information event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of the concept and agenda of the event; - Organization of logistics, materials and communication activities; - Promotion of the event through communication channels relevant to the sector; - Documentation and reporting of the activities carried out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of one (1) public information event on sustainability; - Organization of the dissemination event, within which the tourism packages developed through the mapping and consultation of stakeholders (within the 4 workshops with stakeholders and key actors or within a separate information campaign) will be presented; - Communication and visibility materials; - Video and photo recording, online streaming of the 4 workshops (YouTube); - Report for each event (including translation into English). 	May – June 2026
A.1.4, including: 1) Baseline assessment of the destination and needs analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection and analysis of baseline data for the selected destinations; - Assessment of development needs, gaps and existing opportunities; - Involvement of internal experts and the technical team, equivalent of 4 expert-months; - Preparation of analytical reports and practical recommendations. <p>Will be carried out in accordance with the RADAR methodology. The tools from the following sites will be used:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports on the baseline level of sustainability of the destination (including translation into English); - Needs analysis reports (including translation into English); 	July – October 2026

	https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/21749 https://www.gstcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/GSTC-Destination-Criteria-v2.0-with-SDGs.pdf	- Recommendations for destination development (including translation into English).	
A.1.5, including: Development of the Sustainable Tourism Destination Strategy and Sustainability Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a Common Sustainable Tourism Destinations Strategy for the Project implementation area; - Development of the Strategy (and Plan) for the Sustainability of the Chişinău Tourist Destination for the years 2027–2032 (specific to the destination, adapted to its characteristics and needs); - Development and establishment of a set of key performance indicators (KPI) for monitoring progress, performance and impact of the strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposals to be included in the Common Sustainable Tourism Destinations Strategy of the Black Sea Basin Region, including a set of key performance indicators (KPI) for monitoring progress, performance and impact of the common strategy (Contribution of Partner No. 4 in the development of the Project’s common policy); - The Strategy and Sustainability Plan of the Chişinău Tourist Destination for the years 2027–2032 developed (including a set of KPI for monitoring progress, performance and impact of the DTC strategy) (including translation into English). 	<p>November 2026 – June 2027</p> <p>November 2026 – January 2027</p>
A.1.11. Knowledge sharing and networking. Sustainable Destination Education and Collaboration (SDEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creation of SDEC - Joint Requirement Analysis: - participation in the SDEC - Platform Design - OER Curation and Living Lab Framework Development - – Partner no. 4 contribution <i>(based on the requirement analysis, the platform will be designed to combine the attributes of an Open Educational Resource (OER) and a Living Lab. The OER component will curate and</i> 	- SDEC Joint requirement analysis to identify the needs and expectations of all stakeholders, ensuring that SDEC platform addresses the diverse needs of the tourism sector –	July – December 2026

<p>platform (OER + Living Lab) and best practice repository. SUSDEST-NET</p>	<p><i>provide access to high-quality educational material on sustainable tourism, while the Living Lab framework will facilitate collaborative innovation and real-world testing of sustainable destination practices).</i></p> <p>- participation in the SDEC Platform development <i>(the platform will be developed using modern web technologies to ensure it is user-friendly, scalable and accessible. The development process will involve integrating OER content and establishing interactive features for the Living Lab. The platform will support multiple languages to cater to the diverse audience in the Black Sea region).</i></p> <p>- participation in SDEC Testing <i>(before the official launch, the platform will undergo rigorous testing to ensure its functionality, usability, and performance. Stakeholders will be invited to participate and provide feedback or identify any issues. This process will help refine the platform).</i></p> <p>- participation on creation of the Network – MOU - Partner no. 4 contribution <i>(to formalize the collaboration among partners, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be drafted to outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner, establish guidelines for collaboration, and set the foundation for a sustainable network of stakeholders).</i></p> <p>- participation on creation of the SUSDEST-NET Network – Strategy and Action Plan <i>(a comprehensive strategy and 3-year action plan will be developed to guide the activities of the SUSDESTNET network. This plan will outline the objectives, key activities, timelines and performance indicators for the network).</i></p>	<p>Partner no. 4 contribution).</p> <p>- Developed and tested SDEC platform with OER and Living Lab components in operation – Partner no. 4 contribution.</p> <p>.</p>	
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5. SERVICE COST

For the implementation of the activities mentioned in chapter 4, an amount of **58,500 Euro** is planned. The payment will be carried out based on the presented deliverables, in accordance with the Contract signed between the parties, in Moldovan lei at the exchange rate of the National Bank of Moldova on the date of payment.

The legal entity will present the price offer for each activity (A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4, A1.5 and A.1.11).

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SUSDEST-NET