



## Press Release

The first meeting of the INSPIRES SMP project and the first "Ideation Jam" took place in Antwerp, Belgium, with the participation of all partners, on 25-27 February 2025.

The main theme was "**Tourism Resilience**", in relation to the twin transition of Tourism SMEs, green and digital, according to the EU Transition Pathway for Tourism (TPT).

The event was organised by INSPIRES project partner Tourism Antwerp Province (TPA), Belgium.

The INSPIRES project aims, approach and expected results were discussed between the partners with the participation of the project officer from the European Commission - European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA). Best practices on tourism resilience, sustainability and digitalisation will be collected and reported online, for transferability to SMEs.

The first "Ideation Jam" was held in person and online with more than 30 Tourism SMEs in the partners' countries (BE, DE, ES, FI, PL, BG) participating, on 27 February. An Ideation Jam is a creative workshop format designed to develop and refine innovative ideas in a short time. This dynamic and interactive event encourages collaboration to find solutions to specific challenges. Participants bring diverse perspectives and benefit from an open, cooperative environment.

Presentations were made by the following experts:

- Filip Nicasi, Horeca Partners, on Responsiveness en Diversification.
- Liesbet de Wit, Tourism Province Antwerp, on Accessible and inclusive tourism.
- Jan De Bock, ScraB&Ble (B&B), on Sustainable accommodation Management.

The participating Tourism SMEs discussed the above and their related priorities at breakout sessions, moderated by senior representatives of INSPIRES partners.

From feedback based on the responses from participants, three key insights emerged, viz:

1. Inspiring Content and Valuable Best Practices  
Participants praised the engaging presentations and hands-on examples, particularly those related to sustainable tourism, building resilience, and inclusive offers. The input was widely seen as valuable inspiration for developing their own projects and initiatives, especially in rural areas and the hospitality sector.

“Very impressive insights!” – “Relevant examples of sustainable and innovative practices.” – “Great best practices in building resilience.”

2. Knowledge Exchange and Networking as Added Value  
The event served as a platform for exchange and collaboration, which was highly appreciated by attendees. Many participants highlighted the new opportunities for cooperation and international networking with tourism professionals and developers across Europe.

“New possibilities for cooperation and networking.” – “Exchange on the status quo and transferable good practices.” – “Fresh ideas through other SMEs’ perspectives.”

3. Demand for Practical Support and Implementation Tools  
A recurring theme in the feedback was the need for practical information on funding opportunities, training offers, and tools to support implementation—especially to enhance the resilience and competitiveness of tourism businesses.

“More information on funding for resilience.” – “Suggestions for training needs.” – “Adapting educational paths to support the tourism sector.”

The next INSPIRES Ideation Jam will be held in Lapland, Finland, in early June 2025, with the main theme being the Sustainability of Tourism SMEs.

The INSPIRES project is co-funded by the European Union, in the Single Market Programme (SMP). The project started in November 2024 with 36-month duration.

INSPIRES fosters collaboration among Tourism SMEs in Europe, to develop digital and green transition solutions, with resilience and sustainability.

The INSPIRES project presents an innovative approach to address a crucial EU priority: fostering collaboration among SMEs to develop scalable and transferable twin transition solutions, thereby stimulating robust economic growth in regional tourism ecosystems throughout Europe.