

INCIRCLE

PROJECT

TOURISM



Support INSular and low density areas
in the transition towards a more
CIRCular tourism Economy

 RETHYMNO

What is Circular Economy?

Until now, we knew that the life cycle of a product was divided into three phases: creation – use – disposal.

In circular economy, products are not discarded at the end of their life but designed so their life cycle can follow a different route:

reduction – reuse – recycling – recovery.

In this way, their life cycle is extended and better use of natural resources is achieved while avoiding waste.

A circular economy significantly extends the life cycle of goods and reduces waste of natural resources.

What is Circular Tourism?

Since tourism activities place a particular burden on the environment, the application of circular economy principles to the tourism sector – so called “circular tourism” – is especially important in combating the impacts of climate change.

Benefits of the Circular Economy on Tourism

The circular economy does not add restrictions or complex procedures to tourism activity, as some fear, but it does support tourism enterprises in distinguishing themselves for their environmental awareness, helping them to conserve resources, innovate and become more sustainable overall.

Some benefits of shifting to Circular Tourism are:

- Greater environmental awareness of professionals, residents and visitors in a particular place
- Showcasing and protecting the natural environment and the landscape, while protecting the natural resources of a region
- Establishing innovative enterprises to help rejuvenate the local economy and reduce unemployment
- Boosting local production while highlighting the local cultural heritage, history and local products
- Attracting visitors who are already environmentally aware and desire to leave a small environmental footprint while staying at their destination

Circular Tourism can improve the quality of life of the local population, as well as the tourism experience of visitors.

Municipality of Rethymno

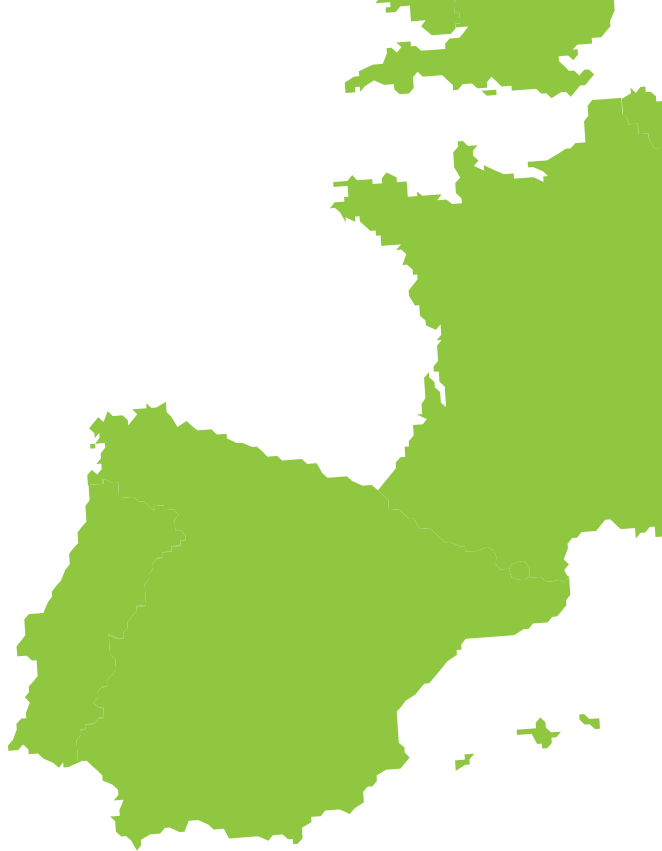
This is an internationally known tourism destination making rapid progress in the area of sustainable development.

As an important educational, research, commercial and administrative centre in the greater region, its competitive advantage lies in its rich cultural assets and an inventory of more than 30 cultural heritage sites. The tertiary (service) sector is the main driver of the local economy, while **more than 2,000 enterprises** are engaged in tourism throughout the area.

The benefits and impacts of tourism for the area

The Rethymno Municipality's vision is to promote itself not only as a worthwhile tourism destination but also as a **model sustainable and "smart" destination**.

In implementing its vision, the Municipality of Rethymno will have to address specific challenges related mainly to the marked seasonal fluctuation of the population due to tourism which leads to fluctuations in the consumption of natural resources (energy, water), waste generation, urban mobility and accessibility. As part of an integrated strategic plan, the Municipality of Rethymno stages actions to inform and raise awareness, prepares studies and implements projects to respond to these challenges, with the overall aim of improving the quality of life of residents and the holiday stays of visitors, alongside efforts to preserve its cultural heritage.



One of the most important priorities for the Municipality of Rethymno is raising awareness of both residents and visitors on issues related to the circular economy.



62,886
residents

397.5
km² in area

RETHYMNO | Actions – Circular Tourism Applications



Electromobility

- **Electric Car:** The first electric vehicle in the public sector fleet at regional level.
- **Electric Bus:** Free, fully accessible electric bus for 23 passengers, the first registered in Greece to a public transport fleet, serving a route in the centre of the city.
- **Shared electric scooter system:** Private initiative, result of a public-private cooperation.
- **E-bike sharing scheme:** Free charging, connected to a photovoltaic/solar canopy that charges bicycles.
- **Electric Bicycles / Scooters:** 20 electric bicycles and 15 electric scooters to cover the needs of employees at the Municipality of Rethymno.
- **Network of electric vehicle charging stations:** 5 installed dual chargers – one of which is a fast charger (the only one at regional level) in a public space offering free charging.
- **Charging station for electric bicycles and scooters:** 20 spaces for free charging in the city centre.

“ In the area of electromobility, Rethymno is a model city on a national level,,



Smart mobility

- System for collecting traffic data using thermal sensors.
- Smart controlled parking system with real-time information about available spaces, navigating and electronic payment.
- Accessible pedestrian signal system with countdown indicator to support accessibility for people with disabilities and with an audible signal to enhance accessibility for blind people or with impaired vision.
- Installation of telematics to provide real-time information on public transport schedules.
- Smart pedestrian radar sensor.
- Radar speed signs at the entrances to the city.



Bicycle lanes

- 20 km bicycle lane network
- 22 trans-regional bicycle paths



Accessibility for persons with disabilities

- Extensive network of pavements designed for people with disabilities and a network of pedestrian walkways
- Installation of autonomous systems for access to municipal beaches, along with necessary equipment (cabins, WC, canopy, pathway over sand)
- Installation of system to provide access to the sea for people with visual impairment

INCIRCLE Pilot Programme

Rethymno is one of five cities in the INCIRCLE project where Circular Economy pilot actions are taking place.

Specifically, the Municipality of Rethymno undertook the development and implementation of two pilot actions focusing on sustainable mobility, sustainable energy and sustainable waste management.

1ST PILOT ACTION

Objective: To promote electromobility in combination with Renewable Energy Sources (RES).

How: Installation of 2 solar carports (at the Rethymno Marina and the main car park at 4 Martyrs Square), a charging station for electric vehicles and 5 charging stations for 20 electric bicycles and electric scooters, with 2 bicycle racks for 10 bicycles.

2ND PILOT ACTION

Objective: To promote recycling and waste separation at the source.

How: Placement of 153 waste collection bins at three different streams (plastics, rest of recyclables and general waste). The bins were placed on the city's waterfront road and at municipal beaches.

Harmonization with the regional and national strategy for the circular economy

With the aim of adopting and implementing the regional and national strategy for the circular economy and taking into account local needs, the Municipality of Rethymno is preparing a local action plan structured along the following axes:

Waste Management

Reducing volume of waste ending up at the landfill through separation at the source, recycling, composting and raising awareness in order to achieve waste reduction.

Energy Efficiency

By improving the energy efficiency of municipal buildings, by changing lights type in municipal street lights and by using RES, etc.

Rational Management of Water Resources

Through repair, maintenance and replacement of the existing network to limit losses due to leaks, the collection and use of rainwater runoff, reuse of treated waste for irrigation, etc.

Sustainable Mobility

Through the promotion of alternative means of transport, the expansion of the electric vehicle charging stations network and the enhancement of the shared means of micro-mobility (bicycles, scooters), the increase of the number of electric vehicles in the municipal fleet and the support of road safety at schools, etc.

HOW I CAN BECOME PART OF THE CIRCLE:

Sustainable tourist habits



Sustainable Mobility

- Before my trip, I can find out and learn about the infrastructure and sustainable mobility services available at my destination to travel by car less and ensure a smaller carbon footprint.
- I choose to travel around the destination on foot, by bicycle and by public transport, at a time of day when it is more pleasant and possible.



Water Efficiency

- I choose to wash regularly used items (e.g. towels, bathing suits) by soaking them in a basin, rather than rinsing them under running water.
- I avoid changing towels every day at my accommodation.



Energy Efficiency

- When I leave the hotel, I make sure to unplug all electrical devices and to turn off the air conditioning/heating.



Waste Management

- I make sure to recycle as much as possible at the source, properly separating waste.
- I respect the natural environment at all times. I keep the beaches and the places I visit clean.
- I avoid single-use plastics, preferring reusable or biodegradable utensils for everyday use (e.g. for storing and consuming water and food).



General Advice


- When deciding where to stay, I choose businesses that follow sustainable practices.
- I support local businesses and local producers and help strengthen the local economy.
- I use electricity, water and other natural resources in the area in a sustainable way.



BE PART OF THE CIRCLE



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