DETOUR

Development of resilient tourism ecosystems along Mediterranean walking routes

Grant Agreement **№101181295**

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Co-funded by the European Union

WHAT IS DETOUR?

Development of resilient tourism ecosystems along Mediterranean walking routes

(1 November 2024 - 31 October 2027)

🟢 A European project funded by the Single Market Programme (SMP), with a total budget of €2 million.

🎯 Objective: Support tourism small businesses through digitalisation, innovation, cooperation, and the enhancement of cultural and natural heritage and the economic development of local communities, by providing training and funding opportunities for stakeholders and actors involved in the European Cultural Routes.

🎯 DETOUR aims to create a replicable system that future proof local tourism ecosystems along a selection of rural walking routes in Southeast Europe, ensuring long-term benefits for trekkers and small businesses.

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WHERE?

The Routes Involved

DETOUR supports SMEs located along 4 iconi walking routes across Europe:

- IT **Via Francigena** (Italy)
- TR **Lycian Way** (Türkiye)
- BG **Sultan's Trail** (Bulgaria)
- GR **Mountain trails in Greece** (including Mount Olympus, Kissavos, Mavrovouni)

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Pilot area 1: Via Francigena

Via Francigena: walking and cycling route (originally medieval pilgrimage route) along 3.200 km from Canterbury, UK, via France, Switzerland and Italy.

The itinerary was certified as a **Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 1994**, recognising its historical and cultural significance as a transnational pilgrimage and heritage route.

It is also a member of the **World Trails Network**, which connects leading walking trails around the world and promotes sustainable, community-based trail development.

Pilot area 2: Lycian Way

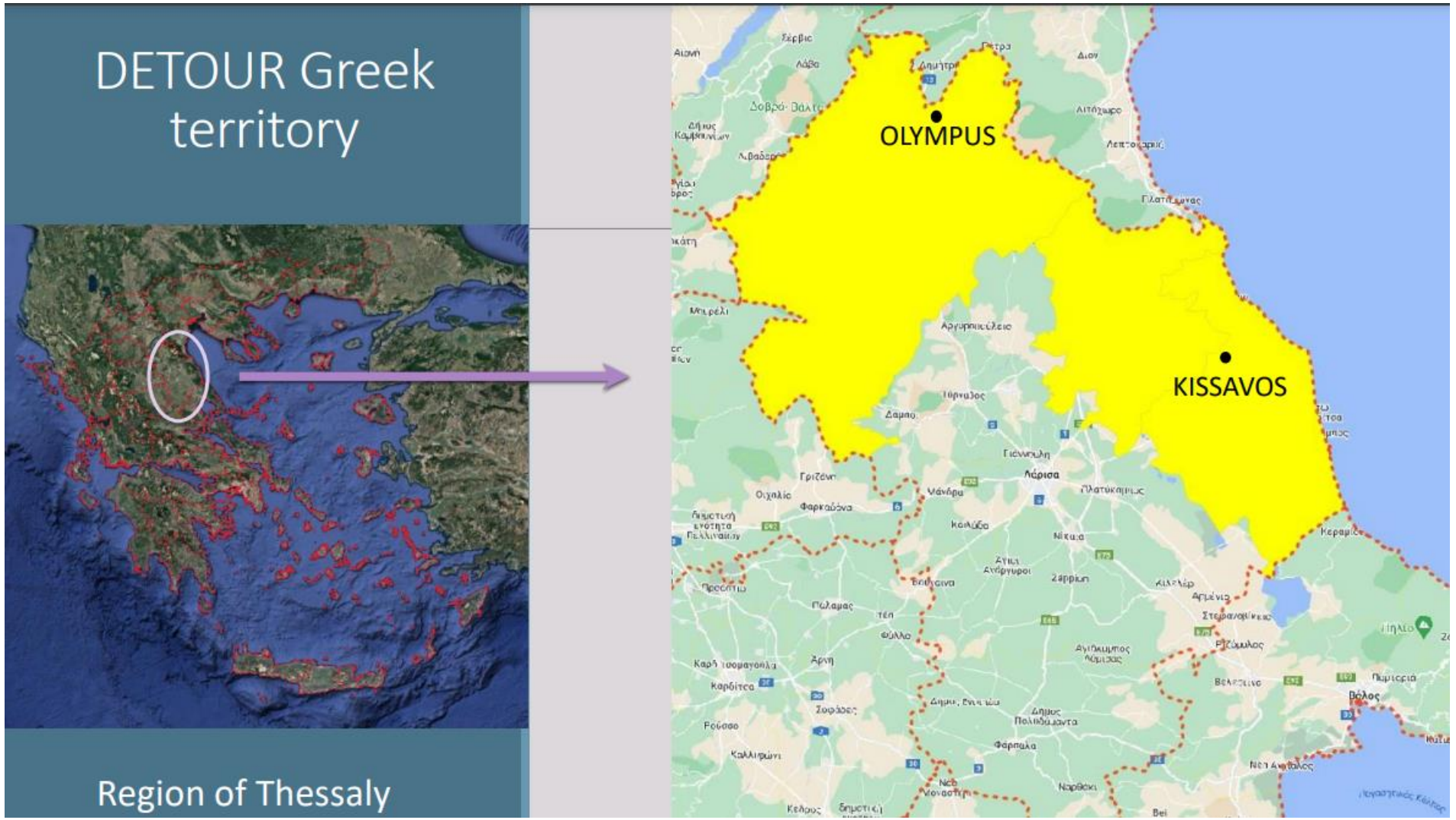
Lycian Way: long-distance hiking trail along the coastal area next to Antalya. It takes it name from the Lycian people, who lived in the area from the prehistoric period until they were absorbed into Roman culture.

The rotue is 710 km from Ovacık in Fethiye sub-province, Muğla province to Aşağı Karaman in Konyaaltıi sub province, Antalya Province. Turkish Hisarönü (Ovacık) to Aşağı Karaman in Konyaaltı, in the vicinity of Antalya

Pilot area 3: Sultan's Trail

Sultan' Trail: walking and cycling route along 2.500 km from Vienna to Istanbul. The route takes its name from the sultan Suleiman the Magnificent of the Ottoman Empire. The **selected stretch of 280 km in Bulgaria is around the Plovdiv area**

Pilot area 4: Trails around Mount Olympus and Kissavos



Greek walking trails around Mount Olympus and Kissavos - a network of 280 km of different trails in the mountains.

BENEFICIARIES

DETOUR targets **SMEs and professionals** involved in walking routes, such as:

- Accommodation & food services
- Tour operators & tourist guides
- Services for walkers and cyclists
- Cultural, creative, and leisure industries
- Municipalities, DMOs, associations

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PROJECT BENEFITS

DETOUR is **a unique opportunity to innovate and make a real impact** on the growth of local communities through the walking routes.

🔧 **Tailored support** for SMEs in the tourism ecosystem

📚 High-quality **training** with European certification

💶 Access to **funding** for collaborative projects up to €25,000

🌱 Promote **green, digital, and inclusive** tourism models

🌍 Be part of a **transnational community** reshaping rural and cultural tourism

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Project Phases & Timeline

📌 **Train the Trainers** *(August – November 2025)*
✅ *Status:* Closed
📍 Includes in-person workshops
🎓 European certification + entry into DETOUR's expert network

📌 **SME Training & Mentoring** *(January – April 2026)*
✅ *Call opens* **1 September – 24 November 2025**

📌 **Accelerator Programme** *(September 2026 – May 2027)*
💡 *Launch of* **collaborative projects**
💶 **Mini-grants** from €15,000 to €25,000 to support innovation, sustainability, and digitalisation

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Preliminary survey

📅 Conducted between **February and May 2025**
Involved **659 SMEs** across **Italy, Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Greece**

🎯 assess SME needs on **sustainability, digitalisation, marketing**, and **environmental awareness**

📊 Survey included **59 questions** under **10 thematic areas**
Results analysed both **regionally and overall** to guide country-specific training focus

⚠️ **Key gaps identified:**

- Low awareness of digital mapping tools
- Need for better recycling practices and environmental strategies

*The survey results guided the design of **tailored training and mentoring for SMEs** along DETOUR walking routes. Key recommendations include clearer KPIs, better budget alignment, and realistic target setting for future surveys. These insights aim to strengthen SME engagement and support trainers with specific needs.*

Participation overview

👥 **Train the Trainers**

🎯 **Target:** 32 trainers total (8 per country)

🇮🇹 **Italy Pilot – Viterbo:**

13 trainers attending

11 officially selected through the process

2 additional trainers self-funded and highly motivated

🏫 **SME Training**

🎯 **Target:** Minimum of 80 SMEs (20 per country)

✅ No upper limit – the more SMEs we involve, the better

💶 **Mini-Grants Programme**

🎯 **Target:** 32 SMEs total (8 per country)

Grants will support collaborative, innovative, and sustainable tourism actions

Partners

	FID	**Municipality of Fidenza** | Comune di Fidenza - **COORDINATOR**
	AEVF	**European Association of the Via Francigena Ways** | Associazione Europea delle Vie Francigene
	T2000	**Training 2000**
	ESCO	**DMO ES.CO**
	CRS	**Culture Routes Society** | Kultur Rotalari Dernegi
	ATM	**Antalya Provincial Tourism Management** | Antalya İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü
	MKP	**Mediterranean Center of Environment** | Mesogeiako Kentro Perivallontos
	MOTTR	**Management Organization of Trakia Tourism Region** | Organizatsia Za Upravlenie Na Trakiyski Turisticheski Rayon

Associated Partners

	STF	**Sultan's Trail Foundation |** Stichting Sultans Trail
	ETTD	**Edirne Promotion and Tourism Association |** Edirne Tanitim ve Turizm Dernegi
	WTN	**World Trails Network**

Impact

The short-term effects:

series of **innovative projects** implemented along walking routes
which will become **blueprints of innovations** for route management and project development for their neighbouring SMEs.

The medium-term effect:

is to create **resilient management frameworks for the SMEs** along the trails, structured to improve crisis resistance, reduce negative environmental impact, link tour operators, guides and service providers with the trail managers.

Giving trekkers the freedom to plan and enjoy their holidays with easily-sourced information, free from risk, in a protected environment with the better support of local service providers, thus optimising the relationship between trekkers and local SME's'.

The long-term aim

is to build **long-lasting partnerships** in the field
and
improve the resilience of the economic actors in the walking tourism ecosystem.

“Alone, you may go fast, but together we can go far”

Thanks a lot for your attention!

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Video