



## **TOURIST DESTINATION COMPETITION**

### **Study materials**

#### **Overarching topic of the competition: Regenerative Tourism**

#### **Why is regenerative tourism important?**

Tourism destinations across Europe are increasingly facing challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pressure on local communities, cultural homogenisation, and growing demands for sustainable development. While sustainable tourism aims to minimise negative impacts, regenerative tourism seeks to create positive outcomes for destinations, communities, visitors, and ecosystems. Regenerative tourism asks a simple but powerful question:

#### **How can tourism leave a place better than it was before?**

#### **Key concepts to study**

Students should familiarize themselves with the following concepts:

- Regenerative Tourism
- Sustainable tourism
- Destination stewardship
- Systems thinking
- Place-based development
- Community well-being
- Resilience
- Net positive impact
- Stakeholder collaboration
- Tourism value creation
- Destination management
- Destination marketing

#### **Key ideas to focus on**

Students should understand that regenerative tourism:

- Goes beyond reducing negative impacts.
- Views destinations as interconnected living systems.
- Seeks to strengthen communities, economies, cultures, and ecosystems.
- Creates value for both visitors and residents.
- Encourages long-term thinking and stewardship of destinations.
- Focuses on enhancing rather than merely preserving local assets.

#### **Reflection questions**

- What makes a tourism destination thrive in the long term?
- Who should benefit from tourism development?
- How can tourism contribute to the well-being of local communities?
- What distinguishes Regenerative Tourism from sustainable tourism?
- How can visitors contribute positively to the places they visit?



### Recommended study materials

- Bellato, L., Frantzeskaki, N., & Nygaard, C. A. (2023). Regenerative tourism: A conceptual framework leveraging theory and practice.
- Loretta Bellato & Anna Pollock (2025) Regenerative tourism: a state-of-the art review, *Tourism Geographies*, 27:3-4.
- Dredge, D. (2022). Regenerative tourism: Transforming mindsets, systems and practices.
- Pollock, A. (2019). *Flourishing Beyond Sustainability*.
- [EU TOURISM PLATFORM](#)
- [UN Tourism resources on sustainable and regenerative destination development.](#)

### EU regenerative tourism related projects

- [REGENERA4EU](#)
- [ReStart](#)
- [SMARTIES for SMEs](#)

**Competitors are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with the tourism offer, heritage, culture, and development priorities of Ferrara and its surrounding region. A good understanding of the destination context may support the development of more relevant and feasible solutions during the competition.**

### IMPORTANT NOTE FOR COMPETITORS and MENTORS

The study materials presented above introduce the overarching topic of the 2026 Tourist Destination Competition: Regenerative Tourism. Their purpose is to provide a common conceptual foundation and guide students towards relevant literature, concepts, and resources. The recommended readings and references are intended as a starting point only and should not be considered exhaustive. Competitors are strongly encouraged to conduct additional independent research and explore further academic, industry, policy, and destination-based sources related to regenerative tourism and destination development. The specific competition themes and tasks will not be disclosed in advance. During the official briefing in Ferrara, the annual themes will be presented and teams will be assigned a specific competition task through a blind draw process. Competitors should therefore expect to work on a narrower destination development challenge related to regenerative tourism. Successful teams will demonstrate not only an understanding of regenerative tourism principles, but also the ability to apply them creatively and practically within the specific context of the assigned task and the destination of Ferrara.