

Making Brussels a sustainable and responsible tourist destination

visit.brussels is the Brussels-Capital Region's tourism promotion and communication agency, a public interest organisation subsidised by the Brussels-Capital Region. We are dedicated to raising the profile of Brussels as a tourism, culture and events destination, creating experiences that enhance its many assets and provide a high-quality welcome for both leisure and business visitors.

OUR OBJECTIVES



As part of its 2023-2027 management contract, visit.brussels has set itself three major objectives for 2028:

1. Building a **strong identity for Brussels** and enhancing the visitor experience;
2. Participating in the promotion and creation of a **visitor economy with a positive impact**, based on **four pillars**: the pursuit of healthy economic growth, helping to enrich cultural life in the region, and paying particular attention to social and ecological impacts;
3. Implementing a proactive strategy of **spatially and temporally decentralising tourism** to avoid the negative effects of tourism overconsumption.

To achieve these objectives, visit.brussels works closely with all players of the visitor economy and culture in Brussels, as well as with other regional public interest organisations. It also involves the citizens of the Brussels-Capital Region in a participative and co-creative approach.

OUR VISION

Brussels is a capital of 500 million Europeans and is authentic, human, welcoming and open. It thrives on the diversity and creativity of its residents, artists and partners in culture, tourism and events.

We want to make Brussels a destination that offers sustainable tourism, is open to everyone and is constantly evolving. A region that dares to lead the way in sustainability in Europe, as a champion of circularity. A true green capital and a model of social integration. A friendly city where the watchwords are well-being, slow working and slow living.



OUR COMMITMENTS

Through its actions, visit.brussels aims to contribute to the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) that the Brussels-Capital Region has set itself for 2040, as part of its **Regional Sustainable Development Plan (PRDD)**. It also supports initiatives arising from the **Shifting Economy**, the region's economic transition strategy.

As stated in its 2023-2027 management contract, visit.brussels aims to develop a **visitor economy with a positive impact, regenerating Brussels** from an economic, cultural, social and environmental perspective.

- » **At the economic level**, visit.brussels aims to support a growth in visitor numbers, reaching 12 million overnight stays by 2030. This objective can be achieved by promoting direct returns for the local and circular economy, as well as the creation of value and jobs (37,500 jobs in 2022) for the region.
- » **On the cultural front**, visit.brussels aims to contribute to the development of a high-quality cultural, artistic and heritage offering through the region's many museums and cultural events (around 23,000/year). This development must benefit both visitors and the citizens of Brussels, and be correctly distributed, both time-wise and space-wise.
- » **On a social level**, visit.brussels aims to set an example by supporting and promoting the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion, both internally and in all its actions. As a vector of exchange, tourism must enable the expression and mixing of cultures and opinions, as well as encounters between visitors and the people of Brussels.
- » **On the environmental front**, the association strives to reduce the ecological footprint of its projects and operations as much as possible. We believe we have a duty to set an example in the public arena and to hold the entire tourism sector accountable.

Examples of our actions

- » We have developed the expertise and tools needed to **measure, reduce and offset the carbon footprint of business, tourism and cultural events**. We share this expertise and these tools with all our partners.
- » We support **sustainable modes of transport to and from Brussels** (promoting European cycle routes, night trains, etc.).
- » We promote **soft and alternative modes of transport**, for example by developing **bicycle tourism** (notably via the network of cycle nodes), and products such as the Brussels Card (culture + public transport).
- » We support **labelling and certification programmes** with all our tourism and culture partners (Green Key, Bike friendly, Access-I, Health & Safety Label, etc.).
- » To promote the positive impact of tourism on the **well-being of Brussels residents**, we regularly carry out a survey on residents' perception of tourism and take this into account in the strategic development of our activities.
- » We are developing a **diversity and inclusion strategy** (people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ community, gender equality, etc.).

Partnerships for sustainable tourism development

To support its sustainable development strategy and share best practices, visit.brussels forms partnerships with a range of international networks, such as:

- » The Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-Movement), which envisions thriving places and communities activated by regenerative tourism and events;
- » The City Destinations Alliance and its Sustainability Knowledge Group;
- » NECSTouR, the voice of European regions committed to sustainability;
- » The European Smart Tourism Destinations programme;
- » The Urban Agenda for the EU Partnership on “sustainable tourism”;
- » The Group NAO Time for DMOcracy project;
- » The International Social Tourism Organisation (ISTO) as part of the working group on accessible tourism.

Examples of our actions

- » We are developing [decentralised initiatives and a neighbourhood strategy](#), with a view to creating a tourism offer spread across the region's 19 communes, rather than just in its centre.
- » Our network of [Greeters](#) is committed to [slow tourism](#). By accompanying visitors as they discover Brussels, these volunteers promote the development of more sustainable and resilient participatory tourism.
- » We [inform and train](#) our employees and stakeholders in the [adoption of sustainable and inclusive practices](#), for example in creating events and welcoming the public.
- » We implement a [responsible purchasing policy](#), integrating environmental, ethical and social criteria into our public procurement contracts.
- » Capitalising on the 8,000 hectares of green spaces that make Brussels the greenest capital in Europe, we [promote nature tourism](#), for example with the [Green Walk](#) and the [Sonian Forest](#).
- » visit.brussels supports the [policies, initiatives and programmes of the Brussels-Capital Region](#) to promote sustainable development, with the aim of achieving zero carbon emissions by 2050: the [Good Move 2020-2030](#) regional mobility plan, the [Good Food](#) strategy for sustainable food consumption, the [Regional Programme for a Circular Economy \(PREC\)](#), the [Ecodynamic Company Label](#), the [Low Emission Zone \(LEZ\)](#), the [City 30](#) project (limiting speeds to 30 km/h on most major roads), etc.

Measuring our contribution to sustainable development

visit.brussels has chosen the **Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index)** as its main sustainability performance indicator. This sustainability assessment and improvement programme for destinations around the globe uses 70 indicators to assess performance in four key areas: environmental, social, supplier/partner and DMO (Destination Management Organisation). These indicators are aligned with the 2030 Agenda and integrate the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

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