WTM LONDON 2026, LAZIO: DIGITAL INNOVATION AND SLOW TOURISM TO SHOWCASE THE WHOLE REGION

Tourism in the Lazio Region is taking a decisive step towards the future. Driven by recent measures to promote technological innovation and culture, such as the **LaDIT - Lazio Digital Innovation Tourism** funding call to support the region's municipalities, artificial intelligence and advanced digital solutions are becoming strategic tools for rethinking how visitors are welcomed, how places tell their stories and how cultural heritage is experienced.

The Region's aim is to combine the extraordinary historical, artistic and natural riches of the area with the potential of new technologies, through interactive solutions that can engage with visitors in real time.

The applications funded and introduced include **smart kiosks and information points** which, thanks to AI-powered interactive systems, can provide instant multilingual information, suggestions about local events and round-the-clock practical support. These are joined by **immersive content and augmented storytelling**, made possible by combining artificial intelligence with augmented and virtual reality, which let tourists see Lazio's archaeological sites and monuments as they looked in ancient times, enriching their visit with interactive narratives.

"**Innovating in tourism means investing in our local areas' ability to raise their profile, reach new audiences and offer experiences that are ever more accessible and engaging.** Through the LaDIT funding call, we are supporting municipalities in using new technologies, because digital transformation is a great opportunity, especially for lesser-known destinations that have an extraordinary heritage to share. Our strategy is clear: we want a Lazio that goes beyond Rome, able to promote all of its excellence and to spread tourism opportunities across its five provinces, at every time of year. This is the direction set out in the Three-Year Tourism Plan, which aims to spread visitor flows more widely, both geographically and across the seasons. Technology, together with targeted promotion and collaboration with local areas, can help us turn this vision into tangible results for communities and businesses," says **Elena Palazzo, Lazio's Regional Councillor for Tourism**.

Lazio is thus confirming its ability to combine the protection of tradition with the efficiency and sustainability of technological innovation, strengthening its appeal to domestic and international tourists who are increasingly focused on quality.

The digital resources deployed by the municipalities that won LaDIT funding, together with other regional initiatives, are expected to benefit one of the most strategic parts of what the region has to offer: the **Network of Walking Routes** and, in particular, the **Via Francigena in Lazio**, on both its northern and southern stretches.

In recent years there has been growing interest in slow tourism, with more and more walkers, pilgrims and nature lovers following Italy's ancient historical and spiritual routes. Against this backdrop, Lazio has played an active role as lead partner for eight Regions in the national strategic project to promote the Via Francigena, known as **Project 33**, under the Development and Cohesion Plan, in collaboration with the Ministries of Tourism and Culture.

The initiative has made it possible to deliver a wide-ranging programme of cross-cutting activities covering tourism promotion, media communication and the development of the route, alongside national and international advertising campaigns and the active involvement of the municipalities along the way.

The regional strategy is part of a broader vision for managing and planning visitor flows, with the aim of easing pressure on the major attractions and encouraging a more balanced spread of visitors. From historic villages to cycle routes, and from walking trails to the lesser-known archaeological and natural sites of the five provinces, the Region aims to make the most of local identity and create new opportunities for economic development.

The measures in place focus on three main areas. The first concerns **digital monitoring and data collection**, using dedicated tools including the *Ross1000* platform for recording overnight stays in tourist accommodation. The second is **promoting slow tourism and inland areas**, with investment in the network of historical and spiritual routes, including the Religious Itineraries, the Way of St Francis, the Way of St Benedict, the Way of St Philip Neri and the Way of Light - Via Amerina. The third concerns **innovation and the development of historic villages**, through grants and funding calls for municipalities to create experiential routes, smart signage and digital visitor services. It is an approach that aims to strengthen Lazio's competitiveness as a tourist destination, while protecting residents' quality of life and the integrity of the landscape, and making technology a tool that serves people, businesses and local communities.