



# TIMIȘOARA TOGETHER

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Tourism Development & Marketing Strategy

Visit Timișoara  
in partnership with TOPOSOLOGY

**2026-2031**

## Tourism Development & Marketing Strategy 2026-2031

This destination development and marketing strategy sets out a **unique vision for the future of tourism in our city** and how we can shape it together.

This vision was co-developed by **Visit Timișoara**, our collaborators, colleagues and citizens. It is a vision anchored on a large body of evidence, research, data and stakeholder consultations which acknowledges our uniqueness as a destination and gives weight and authority to our actions going forward.

We recognise that as a destination we are early in our development journey.

This gives us a unique opportunity to shape our tourism future and ensure that our story is one that we write ourselves.

Our core destination values, which we have shaped together, provide us with **strategic anchors** and compass points during the length of this TDMS. They allow us to ensure that while a chaotic world changes around us, our perspective, story and offer remains resonant, relevant and resolute.

Whilst this plan is inherently outwardlooking in its actions, strategic objectives and methods of connecting our story and city with the world, it is also profoundly inward-looking.

This is because as a destination management and marketing organisation we fully recognise that in order to meet this great opportunity we cannot act alone.

As a proudly innovative city of firsts we recognise that in this instance the most innovative approach is to **first look inwards to galvanise our partnerships and strengthen our relationships** so that we can speak confidently about our tourism future with one voice.

## Our Tourism Vision

In Timișoara, we will work collectively to grow tourism in a way that reflects **our city's values and aspirations**, in partnership with our communities, not separately from them. Tourism here will happen with us, not to us. Together, we will be destination stewards championing our city, our people, our businesses and our communities.

This means we are collaborative in our governance, smart in our delivery, and courageous in our pursuit of a regenerative destination. We welcome high-quality, year-round visitors who value our uniqueness and leave inspired to share our story. We measure our success in numbers, yes, but also in the **pride our residents feel** as hosts within our great city.



## Our Strategic Tourism Objectives

We have identified nine key Strategic Tourism Objectives that give us a firm foundation for our Tourism Development & Marketing Strategy 2026 - 2031.

### Governance Objectives

1. Governance, Leadership & Partnership

### Marketing Objectives

2. Brand Positioning & Narrative
3. Marketing Intelligence & Data Insight
4. Marketing, Communications & Digital Presence

### Management Objectives

5. Sustainability & Destination Stewardship
6. Industry Development & Skills
7. Product Development & Experience Design
8. Connectivity, Visitor Services & Place Experience
9. Monitoring, Evaluation & Delivery

## Action Plan

This section provides the **key actions intended to guide Tourism in Timișoara between 2026 - 2031**. All actions have been developed to align with national and EU policies and reflect both the place research and stakeholder feedback obtained between 2025 - 2026.

Actions have been provided in relation to each of the nine strategic objectives. It is intended that this section of the report is treated as a living document, subject to regular review and updates.



## Context & Alignment

This strategy does not stand alone. It is **shaped by the global, European, national and local frameworks** guiding the future of tourism, and it advances Timișoara's contribution to each.

Globally, it reflects **UN Tourism's principles** of sustainable, resilient and inclusive destination management and contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with particular focus on decent work (SDG 8), sustainable cities (SDG 11), responsible production and consumption (SDG 12) and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17).

In Europe, it aligns with the **European Agenda** for Tourism 2030 and the EU Transition Pathway for Tourism, supporting the twin green and digital transition. It builds on the legacy of European Capital of Culture 2023 and positions Timișoara within the wider EU tourism ecosystem, including the emerging European Tourism Data Space

Nationally, it aligns with **Romania's National Tourism Strategy** and the development priorities of the West Region and Banat. Locally, it complements the city's wider cultural, economic and sustainability commitments, including those carried forward from the European Capital of Culture year.



An aerial photograph of Timișoara, Romania, taken at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the city. The Danube River is visible in the foreground, and the city's skyline, including the iconic Spis Church tower, is silhouetted against the bright sky.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 01

# Governance, Leadership & Partnership

Clarifying roles, strengthening collaboration across sectors,  
and ensuring Visit Timișoara can lead with confidence and legitimacy.



## Rationale

Tourism in Timișoara is guided by clear governance, strong leadership and collaborative partnership. By 2031, Timișoara has a deliberately articulated governance structure that outlines key decision making processes and the roles and responsibilities across all involved stakeholders.

Visit Timișoara exhibits strong leadership in the delivery of TDMS, ensuring partners, investors, and the local community are aligned and working toward shared goals. Through this structure, Visit Timișoara will have earned the trust of both residents and stakeholders, recognised as a credible and accountable apolitical institution that champions sustainable, locally valued tourism development for the long-term benefit of the city and proudly showcases their results.



## To achieve this we will

1

### **Develop a clear leadership framework**

that places Visit Timișoara as a credible, accountable leader that not only advocates for the destination but actively finances its sustainable and innovative future.

2

### **Connect and build relationships**

with key stakeholders, regional government, National Tourism Operators and relevant EU groups to support collaboration, funding and delivering key strategies.

3

### **Create a clear and ongoing feedback loop**

between Visit Timișoara and residents through Neighbourhood Tourism Labs, Participatory Budgeting and other best practice collaboration frameworks.

4

### **Crisis Management and Response**

Plan for and be ready to respond to any crises that may affect the destination.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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A clear, accessible statement of what Visit Timișoara leads, influences and enables, and what sits outside its remit has been drafted and published on the Visit Timișoara website.

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Visit Timișoara is recognised for its leadership across Europe and staff feel sufficiently resourced and satisfied that the work they are doing delivers on the intent of this document.

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We have developed strong relationships and communication pathways with both stakeholders and residents that allow for ongoing feedback, industry networking and collaboration and the sharing of knowledge.

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We have successfully identified and participated in new funding streams or EU Networks and have submitted one or more bids for funding or network membership.

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We have an established Crisis Management Group and have prepared checklists or other documents with key information to guide DMO responsibilities during any future crises affecting tourism.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 02

# Brand Positioning & Narrative

Defining a clear, long-term destination story that differentiates Timișoara and can work across visit, live, work, invest, and study agendas.

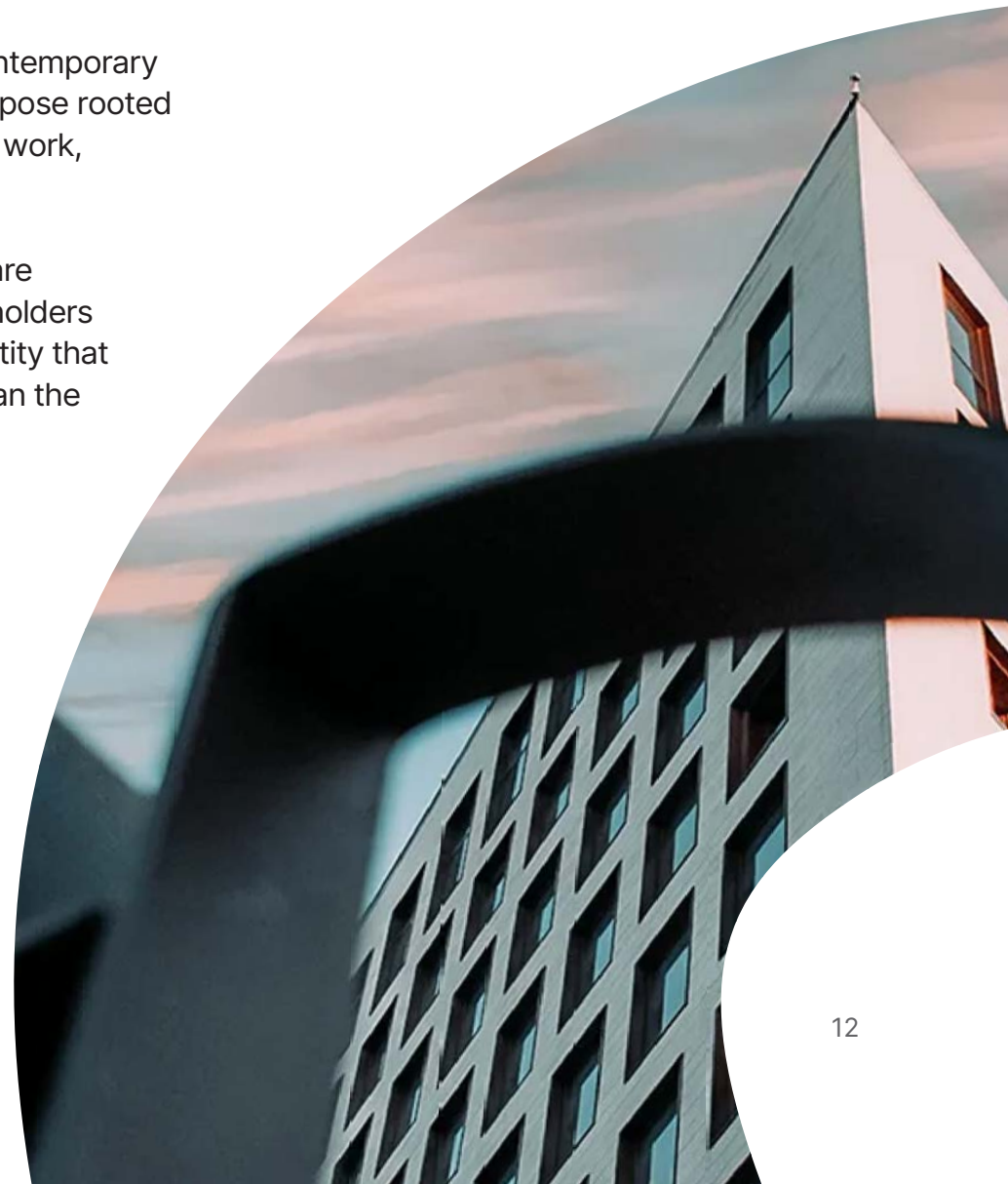


## Rationale

Timișoara builds on the current branding direction that feels authentic and contemporary and does not rely on outdated clichés. By 2031 there is a long-term brand purpose rooted in what makes Timișoara genuinely distinctive and appealing across visit, live, work, invest, and study agendas.

This brand positioning and narrative taps into local voices and stories, which are promoted through branded videos and influencer advocacy programs. Stakeholders collaborate regularly to deliver a “Free City, Free Spirit” shared marketing identity that showcases all of the elements that make Timișoara as a destination bigger than the sum of its parts.

The brand and narrative are shared broadly, across many platforms and languages, establishing Timișoara as a year-round destination.



## To achieve this we will

1

**Promote the 'Free City, Free Spirit' brand** for Timișoara across visit, live, work, invest and study agendas through a year-round programme of campaigns and regular social media promotion that includes local resident stories who embody the free spirit of Timișoara.

3

**Develop the narrative of Timișoara's civic courage, revolutionary heritage, and cosmopolitan liberalism** into a distinctive, communicable brand strand with supporting content and experiences.

2

**Build on the momentum of Timișoara's growing hospitality industry** to develop Timișoara as a key food destination for the region through support with training, collaboration and promotion.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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Increased visibility and awareness of the 'Free City, Free Spirit' brand across physical spaces and digital channels. This brand is one that locals embrace and want to be part of.

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Visitor numbers have increased and visitors are staying longer and spending more money during their visits.

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A yearly calendar of events is implemented on the destination website and maintained regularly, allowing for visitors to better plan their visits.

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**Influencers and Social Media**  
Organisations are regularly covering and promoting the hospitality industry in Timișoara and its revolutionary heritage or civic identity.

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A storytelling asset pack (written, visual, video) centred on Timișoara's identity has been developed and incorporated into the Visit Timișoara website.

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A Timișoara locals' content pool has been developed where local artists, photographers and creators can upload their work to be featured across channels and campaigns.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 03

# Marketing Intelligence & Data Insight

Building a practical and realistic shared evidence base to guide decisions, track impact, and move from instinct-led to insight-led destination management.



## Rationale

The development of Tourism in Timișoara will be driven by insight-led destination management moving beyond an intuition-led approach. By 2031, accessible platforms that collect data and evidence from across the tourism sector will be established to encourage data-sharing and improved decision making across the board.

The regular collection and review of data will guide decisions and allow for impact to be tracked consistently against a formally established baseline.



## To achieve this we will

**1**

**Monitor and report on the annual performance of Timișoara's visitor economy** and support the sharing of data between all partners and stakeholders. Undertake a visitor survey and resident sentiment tracking programme to help build a necessary evidence base.

**2**

**Work with operators to encourage and incentivise reviews** on platforms such as Google, Tripadvisor and Mastercard to help build reputation and tools.

**3**

**Invest in the use of technology** and AI to track visitor data, improve accessibility and create memorable/immersive experiences.

**4**

**Investigate or support work that captures the economic impact** of tourism for Timișoara and provides a clear basis to support the case for investment.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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Local data architecture is aligned with the emerging European Tourism Data Space and is completed in partnership with local research institutions.

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Visit Timișoara have implemented the appropriate analytic tracking tools to enable data-led decision making and a better understanding of trends over time.

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There is an increase in the number of reviews and average rating for hotels, restaurants and attractions across all relevant platforms.

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A repository of authentic local activities has been crowdsourced from residents and integrated into the Visit Timișoara website, allowing AI platforms to surface a previously hidden layer of the city's experiences.

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Completion and publication of the "Destination Digital Readiness Report".

An aerial photograph of Timișoara, Romania, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings, green spaces, and a clear sky with scattered clouds. The city is surrounded by green fields and distant hills.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 04

# Marketing, Communications & Digital Presence

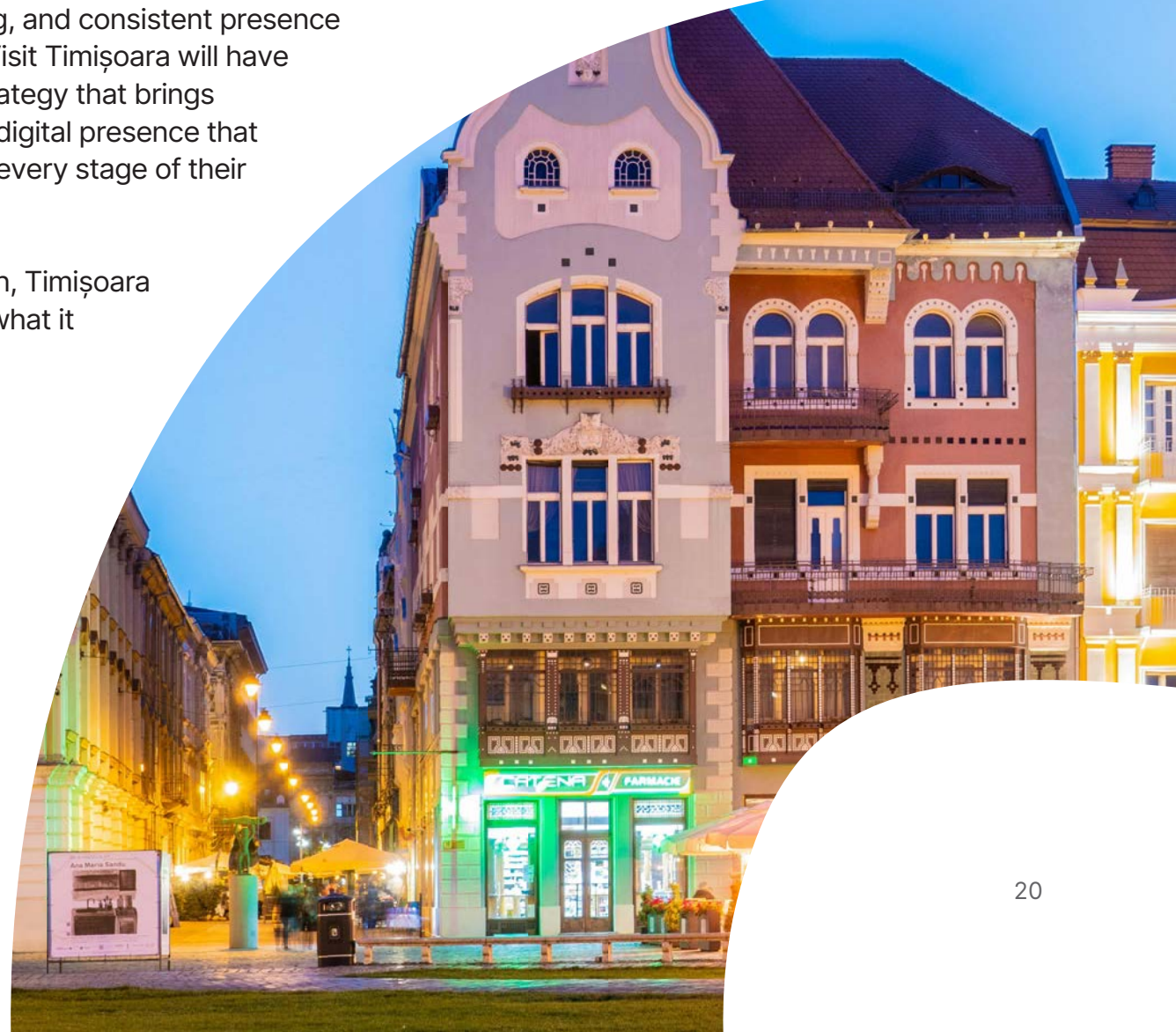
Ensuring Timișoara is visible, compelling, and coherent across priority markets, platforms, and partnerships.



## Rationale

By 2031, Timișoara will have built a distinctive, compelling, and consistent presence across its priority markets, platforms, and partnerships. Visit Timișoara will have developed a confident and coherent communications strategy that brings Timișoara's unique identity to life, supported by a strong digital presence that reaches and engages visitors, investors, and partners at every stage of their journey.

Through targeted marketing and meaningful collaboration, Timișoara will be recognised as a destination that knows who it is, what it offers, and how to share its story with the world.



## To achieve this we will

**1**

**Work with key strategic partners**

to deliver destination marketing activity in target global markets, through in-kind and paid for partnerships.

**2**

**Commission an update of the website's user experience and technical performance**

and complete audience segmentation and journey mapping for all digital platforms.

**3**

**Develop a social media strategy**

centralise campaign assets and resource ongoing content management, video production and a unified visual design across all digital platforms.

**4**

**Initiate and support a diaspora engagement and destination ambassador programme**

initially targeting the Romanian community in the UK and Germany.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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We will have delivered international marketing campaigns in partnership with strategic stakeholders that raise awareness of Timișoara as a destination and an active Timișoara ambassador program drives increased visits and social media engagement.

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We have implemented updates to the website's user experience and technical performance that has resulted in more traffic and increased time spent on the website. Our audience segmentation journey mapping has driven targeted user journeys and reduced bounce rates.

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We have implemented a consistent, bestpractice approach to social media that utilizes high-quality visual elements (carousels, animations), video, and bilingual captions. Our social media strategy assigns a clear role to each platform, ensuring they are leveraged for optimal impact.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a European city square. On the left, there is a large, light blue building with a red-tiled roof and several windows. In the foreground, there is a green lawn and a circular stone fountain. The sky is blue with some white clouds. A large white speech bubble shape is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 05**

# **Sustainability & Destination Stewardship**

Managing growth responsibly, protecting resident support, and aligning tourism with climate, social, and place-based objectives.

## Rationale

By 2031, Timișoara will have established a clear and responsible approach to managing tourism growth. This approach will protect the quality of life of local residents, safeguard the city's cultural and natural assets, and ensure tourism development is firmly aligned with its climate, social, and place-based goals.

Actions will champion regenerative tourism, meeting sustainability metrics and actively encouraging public and active transport. Visit Timișoara will have built the frameworks, partnerships, and monitoring tools needed to ensure that growth is measured not only in visitor numbers, but in the long-term wellbeing of the destination and the communities that call it home.

## To achieve this we will

**1**

### **Encourage and support**

the use of public and active transport, e.g. tap-and-go ticketing for trams and bike-share for visitors.

**2**

### **Develop a responsible visitor charter for Timișoara**

reflecting the principles of the Timișoara Declaration and setting out expectations for respectful, sustainable visitor behaviour.

**3**

### **Ensure Timișoara builds a reputation as a leading sustainable destination**

and maintains the city's commitments to global sustainable destination initiatives by increasing engagement, business support and action with industry, to address climate change and encourage positive, sustainable practices.

**4**

### **Protect and enhance the Bega River corridor**

as a shared civic and visitor asset, ensuring its sustainable use for leisure, events, and active transport.

**5**

### **Commit to the GDS-Index assessment**

as a using it as a practical benchmark for our sustainability journey.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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A successful marketing campaign has highlighted tap-and-go ticketing and active transport for journeys to popular attractions and neighbourhoods, making them the preferred choice for visitor travel.

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Increased third-party green certifications across city businesses, achieved by providing guidance on relevant credentials, facilitating networking for funding opportunities, and supporting climate adaptation training.

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Active support of the Municipality's initiatives regarding the restoration of key landmarks and the protection of the Bega River Corridor, sustained by continuous monitoring and upto- date knowledge of EU Heritage and climate adaptation funding opportunities (e.g., LIFE Programme, Horizon Europe).

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Established, active partnerships relationships with Universities and other Institutions conducting climate research.

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A published visitor charter reflecting the 'tourism with us, not to us' ethos is visible across the Visit Timișoara website and at key tourist destinations.

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Consistent presence at tourism sustainability events, actively sharing findings and lessons learned with other leading sustainable destinations.

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Visit Timișoara is consistently ranked in the top 50 EU destinations for sustainable tourism management within the GDS-Index.

An aerial photograph of a historic city, likely Prague, showing a dense cluster of buildings with red-tiled roofs. A large yellow diagonal banner is overlaid on the image. Below the banner, a central square with a fountain and many people is visible.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 06

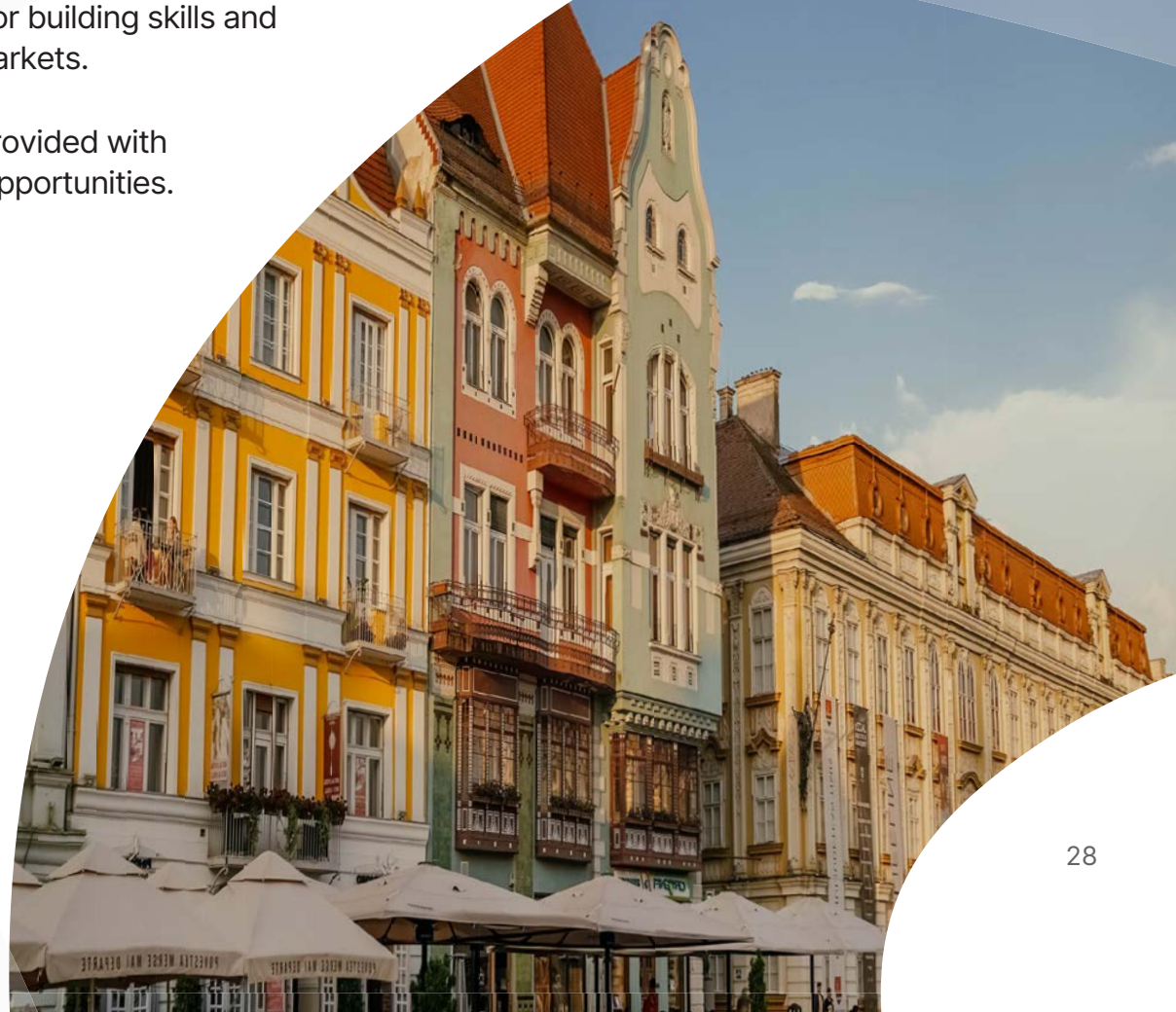
# Industry Development & Skills

Supporting the visitor economy workforce,  
improving skills pathways, and strengthening  
long-term sector resilience.

## Rationale

Timișoara will support and develop its visitor economy workforce ensuring long-term sector resilience as work in this industry becomes formalised and increasingly well-established. By 2031, Timișoara has a hospitality workforce of the highest international calibre, with strong and established pathways for building skills and growing careers, particularly targeted towards local youth markets.

Rather than operating in silos, the industry will regularly be provided with opportunities to network and share lessons, resources and opportunities.



## To achieve this we will

1

**Work with the International Brands** Banat Host Union, HORETIM, and other professional associations to further professionalise the tourism sector (e.g. through training shared resources).

2

**Support the hospitality industry** becoming a more attractive career path for young people through networking events and greater awareness of successful businesses.

3

**Develop a local hospitality quality accreditation or recognition scheme** to drive service standards and provide a visible marker of quality for visitors.

4

**Establish a language skills programme** for front-line tourism and hospitality staff, focusing on key market languages to improve the visitor experience and support international growth.

5

**Roll out the Visit Timișoara Service Excellence programme**  
A practical, simple, and creative service-level approach that clearly differentiates Timișoara and drives destination cohesion.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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We have provided business support services for Timișoara-based tourism and hospitality businesses, assisting with staff training, recruitment, and ongoing support.

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We have investigated a quality recognition framework in partnership with Banat Host Union and HORETIM, defining clear criteria across service, presentation, sustainability, and accessibility.

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Through the Timișoara Service Excellence programme, our industry feels confident in telling the city's story, embracing a mindset of continuous improvement to implement small, impactful changes such as offering local specialty coffee in hotel rooms and engaging destination ambassadors.

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We have supported the delivery of language training programmes through partnerships with universities and language schools, alongside the provision of quick-reference support materials.

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We have seen an increase in the number of young people engaging with tourism and hospitality employers through work experience, volunteering, and career preparation activities.

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We have delivered promotional campaigns that showcase tourism as a positive sector, highlighting local stories through industry communications and corporate press work.

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We have facilitated international exchanges and information-sharing meetings, allowing Timișoara's hospitality startups to spend time with other European DMOs to bring back innovative practices.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 07

# Product Development & Experience Design

Expanding and improving the range, quality, accessibility, and spread of visitor experiences, with a focus on depth, not volume.



## Rationale

Careful consideration and support will be given to expanding and improving the range, quality, accessibility, and spread of visitor experiences across Timișoara and the surrounding region. By 2031, the visitor experience in Timișoara will be built upon a unique and authentic offer that reflects the local identity of Timișoara and allows visitors to engage deeply across core offers.

This will include a focus on expanding existing niches and the offers that already work (e.g. food tourism, neighbourhood exploration, Jewish heritage). Timișoara will support the development of a **curated portfolio of high-quality experiences** that target identified markets rather than trying to offer everything for everyone.



## To achieve this we will

1

### **Expand the MICE market**

and Timișoara's appeal as a business events destination by utilizing the Meeting Planner's Guide, creating an online events calendar, promoting the city within relevant industry networks, and providing bidding training for local partners.

2

### **Grow existing regional markets**

through targeted experience development to boost overnight stays and spending.

3

### **Foster unique and authentic places, spaces, and experiences**

that reflect the local identity of Timișoara.

4

### **Create dedicated spaces or offers**

where visitors and locals can come together and share experiences.

5

### **Establish a gastronomic development programme**

connecting with surrounding wineries and integrating a sustainable tourism ethos.

6

### **Enhance Timișoara's night-time economy**

to extend the visitor day, increase average spend, and bridge current gaps in evening entertainment and dining.

7

### **Develop cross-border experience itineraries**

with Serbia and Hungary, leveraging proximity, cultural ties, and improving transport connections to create bookable multi-destination products.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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Timișoara has a reputation as a high-quality and practical destination for MICE events, supported by a steadily expanding infrastructure.

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We have promoted and seen increased uptake in travel trade experience products (e.g. connections with the wider Banat region, local wineries and cross-border opportunities with Serbia).

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We have provided support to existing tour companies and emerging entrepreneurs in launching new products including food tours, evening tours and niche tour experiences and services (medical tourism, Jewish heritage)

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We have used the '2028 Gastronomic Year of Banat' as a galvanising milestone and explored formal partnerships with relevant stakeholders to build on the available offer both before and after the event.

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We have worked to develop the Night Time Economy through a dedicated NTE Strategy for the city, focusing on promotion (an 'After Dark' or equivalent evening content strand) and support for hospitality operators and cultural venues.

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We have mapped and pursued cross-border experience opportunities with Serbian and Hungarian partners (e.g. Bega corridor, EuroVelo Route 13, Novi Sad cultural link, wine routes).

The background image shows a church with a prominent, dark, pointed steeple. In the foreground, a paved path runs through a grassy area with yellow wildflowers. Two people are riding bicycles on the path. To the right, there is a small garden bed with white flowers. The sky is blue with a few clouds. A large, semi-transparent yellow shape is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 08

# Connectivity, Visitor Services & Place Experience

Improving orientation, wayfinding, accessibility, and everyday visitor infrastructure in ways that also benefit residents.

## Rationale

By 2031, Timișoara will have meaningfully improved the everyday experience of navigating and enjoying the city, for visitors and residents alike. Visit Timișoara will partner with City Hall to develop clear, accessible orientation and wayfinding systems, alongside targeted improvements to visitor infrastructure, air access and connectivity, and digitisation to make the city more welcoming, inclusive, and easy to explore.

These improvements will be rooted in the belief that a better city for residents is a better destination for all, creating shared spaces and services that reflect Timișoara's pride in its own identity and commitment to its community.

## To achieve this we will

1

### **Partner with City Hall**

to advise on and support the most valuable Public realm enhancements such as food and beverage offers, the addition of accessible toilets, seating in parks and riversides, and public art installations to significantly improve the visitor experience.

3

### **Continue to build on the legacy of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) status**

to establish Timișoara as a must-visit cultural destination by supporting creative institutions in securing funding and promoting events through our website and social media channels.

2

### **Improve engagement rates**

with tour guides, information centres, and souvenir shops.

4

### **Develop a comprehensive wayfinding and orientation strategy for Timișoara**

covering physical signage, digital navigation, and multi-language information to support visitor dispersal across the city.

5

### **Conduct an accessibility audit**

and develop an inclusion action plan to make Timișoara a more welcoming destination for visitors with disabilities or mobility limitations.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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Timișoara is recognized as a leading familyfriendly destination, with increased visitation within the public realm by both residents and visitors.

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All cultural events are advertised well in advance via the Visit Timișoara website calendar, with a diverse range of new cultural events successfully implemented in neighbourhoods outside the city centre, using structured formats optimized for AI discovery and amplification.

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Comprehensive support is provided to tour guides, visitor information centres, and souvenir shops, including professional staff training and the facilitation of programmes that showcase local artists.

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We have collaborated with City Hall to deliver a wayfinding audit of the city centre and priority neighbourhoods (Iosefin, Fabric, and Elisabetin) and completed the design of an updated strategy.

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In partnership with City Hall and key stakeholders, we have enhanced destination accessibility by facilitating a comprehensive accessibility audit, designing an improvement plan, and actively working with hospitality businesses to raise awareness of accessibility standards and implementation.

An aerial photograph of a historic city square. In the foreground, there is a large, circular stone fountain with a central tiered structure. The square is paved with cobblestones and has a low stone balustrade. Several ornate black lampposts are spaced along the walkways. In the background, there are multi-story historic buildings with many windows and a small white classical archway on the left. The scene is captured from a high angle, looking down on the square.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 09

# Monitoring, Evaluation & Delivery

Establishing clear metrics, accountability, and feedback loops to ensure a highly responsive and adaptable strategy.

## Rationale

Visit Timișoara will develop a framework for the regular monitoring and evaluation of the actions within this plan. This will provide clear metrics, establish accountability for delivery, and create the necessary feedback loops to allow the strategy to adapt dynamically over time.

By 2031, Timișoara will have delivered or significantly advanced all actions identified in this TDMS, and the collected data will be used to inform the development of the next strategy cycle.



## To achieve this we will

1

### **Monitor and report**

on the performance of the TDMS 2026 - 2031, focusing particularly on updating key responsibilities and accountabilities for delivery across all stakeholders.

2

### **Establish a KPI dashboard aligned**

with the National Tourism Strategy indicators, providing a single reference point for tracking progress against both TDMS and national targets.

3

### **Establish a regular feedback loop**

with residents to ensure that interventions and tourist development activities are balancing liveability and tourism growth.

4

### **Conduct a mid-term review of the TDMS**

to assess progress, adjust priorities based on changing conditions, and refresh goals for the final phase of delivery.

5

### **Develop a 'State of Tourism in Timișoara' report**

distinct from the DMO's organisational annual report, to make the economic and social case for tourism visible to all stakeholders and residents.

## How do we know we have succeeded?

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We have collated and summarised all relevant data for Timișoara's tourism sector within a dashboard or visual display format, regularly publishing it as a report.

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We have implemented a clear process for residents to provide feedback on tourism in Timișoara.

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We have completed a mid-term review covering delivery progress and published relevant achievements to inform all stakeholders and interested residents.

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We have created a 'State of Tourism in Timișoara' report, utilizing a clear template for regular reporting that includes benchmarking against peer cities.



# Visit Timișoara

in partnership with TOPOSOPHY