SESSION 4 – GOOD PRACTISES OF DMOS

Moderator: Daniela Virgilio

Speakers: Wendi Kane, Axelle Brygo, Dejan Ristić, Jaume Mata

The session "Good Practises of DMOs" presented a comparative overview of innovative destination management strategies from across Europe, emphasising how accessibility has become a key pillar of tourism development and local governance. Moderated by **Daniela Virgilio, from isiTT, Italy**, the discussion gathered four distinguished speakers representing diverse geographic and organisational contexts.

Wendi Kane, Tourism Development Officer at Belfast City Council, opened the session by sharing the city's inclusive tourism programme, co-designed with people with disabilities and local businesses. The initiative has transformed Belfast into a welcoming city for all, through training, access grants, peer-learning events, and the annual "Inclusive Spirit Awards," which celebrate excellence in accessibility. The programme has led to over 200 pledges from local enterprises and the integration of inclusive training and imagery into Belfast's tourism marketing.

Axelle Brygo, from the Begian Access-i, described their certification system for accessibility, which audits and verifies the accessibility levels of public spaces, events, and trails across Wallonia and Brussels. By providing clear, reliable information for seven disability groups and discouraging self-declaration, Access-i ensures transparency and builds trust among visitors.

Consultant for Ljubljana Tourism, Dejan Ristić, illustrated how the Slovenian capital has evolved from a car-first city into one of Europe's most pedestrian-friendly and inclusive destinations. He explained the creation of the "Accessibility for All" strategy, the introduction of free electric shuttles, and the auditing of over 450 tourism sites, resulting in a strong collaboration between public authorities, NGOs, and businesses.

Jaume Mata, Head of Sustainable Tourism at Visit Valencia, closed the session. He showcased Valencia's long-term accessibility and sustainability strategy. Rooted in community participation and supported by a robust policy framework, the city's model integrates training, inclusive information systems, and digital tools for self-assessment and improvement. Mata emphasised accessibility as both a human right and a business

opportunity, reinforcing the ideae that destinations must move from isolated interventions to systemic inclusion.

Across all examples, the session highlighted a shared conviction: accessibility is not only an ethical obligation but a hallmark of quality, innovation, and competitiveness in modern destination management.

Watch Session 4 on YouTube. (run time 1:23:54)