



## Socializing Craft & Contemporary Art for Sustainable Tourism

### SOCRAT Newsletter #2 | Feb 2026 n°2

Welcome to the second edition of the SOCRAT newsletter! As winter gently wraps the Adriatic coast, the SOCRAT project continues to nurture creativity, dialogue, and inclusion through cultural innovation. With creative energy flowing from Zadar to Puglia, and across Veneto,

Istria, and Kvarner, our communities are actively shaping new models of sustainable tourism rooted in heritage, arts, crafts, and mutual collaboration.

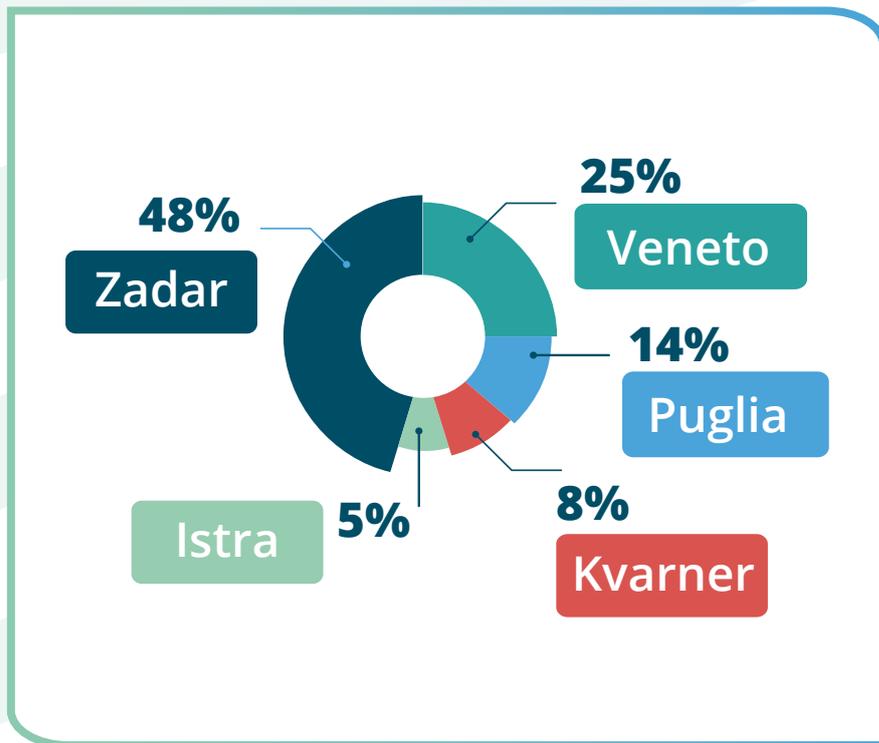
Here's a glimpse into what has been happening over the past months.

## Building the Foundations: Research, Strategy, and Methodology

At the heart of SOCRAT lies a shared cross-border vision – to strengthen local resilience and empower communities through culture. To shape this path, the project partners have worked intensively on mapping local actors, identifying best practices, and co-creating the SOCRAT strategy and methodology. These guiding documents provide a common framework for all partners, supporting joint action across territories. With research activities now finalised, the groundwork is in place for a wave of participatory and creative actions across the Programme area.

Check out our *Project Library!*

# Results of Mapping of Cultural and Creative Industries, Artists, and Civil Society Organisations



21%



Cultural and Creative Industries  
653

39%



40%



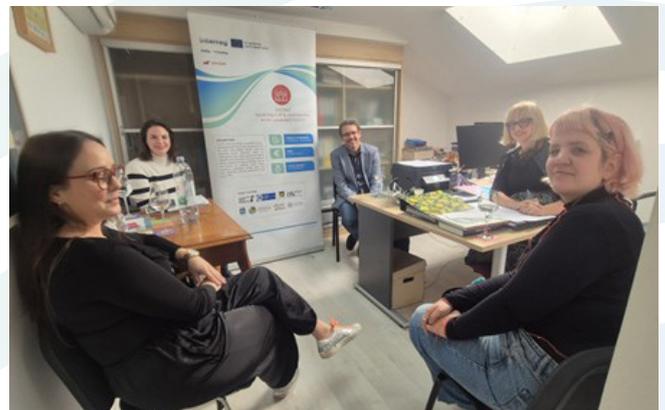
## Presenting SOCRAT to the Public: Local Events Across Regions

In late 2025, SOCRAT partners organised a series of events in Zadar, Puglia, and the Kvarner Region to share project results and present the newly developed strategy and methodology to local stakeholders.

In **Zadar**, the strategy was introduced to representatives of the cultural and creative sectors, tourism, civil society, and local authorities. The event opened a dialogue about opportunities for collaboration and community-driven cultural development.



In **Polignano a Mare, Puglia**, the presentation took place within the inspiring setting of the Pino Pascali Museum, bringing together key cultural actors and showcasing how SOCRAT tools can support local innovation.



In **Opatija**, the Kvarner Region event gathered a vibrant mix of artists, cultural professionals, and institutions. Participants exchanged feedback on the SOCRAT methodology and strategy, and explored ways to integrate creative methods into local tourism and cultural initiatives

These events marked an important milestone in engaging territories and building shared ownership of the project's vision..



# Local Voices: Participatory Meetings That Shape the Process



Before the Creative Living Labs began, SOCRAT partners worked with local communities to ensure their voices, needs, and knowledge were at the centre of the design process. Through a series of participatory meetings held in Zadar, Pula, Veneto, and Puglia, artists, cultural workers, citizens, and civil society representatives came together to discuss local resources, previous experiences, and future possibilities.

These sessions enabled meaningful exchange across sectors and helped shape the content and structure of each lab. Most importantly, they laid the foundation for trust and cooperation – vital ingredients for sustainable, community-driven change.

## Creative Living Labs – Where Ideas Take Shape

With the foundations in place, the SOCRAT Creative Living Labs have taken flight. Designed as dynamic spaces where art, craft, and community intersect, these labs invite artists, artisans, and citizens to co-create cultural experiences that reflect local identity and spark sustainable tourism.

Through public calls for participation, SOCRAT opened its doors to creatives in Istria, Veneto, and Puglia, inviting them to join immersive labs focused on everything from textile design to food heritage and performative arts. Each lab is built around local knowledge, traditional skills, and the imagination of those involved – blending innovation with rootedness.



# Creative Energy in Motion: Labs Across Italy and Croatia

Across the project area, a **wide variety of Creative Living Labs** are now **in full swing** – each offering a unique blend of local context and creative expression.

In **Istria**, a performance-based lab led by Italian artist Michele Sambin explored the role of collective memory and sound in storytelling and tourism. Shortly after, a textile and fashion design lab brought together local creatives to reinterpret traditional patterns into contemporary designs.



Meanwhile in **Veneto**, three parallel labs unfolded in Montagnana, Adria, and Venice. These collaborations brought together artisans and artists from different disciplines – from theatre makers to ceramicists, from photographers to culinary specialists – to co-create new narratives rooted in heritage and material culture.

In **Puglia**, the labs explored connections between sound, textile, photography and artisanal food. From sonic compositions inspired by local weaving, to visual reinterpretations of found

photographs, to artistic reflections on cheesemaking traditions – the Puglia labs celebrated the diversity and depth of local identity through innovative methods and meaningful collaboration.

Each lab is a testament to the power of co-creation – giving form to authentic, experience-based tourism that emerges from the people and places it represents.

Excited for the upcoming labs in **Zadar** and **Kvarner region** as well!



# Steering Committee & Partnership Meeting in Zadar

In February 2026, SOCRAT partners gathered in Zadar for the latest Steering Committee and Partnership Meeting, hosted by the University of Zadar. Over two intensive working days, partners reviewed progress across work packages, coordinated upcoming activities, and aligned next steps towards the implementation of pilot actions and dissemination efforts. The meeting reaffirmed the strong cross-border collaboration at the heart of SOCRAT and provided valuable momentum as the project moves into its next implementation phase.



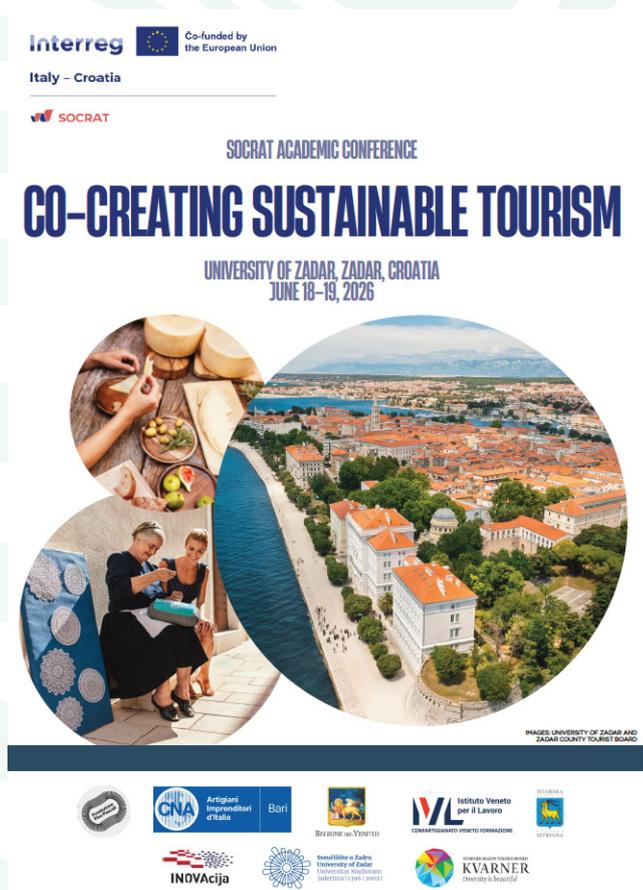
## What's Coming Next: SOCRAT Digital Platform, Local Action Plans & Capacity-Building

Behind the scenes, **work is underway on the SOCRAT digital platform** – a cross-border, multilingual tool that will showcase the outcomes of the Creative Living Labs, support the visibility of artists and artisans, and promote the territories as authentic cultural destinations.

As we look ahead to 2026, exciting results are on the horizon. Each project territory will soon develop **Local Action Plans** to apply the SOCRAT strategy in their specific context – shaping concrete steps towards sustainable, inclusive tourism. In parallel, **capacity-building workshops** will be organised to equip tourism professionals with the skills and tools needed to embed co-creation and cultural innovation in their daily work.

Stay tuned for more details in the coming months!





## Save the Date: SOCRAT Conference in Zadar

As part of the project's knowledge-sharing activities, the University of Zadar will host the international conference "Co-creating Sustainable Tourism" on 18-19 June 2026.

The event will gather researchers, practitioners, and community representatives to explore how co-creation, local empowerment, and cultural innovation can contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable tourism future.

Contribute to the discussion shaping the future of sustainable tourism.

→ Call for papers for abstracts is now open until April 1, 2026!

More information on [Conference Website!](#)

## Looking Ahead: Final Cross-Border Event in Pula

To mark the conclusion of the project, SOCRAT will host its final cross-border event in Pula in July 2026!

The event will celebrate the achievements of the Creative Living Labs, the impact of participatory processes, and the shared commitment of all partners to building more resilient and vibrant cultural landscapes.



# Stay Connected & Inspired



Together, we continue to build bridges across the Adriatic – uniting creativity, heritage and community for a more sustainable tomorrow.

Join us in exploring the crossroads of craft, contemporary art, and sustainable tourism. Follow SOCRAT to stay updated on workshops, labs, and creative collaborations:

[Project website](#)

[Instagram](#) @projectsocrat

[Tik Tok](#) @socratproject

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Let's keep building a vibrant, cross-border creative ecosystem together!

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