



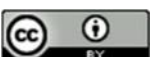
Upskilling in Immersive Literature and Film Tourism

# Immersive Literary and Film Tourism Research

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Immersive Literary and Film  
Tourism Research Report

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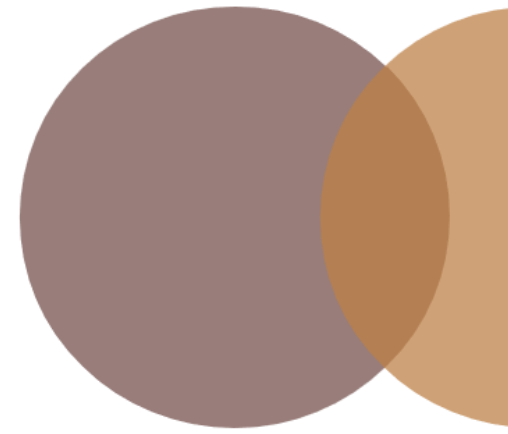
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## Abbreviations

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Augmented Reality (AR)
- Vocational College of Hospitality and Tourism Maribor (VSGT Maribor)
- Destination Management Organisation (DMO)
- European E-Learning Institute (EUEI)
- European Union (EU)
- Extended reality (XR)
- Mixed Reality (MR)
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)
- University of Akureyri (UNAK)
- Upskilling in Immersive Literature and Film Tourism (UPLIFT)
- Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VILNIUS TECH)
- Virtual Reality (VR)
- Vocational Education Training (VET)

## Glossary

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Is technology that enables computers and machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creativity and autonomy.
- Augmented reality (AR)) refers to the real-time integration of digital information into a user's environment.
- Extended reality (XR) is an umbrella term to refer to AR, MR, and VR.
- Mixed Reality (MR) is a blend of physical and digital worlds, unlocking natural and intuitive 3D human, computer, and environmental interactions.
- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are defined as non-subsidary, independent firms which employ less than a given number of employees.
- The Upskilling in Immersive Literature and Film Tourism (UPLIFT) Project helps Europe's tourism sector embrace technologies like VR, AR, and AI.
- Virtual reality (VR) is a technology that allows users to immerse themselves in an artificial, computer-generated environment and interact with it in real-time.
- Vocational Education Training (VET) is education and training in specific job-related and technical skills.

A photograph of a library with wooden bookshelves and a large wooden sculpture of a dragon on the ceiling. The bookshelves are filled with books, and the dragon sculpture is a prominent feature on the ceiling. The lighting is warm and focused on the bookshelves.

# INTRODUCTION

01

## | Introducing Uplift: Immersive Film and Literary Tourism in Europe

**Immersive technologies like Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR) are opening exciting new doors for film and literary tourism. These tools are changing how we tell stories, how visitors engage with destinations, and how we blend the magic of fiction with real-world experiences. Today's travellers want more than just a photo opportunity – they want to dive deep into culture, history, and narrative. For businesses, especially in tourism, this shift offers incredible potential.**

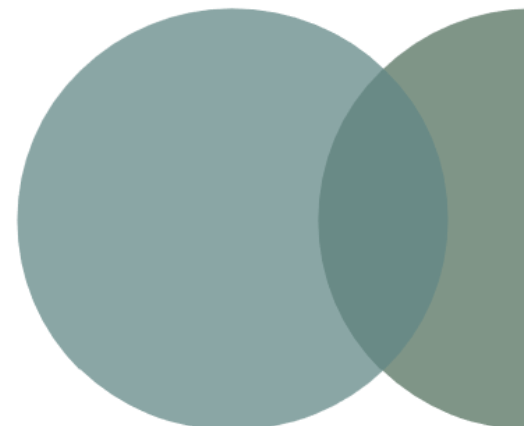
For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the heartbeat of Europe's tourism scene, immersive tech isn't just for the big players anymore. With VR and AR now more affordable and accessible, SMEs can craft richer, more engaging visitor experiences – the kind that attract new audiences and keep people coming back, even beyond peak seasons. These tools allow local businesses to showcase Europe's rich cultural heritage in new and exciting ways, bringing stories to life and giving visitors something truly memorable.

In this report, we shine a spotlight on four diverse countries – Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, and Slovenia – uncovering success stories, fresh opportunities, and key skills SMEs need to thrive in this space. We explore how immersive technologies can boost film and literary tourism, looking at the benefits, the hurdles, and how businesses like yours can make the most of them. Our research blends insights from policy documents, academic studies, and direct conversations with experts in the field. What we found is clear: immersive technologies aren't just a trend – they're becoming essential tools for sustainable tourism growth across Europe.

That's where UPLIFT steps in. Our project is all about empowering SMEs and the next generation of tourism professionals with practical skills in VR, AR, and AI. We're rolling out hands-on training for 20+ key stakeholders and engaging over 100 VET students, educators, and professionals to build a strong foundation in immersive tourism. Beyond that, we aim to reach more than 1,000 people online, ensuring at least 150 future tourism leaders are ready to innovate.

Through workshops, webinars, and real-world case studies, UPLIFT is here to help SMEs like yours make immersive technology part of your everyday toolkit. We're also creating easy-to-access video lessons and running clinics to answer your questions and share best practices. Finally, we'll bring it all together at an international conference, where ideas, strategies, and inspiration will be shared widely.

*The future of tourism is immersive  
– and SMEs are in the perfect  
position to lead the way.*



## | Our Project Goals

### How we plan to Impact on the VET Sector

#### UPLIFT EU will:

1. Produce a comprehensive immersive skills report which includes 6+ interviews (Result 1);
2. Produce a best practice showcase and library of immersive experiences (Result 2),
3. Produce 4 video workshops with lessons for VET integration into Film and Literary tourism SME's (Result 3).
4. The project will also develop VET trainers' guides (Result 4) and host a final conference to share insights, aiming for enhanced vocational skills, digital readiness, and immersive technology adoption in the tourism sector.

### Methodology – A State-of-the-Art Desk Research Report and Stakeholder Interviews

This report explores the potential of immersive technologies in film and literary tourism, with a particular focus on their implications for SMEs and the broader tourism industry in the EU. The research is grounded in a qualitative, inductive, and exploratory methodology, aiming to provide an in-depth understanding of emerging opportunities in this field. Data was collected through ten semi-structured interviews with experts in film and literary tourism across four countries—Slovenia, Iceland, Ireland, and Lithuania. These experts provided valuable insights into how immersive technologies, such as VR and AR, can enhance tourism experiences, create new business models, and expand market reach. The study examines the ways in which these technologies can drive innovation, improve visitor engagement, and contribute to the sustainability and competitiveness of SMEs in the European tourism sector. By analysing expert perspectives, this report identifies key trends, challenges, and strategic opportunities, offering a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of immersive tourism experiences.

### Key interview details which informed this report

Number of interviews	16 semi-structured interviews
Average length of interview (time)	Approx. 40 mins each
Average wordcount of transcription	3,104 words
Range of interviews	510 – 9809 words
Languages for interviews	English, Icelandic, Lithuanian, Slovenian
Interview dates	Conducted December 2024- January 2025

## | Key Findings

### A SWOT Analysis Of Possibilities in Immersive Film and Literary Tourism

To maximize the potential of immersive technologies in film and literary tourism, SMEs and Destination Management Organisations (DMO) in the EU must prioritise digital upskilling, collaboration with tech partners, and provide access to flexible, cost-effective training programmes. Government support, EU funding, and industry-driven skill-building initiatives such as our UPLIFT project, will be key to overcoming existing barriers and ensuring SMEs can effectively integrate immersive tourism experiences into their offerings. The section below is presented as a SWOT analysis to capture the key inputs from the stakeholders analysed in conjunction with the policy and academic literature.

*“In terms of technical implementation, we need someone who can create 3D models – so, modelers. Then we need programmers to code the project and technicians to determine which hardware and software to use and whether they are compatible. This is crucial because, for example, I might know how to model but not how to transfer that information to VR or LED screens for virtual production]”*

(Interview with stakeholder)



### Strengths

1. **Growing Interest in Immersive Tourism** - Our interviews showed that while knowledge levels are low, SMEs and DMOs recognised the value of VR, AR, and digital storytelling in enhancing film and literary tourism experiences. Many indicated they are willing to upskill to capitalise on these opportunities.
2. **Access to EU Funding and Support Programs** - Initiatives such as Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, and Creative Europe provide financial support for skills development in digital innovation, helping SMEs and DMOs invest in training.
3. **Existing Cultural and Creative Industries Expertise** - Many tourism professionals already have experience in storytelling, content creation, and destination marketing, which can be adapted to immersive technologies with targeted training.
4. **Collaboration Opportunities** - Partnerships between DMOs, universities, tech companies, and tourism stakeholders facilitate knowledge-sharing and innovation, helping SMEs develop skills in immersive technology application.
5. **Scalability of Digital Skills** - Once acquired, skills in immersive content creation and digital tourism marketing can be used across multiple projects, allowing SMEs to expand their service offerings beyond physical locations.



## Weaknesses

1. **Limited Digital Literacy and Technical Expertise** - Many SMEs and DMOs lack the necessary skills in AR/VR development, 3D modelling, and interactive storytelling, making adoption of immersive technologies challenging.
2. **High Learning Curve** - Immersive technologies require a blend of creative and technical skills (e.g., coding, UI/UX design, animation), which may be difficult for traditional tourism professionals to acquire without specialized training.
3. **Limited Access to Training and Resources** - SMEs, especially in rural and less-developed regions, struggle to find relevant training programs, industry mentors, and affordable tools for immersive content creation.
4. **Budget Constraints for Training and Implementation** - While funding exists, many SMEs lack the financial resources to invest in upskilling their staff or hiring digital specialists to integrate immersive experiences into their offerings. Additionally, much of the equipment required is expensive to purchase, install and maintain. This was supported by one of the stakeholders, “mobile app design and stuff because that's too complicated for many people and too expensive”.
5. **Slow Adoption Among Traditional DMOs** - Many DMOs rely on conventional marketing strategies and are hesitant to embrace digital transformation, delaying skills development in immersive technologies.

“Technical stuff that can be difficult, you need technical support”  
(Stakeholder interview)



## Opportunities

1. **Specialised Training Programmes for SMEs and DMOs** - The development of industry-specific digital training initiatives can equip tourism professionals with the necessary skills in AR/VR, AI-driven personalization, and digital storytelling.
2. **Collaboration with Tech Startups and Universities** - Partnering with innovation hubs, research institutions, and tech companies can provide hands-on training, internship programs, and skill-transfer opportunities in immersive tourism.
3. **Expanding Online Learning Platforms** - Digital platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and EU-funded e-learning portals can provide flexible, low-cost training in immersive technology, enabling SMEs and DMOs to upskill at their own pace.
4. **Government and EU Policy Support for Digital Upskilling** - Strengthening public-private partnerships to offer grants, subsidies, and incentives for SMEs that invest in immersive technology training can drive widespread adoption.
5. **Showcasing Best Practices and Success Stories** - Case studies of successful immersive tourism initiatives (e.g., Game of Thrones tourism in Northern Ireland) can inspire SMEs and DMOs to invest in skills development and digital transformation.





## Threats

1. **Fast-Paced Technological Advancements** - The rapid evolution of immersive technologies means that skills must be continuously updated, posing a challenge for SMEs and DMOs with limited capacity for ongoing training.
2. **High Costs of AR/VR Technology Implementation** - Even with training, SMEs may struggle to afford the necessary hardware, software, and expertise to fully integrate immersive tourism experiences.
3. **Resistance to Change** - Traditional tourism operators may resist digital transformation due to uncertainty about return on investment, leading to slow adoption of immersive technologies.
4. **Fragmented Skill Levels Across the EU** - Some regions may develop digital expertise faster than others, creating an uneven playing field where only well-funded SMEs and DMOs can compete in immersive tourism.
5. **Cybersecurity and Data Privacy Risks** - As digital tourism experiences collect and process user data, SMEs and DMOs must ensure they comply with GDPR and other data protection regulations, which may require additional training in cybersecurity.





# OUR TEAM

# 02



## | Meet Our Team

**The UPLIFT Project brings together a diverse team of experts from academia, technology, and tourism to drive innovation in immersive storytelling for European literary and film tourism. The University of Akureyri (UNAK) in Iceland contributes its expertise in sustainable tourism and cultural heritage through the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, leveraging strong industry connections.**

VSGT Maribor, a Slovenian vocational college, enhances the project with its specialization in hospitality, digital marketing, and AR/VR training. The Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) in Ireland leads research on tourism innovation, ensuring UPLIFT delivers sustainable and practical solutions. Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VILNIUS TECH) brings cutting-edge knowledge in AR, VR, and virtual production, strengthening the project's digital focus. Feltech Software Innovations Ltd, an IT specialist, provides advanced VR, AI, and immersive simulation tools to enhance visitor engagement. Lastly, The European E-Learning Institute (EUEI) ensures accessible and interactive digital learning resources, empowering educators and businesses to adopt immersive technologies. Together, this multidisciplinary team is shaping the future of European tourism by bridging technology and cultural storytelling.

### The University of Akureyri (UNAK)



UNAK, located in Iceland, brings its expertise in tourism research and digital innovation to the UPLIFT project. With its Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, UNAK focuses on sustainable tourism and cultural heritage. Their strong network of tourism businesses and experience in international projects makes them an invaluable contributor to developing immersive storytelling solutions for European literary and film tourism.



### VSGT Maribor

VSGT Maribor, a leading vocational college in Slovenia, specialises in hospitality and tourism education. Their expertise in digital marketing and AR/VR training, combined with strong ties to regional tourism businesses, positions them perfectly to support UPLIFT's goals. VSGT enhances the project with practical insights and education-focused solutions that bridge the gap between technology and tourism.



## The Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS)

TUS leverages its Tourism Innovation Research Group to drive sustainable development and innovation in the tourism sector. With expertise in research, stakeholder collaboration, and immersive technologies, TUS plays a key role in UPLIFT, ensuring the project delivers practical, impactful solutions for the European tourism industry.

## Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VILNIUS TECH)



VILNIUS TECH, a leader in technology and engineering education, contributes cutting-edge expertise in AR, VR, and virtual production. Their involvement enriches UPLIFT's innovative approach, combining academic excellence with practical applications to support the digital transformation of literary and film tourism.



## Feltech Software Innovations Ltd

Feltech brings expertise in IT solutions, VR, and AI to the UPLIFT project. Their focus on creating immersive simulations and user-friendly digital tools helps tourism businesses enhance visitor engagement, ensuring UPLIFT's deliverables are innovative and future ready.



## European E-Learning Institute (EUEI)

EUEI leads the creation of UPLIFT's digital learning platforms and resources. With over 20 years of experience in eLearning and tourism innovation, EUEI ensures the project's outputs are interactive, accessible, and impactful, empowering educators and businesses to adopt immersive technologies.



**EU POLICY**

# 03



## | Film And Literary Induced Immersive Tourism in the EU

### Opportunities to Stimulate New Immersive Products and Services

**The integration of immersive technologies into film and literary tourism presents significant opportunities for innovation, audience engagement, and economic growth within Europe. However, there are clearly challenges in the sector – new technologies can be technical and complex, as well as expensive. Skills development for SMEs and DMOs will be crucial to capitalise on this opportunity. Technical issues also need to be overcome, such as integration of new technologies with existing sites, negotiating potential copyright issues and ensuring infrastructure and investment costs are kept low.**

AR, VR, and MR offer new ways to engage with cultural heritage, film locations, and literary landmarks. These technologies allow destinations to enhance storytelling, create digital extensions of iconic sites, and develop virtual experiences that transcend geographical limitations. For SMEs in the tourism sector, immersive technology can potentially provide a cost-effective means to diversify offerings, extend visitor engagement beyond traditional peak seasons, and attract global audiences. These could be, for example, AR-enhanced city tours, VR reconstructions of historical or fictional scenes, or interactive literary trails which transform static locations into dynamic, story-driven experiences. By integrating AI-powered personalization, tourists can tailor their journeys based on their favourite films, books, or historical narratives, developing deeper emotional connections with destinations. Can you imagine, for example, having a conversation with an AI powered Dracula while visiting Transylvania?

Film tourism, driven by popular cinema and television productions, can enhance immersive experiences to bring scenes to life beyond the screen. Virtual set recreations, behind-the-scenes AR applications, and gamified location-based storytelling can extend the impact of cinematic destinations. Similarly, literary tourism can benefit from digital storytelling, allowing visitors to explore classic novels through interactive experiences, 3D recreations, and holographic narrations by historical authors or fictional characters. The EU's investment in digital innovation and creative industries creates possibilities for collaboration between tourism boards, tech startups, and cultural institutions. Funding programmes such as Horizon Europe and Digital Europe provide resources for SMEs to develop and scale immersive tourism solutions. Our project will enhance public-private partnerships in this sector; destinations can enhance their global appeal, drive sustainable tourism growth, and position themselves as pioneers in the future of immersive cultural tourism. This was given a real-life context by one of our stakeholders "so what we decided to do was, is to do a, it's about storytelling, is to design and develop and deliver an exhibition that told the stories of the long room and the journey of the Book of Kells. And we would do that in a digital and immersive way".



# IRELAND

04



### Policy, Practice and Case Studies: A State of the Art

The development of Ireland's film induced tourism sector has become a strategic priority. Studies have highlighted that the perception of a destination's image significantly influences its attractiveness to tourists. Films can shape travel preferences by showcasing a destination's unique attributes and fostering a favourable image, potentially inspiring viewers to visit (Butler, 1990; Iwashita, 2006). Troy Studios (2021) suggest that Ireland is globally recognised for its world-class screen industry, known for consistently delivering high-quality content across film, television drama, documentary, animation, visual effects and post-production.

The sector's talent and expertise are frequently acknowledged on the international stage, attracting numerous high-profile global productions to Ireland for both production and post-production. As the demand for quality content continues to rise worldwide, Ireland's screen industry is striving to meet this demand and foster further growth within the sector. The film, television and animation sector in Ireland is estimated to be worth over €692 million, comprising 11,960 jobs by way of direct, indirect and induced employment across the economy. Irish creative filmmaking talent has garnered international acclaim over the years, recently highlighted when John Crowley's *Brooklyn* (2015), Lenny Abrahamson's *Room* (2015) and Martin McDonagh's *Banshee of Inisherin* (2022) collectively earned 16 Academy Award nominations (Screen Ireland, 2024).



*Figure 1: 2024, May The 4th, Sci-Fi Film, Festival, Comic Con, Portmagee, Co Kerry, Photographer/Creator: Keith McGlynn*



Ireland's film tourism has grown steadily, contributing to the wider tourism sector, especially since the onset of its economic downturn in 2007. The country's connection to film dates to *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910), the first film set in Ireland. Ireland's scenic landscapes have since served as the backdrop for numerous acclaimed productions, from *Moby Dick* (1956) in Youghal, County Cork, to *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* (2006) in Kilmichael, County Cork, and *Ryan's Daughter* on the Dingle Peninsula. Popular television shows like *The Irish R.M.* (1983-1985) have also showcased picturesque locations such as West Cork's coastline, the world acclaimed television series *Normal People* (2020) promoted Dublin and Sligo, while *Ballykissangel* (1996 – 2001), *Vikings* (2013 – 2020) and Sharon Horgan's *Bad Sisters* (2022 – present) were a fantastic tourism advertisement for the beautiful County Wicklow countryside. Northern Ireland served as a primary filming location for the first season of *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), offering the landscapes that became the backdrop for some of the series' most unforgettable scenes (Tourism Ireland, 2024).



*Figure 2: John Wayne & Maureen O'Hara, Cong, Co Mayo, Copyright: © Fáilte Ireland, Courtesy Michelle Fahy*

O'Connor (2011) noted that Ireland's appeal as a filming location is bolstered by its cultural richness, heritage, and competitive incentives, such as tax breaks. Productions like *King Arthur* (2004) and *P.S. I Love You* (2007) have capitalised on these advantages. The Irish Film Board (IFB) plays a key role in both fostering the local film industry and promoting Ireland to international filmmakers. Their efforts have attracted films that have earned prestigious accolades including *Once* (2006), which won an Academy Award for Best Song, and *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* (2006), which received the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. The Irish film industry began to emerge as a significant player in the mid-1980s and 1990s, drawing renowned directors like Mel Gibson (*Braveheart*, 1995), John Ford (*The Quiet Man*, 1952), and Steven Spielberg (*Saving Private Ryan*, 1998). Successful productions such as *The Crying Game* (1992), *My Left Foot* (1989), and beloved television series like *Father Ted* (1995-1998) and *The Tudors* (2007-2010) highlighted the growing synergy between film and tourism.

An Old-Fashioned Christmas (2010) filmed at Bunratty Castle, continue to reinforce this trend, demonstrating the enduring appeal of Ireland’s landscapes and cultural heritage as key drivers for both cinematic and tourism industries (O’Connor, 2011) and all of this is underscored by Cork’s own Cillian Murphy, who won the Best Actor Award at last year’s Academy Awards for his remarkable performance in Christopher Nolan’s critically acclaimed film Oppenheimer (2023). Our interviews with stakeholders revealed a strong curiosity about the potential for AR/ VR and AI to be used in developing immersive experiences for tourists.



*Figure 3: The Derry Girls Experience, Photographer/Creator: Brian Morrison, Copyright: Derry City and Strabane District Council*

However, several barriers to entry were highlighted by the two interviewees, including cost of equipment set-up and challenges with copyright. One interviewee pointed to the legal complexities of using third party images and video in XR materials (e.g. to recreate a film scene), although he did acknowledge that this is not as problematic with older films from bygone eras. The corollary of this of course, is that the older the film the less interest it may have among tourists. While both challenges are surmountable with creativity, they do require upskilling, brainstorming and innovation to overcome. Another potential issue which was highlighted in Ireland is that many film locations are located on private lands and are inaccessible to film tourists. Again, this requires a creative approach to overcome and is more challenging for film than for literature.

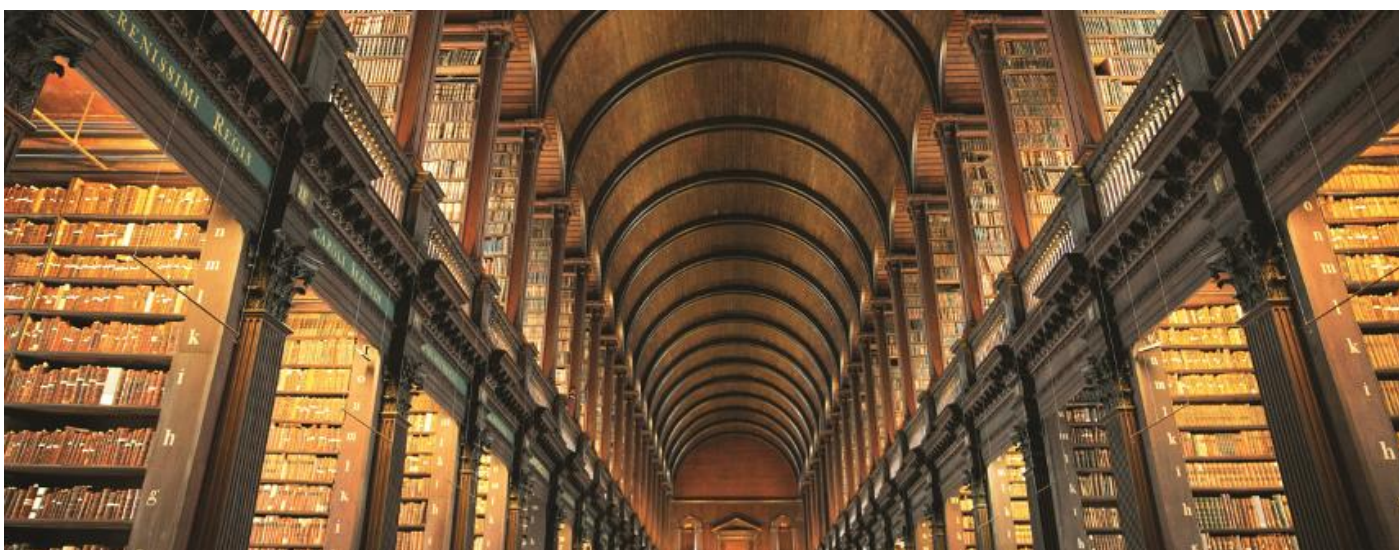
One of our stakeholders agrees with this

**“Using XR technology can make the intangible more tangible. In the case of VR experiences such as the one they provide is about “standing and being in the world itself [...] your body is included”. And “I think what matters this emotional connection is. You know, people feel so strongly that they are participating in something”**

## | Literary Induced Immersive Tourism in Ireland

### Policy, Practice and Case Studies: A State of the Art

Ireland's rich literary heritage and vibrant contemporary literary scene make it a hotspot for literary tourism. 1Literary tourism is most often associated with place – whether celebrated for literary connections – sites of birthplaces, homes, places of inspiration for specific writers, playwrights, poets, or depictions of evocative topographies, landscapes and places references in literary texts, settings for novels etc. In Ireland, the readers and followers of literature are enjoying a surge, and this is evident in their significant contributions to Ireland's literary traditions. With James Joyce and Oscar Wilde being some of the country's greatest writers, Ireland tries to showcase and pay tribute to its literary figures through various festivals, monuments, and other cultural structures.



*Figure 4: Trinity College Library Long Room,  
Copyright: ©James Bowden for Contiki and Tourism Ireland*

### FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

One of the most notable events is Bloomsday which take place on June 16th. This event is celebrating James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Bloomsday attracts thousands of enthusiasts annually. Events in Dublin include readings, re-enactments, walking tours, and themed meals. In 2023, it was estimated that over 25,000 people participated in Bloomsday activities, contributing significantly to the local economy.

Then we can talk about the Bram Stoker Festival (October). This festival honours the creator of *Dracula* (hence the name of the festival), this festival blends Gothic literature with modern art forms. Activities include vampire-themed walking tours, theatrical performances, and film screenings. The 2022 edition attracted over 40,000 attendees, with many international visitors seeking to explore the Gothic undercurrents of Dublin.

The International Literature Festival Dublin, held annually in May, is a cornerstone of Ireland's cultural scene, attracting thousands of literary enthusiasts. The festival offers a vibrant mix of readings, workshops, and discussions with acclaimed authors from around the world. It generates approximately €2.5 million in economic activity each year for Dublin. Set in Merrion Square Park, it also features performances, arts, and crafts, making it a hub for both literature and cultural exchange. Past editions have welcomed high-profile authors such as Colm Tóibín, Marilynne Robinson, and Richard E. Grant.

The Yeats Summer School in Sligo plays a key role in Ireland's literary tourism by attracting global visitors to explore the life and works of W.B. Yeats. Each year, the school offers academic seminars and creative workshops, centered around Yeats's poetry and the landscapes that inspired him, such as Benbulbin Mountain. The event boosts Sligo's cultural tourism, bringing literary enthusiasts to key Yeats sites like Drumcliffe. While exact attendance figures vary, the school significantly contributes to local tourism, supporting the economy and highlighting the region's literary heritage

## Landmarks and Attractions

Ireland's literary tourism is also supported by institutions such as the Trinity College Library, home to the famous Book of Kells and a collection of over 200,000 ancient books. The stunning Long Room, with its barrel-vaulted ceilings and busts of famous writers, is a highlight for many visitors (over 2 million per year). Then we must talk about the James Joyce Centre: Located in a restored Georgian townhouse in Dublin, the centre offers exhibitions, guided tours, and insights into Joyce's life and works. It serves as a focal point for Bloomsday celebrations. We will finish by talking by the Oscar Wilde Statue and Memorial, this statue is in Merrion Square Park, visitors can admire the colourful statue of Oscar Wilde and plaques bearing his famous quotes. This site celebrates Wilde's wit and enduring influence.



*Figure 5: 2022, Bram Stoker Festival, Borealis, Dublin Castle, Dublin City, Photographer/Creator: Paola Floris*

## Economic and Cultural Impact

Ireland's literary tourism sector contributes millions annually to the national economy. For example, the literary festivals collectively generate significant revenue through ticket sales, accommodation, and local services. The government and private sector have invested in promoting Ireland's literary heritage, capitalizing on its UNESCO Cities of Literature designations (Dublin earned this title in 2010).

The ongoing appeal of Ireland as a literary destination lies in its ability to connect its literary past with present-day cultural events and experiences. From modern interpretations of Dracula to academic explorations of Yeats, literary tourism in Ireland continues to thrive, engaging audiences both old and new.

## Examples of Immersion this Sector (VR/AR/Any Interesting Use of Technologies...)

- Augmented Reality (AR) for Guided Tours such as doing something with augmented reality, or you could do a virtual reality or even just projection of lights (stakeholder)
- Mobile applications overlay historical images and literary information on real-world locations.

**“The first step towards technology, we already have a touch screen, we have one video, I have the intention of adding more images and so on. That you can be a person who is there to see something else that you can't explain to them, but it doesn't make sense to print and laminate images if you have the option of a screen. I think that would be very helpful”**  
(Interview with stakeholder)

## A new example product could be: Exploring Dublin while visualizing film and literary scenes

- Virtual Reality (VR) for Full Immersion
- Creating VR experiences to visit iconic literary locations

A new example product could be:  
Reliving scenes from Dracula in a gothic Irish-inspired virtual environment

## Interactive Storytelling with Mixed Reality

- Interactive tours when visitors meet literary or historical characters through holograms - a new example product could be engaging with Bram Stoker's characters in dynamic digital narrative

### 3D Historical Reconstructions

- Digitally recreating libraries and other historic sites that are no longer accessible - a new example product could be: Immersive 1920s Dublin to explore James Joyce's era .

**“....to be open minded about introducing new technologies and innovative things in literature tourism”**  
(Interview with Stakeholder)

### Immersive Digital Mapping

- Interacting maps combining geolocation and literary content
- Multisensory experience in Literary Museum
- Technology integrating sounds, lighting, and VR to stimulate writer's environment
- James Joyce Museum using VR
- A new example product could be: Discovering local stories by following curated literary trails
- Educational video games
- Games based on literary works to promote engaging learning experiences
- A new example product could be: An interactive adventure by W.B Yeats poetry and stories
- Hybrid events with VR/AR streaming
- Literary festivals offering VR lectures or readings for global remote participation

**A new example product could be:**

**Celebrating Bloomsday in virtual reality with worldwide audiences.**



*Figure 6: Streedagh Beach Sligo, Copyright: Sligo Tourism as seen in the TV series Normal People, by the author Sally Rooney*



ICELAND



05

## | Film Induced Immersive Tourism in Iceland



### Policy, Practice and Case Studies: A State of the Art

Icelandic film production has steadily grown since the 1980s, both regarding domestic and international film production, and has become a thriving industry in Iceland. To put the development into perspective, around 40 films were produced in Iceland between 1906 and 1980, while over 300 films have been produced, in whole or in part, in Iceland since 1980 (Kvikmyndavefurinn, n.d.). Iceland has also increasingly become a popular filming location with international production companies, especially since the turn of the century. Iceland's nature and its versatility has captured the imagination of filmmakers and filming locations around the country are now in the dozens, although most can be found in South or Southwest of Iceland.

The Icelandic government has supported this development by providing funding for the Icelandic Film Centre and by a reimbursement scheme, which was first enacted in 1999, that offers refunds of production costs for films and television shows filmed in Iceland. The main objective of the scheme is to promote and develop Icelandic film production, as well as “contribute to the strengthening of national culture and the promotion of the country's history and nature” (Alþingi, 2022). Furthermore, the reimbursement scheme is intended to attract international film productions to Iceland. With this goal in mind, the Film in Iceland project was launched shortly after to market Iceland as a filming location and promote the 35% reimbursement of production costs incurred in Iceland (Film in Iceland).



*Figure 7 True North: Night Country with Jodie Foster was largely filmed in Iceland. Copyright: HBO.*



## Iceland Featured in Domestic and International Films and TV Shows

The promotional efforts that have been enacted in the past couple of decades has given great results. The annual turnover of the film industry in 2023 according to VAT-reports by Statistics Iceland was 27.7 billion ISK, which is an 85% increase in the past five years, and it is estimated that the industry creates around 4000 jobs (Stjórnaráð Íslands, 2022; Hagstofan, n.d.). Iceland and Icelandic landscapes have featured in a variety of international films such as Star War's The Force Awakens (2015) and Rogue One (2016), Batman Begins (2005), The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013), Interstellar (2014), and Marvel's Thor: The Dark World (2013) and Captain America: Civil War (2016). Two popular HBO series have been filmed in Iceland. Game of Thrones (2011-2019) was filmed in a few locations around South and North Iceland from the 4th series onwards, and the 4th series of True Detective: Night Country (2024) was entirely filmed in Iceland. Icelandic TV series filmed in Iceland have also gained international attention, such as Trapped (2015-) and Netflix's Katla (2021). The exposure Iceland gains through these filming locations seems to have an impact, as around 30% of inbound tourists to Iceland in 2023 stated that Icelandic nature featured in international movies and tv shows influenced their decision to visit the country (Ferðamálastofa, 2024).

## Film Tourism in Iceland

The exposure Iceland experiences due to the filming locations of international films can, and have, translate into increased interest from tourists to visit the filming locations themselves. Icelandic travel agencies have offered both guided and self-drive tours themed around Game of Thrones, and other notable filming locations for years. One of the first Game of Thrones tours offered came about through increased requests from interested tourists and travel agencies abroad who wanted a way to visit these sites (Vilhjálmstöttir and Jóhannstöttir, 2022). Likewise, after the success of Netflix's Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga (2020) entrepreneurs in Húsavík, a town in in North Iceland where parts of the movie were filmed and one of the songs were named after, offered walking tours of film locations and opened a themed pop-up bar. Today, Húsavík has a permanent [Eurovision exhibition](#) with costumes from both the movie and from previous Icelandic Eurovision contestants (ibid). These examples show that tourists are interested in visiting filming locations in Iceland and the possibilities for using that interest to attract guests to your destination or tourism business are many and varied.



*Figure 8 Costumes from Eurovision Song Contest: The Story of Fire Saga on display at the Eurovision exhibition in Húsavík, Iceland (Copyright: Vera Vilhjálmstöttir).*

## | Literary Induced Immersive Tourism in Iceland

### The Sagas: Iceland's Cultural Heritage

Iceland has a long literary history, starting with the old Icelandic Sagas detailing the lives of the early settlers in Iceland from around the 9th to mid-11th centuries. There are forty Sagas in all, with the oldest preserved manuscript being from the 13th century, and are considered one of Iceland's greatest cultural heritages.

The stories do not have named authors but are based on a long tradition of oral storytelling and are to an extent a retelling of stories about real people and events that took place during the first centuries of Nordic settlement in Iceland.

Therefore, many destinations in Iceland are linked to the old Sagas and inspire tourists to visit the setting of their favourite Sagas. This includes, among others:

- A reconstruction of Eiríksstaðir in West Iceland of the home of Eirik the Red and Leif the Lucky, and the house is used as a venue for reenactments and storytelling in order to bring the old story to life.
- Grettislaug and Jarlslaug are two natural geothermal pools in North Iceland that where visitors can still bathe during the summer. Grettir the strong is said to have used the pool, according to Gretti's Saga, to warm up after swimming to shore from the island Drangey.
- Not far from Grettislaug, is the 1238: Battle of Iceland exhibition in Sauðárkrókur. The exhibition offers an immersive experience, where visitors can take part events and battles depicted in Sturlunga Saga through VR headsets.
- A newly opened manuscript exhibition in Reykjavík, World in Words, where visitors can view the old manuscripts and learn more about the Icelandic Sagas, poems, and how Icelanders used to live.



*Figure 9 A guest trying the VR experience at the 1238: Battle of Iceland exhibition in Sauðárkrókur, Iceland (Copyright: 1238).*

The Sagas take place all over Iceland, and there are many opportunities unexplored to bring the stories to life for visitors. As there are not many remaining structures visible from this time, immersive technology could be an innovative way to showcase certain events from the old Sagas. The director of the DMO for South Iceland named, as an example, the QR codes that can be found along the Búðaslóð-path in Þingvellir National Park for visitors to experience how certain locations along the path might have looked like 1000 years ago through AR. Þingvellir were the location of Iceland’s annual summer parliament from 930 to the mid-1200s, and the parliament gatherings are featured in many of the Icelandic Sagas.

**“We as Icelanders have maybe a vague picture in our head from textbooks and such, so we have an understanding of the history, but it was perhaps difficult for foreign guests to imagine. So, I think this has lifted the place a little bit, and it’s a way to tell a story about our history and culture”**

(Interview with stakeholder)

## Modern Icelandic Literature, Festivals, and Opportunities

Modern day Icelandic literature also plays a big part in Icelandic society. Reykjavík has been an UNESCO City of Literature since 2011. As the capital of Iceland, it has a very active literary scene with events, festivals, and bookfairs. The oldest and largest festival is the Reykjavík International Literary Festival that has been held since 1985. Reykjavík is also the setting for many modern Icelandic fiction. The Reykjavík City Library organises Literary Walks in Reykjavík, both guided group tours and audio-guided tours that people can access through their smart devices. And around the city QR codes can be found on benches for those who want to listen to stories or poems that are connected to the location. It is also a significant business in Iceland, with the annual operational income relating to literature in 2021 being 8.4 billion ISK (Hagstofa Íslands, 2023). In recent years, many Icelandic authors have gained popularity abroad, perhaps especially crime writers such as Arnaldur Indriðason, Yrsa Sigurðardóttir and Ragnar Jónasson, whose books have been translated into many languages. To celebrate this genre and “darkness in all its forms”, the Iceland Noir literary festival is held annually in Reykjavík during winter.



*Figure 10 Gljúfrasteinn, the Laxness museum, is located in the author's old home in Mosfellsbær (Copyright: Gagaráin).*

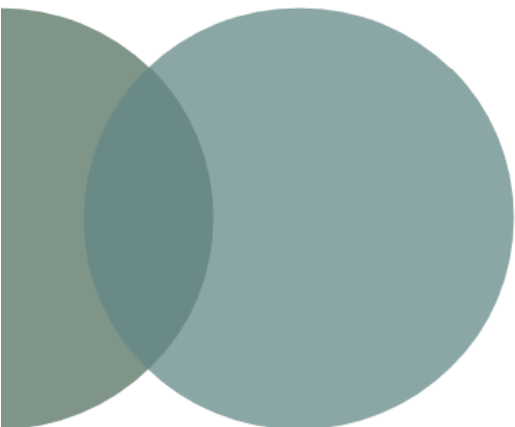
**However, it is not just in Reykjavík that modern literature is celebrated:**

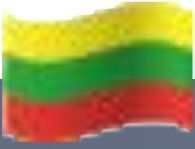
- At Gljúfrasteinn in Mosfellsbær, the life and literature of Iceland’s Nobel Prize author Halldór Laxness (1902-1998) is celebrated in his old home. There visitors can see his house and visit an exhibition that uses digital solutions to educate visitors about the author’s life and works.
- Þórbergssetur is a cultural centre in Southeast Iceland that has an exhibition centred around the famous Icelandic author Þórbergur Þórðarson (1888-1974), his life and his works. The centre is located at his birthplace of Hali in Suðursveit.
- In Akureyri in North Iceland, an exhibition in honour of the Icelandic author Jón Sveinsson can be found in Nonni’s House who wrote the popular Nonni books, that have been translated into many languages as well as being filmed.
- Bókabæir austanfjalls is a project between five towns in South Iceland with the aim of strengthening literature and culture in the area. They organise events, workshops, book fairs, and poetry nights where poets from different backgrounds come and read their poems in their native languages.

As this short overview shows, Iceland’s long and rich literary history, both old and new, provides ample opportunities for tourism SMEs to create innovative destinations or recreation for their guests. In collaboration with the authors, scenes or characters from books can be brought to life in imaginative ways all around Iceland. In general, it’s about developing an idea and creating a story to tell your guests – then think about how best to realise your ideas.

**“We want all ideas, we don't care, good or bad. Bad ideas are also good to work with. Then you narrow it down to something that might work. We then need to think about whether it's complicated or expensive or has been done before. We try to do something that's original too. Up til this point, we are not thinking about the technology. Once the ideas are there, we look at what technologies could be suitable. We always try to find the simplest way to solve it, because it's the most economical. And the simplest to maintain”.**

(Interview with stakeholder, an immersive technology business in Iceland)





# LITHUANIA

# 06

## | Film Induced Immersive Tourism in Lithuania



### The Growth of Lithuania's Film Industry and its Impact on Tourism Development

Lithuania's film industry has experienced remarkable growth, positioning itself as a competitive global player in film production. This success is driven by government initiatives, professional expertise, and the country's unique ability to serve as a versatile filming destination. Alongside economic contributions, the film industry has played a significant role in enhancing Lithuania's cultural profile and driving tourism.



*Figure 11 Immersive exhibition at VILNIUS TECH "LinkMenų fabrikas"  
(Copyright: VILNIUS TECH "LinkMenų fabrikas").*

### Industry Growth and Vilnius Film Office's Role

Vilnius, Lithuania's capital, has been at the heart of the country's film industry development, thanks to the establishment of the Vilnius Film Office on November 23, 2011. This office provides comprehensive support to filmmakers, including free location permits, access to public spaces for filming, location scouting, and connecting filmmakers with local film professionals, service companies, and production facilities. These efforts aim to position Vilnius as one of the most filmmaker-friendly cities globally.



*Figure 12 Virtual production in action: a set snapshot from filming at VILNIUS TECH "Faux Real studio"  
(Copyright: VILNIUS TECH "LinkMenų fabrikas")*

The Vilnius Film Office promotes the city as an ideal filming destination due to its accessibility, diverse architecture, and cost-effective services. Filmmakers have praised the quality of its infrastructure and services, with notable figures like Jeremy Irons, Woody Harrelson, John Malkovich, and Helen Mirren highlighting the high level of professionalism and excellent working conditions in Vilnius. The city's compact size allows for efficient logistics, with most filming locations reachable within 30 minutes.

## Vilnius as a Filmmaking Destination

Vilnius has carved a niche among filmmakers by offering a multifaceted historical backdrop that spans various periods, from the medieval and Renaissance eras to the Soviet period. This versatility has attracted major productions, including HBO's *Chernobyl*, Netflix's *Stranger Things* and *Young Wallander*, and Sky's *Catherine the Great*. The city's ability to portray diverse settings has been particularly beneficial for productions requiring historical accuracy. For instance, *Catherine the Great*, featuring Helen Mirren, used Vilnius to recreate 18th-century St. Petersburg. The Trakų Vokė manor doubled as Catherine's quarters, Vilnius University portrayed the Council Chamber of the Russian Empire, and the Writers' Union became the Empress's private staircase. These examples showcase Vilnius's capacity to transport viewers across different eras and regions, enhancing its appeal as a filming destination.



*Figure 13* Trakų Vokė Manor (Copyright: Go Vilnius)

## Economic Contributions and Tourism Impact

The introduction of the Film Tax Incentive in 2014, offering rebates of up to 30%, has significantly bolstered the Lithuanian film industry. By 2023, this initiative had generated €21.08 million in non-reimbursable funds, supporting 101 productions, including major international projects. The film industry in Vilnius contributed €202.2 million to production costs between 2017 and 2021, creating 19,000 jobs and paying €51.7 million in salaries (Lithuania.lt, 2024). The growth of the film industry has also fuelled film-induced tourism. Productions like *Stranger Things* filmed at locations such as the century-old Lukiskes Prison, and Chernobyl shot in Vilnius, have attracted global audiences. This phenomenon has bolstered tourism by drawing visitors to these iconic filming locations, creating opportunities for local businesses and further enhancing Vilnius's reputation.

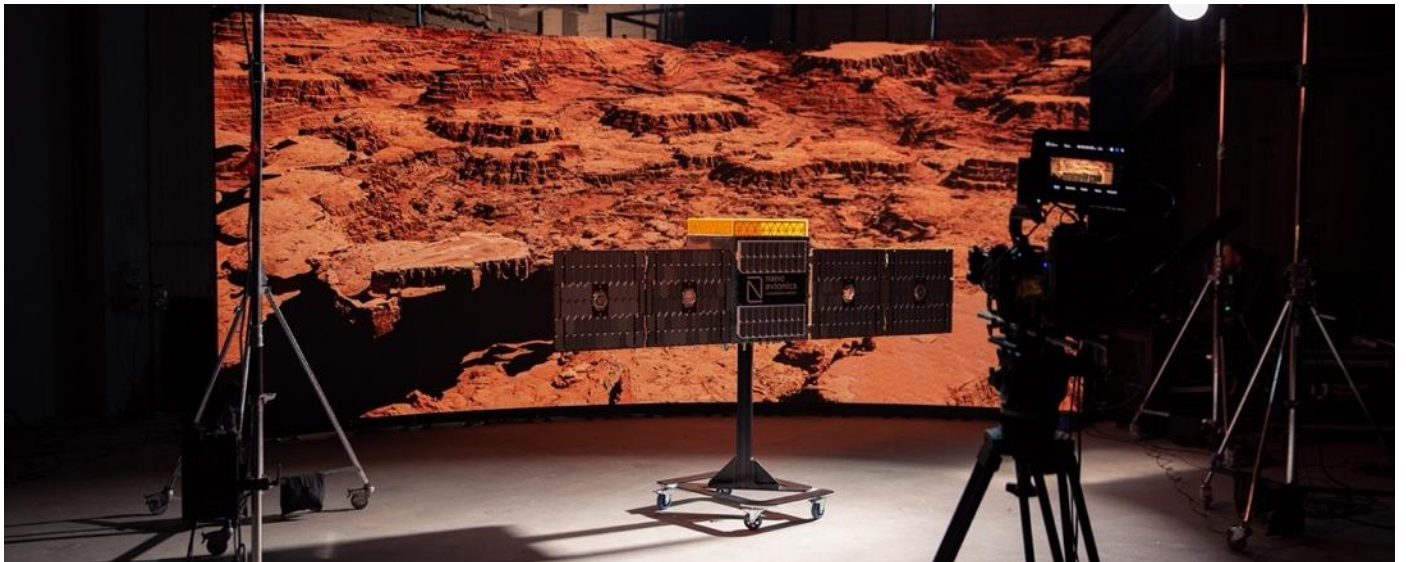
## Prospects

Lithuania's cinema market is projected to reach \$46.76 million by 2024, growing at an annual rate of 3.92% through 2029 (Statista, 2024). Continued investments in film infrastructure and tax incentives will solidify the country's position as a global filming hub. Additionally, strategic marketing of film locations and collaboration with the tourism sector will maximize the economic and cultural benefits of the industry.

The Lithuanian film industry exemplifies how strategic policies, and local expertise can transform a sector into a driver of economic growth and cultural enrichment. Vilnius has emerged as a premier filming destination, offering a combination of historical versatility, cost-effective production, and professional infrastructure. By leveraging its growing reputation and strengthening ties between film production and tourism, Lithuania is poised to become an even more prominent player on the global stage.

Recently, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University has opened the country's first virtual production studio of its kind – VILNIUS TECH "Faux Real Studio." The studio aims to become a virtual production hub for education and filmmakers in Europe and seeks to help minimize the existing skills gap in virtual production and related technologies. According to Rūta Račaitė, Producer at VILNIUS TECH's virtual production studio "Faux Real Studio," professionals should have a broad range of technical and soft skills. As she states, "First and foremost, it's important to understand that the process leading to the final result involves several departments and specific people." This includes everyone from storytellers and visionaries to programmers and 3D modelers. Likewise, a wide range of soft skills is required: "Soft skills include communication, which is crucial – not only to clearly express how you feel during the process but also to communicate needs, deadlines, and expectations. Communication is one of the main skills. A strong sense of responsibility is also essential. While money or grades may serve as motivators, a strong internal sense of responsibility ensures high-quality results. Self-criticism is another vital skill, as is the ability to accept constructive criticism." Račaitė believes that new filmmaking technologies, such as virtual production, can significantly contribute to improving tourism "In tourism, it can be incredibly beneficial, especially when films involve time travel – a common theme among modern filmmakers. For instance, recreating a 20th-century Vilnius Old Town would not only be valuable for filmmakers but also for tourists. With VR, visitors could explore historically accurate environments, offering an immersive experience of walking through locations they've seen in a film. I'm not sure how much further it can be improved, but the technology is already evolving and expanding its possibilities. It's about knowing how to use it effectively. AR and VR can significantly enhance the experience by making it interactive and immersive, allowing users to look around and engage with the environment in a way static images cannot."





*Figure 14 Virtual production in action: a set snapshot from filming at VILNIUS TECH “Faux Real studio”  
(Copyright: VILNIUS TECH “LinkMenų fabrikas”)*

**“Technology is already evolving and expanding its possibilities. It’s about knowing how to use it effectively. AR and VR can significantly enhance the experience by making it interactive and immersive, allowing users to look around and engage with the environment in a way static images cannot”  
(Interview with Stakeholder)**



*Figure 15 Virtual production in action: a set snapshot from filming at VILNIUS TECH “Faux Real studio”  
(Copyright: VILNIUS TECH “LinkMenų fabrikas”)*

## Literary-Induced Immersive Tourism in Lithuania

Literary-induced immersive tourism, which invites visitors to engage with locations associated with literature and authors, is a growing niche in Lithuania's cultural tourism sector. This form of tourism offers a unique opportunity to explore the country's rich literary heritage through curated experiences, historical sites, and modern literary festivals.

*“With the renovation of the house this year, we have also upgraded the digital content, with one projection and 2 screens, on which it will be possible to scroll through the content .... At the same time, we have also supplemented our offer with tablets, on which guests will be able to read more about the wines that we also sell in the wine shop. They can put these wines, I don't know, on a list and then we will prepare a package for them, they can save it so that they can come and get the wine later.*

*They will also be able to scan the labels in the wine shop and then learn more about the production of wine and the winemaker who produced this wine. We are also preparing a kind of digital sommelier, who will also help guests in choosing the right wine, if, for example, they want to prepare something relevant for eating and then choose a wine or ask them according to their wishes and based on that we will be able to choose the appropriate wines in this way”*

(Interview with Stakeholder)

## Current Landscape of Literary Tourism in Lithuania

Despite its global popularity, literary tourism in Lithuania is relatively underdeveloped. The phenomenon bridges past and contemporary cultures, offering diverse experiences for audiences. However, there remains a lack of infrastructure and awareness to support structured literary tourism in the country (Ilgarūbytė, 2020). One key player in promoting literary tourism is Vilnius, the nation's capital and cultural hub. It hosts numerous independent bookstores, international literary festivals, and events like book launches and readings. The Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, operational for over a century, is another notable institution. The city also organizes the International Vilnius Book Fair, the largest in the Baltic States, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2025 (Vilnius Literature, 2021).



*Figure 16 International Vilnius Book Fair 2025 (Copyright: Vilniaus knygu mugė)*

## Vilnius: A Unesco City of Literature

In 2021, Vilnius was designated as a UNESCO City of Literature, a prestigious recognition of its vibrant literary scene and commitment to literature as a central aspect of cultural life. This designation reflects Vilnius's dedication to fostering literary creativity, hosting literary events, and supporting the publishing industry (Cities of Literature, 2021).

The designation has further elevated Vilnius's global profile, showcasing it as a destination for literary enthusiasts. It emphasizes the city's focus on integrating literature into public spaces, such as Literatų Street, where plaques and artwork honour writers with connections to the city. The vibrant literary scene is complemented by modern infrastructure, making Vilnius a literary destination that blends heritage with innovation.

## Key Literary Sites and Experiences

- **Literatų Street:** This iconic street in Vilnius serves as an open-air gallery dedicated to authors with ties to the city. Adorned with over 200 decorative plaques, it is a must-visit for literary enthusiasts.
- **Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum:** Located in Kaunas, this museum celebrates the works of prominent Lithuanian writers. Established in 1936 in the home of poet Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis, it offers an intimate look at Lithuania's literary history.
- **International Literary Festivals:** Events such as the Vilnius Book Fair and the Poetic Druskininkai Fall expand Lithuania's reach to international audiences, bringing together authors, publishers, and readers.



*Figure 17 Literatai Street (Copyright: Go Vilnius)*

## Challenges and Opportunities

While Lithuania's literary tourism is growing, it faces challenges such as limited global recognition and a lack of structured offerings. Addressing these requires creating thematic literary trails, interactive guided tours, and programs connecting visitors to the country's literary legacy. Collaborative efforts between cultural institutions and tourism boards are essential to establish Lithuania as a literary tourism destination (Ilgarūbytė, 2020). The designation of Vilnius as a UNESCO City of Literature and the presence of significant literary landmarks demonstrates Lithuania's potential to become a key destination for literary-induced immersive tourism. By leveraging its literary heritage, fostering public-private partnerships, and promoting innovative tourist experiences, Lithuania can position itself as a vibrant hub for literary enthusiasts worldwide.

**“I think empathy is important because you will have guests who maybe meet the first time with something technological”**  
(Interview with stakeholder)



DENMARK

07



## | Film Induced Immersive Tourism in Denmark

### Policy, Practice and Case Studies: A State of the Art

Denmark has a rich cultural heritage that spans film, literature, and digital innovation. The country has long been a key player in the European creative industries, with world-renowned filmmakers such as Lars von Trier, Susanne Bier, and Nicolas Winding Refn, as well as a strong tradition of literature that includes Hans Christian Andersen and contemporary crime fiction authors like Jussi Adler-Olsen and Sara Blædel. The Danish tourism industry has increasingly recognised the value of leveraging these creative assets to attract visitors. In recent years, film and literary tourism have gained traction, with immersive technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) beginning to play a larger role in enhancing visitor experiences. According to VisitDenmark, the national tourism organisation, the integration of immersive technologies in cultural tourism is still emerging but holds significant potential:

**“Visitors are looking for experiences that are both engaging and educational. AR and VR can bring history, literature, and film locations to life in ways that traditional tours cannot” (Interview with stakeholder)**

Government initiatives have supported digital transformation in the tourism sector, including funding for projects that explore interactive and digital storytelling. Denmark has also been an early adopter of sustainable tourism, ensuring that immersive experiences align with environmental and cultural preservation goals.



*Figure 18: 2024, Statue and Castle of Hans Christian Andersen, Copenhagen, Denmark*

## | Danish Film as a Driver of Tourism

### The Situation in Danish Literary Tourism

Denmark has been home to internationally acclaimed films and TV series that have contributed to its status as a desirable filming and tourism location. The Nordic Noir genre, which includes series such as *The Killing* (*Forbrydelsen*), *Borgen*, and *The Bridge* (*Broen/Bron*), has captivated audiences worldwide.

The success of these productions has led to growing interest in visiting filming locations. Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Malmö (Sweden) have seen an increase in guided tours tailored to fans of Nordic crime dramas. A stakeholder from a tour company offering film-based experiences noted:

**“Nordic Noir has created an entire subgenre of tourism in Denmark. Fans want to see where their favourite scenes were filmed, and immersive technologies can help us reimagine these locations as they appeared in the shows”**

(Interview with stakeholder)

Additionally, internationally acclaimed films such as *Another Round* (*Druk*), winner of the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film in 2021, have further solidified Denmark’s place on the global cinematic map.



*Figure 19: Colorful Nyhavn Waterfront in Copenhagen, Denmark*

## Government and Industry Support for Film Tourism

Denmark has been home to internationally acclaimed films and television series that have contributed to its status as a desirable filming and tourism location. The Danish Film Institute (DFI) plays a crucial role in promoting Denmark as a filming destination. It provides funding and incentives for filmmakers, which indirectly supports film tourism by attracting international productions to shoot in Denmark. One of the key financial incentives is the Danish Film Production and Distribution Support Scheme, which helps fund both domestic and international projects filmed in Denmark. This aligns with the country's tourism strategy, as increased global visibility leads to heightened interest in visiting film locations.

## | Immersive Technologies in Film Tourism

Danish tourism stakeholders have begun integrating immersive experiences into film tourism. Some notable developments include:

- **AR-based film location tours:** Visitors can use their smartphones or tablets to view scenes from famous movies or TV shows as they explore real-world locations.
- **VR experiences in museums and cultural sites:** Digital reconstructions of historical film settings enable visitors to step into key moments from cinematic history.
- **Interactive storytelling apps:** Apps allow users to follow a self-guided tour while receiving narrated insights and digital content related to films shot in Denmark.



*Figure 20: Facade of Axel Towers in Copenhagen, Denmark*

An expert from a Danish tourism technology company highlighted:

**“Denmark is at the forefront of digital innovation, and we are seeing increasing interest in AR and VR as tools for storytelling. This is especially important in tourism, where immersive experiences can engage visitors in unique ways.”**

(Interview with stakeholder)



## | Literary Tourism In Denmark

### Hans Christian Andersen: Denmark's Literary Icon

No discussion of literary tourism in Denmark would be complete without mentioning Hans Christian Andersen. The world-famous fairy tale author's legacy remains a cornerstone of Danish cultural tourism. Visitors to Denmark frequently seek out locations associated with Andersen, including:

- Odense, his birthplace, which features the Hans Christian Andersen Museum and various statues and landmarks inspired by his stories.
- Copenhagen's Nyhavn, where he lived for many years, and where guided literary walks introduce visitors to his life and works.
- The Little Mermaid statue, inspired by Andersen's fairy tale, remains one of Copenhagen's most iconic tourist attractions.

A representative from the Hans Christian Andersen Museum noted:

***"Our visitors are not just looking for history - they want to experience Andersen's stories firsthand. We are integrating more interactive exhibits and exploring the use of AR to bring characters to life."***

(Interview with stakeholder)

### Crime Fiction and Modern Literary Tourism

Beyond Hans Christian Andersen, Denmark has also gained international recognition in crime fiction tourism. Cities like Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Roskilde have been featured prominently in best-selling Danish crime novels, particularly those of Jussi Adler-Olsen (The Department Q series) and Sara Blædel (The Louise Rick series).

**Guided tours focused on crime fiction tourism have become popular among literary enthusiasts, with interactive elements such as:**

- Augmented reality crime scenes where visitors can scan locations with their phones to reveal information about key events in books.
- Escape room-style experiences based on famous Danish crime novels.

***"Crime fiction tourism is growing in Denmark, and we see great potential in using AR and VR to create more immersive experiences. Tourists love the idea of stepping into the world of their favourite books."***

(Interview with stakeholder)



*Figure 21: The Little Mermaid Bronze Statue at the Langelinie Promenade in Copenhagen, Denmark*

## | Opportunities for Immersive Literary and Film Tourism in Denmark

### Growing Demand for Interactive Experiences

Danish stakeholders agree that tourists are increasingly seeking experiences that go beyond traditional sightseeing. The integration of immersive technologies offers a way to engage visitors in a deeper, more interactive way.

- AR-enhanced book trails could allow readers to explore locations while accessing extra content, character insights, and exclusive author interviews.
- VR recreations of historical events could transport visitors to key moments in Danish literary and film history.

A stakeholder from the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces commented:

***“We are exploring new ways to engage visitors using digital technology. The potential for integrating AR and VR into cultural tourism is enormous.”***  
(Interview with stakeholder)

## Challenges to Implementation

Despite the enthusiasm, some challenges remain in implementing immersive tourism experiences:

- High development costs for AR/VR applications.
- The need for technical expertise among tourism operators.
- Balancing digital enhancements with authenticity.

However, tourism professionals remain optimistic about overcoming these barriers through collaboration and investment.

**“We need to ensure that technology enhances rather than replaces the experience of visiting these locations. The key is using digital tools to deepen engagement rather than distract from the cultural significance.”**

(Interview with stakeholder)



*Figure 22: Baroque altarpiece with sculptures of angels in catholic cathedral, Copenhagen, Denmark*

## | Conclusion

Denmark is well-positioned to leverage immersive technologies in film and literary tourism. With its strong creative industries, commitment to digital innovation, and rich cultural heritage, the country offers numerous opportunities for enhancing visitor experiences through AR, VR, and AI. Stakeholders recognise the potential for growth in immersive tourism and are working towards integrating digital storytelling into tourism strategies. While challenges remain, the Danish tourism sector is embracing innovation to create interactive, engaging, and sustainable tourism experiences for future generations.



# SLOVENIA

# 08



## The Situation in Slovenian Literary Tourism

Literary tourism in Slovenia is still developing, despite its rich literary heritage. Interest in this field has increased in recent years, especially in academic circles. Despite the many literary attractions, such as memorial houses, literary trails, and museums, visitor numbers remain low. Literary tourism in Slovenia is part of cultural tourism and is often considered a subgenre of heritage tourism, although it has the potential for independent development. (Žnidar, 2015), (Spevan, 2015). The most frequent visitors to literary tourism destinations are school groups and domestic tourists.

## Destinations and Events Related to Literary Tourism in Slovenia and Examples of Good Practice

Slovenia offers several literary destinations that are related to the life and work of important authors. Ivan Cankar was born in 1876 in Vrhnika. He wrote works of social criticism intertwined with symbolism and is the most important prose writer of Slovenian literature. There are no immersive technologies in the memorial house, nor are there any plans to do so, as they are of the opinion that there is no place for them to present such an important writer, or the presentation of his work and life would be curtailed. France Prešeren was born in Vrba in 1800. He was the most important poet in the Slovenian language environment, his poems are imbued with pessimism towards love, and he also expresses homeland themes.

The seventh stanza of his song *Zdravljica* (Drinking toast) is the Slovenian national anthem. He lived in Ljubljana and Kranj and studied in Vienna. In Vrba, his birthplace is arranged for tours, where there is no digital or immersive content. In the house in Kranj, where he lived and the content is dedicated to his work and life, they have QR codes with links to his poems available for visitors. Primož Trubar was born in 1508 in Velike Lašče. In 1550, Primož Trubar published the *Alphabet* and the *Catechism*, which were the first books to be printed in Slovene language. Due to the importance of this event for the Slovenian language, 31 October is a Slovenian national holiday, as Trubar was a reformer and without the Reformation, these two books would not have existed. His birth house and the mill next to it in Velike Lašče are decorated with rich cultural content, related to literature and the Slovenian language, but without digital, immersive content. There are many smaller places in Slovenia where memorials or birthplaces of Slovenian literary authors are arranged, but they do not offer immersive content.



*Figure 23: The guide in Cankar House, disguised as Ivan Cankar*

Ljubljana, as a UNESCO City of Literature, is a central literary centre with events such as the Ljubljana Literary Festival. The festival successfully promotes books and reading as part of its cultural identity (Žnidar, 2015) (MGRT, 2022). In the last decade, Maribor has been interesting because of the authors Drago Jančar and Tone Prtljič, who set the events of their novels in Maribor and its surroundings. Tonja Jelen (literary guide) and Dijana Božić created 14 literary maps around the city.

Among the internationally recognized literary events are the Slovenian Book Fair and Fabula Festival in Ljubljana, the Days of Poetry and Wine in Ptuj, and the Vilenica International Literary Festival in Vilenica. Successful examples in literary tourism also include the Slovenian Writers' Route, which has been connecting literary places and promoting sustainable tourism since 2013. The trail expands from year to year and help, plans and other information for visiting places and hiking trails can be found on the website.

**“We did set up a web page. [www.ivancankar.si](http://www.ivancankar.si).  
It's still in Slovenian. We still need to work on it”**  
(Interview with stakeholder)

Literary tourism destinations do not offer or very rarely and to a very limited extent (only QR codes) digital or immersive content. From all the above, it follows that Slovenia has the potential to introduce immersive technologies in the field of literary tourism, as it already has a very extensive network of destinations related to literary creators and characters.

## Opportunities for the Development of Literary Tourism in Slovenia

**“When I imagined this literary map myself, that is, I was still a child and even then the technology was not so developed, but somewhere in my head I had the idea that it could be one little man or one figure that basically appears here in Maribor, as an expression, that could lead around Maribor.”**

(Interview with Stakeholder)

Slovenia has a great untapped potential for the development of literary tourism. Key opportunities include better promotion in international markets, digitalization of literary content and the integration of literary themes into sustainable tourism products. Sustainable development, including the involvement of local communities, can increase the attractiveness of literary tourism (Žnidar, 2015) (MGRT, 2022). The development of literary tourism also requires international recognition of the Slovenian literary space. Slovenia's participation in the 75. Frankfurt Book Fair in 2023, where it was the central guest, the same as a year later in Bologna were important booster for Slovenia as a literary destination.

This was supported by one of our stakeholders

**“I think cultural tourism and using digital solutions could appeal to a wider audience. Tourists are a diverse group and have diverse interests. So, this could appeal to some of our visitors to Iceland and would be a good addition to the nature experiences”.**



*Figure 24: Kranj, the city of the most important Slovenian poet France Prešeren*

The Slovenian Tourism Strategy 2022–2028 identifies the digital transformation of tourism as one of the horizontal priorities. The strategy emphasizes the use of digital tools to promote destinations. (MGRT, 2022). There is great potential in literary tourism in Slovenia and many untapped opportunities, often mainly due to the lower interest in the literature of younger generations, who are close to such technologies. As a result, the leading content designers of these places remain older and have difficulty embracing technology and often see it as a threat to reduce the number of visitors or lose their jobs, such as tour guides. Those individuals who are fond of literature and technology are breaking new ground now.

## **The Future and Development of Literary Tourism in Slovenia and the use of Immersion Technologies in the Future**

The Slovenian Tourism Strategy for the period 2022–2028 envisages a greater emphasis on cultural tourism, including literary tourism. The objectives include improving the quality of services, increasing accessibility and connecting literary themes with other tourism sectors. With appropriate support, literary tourism can become an important part of Slovenia's cultural offer, which contributes to the international recognition of the country (Žnidar, 2015) (MGRT, 2022).

The first time an immersive technology company was asked to prepare a plan for immersive contents of an author's birthplace was in 2024, but it still needs to be selected in a competition for the project to be carried out. Slovenia is the only country in Europe that has a public holiday and a day off dedicated to culture, February 8th, the day of the death of France Prešeren, the most important Slovenian writer.

**“Now our idea of implementing immersive technology in literary tourism in Maribor is basically VR glasses and a stationary bicycle, so basically you're in one place and you see all the sights from one book”.**

(Stakeholder)

## **| Film Induced Immersive Tourism in Slovenia**

### **Situation in Slovenian Film Tourism**

Film tourism in Slovenia is a relatively new phenomenon and has not yet reached its full potential. Despite some efforts and favourable geographical and cultural conditions, it remains underdeveloped. The main reasons include the lack of promotion and networking among key stakeholders such as film productions, tourism organizations and local communities (Turnšek, 2022) (Požun, 2017). According to the Slovenian Tourism Strategy for the period 2022–2028, the emphasis is on raising the profile of Slovenia as an attractive destination for film productions, which could contribute to greater tourist interest (MGRT, 2022).



## Destinations and Events Related to Film Tourism in Slovenia

Slovenia offers numerous destinations where domestic and international films have been filmed. The most recognizable example is the Soča Valley, where scenes for the film *The Chronicles of Narnia* were filmed. Scenes for the Netflix series *The Witcher* were filmed in Nanos, Kranjska Gora and Predjama Castle, scenes for the film *The Union* in Piran, *Endless Storm* in Krvavec and many other natural locations in Slovenia served as scenes from films. Ljubljana, as the capital, boasts a variety of venues that are attractive to filmmakers, including castles, bridges and old towns. In Gorizia and Brda, the popular TV show *One Noble Story* was filmed, which attracted many domestic visitors (Turnšek, 2022) (Požun, 2017).

## Examples of Good Practice in Slovenian Film Tourism

A successful example of film tourism in Slovenia was the promotion of the Soča Valley after the filming of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. This example shows how film tourism can increase the visibility of places and attract tourists interested in natural beauty and film production. Also, UNESCO's status as a city of literature is an incentive for linking literature and film into tourist products. (Turnšek, 2022) (MGRT, 2022) (Požun, 2017).



*Figure 25: Soča River, the location of many film and TV series filming*

## Opportunities for the Development of Film Tourism in Slovenia

Key opportunities for the development of film tourism include the improvement of filmmaking infrastructure, the development of interactive film museums and routes, and better cooperation between tourism and film institutions. Digitalisation and the use of new technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, could improve accessibility and experiences for visitors. (Požun, 2017) (MGRT, 2022).

## The Future and Development of Film Tourism in Slovenia

The future of film tourism in Slovenia is closely linked to the implementation of the 2022–2028 strategy, which emphasizes sustainable growth, the involvement of local communities and innovation in tourism. Increased support for film productions, including through financial incentives, and promotion on international markets can enable Slovenia to become an important film tourism destination (MGRT, 2022).

**“Digital solutions can be used in a variety of ways, as most people have a smartphone with them, that could open many avenues for increased use of, for example, augmented reality. It’s just the next step in telling stories”**

(Interview with stakeholder)



*Figure 26: Film under the stars, Ljubljana*



# FUTURE TRENDS

# 09

## | Future Trends in Immersive Film and Literary Tourism

### Augmented Reality Possibilities

One of the most immediate opportunities is the enhancement of guided tours using AR applications. In literary tourism, cities with strong literary heritage, such as Dublin (home to James Joyce's *Ulysses*) and Vilnius (a UNESCO City of Literature), can develop AR-based walking tours that overlay digital content onto real-world locations. Visitors could use their smartphones or AR glasses to see historical authors narrate their works, explore 3D reconstructions of past cityscapes, or interact with animated literary characters. Similarly, in film tourism, AR apps can bring famous movie scenes to life at shooting locations. For example, an AR tour of Dubrovnik, widely recognized as King's Landing from *Game of Thrones*, could allow visitors to see iconic scenes unfold before their eyes while standing in the actual filming spots.

### Virtual Reality Possibilities

VR presents another major opportunity, particularly for locations with seasonal or accessibility challenges. Remote or off-season destinations, such as Icelandic film locations from *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* or *Game of Thrones*, can offer virtual reality experiences that transport users to breathtaking landscapes year-round. Museums and literary centres can develop VR experiences allowing visitors to "step into" scenes from famous novels or historical events. The Brontë Parsonage Museum in the UK, for example, could create a VR experience where visitors immerse themselves in the moors of *Wuthering Heights* as described by Emily Brontë.

### Other Possibilities

Gamification is another avenue for immersive tourism, offering interactive and engaging ways to explore destinations. Mobile-based scavenger hunts or AR treasure hunts linked to literary works or films could be developed for cities with strong storytelling traditions, such as Edinburgh, the setting of *Harry Potter*. Players could follow clues, interact with virtual characters, and unlock exclusive digital content related to the city's literary and cinematic history. Scenes from *Harry Potter* were also filmed in Ireland, which offers possibilities to the Irish industry.

Live performances and holographic projections also hold potential for immersive tourism. The use of holograms to bring authors or historical figures back to life has already been tested successfully in museums. For example, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London could incorporate holographic performances to recreate how plays were staged in the 17th century. Similarly, VR re-enactments of iconic film moments—such as the Colosseum battles from *Gladiator*—have been developed for visitors in Rome. One of our stakeholders did investigate the use of VR *"Yeah, we had looked at VR goggles and, you know, right back in the early days, but you know, what we needed was numbers"*.

For SMEs, these immersive solutions provide cost-effective ways to compete in a global tourism market. Digital experiences do not require extensive physical infrastructure and can be monetized through app downloads, VR content subscriptions, and partnerships with tourism boards. EU funding programs, such as Horizon Europe and Digital Europe, also provide financial support for innovation in cultural and creative industries, making it easier for businesses to develop and scale immersive tourism products.

**“Most people have cameras on their phones so using QR codes to get this extra experience or that diverts you to a website with more information does not hurt and is not something people need to download an app for. And with the cameras, there are a lot of opportunities to enhance the visitors’ experience through these digital means. There are new generations who are starting to travel who are more receptive to these kinds of things, and who could be interested in learning in this way. However, older people are becoming more technologically savvy, more so than just 10 years ago”**

(Interview with stakeholder)



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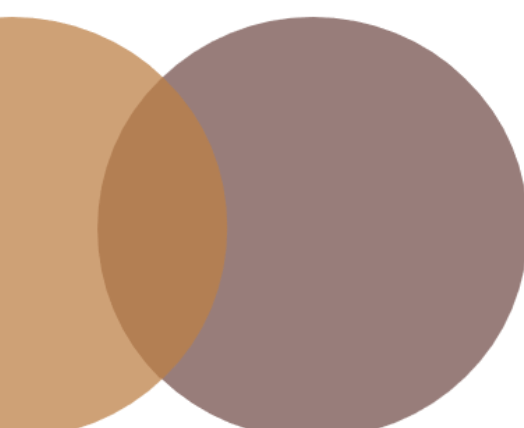
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A man in a dark hoodie and shorts is walking away from the camera on a paved path. The path is lined with large, mature trees with thick, gnarled trunks and dense green foliage. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the path.

# UPLIFT

Upskilling in Immersive Literature and Film Tourism

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