



Together Means More Effective: Open Calls for Proposals for NGOs Support Sustainable Tourism

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Better alignment of services with residents' needs and the development of local tourism initiatives as an alternative to mass tourism are just some of the advantages of cooperation between local government and the third sector. Organizations active in tourism and sightseeing have been successfully benefiting from this form of city support for several years.

Kraków Fortress Days, the Kraków Craft Trail – Masters, and the Historic Kraków Culinary Trail are among the most popular tourism projects funded by the city since 2024. They are attracting growing interest from both residents and tourists looking for experiences beyond the usual routes. Their development is made possible by open calls for proposals for NGOs—an instrument that genuinely supports sustainable tourism.

Firstly, the broadly understood third sector—NGOs and organizations operating under the Act on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism—possesses specialized knowledge and experience. The local government, in turn, provides stable organizational and financial frameworks. This combination makes it possible to create new, improved solutions or raise the standards of existing projects.

Secondly, such cooperation strengthens social dialogue and allows for a better understanding of residents' needs. This is particularly important in the context of the challenges posed by the rapid growth of tourism. Dispersing tourist traffic—both in time and space—helps relieve pressure on the city center. Kraków offers many opportunities for exploration year-round, also beyond the Main Market Square or Kazimierz district. Kraków Fortress Days illustrate this well: the September event connects history enthusiasts with residents of various districts. A similar idea is pursued by the “Masters” trail and the historic culinary trail, developed in collaboration with experts and local communities.

Thirdly, partnerships between local government and NGOs foster the creation of innovative initiatives that enrich the city's tourism offer. Operating close to local communities, organizations can quickly identify needs and trends, which makes it easier to allocate resources effectively to projects promoting heritage, thematic trails, sightseeing events, or educational activities.

Kraków has extensive experience in cooperating with the third sector, as evidenced by its long-standing programs and industry consultations. Since 2024, the Tourism Department has also had a dedicated pool of funds for projects in tourism and sightseeing. From just two competitions held in 2024, their number has increased to four in 2026. Once again, through an open call for proposals, an NGO was selected to implement the 5th edition of Kraków Fortress Days. Decisions are still pending regarding the continuation of the Kraków Craft Trail – Masters, the Historic Kraków Culinary Trail, and the City Helpers project. The pool of ideas remains open—any eligible organization can submit its concept and discuss it with department staff.

3All competitions in the field of tourism and sightseeing planned for 2026 are available in [the Public](#)



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Information about them is also published on the following websites: [Op/eP_n calls for proposals, 2026 - Tourism Department - Official Municipal Service "Magiczny Kraków"](#), as well as www.krakow.pl, www.turystykakrakow.pl, and on [social media](#).

The Municipality of Kraków encourages third-sector organizations active in tourism and sightseeing to submit their ideas and participate in the competitions. Sustainable tourism in Kraków is only possible when it is shaped collectively—as a result of cross-sector cooperation.

This article continues a series of publications by the Municipality of Kraków on the state of tourism in the city. The articles aim to systematize key concepts and phenomena and to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of Kraków's tourism based on data. They also encourage active participation in social dialogue between residents, entrepreneurs, and local authorities.