Be.CULTOUR: "Beyond CULtural TOURism: human-centred innovations for sustainable and circular cultural tourism"

Deliverable 3.1

Protocol/Methodology for human-centred innovation in sustainable and circular cultural tourism

Version 1.0

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Abstract

The Be.CULTOUR Protocol/Methodology provides methodological guidelines for the Be.CULTOUR Community: it clarifies the project's concept, approach, theoretical framework and overall methodology. This Protocol/Methodology develops a comprehensive methodological basis to establish and guide the activities of the Heritage Innovation Networks (HIN). It ensures that the methodological and conceptual Be.CULTOUR approach is adopted throughout the innovation processes across the different territories. Thus, this Protocol/Methodology provides methodological guidance and support also to the local stakeholders throughout the different stages of the human-centred innovation process.

This Protocol/Methodology includes guidelines for an in-depth identification, selection, and engagement of key stakeholders for the Heritage Innovation Networks, in order to obtain a fair representation of all relevant groups including minority cultures and marginalised social groups. The objective is to ensure that expectations are met for each stakeholder group, thus ensuing the effectiveness of the co-creation process. These guidelines for the identification of stakeholders take into account both the needs of the local level and its context as well as those of the entire project.

The Be.CULTOUR Protocol/Methodology is divided into two parts: this document represents the first release (v1) focused on the Actions Plans development (M1-18) and will be integrated in the second part of the project (v2) with the detailed methodology for the development of circular cultural tourism innovative solutions. The Protocol/Methodology aims to become a working guide for human-centred innovation in sustainable cultural tourism through Heritage Innovation Networks. This first version identifies the key concepts, the overall process, phases and activities, and the actors involved that represent the main elements of the project methodology. The second version will focus on the tools to be used for the innovation process.

Partners involved in the document

Participant No	Participant organisation name	Short Name	Check if involved
1 Coordinator	CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE DELLE RICERCHE, Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development	CNR IRISS	X
2	European Regions Research and Innovation Network	ERRIN	X
3	ICLEI Europe – Local governments for Sustainability	ICLEI	X
4	Iniziativa Cube S.r.l.	INI	
5	Uppsala University	UU	
6	Haute Ecole ICHEC - ECAM - ISFSC	ICHEC	
7	Open University of the Netherlands	OUNL	
8	APT Basilicata	APT-BAS	
9	Diputación Provincial de Teruel	PGT	
10	Larnaca and Famagusta Districts Development Agency	ANETEL	
11	Laona Foundation	LAONA	
12	Västra Götaland region	VGR	
13	Stalna Konferencija Gradova I Opstina	SCTM	
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15	Verde e Moldova	VEM	

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1   Introduction

The Be.CULTOUR Protocol/Methodology provides methodological guidelines for the Be.CULTOUR Community: it clarifies the project's concept, approach, theoretical framework and overall methodology. This Protocol/Methodology develops a **comprehensive methodological basis to establish and guide the activities of the Heritage Innovation Networks (HIN)**. It ensures that the methodological and conceptual Be.CULTOUR approach is adopted throughout the innovation processes across the different territories. Thus, this Protocol/Methodology provides methodological guidance and support also to the local stakeholders throughout the different stages of the human-centred innovation process.

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Be.CULTOUR research and innovation activities are structured into five technical work packages (WPs) as follows:

WP1 - Innovative statistical methods, tools and indicators for sustainable cultural tourism impacts assessment;

WP2 - Creation of synergies and efficient use of ESIFs and other EU funds for neighbouring regions for sustainable cultural tourism;

WP3 - Co-creation of human-centred innovations and Action Plans for sustainable cultural tourism;

WP4 - Building Be.CULTOUR Community of Interest in European and neighbouring regions;

WP5 - Exploitation of Be.CULTOUR innovative solutions, dissemination and communication.

This document includes detailed guidance and information on specific activities to be conducted in WP3 and WP4, as well as the overall theoretical framework in which all WPs are grounded, which is developed in WP1. The second release will include details on the activities to be conducted especially in WP3 and WP5 with the Hackathon and Accelerator programme, with additional details on the activities that will be implemented and replicated by mirror innovation ecosystems in WP4. WP1 and WP2 are meant to support the activities of co-development and implementation of the Action Plans and innovative solutions, providing data, insights, indicators and key information and knowledge to inform the decision-making processes in pilot and mirror sites.

1.1 Document structure

The document is structured as follows:

Section 1 introduced the objectives of the Be.CULTOUR Protocol/Methodology, specifying the contents of the first and second release;

Section 2 presents the theoretical framework of the project, specifying the objectives, key concepts and approaches, and includes guidelines for stakeholders' identification in the Pilot Heritage Sites;

Section 3 presents the overall methodology, and summarizes the activities to be conducted throughout the four stages of the project, the Innovation Areas, the innovative approaches to circular cultural tourism as well as the identified emerging trends;

Section 4 specifies the four levels of engagement of the Be.CULTOUR Community, namely amongst the project partners, the Community of Practice, the Community of Interest, and the Learning Community. It, describes the activities to be conducted and the expected results;

Section 5 focuses on the mentoring structure: it defines the role of Mentor partners in supporting the local coordinators of the Heritage Innovation Networks in the implementation of the project's methodology, with particular attention to the Action Plan co-creation process;

Section 6 provides details on the Action Plan specific methodology, including the guidelines for stakeholders' engagement, the structure of the "collaboration pacts" as a basis for the establishment of Heritage Innovation Networks in Pilot Heritage Sites, as well the structure and process of the three Local Workshops to be organized in the pilot areas;

Finally, Section 7 outlines some first conclusions in view of the second part of the Protocol/Methodology which will be released in the second part of the project.

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2 Be.CULTOUR concept and ambition

Be.CULTOUR stands for "**Beyond CULtural TOURism: Heritage Innovation Networks as drivers of Europeanisation towards a human-centred and circular tourism economy**". It expresses the goal to move beyond tourism through a longer-term *human-centred* development perspective, enhancing cultural heritage and landscape values.

Cultural tourism entails opportunities but also risks. Tourism as a whole can be a highly volatile economic sector. If not managed properly, cultural tourism can also easily turn into a "value extractive" industry, generating negative environmental, social and cultural impacts on local communities and ecosystems. This project will **develop specific strategies to promote an understanding** of cultural tourism, which moves away from a "stop-and-go" consumer-oriented approach towards one that puts humans and circular economy models at its centre, paying attention to nature, communities and cultural diversity. **"Place"**, intended as the *genius loci*, the ancient spirit of the site expressing its "intrinsic value" and **"people" as co-creators** of its uniqueness, culture, art, tradition, folklore, productivity, spirituality, as well as its "time space routine", are the focus of Be.CULTOUR, which aims at realizing a longer-term development project for the pilot areas involved.

Wide and diversified partnerships of stakeholders from **6 pilot and 16 additional mirror innovation ecosystems in EU and non-EU countries** of Northern-Central and Southern Europe, the Balkans, the Eastern neighbourhood and the Mediterranean, are the driving force of the project. A **community of 300 innovators** (which includes regional authorities and municipalities, clusters and associations, museums and tourist boards, entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, citizens, researchers, practitioners as well as project partners) in the **6 pilot regions** will **co-create innovative place-based solutions for human-centred development through** *sustainable* **and** *circular* **cultural tourism**.

Collaborative "**Heritage Innovation Networks**" are going to be established in **6 European deprived remote, peripheral and deindustrialised areas and cultural landscapes** identified as "**Pilot Heritage Sites**": committed to the project's objectives, they have defined clear cultural tourism related challenges requiring innovation that will serve as the basis for the collaboration with **16 additional "mirror innovation ecosystems"**. Mutual learning and up-scaling of business solutions will be the objectives of the collaboration between pilot and mirror ecosystems, building the sustainability of the project's results beyond its lifetime (WP4).

By adopting a human-centred quadruple/quintuple helix approach to co-design, **Be.CULTOUR will result in 6 community-led Action Plans**, **18 proposals of human-centred innovative solutions** and **6 close-to-market prototypes** of circular cultural tourism integrated services and products: these will directly contribute to **inclusive economic growth, communities' wellbeing and resilience, and nature regeneration** in pilot and mirror sites, **stimulating effective cooperation** at cross-border, regional and local level. The core partners of the Consortium will progressively build Be.CULTOUR's sustainability by broadening the interregional collaboration, while anchoring it to relevant EU initiatives in the academic, business and institutional realms.

In a nutshell, Be.CULTOUR results can be listed as follows.

6 community-led Action Plans to promote sustainable and circular cultural tourism in the Pilot Heritage Sites of Vulture in Basilicata-Matera region (Italy), the Cultural Park of the Rio Martin in Aragon region (Spain), Larnaca rural cultural landscape (Cyprus), Forsvik and Rydal industrial heritage sites in Västra Götaland region (Sweden), Bac, Irig and Sremski Karlovci historic cities in

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[Vojvodina region](#) (Serbia), and along the [Cultural Route of Stephan the Great and Saint at the cross-border of North-East Romania and Moldova](#) (WP3);

To support the implementation and monitoring of Action Plans, novel methods for **tourism flows metabolisms assessment** will be created, in line with a circular economy approach in cultural tourism. The **multidimensional impacts of cultural tourism** will be assessed employing **innovative statistical methods, tools and key performance indicators**, identifying advanced **IoT systems and big data management tools** applicable in pilot and mirror heritage sites (WP1);

Action Plans will be completed with the **scouting of funding alternatives** to allow effective implementation, up-scaling and long-term sustainability in pilot regions. Based on the experimentations conducted, the project will develop **policy recommendations for the effective use of European Structural Investment Funds (ESIFs), pre-accession and other EU funds** adopting a practitioners' perspective. Be.CULTOUR will go even beyond the current use of EU funds and will develop a **proposal of the evolution of ESIFs** in sustainable cultural tourism sector through **synergies with other public and private funds**. Moreover, it will implement **innovative financial tools,** such as Hybrid Pledge Fund to support the local start-ups ecosystems in the cultural tourism sector, and Project development assistance (PDA) to support regions, cities, municipalities or groupings of those in developing bankable sustainable cultural tourism projects, mobilising regional/local stakeholder (WP2).

At least **18 place-based solutions (3 in each Pilot Heritage Site)** will be defined taking into account the **Innovation Areas** identified in the project (WP3). The innovative solutions selected will enter the **Be.CULTOUR Innovations Accelerator programme**: **6 of these will be selected** in the frame of an **international Hackathon to be conducted at ICHEC business school in Brussels, and awarded with the possibility to prototype and test close-to-market services/products** for sustainable and circular cultural tourism in Pilot Heritage Sites (WP5).

Last, but not least, **the 6 Be.CULTOUR innovative solutions** will be fully exploited by developing **circular business models** (i.e. inspired from the Flourishing Business Canvas; Strongly Sustainable Business Model; Inclusive Business Model) and business plans, concretely contributing to the **implementation of the circular economy and circular city/territory model through cultural tourism** in Europe and beyond (WP5).

2.1 Be.CULTOUR objectives

The overarching goal of **Be.CULTOUR** is to **co-create and test sustainable human-centred innovations for circular cultural tourism** through **collaborative innovation networks/methodologies and improved investments strategies.** Targeting deprived remote, peripheral or deindustrialized areas and cultural landscapes as well as over-exploited areas, local **Heritage Innovation Networks** will co-develop a long-term heritage-led development project in the areas involved enhancing **inclusive economic growth, communities' wellbeing and resilience, nature regeneration** as well as **effective cooperation** at cross-border, regional and local level.

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Specific Objectives

The scopes of the Be.CULTOUR project will be achieved through a set of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-constrained (SMART) specific objectives:

Objective 1 – **To assess the impacts and market potential of sustainable and circular cultural tourism** at national, regional and local level through **multidimensional quantitative and qualitative indicators, innovative statistical methods and advanced smart data management systems** (WP1);

Objective 2 – **To build a Community of Practice** of 6 pilot innovation ecosystems (WP3) and a **Community of Interest** with at least 12 "mirror innovation ecosystems" (WP4) in EU and non-EU countries actively engaged in **knowledge-sharing and exploitation of Be.CULTOUR's approach, methodology, tools, and innovative solutions for sustainable and circular cultural tourism**;

Objective 3 – **To co-develop 6 Action Plans for sustainable and circular cultural tourism** by establishing **collaborative "Heritage Innovation Networks"** in 6 Pilot Heritage Sites in Northern-Central and Southern Europe, the Balkans, the Eastern neighbourhood and the Mediterranean (WP3);

Objective 4 – **To co-develop, prototype and test human-centred and place-specific product, process and service innovative solutions for sustainable and circular cultural tourism** in Pilot Heritage Sites (WP3, WP5);

Objective 5 – **To provide policy recommendations for more effective use of European Structural Investment Funds (ESIFs) and other EU funds** to support cultural tourism innovation ecosystems in pilot and mirror regions, and develop a proposal of evolution of ESIFs through synergies with other public funds (WP2);

Objective 6 – **To contribute to deepen cultural Europeanisation** through information and educational activities focused on the European history, identity and culture expressed in tangible and intangible cultural heritage and cultural landscapes, developing European Cultural Routes and European Heritage Labels in Pilot Heritage Sites (WP5).

2.2 Be.CULTOUR circular cultural tourism framework

Circular cultural tourism in Be.CULTOUR project defines a **sustainable and regenerative cultural tourism model** that aims to foster **sustainable and equitable regional development** implementing a **"human-centred" circular economy** model through the **enhancement of abandoned, underused and less-known cultural and natural resources, enhancement of human capital and human rights, reduction of tourism pressure on over-exploited territories, reduction of wastes and natural resources consumption (energy, water, soil, biodiversity), increase of clean energy and green transport means, recycling and reuse of materials and products, and enhancement of locally based food and craft productions – finally empowering local communities, enhancing ecosystems, enhancing local identity, wellbeing, health and cultural diversity, and enhancing local entrepreneurial innovation ecosystems through cultural tourism**.

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The Be.CULTOUR framework and definition of **circular cultural tourism** is based on the following main **concepts**:

- **Circular economy in cultural tourism**
- **Human-centred design & development**
- **Cultural tourism as driver of Europeanisation**

Moreover, the implementation of the theoretical framework is grounded on the concepts of **Innovation Ecosystems** and **Open and Collaborative Innovation**, through which the Be.CULTOUR model can be realized. Local "Heritage Innovation Networks" are thus identified as the "cells" of circular innovation in each territory, from which new ideas and solutions can be spread across the whole territorial innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The key concepts of the **Be.CULTOUR framework** are briefly summarized in this section, while next section presents the concepts of **Innovation Ecosystems and Open and Collaborative Innovation** and how they are applied in the Be.CULTOUR project.

2.2.1 Circular economy in cultural tourism

Despite being classified as a service sector, producing immaterial services, **tourism** relies on huge quantities and flows of exhaustible natural resources and largely reflects a linear take-make-dispose production model (Manniche, Larsen and Broegaard, 2021). Tourism, if not properly managed, can become a very demanding economic sector and can be a source of pressure on local resources (Manniche et al., 2017), especially if based on the linear economy model of take-make-dispose (Fusco Girard and Nocca, 2017). Potential **negative impacts of tourism** are still less addressed as a threat to local communities. Tourism development can become a serious threat to the availability of **natural resources** (such as freshwater) and the **authenticity and integrity of a cultural heritage site**, with rapid changes in local economies which turn from being based on traditional craft and food productions and lifestyles to **"tourism-based" highly volatile economies**. The **Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism** (European Commission, 2007$_a$) already recognized the necessity to allow autonomous development of touristic destinations protecting in the meantime the environment and allowing the development of competitive economic activities. The recent publication on "The Future of Cities" (Vandecasteele et al., 2019) reports that **tourism is responsible for 9% of total annual water use in EU and this consumption is expected to rise**. According to Lenzen et al. (2018), **global tourism (before the Covid-19 pandemic) was responsible for about 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions**. Without reaching too detailed statistics, the need to manage the tourism sector sustainably is undeniable.

The **sustainability** concept was defined and used since seminal Brundtland Report (Brundlandt, 1987), stressing the need of maintaining economic growth within the limits of the regeneration capacity of natural resources. The sustainability approach has largely pervaded all economic sectors, including **tourism** activity. The last decades have witnessed the development and application of frameworks, indicators and other initiatives to promote the sustainable development of tourism destinations (WTO, 2004). At European level, one of the most systematic attempts to encourage that territories targeted as "touristic destinations" are managed in line with sustainability principles is the **ETIS** initiative (EU, 2016), which developed a set of **specific criteria and indicators of sustainable tourism** addressed to destinations managers.

Despite the call for more sustainable tourism practices able to reduce pressures on people and territories, the tourism sector continued growing, before the global stop in 2020 derived from the Covid-19 pandemic emergency. In **Europe**, the tourism sector represented the 12% of total

employment, with 23 million direct and indirect jobs, contributing to 10% of EU GDP and 2,4 million of business activities, of which over 90% are SMEs[1]. Countries such as Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy, are largely dependent on tourism as % of their national GDP. The impact of the Covid-19 outbreak showed the **fragility of national economies more dependent on tourism**. In this scenario, there is a call for a responsible recovery of the tourism sector from the COVID-19 crisis, which is founded on sustainability. The pandemic raised the awareness of the role of sustainability and its importance to underpin the **resilience of the tourism sector** (UNWTO, 2020).

Thus, the sustainability challenge in the tourism sector is twofold: on one side, there is a strong need to **reduce emissions, pollutions and other negative impacts of the tourism activity**; on the other side, there is the need of **diversifying local economies and the tourism sector itself**, moving from a 'stop-and-go', massive and extractive tourism model, indifferent to the place in which it is established, to a more sustainable tourism model which encompasses diverse types, periods and places of activity, overcoming seasonality, overcrowding and cultural touristification that can make the tourism experience in a destination an unsustainable and even stressful experience for both visitors and locals.

To reach the goals of sustainability in the tourism sector, **sustainable destinations** should strive to reduce pollution, wastes, CO_2 emissions, soil consumption, energy consumption, water consumption, mobility impacts, overexploitation of natural and cultural resources, and even overexploitation of people, for example tourism workers. However, *"given the continued inexorable growth of tourism, there seems to exist a gap between the conceptual ambitions of researchers and policy makers versus the practical changes among tourism businesses"* (Manniche, Larsen and Broegaard, 2021). The level of depletion of natural resources has reached a point in which a stronger action is needed to not only maintain, but also regenerate resources, reusing and recycling them for the longest time possible, giving raise to the "**Circular Economy**". In recent years, the concept of the circular economy (CE) and its **restorative and regenerative principles** for production and consumption has attracted growing attention among businesses, policy makers and researchers (Ghisellini, Cialani and Ulgiati, 2016; Kirchherr, Reike and Hekkert, 2017). The CE focuses on the "cradle to cradle" approach, avoiding "take-make-dispose" linear production-consumption patterns, and on "closing the loop" of resources consumption by recovering, reusing, recycling, refurbishing, reducing resources need, generating energy from renewable sources and avoiding greenhouse gas emissions (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2012, 2013). While the concept of sustainability is increasingly applied in tourism research, the implications of CE in tourism have not received much attention (Girard and Nocca, 2017; Manniche *et al.*, 2018; CEnTOUR project, 2021; Manniche, Larsen and Broegaard, 2021). With respect to sustainability concept, *"the CE goes further than calling for implementation of 'sustainable', 'green', resource effective and environment-friendly technologies in isolated links of production systems. It requires a broader and more comprehensive design of radically alternative solutions over the entire life cycle of products and adoption of closing-the-loop production and consumption patterns within the entire economic system. The CE relies on value creation through restoration, regeneration and re-use of resources, enabled by new types of business models and forms of consumption that discard ownership and rely on active 'users' rather than passive 'consumers'. Thus, the CE concept introduces an agenda for radical change, which involves and integrates the production and consumption sides of our societies"* (Sorin and Einarsson, 2020).

Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2013) states that *"CE implies the comprehensive design of radically alternative solutions over the entire life cycle of products within the entire economic system,*

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[1] European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism_en

encompassing technological, organisational, and social innovation throughout production and consumption systems". **CE relies on the generation of novel value cycles in which value is created through restoration, regeneration, and re-use** of all kind of resources. Hence, the precise definition of CE continues to be contested and its proponents use it differently. Homrich et al. (2018) define the circular economy as an "umbrella concept", encompassing other fields such es eco-design, regenerative design, blue economy, natural capitalism, industrial ecology and others (Homrich *et al.*, 2018). In another study, based on 114 different definitions available in the scientific literature, Kirchherr et al. (Kirchherr, Reike and Hekkert, 2017) conclude that *"a circular economy describes an economic system, based on business models which replace the end-of-life concept with reducing, alternatively reusing, recycling and recovering materials in production/distribution and consumption thus operating at the micro-level (products, companies, consumers), meso-level (eco-industrial parks, supply chains), and macro level (city, region, nation and beyond) with the aim to accomplish sustainable development, which implies creating environmental quality, economic prosperity and social equity to the benefit of current and future generations"* (pp. 224–225).

As clearly stated by Manniche et al. (2021), **"reformulating this definition into a catchphrase, one could say that *'Sustainability is the goal, Circularity a way'"***.

Thus, *"CE goes further than calling for implementation of 'sustainable', 'green', resource effective and environment-friendly technologies in isolated links of production systems. It requires a broader and more comprehensive design of radically alternative solutions over the entire life cycle of products and adoption of closing-the-loop production and consumption patterns within the entire economic system. The CE relies on value creation through restoration, regeneration and re-use of resources, enabled by new types of business models and forms of consumption that discard ownership and rely on active 'users' rather than passive 'consumers' […] Thus, fully understanding the CE and the economic and social dynamics through which businesses create and implement circular economy solutions requires **a larger transition system perspective**"* (Sorin and Einarsson, 2020), implying a **higher capacity of diverse stakeholders to cooperate** to reach sustainability targets in a circular economy model.

EU funded projects such as CIRTOINNO, European Tourism Going Green 2030, CEnTOUR and TOURISME recently provided compendiums of **circular economy practices in the tourism sector** (Manniche *et al.*, 2017; CEnTOUR project, 2021; Daddi, Khan and Bellini, 2021). Particularly, CEnTOUR categorized circular tourism practices according three **circular principles** of "designing out wastes and pollution", "keeping products and materials in use", and "regenerating natural systems", and according to the **9 Rs of circular economy**: Refuse, Redesign/rethink, Relocate, Replace, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose/repair, Recycle, Restore/regenerate. **Circular tourism practices** vary from tackling food wastes, banning plastics, using eco fibers, saving energy and water, and recycling soap at hotels, to integrating circular purchasing policies, generating energy through hydrogen, using eco-friendly water bottles, using recycled furniture, and many others.

It is also worth to note that **only few scientific studies have been published on "circular tourism"**. A search conducted on Scopus database of scientific literature in late July 2021 identified only 65 articles published mainly between 2017 and 2021, which explicitly addressed "circular tourism" or circular economy in tourism as keywords (Naydenov, 2018; Vargas-Sánchez, 2018, 2019; Cornejo-Ortega and Dagostino, 2020; Manniche, Larsen and Broegaard, 2021). Moreover, from the review of literature available, **only few studies focus on the interrelations between "circular economy and cultural tourism"**, while other streamed sectors are related to "agriculture and rural tourism", "renewable energy in the tourism sector", "circular hotels", "maritime sector and tourism", "resources consumption in the tourism sector", "Sustainable Development Goals", and "wastes generation in tourism" (Rodríguez, Florido and Jacob, 2020). Martinez-Cabrera and Lopez-

del-Pino (Martínez-Cabrera and López-Del-pino, 2021) highlight that **only some general circular economy challenge patterns are perceived as relevant in the tourism sector**, identifying 10 most crucial patterns in tourism, which can be relevant to address pandemic impacts in current and future scenarios. A number of recent studies focus on **challenges and barriers of implementation of the circular economy in the tourism sector** (Patti and Messina, 2019; Vatansever, Akarsu and Kazançoğlu, 2021). Ibn-Mohammed (Ibn-Mohammed *et al.*, 2021) conducted an extensive critical review of the **impacts of COVID-19 on the global economy and ecosystems and opportunities for circular economy strategies**, analysing the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic in the tourism sector. Questions arise when the concept of circular economy is focused mainly on reducing consumption. Sorensend and Baerenholdt (Sørensen and Bærenholdt, 2020) conducted a study involving 32 experts identifying barriers and **drivers of circular tourism**, finally asking *"Is less better?"*, as results highlighted that *"many suggestions were based on notions of less is better, such as less speed (walking, cycling, trains instead of planes, etc.), less distance (staycation, near-market tourism), less food, less luxury, and fewer trips. As one expert reflected in the study: "To do less of something will express a sustainable activity, but will not necessarily be an expression of a circular economy. The entire idea behind circular economy is that the level of activity can be maintained"*.

Practical examples such as Ecobnb are cited as a well managed **circular economy business models in the tourism sector** (del Vecchio *et al.*, 2021). Ecobnb proposes 6 strategies for implementing the circular economy in tourism: 1. Choose organic and km 0 Food from local farms; 2. Choose train, bike and eco-friendly cars; 3. Don't throw away but reuse and recycle; 4. Exploit renewable energy and recover rainwater; 5. Recycle wherever you are; and 6. Avoid single-use Plastic. Other **examples of application of circular economy principles and business models in the tourism sector** have been studied in Romania (Pamfilie *et al.*, 2018), Italy (Falcone, 2019) or more in general in **hospitality** (Julião *et al.*, 2019; Rodríguez-Antón and Alonso-Almeida, 2019) and in **agri-tourism clusters** (Joshi, Sharma and Kler, 2020).

While previous evidence and practice support the implementation of **circular economy principles for cultural heritage** (Fusco Girard and Gravagnuolo, 2017) and **sustainable tourism** (Grah et al., 2020; Patti and Messina, 2020; Manniche, 2017), **innovative multidimensional approaches to cultural tourism sustainability based on circular economy models still need to be developed and tested** across destinations with different levels of tourism development (demand and supply) and different challenges for heritage sustainable management and development. **Cultural heritage tourism** poses specific challenges that need to be addressed when applying **circularity approaches beyond the main focus areas of the tourism value chain** i.e. transportation, accommodation, food, place-based activities. The experiential nature of engagement with heritage in tourism encounters brings about changes within individual visitors and more broadly within society. **Circular economy models in cultural tourism** could be implemented considering two main aspects: the circularity "mindset", expressing a "circularity culture" between territorial stakeholders, residents and visitors of a destination, oriented to collaborative and cooperative processes for reusing, recycling, recovering resources, recognizing cultural and natural heritage as a "common good"; and the regeneration and adaptive reuse of cultural heritage resources, enhancing the territorial dimension of the circular economy. For example, the Horizon 2020 CLIC project[2] stressed the importance of reusing cultural resources, such as cultural heritage buildings, sites and landscapes, to move towards a circular development model in cities and regions (Fusco Girard and Gravagnuolo, 2017; Gravagnuolo *et al.*, 2017).

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[2] Horizon 2020 CLIC project, www.clicproject.eu

Hence, **going beyond** the specific tourism sector, it is possible to look at the concept of **circular economy from the city/territory perspective,** linking it to the reduction of negative externalities of urban metabolisms (Gravagnuolo et al., 2019). This implies also the establishment of **circular territorial development models** that can facilitate the transition towards resource-efficient cities. Indeed, the **Circular city** is "where we apply the concepts of circular economy, i.e. we manage waste, commodities and energy in smarter and more efficient ways. A Circular city results in **less pressure on our environment, new business models, innovative designs and new alliances and cooperation between different stakeholders**" (https://circular-city.eu/). From this perspective, circular cultural tourism can contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal, Sustainable Development Goals, The Leipzig Charter (LC1+LC2) and The Charter of European Planning by developing **innovative sustainable and circular cultural tourism integrated policies and practices, products and services** with a particular focus to the **environmental and cultural "carrying capacity"** of the touristic destination, enhancing decision-making at institutional, business and community level. Thus, Be.CULTOUR project aims to contribute to an "**integrated territorial development**" that takes into account the complexity of the territory both in the space and time.

In conclusion, **circular tourism** is an emerging concept still in its infancy, but with high potential of being developed also in the specific field of cultural tourism.

2.2.2 Human-centred design and development

The **European Commission Report on the "Human-centred city"** has recently highlighted the need for placing "people" at the centre of strategies for sustainable *human* development in cities and regions[3]. The objective of a "Europe closer to citizens"[4] means the need of more inclusive, "people-centred" urban/territorial development strategies, aiming at **enhancing people's wellbeing, health, identity, relationships, landscape** – towards enhanced community *resilience*. Be.CULTOUR adopts the **enhancement of the *human* dimension of sustainable development** as a key concept focusing on long-term *heritage-led* strategies of cities and territories development through cultural tourism.

While a "people-based" approach was already present in the European Agenda for Culture (European Commission, 2007b), in the Human-Centred City report it is stressed the importance of **involving citizens in Research & Innovation (R&I) actions, promoting skills (human capital) and fostering widespread participation** to address urban challenges. Through the **combination of "expert knowledge" and "local/common knowledge",** it is possible to create *"a city for citizens/inhabitants"* where citizens/inhabitants become *"city-makers"*.

Focusing on a *human-centred city* means, indeed, to develop an approach to urban/territorial planning that takes into account the **multidimensional wellbeing of citizens**, enhancing their **sense of belonging**, **responsibility, feeling of identity and civic pride**; consequently, *citizens become "actors"* and *spaces become "places"* (Fusco Girard et al., 2003). The challenge of human-centred development is to foster economic and technological development while **avoiding fracturing human bonds in the community** and this can happen through the **involvement of stakeholders in the co-creation of services and products through participatory governance and human-centred design of specific solutions**.

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[3] European Commission report on the Human Centred City: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5b85a079-2255-11ea-af81-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search
[4] Europe closer to citizens: https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities/programme/sessions/699_en

The human-centred dimension of Be.CULTOUR is expressed in the adoption of **human-centred design** and **design "for all"** approaches and tools, which enable to address **'special needs'** of people with temporary or permanent diversities, minorities and other niches of final users, putting the "person" at the centre of the development of innovative solutions. In this way, people can become **"shapers, makers and co-creators of their evolving city"** (European Commission, 2020).

Particularly, the ***"Human-centred" design (HCD)*** is adopted as a key approach to co-develop Be.CULTOUR innovative cultural tourism services and products. HCD is focused on the **'user'**, **assessing the needs and engaging the final users of new services, products, policies and practices** in the co-design and co-development phases. Recent tourism literature and practice places increasing emphasis on HCD in association with **experience design** as an emerging approach. HCD is used to refer to the designing process in which the needs, wants, expectations, and limitations of the end-users are given extensive attention at every stage of designing. HCD is based on the idea that designers do not design things/objects (i.e., products, services, environments, etc.) but the **users' experience** with these. In other words, as clarified by Tussyadiah (2014, p. 547), "design for tourism experience is not a matter of creating a tour package or staging a theme park, it means **designing the experiences** people will have, which typically includes **experiences associated with the senses, cognition, emotions, affect, and other values**". HCD has been advocated as a preferred approach for the development and marketing of sustainable tourism products (Font et al., 2019) and accessible heritage experiences (Marasco & Balbi, 2019), based on an in-depth understanding of implicit and explicit motivations, needs, behaviours of potential users.

Thus, the ***human-centred* approach** adopted in Be.CULTOUR places **real people and communities**, instead than an abstract 'consumer', at the centre of the **co-development of new services, products, policies and practices that respond to specific needs of longer-term integrated development strategies through personalized solutions**.

The **Human-centred approach** is relevant also in the perspective of **social impact assessment** in the sector, taking into account human rights. **Human rights** protection is no longer just an issue concerning international political arena and public opinion, but it has become matter for corporate governance and business management. Increasingly, a large majority of corporate executives nowadays believe that business is an important player in respecting human rights, and that what their companies do, or fail to do, affects those rights. This applies also as far as the cultural and tourism sector is concerned.

While generating income, tourism often undermines the rights of individuals working for tourist operators and for people in the tourist destinations. This includes the fundamental rights of those who hardly participate in tourism and receive no benefits from it, but whose lives are affected by its impacts. Companies need strategies in order to ensure that their **business activities support human rights** instead of violating them. As part of their due diligence, they are requested to apply this human rights approach all along their supply chain. As for instance, tourism businesses should incorporate the principle of human rights due diligence into their business policies. This includes: having a human rights policy; assessing the impacts of their business practices on human rights; monitoring and reporting on practices and progress, also taking responsibility for human rights violations occurring along their supply chain. Human rights might include the **rights of future generations** especially in relation to the access to natural and cultural resources, in line with the **circular economy model**.

Indeed, while many companies in the tourism industry have already started to embrace the sustainability agenda, the next challenge is to recognise that sustainability means also taking a human rights approach to business activities. Both smallest and largest tour operators, hotel groups

and travel trade associations, may negatively affect human rights under several perspectives. For example, tourism models that exacerbate the competition for scarce resources – such as water, food, and land –, that create exploitative labour conditions, or ignore the needs of the local population have a negative impact on human rights. Therefore, it is pivotal that tourism businesses become familiar with the connections of their economic activities and supply chains with various aspects of human rights: this means recognising and addressing the multiple human rights impacts and issues associated with them. The most important standard developed in international realm in this respect is represented by the **United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)** (United Nations, 2011).

The **UNGPs** have rapidly become the most important standard in the Business and Human Rights arena, and as far as their content, they rely on three Pillars: a) the **State duty to protect human rights** from abuses by third parties, including business enterprises; b) the **corporate responsibility** to respect human rights and c) the **access to remedy for the victims**. While the UNGPs are not a legally binding instrument, they provide the internationally agreed reference framework clarifying corporate responsibility to respect human rights wherever businesses operate in the world.

Specifically, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights requires that **businesses prevent their activities from adversely affecting human rights**, and provide remedy in case of negative impact. Such a corporate responsibility refers not only to their own acts or omissions, but also to the negative impact on human rights which is directly linked to their operations, products or services by virtue of their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts. According to the Guiding Principles, this means, that companies should act with **human rights due diligence** in all of their business activities.

2.2.3 Cultural tourism as driver of Europeanisation

In the **Sustainable Cultural Tourism recommendations paper of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018**, initiative n.5 on Heritage and Tourism, the European Commission highlights the important role of *sustainable cultural tourism* defined as "*the integrated management of cultural heritage and tourism activities in conjunction with the local community creating social, environmental and economic benefits for all stakeholders, to achieve tangible and intangible cultural heritage conservation and sustainable tourism development*". Scholars, policymakers and practitioners highlight the need to increase the potential of **cultural tourism in Europe as an opportunity to learn about common European culture and history**.

Engaging with **cultural heritage can help create awareness of, and pride in, historic and cultural values**, as showed by the results of the special Eurobarometer 466 on attitudes and opinions of people in the EU on cultural heritage. **Cultural heritage** is a key resource for the transition towards a *sustainable* cultural tourism, especially in relation with **less known heritage assets** that, if empowered, could enable longer-term sustainable development - also through a more efficient management of cultural visitors flows (European Commission, 2019). **Cultural tourism** can be an opportunity to enhance the **"sense of place"** as a strong leverage for **deepening the European identity**. Europeanisation means to recognize common "roots" within local identities and specificities, **recognizing the unique symbolic, historic, cultural, social, spiritual values of European populations**, which are expressed in exceptional "places", landscapes, languages, traditions and arts.

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Be.CULTOUR aims to broaden the understanding of Europeanisation, from a discourse on institution-building and policy-transfer, to a concept of inclusiveness based on shared histories and acceptance of new perspectives as new layers of multiculturism that enriches the tourist experience. The European Commission and the Council of Europe (2011) demonstrated the economic potential of **cultural routes**, highlighting how they can **promote the image of Europe** and **make known places full of potential** but often on the edge of knowledge.

Innovative approaches are needed to fully untap **cultural tourism's potential as a driver for cultural Europeanisation** and **sustainable growth** (Loulanski and Loulanski, 2011). Two key principles are consistently evident in the scientific literature (Landorf, 2009, 2011) and policy recommendations (European Commission, 2019): the adoption of **holistic strategic approaches** that balance all dimensions of sustainable development in the longer-term; the participation of multiple stakeholders and, in particular, **community empowerment as a cornerstone of the development process**. **New forms of collaborative inter-organizational relationships and structures between public, private and civic/voluntary sectors are needed** rather than traditional hierarchical approaches, based on **new skills in entrepreneurship, negotiation, networking and relationship management** (Landorf, 2011). Research emphasizes, in particular, the **crucial role of collaborative multi-agent relationships and structures** in relation to **service innovation** (Errichiello and Marasco, 2017; Marasco *et al.*, 2018) and cities facing **overtourism challenges** (Coca-Stefaniak, 2019; Plichta, 2019). Collaborative multi-stakeholder approaches are crucial for **developing more networked approaches to the management of cultural tourism destinations beyond urban hubs, incorporating small towns and cultural resources** nearby (Coca-Stefaniak and Seisdedos, 2020).

2.3   Collaborative Innovation and Innovation Ecosystems[5]

Collaborative innovation has been defined as the pursuit of innovations across firms' boundaries through the **sharing of ideas, knowledge, expertise and opportunities** (Ketchen *et al.*, 2007). It can encompass a broad spectrum of external parties (e.g. customers, suppliers, competitors, universities and research institutes) and cover a range of **collaboration forms and approaches** in relation to an interactive, distributed and open nature of innovation (Chesbrough, 2003), including **alliances, partnerships, networks and cooperative agreements** (Feranita *et al.*, 2017). The **co-innovation paradigm** is built on principles of **convergence** of idea/services/products of several organisations (public, private, third-sector), **collaboration** on shared purposes, and **co-creation** of experience with stakeholders (Lee et al., 2012).

Recent years witnessed a growing interest into collaborative innovation as an approach to **enhance public innovation by engaging multiple private, public and civil actors** (Wegrich, 2018). This phenomenon has gained momentum also in **tourism and hospitality**, where fierce competition makes collaboration and innovation essential for firms' and destinations' competitiveness (Hall and Williams, 2008; Sundbo *et al.*, 2007). A review of research highlights the importance of collaborative innovation as a driver of (Marasco *et al.*, 2018): superior performance (e.g. profitability) and innovativeness of tourism firms; new service market outcomes, new service development speed, quality of new services; democratized citizenship and creative practices for the innovation of urban tourism concepts/services; destination competitiveness through new or improved services and smart innovations; knowledge sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge among different stakeholders in networks; spin-offs and spill-overs.

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[5] This section is based in part on Marasco et al. (2018).

Research and practice stress the relationship between collaboration in tourism innovation and the implementation of sustainable tourism. In this context, **collaborative innovation through co-creation and co-design of sustainable products, services and experiences** is key for capturing needs of visitors and their contribution in the creation of sustainable tourism products and sustainable customer experience design (Font et al., 2018).

Following this approach, Be.CULTOUR includes the **creation of networks of actors** with different backgrounds and capabilities, contributing to regional and local cooperation. This is coherent with the Open and Collaborative Innovation approach through the organization of **"Heritage Innovation Networks" (HIN)** in Pilot Heritage Sites to **co-create new products and services for cultural tourism through end-users' engagement, adopting a Human-Centred Design (HCD) approach**.

Heritage Innovation Networks comprise stakeholders from the innovation ecosystem of the region. The notion of innovation ecosystem has been thriving over the past decade, passing from being a more analytical notion used in the research realm to a fully-fledged European funding programme launched in the frame of the Framework Programme Horizon Europe.

The ecosystem metaphor comes from an ecological understanding of the environment: "ecosystems are communities that have the ability to adapt to the environment they are facing. Their component parts interact with each other and can perform different tasks, change, and evolve. **Applied to innovation, ecosystems involve researchers, entrepreneurs, industry, and society in general and attempt to take full advantage of their innovation potential.** The environment context helps to encourage cooperation, networking, brainstorming, funding, and skills among the building blocks of the system" (European Commission Joint Research Centre, 2020).

In addition to the multi-stakeholder approach, the **place-based dimension of ecosystems is crucial to fully embrace how innovation varies from place to place**. 'An innovation ecosystem consists of a group of local actors and dynamic processes, which together produce solutions to different challenges' (Oksanen and Hautamäki, 2014). **Innovation takes place in a precise location, which suggests that the physical proximity of innovation players matters**. Also, that there are certain specific local conditions, which, individually or combined, make such an innovation ecosystem flourish. There is also a dynamic process — often not easily recognisable from outside — that makes such innovation ecosystems develop. This poses the question who those sustaining such a process are – either we call them either animators, facilitators, or orchestrators (European Commission Joint Research Centre, 2017).

Bringing together these different notions into one methodology, Be.CULTOUR aims at developing a specific approach to the **co-creation of innovative solutions and Action Plans for circular cultural tourism** which can support the consolidation of new forms of collaboration.

2.3.1 Heritage Innovation Networks

The concept of **"Heritage Innovation Networks" (HIN)** in the Be.CULTOUR project is grounded into existing literature in the field of service innovation and in the research area of collaborative innovation in services and in tourism.

Literature has shown the important role of **collaborative relationships for innovation in services** in relation to the **open innovation perspective** (Gallouj & Djellal, 2010), including public-private partnerships, dyadic collaborative relationships between customer and provider and networks involving different stakeholders in the generation, development and exploitation of new and/or improved services. Research in this area has also stressed the importance of collaborative

innovation as an approach to **enhance public innovation by engaging multiple private, public and civil actors** (Desmarchelier et al., 2020; Sørensen and Torfing, 2012; Wegrich, 2018).

With specific regard to **tourism**, an emerging body of research emphasizes the crucial role of **collaborative multi-stakeholder relationships for innovation** in light of the specific features and challenges of this sector (Marasco et al., 2018; Errichiello and Marasco, 2017). Indeed, seminal contributions on **tourism innovation** highlighted the importance of networks and other formal or less formal constellations to increase the **innovation capacities of small- and medium-sized enterprises** (Hjalager, 2002) that represent the vast majority of enterprises in this sector. Research also stressed the role of **networks' efficiency in knowledge transfer and innovation in tourism destinations** (Hjalager, 2002; Shaw and Williams, 2009) and the importance of **relationships with customers for the creation of new products and services** (Hjalager and Nordin, 2011) and for the **co-design of experiences** (Campos et al., 2018).

Literature also highlights that service innovation networks are inherently different from "traditional" industrial innovation networks that are geared (only) towards R&D and technological innovation and are essentially centred on private, manufacturing firms (Djelall and Gallouj, 2010; Gallouj et al., 2013). Accordingly, several attempts have been made to identify the characterizing features and mode of functioning of **service innovation networks**. In particular, the concept of **Public-Private Innovation Networks in Services (servPPINs)** has been developed within the 7th Framework Programme Project "The Contribution of Public and Private Services to European Growth and Welfare, and the Role of Public-Private Innovation Networks" (2011)[6].

The servPPIN concept is developed on the basis of an extensive analysis of the role of innovation networks in the service economy and an empirical analysis of innovation networks in several services, including tourism, and identifies a type of service innovation network that differs from traditional innovation networks. In particular, Djelall and Gallouj (2010) characterize ServPPINs as multi-agent service relationship systems that involve collaborative partnerships between public, private and third-sector actors for innovation in services. These inter-organizational arrangements are identified by three fundamental features (Djellal and Gallouj, 2010; Gallouj, Rubalcaba, & Windrum, 2013): firstly, the interaction between public and non-market actors (e.g. third-sector) and private actors occupies a central role; secondly, service providers act as the main actors in the networks; and, finally, they build upon a broad conceptualization of innovation, including also non-technological forms (i.e. organizational, process, cognitive, conceptual, network-based). Moreover, they are "naturally" characterized by customer/user interactivity and involvement in innovation processes, given the endogenous role of customers in service co-production.

ServPPINs are flexible collaborative structures that support the exploitation of **complementarities and synergies** among different organisations, the **integration and sharing of dispersed knowledge, technology, competences and potential risks in uncertain innovation processes**. The relational configuration of ServPPINs can widely vary depending on the actors involved, their role and the degree of formality of relationships among them (Green et al., 2013).

Research has leveraged the interpretative potential of the ServPPIN concept for the analysis of **collaborative innovation in tourism and related services in smart destinations and cities** (Errichiello & Marasco, 2017; Marasco & Errichiello, 2016). It is shown that ServPPINs can provide a useful lens to advance the understanding of innovation within the complex landscape of cities and tourism destinations, by properly addressing the complexity of interactions between public and non-

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[6]SERVPPIN project https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/217247

profit stakeholders, private firms and users/citizens communities for the development of innovative solutions in response to urban, social and visitors' needs (Marasco & Errichiello, 2016).

For its features, **the ServPPIN concept is considered as a basis for defining Heritage Innovation Networks**, since it aligns to the specificities and requirements of collaborative innovation for sustainable and circular cultural tourism underlying the Be.CULTOUR project.

First, the ServPPIN concept is in line with the **quadruple/quintuple helix approach** adopted as a foundation of the project, according to which **Government, Academia, Industry/Businesses and Citizens** collaborate to drive structural changes far beyond the scope any one organization could achieve on its own. This approach is indispensable for the development and completion of **European Innovation Ecosystems** where governments, business, academia and citizens can interact to foster creative and bold thinking and a flexible, dynamic, stimulating and enabling environment allowing for innovation to drive economic growth, the creation of jobs, ground-breaking research and new solutions for societal and welfare challenges (High Level Group, 2014).

Secondly, the ServPPIN concept supports the **human-centred design approach (HCD)** adopted in the project to **co-develop innovative services and products**, since it can encompass all the relevant stakeholders and potential end-users to be involved in the explorative, generative and evaluative activities along the co-design process.

Finally, with specific regard to innovation for sustainable cultural tourism, the concept aligns with the multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable cultural tourism that considers the role and needs of each of the following public, private and civil stakeholders for the sustainable development (EU, 2019):

- **Visitors**: needs, aspirations and wellbeing;
- **Industry/Businesses**: need for tourism businesses to be profitable, have a long-term future;
- **Community**: respecting the values, needs and quality of life of the local community; and
- **Environment**: conserving the cultural and physical environments, local identity and sense of place.

3   Project overall methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the Be.CULTOUR project overall methodology, explaining the connection between the different actions within the project process.

3.1   Overall methodology

Be.CULTOUR will achieve its objectives through **a set of coordinated actions** built around a structured **human-centred design innovation process**, involving pilot and mirror innovation ecosystems.

The methodology of the project will follow four main steps, reflecting the general articulation of the design process[7]:

1. Exploration phase (M1-12);
2. Action Plans and Concepts co-design phase (M13-18);
3. Co-development phase (M19-20);
4. Deployment phase (M21-36).

Furthermore, the methodology of Be.CULTOUR project will be up-scaled, transferred and replicated throughout the **Community of Interest**, which includes the "pilot" and "mirror" innovation ecosystems, to test the approaches and tools proposed in diverse contexts, providing a Learning Lab for the stakeholders involved in all EU and non-EU regions.

Figure 1 – Be.CULTOUR co-design methodology

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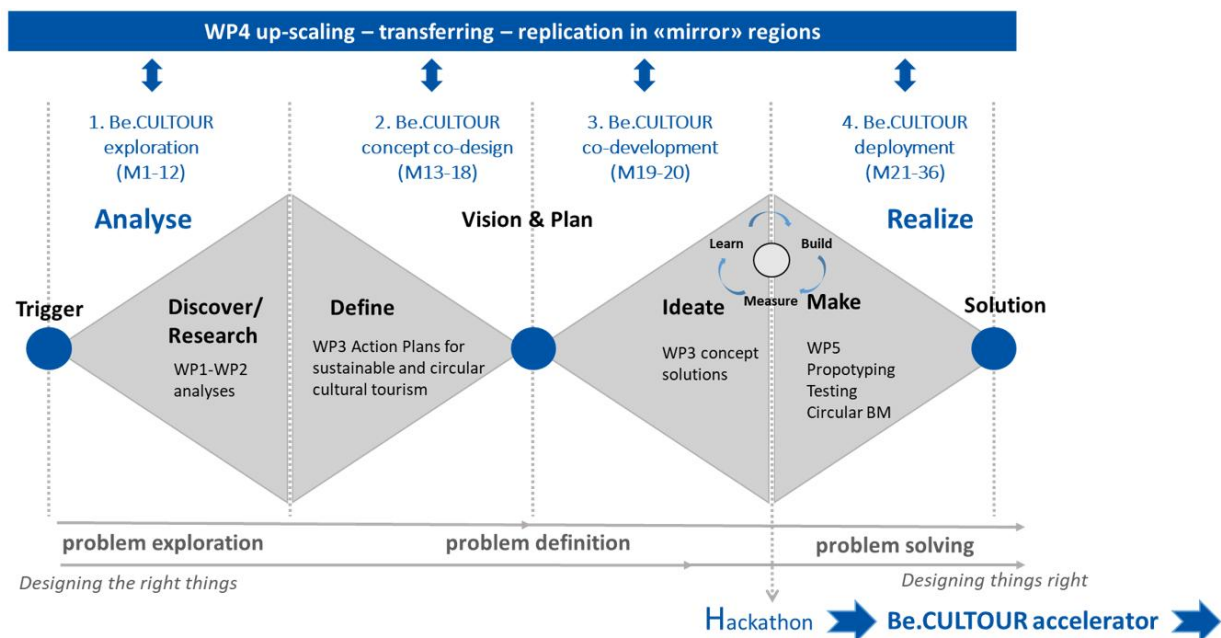
[7] The methodology is based on the Double Diamond model ideated by the British Design Council (2005), which articulates the **design process** into four stages: **Exploration, Design, Development and Deployment**.

3.1.1 Exploration phase: establishing the Heritage Innovation Networks in Pilot Heritage Sites

The **Exploration phase** – also referred to as the "discovery" phase in the innovation process – is aimed at specifying the context and requirements of users and stakeholders. This phase will integrate expert and local knowledge on three main topics: (1) analysis of economic, cultural, social and environmental potential impacts of sustainable cultural tourism – WP1, (2) policy analysis and financing opportunities including effective use of European Structural Investment Funds and other funding instruments in non-EU countries – WP2, (3) tangible and intangible cultural capital and natural capital assessment through workshops in Pilot Heritage Sites – WP3.

During the exploration phase, **Heritage Innovation Networks** will be established in pilot areas. Entrepreneurs and startups in the tourism industry, SMEs, regional and local governments and municipalities, institutions and organizations representing citizens living in the affected areas or involved in the touristic sector will be involved in specific needs' assessment as sector barriers/obstacles/framework conditions assessment at "micro" (business) and "meso" (territorial) level. Local actors will be thus involved in co-creation workshops. This phase will end up with in-depth knowledge of challenges and potential resources for the development of sustainable cultural tourism Action Plans in the circular cultural tourism perspective.

Based on the conceptual background, the concept of heritage innovation network in the Be.CULTOUR project is defined as cultural-sector specific public-private-people service innovation network. Specifically, it identifies the local network of stakeholders from the public and semi-public, private and civil society sectors participating in Be.CULTOUR project activities, contributing to the co-development of a Community-led Action Plan and to the human-centred innovation processes in one of the Pilot Heritage Sites.

These networks include representatives from the main categories of stakeholders for the development of sustainable cultural tourism (EU, 2019):

- Government / public administration (public sector);
- Local and heritage communities (community);
- Cultural heritage (religious heritage, organisations, institutions, sites, practices);
- Tourism (operators, developers, entrepreneurs);
- Tourists (consumers).

Specifically, the stakeholders to be potentially included in Be.CULTOUR networks are identified in the following Table 1.

Table 1 – Stakeholders' categories in Be.CULTOUR Heritage Innovation Networks

Category	Sub-category	Relevant stakeholders for the project
Public and semi-public	Government	- National, regional and local government agencies - municipalities - counties - destination management organisations - energy, water and wastes management authorities
	Cultural heritage	- heritage organisations - heritage foundations - cultural institutions - interpretation centres/services
	Academia and education	- Universities - research centres - schools - business incubators/living labs
Private sector	Tourism	- tourism and hospitality firms (hotel, other accommodation structures, tour operators, travel agencies, restaurants, events) - entrepreneurial associations (including SMEs) - craftsmen and artisans associations
	Other sectors	- IT firms - media & communication agencies - design and architecture firms - transport - ethical banks and foundations
Third sector and civil society	Local and heritage communities	- cultural associations - artists/artisans communities - citizens associations - local women groups/associations - minority groups associations - pro-environmental associations/groups - pro-heritage associations/groups
	General public	- Residents - Tourists

This basis is functional to identifying stakeholders' categories to be involved in connection with the two different, but interconnected streams of the project implementation: the institutional level (regional / municipal institutions and organizations), which will be involved in the strategic part of the Action Plans, and the "innovators" level, which will be involved in innovative solutions design, validation and prototyping, that can include business actors, startups, activists, artists and innovators. Citizens can be involved in diverse phases throughout the Action Plan process, to give insightful comments as well as to test/validate the innovative solutions and ideas proposed.

3.1.2 Community-led Action Plans and Concept solutions co-design phase

Be.CULTOUR will draw cross-cutting lessons from the pilots in order to validate and replicate strategies and Action Plans for implementing longer-term development projects through integrated cultural tourism strategies, policies, tools, training, models, products that address sustainability challenges. These include the re-balance of tourism flows among over-exploited and under-exploited areas and the regeneration of under-recognized cultural resources as key assets of sustainable local development processes and an integrated territorial development.

The **Concepts co-design phase** is aimed at developing a set of concept ideas of innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism in Pilot Heritage Sites. The concept co-design phase is **collaborative** (involving input and ideas from different stakeholders and innovators) and **iterative** (meaning that it cycles back upon itself to validate ideas and assumptions). Building the insights drawn from data collected in the previous phase, it is aimed to ideate a new solution, from rough concept to finished design. Based on the insights collected in the exploration phase, **6 community-led Action Plans,** one for each Pilot Heritage Site (including collaboration "Pacts" between stakeholders that are further explained in Section 6) will be co-developed through **a series of 2 two-days workshops in each Pilot Heritage Site** (WP3), which will include specific solutions for circular cultural tourism, thus including solutions for avoiding (for example) non-renewable energy and freshwater consumption, GHG emissions and wastes generation, materials extraction, as well as local community wellbeing, health enhancement and jobs creation. The **Action Plans methodology** is further explained in section 6 of this document.

3.1.3 Co-development phase: Hackathon co-creation workshop

Through an international open call, innovative concept solutions for circular cultural tourism in Pilot Heritage Sites will be selected and invited to a 3-days Hackathon/workshop at ICHEC venue in Brussels, where the best concept ideas will be developed at TRL stage 3 to 5 (proof of concept or more). The hackathon will provide the opportunity to co-develop place-specific concepts for new circular cultural tourism services/products, put them in front of potential users, get their feedback, and refine them. These ideas may be represented by low-fidelity prototypes, including paper prototypes and interactive wireframes.

Six best ideas / teams (one per each Pilot Heritage Site) will be awarded a prize for the prototyping and testing of the solutions through the Be.CULTOUR Accelerator programme, conducted in the second part of the project (WP5). An Award ceremony will be organized and web-streamed at the end of the 3-days hackathon to give maximum visibility to participant teams and specific solutions.

3.1.4 Deployment phase: Action Plans implementation and Be.CULTOUR

Accelerator programme

After establishing the Action Plans for circular cultural tourism, and identifying the best innovative solutions to be developed, two main activities will be developed in the deployment phase: (1) at the institutional territorial level, the implementation of the Action Plans within existing policies and the identification of sustainability strategies, including use of European Structural Investment Funds and other funds; and (2) prototyping of the innovative solutions selected through the Hackathon process.

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- *Action Plans implementation and long-term sustainability (WP3)*

The Action Plans will be implemented in the second part of the project, involving relevant authorities (especially managing authorities of ESIFs and other European funding instruments) and other stakeholders for their integration in local policies. In this phase, the project will focus on synergies between strategic infrastructural projects, as well as support to local stakeholders and communities to develop the strategies through the Heritage Innovation Networks. The objective is to ensure that local projects become ready for a diverse range of available investments from ESIFs and other financing models and actors, verifying the relevance and applicability of the financing instruments proposed and receiving precious feedback for Action Plans implementation.

- *Be.CULTOUR Accelerator: Prototyping, testing and Circular Business Model development (WP5)*

The best solutions selected for each Pilot Heritage Site will enter the **Be.CULTOUR innovations Accelerator programme**. The development stage of the process is aimed at developing and delivering the product. This phase takes the concepts and interaction designs and implements them into working systems ready to be delivered. In this phase, the winning teams will **develop a prototype** of the selected product/service and will test it in Pilot Heritage Sites, bringing Be.CULTOUR solutions at TRL 6. Effective development of the innovative solutions will be enhanced through involvement of end-users in all stages. **Human-centred design tools, service design workshops, user experience design tools and "Design for All" approaches and tools** will be employed within a **Open Innovation context**. Once the components of BE.CULTOUR products/services have been validated in laboratory (TRL 4) and in relevant environment (TRL 5), they will be *demonstrated* in relevant environment (TRL 6). The awarded solutions will finally enter the deployment phase to demonstrate the solutions in real environment, bringing them close-to-market (TRL 7). In this stage, the Circular Business Model and business plan of Be.CULTOUR solutions will be developed.

3.2 Be.CULTOUR scaling-up challenge: the Be.CULTOUR Community of Interest

Mirror innovation ecosystems will be involved in all stages of the project. They will be replicating / adopting the Be.CULTOUR methodology developed in and with the pilots. The

- **1-2 | Exploration and co-design phase (M1-18)**: Studies will include best/worst practices from mirror innovation ecosystems (Be.CULTOUR will learn from mirror ecosystems); already established Heritage Innovation Networks or other forms of Open innovation networks could be invited to join the Be.CULTOUR enlarged Community; Mirror innovation ecosystems stakeholders and innovators will be invited to propose circular cultural tourism solutions within the context of the Hackathon.

- **3 | Co-development phase / Hackathon (M19-20)**: Mirror innovation ecosystems will be invited to share their best practices and strategic plans for sustainable and circular cultural tourism at the Learning Lab organized by ERRIN in Brussels at M20. Mirror innovation ecosystems stakeholders and innovators could take part in the Hackathon in case they have developed concept ideas. Additional awards/prizes could be provided by own resources to take part in the Be.CULTOUR Accelerator programme.

- **4 | Deployment (M21-36)**: The selected mirror innovation ecosystems will transfer the project methodology, and providing feedback regarding its transferability and replicability. Representatives of mirror innovation ecosystems will participate in webinars and benefit from Be.CULTOUR partners support/mentorship. The most active mirror innovation ecosystems will be invited to take part in Be.CULTOUR final conference (travel budget provided).

3.3 Be.CULTOUR Innovation Areas

Be.CULTOUR's Innovation Areas reflect potential unique selling points for the territories: Be.CULTOUR has identified **six niche Innovation Areas** linked to cultural heritage and places specificities, along with **four transversal innovation approaches** towards circular cultural tourism. In addition**, four emerging trends** which encompass all Pilot Heritage Sites.
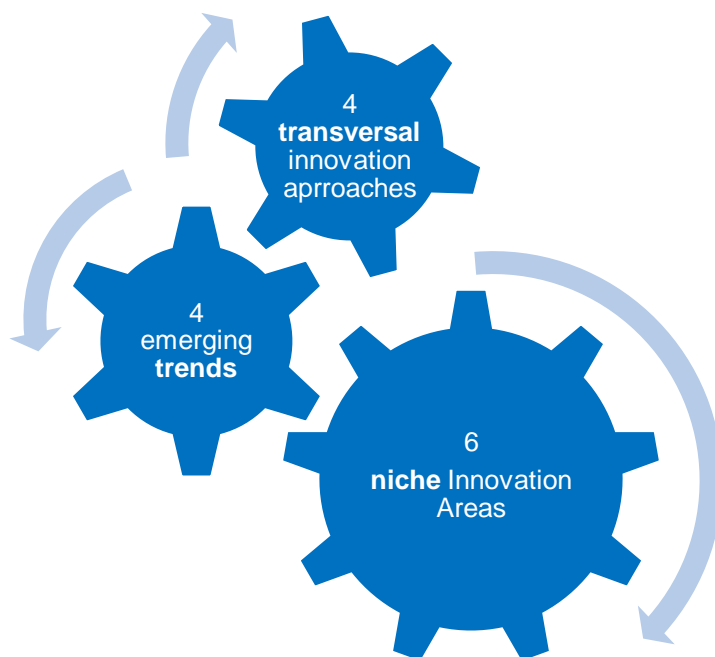
Figure 2 – Be.CULTOUR Innovation Areas, transversal innovation approaches and emerging trends

Niche Innovation Areas

1. RURAL CO-LIVING

Promotion of authentic **rural experiences in traditional cultural landscapes** through **homestay and hospitality** in rural villages, stimulating relationships between citizens and visitors through their participation in traditional activities such as agricultural and landscape maintenance, crafts, etc.

Pilot Heritage Site: Larnaka's rural villages in Cyprus.

Associated words: rural experience, homestay, working holiday.

2. SENSORIAL HERITAGE EXPERIENCE

Immersive experience of places combining new ways of **enjoying and learning about intangible cultural heritage** – such as local gastronomy, wine, craft, music, language, history and traditional skills – with a more intimate and reflexive inner journey. Sensorial heritage experience includes learning and educational activities addressed to all age groups to get in contact more deeply with the local culture and traditions through their intangible heritage expressions using the five senses.

Pilot Heritage Site: Less-known historic cities in Vojvodina, Serbia.

Associated words: sensorial experience, traditional skills, local craft, local products.

3. CONTEMPORARY MEANINGS OF HERITAGE

Contemporary interpretation of cultural heritage sites through artistic creation, linking past and future perspectives and re-generating heritage "intrinsic value", its meanings and sense, while generating intense emotional experience addressing citizens and visitors at the same time; also, developing new forms of heritage enjoyment such as gamification and virtual travel experience, creative and unconventional story-telling for example co-developed involving residents, and augmented ways to enjoy cultural heritage such as augmented reality and immersive hybrid digital-physical experience.

Pilot Heritage Site: Vulture area in Basilicata, Italy.

Associated words: heritage interpretation, creative storytelling, augmented cultural experience, virtual visit.

4. SPIRITUAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Religious heritage appreciation intertwined with nature enjoyment, joining physical and spiritual health enhancement. This includes pilgrimage routes, spiritual retreats, and other diverse ways to regenerate and conserve religious heritage places, promoting the value of religious heritage by raising public interest and encouraging community engagement in the conservation and safeguarding of Europe's religious heritage.

Pilot Heritage Site: Stefan Cel Mare cultural route at the cross-border of North-East Romania and Moldova.

Associated words: pilgrimage routes, religious heritage.

5. NATURE AS HERITAGE

Nature can be perceived as cultural heritage by exploring the meanings and values of natural areas, their "genius loci" recognized over centuries and millennia. Natural heritage includes also, for example, the **cultural meanings attributed to view of the sky in local cultures**, often linked with mythology and traditional practices, as in astro-tourism experiences promoted by starlight reserves

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initiatives. Moreover, **local biodiversity**, as autochthonous flora and fauna species, and/or important geologic areas, can become **symbols of a territory and thus part of the cultural identity of local communities**. Enjoying "nature as heritage" means also developing **eco-tourism, trekking, sports, active & adventure experiential tourism solutions** in natural heritage sites.

Pilot Heritage Site: The cultural park of Rio Martin in Teruel province, Aragon region, Spain.

Associated words: biodiversity, outdoor travel, astro-tourism, eco-tourism.

6. INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE EXPERIENCE

Innovative ways to **create an audience for industrial heritage sites** as iconic architecture places and "modern cathedrals" telling the **history of European flourishing manufacturing**. The industrial revolutions has always generated deep cultural changes in the society, while they have been also oriented by scientific and cultural evolutions. **The types of industries and manufacturing activities in diverse European territories have profoundly influenced local culture and history**, for example coal, mining, textile industries, while they have stimulated the development of arts and design, as in the European Bauhaus, generating **iconic architectures and products**. European industrial heritage represents a unique testimony of this creativity, while the visit to **contemporary innovative craft/production places** could be enhanced as 'real world' cultural experiences, also stimulating entrepreneurial spirit and promoting responsible entrepreneurial culture.

Pilot Heritage Site: Industrial heritage in Västra Götaland region, Sweden.

Associated words: eco-museums, European Route of Industrial Heritage, entrepreneurial culture

Transversal innovation approaches

In addition, Be.CULTOUR has identified **four transversal innovation approaches** linked to the project's objectives towards "circular cultural tourism" in the Pilot Heritage Sites, as well as **four recent emerging trends** in the visitor economy due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The **transversal innovation approaches** which are common for all Pilot Heritage Sites are the following.

1. CIRCULAR TOURISM

Circular economy in the tourism sector is mainly linked to the reduction of the negative environmental externalities of the tourism industry, such as pollution and generation of waste, but it goes beyond this by embracing the wider notion of sustainability. Circular economy models in the tourism sector are related to the effort for reducing wastes and natural resources consumption (energy, water, soil, biodiversity), enhancement of green transport means, recycling and reuse of materials and products, as well as the promotion of locally based food and craft products. Moreover, circular models are related to the reduction of tourism pressure on over-exploited territories, overcoming mass tourism, seasonality and "stop-and-go" tourism, promoting less-known and less-crowded destinations, but also overcoming tourism dependency by diversifying the local economy avoiding focusing on only one economic sector or tourism typology.

Associated words: circular tourism, circular city, green tourism, sustainable tourism, circular business models.

2. CULTURAL EUROPEANISATION

The travel experience in Europe can be an opportunity to explore the extremely rich and diverse European culture, history and identity, promoting educational and recreational activities focusing on European identity, culture, history and values, as well as the development of European Cultural Routes and European Heritage Labels. Cultural Europeanisation focuses on a shared sense of belonging based on the common history and cultures expressed in European tangible and intangible cultural heritage and landscapes.

Associated words: European identity, cultural diversity, European Cultural Routes, European Heritage Labels.

3. HUMAN-CENTRED, FAIR AND RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Human-centred services and products are generally linked to placing 'real' needs of people and communities at the centre of the design process, overcoming extreme standardisation and providing diverse, tailor-made experiences, considering the special needs of the person. This concept can be effectively applied to develop inclusive tourism services and products. For example, the concept of cultural tourism "for all" is based on inclusive products and services addressing people with special needs. Human-centred tourism is also based on enhancement of human capital including skills and the entrepreneurial capacity, empowering local communities to take advantage of the benefit of a sustainable tourism and enhancing local entrepreneurial innovation ecosystems through cultural tourism. From the point of view of tourism service providers, human-centred businesses are committed to respect human rights paying attention to tourism workers rights, and avoiding any exploitative measure of people in tourism-related activities. Finally, from the point of view of the visitor, the human-centred tourism is linked to fair and responsible tourism behaviour, paying attention to contribute to places sustainable development and avoiding exploitative behaviours, as it is emerging through voluntourism or 'FairBnb' experiences.

Associated words: fair tourism, responsible tourism, human-centred design, tourism for all, human rights due diligence, human-centred business models, voluntourism.

4. SMART DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

ICT, AI, 5G and IoT systems can be used for better tourism flow management to avoid overcrowding, enhance accessibility and safety, and foster evidence-based policies to enhance local communities' wellbeing, as well as the visitor experience. This includes the development of applications for enhanced travel experience, for example to visit less-known and less-crowded places, discovering 'hidden treasures' or accessing creative and unconventional guides to places. Through digital tools, visitors and residents can be also facilitated to become active actors of local sustainable development policies, expressing their preferences and needs and thus participating to enhancing local context, going beyond tourism by embracing regional/local sustainable development.

Associated words: digitalization, data-driven innovation, smart tourism, regional sustainable development.

Emerging trends

Finally, four **emerging trends** are considered as potential Innovation Areas for all Pilot Heritage Sites, identified based on recent changes in tourism sector driven by the pandemic crisis. Some studies confirm Be.CULTOUR transversal innovation approaches, while additional trends are observed which could give rise to alternative forms of sustainable cultural tourism in the near future.

Indeed, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, tourists behaviours and preferences are rapidly changing, with new trends emerging. The **Report on "Behavioural changes in tourism in times of Covid-19"** of the European Commission Joint Research Centre (Marques Santos et al., 2020) provides an analysis of the potential effect of the COVID-19 outbreak, analysing potential consequences of travel and mobility limitations, psychological and economic factors, and providing policy recommendations. The report highlights that "changing consumer preferences hold opportunities for **more diversified and sustainable forms of tourism, building on Europe's rich territorial and cultural diversity**. Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), as a governance model based for **place-based innovation** is well suited as a tool for multi-level governance towards more sustainable tourism. Reshaped towards **Sustainable Smart Specialisation Strategies (S4)**, this model could play a key role in the post COVID-19 recovery process". Also, the **OECD Report on "Rebuilding tourism for the future: COVID-19 policy responses and recovery"** highlights that in response to the stop of international travels due to the pandemic, **domestic tourism is helping to soften the blow**, at least partially, while recommended measures for tourism sector recovery and resilience include **preparing plans to support sustainable recovery**, promoting the **digital transition** and move to a **greener tourism system**, rethinking tourism for the future (OECD, 2020).

The investigations of data analysts in tourism sectors[8] highlight that the key factor for the recovery of the sector is innovation, describing new trends "from 'bubble resorts' ensuring health safety, to the rise of **workcations** (hybrid work and vacation) and a new breed of **sustainably conscious consumers**, the current map of travellers' choices is almost unrecognizable from that of 2019 and 2020". The map is confirmed by Booking.com, that highlights in a recent analysis the "five emerging trip types"[9] as the "**solo travel**", "**relaxury**" travel, meaning less expensive travels but with a strong relax component, "**breakaway bubbles**" to visit friends and relatives, "**weekend wonders**" and "**local travels** – food for thought", exploiting shorter and more local trips. More specifically, Booking.com declares that "data pre-pandemic saw only 17%* of travellers were planning a trip on their own, while 30%** now say they will be planning a solo trip in the future". Also, "there will be an increased demand for a quick trip as over half of travellers (53%)** want to take more shorter breaks in 2021 than they did in 2019 to minimize any disappointment. A further 28%** also revealed their preference of a weekend break for their first trip once restrictions are lifted, showing travellers' desires to be able to escape reality, even for just a few days". It is also worth to note that "local travel is the new way of exploring the world, with culinary delights being top of the list".

Due to the difficulties in organising long distance trips, the "staycation" trend is rapidly raising, as Ecobnb[10] and other companies observed in the last months. New trends for travels are related to **strong sustainability**, as well as **remote villages and remote destinations**, to discover the charm of more isolated places. According to Ecobnb analysis, after the restrictions due to the pandemic,

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[8] Amadeus company, "Four trends sparking new life into travel" (2021) https://amadeus.com/en/insights/blog/4-trends-sparking-new-life-into-travel

[9] Booking.com, "The Five Emerging Trip Types of 2021" (2021) https://globalnews.booking.com/the-five-emerging-trip-types-of-2021/

[10] Ecobnb, What will post-pandemic tourism look like? https://ecobnb.com/blog/2021/04/what-will-post-pandemic-tourism-look-like/

"the **desire to be in nature**, but also to have a **more authentic relationship with neighbours**, is getting bigger and bigger". It is significant to observe that also Ecobnb identifies nearby hotels / **staycation**, **workations** and **digital nomads**, **disconnection** from everyday life, **detox from social networks** and **smart working** as clear trends for future travels.

The White Paper of Tripadvisor issued in 2020[11] confirms the trends of "**remote escapes**" in nature/outdoor, with "**tourism away from urban centres to less populated nature destinations**", "**ski and seaside resorts**, as well as other **rural destinations**, dominating the list of fastest recovering destinations in Europe based on domestic accommodation searches on Tripadvisor", while "safety first" issues and domestic travels are reported as key aspects for future destinations.

With the slowing down of mass tourism due to the pandemic, other trends such as **"transformational" or transformative travels** are also emerging, and previously niche sectors such as **"post-tourism"** are raising as new ways of travelling to **discover less usual places and "normal" daily life**. Specifically, transformational travel is described as "intentionally traveling to stretch, learn and grow into new ways of being and engaging with the world"[12], including taking experiential travel (authentic, local, culture-centric, off the beaten path experiences) to another level by incorporating **lessons, exercises, coaching and other tools for self-development** during and after the journey. As Businessinsider.com observed already in 2019[13], travellers want their experiences to be life-changing, and it's ushering in a new era of 'transformational travel'.

Therefore, Be.CULTOUR project identified **four additional emerging trends** that serve as **inspiration for pilot and mirror innovation ecosystems to identify their innovation strategies for circular cultural tourism,** aligning with the most interesting tourism trends and attracting a promising niche of sustainable travellers, both within and outside the target regions.

The four emerging trends identified are explained below.

1. TRANSFORMATIVE TRAVEL

Transformative travel permanently affects you: it focuses on learning and educational experiences, self-reflection, self-discovery or re-discovery, and integrates the experiences enjoyed during the trip back into the visitor's daily life back home. Traveling alone can be a way to develop confidence and new social skills. This is a growing tourism segment, including not only single millennials but even middle-aged people. However, women traveling alone or in small groups do not always feel safe and trustful of local people. This includes finding new ways for making women feel comfortable, find trustful local people, and develop soft skills through cultural tourism.

Associated words: regenerative travel, solo travel, wellbeing travel, learning journey

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[11] Tripadvisor White Paper (2020), https://www.tripadvisor.com/Covid19WhitepaperNovember2020
[12] Transformational Travel Council (2016) https://www.transformational.travel/
[13] Businessinsider.com (2019) https://www.businessinsider.com/transformational-travel-experiential-luxury-safari-trends-2019-8?IR=T&fbclid=IwAR1FqSEunLBxXfIXGQ-J_tAkTlhtw245tY-j2G-tgcOvuUyHaJaUYbjpb18

2. REMOTE WORKING DESTINATIONS

Home working has been one of the primary effects of the pandemic. As the situation pursued, an increasing number of workers, especially creative and cultural industry workers, have started to look for remote working destinations. Some authorities and organisations in charge of tourism are looking into long-term attraction of this visitor's segment, hoping that this trend will stay beyond the long-tail of the pandemic in order to support local economies without displacing any permanent residents' jobs.

Associated words: smartworking, digital nomadism, southworking[14], workation

3. PROXIMITY TRAVEL

Another impact of the pandemic is the increasing trend of so-called proximity tourism, also known as "staycation": this is a practice that consists in travelling close-by to one's daily environment. Citizens re-discover nearby cultural and natural sites, becoming "tourist at home". What motivated travellers to pick this option, is the willingness to rediscovering a place in a different way, organising various tourist activities, living unusual experiences and responding to a need for a break from everyday life while remaining in an environment close to home.

Associated words: staycation

4. POST-CULTURAL TOURISM

Explore different forms of alternative travel which aim to discover authentic 'unusual', "un-exceptional", ordinary / 'daily life' places, which are not included in conventional cultural tourism itineraries, but can be representative of the authentic, 'real' cultural life of places, also discovering particular places in which social and cultural innovation is developed by active local organizations, artists and innovators, turning visitors into 'temporary residents'. This includes also providing new ways to integrate visitors and residents daily life, promoting for example locals guides and/or unconventional digital guides able to enlighten 'ordinary' places through alternative itineraries, creative interpretation and unusual / engaging storytelling.

Associated words: post-tourism, unconventional places, local guides, temporary resident, social innovation.

Based on the Innovation Areas, the transversal innovation approaches to circular cultural tourism, and the emerging trends identified, the Heritage Innovation Networks will be engaged to identify specific **place-based and people-based strategies for the development of circular cultural tourism in Pilot Heritage Sites**.

Each pilot will be thus able to identify a set of actions which can potentially lead to the development of circular cultural tourism, intercepting the Innovation Areas, innovative approaches and emerging trends (Figure 3).

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[14] South working community, the community of workers coming back to Southern Italy after years of working abroad, exploiting the opportunities stemming from smartworking organisation (2020) https://en.southworking.org/

Figure 3 – Be.CULTOUR Innovation Areas scheme

Innovative approaches to circular cultural tourism will be developed in a transversal way throughout all Innovation Areas and in all Pilot Heritage Sites, while emerging trends can be considered as additional potential opportunities which may be exploited in the post-pandemic scenario.

The structure provided represents an orientation for local Heritage Innovation Networks to develop a context-specific reflection on circular cultural tourism development in Pilot Heritage Sites, and it further provides the base "map" for specific innovative solutions to be co-developed through the Call for Innovators, the Hackathon activity and the Be.CULTOUR Accelerator programme.

Table 2 – Overview of Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Sites, challenges and Innovation Areas

Region / Features	Basilicata, Italy	Aragon, Spain	Larnaca, Cyprus	Västra Götaland, Sweden	Vojvodina, Serbia	North-East Romania / Moldova
Pilot Heritage Site(s)	Vulture site, with Regina Viarum and Bradanica Cultural Road	Cultural Park of the Martin River, Province of Teruel	Larnaca site	Forsvik and Rydal	Bac-Irig-Sremski Karlovci	The Route of Stephan the Great and Saint
Heritage type	Archaeological and rural heritage	Natural heritage	Terraced rural landscape	Industrial heritage	Intangible heritage (e.g. wine making), Cultural, Religious and Natural heritage	Religious heritage and Natural reserve
Other relevant heritage in the area	Sassi di Matera, Matera European Capital of Culture 2019	UNESCO World Heritage: Mediterranean Arc Cave Paintings (1998). Mudéjar Art of Teruel (1986) and Aragonese Mudéjar Art (2001); UNESCO Intangible Heritage: The art of dry-stone wall technique, Tamboradas drum-playing rituals, Mediterranean diet	UNESCO sites are present in the Larnaca area; UNESCO Intangible Heritage: The art of dry-stone wall technique; embroidery of Lefkara. Venetian heritage of Cyprus.	The area is rich in natural and rural heritage and target of sports tourism niches	Bac - Europa Nostra award for cultural heritage, UNESCO Cultural Heritage Tentative List and "Backo Podunavlje"; UNESCO Man & the Biosphere Reserves	The "painted monasteries": 2 UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Voroneț (1488) and Pătrăuți (1487)
European Cultural Routes or other European label	Via Francigena	The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails (co-founder); the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes. Could be involved in Routes of the Olive Tree, the European Route of Jewish Heritage and others.	ECR of Phoenicians' Route and Routes of the Olive Tree; European Destinations of Excellence EDEN	none: could be involved in ERIH / Industrial heritage sites routes	Roman emperors and Danube Wine Route - Middle Danube	European Destinations of Excellence EDEN
Challenges	Abandonment and depopulation of rural areas	Accessibility of remote areas and depopulation of rural areas	Over-exploitation of high-demand areas	Deprived and polluted industrial heritage sites	Concentration in one site (such as ECoC) and lack of communication and synergetic action towards joint potentials	Abandonment and depopulation of rural areas
Innovation areas	CONTEMPORARY MEANINGS OF HERITAGE	NATURE AS HERITAGE	RURAL CO-LIVING	INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE EXPERIENCE	SENSORIAL HERITAGE EXPERIENCE	SPIRITUAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

3.4 Summary of Action Plans & innovative solutions methodology (infographic)
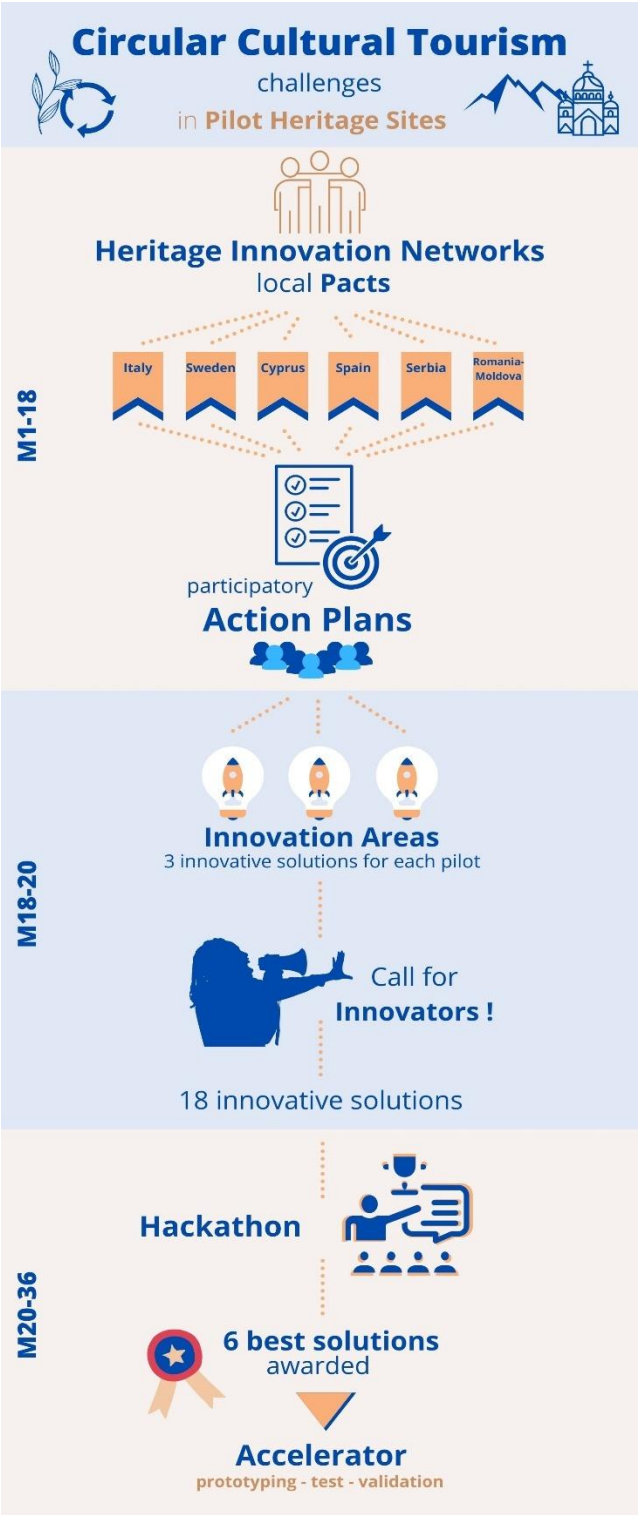

Figure 4 – Be.CULTOUR methodology for Action Plans

4 Be.CULTOUR Community

The Be.CULTOUR Community is defined by four levels of engagement as specified below:

1) PROJECT PARTNERS: The core of the project is made of the 15 organisations constituting the Be.CULTOUR Consortium;

2) COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: The **Community of Practice** is composed of the Local Coordinators of the Heritage Innovation Networks developed in the **6 Pilot Heritage Sites,** as well as the Mentor organisations supporting the implementation of Be.CULTOUR activities at local level;

3) COMMUNITY OF INTEREST: The third level of engagement concerns the **Community of Interest** which aims to bring together the representatives of **16 Mirror Innovation Ecosystems**, selected through an Open Call launched by ERRIN;

4) LEARNING COMMUNITY: The fourth level of engagement refers to a broader **Learning Community** made of at least 16 organizations and the linked local stakeholders' networks. These organizations will be involved in the knowledge sharing activities as they represent good practices of sustainable cultural tourism that can inspire the development of innovative solutions in Pilot Heritage Sites.

Figure 5 summarizes the levels of engagement within Be.CULTOUR project, highlighting the mentoring role of core academic partners with specific expertise and umbrella organizations such as ICLEI and ERRIN, as well as the implementation role of practice partners who are identified as local coordinators of the Heritage Innovation Networks.

Finally, the **larger audience** of the project is represented by all interested actors that will follow the project activities and learn from its results in pilot and mirror heritage sites. It embraces every active participant contributor and/or passive follower of the offline and online activities and/or outputs of the Be.CULTOUR project as a whole.
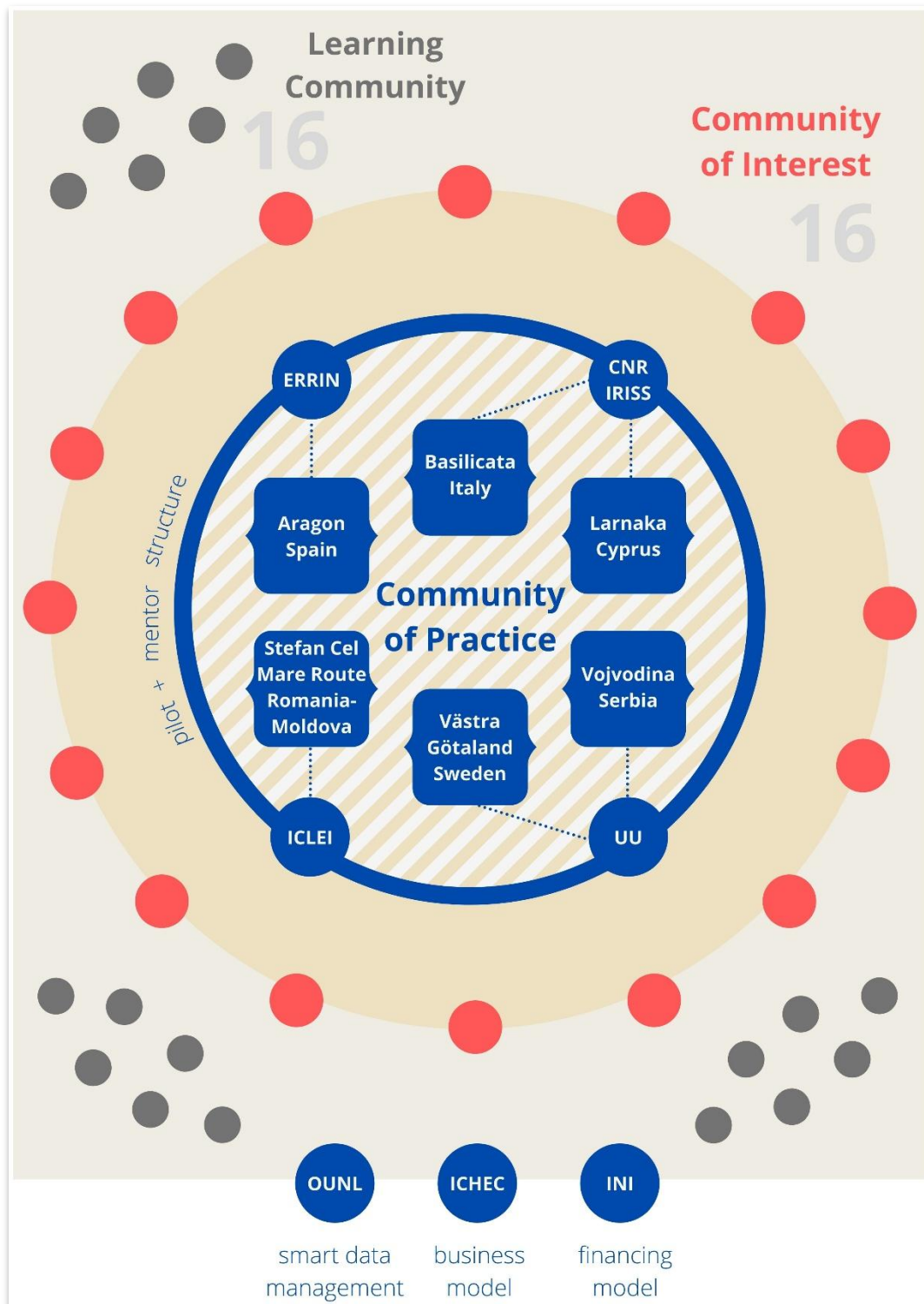
Figure 5 – Be.CULTOUR Community: Community of Practice, Community of Interest, Learning Community

4.1 Community of Practice

Central to the co-creation processes enabled by the Be.CULTOUR project is the Community of Practice (CoP), which enables the Local Coordinators of Pilot Heritage Sites to interact with expert Mentors, receive guidance, exchange knowledge and reflect on outcomes. Through the CoP, the core Be.CULTOUR Consortium priorities are linked to local realities on the ground and academic research is translated into local action. Monthly Community Meetups enable CoP members to connect, learn and co-create while facilitating project monitoring and knowledge sharing between Local Coordinators and Mentors. Shared online tools such as Teams, MIRO and a dedicated Facebook group enable ongoing informal interaction and asynchronous work between CoP members, enabling both alignment and adaptation of project methodologies across Pilot Heritage Sites.

A comprehensive overview of the CoP operational framework, the processes and tools developed, is available in the Deliverable 3.3. Heritage Innovation Networks and Be.CULTOUR Community of Practice webpages[15].

4.2 Community of Interest

In order to maximise the impact of the project's results, a Community of Interest (CoI) of 16 additional "mirror innovation ecosystems" has been built.

An innovation ecosystem in general is an interconnected network of quadruple helix stakeholders, including academia, industry and different levels of the public sector and civil society. This multi-level approach applies a systemic and bottom-up approach to creating research, innovation and knowledge.

Pilot Innovation Ecosystem is the ecosystem of actors active in Be.CULTOUR "Pilot" Heritage Sites. It includes local stakeholders in the cultural tourism value chain, as well as residents and visitors of the site.

Mirror Innovation Ecosystem is the ecosystem of actors active in Be.CULTOUR "Mirror" Heritage Sites. It includes local stakeholders in the cultural tourism value chain, as well as residents and visitors of the site.

Pilot/Mirror Innovation Ecosystem thus defines the **whole ecosystem of actors in a Be.CULTOUR pilot / mirror heritage site**, including **every** stakeholder and innovator in the cultural tourism value chain **even if not participating** directly in project activities.

Following the pilot-mirror approach to the deployment of innovative processes, products, and services, the Community of Interest comprises 16 organisations which have demonstrated their capacity to mobilize a broad range of stakeholders from the quadruple helix in order to replicate in their own region the key methodological approach of the Be.CULTOUR project towards circular cultural tourism. The idea of "mirroring" the outcomes of the project builds on the shared interest in the domain of circular cultural tourism amongst the Be.CULTOUR community members: thus, the

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[15] For more details on the Community of Practice framework and Heritage Innovation Networks in Pilot Heritage Sites, see the Deliverable "D3.3 Heritage innovation networks and Be.CULTOUR Community of Practice webpages" at the link: https://www.becultour.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Be.CULTOUR-D3.3.Heritage-Innovation-Networks-and-Community-of-Practice-Webpages.pdf

idea of engaging with "mirror innovation ecosystems" to broaden the potential uptake of Be.CULTOUR's key results.

The Community of Interest was established in July 2021, after the publication of an Open Call which gathered 62 applications from 21 countries. The 16 selected mirror innovation ecosystems cover 11 different countries from the EU and its neighbouring countries[16]. They are a mix of different kinds of organisations – regional authorities, tourism boards, publicly owned companies, county councils, NGOs and universities. This demonstrates that the organisations that can "orchestrate" the mobilisation of the local innovation ecosystem can be of different nature.

The 16 representatives of selected mirror innovation ecosystems invited to join the project are:

- Nicosia Tourism Board (Cyprus)
- Sviluppumbria (Italy)
- Regione del Veneto (Italy)
- Savonlinna Development Services Ltd. (Finland)
- Municipality of Leeuwarden (The Netherlands)
- North-West Regional Development Agency (NWRDA) (Romania)
- Timis County Council (Romania)
- Region of Thessaly (Greece)
- Regional development agency Srem (Serbia)
- Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi Sciacca - Cooperativa di Comunità Identità e Bellezza (Italy)
- Gwynedd County Council (UK)
- Greater Poland Tourism Organization (Poland)
- University of Algarve (Portugal)
- Kuldiga District Municipality (Latvia)
- Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg (The Netherlands)
- Saltaire Inspired (UK)

Each pilot ecosystem will be matched with four mirror innovation ecosystems, and work together on specific elements of the Be.CULTOUR methodology (such as the open call to establish the local heritage innovation network, or the local pacts). During Fall 2021, the selected representatives of mirror innovation ecosystems will be re-contacted and interviewed to develop a tailor-made peer-learning scheme to up-scale, transfer and replicate the project methodology in diverse contexts.

4.3 Learning Community

In addition to the selected mirror innovation ecosystems, 16 applications to the open call launched by ERRIN[17] were identified as particularly interesting practices and case-studies which

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[16] At proposal stage, it was foreseen to select 12 mirror ecosystems, which would be paired to the pilot ecosystems with a 2:1 ratio. Considering the high number of interesting applications received, the evaluation board comprised of one member per partner organisation decided to accept all those that received a score above 30 points.

[17] Applications selected for the Learning community were identified with a score ranging between 20 and 30. Applications scoring less than 20 were not selected for the Be.CULTOUR Community, however they were invited to follow the project and participate in the online digital community.

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could be mobilised during the peer-learning scheme and inspire innovative solutions in Pilot Heritage Sites.

The broader learning community comprises 16 cases from 11 countries:

- Vice ministry of Culture & Cultural Heritage - Canary Islands Government (Spain)
- Destination Makers S.r.l. Società Benefit (Italy)
- SmartGuide (Czech Republic)
- Trentino Marketing (Italy)
- Not Quite ekonomisk förening (Sweden)
- Ishøj Kommune - The Municipality of Ishøj (Denmark)
- Villae (Italy)
- Aisapari ry (Finland)
- Chamber of Commerce of Granada (Spain)
- Małopolski Instytut Kultury w Krakowie - Malopolska Institute of Culture in Krakow (Poland)
- Holbæk Kommune / Kultur og fritid (Denmark)
- Scoala Trimitoare (Romania)
- Municipality of Maratea (Italy)
- City of Kragujevac (Serbia)
- BRIO s.r.l.s. (Italy)
- Acarbio Association (Italy)

Applicants willing to take part in the Learning community will be invited to take part in Peer-learning scheme specific activities, as described in next section.

4.4   Peer-learning scheme

The replication / adoption of Be.CULTOUR's key outcomes by the mirror innovation ecosystems is framed in a peer-learning scheme which blends a mix of offline and online exchanges. Because of the outbreak of the pandemic, the digital dimension of these interactions will take a more prominent dimension although the two travels (Brussels 2022 and Naples 2023) will be offered to the most active and engaged representatives of mirror innovation ecosystems.

The framework of the peer-learning scheme will be further defined based on bilateral interview sessions which ERRIN will lead on with the representatives of mirror innovation ecosystems. The aim of these sessions if to further participants' understanding of Be.CULTOUR's replication opportunities, and collect their commitment to replicate one or more elements of the methodology in their own region / Pilot Heritage Site.

The peer-learning scheme is composed as follows:

- **Bilateral progress calls** with ERRIN: once / twice per year, ERRIN will touch base with the representatives of mirror innovation ecosystems and assess the motivation, commitment, and replication progress;

- **Quarterly community conversation**: every four months, the pilot and mirror ecosystems' representatives will meet online to share insights, best practices and know-how from experts from different fields, on topics relevant for the design and implementation of the Be.CULTOUR methodology. These meetings will take place in between the local workshops

implemented offline in Pilot Heritage Sites. The format will last a maximum of two hours, and will kick–off with the presentation, by pilot partners and their mentor, of the main highlights of the local workshop. A discussion will then be facilitated by the mentor, and will include the possibility of having experts joining and discussing the challenges and opportunities linked to the implementation. The main goal is to present a specific aspect of the methodology and discuss its replication in other contexts;

- **Wine talks**: on an ad hoc basis, shorter informal "campfire discussions" can be organised on specific topics / challenges based on what comes out of the implementation / replication of the methodology, expressed in the quarterly community conversations. This is when the broader Learning Community can be invited to share their experiences and provide feedback. A number of experts have also gotten in touch with some of the core partners and expressed their interest to participate in such discussions. The objective of the wine talks would be to have a dedicated format to deepen specific challenges in a more playful context: for example, based on imaginary scenarios reflecting the challenges presented by one expert, the pilot and mirror ecosystems could test different hypothesis and methodologies;

- **Learning Labs**: two offline opportunities to exchange knowledge will be organised in Brussels (M20) and Naples (M35), with the idea of exchanging at both policy and operational levels: planned back-to-back with two key moments of the project, the first during the hackathon and the second at the end of the project, the Learning Labs are there to foster face-to-face exchanges amongst the Be.CULTOUR community members.

4.5 Summary of Be.CULTOUR Community activities

The activities of the Be.CULTOUR Community are summarized in the Figure below.

Figure 6 – Be.CULTOUR Community activities

5   Mentoring structure

This chapter provides details on the **role of mentor partners** with regard to the Action Plans development, implementation and the support to the coordination of Heritage Innovation Networks at local level[18].

An internal mentoring programme is structured to support local coordinators of the Heritage Innovation Networks (HINs) in the development and implementation of project activities. **Focusing on local needs and challenges of Pilot Heritage Sites**, specific support is provided by experienced project partners who have the role of "Mentors" to develop tailored co-design processes for concept ideation and development of innovative solutions for sustainable cultural tourism within the Action Plans.

The mentoring structure is based on previous experience of project partners in trans-disciplinary European funded projects (e.g. H2020 CLIC project) and it is inspired to good practices in the business and research sectors[19]. The mentoring programme has four main components: PURPOSE, PARTICIPANTS, FORMAT, STYLE.

With regards to "purpose", the Be.CULTOUR mentoring programme has the objective of facilitating the work of project partners, both on the side of coordination and implementation.

Participants are project partners, and specifically the teams of local coordinators of the HINs as Mentee, while academic and more experienced partners (CNR IRISS, UU, ICLEI, ERRIN) are identified as Mentors forming a 1-to-1 structure. Finally, specialized partners (OUNL, ICHEC, INI) will engage as knowledge facilitators for all Mentees, forming a 1-to-many structure.

The format is therefore a mixed 1-to-1 and 1-to-many structure, according to the diverse range of activities and expertise requested. The mentoring format can also temporarily assume the "network" form, when different competences are needed to carry out project activities.

Finally, the program style can have diverse degrees of formality. In Be.CULTOUR project, the Mentoring programme is "informal", as the activities foreseen do not require a "training", instead they require a continuous exchange and support to ensure effective linkages between academic and non-academic backgrounds, ensuring the coherence and feasibility of the actions undertaken. Moreover, the informal style enhances personal relationships and trust, which greatly helps the day-to-day management and coordination activities, ensuring smooth progress and early alert for possible barriers, allowing to identify eventual alternative solutions to reach project objectives.

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[18] See DoA WP3, Task 3.1, Subtask 3.1.2

[19] The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM (2019) https://www.nap.edu/read/25568/chapter/1; Drive Employee Talent Development Through Business Mentoring Programs (2010) http://www.bu.edu/questrom/files/2013/07/Forrester-Research-Report-Drive-Employee-Talent-Development-Through-Business-Mentoring-Programs.pdf; The Basic Anatomy of All Corporate Mentorship Programs (2018) https://blog.gloo.us/anatomy-corporate-mentorship-programs

5.1 Role of mentors

A human-centred approach will be followed in the mentorship process through one-to-one / focus groups meetings and continuous open communication, allowing the development of trust relationships between mentors and local coordinators of Heritage Innovation Networks, that will ensure smooth progress of activities, timely reporting, problem solving and close monitoring.

CNR IRISS, ERRIN, ICLEI, and **UU** teams provide mentorship and coaching services to ensure that local coordinators of the Heritage Innovation Networks have all necessary support to carry out co-creation activities in a coherent and effective way. Language barriers are avoided through the inclusion of regions native speakers between partners' staff.

5.2 Mentoring activities

The activity of Mentors is focused on both (1) **CONTENTS** and (2) **PROCEDURES** of the project, ensuring smooth progress and coherence with project objectives.

In particular, the role of Mentor partners is linked to the following aspects:

- Ensure the adaptation of the overall Be.CULTOUR methodology to the local needs and circumstances of each Pilot Heritage Site. This may require providing context-specific input to Workshop activities, assisting with translation and cultural interpretation of key concepts or supporting local outreach activities;
- Guide, offer feedback and support the project partners from the local level in preparing the key events and activities in the project (local workshops, draft actions);
- Offer clarification about the overall project structure / development and the local level development and implementation of the Action Plans;
- Offer critical and constructive feedback about the challenges/ needs identifies, objectives identified (from different local strategies and plans) and actions drafted for the Action Plan;
- Offer inspiration and contribute with ideas to the Action Plan development;
- Link bidirectionally the local level with the European context, by sharing research, policies and events;
- Support with technical knowledge regarding regional development, cultural tourism and circular economy;
- Consult and guide specifications for possible subcontracting of services at local level (eg. Data Collection, Workshop Facilitation);
- Observation: Mentorship will require flexibility and adaptation to the specific of the local level;
- Adaptation / co-creation of the Action Plan methodology at local level, providing cultural interpretation and relevant examples;
- Provide expert feedback on the documentation developed by local coordinators of the Heritage Innovation Networks, checking coherence with the project concept, approach and work plan.

It is expected that Mentors facilitate the work of pilots making them available for **at least one monthly meeting with local coordinators** after each CoP Meetup, and **provide feedback** to the Consortium on the implementation of local activities.

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CoP Meetups will host **joint reflections** on project progress in Pilot Heritage Sites: local coordinators will share a brief **synthesis of local activities** at each CoP meetup, while Mentors will act as "critical friends", sharing **impressions and suggestions** to reflect on the process – what worked, what did not work, how can we improve.

The results of the mentoring activities will be synthesized and integrated into **final recommendations** for stakeholders and policy makers, reflecting on the conditions for success and the potential barriers related to collaborative innovation towards circular cultural tourism in diverse contexts.

The mentors and their local partners are advised to keep a (mentorship) journal. This journal should report the most important aspects discussed and agreed.

5.3   Thematic knowledge facilitation activities

OUNL has the role of Knowledge Facilitator on the specific topic of **smart data management** (WP1), supporting all local coordinators and the mirror innovation ecosystems clustered in the same area of interest to develop innovative strategies for smart data management according to the resources and technologies available in the local areas.

Moreover, **ICHEC** has the role of Knowledge Facilitator within the **Be.CULTOUR Accelerator** (WP5), to support local coordinators in developing their strategies for innovative circular business solutions for cultural tourism, according to the local needs and challenges, and innovation areas identified.

Finally, **INI** will support as Knowledge Facilitator for the **scouting of financing instruments** to support the implementation of Action Plans within the project timespan and beyond it (WP2).

5.4 Pilot-Mentor scheme

According to Deliverable 3.3, the pilot-mentor scheme is described in Table 3.

Table 3 – Mentors & Pilots partners structure (Deliverable 3.3)

Partner Organisation	Partner	Role in CoP	Contact Person
CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE DELLE RICERCHE, Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development	**CNR IRISS**	**Mentor**	Alessandra Marasco & Serena Micheletti
APT Basilicata	APT-BAS	Pilot	Antonio Nicoletti
CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE DELLE RICERCHE, Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development	**CNR IRISS**	**Mentor**	Antonia Gravagnuolo
Larnaca and Famagusta Districts Development Agency	ANETEL	Pilot	Eudokia Balamou
Laona Foundation	LAONA		
European Regions Research and Innovation Network	**ERRIN**	**Mentor**	Ilaria d'Auria & Gaia Marotta
Diputación Provincial de Teruel	PGT	Pilot	Laura Gascón Herrero
ICLEI Europe – Local governments for Sustainability	**ICLEI**	**Mentor**	Alexandru Matei
Agentia Pentru Dezvoltare Regionala Nord-Est (Romania)	NERDA	Pilot	Roxana Slemco (Pintilescu) & Anatolie Risina
Verde e Moldova	VEM		
Uppsala University	**UU**	**Mentor**	Jermina Stanojev & Christer Gustafsson
Västra Götaland region	VGR	Pilot	Johan Tranquist & Christina Shearer
Uppsala University	**UU**	**Mentor**	Jermina Stanojev
Stalna Konferencija Gradova I Opstina	SCTM	Pilot	Igor Pucarević

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6 Action Plan methodology

This chapter provides details on Action Plan methodology: expected outcomes, partners involved in each phase, planned activities and timeline, roles and responsibilities, monitoring methods, organisational and communication procedures.

What is the Be.CULTOUR Action Plan?

The Be.CULTOUR Action Plan is a strategic document that reflects a shared vision for circular cultural tourism enhancing local heritage, and proposes consensual pathways in the form of objectives and actions to meet the plan's goals over a specific timeframe in Pilot Heritage Sites, usually three to five years. The Action Plan is not an additional planning level within the existing governance framework: ideally, it goes in synergy with existing plans, while offering an innovative approach and viable solutions for more sustainable and circular cultural tourism as an important contribution to sustainable regional development.

The Action Plan is led by the local coordinator of Heritage Innovation Networks and co-developed by local stakeholders, coming out as the result the participatory process which includes the organization of co-creation workshops, informal meetings and learning activity within the larger Be.CULTOUR Community. The Action Plan starts with the establishment of the Heritage Innovation Network through the signature of an open collaboration "Pact" established between active and interested stakeholders at local, regional or even national level.

Why an Action Plan?

A co-created Action Plan can help build commitment, understanding, and awareness between diverse stakeholders from the quadruple helix, and help establish new partnerships, identifying financing models, and bringing about new ways of working together towards a shared vision.

The participatory Action Plan methodology helps to establish synergies between diverse stakeholders, enhancing each other's action within a collaborative support networks, finding win-win solutions. Through the Action Plan, the effort of each stakeholder can be enhanced within the shared strategy adopted, and eventual conflicts can be addressed in a trust environment, evaluating alternative solutions and identifying viable and equitable pathways to reach common objectives, strengthening relationships, mutual solidarity and cooperation, making the local innovation ecosystem stronger and more competitive.

How is the Action Plan made?

Be.CULTOUR Action Plans are made of two parts:

- Overall strategic plan (challenges, innovation areas, objectives, actions, resources, timeline, monitoring framework);
- Concepts ideation of (at least) 3 innovative solutions per Pilot Heritage Site (tot. 18 concept innovations).

The first part will include a structured overview of the specific challenges, cultural capital potentials and details on Be.CULTOUR innovation areas to be explored in the pilot sites, along with

place-specific multidimensional impacts evaluation indicators and methods for data collection (WP1), and suitable financing models and instruments for long-term sustainability and upscaling of concept solutions – starting from financing models and instruments for cultural heritage developed in previous projects such as H2020 CLIC (WP2).

The second part will include a set of at least 3 initially developed solutions in each Pilot Heritage Site: original and innovative place-specific concept solutions developed at TRL 2 stage. Innovative solutions are proposals for place-based cultural tourism products and services that are focused on one or more Be.CULTOUR Innovation Area and apply at least two innovative transversal approaches identified in the project methodology (circular economy in tourism, cultural Europeanisation, human-centred innovation, smart data management).

Be.CULTOUR Action Plan characteristics

Be.CULTOUR Action Plans will have the following characteristics:

- Directly linked to the Be.CULTOUR project partners' mandate (it's YOUR Action Plan!)
- Addressing existing regional development strategies/plans and their objectives
- Approach cultural tourism as a "tool" for regional development
- Localises the "Circular Economy" concept 'beyond' cultural tourism towards more circular cities and regions
- Demonstrates implementation of human-centred design principles
- Includes Europeanization dimensions
- Focuses on at least one of the Innovation Area
- Valorises concrete Heritage Sites & Cultural Assets
- Specifies what are "the must have" requirement/aspects based on the requirements of the European Commission, HORIZON 2020 programme and the Be.CULTOUR project.

Indicative structure

The Action Plans will be developed based on local specificities, however a common structure can be drafted to facilitate their development and ensure comparability of results and a learning process. The proposed structure of Action Plans is the following:

- Introduction to Pilot Heritage Sites [from Interviews & Data Analysis]
  - Challenge/needs
  - Objectives selected from existing Regional and Local Plans and Strategies
- Stakeholder Mapping (specific for the Be.CULTOUR project)
- Local collaboration "pact" framework
- Innovation Areas + Links to regional development strategies and plans
- Selected **Actions** [from LWS]
  - Minimum 3 and maximum 7
  - Actions can have sub-actions
  - Should be developed using the SMART (Action Planning) framework: S—Specific M—Measurable A—Agreed R—Realistic T—Time-bounded

Selected actions can be of two types:

i. Led by Be.CULTOUR Partner (local coordinator)
   (what you as project partner commit to do, within project timeframe and beyond)
ii. Led by the "Pact" signatories at regional level
   (what the "Pact" signatories aim to do, within project timeframe and beyond)
- Innovative Solutions - finally, the Action Plan will include at least 3 best Innovative Solutions selected through the Call for Innovators as a base for the Hackathon.

Actions characteristics

To ensure the feasibility and implementation of the Action Plan, each Action will reflect the following aspects:

- Challenge(s) addressed
- Existing objectives identified in existing Regional Strategies and Plans
- Impact in the wider regional context
- Solution Concept
- Objectives / Kee Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- List of stakeholders involved
- Allocation of Tasks (between partners and stakeholders)
- Timeline & Milestones
- Main resources needed and available/ accessible
- Funding sources [ESF and beyond]

The Action Plan step-by-step

The steps for the development of Action Plans are:

1. Building Heritage Innovation Networks in Pilot Heritage Sites;
2. Organize the Local Workshops (3 in each Pilot Heritage Site);
3. Define the initial collaboration Pact;
4. Define the Innovation Areas, transversal innovation approaches adopted and emerging trends to be considered;
5. Identify best innovative solutions in line with the Innovation Areas defined;
6. Adopt the Action Plan and monitor progress.

Next sections provide details on the key steps of the Action Plan development.

6.1 Building Heritage Innovation Networks in Pilot Heritage Sites: stakeholders' engagement

Stakeholders' engagement is key for the success of the Action Plan, both in the phase of development and implementation. This section provides a brief summary of how stakeholders are engaged in Pilot Heritage Sites and the motivation for which it should be useful for stakeholders to participate in the project on a voluntary base.

Stakeholders will be engaged through Local open calls, communicating the objectives of the activity to be conducted and the added value for stakeholders taking part in the process. To ensure long-term commitment, it is highly recommended to clarify from the start of the process the benefits and responsibilities for participating organisations. The Local open call will serve to:

- Communicate the innovative approaches, objectives and expected results of the project;
- Engage key stakeholders at local, regional and eventually national level to establish Heritage Innovation Networks of mutual cooperation;
- Ensure voluntary participation and commitment.

The following section describes the contents that will be shared with local stakeholders to make clear the diverse aspects of the project, and what is expected from stakeholders participating in the networks.

6.1.1 Local Open Calls

The Local open calls will have a common structure that will be adapted to local needs and challenges, and translated in local language to ensure maximum accessibility.

The structure of the Local open call is the following:

- **Be.CULTOUR project summary**
- **LOCAL CHALLENGE**: the pilot site and project's local objectives
- **WHY** to participate in the local networks (motivation and expectations of stakeholders)
- **APPLICATION FORM** (organisation name, type, motivation, cross-cutting topics, contacts)
- **Informed consent form**

The following suggested disclaimer is proposed to facilitate local coordinators in developing their Local open calls for the establishment of Be.CULTOUR Heritage Innovation Networks.

Be.CULTOUR stands for **'Beyond CULtural TOURism: Heritage Innovation Networks as drivers of Europeanisation towards a human-centred and circular tourism economy'** (see project website www.becultour.eu). The overarching goal of Be.CULTOUR is to foster **sustainable regional development** through **circular cultural tourism**.

Circular cultural tourism is a novel concept based on three main elements/objectives:

- **Strengthening environmental sustainability** by implementing the circular economy model in cultural tourism, through the adoption of green and slow mobility

systems, reduction of wastes and water, energy, soil and materials consumption, biodiversity regeneration, and awareness raise;

- **Deepening the cultural experience** of European cultural heritage sites, enhancing relationships between visitors and residents through communities' engagement;

- **Adopting a human-centred approach** in cultural tourism by strengthening wellbeing, accessibility for all, human rights, human capital and entrepreneurship, and the role of local communities in co-creation.

The **specific objective** of Be.CULTOUR project in the area of *[Pilot Heritage Site]* is to **co-create the locally based Action Plan as a PACT for strategic territorial development through circular cultural tourism**.

In *[Pilot Heritage Site]*, we are building the community of stakeholders and innovators committed to shaping the future of cultural tourism in this territory!

Are you the ideal candidate to join the Be.CULTOUR project? Check the list below:

- Would you like to **boost the attractiveness** of deprived, remote or peripheral heritage sites in your region?
- Do you want to co-develop **innovative approaches to regional development through cultural tourism?**
- Do you want to support the transition of the **tourism sector towards a more sustainable and circular economy?**
- Are you interested in strengthening the local innovation ecosystem by **adopting new co-creation methodologies?**
- **Do you want to know what others do to solve similar challenges** around Europe?

If so, APPLY to the open call to join the Heritage Innovation Network of Be.CULTOUR project in your region!

"Why should I take part in the Be.CULTOUR project?"

CO-CREATE

- Co-develop **Action Plans** to foster **regional development** through circular cultural tourism

- Participate in the **Heritage Innovation Network** in your region/area with other stakeholders from public, private, academia and civil society

- Co-create innovative **products, services and processes** for **circular cultural tourism**

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CONNECT

- Meet like-minded professional interested in circular cultural tourism in your region/area

- Share common **challenges** and create new **opportunities**

LEARN

- Learn about **human-centred design** and experiment with **participatory approaches** and **co-creation** methodologies in online and offline spaces

- Get insights about Be.CULTOUR **tools and methods** (Data, Policies & Financing, Prototyping etc.)

- Engage in **Peer-Learning** activities with stakeholders from 18 Heritage Innovation Networks in EU and non-EU countries

To apply as a stakeholder / innovator in the Be.CULTOUR project, please fill-in the **Application form**.

The Local open calls for participating in Be.CULTOUR project will be issued in each Pilot Heritage Site, based on the stakeholders' mapping conducted (see Deliverable 3.3).

6.2 Collaboration Pacts

In order to strengthen the local Heritage Innovation Network and inspire collective action at local level, a local "Pact" will be introduced to local stakeholders between the implementation of LWS1 and LWS2. **"Collaboration Pacts"** are agreements between diverse stakeholders (similar to a Memorandum of Understanding or "Manifesto") that Local coordinators will **sign** with the core stakeholders as a basis for the Action Plan co-creation and implementation (for example, a "*Pact for Vulture*", a "*Pact for Larnaca*"... etc.).

This process stresses the **collaborative dimension**, instead of focusing on the territorial planning dimension overlapping with other "strategic" plans. The **"Pact"** will thus define:

- **Aims** of the collaboration (WHY Heritage Innovation Networks are built);
- **Key concepts** of Be.CULTOUR adapted to local specificities (sharing the concept of the project will be useful to ensure a **common vision** stressing the "beyond" cultural tourism dimension – not just a plan for tourism development!);
- **Responsibilities and 'governance' structure** (not only participation in workshops, but commitment to start implementing actions according to capacity and mandate of each stakeholder).

The Pacts will not be legally binding, but will help stakeholders to reflect on their own objectives, commitment and responsibility to implement the actions agreed. Signatories of the local Pact will be pro-actively engaged in the next phases of the project, taking ownership of the Action Plans and innovative solutions developed. However, the Pacts will be open to changes and additions of new

stakeholders over the life span of the project, while they will potentially remain as a 'legacy' of the project in the pilot areas.

6.3 Local Workshops structure

Local Workshops constitute a core element of the Be.CULTOUR co-creation process, enabling stakeholders of the Heritage Innovation Networks to meet, exchange and gradually co-develop Action Plans for circular cultural tourism in each Pilot Heritage Site.

The Be.CULTOUR workplan foresees the implementation of three 2-day Local Workshops (LWS) in each of the 6 Pilot Heritage Sites, over a period of 10 months (M8-M18). Using **human-centred design methodologies**, these LWS will enable local stakeholders to define challenges, ideate solutions and co-develop actions for circular cultural tourism in their region.

LWS are being developed by ICLEI as modular events with specific Modules / building blocks that can be spread over one or two days, proposing activities that can be implemented in both physical and online environments, depending on COVID-19 restrictions. Modules that focus on **community building, networking and place making** will be treated as optional, while Modules that focus on **co-creation and co-decision** will be treated as mandatory. This approach aims to provide a certain degree of flexibility to Local Coordinators to **adapt the LWS programme to their local needs and realities**, but at the same time ensure a robust co-creation methodology and comparable documentation of LWS results between the six Pilot Heritage Sites.

Each **LWS Module** will define concrete objectives, provide exercise guidelines and sheets, set indicative questions and offer organisational advice. The compilation of these Modules will form a Toolkit for Pilot Heritage Sites to adapt and implement locally in close collaboration with their Mentors.

A **Progress Report** with a compilation of LWS results is expected after the implementation of each round of Local Workshops, leading to the publication of 6 Action Plans.

6.3.1 LWS Toolkit & Training

In order to implement the Local Workshops (LWS) in the six Pilot Heritage Sites, ICLEI will prepare a **Toolkit** for each workshop, to be used and adapted by Local Coordinators in collaboration with Mentors. This Toolkit will consist of the following elements:

1) Workshop **Script** for facilitator: Detailed timeline and guidelines to implement workshop based on concrete Modules;

2) PowerPoint **Presentation**: Introduction to Be.CULTOUR project objectives, structure and activities and step-by-step guidelines for LWS participants;

3) **Creative Canvas(es)**: Exercise sheets for each Module to be printed and filled out by participants during workshop (in local language);

4) **Reporting Form** for Workshop Results: A detailed template to be filled out by Documenter and submitted to ICLEI after the workshop to inform the Progress Report (in English).

A half-day **Training session** for pilots and mentors will be organised before the implementation of each Local Workshop, in order to introduce the Toolkit, discuss the different Modules, simulate workshop activities, respond to questions and get feedback. In case Local Coordinators decide to outsource facilitation services for Local Workshops implementation, the selected facilitator(s) will need to participate in the Training and be actively involved in the local adaptation of LWS Toolkit. In this framework, Mentors will play a key role in ensuring the LWS Toolkit is translated to the local language and adapted to local needs and specificities, providing relevant input and examples to each activity.

6.3.2 LWS1 Starting Point Round Table: Where we are

The first workshop will be held between September-November 2021. It will present the initial analysis of local context, challenges, opportunities. The "intrinsic value" of cultural and natural heritage will be addressed as a key resource for communities' identity, wellbeing and cultural Europeanisation, assessing the intangible and intangible cultural capital and natural capital in the Pilot Heritage Sites, letting emerge the "hidden" cultural and natural resources of the territories. Take note of existing projects, initiatives and the first ideas for improvements.

Theme: Mapping our regional context, heritage sites and cultural assets

Objectives:

- Framing of project concepts & objectives and links to local challenges and regional development strategies;
- Networking and peer learning between HIN members;
- Assessment of visitor experience in selected heritage site through the lens of different target groups and user journey exercises;
- Participatory enhancement of SWOT analysis building on baseline information distilled from Interviews & Data Collection;
- Problem definition and analysis of PESTEL[20] factors that shape each challenge, localizing the "circular" approach of the project;
- Cultural mapping of heritage sites and intangible assets in relation to pre-selected Innovation Areas;
- Enhancement of Stakeholder Mapping in order to assess the experience and resources brought together by LWS1 participants and identify additional relevant stakeholders worth engaging in the HIN;
- Introduction to the idea of the "Local Pact" and collection of feedback by HIN members;
- Presentation of indicative / inspirational examples or ideas of possible actions that could be explored in the next stages (These should be presented in relation to the challenge they address and the objective the support from the existing Regional Strategies and Plans).

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[20] A PESTEL analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal) is an acronym for a tool used to identify the macro (external) forces facing an organisation/project.

Expected results:

- Establishment of the Local Pact for the Heritage Innovation Network as a collaborative multi-agent structure for circular cultural tourism in each Pilot Heritage Site;
- Enhanced understanding of regional and local challenges, dynamics and possibilities
- Confirmation of Innovation Areas and prioritization of target heritage sites / cultural assets
- First reflections on scope and structure of Action Plans and a clear co-creation pathway forward

6.3.3 LWS2 Solutions Ideation: Where we want to go

The second workshop will be held between January-March 2022. It will focus on the possibilities to develop new or join existing European Cultural Routes, develop new European Heritage Labels and/or new services and products for circular cultural tourism, as defined in Be.CULTOUR project. This stage will include a "Serious Game session" that will help to reflect on "cooperation" and "complexity" between topics, actors, territories and scales. This will generate reflection about the need to support cooperation between existing actors, topics and territory.

Theme: Defining strategic priorities for circular cultural tourism

Objectives:

- Localisation of "beyond" and "circular" concepts in relation to pre-selected Innovation Areas;
- Identification of gaps in terms of services, products & processes for circular cultural tourism;
- Ideation of possible innovative solutions;
- Co-decision of strategic priorities.

Expected results: Definition of 3 Innovation Areas of the Action Plan, in view of the Be.CULTOUR Hackathon. These priorities will shape the Call for innovators at local / regional / national level and define the type of business solutions sought by the HINs.

6.3.4 LWS3 Action Plan co-development: How to get there

The third and last workshop will be held between May-July 2022. It will define in detail the concept solutions selected and the implementation process and timeline. The Action Plan will explain the actors needed to be involved, the resources, timeline, indicators and budget needed. Scouting of funding alternatives will be initiated. In the final workshop, 3 best concept solutions will be selected in each Pilot Heritage Site (18 concept solutions in total), which will be invited to the Be.CULTOUR Hackathon co-creation workshop organized by ICHEC in Brussels in September 2022.

Theme: Building an Action Plan

Objectives:

- Definition and prototyping of concrete actions for circular cultural tourism in the Pilot Heritage Sites;
- Building of action groups / working teams for each action;
- Definition of KPIs and Milestones;
- Exploration of funding sources for action implementation.

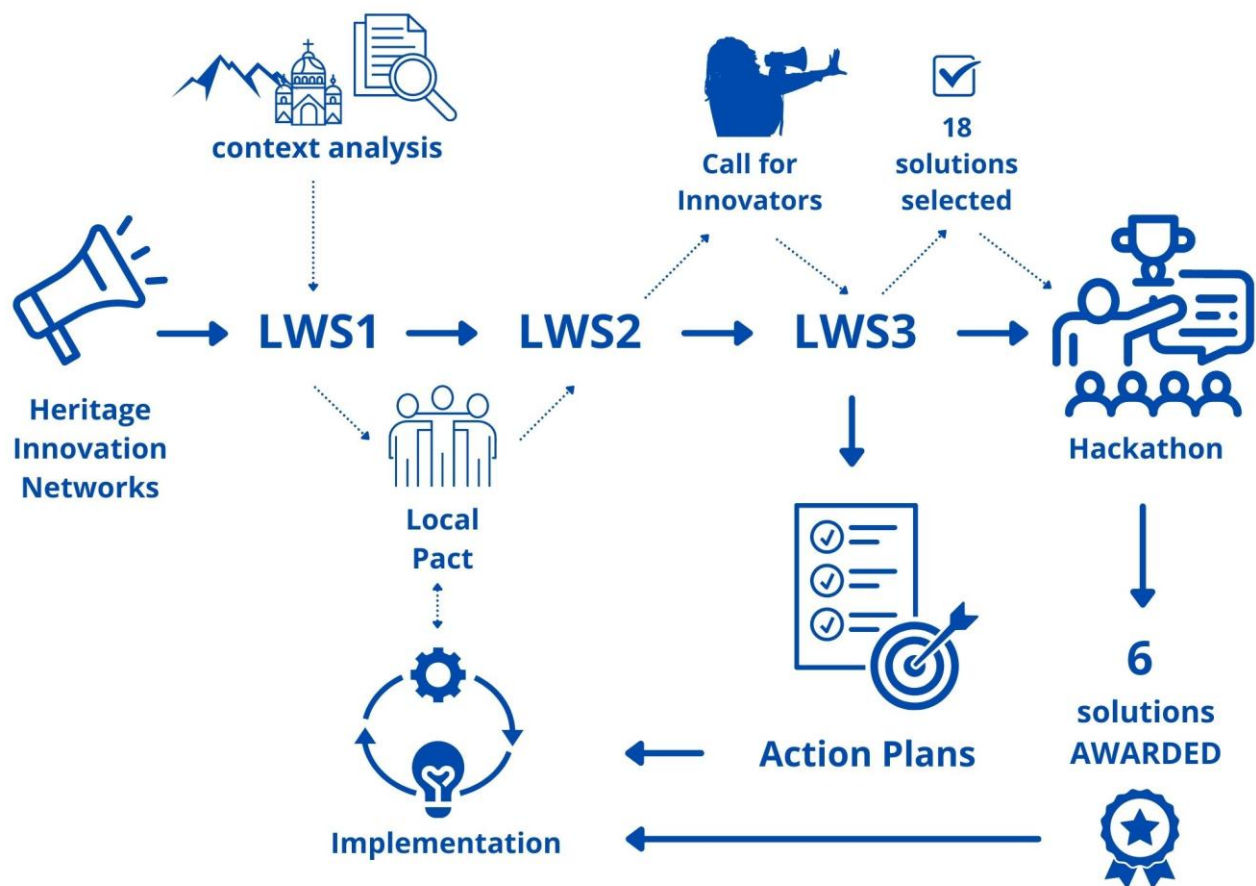**Expected results:** Co-development of building blocks for the local Action Plan.

Figure 7 – Local Workshops organization

7 Conclusions and ways forward

The Be.CULTOUR Protocol/Methodology represents the methodological guide for the Be.CULTOUR Community to support the implementation of project actions and ensure coordination between diverse contexts and partners.

The Protocol/Methodology aims to become a working guide for human-centred innovation in sustainable cultural tourism through Heritage Innovation Networks. This first version identifies the key concepts, the overall process, phases and activities, and the actors involved that represent the main elements of the project methodology.

The second version will focus on the tools to be used for the innovation process, providing detailed guidance on the process of Innovative Solutions development, i.e. what happens after the Action Plan, as well as describing the heritage innovation networks that will be established in Pilot Heritahe Sites. Also, it will include a detailed description of the Call for innovators, the Hackathon methodology and organization, as well as the tools and methods for human-centred design of the innovative solutions.

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Acronyms

[CoP]   [Community of Practice]

[CoI]   [Community of Interest]

[EC]   [European Commission]

[ESIFs]   [European Structural investment Funds]

[EU]   [European Union]

[HIN]   [Heritage Innovation Networks]

[HUL]   [Historic Urban Landscape]

[LWS]   [Local Workshops]

[GA]   [Grant Agreement]

[SDGs]   [Sustainable Development Goals]

[WP]   [Work Packages]

Annex 1 Be.CULTOUR Glossary

Be.CULTOUR has developed a Glossary to explain the meaning of particular terms used in the project methodology. This Glossary was developed through a collaborative effort between project partners, and it is available at the project website: https://www.becultour.eu/glossary/ . Il will be eventually updated and integrated during the project.

Be.CULTOUR terms	Implementation definition
Circular cultural tourism	Circular cultural tourism in BeCULTOUR project defines a sustainable and regenerative cultural tourism model that aims to foster sustainable and equitable regional development implementing a "human-centred" circular economy model through the enhancement of abandoned, underused and less-known cultural and natural resources, enhancement of human capital and human rights, reduction of tourism pressure on over-exploited territories, reduction of wastes and natural resources consumption (energy, water, soil, biodiversity), increase of clean energy and green transport means, recycling and reuse of materials and products, and enhancement of locally based food and craft productions – finally empowering local communities, enhancing ecosystems, enhancing local identity, wellbeing, health and cultural diversity, and enhancing local entrepreneurial innovation ecosystems through cultural tourism.
(Pilot / Mirror) Innovation Ecosystem	An innovation ecosystem is an interconnected network of quadruple helix stakeholders, including academia, industry and different levels of the public sector and civil society. This multi-level approach applies a systemic and bottom-up approach to creating research, innovation and knowledge. **Pilot Innovation Ecosystem** is the ecosystem of actors active in BeCULTOUR "Pilot" Heritage Sites. It includes local stakeholders in the cultural tourism value chain, as well as residents and visitors of the site. **Mirror Innovation Ecosystem** is the ecosystem of actors active in BeCULTOUR "Mirror" Heritage Sites. It includes local stakeholders in the cultural tourism value chain, as well as residents and visitors of the site. **Pilot/Mirror Innovation Ecosystem** thus defines the **whole ecosystem of actors in a BeCULTOUR pilot / mirror heritage site**, including **every** stakeholder and innovator in the cultural tourism value chain **even if not participating** directly in project activities.
(Pilot / Mirror) Heritage Site (PHS)	The cultural or natural, tangible or intangible Heritage sites target of BeCULTOUR project, for which Community-led Action Plans will be developed. '**Pilot Heritage Sites**' refers to the six sites included in the BeCULTOUR project as experimental areas to co-develop innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism. '**Mirror Heritage Sites**' refers to the twelve sites included in BeCULTOUR project as additional areas in which BeCULTOUR innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism will be possibly transferred and replicated.

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Heritage Innovation Network	The local stakeholders and innovators participating in BeCULTOUR project activities, located in pilot and mirror heritage sites. The local network of stakeholders from the public and semi-public, private, academic and civil society sector participating in project activities, contributing to the co-development of BeCULTOUR Community-led Action Plans in Pilot Heritage Sites. These include government agencies, heritage organisations, cultural associations, local businesses that will be directly involved in local Be.CULTOUR activities such as local workshops and international learning labs.
Community of Practice (CoP)	A group of Local Coordinators of the 6 Heritage Innovation Networks and their Mentors, regularly engaging in co-creative and peer learning activities to advance their Community-Led Action Plans.
Community of Interest (CoI)	Representatives of the 12 Mirror Innovation Ecosystems selected to engage in knowledge-sharing activities and exploitation of project results. All individuals and organisations directly or indirectly participating in Be.CULTROUR project activities.
Local Coordinator	**CoP:** The representative of the Heritage Innovation Network, responsible for the implementation of the Be.CULTOUR work plan at local level. Local Coordinators actively participate in the Community of Practice and the Consortium Meetings as project partners. **CoI:** The legal entity selected to participate in the Community of Interest in order to contribute to Be.CULTOUR objectives and exploit project results in their regions.
Mentor	The partner organisation supporting each Local Coordinator in the implementation of BeCULTOUR work plan. Mentors actively participate in the Community of Practice and the Consortium Meetings as project partners and are available for questions and doubts, and to identify solutions in case of any issue in project implementation at local level, reporting relevant information to the WP leaders and Project Coordinator to ensure smooth progress and robust results of project activities.
Community-led Action Plans	Integrated, long-term action plans promoting sustainable and circular cultural tourism in the Pilot Heritage Sites.
Innovative solutions	Novel products, services and processes that enhance circular cultural tourism in a pilot heritage site, based on human-centred, place-specific and circular principles.
Innovation Areas	Thematic areas within the cultural tourism sector, in which innovative solutions will be sought.
Hackathon	A 3-day workshop aiming to engage actors of the 6 Pilot Innovation Ecosystems in developing 18 concept solutions.
Peer learning scheme	A series of Community Conversations (Online events, Webinars) enabling knowledge exchange between Pilot and Mirror Innovation Ecosystems stakeholders and exploitation of Be.CULTOUR results.
European structural and investment fund (ESIF)	ESIF are financial instruments used by Cohesion Policy to finance its interventions. They are used by EU Member States to support development in a comprehensive way by investing in business, research and development, infrastructure, employment and training, agriculture, forestry and fisheries development, with the overall aim of improving the quality of life of EU citizens.

	The purpose of all these funds is to invest in job creation and a sustainable and healthy European economy and environment.
	The ESIF mainly focus on 5 areas:
	- research and innovation - digital technologies - supporting the low-carbon economy - sustainable management of natural resources - small businesses
	Assessment and detailed mapping in the 6 pilot countries and regions.
Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)	The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is a European Union funding to support candidate countries and potential candidate countries.
	The IPA ("IPA I") is made up of five different components:
	- Assistance for transition and institution building; - Cross-border cooperation (with EU Member States and other countries eligible for IPA); - Regional development (transport, environment, regional and economic development); - Human resources (strengthening human capital and combating exclusion); - Rural development.
	The IPA beneficiary countries are divided into two categories:
	EU candidate countries (Turkey, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the Republic of North Macedonia) are eligible for all five components of IPA;
	Potential candidate countries in the Western Balkans (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99) are eligible only for the first two components.
	Assessment at non-EU level and detailed mapping in the 6 pilot countries and regions. Serbia in particular.
European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) funds	ENP is a foreign relations instrument of the European Union (EU) which seeks to tie those countries to the east and south of the European territory of the EU to the Union to promote prosperity, stability and security at its borders.
	At present, 16 partners are addressed by the ENP: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the Republic of Moldova, Morocco, the occupied Palestinian territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.
	The ENP provides the EU with the means to deepen bilateral relations with these countries. The policy is based upon a mutual commitment to common values: democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development.
	Assessment at non-EU level and detailed mapping in the 6 pilot countries and regions. Moldova in particular
The Eastern Partnership (EaP)	The Eastern Partnership is a joint policy initiative which aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union (EU), its Member States and its six Eastern neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, to include deep and comprehensive free trade agreements where possible and visa

	liberalisation to accompany measures to counter illegal immigration. The EU agreed a number of priorities including the promotion of democracy and good governance, the strengthening of energy security, the promotion of sector reform and environmental protection, the encouragement of people-to-people contacts, support for economic and social development and additional funding for projects to reduce socio-economic imbalances and increase stability.
Smart Specialisation Strategies	Conceived within the reformed Cohesion policy of the European Commission, Smart Specialisation is a place-based approach characterised by the identification of strategic areas for intervention based both on the analysis of the strengths and potential of the economy and on an Entrepreneurial Discovery Process (EDP) with wide stakeholder involvement. It is outward-looking and embraces a broad view of innovation including but certainly not limited to technology-driven approaches, supported by effective monitoring mechanisms. Assessment and detailed mapping in the 6 pilot countries and regions Smart specialisations will be mapped also for mirror regions.
Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC)	Cross-Border Cooperation, known as Interreg A, is part of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), whose main objective is to support progress towards "an area of shared prosperity and good neighbourliness" between EU Member States and their neighbours. CBC puts the focus on equal cooperation between NUTS III regions from at least two different Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them. It aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly in the border regions and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas, while enhancing the cooperation process for the purposes of the overall harmonious development of the Union. Assessment and detailed mapping in the 6 pilot countries and regions
Pledge Fund	A Pledge Fund is essentially a non-committed venture capital (VC) fund, or a "fundless" VC firm, that operates as an organisation between a traditional VC firm and a group of individual angels making early stage investments together.
Project development assistance (PDA)	Project Development Assistance (PDA) is represented by a financial facility (e.g. grant, loan etc.) to support public and private bodies in developing bankable sustainable projects, focused especially on cultural tourism initiatives, and preparing and mobilise private investments in the sector.
Circular financial instrument	A circular financial instrument is based on circular economy finance that is defined as "any type of investment where the investments will be exclusively applied to finance or re-finance, in part or in full, new and /or existing eligible companies or projects in circular economy" (ABN Amro, 2018).