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Call: H2020-SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2020 – Type of action: IA (Innovation action)



Call for proposals

Innovative circular cultural tourism solutions Hackathon and acceleration opportunity

**Reference: Be.CULTOUR -2022- The North-East Regional
Development Agency & Verde E Moldova**

**Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Site:
The Route of Stephan the Great and Saint, North-East
Romania – Moldova cross-border area**

**Innovation area:
Nature as heritage
Spiritual travel experience**

**Deadline for submission of application:
May 19th 2022 at 18:00 (CET)**



1. INTRODUCTION

In the frame of the Horizon 2020 funded project ‘Beyond Cultural Tourism (Be.CULTOUR)’, Haute Ecole ICHEC - ECAM – ISFSC (hereinafter abbreviated as ICHEC) is opening a call for passionate innovators to shaping the future of cultural tourism in six European regions: Basilicata (Italy), Aragon (Spain), Larnaca (Cyprus), Vojvodina (Serbia) and the cross-border area of North-East Romania and Moldova.

19 applications will be selected to participate in Be.CULTOUR Hackathon which will take place in Brussels from 7 to 9 September 2022.

Selected applicants will be given the opportunity to access the Be.CULTOUR Accelerator, a training programme of 4 months in which they will have the possibility to develop their innovative solutions to a close-to-market stage.

Starting from the challenges linked to the targeted deprived, remote or over-exploited areas, the selected participants will develop circular cultural tourism services and/or products that will focus on creating attractive destinations taking into account post COVID-19 pandemic scenarios.

1.1. BACKGROUND

a) ABOUT Horizon 2020 Be.CULTOUR PROJECT

Be.CULTOUR stands for ‘**Beyond CULTURAL TOURism: heritage innovation networks as drivers of Europeanisation towards a human-centred and circular tourism economy**’. The overarching goal of Be.CULTOUR is to foster sustainable regional development through circular cultural tourism. The project will develop human-centred innovations inspired by cultural heritage, to support the transition of the tourism sector towards a circular economy.

Title of the project	Beyond Cultural Tourism
EU programme	Horizon 2020 (Innovation Action)
Duration	36 months, starting from 1 st February 2021
Coordinator	CNR-IRISS Italian National Research Centre - Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)-IRISS (IT) • Iniziativa Cube (IT) • Uppsala University (SE) • European Regions Research & Innovation Network (ERRIN) (BE) • ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability (DE) • ICHEC – Business management school (BE) • OUNL – Open University of the Netherlands (NL) • APT-BAS - Association for territorial promotion in Basilicata (IT) • PGT - Provincial Government of Teruel (ES) • ANETEL -Larnaca and Famagusta District Development Agency (CY) • LAONA Foundation for the Conservation and Regeneration of the Cypriot Countryside (CY) • VGR - Cultural Development Administration Region Västra Götaland (SE) • SCTM - Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities National Association of Local Authorities in Serbia (RS) • NERDA - North-East Romania Regional Development Agency (RO) • VEM - NGO Verde e Moldova (MD)



Cultural tourism entails opportunities but also risks. If not managed properly, it can easily generate negative environmental, social and cultural impacts on local communities and ecosystems. Moreover, the **level of development of cultural tourism** between certain regions and sites, including those between the neighbouring countries in Europe, remains still **unbalanced**. Deprived remote, peripheral or deindustrialised areas lag behind, whereas high demand areas are over-exploited in an unsustainable manner.

Moreover, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought global, urban, and regional development and cultural tourism to a standstill, hitting all territories without distinctions and seriously jeopardising thousands of European cultural and tourism professionals' livelihoods. Despite the challenges, the tourism and culture sectors today face a unique opportunity to **develop innovations towards more circular and resilient future**. They are bound to **reinvent and diversify their offer**, attract new audiences in different ways, and develop new skills to support this radical transition. **Capitalising on digitalisation, supporting circular tourism and promoting less exploited areas are now key to build a stronger, more sustainable and resilient tourism sector.**

In February 2021, **the Horizon 2020 funded project “Beyond Cultural Tourism – Be.CULTOUR” was launched with precisely this ambition.** Selected with the maximum score amongst 86 proposals. Be.CULTOUR has **4 million Euros and 3 years** to help regions develop human-centred and circular models for their cultural tourism sector. Led by the CNR IRISS, Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development in Italy, the consortium comprises 15 partners including research institutes, local and regional authorities, as well as European umbrella organisations.

Six EU and non-EU territories have accepted the challenge: the regions of **Basilicata** (Italy), **Aragon** (Spain), **Larnaca** (Cyprus), **Västra Götaland** (Sweden), **Vojvodina** (Serbia) as well as the cross-border area of **North-East Romania and Moldova** will be equipped with tools, knowledge and contacts to **accelerate the development of innovative solutions in different thematic areas** (Rural Co-living, Sensorial Heritage Experience, Contemporary Meanings of Heritage, Spiritual Travel experience, Nature As Heritage, Industrial Heritage Experience, Transformative travel, Remote Working Destination, Proximity Travel, Post-cultural tourism) and test them with a wide and diversified partnership of stakeholders in each site.

By adopting a human-centred quadruple/quintuple helix approach to co-design, Be.CULTOUR will result in 6 community-led Action Plans, **19 human-centred innovative solutions** and at least **6 close-to-market prototypes** of new cultural tourism integrated services and products: these will directly contribute to **inclusive economic growth, communities' wellbeing and resilience, and nature regeneration** in pilot sites, **stimulating effective cooperation** at cross-border, regional and local level.

19 teams will be selected and awarded to join the **Be.CULTOUR Community of innovators** and **will have access to a training programme 100% funded by Horizon 2020** and dedicated to passionate innovators in charge of shaping the cultural tourism sector of the future!

More information on the project is available at: <https://www.becultour.eu/>



b) ABOUT THE ROUTE OF STEPHAN THE GREAT AND SAINT, NORTH-EAST ROMANIA – MOLDOVA CROSS-BORDER AREA

As a partner of the Be.Cultour project, the North-East Regional Development Agency together with „Verde e Moldova” Association, have selected for researching the development potential of circular cultural tourism some cultural objectives from the Cultural Tourist Route “Voivode Stephen the Great and Saint in Romania and the Republic of Moldova”. The route was defined by the Ministry of Tourism (Romania) and the National Agency for Investment (Republic of Moldova) in 2019 and includes 20 main objectives and 46 secondary objectives in Romania and 9 main objectives and 34 secondary objectives in the Republic of Moldova. can be found at the web address: <https://stephenthegreat.travel/>

Stephen the Great, Voivode of Moldavia, in the Middle Ages, founded a series of Orthodox churches and monasteries. All cultural heritage sites included in the route have an important component based on intangible heritage (stories, books, legends, movies, knowledge, crafts and traditions, related to the Grand Duke of Moldova) that include Northeastern Romania and the Republic of Moldova.

In addition to the listed objectives, the Be.Cultour project included research into the potential of the Vanatori Neamt Natural Park and Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve to develop products and services specific to circular cultural tourism, possibly researching its potential to be proposed for later inclusion by institutions authorized in the Cultural Tourist Route "Voievodul Stephen the Great and Saint in Romania and in the Republic of Moldova".

c) Challenges:

The challenges addressed by the project in this area are related to the accessibility of remote areas, quality standards for cultural tourism and language barriers and cultural mediation. The focus area features villages with relevant cultural heritage sites that can be valorised for tourism activities. However, these destinations are still unknown, and the local economy is underdeveloped, creating the need to assist local communities in their local economic development strategies. Rural areas are affected by migration of young people to western Europe for employment, causing the loss of immaterial heritage in these villages. The lack of public funding for the promotion of tourism is a challenge, coupled by a lack of qualified human resources in tourism caused by brain drain.

d) Key stakeholders

Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment in Moldova, Association of Tourism Development in Moldova, Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration in Romania, Associations Dezvoltare Locala ECO LAND and APDTN VALEA OZANEI, Bucovina Tourism Association, Bison Land Association, Association “Verde e Moldova”

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The **Objective** of the Call for Proposals is to select and award the best **four innovative solutions** in addressing the challenges and cultural areas of interest mentioned in section 1.1. This call aims at the creation of **innovative circular tourism services and/or products** in the **Route of Stephan the Great and Saint, North-East Romania – Moldova cross-border area**.



The innovative solution should address the following innovation areas:

-Nature as heritage

-Spiritual travel experience

The innovative solution should encompass the three main concepts of H2020 Be.CULTOUR framework and definition of circular cultural tourism, namely:

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

Moreover, **digitalisation and smart data management** features will be considered a plus. Please find in ANNEX 1 of Be.CULTOUR Call for proposals - Terms and Conditions, the definitions provided for each innovation area considered in this Call together with the three main concepts of Horizon 2020 Be.CULTOUR framework and definition of **circular cultural tourism**.

A **Be.CULTOUR** glossary is available here: <https://www.becultour.eu/glossary/>

2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The following guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the solutions in the in the **Route of Stephan the Great and Saint, North-East Romania – Moldova cross-border area**.

2.1. ORGANIZER

The organiser is as mentioned in this call ICHEC.

2.2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are two sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

- (1) composition of the team (see §2.2.1)
- (2) minimum innovative solution(s) requirements (see §2.2.2)

2.2.1. Composition of the team

-This Call for Proposals is open to individuals, companies, associations, foundations, institutions, and other entities (either individually or in association), which have a direct or indirect interest in intervening and/or contributing to the development of circular cultural tourism in the **Route of Stephan the Great and Saint, North-East Romania – Moldova cross-border area**.

-Whether individual or in association, each application should be submitted by a team made of **4 people**¹.

-At least one team member should be able to speak and write in English.

-If the entire group is composed by individuals, preferably at least one team member should be a representative of a legal entity (i.e. have a VAT number or equivalent status).

-Participants should be preferably resident (in case of individuals) or legally registered (in case of organisations) in Romania or Moldova.

-Gender equality in the group composition is a plus.

-Eligible applicants should fill in the **application form** at EU Survey (<https://becultour.eu/hackathon/form>) which includes:

Team composition and a concept note describing the innovative solution. Applicants should also attach the consent form and expression of commitment (See ANNEX 2) of each teammate, which are vital for the smooth running of Be.CULTOUR Hackathon and acceleration programme. The attachment can be uploaded directly with the application form. Please download and read carefully the privacy policy.

¹ The flight and accommodation will be covered for 4 teammates according to the conditions specified in this Call.



-Eligible applicants should fill in the **application form** at EU Survey (<https://becultour.eu/hackathon/form>) which includes:

Team composition and a concept note describing the innovative solution. Applicants should also attach the consent form and expression of commitment (See ANNEX 2) of each teammate, which are vital for the smooth running of Be.CULTOUR Hackathon and acceleration programme. The attachment can be uploaded directly with the application form. Please download and read carefully the privacy policy.

2.2.2. Innovative solutions

Definition

An **innovative circular cultural tourism solution** is composed of a set of product(s) and/or service(s) aimed at creating a unique **experience/tourist service**.

Level of maturity

The proposed solution is expected to be at an **idea/concept level**.

Innovation areas

The main innovation areas addressed by this call are nature as heritage and spiritual travel experience. The innovative solution must be fully aligned with the definition of circular **cultural tourism provided in section 1.1. Therefore, it should encompass Circular economy in cultural tourism, Human-centred design & development and Cultural tourism as driver of Europeanisation. Moreover, digitalisation and smart data management features will be considered a plus.**

Location

The applicants **must** select the **Route of Stephan the Great and Saint, North-East Romania – Moldova cross-border area** as their main area for the development of the innovative solution.

3 LOCAL PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOPS

Seen that the **innovative circular cultural tourism solutions** will be linked with **Be.CULTOUR** local Action Plans for circular cultural tourism co-designed by the local community in each **Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Site**, the applicants are welcome to participate in the second local workshop which will take place on 3 and 4 March 2022. During this workshop, the applicants will have the opportunity to meet the local community, discuss and understand the local challenges. To register, please email: rpintilescu@adrnordest.ro; alexandra.albu@adrnordest.ro

4. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection process will be conducted in two steps, the “Pitch session” and the “Hackathon”, as described below.

4.1. STEP 1 - PITCH SESSION

The best innovative solutions will be selected, and the teammates will be invited to pitch their innovative solution during a pitch event to be held between 23-31 May 2022. Place and time will be communicated by email.

4.2. STEP 2 - HACKATHON

What is a Hackathon

A hackathon is a **design sprint** event **that brings together professionals from different walks of life.** It spans from multiple hours to a few days during which **multidisciplinary teams brainstorm and solve a challenge, create a product prototype or conduct a case study.** Hackathons provide a unique opportunity for teams to **collaborate intensively on the development of their ideas into desirable, feasible and viable projects** and it is known to be the shortest route to **innovation.**



Who will participate **Be.CULTOUR Hackathon?**

The two best selected **innovative circular tourism solutions** submitted to this open call will be invited to a **3-day hackathon in Brussels**. The applicants of the solution should commit to travel to Brussels, participate actively in the 3-day **Be.CULTOUR Hackathon** and **Be.CULTOUR acceleration period**.

Be.CULTOUR Hackathon will take place **from 7 to 9 September 2022**, from: **09:00-18:00** at **ICHEC Brussels Management School**: Boulevard Brand Whitlock 6, 1150 Woluwe-Saint-Pierre, Belgium. It is planned to take place in person in **English**. However, given the current uncertainties regarding the course of the pandemic, ICHEC have an operational Plan B which provides for a fully virtual hackathon. In the event of force majeure, our seasoned practitioners in distance learning processes and workshops will make sure to provide a vibrant and engaging digital experience.

Number of innovative solutions to be selected from this Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Site: 4

Number of solutions participating in Be.CULTOUR Hackathon: 19

Number of participants per innovative circular cultural tourism solution: 4 people

Total number of participants: 100 participants

Outcome: a Minimum Viable Prototype²

What are we going to do during **Be.CULTOUR Hackathon?**

Be.CULTOUR Hackathon is structured in **three intensive days** from **09:00 to 18:00**. During these 3 days, participating teams will go through the following stages :

Understanding my heritage site and circular cultural tourism

Identify my ecosystem, analyze the environmental and social impacts throughout the value chain, understand the scientific and technical aspects with a focus on energy, material flows, & understand the social issues.

Building desirable, feasible, viable and resilient circular cultural tourism solutions

Operate in Design Thinking, Lean Startup, Agile mode, discover and apply the suitable Sustainable Business Model, test the designed solution, its technical feasibility, monetization and impact measurement.

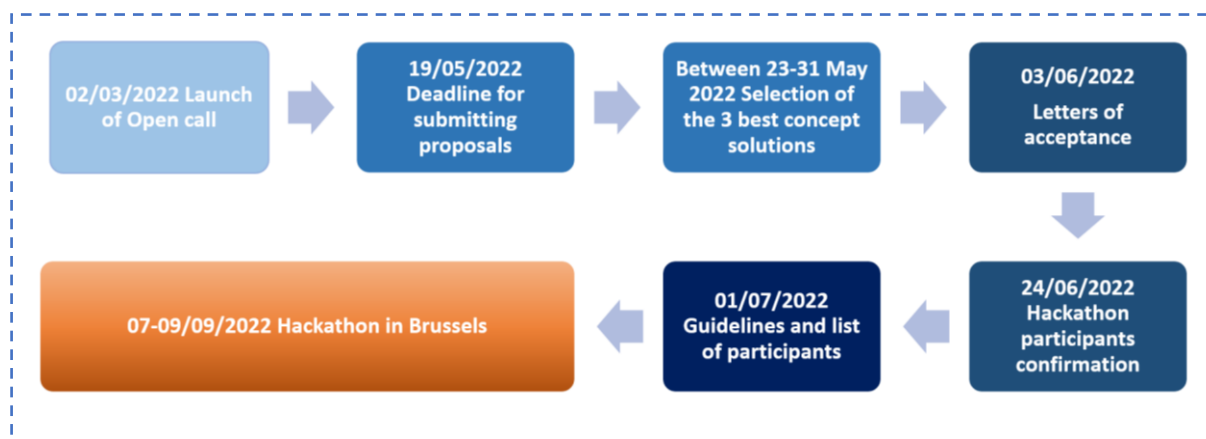
Deploying the solution

Think about organizational design and governance needed to run the solution and set up a first roadmap describing next levels.

These sessions are designed as highly participatory processes that allows to move from **idea generation** to **first solution prototyping**. Business Model canvases adapted to cultural heritage sustainable tourism and circular economy approaches (i.e. inspired from the Flourishing Business Canvas; Strongly Sustainable Business Model; Inclusive Business Model) will help participants to consider the 4 main pillars of a business model: desirability / feasibility / viability/ impact.

During each of the above-mentioned days, a time for reflection is planned and coaching is provided by ICHEC Brussels Management school.

² For the scope of this Open Call, a Minimum Viable Prototype is a first non-marketable version of the product / service including its business model and a riskiest assumptions testing plan the team needs to dig deep into and solve in order to develop a viable go-to-market product. This MVP will drive the product/service roadmap for what the team should pilot first and what needs to be built year over year to achieve the vision.



Be.CULTOUR Hackathon timeline

Why participate in Be.CULTOUR Hackathon?

During **Be.CULTOUR Hackathon**, you will have the possibility to interact and work with **100 innovators** from: **Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Sites³**; **Be.CULTOUR Mirror Innovation Ecosystems⁴**; and **experts from European countries**

During the Hackathon the **most innovative circular cultural tourism solution** will be voted by a people's jury.

5. AWARD

The best solutions selected for each Pilot Heritage Site will enter the **Be.CULTOUR Acceleration programme** offered by ICHEC. The acceleration period will have a duration of 4 months and will be carried out on-line (except for the last meeting which will take place in person in the Pilot Heritage Site).

The **acceleration period** aims at making **innovative circular cultural tourism solutions** become concrete business solutions.

³ **Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Sites:** Vulture-Alto Bradano in Basilicata 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 Vojvodina region (Serbia), and along the Cultural Route of Stephan the Great and Saint at the cross-border of North-East Romania and Moldova.

⁴ **Be.CULTOUR Mirror Innovation Ecosystems:** 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), Kuldīga District Municipality (Latvia), Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg (The Netherlands), Saltaire Inspired (UK).



What is an **acceleration period**?

An acceleration period is a fixed term education, training or mentorship program accessible through a competitive application process aimed at speeding up the growth of new businesses.

What are we going to do during **Be.CULTOUR acceleration period**?

The **four Romanian and Moldovan teams** who completed successfully **Be.CULTOUR Hackathon** will have a free access to a **four-months acceleration period**. A **mentoring program** run by **ICHEC Brussels Management school** which encompasses **four key periods** divided into **tasks of 4 weeks**.

Each **key period** starts with a **meeting** aiming at igniting the items to be covered during the period. The following paragraph describes the different **key periods** and what is expected from teams during **each key period** as follows:

Period I (25 October - 14 November 2022): Project structuring

- A core team is identified in every **Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Site**
- Solution features are fine tuned
- Solution roadmap based on a set of value streams is set up
- The first iteration is planned and executed

Period II (15 November - 12 December 2022): Assumption Testing

- Riskiest Assumptions are listed and prioritized
- Testing of the most critical assumptions is performed
- The solution is updated according to lessons learned from the different tests

Period III (13 December 2022 - 23 January 2023): Prototyping

- Prototypes are designed (eg : landing page, storyboard)
- Prototypes are tested toward specific target customers / users
- Results are analyzed and the solution is adapted accordingly

Period IV (24 January - 14 February 2023): Viability and Pitching

- Financial numbers are fine tuned
- Pitches are created and challenged through dry runs
- Important stakeholders are identified
- The project is pitched to these stakeholders in order to get a first idea about their level of readiness re an engagement in the project (eg: bringing people, money and/or any other asset)

Meeting dates:

Period I: Tuesday 25 October 2022 09:00-12:00 (VIRTUAL MEETING)

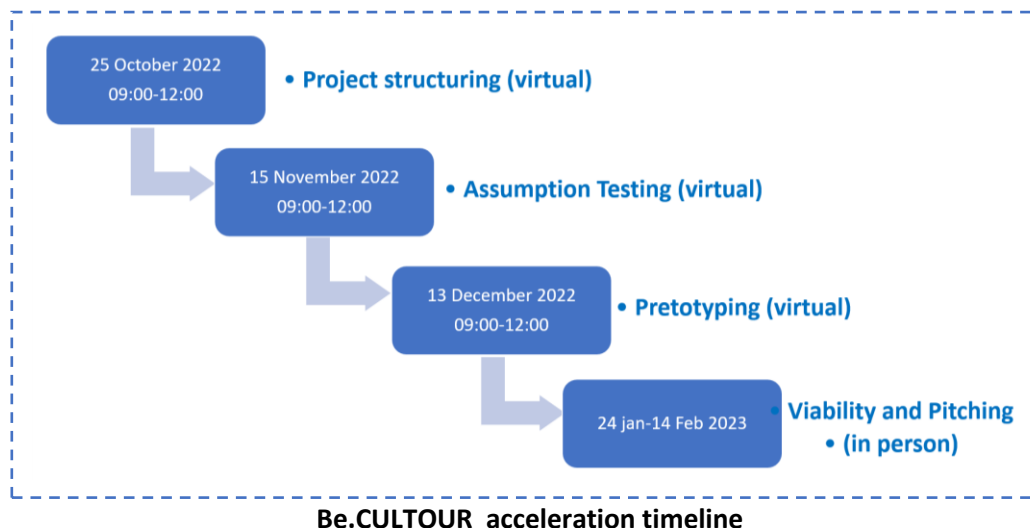
Period II: Tuesday 15 November 2022 09:00-12:00 (VIRTUAL MEETING)

Period III: Tuesday 13 December 2022 09:00-12:00 (VIRTUAL MEETING)

Period IV: Between 24 January and 14 February 2023 (face to face meeting in North-East Romania)

The exact pitch date and place will be communicated in a later stage.

During the **Be.CULTOUR acceleration period** (25 October 2022-14 February 2023), each team has **2 wild cards of 30-minutes**. This means that they can contact ICHEC's team and schedule a 30-minutes meeting to address burning questions, drawbacks, concerns, or any other matter.



6. WHERE AND HOW TO SEND APPLICATIONS

Application form

The application form includes: Team composition; and a concept note describing the innovative solution. Applicants should also attach the consent form and expression of commitment (See ANNEX 2 Be.CULTOUR Call for proposals – Terms and Conditions) of each teammate, which are vital for the smooth running of Be.CULTOUR Hackathon and acceleration programme. The attachment can be uploaded directly with the application form. To apply at EU Survey: <https://becultour.eu/hackathon/form>

Deadline for submission

The deadline for submission of the application is 19 May 2022 at 18:00 (CET)
Any application submitted after the deadline will be rejected.

7. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications submitted to this open call will be examined and evaluated by an evaluation committee. The best applications from each Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Site will be invited to pitch their solution to a local jury (see §4.1 Step 1 – Pitch session) which will take place online/hybrid between 23-31 May 2022. Each group will have the opportunity to present its solution and discuss its feasibility and viability. Three innovative circular cultural tourism solutions will be selected from each Be.CULTOUR Pilot Heritage Site (four from this specific PHS).

Evaluation criteria

Innovativeness of the proposed solution 60

- Relevance to circular cultural tourism framework 30

(Circular economy aspects; Human-centred, fair and responsible tourism aspects; Cultural Europeanisation aspects)

- Relevance to the selected heritage site 20

(Contribution to the valorisation, reuse and regeneration of the target heritage site)

- Relevance to the innovation area(s) 10

(Coherence with the topics expressed in the target innovation areas, including cross-cutting areas such as digitalisation)



Expected impacts 30

(Social impact and social innovation, including benefit for local communities, engagement and/or wellbeing of cultural minorities and vulnerable social groups; Environmental impacts such as reduction of pollution, materials extraction; enhancement of biodiversity, energy, water, renewables & recycled materials use, etc.; Economic impacts in the region/site such as jobs generation potential, enhancement of local economy, increase in tourists' arrivals, etc.)

Group composition 10

(Internal skills and competences required for the implementation of the innovative solution proposed, motivation and commitment)

Should the examination of the application reveal that a submitted solution does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Sections §2.2.1 & §2.2.2., the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

8. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

The best solutions/teams awarded will have the possibility to apply for further support from Be.CULTOUR project for an amount up to 96,000 € in total for all Pilot Heritage Sites to develop their Minimum Viable Product and test it in real context. The terms of reference for the applications will be specified after the Hackathon according to principles of transparency, competition and best value for money in compliance with the rules of each country.

9. ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For the detailed description of the terms and conditions of this call please read carefully articles 9-16 of the Be.CULTOUR Call for proposals – terms and conditions.