



Be.CULTOUR:

“Beyond CULTural TOURism: human-centred innovations for sustainable and circular cultural tourism”



HORIZON 2020

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Set of articles on the Be.CULTOUR “mirror ecosystems”

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Abstract

Be.CULTOUR aims to empower European regions to co-create innovative, circular solutions for heritage regeneration and regional development beyond cultural tourism. The objectives and impact of the project are based on the implementation of co-creation activities, the development of Local Action Plans and innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism in six pilot ecosystems located in Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Sweden, Serbia and the cross-border region of North-East Romania-Moldova. As a partner to the consortium, each pilot ecosystem has identified a specific Pilot Heritage Site on which the project's methodology will be applied, tested, and validated. This will be done together with the local stakeholders engaged in local Heritage Innovation Networks, working together amongst each other and actively involved in the participation in the Be.CULTOUR Community of Practice. In parallel, a Community of Interest is developed to engage additional organisations (mirror ecosystems) committed to engaging in a peer-learning programme and replicating the Be.CULTOUR methodology in their territory, with their resources. This document will detail the first activities organised for the Community of Interest of the 16 ecosystems consisting of a first "Community Conversation" and an interview scheduled to enhance the Community of Interest, introduce the project activities and the peer learning programme and gather expectations in terms of innovation areas and peer learning activities. Moreover, specific sections are dedicated to the set of articles on the members of the Be.CULTOUR Community of Interest to present the 16 selected Be.CULTOUR mirror ecosystems, as well as the identification of three inspiring examples of circular and human-centred cultural tourism in heritage sites selected as "Advisors" for the Be.CULTOUR Community. Conclusions provide information on how the results of this part of the work are integrated and will feed into other project activities and implementation, including shared challenges with pilot heritage sites and potential solutions from local experiences.



Partners involved in the document

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2	European Regions Research and Innovation Network	ERRIN	X
3	ICLEI Europe – Local governments for Sustainability	ICLEI	
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	
14	Agentia Pentru Dezvoltare Regionala Nord-Est	NERDA	
15	Verde e Moldova	VEM	



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1. Description of the Project

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 become 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 realising a longer-term development project for the pilot areas involved.

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.

Wide and diversified partnerships of stakeholders from **18 EU and non-EU regions** of Northern-Central and Southern Europe, the Balkans, the Eastern neighbourhood and the Mediterranean will be the driving force of the project. A **community of 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 **6 pilot regions** will **co-create innovative place-based solutions for human-centred development through sustainable and circular cultural tourism**.

Collaborative “Heritage innovation networks” will be established in **6 European deprived remote, peripheral and deindustrialised areas and cultural landscapes** identified as “pilot innovation ecosystems”: 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 the **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.

By adopting a human-centred quadruple/quintuple helix approach to co-design, **Be.CULTOUR will result in 6 community-led Action Plans, 18 innovative human-centred solutions and 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 and mirror regions, **stimulating effective cooperation** at a cross-border, regional and local level. The core partners of the Consortium will progressively build Be.CULTOUR sustainability by broadening the interregional collaboration while anchoring it to relevant EU initiatives in the academic, business and institutional realms.

1.1 Be.CULTOUR 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;

Objective 2 – To build a Community of Practice of 6 pilot regional ecosystems and a Community of Interest with 16 “mirror ecosystems” 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 regions in Northern-Central and Southern Europe, the Balkans, the Eastern neighbourhood and the Mediterranean;

Objective 4 – To co-develop, prototype and test human-centred and place-specific product, process and service innovations for sustainable and circular cultural tourism in pilot heritage sites;

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;

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.

All partners have wide experience in developing and testing the Be.CULTOUR proposed approach, methodology and tools, ensuring the effective and time-constrained achievement of all the above-mentioned specific goals.



2. Introduction

Be.CULTOUR aims to empower European regions to co-create innovative, circular solutions for heritage regeneration and regional development beyond cultural tourism. The objectives and impact of the project are based on the implementation of co-creation activities, the development of Local Action Plans and innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism in six pilot ecosystems located in Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Sweden, Serbia and the cross-border region of North-East Romania-Moldova. As a partner to the consortium, each pilot ecosystem has identified a specific Pilot Heritage Site on which the project's methodology will be applied, tested, and validated. This will be done together with the local stakeholders engaged in local Heritage Innovation Networks, working together amongst each other and actively engaged in the participation in the Be.CULTOUR Community of Practice. In parallel, a Community of Interest is developed to engage additional organisations (mirror ecosystems) committed to engaging a peer-learning programme and replicating the Be.CULTOUR methodology in their territory, with their resources.

This document will detail the first activities organised for the Community of Interest of the 16 ecosystems consisting of a first “Community Conversation” and an interview organised to enhance the Community of Interest, introduce the project activities and the peer learning programme and gather expectations in terms of innovation areas and peer learning activities.

Moreover, specific sections are dedicated to the set of articles on the members of the Be.CULTOUR Community of Interest to present the 16 selected Be.CULTOUR mirror ecosystems, as well as the identification of three inspiring examples of circular and human-centred cultural tourism in heritage sites selected as “Advisors” for the Be.CULTOUR Community. Conclusions provide information on how the results of this part of the work are integrated and will feed into other project activities and implementation, including shared challenges with pilot heritage sites and potential solutions from local experiences.

2.1 Document structure

The document is structured as follows:

Section 1 described the Be.CULTOUR project in brief;

Section 2 introduced the objectives of this document related to the Community of Interest;

Section 3 provides information on the first activities of the Community of Interest, the “Community Conversation” and the interview;

Section 4 provides detailed information about the mirror innovation ecosystems.

Section 5 describes the 3 Be.CULTOUR advisors;

Finally the conclusions focus on common threads and potential pathways in terms of shared challenges and solutions related to circular cultural tourism, in particular:

- Circular economy in cultural tourism: creative, sustainable, beautiful destinations;
- Digitalisation & smart destination management for circular cultural tourism;
- Enhancing the human dimension of circular cultural tourism;
- Entrepreneurial ecosystem, innovative business and financial models for circular cultural tourism.



3. The identification of needs for the peer-learning scheme

The backbone of the Be.CULTOUR community is its peer-learning activity tailored to the mirror ecosystem's needs. Indeed, to define it and plan the activities according to the Community members, it was necessary to identify the mirror's needs, gather insight on their experience in the circular economy, cultural tourism-related challenges, and expectations in terms of innovation areas.

The process of gathering information on the mirror ecosystems has been developed through two main activities: a Community Conversation and interviews.

3.1 The first Community Conversation

On 26 October 2021, the first Community Conversation took place involving the Pilot Heritage Sites and the 16 mirror ecosystems. Besides presenting the project activities and the Pilot's cases, the event was the occasion for building the Be.CULTOUR Community let the mirrors introduce themselves and gather their expectations regarding Innovation Areas and peer learning activities.

Table 1 – Agenda of the first Community Conversation

15:00	Check-in, ice-breaker and introduction of the mirror ecosystems
15:25	Beyond Cultural Tourism: the project in a nutshell Antonia Gravagnuolo, CNR IRISS, Project Coordinator
15:35	The six pilot heritage sites Representatives from the 6 pilots
15:50	Q&A & interactive session
16:20	Connection time! Social media get-together... and grab a coffee!
16:30	Be.CULTOUR Community of Interest: structure and activities Gaia Marotta, ERRIN, WP4 leader
16:40	Q&A & interactive session
17:00	Check out and end of the event

The first part of the event was dedicated to introducing the mirror ecosystems, the main features of the Be.CULTOUR project and the pilot heritage sites.

Every representative of a mirror ecosystem was invited to take the floor and introduce the local case focusing on the circular cultural tourism aspects.

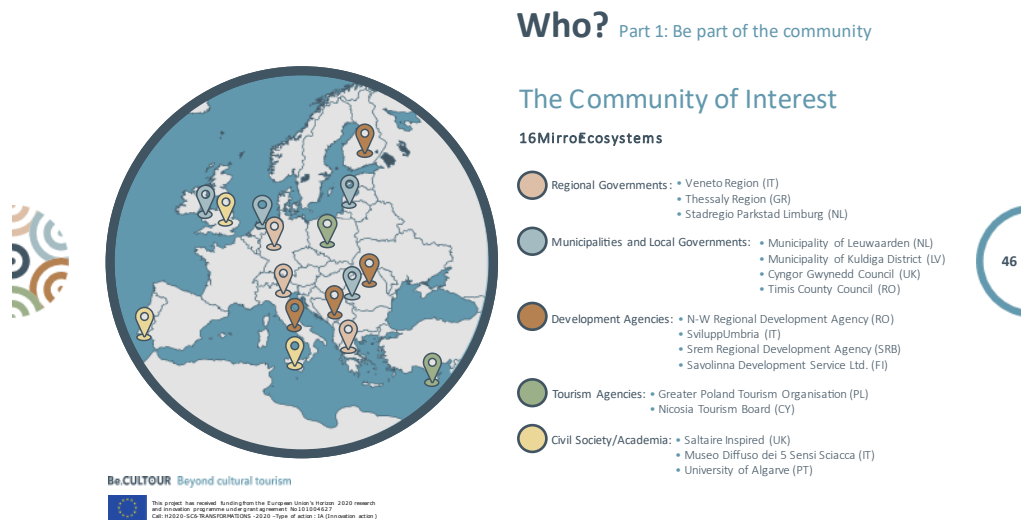


Figure 1 – the Community of Interest

Then, the coordinator (Antonia Gravagnuolo from CNR-IRISS) gave an overview of the Horizon 2020 funded project, highlighting the specific approach, key objectives, methodology and innovation areas. The representatives of the Community of Practice presented the six heritage sites focusing on the specific challenges, the type of heritage and the related innovation areas.

The first interactive part of the event was dedicated to the innovation areas. The mirror ecosystems were asked to explain what innovation areas are the most relevant for the specific local case.

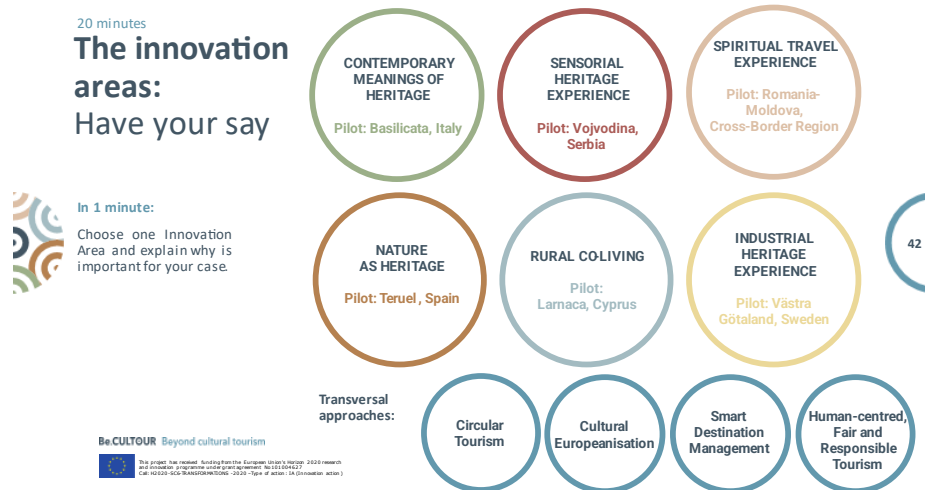


Figure 2 – interactive session on the Be.CULTOUR innovation areas

The second part of the Community Conversation was specifically dedicated to the Community of Interest activities, especially on peer learning planning.

Gaia Marotta from ERRIN presented the main activities of the Be.CULTOUR Community of interest, divided into four main parts:

1. **Be part of a Community:** 16 Different organisations and challenges
2. **Visibility:** Webpage, dissemination of best practices
3. **Learn and Replicate:** Be.CULTOUR tools and methodologies
4. **Mark your calendar, join the peer learning scheme:** Objectives, format, calendar

The last interactive session was dedicated to gathering information on the mirror's expectations.

3.1.1 The Be.CULTOUR transversal innovation approaches

The first discussion was dedicated to the Be.CULTOUR project four main innovation approaches:

- The circular economy model in the cultural tourism sector, towards higher sustainability and regenerative tourism models – which means regenerative for nature and for people.
- European culture and identity, strengthening its common roots, enhancing its shared heritage and valorising its beauty.
- A human-centred, fair and responsible tourism models attentive to the impacts generated in the territory.

- A Smart and human-centred data management that supports managers and institutions to enhance tourism flows and provide immersive, engaging cultural experiences.

From the discussion, it emerged that the 16 mirror ecosystems are generally interested in all of them. In particular, most of them indicated their interest in learning and implementing new innovative solutions for Circular Tourism.

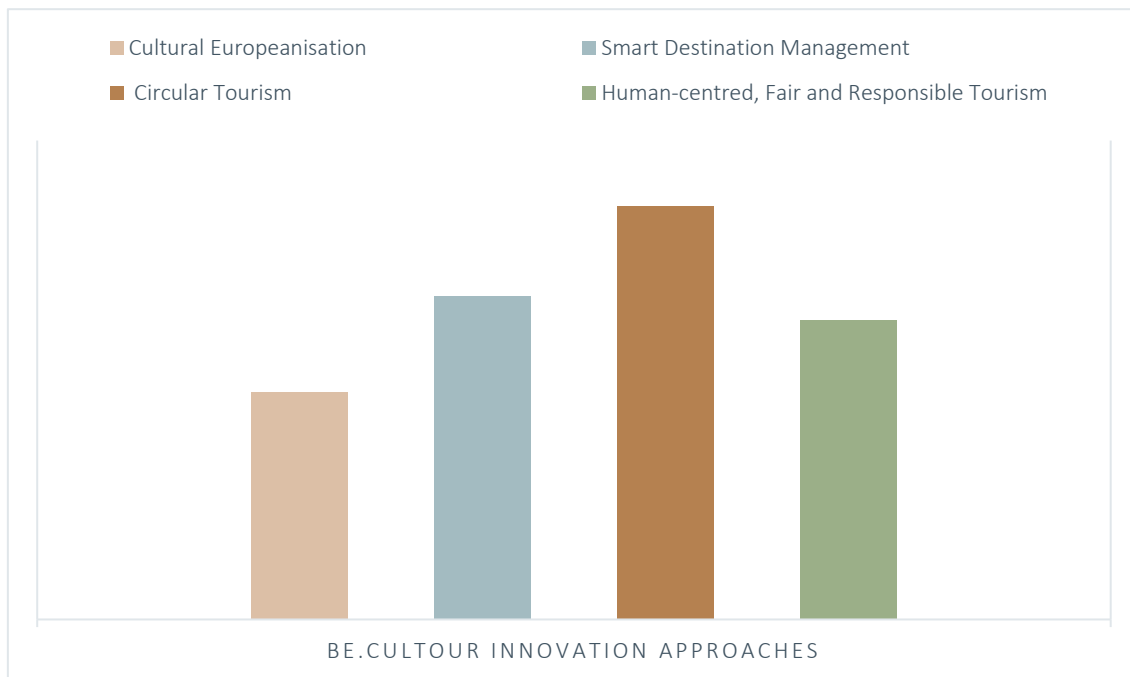


Figure 3 – the ranking of the Be.CULTOUR transversal innovation approaches

3.1.2 Interest in replicating the methodology

The Be.CULTOUR methodology is based on four phases: Exploration, Strategy definition, Solutions co-development, and solutions prototyping. The 16 mirror ecosystems can be involved, and learn from all of them. The second discussion was about what parts of the project methodology is more interesting for them to plan the peer-learning programme accordingly.

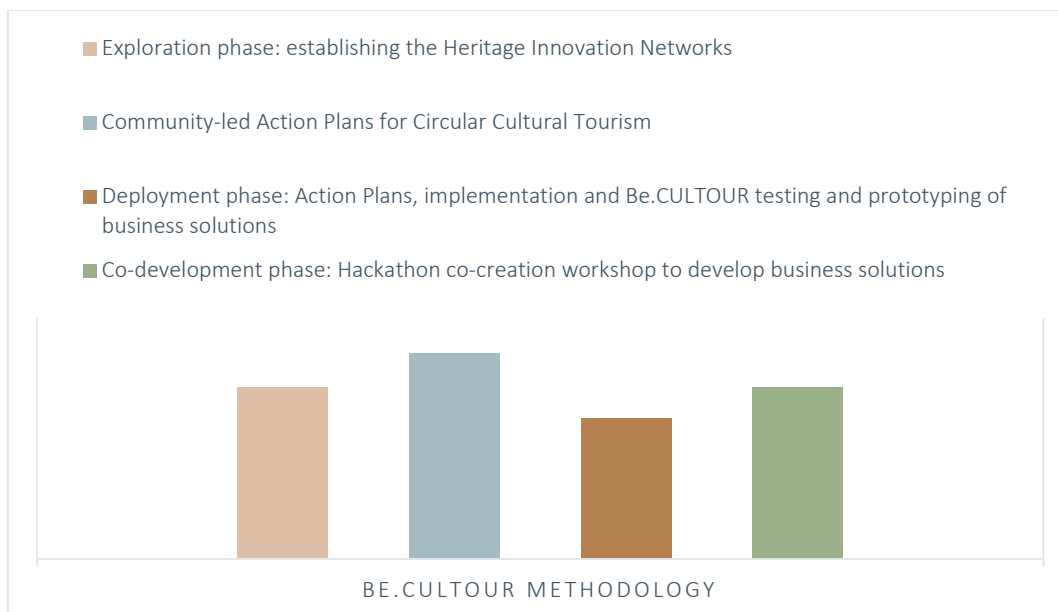


Figure 4 – the ranking of the Be.CULTOUR methodology assets

The majority of the mirror ecosystems have indicated an engagement in learning and replicating the first two Be.CULTOUR methodology phases, the exploration phase with establishing the local heritage innovation networks and the co-designing phase to produce community-led action plans for circular cultural tourism.

3.1.3 Interest in peer learning activities

The third topic was the interest in the different project activities. Indeed, the mirror ecosystems will have the possibility to be involved and benefit from many dedicated project activities and services. The main interesting output of this discussion was that the Be.CULTOUR methodology is the output the mirror ecosystems are interested in the most. The session highlighted a general agreement on the interest in learning and replicating it, especially concerning its circular cultural aspects. The second output that every mirror ecosystem considers beneficial is being part of the Be.CULTOUR community to discuss challenges and innovative solutions with peers and experts. While the peer learning activities, both online through the Community conversation and in-person in the two Learning Labs in Brussels and Naples, are considered crucial for the mirror ecosystems, the less interesting activities focus on their visibility.

The overall main output from this interactive session is that the 16 mirror ecosystems are more interested in the project's innovative topics and methodology than in benefiting from the project visibility. Their strong commitment to implementing the Be.CULTOUR innovation actions will be a strong basis for the deployment of the Community and peer-learning activities.

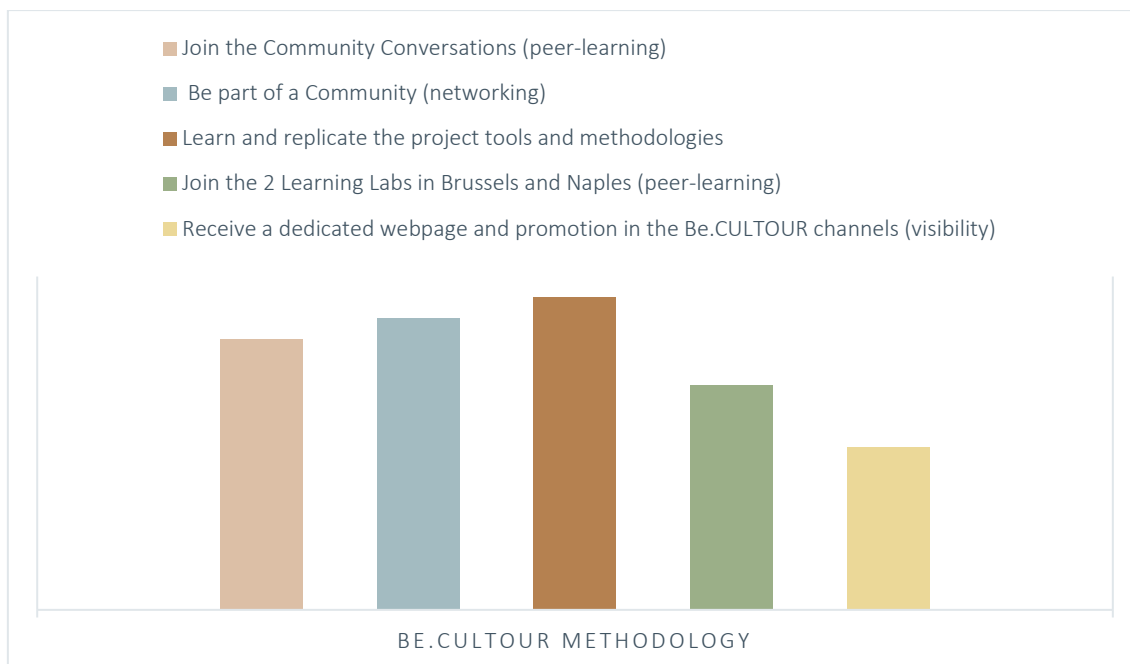


Figure 5 – the ranking of the Be.CULTOUR peer-learning activities

3.1.4 Practical aspects and other discussions

The last interactive session of the first Community Conversation was an occasion to plan and discuss future meetings and activities. Indeed, a general agreement was found on the duration and the logistics of the future Community Conversation. The forthcoming activities have been presented, including the dedicated interviews.

3.2 Following online peer-learning activities

Following the first Community Conversation, focusing on building the community of interest, gathering the needs and learning expectations from the mirror ecosystems other activities were held by the project team on the following topics:

- Meetup with Mirrors and Advisors, 28 January 2022: **The circular approach in cultural tourism;**
- Second Community Conversation, 24 February 2022: **Insights from the first local workshop in the Pilot Heritage Sites and focus on the inclusion of the local communities;**
- Third Community Conversation, 28 April 2022: **Insights from the second local workshop in the Pilot Heritage Sites and focus on how to align bottom-up community plans with municipal, regional or national strategies;**

- Forth Community Conversation, 8 July 2022: **Insights from the third local workshop in the Pilot Heritage Sites and focus on how are heritage sites rethinking and promoting circular cultural tourism in the first ‘post-covid’ summer;**
- Study Visit to Heerlen, Parkstad Limburg, 9 September 2022;
- Policy Learning Lab, 9 September 2022: **How can policy support circular cultural tourism?**
- Fifth Community Conversation, 15 December 2022: **Launch of the Be.CULTOUR Working Groups and discussion on the regions’ winter cultural traditions (sustainability, tourism attractiveness, inclusivity and human dimension of the tradition).**

Further details on the main findings and results from these online peer-to-peer exchanges will be outlined in D4.4 Report of the Peer-learning Scheme.

3.3 The mirror’s interview

Besides the information on the general Community of Interest’s needs and expectations, it was essential to collect more specific information on the 16 mirror ecosystems. The second activity carried out has been a series of dedicated interviews with them. After analysing the information gathered from the application form, the mirrors have been asked to complement, confirm and add relative information on their local cases.

The interviews' common thread has been the project's main innovation approaches, mainly the focus on the circular economy model in the cultural tourism sector and the European culture and identity, strengthening its common roots, enhancing its shared heritage and valorising its beauty. The main goal of the interviews was to understand the uniqueness, specificity and point of view of each of the mirror ecosystems in terms of challenges and best practices. This will lead to a peer-learning programme focusing on their needs, highlighting their specificities, and sharing best practices.

4. Set of articles

The information gathered through the interviews are collected in the set of articles that focuses and describes some specific local aspects:

- The region, the organisation and their relations to cultural tourism.
- Their interest in the Be.CULTOUR Innovation Areas.
- The main challenges related to cultural tourism, the main strategies, plans and objectives, and the ideas for future plans and activities.

- The selected Heritage asset, the specific goals related to the circular economy, human-centred tourism or cultural Europeanisation and how it represents the European identity as a part of European history.
- The EU and international Cultural Heritage recognitions and the past and current projects and best practices.

The result is a **set of articles describing the 16 mirror ecosystems that highlight their specificities in terms of challenges**, especially **specific approaches and innovative solutions** to share with the Be.CULTOUR Community. This set of articles will be used to share their experience, best practices and challenges with the pilot partners in a user-friendly manner, as well as to promote the 16 mirror ecosystems through diverse communication means.





4.1 CYNGOR GWYNEDD COUNCIL, UK: The development of a regenerative tourism model linking the ecomuseum to the value of the local heritage, language and culture.



Cyngor Gwynedd Council, UK

For Cyngor Gwynedd being part of the Be.CULTOUR Community means that we can collaborate with other regions all over Europe to develop a sustainable tourism model for our communities.

Region: Wales

- MOUNTAINS AND SEA
- RUGGED
- PERIPHERAL

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public authority



Gwynedd County Council is a Local Authority in the northwest of Wales. Tourism is an important economic activity within Gwynedd.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

Historically the area has benefited from **seasonal tourism** (mainly in the summer months), providing employment opportunities for local people in an area that has seen a decline in heavy industry such as quarrying.

As the tourism season has lengthened, the demands on infrastructure, roads, water, housing and medical services has also increased, and the main honey pot areas have become full beyond capacity during the summer months and school holidays.

This can have a **negative effect on the natural environment** as tourists are always looking for new experiences and to get away from the crowds.

Current strategic planning

Regional projects deliver the wider objectives identified in the Welcome to Wales Priorities for the Visitor Economy 2020 – 2025 [document](#): developing a **regenerative tourism model will highlight, celebrate, value and promote the knowledge and skills that exist within the region.**

Ideas and future perspectives

The regenerative tourism model that we are aspiring to develop will value the presence of **heritage, language, culture and the natural landscape** within the tourism offer, linking the Celtic saints and their routes to present day pilgrims who walk through iconic, high-value coastal landscapes along the Wales Coast Path, but are also looking for the authentic cultural experiences during their visit.

Linking the core ecomuseum sites and their surroundings will further develop the four-season offer that is essential in creating sustainable, full-time quality jobs within the tourism and hospitality sector.

Type of cultural heritage

- RURAL
- RELIGIOUS
- NATURAL
- INTANGIBLE



Cultura heritage asset description

Ecomuseum in Pen Llŷn

The strategic locations of the Ecomuseum sites around the coast of the region, each with its unique offer highlighting the living marine, environmental, artistic (visual and performing arts),

and linguistic heritage, should encourage more people to visit these heritage assets out of the main holiday season, bringing added economic benefits and developing interest and **cultural awareness** within the local community.

Augmented reality products will also open the experience to those who might not physically be able to participate and bring Wales and Pen Llŷn to a global audience.

The Ecomuseum will share **learning opportunities** with other regenerative tourism projects being developed in the region.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

To bring back the learning to Pen Llŷn, to catalyse actions and further innovation that will strengthen the links between the Ecomuseum and the wider local environment. The walking offer provides a steady stream of visitors during and outside of the main holiday season to the region. Providing better information for people who utilise this resource through the **use of digital apps and Augmented Reality** can improve the visitor experience and open the door to information about the natural environment and the culture and heritage of the region.



Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

The link between the Celtic saints who set up churches along the coast of Wales travelled extensively around the countries of northwest Europe and had churches in Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, Brittany in France and Northern Spain. Many towns and villages carry the names of these saints today, and the indigenous people who still live and work in these communities today have a linguistic link back to these early Christians.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- Unesco designation Llechi Cymru / Welsh Slate
- The **North Wales Pilgrims Route** that finishes at the tip of the Llŷn Peninsula is known as the ‘Welsh Camino’ ([link](#))
- The **Llŷn Coastline has Heritage Coast status** that recognises its cultural importance and provides protection linked to planning issues within the designation. ([link](#))
- **The Wales Coast Path** – The Llŷn Peninsula is recognised for being one of the most striking and varied sections of the Wales Coast Path ([link](#))

Ongoing projects and best practices

- LIVE, Wales– Ireland INTERREG project ([link](#))
- The #Ecoamgueddfa: the first digital ecomuseum in the world. ([link](#))
- Skye Ecomuseum. ([link](#))



Website and social media accounts

<https://www.ecoamgueddfa.org/>

Facebook | Twitter | Instagram @Ecoamgueddfa

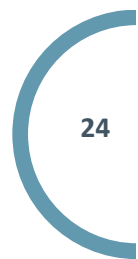




photo by Alicja Klary

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4.2 WIELKOPOLSKA REGION - GREATER POLAND TOURISM ORGANIZATION, POLAND: find new strategies to promote the Piast Route as a symbol to showcase and spread the authentic historical objects related to the beginnings of Poland and the Christian religion on its territory through inclusive strategies.

WIELKOPOLSKA REGION - Greater Poland Tourism Organization, Poland

For Greater Poland, being part of the Be.CULTOUR Community means building a network of knowledge, sharing ideas, and seeking inspiration from Europe-wide to boost tourism locally.

Region: Greater Poland

- THE CRADLE OF POLAND
- GREAT HISTORY
- GREAT ADVENTURE

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public authority

The Regional DMO clusters local governments, organisations, hotels, tour operators, universities and other partners. Its main focuses are supporting tourism development and promoting the region as an attractive tourist destination. The Regional DMO is a key partner in developing the region's core cultural tourism product: the Piast Route.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

Greater Poland is the birthplace of Polish statehood, filled with monuments from the early middle ages and places crucial for Polish history – connected with The Piast Route, Poland's oldest culture tourism trail. Yet, despite its significance, the trail is often perceived as suitable mostly for school trips. **The key is to re-define it, bringing new means of communication and storytelling, and implementing viable strategies to build the tourist offer.** Finally, it is essential to promote networking and cooperation between different entities to create a complex and complementary tourist product.

Current strategic planning

Since 2016 the Piast Trail has been managed by the Piast Trail Tourism Cluster, established by a group of local governments, with the partnership of the Greater Poland Tourism Organisation. Together we implement the vision of a coherent tourist product, and shape promotion and brand management. There is an ongoing project to develop a common communication strategy, however, there is no master plan for the trail yet. The main objective is to make the Piast Trail the best recognised cultural tourism trail in Poland, establish direct links between the heritage and local economy and make that heritage comprehensible for European tourists.



Photo by Jacek Ciešlewicz

Ideas and future perspectives

The main focus is to **strengthen cooperation and bonds between all the stakeholders involved in the trail activities, promote a synergy effect** and – based on the knowledge acquired by participating in Be.CULTOUR – **to reshape its image**, introduce innovative storytelling solutions and new tourist offers based on cultural heritage. It is crucial to **make the trail an important element of local identity** and be inclusive towards the local population and business by encouraging their involvement in the tourism economy.

Type of cultural heritage

- RELIGIOUS

Cultural heritage asset description

The Piast Trail

The Piast Trail is the cultural heritage of the region. It is one of the most visited and best-known tourist routes in Poland. The trail's idea and message are to **present and make available authentic historical objects related to the beginnings of Poland and the Christian religion on its territory.**

The Piast Trail intersects with other international and national tourist and cultural trails (the Way of St. James, the Romanesque Trail) and those with a regional range (the Trail of Wooden Churches around Zielonka Forest).

The trail is the main axis of tourism in the Greater Poland region and is supported by mobile applications, maps, and routes for various modes of transport. It has a great potential to attract a large group of tourists.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The biggest challenge is to encourage the tourist facilities located on the Piast Trail to network, cooperate and willingness to identify more closely with the brand of the trail. The aim is to increase brand recognition of the trail in Poland and abroad.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

The Piast dynasty created the Polish state and its first rulers adopted Christianity, and then they were crowned with the approval of the German emperor and the pope. The idea behind the meeting of the German emperor in 1000 with the ruler of Poland was the seed of a thought about a united Europe. The preserved monuments constituting the core of the Piast Trail are the oldest historical sites in Poland and are part of the cultural heritage of the whole of Europe.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

The Address of the Polish Bishops to the German Bishops, which is related to the history of the Piast Trail and Lech Hill with Gniezno Cathedral, are Polish candidates for the European Heritage Label 2021.

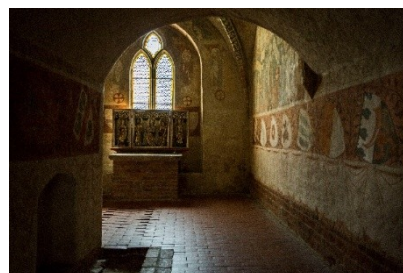


photo by Karol Budzinski

Ongoing projects and best practices

- Common branding and communication for multiple entities, working together on the Piast Trail. An example of clustering in practice with the decentralised organisation of a tourist product
- Adding new assets to the trail by supporting storytelling through augmented reality mobile app, interactive quests and events
- Development of basic infrastructure crucial for the identity of the trail, including road signs, information boards, and outdoor maps.
- Supporting accessible tourism: accessibility audits, training and courses focused on accessible tourism, three-dimensional tactile models for blind tourists

Website and social media accounts

www.szlakpiastowski.pl

<https://www.facebook.com/ZwiedzajSzlakPiastowski>



<https://www.instagram.com/szlakpiastowski/>

www.wielkopolska.travel

4.3 KULDIGA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, LATVIA: A pioneer in digital data analytics for cultural tourism through the global visitor flow analysis using artificial intelligence.

Kuldiga District Municipality, Latvia

Our main goal regarding Circular Cultural Tourism is to boost Circular innovations, especially Augmented Reality solutions and tools. AR will scale cultural experiences. Once it arrives, Augmented Reality will be everywhere.

Region: Kurzeme

- GREEN
- BEAUTY
- HISTORY

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public authority

Kuldiga is one of the most charming and magical destinations in Latvia. It is a place that has preserved its medieval appearance and charm. The Kurzeme Region is the Western Region of Latvia,

which is involved in the project represented by the Kuldiga District municipality (public authority



of central part of the Region). The Kuldīga Municipality has been a **pioneer in digital data analytics for cultural tourism** in Latvia regarding **the global visitor flow analysis by artificial intelligence**. It has received the Sustainable Tourism Innovation award VISTAS in 2014, ITB, Berlin.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

The main challenge is to boost Circular Cultural Tourism innovations, especially **Augmented Reality solutions and tools**. The AR tools planned to be developed within the project:

- **AR GUIDE** and navigation for Kuldīga city. AR guide app would allow users to scan cultural and historical landmarks, monuments, and geographical points of interest to view instant interactive digital information.
- **AR cultural tourism MAP**. Cities often offer touristic maps of the surrounding areas to help guide and inform guests during their visits. Similar hotels could use the actual map to reveal landmarks, famous constructions, and cultural monuments digitally popping out of the map in a realistic or artistic manner.
- **AR art and Museums**. Digital artists feature their art throughout the digital museums. Users could scan paintings and outdoor art murals to view, capture, and share the digitally hidden art on social media. It also allows tourists to learn more about the artworks and artists with a simple phone scan that could trigger audio guides, videos, text or a digital version of the artist himself explaining his masterpiece and personal story.
- **Augment existing 3D Art**. Cool monument, fountain, or architectural feature in town. The aim is to use Object e Scene AR Tracking technology to have digital augmentations attached to objects, sculptures, or the building structure itself.
- **AR for restaurants and hotel dining**. Digital representations of the 3D food menu or entertaining stories about the traditional artisan restaurant or hotel and the area. When visiting the restaurant, guests can point their phone's viewfinder to enjoy a series of artistic styles digitally layered around cocktails and meals, brought to life through Image Tracking augmented reality technology for sustainable and circular cultural tourism.

Current strategic planning

We have updated two separate documents: culture as well as tourism development programs, both by 2021. The main objectives of the Kuldīga Culture Development Program 2021–2028 are:

- To identify and evaluate the existing creative industries and cultural environments of the municipality resources, including both cultural institute and organizational resources, offering a clear vision and solutions;
- Targeted planning of actions and investments, incl. the municipal budget for culture development;
- To substantiate the attraction of all types of investments to culture and related industries, incl. foreign and domestic investment;
- To promote the recognition of the cultural activities of the region in the regional, national and internationally.

Ideas and future perspectives

Within Be.CULTOUR project, we wish to co-create and test sustainable human-centred innovations for circular cultural tourism through collaborative innovation networks within the project. We wish to develop some of the five ideas (mentioned before):

- AR GUIDE and navigation for Kuldiga city.
- AR cultural tourism MAP.
- Digital AR art in Museums or outdoor art exhibitions.
- Augment existing 3D Art.
- AR for restaurants and hotel dining.

Type of cultural heritage

- RURAL
- INTANGIBLE



Cultural heritage asset description

Kuldiga

The cooperation between the city residents, house owners, managers and Kuldiga municipality is very important, which has become an integral part of the management of the historical UNESCO centre of Kuldiga oldtown. In 2011, the Kuldīga Oldtown Preservation and Development Plan was approved, comprehensively including various aspects of cultural and historical heritage preservation, integrating them into the sections of economic development, environmental protection, sustainable tourism and cultural development.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The specific territorial challenges are **Lack of data** (and data-driven policies) and being **unknown destination**. Latvia has been a pioneer in digital data analytics regarding the global visitor flow analysis through artificial intelligence in the local climate context. Therefore, they are eager to develop Smart data monitoring and management system for circular cultural tourism in Kuldiga as well as to develop sustainable human-centred innovations for circular cultural tourism to display the heritage asset.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

Kuldiga is an ancient Viking centre from the 9th Century. This heritage site is focused on the European history, identity and culture expressed in tangible and intangible cultural heritage, cultural landscapes, developing European Cultural Routes and the following European Heritage Labels: Vikings, Hansa, Christianity, Duke Jacob road, UNESCO site, EUROvelo 10 and 13, etc.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

Cultural heritage is an integral part of Kuldīga city. The historical centre of Kuldīga received the **European Heritage Label** in 2008 and was included in the **UNESCO** World Heritage Latvian List in 2011. In 2007 "Kuldīga Town in the Valley of the River Venta" was awarded with the title of the Best **European Destination of Excellence** in Latvia. It was awarded with **Europa Nostra** Award too. Kuldīga District council has been a member of the international organization "Mayors for Peace" since 2015 and from 2020, a member of the European Covenant of Mayors too.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- Digital data analytics for culture tourism in Latvia regarding the visitor flow analysis by artificial intelligence in the local climate context.
- Kuldīga International *Bauhaus* Art Festival
- Development of Forest trail In Latvia and Lithuania and expanding the Baltic Coastal Hiking route in Lithuania.
- Revival of Industrial heritage for tourism development
- The adaptation of the Venta river to tourism in the border areas of Lithuania and Latvia (ViVa), Etc.

Website and social media accounts

www.kuldiga.lv

<https://www.kurzeme.lv/en/>

<https://www.facebook.com/visitkurzeme/>

<https://www.instagram.com/kuldigalv/>

<https://twitter.com/kuldigalv>





photo by Lieuwe Terpstra

4.4 MUNICIPALITY OF LEEUWARDEN, THE NETHERLANDS: A focus on the intangible cultural heritage, investing in cultural events to build a steppingstone for (young) creators.

Municipality of Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

“For Leeuwaden, Circular Cultural Tourism is stimulating overall tourism by means of investing in cultural events and therefore creating a stepping stone for (young) creators. Whilst taking into consideration that it should enrich and diversify our local community. Using culture to address social- and environmental challenges that we as a world need to defy.”

Region: Friesland

- OPEN SOCIETY
- EAGER
- DIVERS



Photo by Theo de Witte

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public authority

Together with partners such as LF2028, Circular Friesland, Tourism Alliance Friesland, and the knowledge institutes (European Tourism Futures Institute), we work towards a more circular and sustainable tourism sector.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

- Difficulty to attract visitors due to the position as a small and remote area.
- As a region with a diminishing population, it is difficult to maintain a certain level of facilities, especially within the cultural sector.
- Many creative, tourist and cultural institutions and organisations have been hit hard by the COVID crisis.
- A remote area, such as Friesland/Leeuwarden, often has a certain stigma, for example, about the distance (too far), the accessibility (difficult), the population (stiff and inhospitable).

Current strategic planning

Together with the regional government, a position paper has been made defining the goals and ambitions up to 2030. However cultural tourism is not an integral part of this paper. Besides that, the municipality has its own policy paper, “Warm welcome”.



Photo by Hoge Noorden

Ideas and future perspectives

Leeuwarden is proud residence of the Watercampus, Energiecampus, Dairycampus and Wateralliance. All in their own way, working on innovations in order to contribute to environmental circularity.

Besides that, on a tourism level, Leeuwarden focuses on the **quality tourist and not the mass tourist**. For culture, we strive to increase the quality level of our local makers by letting them work together with international market leaders in the field of culture.

Photo by Imazzo

Type of heritage

- INTANGIBLE



Cultural heritage asset description

The focus is on three main aspects of the (intangible) cultural heritage:

- LF2028, our 10-year goal to complete the transitions put in motion during Leeuwarden-Fryslan 2018 European Capitol of Culture
- Own official minority language with the Netherlands
- the Elfstedentocht (11 cities skating tour),
- Iepenloftspullen (open-air plays by volunteers/non-professional actors),
- music ensembles (brass bands/taptoe/fanfare).

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The main challenge is to use the limited resources they have at their disposal to create a cultural, creative and tourist offer that attracts guests and to do it without damaging the cultural, social and natural heritage. Moreover, a common thread for all these cultural heritage elements is that many volunteers drive them. This is an added value but also represents a challenge.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

As the capital of a province representing a **minority language** in the EU, Leeuwarden represents people with a strong cultural identity which can be found throughout Europe. Europe's rich cultural life is characterized by that diversity. In addition, Leeuwarden represents historic struggles (i.e. against water, oppression), an open society (represented by LF2018) with an ambition for the future that is focused on quality of life and environment instead of economic gain.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- Leeuwarden is a former Capital of Culture (LF2018).
- The local language, the Frisian, has a special status as a minority language within Europe.
- UNESCO status as the City of Literature.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- Leeuwarden is a former Capital of Culture (LF2018).
- **Legacy program for LF2018, namely LF2028,**
- Interreg Europe project ECoC-SME directed at **entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative industries** and how they can benefit from events such as ECoC.
- Leeuwarden is an associated partner in the Erasmus+ projects Culture United and Story Valley.
- BOSK: It is part of Arcadia, the follow-up of LF2018 ([link](#))
- Kening fan'e Greide (King of the Meadow), was a production for LF2018 that focused on **biodiversity loss and landscape**.
- The ECoC-program, is an example of how LF2018 has very much been focused on **using tourism and culture as a driver for change, socially as well as ecologically**. ([link](#))



photo by Jacob van Essen

Website and social media accounts

Tourist en marketing:

Website: www.visitleeuwarden.com

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/leeuwardenstad/?hl=nl>

Municipality: <https://www.leeuwarden.nl/nl>





4.5 MUSEO DIFFUSO DEI 5 SENSI SCIACCA COOPERATIVA DI COMUNITÀ IDENTITÀ E BELLEZZA, ITALY: transforming individuals from passive spectators to inhabitants through an inclusive and bottom-up tourism innovation project managed by a community no profit cooperative.

Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi Sciacca Cooperativa di Comunità Identità e Bellezza, Italy

“For Sciacca 5 Sensi Circular Cultural Tourism is about becoming aware of the resources we already have, of their value and, without creating anything new, enhancing them to create valuable and sustainable touristic products and services through a connected and competent community.”

Region: Sicily

- COMMUNITY
- BEAUTY
- IDENTITY



Photo by Antonino Carlino

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Civil Society

An inclusive and bottom-up tourism innovation project managed by a community no profit cooperative, which has become, in only two years, a community network with more than 55 engagement agreements. A big community engaged in building its own future responsibly.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

The overall objective is to create an aware and competent community able to develop with its own hands its territories and connect it with buyers, consumers, and influencers alike in the cultural heritage and tourism industries to generate value-added markets using the uniqueness of the area: people and the “beauty” of the place where they live.

We are aiming at:

- **Transforming individuals from passive spectators to inhabitants** aware of their value and of the interconnection between them and the territory in which they live.
- Creating a destination that can attract tourists all year and can develop in a sustainable way by benefiting everyone.

Current strategic planning

The whole project aims at **using existing resources in a responsible way**:

- enhancing of existing resources, such as pre-existing buildings;
- enhancing of the knowledge local people own and sharing of identities through meaningful storytelling and experiential, transformative and emotional tourism;
- undergoing the process of using less plastic and reducing the use of resources.

Ideas and future perspectives

The overall outcome is that the whole community grows and develops in a horizontal, sustainable, responsible, and circular way through **Horizontal Economy, Circular Economy, Responsible Tourism and Sustainable Tourism**.

Two main steps:

1. linking everyone who lives in the area and facilitating the **awareness process about the resources available** and how they can be **responsibly exploited**;
2. start positioning the destination in tourists minds and ensure the **destination is working as an ecosystem**.

Type of cultural heritage

- RURAL
- NATURAL
- INTANGIBLE



Photo by Ambra Favetta

Cultural heritage asset description

Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi Sciacca

The territory of Sciacca has an immense heritage of history, art, archaeology, landscape, crafts, architecture, agriculture, food and wine, environment and traditions that has the right to be rediscovered, protected, and valorised.

The goal is to create awareness of its value, stimulate action to make it usable through storytelling and create an economy in which useful and ethical are no longer in opposition—the **Economy of Beautifulness**.

The focus is on the **identities and the competencies of the people living in the area**. Day by day, as more people get involved in the project, new ideas, stories, experiences, and projects come up to narrate the history, traditions, and cultural heritage. They become resources that, transformed through storytelling and experiences, benefit the whole community.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The vision is to create a community that is engaged for a sustainable and responsible development of its territory. An engaged community is able to guarantee viable long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities, and contributing to equality and poverty alleviation. The aim is to generate awareness, valorise, and make the cultural heritage available to tourists, whom they call and consider temporary citizens.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

The tangible and intangible cultural assets are an expression of all the European and Mediterranean countries who conquered Sicily over history: the culinary culture, traditions, Sicilian language (recognized by the UNESCO as a language and not only a dialect) and architecture.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- The town of Sciacca is part of the **Phoenicians' Route**, which is a **"Cultural Route of the Council of Europe"** certified in 2003.
- Additionally, among the identities they are valorising are found the **Carnival and Anchovy and Sardines processing and conservation tradition**, which are part of the REI (Registro Eredità Immateriali – **Register of the Intangible Heritage** ([link](#)) of the Sicilian Region.
- Food and the traditions tied to it are also one of the key assets they are working on, and Sciacca, a town on the Mediterranean in south Sicily, is one of the **cradle of the Mediterranean Diet**, heritage-listed among the **UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage** ([link](#)).



Ongoing projects and best practices

The project **connects people meaningfully and uses existing resources in a responsible way**. To create a tourist destination, they did not build any new places or attractions. Instead, they connected different individuals among the community, who share the objective of living well in the place where they were born, and they valorised existing resources and made them available

to visitors. The experience offered is based on the knowledge local people own, and to share their identities, few other resources are needed.

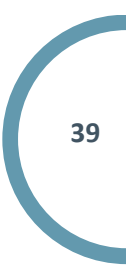
Website and social media accounts

Website: www.sciacca5sensi.it

Facebook: www.facebook.com/sciaccacittadei5sensi

Instagram: www.instagram.com/sciacca5sensi

YouTube: www.youtube.com/channel/UCuxjrQBQtCZ7Vs40h5hEA1w





4.6 NICOSIA TOURISM BOARD, CYPRUS: The lack of a comprehensive branding among the local cultural industries that would boost Nicosia's tourism.

Nicosia Tourism Board, Cyprus

Region: Nicosia

THE BRIGHTEST CAPITAL OF EUROPE

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Non-profit

Non-profit organisation with the mission to enhance and promote the city and peripheral area of Nicosia as a tourist and business destination.

4 main areas: Cultural Tourism, Conferences, Incentive and Business Tourism and Wellness and Sports tourism.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

Lack of a comprehensive branding among the local cultural industries that would help the stakeholders in this field optimize their product, consequently enhancing Nicosia's tourism product.

Type of cultural heritage

- RURAL incl. specific MILITARY HERITAGE
- RELIGIOUS

Cultural heritage asset description

The Venetian walls of Nicosia

The walls are the longest preserved medieval walls in Europe, and this is quite significant not only for the Cypriot culture heritage but also for European Culture heritage.

Churches

Phaneromeni Church was built in 1872 next to an ancient Orthodox nunnery and is the largest church within the walls. The marble mausoleum located east of the church contains the remains of bishops and other clerics executed by the Ottomans in 1821 in reprisals for the beginning of the Greek War of Independence.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The aim is to capitalise on the shared Venetian legacy in Europe to:

- diversify European tourist offer.
- promote sustainable cultural-tourism approach toward Euro-Mediterranean cultural and natural heritage linked to Venetian routes.
- contribute to the European Union policy of making Europe a more competitive tourist destination.
- create business opportunities in the sustainable cultural tourism sector.
- and, to encourage local authorities and stakeholders to invest in Venetian route-related products.

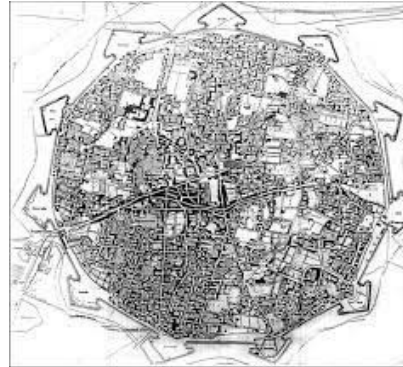
Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

Cultural Routes are an important way to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism. The Venetian influence is very relevant in Euro-Mediterranean countries.



European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

The Venetian walls are a candidate for the Venetian European Cultural Route



Ongoing projects and best practices

- In regard to the Sustainable tourism principle of respecting socio-cultural authenticity, NTB takes initiatives to fully sponsor the renovation of historic houses facades in the central area of the historic centre and effectively lobbying towards the pedestrianisation of the area.
- Currently, NTB concentrates its efforts on developing digital tools and maximise the use of emerging technologies to strengthen visitors' experiences

Website and social media accounts

Website: <https://www.visitnicosia.com.cy/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitNicosia>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/VisitNicosia>

YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyDlt6QdiwgFBmxEBlvGGrA?view_as=subscriber





4.7 NORTH-WEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NWRDA), ROMANIA: Conservation, protection, restoration and valorisation of LIMES-related archaeological sites.

North-West Regional Development Agency (NWRDA), Romania

“For the North-West Development Region, being part of the Be.CULTOUR Community means a step forward towards capitalizing on the potential of the region through sustainable cultural tourism.”

Region: Nord-West Romania

- HISTORICAL & NATURAL HERITAGE
- AUTHENTICITY
- DIVERSITY

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public utility NGO

NWRDA elaborates regional development plans & strategies, committing the entire ecosystem of LPAs, businesses, social & academia in these processes; will act as MA for ROP 2021-2027, which will enclose heritage & tourism investment opportunities in Priority 7: An attractive region.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

Many heritage sites require investments for conservation, protection, restoration or equipment endowments to be included in tourist circuits. Many sites are in private property, not eligible for state funding. Due to improper restorations, a non-performing management or insufficient funds, some public heritage sites failed to attract and engage the local communities, resulting in lifeless, empty and unattractive sites. The cultural & tourism activity is concentrated in a few centres, the rest being largely untapped, unknown or unreachable, having a high risk of unsustainability.



Current strategic planning

There are national, regional, county and local strategies that include components of cultural tourism but which are not entirely intended for this form of tourism.

Among the objectives found in these strategies are listed:

- Conservation, protection, restoration and/or endowment of cultural buildings and/or historical monuments
- Revitalizing the restored heritage objectives which have not maximised their potential
- Making sustainability plans for cultural and heritage objectives

Ideas and future perspectives

- **Add management and/or marketing plans** (to previous documentation of state funding – conservation, protection, restoration or endowment of heritage sites) for the short and medium-term to ensure the sites' sustainability
- **Involve local communities** in the revitalization of cultural sites already restored to increase their attractiveness, competitiveness & sustainability
- **Use of digital features:** audio guides, virtual tours, VR & AR tools
- **Increase the energy efficiency** of cultural heritage sites

Type of cultural heritage

- ARCHAEOLOGICAL
- NATURAL
- INTANGIBLE



Cultural heritage asset description

The North-West LIMES (Limes Dacicus, the permanent border of the province Dacia) consists of a complex system of towers, earthworks, walls, small fortifications and forts, existing since Roman times.

Nowadays, there are more than 160 LIMES-related archaeological sites in the North-West Development Region. Of these, 13 are Roman Castra of greater importance: Turda (Potaissa), Gilău, Bologa, Buciumi, Românași (Largiana), Brusturi (Certiae), Moigrad Porolissum, Brebi, Tihău, Cășeiu (Samum), Ilișua (Arcobara), Livezile and Orheiu Bistriței. Some of those were partially rehabilitated from ERDF and EARDF EU funds.

Most of the LIMES-related archaeological sites are no longer visible, being difficult to be identified.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

LIMES heritage sites are remotely placed in the region; one goal is to **boost their attractiveness & competitiveness** and to **dynamise the tourist flows** by involving the local communities and sites' responsible LPAs. LIMES attractions could also be enhanced with **digital features** by involving regional ITC clusters.

In addition, there is a need for good practices focused on **restoration & energy efficiency** due to previous improper interventions, which undermine the sites' authenticity and integrity.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

The Romanian LIMES from the North-West Development Region is a small puzzle piece from the Great Roman Empire, which, 2000 years ago, ruled a large part of today's Europe. The Romanian authorities are planning to include this area, the Romanian LIMES, in the UNESCO world heritage sites list to show the European territory's importance and common history.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- The North-West LIMES is part of the **Romanian LIMES Dacicus**, which is also part of the trans-national monument, **Frontiers of the Roman Empire (FRE)**.
- The registration of the Roman border crossing various countries was a joint objective, a trans-national FRE monument being established in 2005. The Romanian Roman border is the largest unitary heritage monument in the country, contributing with the longest sector, of over 1000 de km, to FRE. ([link](#))

Ongoing projects and best practices

Digital tools

- [Limes virtual tour](#)
- [Oradea fortress 3D model & restoration](#)
- [Digitization of museums \(link 2\)](#)

Cultural routes

- [Via Transilvanica](#)
- [Maramureş UNESCO Wooden Churches \(link 2\)](#)

Cultural events

- [Porolissum Fest](#)
- [Electric Castle](#)

Industrial reconversion

- [Turda Salt Mines](#)

Projects

- [RFC – Recapture for Fortress Cities](#) (Interreg Europe, 2019-2023)
- [ISTER – Connecting hiSTorical Danube rEgions Roman routes](#) (EUSDR Danube Programme, 2020-2022)
- [Transylvania Castles](#) (EEA & Norway Grants, 2016-2017)



Website and social media accounts

www.nord-vest.ro

www.facebook.com/AgentiadeDezvoltareRegionalaNordVest/

www.twitter.com/adrnv

www.youtube.com/user/ADRNordVest

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/adr-nv>





© Ministry of Culture and Sports,
Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities
Photo by Matteo Collina,
Università della Calabria – DIMEG

4.8 THESSALY REGION, GREECE: Creating the most important network of underwater museums in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Thessaly Region, Greece

“For Thessaly Region, Circular Cultural Tourism is a development tool.”

Region: Thessaly

- PIONEERING
- SAFE
- EXTROVERTED

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

The Region of Thessaly protects, preserves and promotes the rich and irreplaceable cultural stock of Thessaly with projects over 60 million euros from all financial instruments and actively supports dozens of cultural events, associations and organizations that keep alive the fire of tradition. With the opening of the first Underwater Museum in the country, in Alonissos, Thessaly becomes a leader in diving tourism, the second most expensive tourist product in the world. The promotion of Creative Tourism is one of the thematic priorities of the Strategy of Smart Specialization in Thessaly (RIS 3), organized based on the functional utilization of Thessalian Culture through activities capable of a) to activate part of the various resources of Thessaly (historical periods, gastronomy etc.) and b) attracts visitors seeking relationships with places and local communities, experiences and opportunities for creation.



Main challenges related to cultural tourism

The main challenges related to cultural tourism as they have developed due to the coronavirus are:

- The increase in the use of digital technologies to highlight cultural or natural resources, the use of digital immersion technologies for greater tourist engagement and better experience, the use of electronic ticketing and pricing policies.
- Improving the skills of employees in cultural resources to provide high quality services.
- Improving the accessibility of cultural or natural resources.
- Targeted marketing in specific markets with a different approach each time, with vehicle-recognized destinations such as e.g. the Meteoras that are gaining worldwide recognition.
- Actions linking knowledge with entrepreneurship in the field of cultural tourism (universities, technical institutes, research institutes).
- Actions for the use of digital tools and media for businesses.
- Marketing plan for the development of cultural tourism and specialization of the plan per group of institutions / audience / content.
- Creating a guide for the tour - presentation and use of appropriate media (books, digital media, etc.).
- Creation of a guide for the promotion of cultural tourism of the Region of Thessaly.
- Enhancing business skills in the field of cultural tourism leading to certification.
- Supporting businesses to adapt to climate change and transition to a low carbon economy.
- Increasing business extroversion (eg exhibitions abroad, digital promotion tools)
- Strengthening alternative forms of tourism and innovative and extroverted entrepreneurship.
- Strengthen development research and innovation projects in RIS3 priority areas.
- Strengthening the interconnection of tourism with the agri-food system.
- Strengthening the creative industry.
- Improving employability in culture and tourism with actions for the creation of sustainable jobs, vocational training with certification of knowledge, upgrading of knowledge and skills of human resources in topics related to cultural tourism.
- Social economy / social innovation support (start-ups, social enterprises, clusters, networking).
- Ensuring conditions for social inclusion through the use of social entrepreneurship actions to integrate socially vulnerable groups into the labor market, as well as other integration actions, especially for groups most at risk of exclusion such as young people, women and the disabled.

Current strategic planning

The Integrated Spatial Investment in Cultural Tourism

The strategic goal of the implementation of the integrated spatial investments in the Tourism Culture Route in the Region of Thessaly is the protection, promotion and utilization of the cultural

and natural heritage and activation of human capital and companies for the emergence of Tourism Culture Route as a modern, international and competitive tourist product.

The utilization of the cultural and natural heritage in the Tourism Culture Route in Thessaly aims to convey the importance and need for preservation to the host community members and visitors. Also, its management should provide benefits to the host communities and **incentives and means to maintain it**. On the other hand, visitors must respect both the cultural values and the interests and financial interests of the community where the heritage is located, of the local groups that preserve it or of the owners of historic properties and the landscapes and the cultures from which it comes.

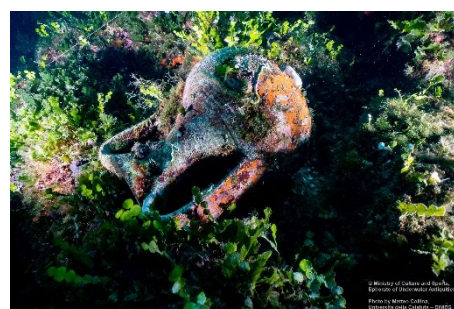
The Integrated Spatial Investment of the Northern Sporades Islands is a development strategy in the spatial unity of the Northern Sporades Islands in Thessaly, with an integrated approach, with emphasis on the **sustainable development of local economies and societies, resources, increase employment and improving the quality of life of residents and visitors** to the three islands of the Northern Sporades, through a new development planning framework.

Ideas and future perspectives

Solar charging stations for electric vehicles, cycling tourist routes, separation of waste and recyclable at the source, storage and supply of drinking water in streets and squares, marking, improving accessibility, maintenance and promotion of hiking trails of unique beauty

Type of cultural heritage

- ARCHAEOLOGICAL
- NATURAL



Cultural heritage asset description

The Underwater Museum of Alonnisos/Sporades & The Underwater Museum of Western Pagasetic Gulf, Greece

Peristera is an islet near Alonissos in the North Sporades, a cluster of islands in Greece (central Aegean Sea). The island is part of the National Marine Park of Alonissos, North Sporades, the largest protected marine area in Europe (2,315 km²), where the monk seal (*monachus monachus*) finds refuge. Prehistoric remains and ancient tombs are located on the island of Peristera.

Peristera shipwreck This merchant ship is dated around the last quarter of the 5th c. BC, based on the artefacts and the transport amphorae recovered. This large wooden merchant ship of the classical period is considered one of the largest of that period and, at the same time, evidence of the importance of trade in the classical period. An extremely massive and impressive pile of transport amphorae still remains on the seabed, which almost still keeps the shape of the ship's wooden hull. Western Pagasetic Gulf is composed of shipwrecks of three different sites. The shipwreck at Kikinthos, at Akra Glaros Cape, at least four shipwrecks were recognized, the shipwreck at Telegrafos.

KACs description

Old Primary School at the settlement of Old Alonissos (Chora), in Amaliapolis a public building.

At the Knowledge Awareness Centre of Alonissos and Amaliapolis the visitor can:

- Meet the world of Underwater Archaeology
- Gather information on the Accessible Underwater Archaeological Sites
- Learn how he/she can dive to an Accessible Underwater Archaeological Site
- Get information on the BLUEMED project
- Visit the Digital Museum of **Underwater Archaeology**
- Do a virtual dive in the impressive shipwreck of Peristera



NOUS

Part of the Bluemed project was the prototype installation of an underwater self-powered (with solar panels) system that provides real-time:

- video streaming from 5 Underwater Cameras
- remote-controlled land-based survey camera
- complete weather data and statistics
- complete solar power data and statistics

The site of the cameras is Peristera island. The cameras are running an Image Recognition software that can send alerts and updates relevant to on-demand pre-programmed pattern recognition (divers, fishes, R.O.V. etc.)

Specific goal related to the selected asset

Our goal is to open four more diving parks in the Sporades and the Western Pagasitikos, creating the most important network of underwater museums in the Eastern Mediterranean. The shipwrecks, in combination with the other cultural monuments of Thessaly, such as churches, ancient theatres, castles and other archaeological sites, will make Thessaly a 12-month destination.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

Ancient shipwrecks teach us many facts of European history and practices and materials used at that time. For example Peristera shipwreck, in addition to the unparalleled aesthetic beauty of the underwater space, the shipwreck changed our understanding of the shipbuilding techniques of the ancient world. Marine archaeologists have brought to light a major breakthrough in the technology used to build the ship. Prior to discovering this shipwreck, ships of similar size and volume were considered possible to build only during the Roman era, i.e. three centuries after this shipwreck in Peristera. The size of the shipwreck proves that Greek shipbuilding art and technology were ahead of their time. It is considered one of the most significant shipwrecks ever found in the Mediterranean Sea, and we can reveal aspects of the history of that period that otherwise would not have been known to us.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- European distinction for the Region of Thessaly in promoting innovative, alternative tourism products with added value for the economy, culture and local communities. The work - flag of the Underwater Museum of Peristera in Alonissos, Thessaly Region won the **1st Prize** in the category: "Innovation and digitization in sustainable cultural tourism, for smart destinations" of the European Cultural Tourism Network ECTN. The project was recognized as an example of excellence that inspires other tourist destinations and encourages the further development of sustainable and responsible cultural tourism initiatives.
- Meteora is one of the largest monastic ensembles in Greece, with a continuous presence from the time of the establishment of the first ascetics until today. The six monasteries to be visited in Meteora are today restored and, with most of them preserved their fresco decoration. In 1989 Unesco inscribed Meteora on the World Heritage List as a cultural and natural asset of particular importance.
- The Underwater Museums in Peristera Alonissos is an archaeological site declared by the Ministry of Culture of the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports.
- We have four more declared archaeological sites by the Ministry of Culture of the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports in the area of North Sporades that we want to highlight.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- The award-winning European project Bluemed: <https://bluemed.interreg-med.eu/>
- Restoration of ancient theatres of Thessaly region
- Digital projection of the history and culture of Meteora and Olympus: <https://euchangesthessaly.com/erga/ta-erga/item/12-kentro-pshfiakhs-provolhs-ths-istorias-kai-tou-politismou-twn-metewrwn>
- Promotion of church monuments of the Thessaly region
- Theopetra Cave and Documentation Center and cave education: <https://euchangesthessaly.com/erga/ta-erga/item/10-kentro-tekmhriwshs-kai-ekpaideyshs-sphlaiou-theopetras>

Website and social media accounts

www.thessaly.gov.gr

www.mythessaly.com



4.9 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY SREM, SERBIA: Reducing waste, regenerating natural resources, and empowering local communities in an archaeological site.

Regional development agency Srem, Serbia

“For Srem Region being part of the Be.CULTOUR Community means creating new partnerships, collaborations, exchanging good practices and developing new skills and knowledge to support policies and practices building at local and regional level, to develop innovative human-centred solutions for circular cultural tourism.”

Region: Srem

- CULTURE
- NATURE
- PEOPLE

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

RDA Srem represents the link between the public, private and civil sectors in building strategic partnerships, realization projects with the aim of balanced regional development in Srem, Vojvodina and Serbia. One of the most significant partners in culture tourism is the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Srem.



Main challenges related to cultural tourism

Previous practices of cultural tourism development were more based on promotion and "consumers" and less on the involvement of the local population and stakeholders. The circular economy principles have been recognised but without the application of business models. There

is a need for acquiring knowledge to accelerate the development of innovative solutions in different thematic areas: rural co-living, sensorial heritage, contemporary meanings of heritage, religious heritage, natural heritage and how to manage attractive destinations in a sustainable way, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current strategic planning

- Strategy of sustainable development of tourism in Serbia for the period 2016 - 2025.
- Vojvodina Tourism Development Program for the period 2018 - 2022.
- Strategy of sustainable tourism on Fruška Gora
- Culture Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia from 2019 to 2029.

To guarantee the optimal use of natural and cultural resources of Srem that are the basis of tourism development through the support of environmental processes, protection of the socio-cultural heritage of the local communities.

Ideas and future perspectives

- Enhancing intersectoral collaboration with a focus on the circular tourism economy regarding the Establishment of the Center for sustainable development of Srem
- Mapping of culture and natural heritage of Srem and its valorisation with innovative solutions
- Creating topics and culture routes that connect the region Srem with regions surrounded
- Capacity building of public, civil and private sectors of Srem in bringing short and long term cultural tourism strategies in local and regional level.

Type of cultural heritage

- ARCHAEOLOGICAL
- RURAL
- RELIGIOUS
- NATURAL



Cultural heritage asset description

Sirmium is an archaeological site, a city-museum of national and international importance and represents the regional cultural centre of Srem. The remains of the ancient city of Sirmium are below the current urban settlement of Sremska Mitrovica. It is near the natural, cultural and religious heritage of the National Park "Fruška gora", the Special Nature Reserve of the pond "Zasavica", the rivers Danube and Sava as a potential river port, 60 km west of Belgrade. In the southern part of Srem is the Special Nature Reserve Obedska pond is known for its diverse wetland and forest habitats, numerous species of mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects and the exceptional richness of flora, ichthyofauna and especially ornithofauna with arranged picnic areas and monuments of folk architecture.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The goal of the development of **innovative human-centred solutions for circular cultural tourism in the Srem region**, its valorisation, increase its visibility and reach higher sustainability and profitability by **reducing waste, regenerating natural resources, and empowering local communities**. A specific goal is the capacity building of interested stakeholders of the Srem region to actively participate in the co-creation, peer-learning, improve sustainable and circular cultural tourism policies and practices.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

The archaeological site of Sirmium represents the culture, architecture and history of the Roman Empire in the period from the first decade of the new era until the collapse of the empire at the end of the 6th century. The monasteries of Fruška Gora (Holy Mountain of Serbia) are a unique group of sacral buildings (17 in total), created from the end of the 15th to the 18th century. Eight archaeological sites located on UNESCO Tentative List Delivered – Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes (Serbia).



European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

Originated from the Pannonian Sea, Fruška gora is a unique natural phenomenon with over 1500 species of plants, 211 species of birds and 60 species of mammals (Important Bird Area, IBA - 011SER), is the oldest national park in Serbia. SNR "Obedska bara" and SNR "Zasavica" are significant nature habitats in Srem with identified areas of protection within the different international ecological networks. The Roman Emperors' Way and the Danube Wine Route is the Council of Europe's first cultural route from Southeast EU.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- Establishment of the Center for sustainable development of Srem, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zDdVKjfKwM&feature=youtu.be>;
- RecRoad 2016-2017, Viability in the country of Srem. Horizon 2020 Program
- ARCHEST project: **Education of archeological visitors** along the Roman road Aquileia-Emona-Sirmium-Viminacium.
- Roads of the Roman emperors and the Danube wine route in cooperation with the Danube Competence Center and GIZ GmbH
- **Bicycle tourism** toward rural and regional development Srem
- **Cycling Danube** – the establishment of the regional cycling route Srem

Website and social media accounts

<https://rrasrem.rs/>

<https://www.facebook.com/RegionalnaRazvojnaAgencijaSrem/>

<https://zavodsm.rs/>

<https://www.facebook.com/zavodsmitrovica/>

<http://www.carskapalata.rs/carskapalata.html>

<https://sr-rs.facebook.com/carskapalata.sirmijuma>

<https://www.npfruskagora.co.rs/en/>

<https://www.vojvodinasume.rs/en/environmental-protection/obedska-swamp/>

<http://www.zasavica.org.rs/en/>





4.10 VENETO REGION, ITALY: the creation of a slow mobility itinerary in the Prosecco hills: valorising the agri-food heritage by guaranteeing a zero environmental impact.

Veneto Region, Italy

For Veneto Region, Circular Cultural Tourism is sustainability, integration, rural landscape.

Region: Veneto

- CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
- TRADITION
- HISTORY

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public authority

Veneto Region - Department for territorial marketing, culture, tourism, agriculture and sport - promotes several initiatives to develop a new green dimension for cultural tourism thanks to active territorial policies (regional laws, territorial planning tools and funds).

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

One of the main challenges at the regional level is the management of the mass tourism flows, which affect especially the cities of Venice and Verona, through the delocalization of these flows to other areas of the region and the promotion of a tourism with zero environmental impact.

The Prosecco Hills are focusing on creating a **slow mobility itinerary** that connects notable sites in the Veneto region. There are other initiatives regarding outdoor tourism and widespread accommodation facilities with few beds.



Current strategic planning

Veneto Region recently adopted two regional laws for **slow and green tourism**: one for cycle-tourism and one for routes. The Regional Strategic Plan for Tourism, annually updated in compliance with these rules, includes specific “slow and green” actions addressed to cycle tourism, routes, and equestrian tourism.



The three main objectives are:

- To distribute tourism in Veneto all over the year.
- To promote tourism in the less known areas by valorising tangible and intangible heritage.
- To enhance the circular economy in tourism.

Prosecco Hills association has a site management plan approved by Unesco Organization.

Ideas and future perspectives

The site management plan of the Prosecco hills will be updated in 2022, all the useful contributions of Be-Cultour can be implemented.

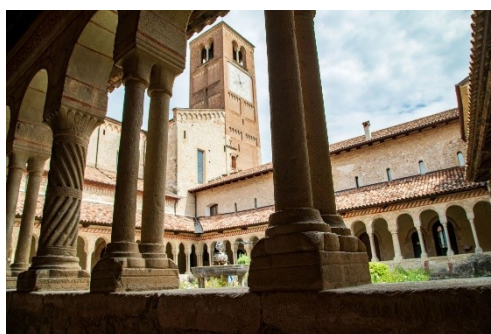
The Association will soon set up working groups with local stakeholders related to tourism, training and sustainable mobility.

A dialogue is underway with other Unesco sites in the Veneto region to create shared tourist and cultural itineraries.

A fair connection to Vinitaly concerning the world cultural landscapes related to wine and wine cultivation is planned.

Type of cultural heritage

- RURAL
- NATURAL
- INTANGIBLE



Cultural heritage asset description

The Prosecco Hills

It is a wide area in the centre of Veneto, characterised by a **terraced landscape** where the main agricultural production is the Prosecco wine. Prosecco Hills are characterised by a **long agri-food tradition** that is the basis of the terraced landscape. Veneto Region cooperates with the Municipalities of this area to involve the local stakeholders in the information and communication system, design educational packages for local guides, and select locations to be restored.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The main goal is to delocalise the massive tourism flows from cities like Venice and Verona to this less-known area through innovative strategies for its valorisation that guarantee a zero environmental impact.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

Prosecco hills represent an example of a European rural area, and it is a sample of the European agri-food heritage. Prosecco Hills are characterized by a long agri-food tradition that is the basis of the terraced landscape. The strong connection between grapevine and landscape transformation can be found in many other European areas.



European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- In 2019, Prosecco Hills of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene became a UNESCO Heritage site. Veneto Region is a partner of the Association that manages this site.
- In 2016 the same area was awarded as the European Capital of Cultural Wine, and it is one of the members of the European Wine Cities (RECEVIN) network.
- One of the municipalities of the area was also a candidate as Italian Capital of Culture 2022, an initiative linked to the European Capital of Culture award.
- Follina and Cison di Valmarino have been inserted in the “most beautiful villages of Italy” ranking list.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- UNESCO Association for the promotion of Heritage of Prosecco Hills from Conegliano and Valdobbiadene
- Two regional laws for slow and green tourism: cycle-tourism and routes.

Website and social media accounts

www.regione.veneto.it

www.culturaveneto.it/

<https://www.facebook.com/Culturaveneto/>

<https://collineconeglianovaldobbiadene.it/>

<https://www.facebook.com/coneglianovaldobbiadene.unesco/>

<https://www.instagram.com/collinepatrimoniounesco/>



Photo credit: Visit Bradford

4.11 SALTAIRE INSPIRED, UK: Building on the creativity of the local community, blending heritage, the arts, diversity and inclusivity.

Saltaire Inspired, UK

For Saltaire Inspired, Bradford, being part of the Be.CULTOUR Community means we can share and develop more co-creative and innovative ways to build relationships with our local and wider communities to generate effective circular cultural tourism experiences in places of Industrial Heritage.

Region: West Yorkshire

- CREATIVELY DETERMINED
- VIBRANT CULTURE
- ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Saltaire Inspired co-creates art events within the unique historical & contemporary context of Saltaire Industrial Village, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We involve residents, schools, community groups & businesses, ensuring cultural experiences for all who live, work & visit Saltaire.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

Saltaire Village as a World Heritage site is not as well-known regionally and beyond as a cultural destination, and there is limited understanding by locals and visitors of the reasons for its UNESCO

status. Equally, those who do visit, tend not to extend their stay or explore cultural attractions in the wider district, such as Bradford Industrial Museum, Cartwright Hall or Cliffe Castle for example - all gems within a short distance of each other.

Current strategic planning

The wider district of Bradford has just launched a **ten year cultural strategy ‘Culture is Our Plan’** committed to **building on the creativity of the local community, blending heritage, the arts, diversity and inclusivity.** Bradford is one of the youngest cities in Europe, and there is an energy to nurture community-driven sustainability and human-centred approaches to re-create and re-design impactful cultural experiences.



Photo credit: Visit Bradford

Ideas and future perspectives

As an Industrial Heritage site in a northern city with many challenges, we are keen to develop a more coordinated approach to a circular cultural offer of cultural experiences, venues and organisations in and beyond Saltaire. With our emerging co-collaborators in Västra Götaland, (Sweden), we are keen to build on innovations and create a networked approach to build a community of practice and Be.CULTOUR provides an excellent international impetus for us to connect, learn and co-create together.

Photo credit: Visit Bradford

Type of cultural heritage

- INDUSTRIAL

Cultural heritage asset description

Saltaire, located 3 miles from the centre of Bradford, became a World Heritage Site in 2001. Established in 1851, Saltaire derives from Sir Titus Salt (1803-1876) and the River Aire, which runs through the village. As a leading industrialist in the woollen industry Salt established his business, providing 824 fully equipped homes with facilities for all his employees, in stark contrast to typical dwellings of the day. As well as the Mill, Salt built a church, washhouse, a village hall, hospital, a school, and almshouses that were rent-free for the sick and elderly, plus a pension, forty years before the first state pensions in the UK. Today the houses are occupied by private residents, and Salts Mill contains galleries, SMEs & restaurants.



Specific goal related to the selected asset

As a small organisation dependent on volunteers and residents, our philosophical approach is grounded in **human-centred development and sustainable creative practice.** Our specific focus is **visual arts**, and this is our key tool in **generating co-creative experiences with residents, local**

businesses, schools and colleges as well as visitors. Our contemporary approach utilises the unique context, landscape and heritage of Saltaire.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

Saltaire was one of the early examples of architecture featuring a unified public realm emulated in many buildings and areas throughout Europe. Its design was informed from architectural reference to Italian renaissance and its connectedness to European trade links. Saltaire is **part of the European Route of Industrial Heritage**. Bradford as a textile town had EU trade links spanning many years exemplified by locations named 'Little Germany' reflecting commercial trade links from overseas.



Photo credit: Visit Bradford

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

As well as the recognition of Saltaire Village as a unique Industrial Heritage Site, and part of the European Route of Industrial Heritage, Saltaire continues to connect with EU partners to build links between artists and cultural organisations through Saltaire Inspired. In addition, The Saltaire World Heritage Officer collaborates with UK World Heritage sites on developing and sharing good practice on sustainable tourism, travel and heritage by assessing UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- Saltaire Open Village & Makers Fair: contemporary works of art and crafts co-presented with residents in Saltaire's homes and the Village Hall providing a platform for 100+ artists; student 'showcases' & schools.
- Saltaire Living Advent Calendar: a village-wide installation illuminating windows in residents' homes, Salts Mill & businesses in December with partners in Scotland, Sweden & USA.
- Innovative commissions in iconic Salts Mill.
- Supporting the sustainable Travel Plan for events.

Website and social media accounts

Website : <http://www.saltaireinspired.org.uk/>

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/saltaireinspired>

Instagram : <https://www.instagram.com/saltaireinspired/>

Twitter : @SaltaireArt



4.12 SAVONLINNA DEVELOPMENT SERVICES LTD, FINLAND: develop and expand partnerships into digital media, creative industries and local cultural production and heritage sectors to attract not only tourists but also digital nomads and creative people as full and part-time residents to the city.

Savonlinna Development Services Ltd, Finland

For Savonlinna, Circular Cultural Tourism means capacity building for the renewal of the regional tourism ecosystem so that it sustains and regenerates the region's social, cultural and ecological assets by protecting the Lake Saimaa environment reinvigorating our communities.

Region: South Savo

- VIBRANT CULTURAL HUB OF LAKE SAIMAA
- INTERNATIONAL MEETING POINT OF PEOPLE
- RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE RELATED TO THE LAKELAND ARCHIPELAGO

Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public development agency

Savonlinna Development Services Ltd. (SDS) is a development agency owned 100% by the city of Savonlinna and is carrying out project activities with over 15 years of experience on the European level. SDS is a cluster organisation coordinating the cooperation of enterprises in tourism and cultural and creative industries, destination management organizations and cultural heritage institutions in order to promote sustainable development and the livelihood of the area.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

Savonlinna is a seasonal touristic destination. The strategic goal is to make it an all-year-round cultural destination with events, cultural attractions and activities attracting significant domestic and international tourists during spring, summer, autumn, Christmas and winter. We are making an effort to connect to new audiences with the help of user-driven and responsive design of services.



Current strategic planning

- The aim is to develop and expand partnerships into **digital media, creative industries and local cultural production and heritage sectors** to attract not only tourists but also digital nomads and creative people as full and part-time residents to the city.
- The approach to destination management is to significantly increase the inclusion of **stakeholders and small and medium-sized enterprises** in tourism and creative industries as well as improve the usage of data and knowledge management for building a competitive regional tourism cluster.

Ideas and future perspectives

We aspire to increase the inclusion of local inhabitants and attract enterprises and professionals with innovation capacity to the city in order to **create new types of cultural experiences**. We are looking into possibilities for revitalising the historical castle and Riihisaari museum with augmented reality experience targeted especially to the young. Saimaa Art Cave Retretti is an Art Centre that where private investment expansive underground spaces and in digital technologies (e.g. video mapping) has been c. 13 euros in 2020-2021. We are interested in developing the site as a public-private partnership into an all-year-round digital arts centre and hub, creating content inspired by our rich cultural heritage and utilizing the potential for cultural production through the Savonlinna - including Savonlinna Opera Festival. In 2022 we are launching the development of Finnish national urban park as a platform for cultural activity (approved by the Ministry of the Environment 30.9. 2021.)

Type of cultural heritage

- INTANGIBLE
- RURAL
- NATURAL



Cultural heritage asset description

St. Olav's castle (Olavinlinna) and Savonlinna Museum Riihisaari

These two heritage assets are an example of shifting borderland between East and West, i.e. Kingdom of Sweden and Russia since the middle ages. Riihisaari museum is a window to the way of life in the Lake Saimaa archipelago, the biggest lake in Finland and the 4th largest lake in Europe. St. Olav's castle is also the venue of the Savonlinna Opera Festival that belongs to the category of the five most prestigious opera festivals in the world.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

Savonlinna is looking for innovative strategies to develop the historic ensemble of St. Olav's castle (Olavinlinna, est. 1475) and Savonlinna Museum Riihisaari site as a **hub and gateway of cultural tourism** in the Lake Saimaa area. In order to increase the number of visitors and even out seasonal variation, new types of attractions, events, and cultural content need to be designed to cover different times of the year and utilise the opportunities provided by the environments. **Circular economy goals will be realised through the user-driven development or services valorising and re-creating cultural heritage in different representations also in the digital form.** The social, human-centred dimension also means that the historic ensemble will be developed as an open platform for different types of cultural production reflecting different meaning for participant groups. It is intended that youth in the age category 15-25 years and families with children would be the prime target groups for new services.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

St. Olav's castle is an example of shifting borderland between East and West, i.e., Kingdom of Sweden and Russia since the Middle Ages. Riihisaari museum is a window to the way of life in the Lake Saimaa archipelago, the biggest lake in Finland and 4th largest lake in Europe. St. Olav's castle is also the venue of Savonlinna Opera Festival belongs to the category of five most prestigious opera festivals in the world and which is cooperating e.g., with La Scala, Milan and many other most prestigious opera venues. Thus, the site is in renowned and unique focal point of European culture and history.



European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- In the process of developing the site as a **node of European Cultural Route(s)** (St. Olav Ways, possibly Prat-cart prehistoric rock art trail (Riihisaari Museum)).
- In preparation for **applying for European Heritage Label**. Needing innovation and fresh outlooks to develop the application.
- Lake Saimaa Ringed Seal Archipelago is on the **tentative national list for UNESCO World Heritage nomination** (expected in 2025), with a tentative visitor centre located on the site.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- The sustainable "Lake Saimaa Purest Finland" brand for Lake Saimaa area including 5 cities and 2 regions. Through Lake Saimaa cooperation, they are committed to **sustainable tourism** and, with the support of Visit Finland, launching **ecolabels and responsible practices in tourism companies**.
- Together with Metsähallitus they are developing **sustainable nature tourism** according to their guidelines in two national parks in Savonlinna and Punkaharju national landscape protection area, also located in Savonlinna.
- Saimaa Ilmiö 2026 bid for ECoC. Building of wider CCI networks and cooperation. Bid failed, but we intend to develop and utilize established networks.

Website and social media accounts

<https://www.visitsavonlinna.fi>

<https://www.savonlinna.fi/riihisaari/>

<https://www.kansallismuseo.fi/fi/olavinlinna>

<https://www.facebook.com/visitsavonlinna/>

https://www.instagram.com/visitsavonlinna_official/





Photo credit: Visit Zuid-Limburg

4.13 STADSREGIO PARKSTAD LIMBURG, THE NETHERLANDS: focusing on the rich 2000-year history, to entice tourists to discover more and extend their visits and inhabitants to regain the region's pride

Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg, The Netherlands

For Parkstad Limburg being part of the Be.CULTOUR Community means having a unique chance to discover and learn from the tools for circular cultural tourism in other regions in Europe

Photo credit: Visit Zuid-Limburg

Region: Parkstad Limburg

- MIX OF RURAL AND URBAN
- TRANSITION
- 2000 YEARS OF HISTORY



Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public authority

Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg has developed particular expertise in collaborating with relevant stakeholders in the field of tourism to create an attractive touristic region out of an industrialized black coal mine region.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

The region has a rich history that has known many ups and downs for the inhabitants. Through the years, a lot of the unique reminders of this rich history have been torn down, but a few have been saved, and some even restored. While history may not be so clearly shown in the environment, it's still significant for the region and its inhabitants. By turning down the reminders of the heydays of the region, the pride of its inhabitants faded. The main challenge is to find a way to let inhabitants and tourists experience the region's rich history and, by that, win back the pride of the region.

Current strategic planning

The cultural history of Parkstad Limburg has not been in the centre of tourism in our region, which was primarily focused on attractions and theme parks. By partly shifting the focus to cultural tourism, we want to improve the human-centred tourism in our region, with the objectives to entice tourists and inhabitants to discover more of the region and extend their visit and regain the region's pride.

The cultural history of Parkstad Limburg is, in essence, more part of the common European history than the common Dutch history. Learning from other European regions is therefore valuable.

Ideas and future perspectives

The region's goal is to entice tourists and inhabitants to discover more of the region and extend their visit. To achieve this goal, they want to use or renew the unique assets the region has, rather than invest in new things like buildings etc. They also want to stimulate visitors to use less polluting ways of transportation by investing in good cycling infrastructure.

Photo credit: Visit Zuid-Limburg



Type of cultural heritage

- ARCHAEOLOGICAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- INTANGIBLE

Cultural heritage asset description

Parkstad Limburg's history

The heritage asset they would like to focus on is the rich 2000 year history the region has. With the use of five timelines, which highlight the most important transitions of the region, they tell the region's story to tourists and inhabitants. Each of these timelines has left its own unique print on the region's scenery, constructions, and culture. With the five timelines, they embrace the diversity that can be found in the region, from urban parts to beautiful nature.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The challenge is to increase awareness about the diversity Parkstad entails and entice tourists to extend their visit and experience all Parkstad offers.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

The heritage asset of the rich history told by five timelines is a direct expression of European culture and history. The five timelines include the Roman Period, the Middle Ages, the Mining period, the Transition years and the New time. The events happening in these periods have affected all of Europe. The Parkstad region has known lots of different European rulers and has been part of negotiations between countries. The cultural history of Parkstad Limburg is, in essence, more part of the common European history than the common Dutch history.



Photo credit: Visit Zuid-Limburg

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

The heritage asset of the rich history told by five timelines is a direct expression of European culture and history. The five timelines include the Roman Period, the Middle Ages, the Mining period, the Transition years and the New time. The events happening in these periods have affected all of Europe.

Ongoing projects and best practices

Creation of the Experience in the heart of Parkstad Limburg region. In this experience, visitors can not only get touristic information but can also experience the history of the region. By using modern techniques, like a digital graffiti wall and storytelling through movies and podcasts, visitors get a unique kick-off to their touristic experience in Parkstad. ([link](#))

The region facilitates collaboration between seven municipalities and entrepreneurs to work together to build a better region and promote one image of the region.

Website and social media accounts

<https://parkstad-limburg.nl/>

<https://www.facebook.com/stadsregioparkstad/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/stadsregio-parkstad-limburg>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/parkstadlimburg/videos>

<https://www.visitzuidlimburg.nl/omgeving/parkstad-limburg/de-vijf-verhaallijnen/>



4.14 SVILUPPUMBRIA, ITALY: enhance and promote the hiking network as a slow way to visit the main cultural attractions and enjoy the natural environment.

Sviluppumbria, Italy

For Umbria being part of the Be.CULTOUR Community means learning from peers how to make the Greenheart of Italy...greener.

Region: Umbria

- TREASURE THROVE OF CULTURE AND ART
- LAND OF SAINTS
- GREEN HEART OF ITALY



Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public development agency

Sviluppumbria is the Regional Development Agency of Umbria and is the in-house supporting the Regional Government on policies relating to SMEs creation and boost, internationalisation, EU cooperation, innovation and Tourism.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

- To find innovative approaches to urban cultural heritage to **promote sustainable mobility and walking/cycling itineraries**. As these issues are now more of a priority than ever, due to their 'natural' social distancing opportunity in times of COVID, finding the best solutions to the challenges faced by the region (**poor interregional connections, hilly cities and territory**) is crucial.

- To explore solutions and ideas about full accessibility of cultural heritage and assets and connect cities and their heritage with their natural environment.

Current strategic planning

The main strategy involves the enhancement and promotion of the hiking network (rete dei cammini), a **slow way to visit all the main cultural attractions of the Region** and enjoy the natural environment. Particular attention is also devoted to the promotion of local borghi. These small hamlets allow for an experience of lesser-known heritage and enjoy the typical Italian way of life as well as the support of cultural events and festivals, attracting visitors all year round.

Ideas and future planning

The St. Francis Way is the primary spiritual itinerary in Umbria and is part of a larger project aimed at **connecting all walking, cycling and bridle trails, offering a sustainable mobility alternative to visit heritage without cars**. The circular economy approach to this and all other cultural assets of the Region will guide us in identifying the relevant stakeholders, assessing the current gaps, identifying key objectives, develop, and implementing a circularity plan.

Type of cultural heritage

- RURAL
- RELIGIOUS
- NATURAL



Cultural heritage asset description

The Town of Assisi and the Via di Francesco (St Francis Way)

Assisi is the heart, and in many cases, a final destination for St Francis Way, a **pilgrimage route** that connects many cultural heritage attractions and the five main cities of the region (Perugia, Terni, Foligno, Spoleto and Città di Castello).

Assisi is a major tourist and cultural destination, as it is one of the most famous religious centres in Italy after the Vatican.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The Region's main goal is to identify a set of circular values that can be translated into an actual implementation plan aimed at drastically reducing negative impacts produced by cultural tourism along the St. Francis Way, as pilot action for testing a circular economy model applied to all cultural tourism assets in Umbria.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

The architectural and artistic monuments in Assisi and along the Way are milestones in the evolution of European art, culture and spirituality, and have long attracted visitors seeking to connect to the values of St. Francis: frugal lifestyle, respect for nature and her creatures, and standing for one's own ideas. The Via di Francesco arose spontaneously through different grassroots actors.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- St. Francis Way has been UNESCO-listed since 2000 for its “ensemble of masterpieces of human creative genius” that “significantly influenced the development of art and architecture”.
- The Via di Francesco attracts walkers worldwide and has been recognised among the best European ‘Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism’ (2018) by the European Cultural Tourism Network and Europa Nostra.
- It is also included in the Best Practices identified by the SHARE project and approved by the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform.
- It is a candidate to be included in the European Cultural Route network.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- The Via di Francesco is in the Interreg Europe good practices database ([via](#)) and is one of the practices described in the EU Week 2020 Workshop “Resilient Heritage, Cohesive Society” (<https://euregionsweek2020-video.eu/video/resilient-heritage-cohesive-society>)
- The Interreg Europe project SHARE deals with exchanging experiences among 7 European partners to find common solutions to make the **cultural assets more sustainable and relieve pressure from residents and tourists alike**. Sviluppumbria has developed and led the project for over 4 years (2017-2020) (interregeurope.eu/share)
- The InterregIVC project ZEN, in which Sviluppumbria aimed to find a **common approach to make events throughout Europe more sustainable**. The project was carried out from 2012 to 2014 and produced a Handbook to give events organisers tips on how to reduce the impacts of festivals and other large gatherings. The Handbook was adopted formally by AMA (Association of Artistic Events) Calabria in Italy in 2020, who was not a member of ZEN, as part of their implementation of the ERDF ROP 2014-2020 for the sustainability of all their events

Website and social media accounts



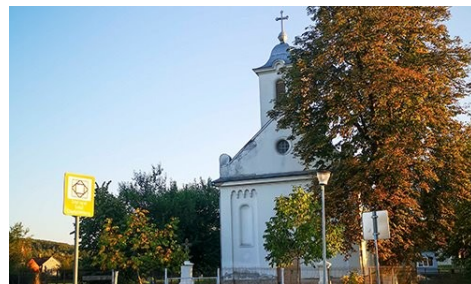
4.15 TIMIS COUNTY COUNCIL, ROMANIA: a dynamic, multicultural, modern and innovative city that keeps alive the memory of past times through a rich historical, architectural and cultural heritage.

Timis County Council, Romania

For Timis County, Circular Cultural Tourism is a new way to increase the notoriety of the destination in a sustainable manner.

Region: Timis County

- MULTICULTURAL AND MULTIETHNIC
- INNOVATIVE
- DYNAMIC



Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Public authority

Timis County Council provides annual funding to cultural institutions and the associative environment in the field through the Cultural Agenda Program of Timis County, which manages to be one of the main ways to support culture, thus contributing to the development of cultural tourism in the county.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

The main territorial challenges faced by the cultural tourism sector in the region are the concentration of touristic flows in only one site, the accessibility of remote areas and the lack of communication and synergetic actions.

Current strategic planning

The strategy for tourism development in Timis County (2018 – 2028) also includes proposals and measures for the development of cultural tourism. Most of the actions undertaken so far in terms of cultural tourism are the creation and promotion of cultural routes on topics related to specific architecture, traditional and ethnic culture; the organisation events to promote the built heritage, to promote the traditions and customs of different ethnic groups in the area or to promote local gastronomy; the involvement and support of the cultural program Timisoara European Capital of Culture in 2023.

The most important cultural tourism objectives are:

- Cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) is protected, capitalised, and promoted sustainably.
- Recognised tourist destination for cultural tourism with high-quality services for tourists.
- Increased cultural vitality, supported by a cultural offer adapted to various categories of the local and external public (including support for creative cultural industries).

Ideas and future perspectives

- Timis Circular Valley – developing a cluster in the circular economy;
- Raising public awareness of the importance of using organic, recycled and reused products;
- Development of a platform for the promotion and implementation of the circular economy in Timis County;
- Incentive program for tourist consumption by offering one night of free accommodation for two nights of accommodation booked by visitors;
- Program for recognizing the quality and sustainability of tourism services/products (pilot action for accommodation or food units that includes certification actions for local operators; dedicated training and promotion);
- **Support for stimulating partnerships in order to capitalize on local resources** (e.g. facilitating the interaction between local agricultural producers and accommodation/food units).



Type of cultural heritage

- RURAL



Cultural heritage asset description

The Charlottenburg village and its surroundings

The village of Charlottenburg was founded in 1771 by 32 families (171 settlers) who immigrated from Baden-Württemberg, German-speaking Lorraine (Grand East region of France, nowadays) and the German-speaking area of Trentino (Trentino-South Tyrol region of Italy).

The **multicultural character of the settlement** was a constant feature until the end of the communist regime in Romania, when the German and Hungarian language populations migrated massively. Although currently, the population of the settlement is almost 100% Romanian, the cultural heritage of the settlement is preserved, primarily due to the integral protection (by law) of the settlement as a monument of national and universal value.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The multi and interethnic character of Timiș County resides in all the categories of components of its cultural heritage. This fact can and must bring a plus for all the organised actions that shed light and bring to the knowledge of the consumer the patrimony at his disposal. The main goal is to inform the public about the tourism potential of the region.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

Timiș County presents itself today as **dynamic, multicultural, modern and innovative, keeping alive the memory of past times through a rich historical, architectural and cultural heritage**. These attributes of the county are closely related to the history and civilization of the Banat region. The multi and interethnic character of Timiș County resides in all the categories of components of its cultural heritage. This fact can and must bring a plus for all the actions that are organized and that shed light and bring to the knowledge of the consumer the patrimony at his disposal.

European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

Even if registered on the national list of sites and monuments, Charlottenburg village still lacks international recognition, but it could be a great candidate for a European Heritage Label because of its unique circular shape and its history defined by a Pan-European identity.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- Timiș County Council is an associate member of the DKMT Euroregional Agency (Danube-Criș-Mureș-Tisa).
- Timiș County Council has developed a series of projects on the restoration and enhancement of heritage elements, by accessing European funds.

- Rehabilitation and revitalisation of fortress of Timisoara Citadelle, Theresia Bastion ([link](#))
- Capitalisation of the cross border tourist potential, including bicycle lane along Bega river, downstream Timisoara (ROMANIA-SERBIA) Main results: Bicycle lane built (Romania); e ([link](#))
- Banatian Village Living Museum, Csongrád – Timiș Tradition and Multiculturality – LIVMUSECSOTM (ROMANIA – HUNGARY Cross-border. ([link](#))
- Renewable Energy Regions Network - REN REN (INTERREG IV) ([link](#))
- The repairing of the navigable infrastructure on Bega Canal ([link](#))
- Eco Tamis (Interreg IPA CBC Romania-Serbia), a tourism infrastructure has been developed that promotes eco-tourism and cycling tourism along several routes ([link](#))

Website and social media accounts

Department for tourism development of Timis County Council facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/CentrulMultifunctionalBastion>);

Discover Timis App (<https://discovertimis.com/?locale=ro>);

Timis County Council website (<https://www.cjtimis.ro/>);

Timis County Council facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/cjtimis>).





- 4.16 UNIVERSITY OF ALGARVE, PORTUGAL: a geopark that involves the communities to offer sustainable tourism based on local values: villages, gastronomy, handicrafts, hiking, mountain biking, bird watching and geology.

University of Algarve, Portugal

For Geopark Algarvensis Circular Cultural Tourism is an opportunity to develop a region, currently economically depressed, ensuring the preservation of its natural and cultural heritage and creating local opportunities and solutions for a sustainable tourism model.

Region: Algarve

- RURAL LANDSCAPE AND VERNACULAR HERITAGE
- NATURAL AND GEOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
- NON-MASS CULTURAL AND NATURAL TOURISM



Type of organisation leading the larger local innovation ecosystem

Academia

The University of Algarve has a deep knowledge of the Algarve region, its landscape and heritage (natural/cultural) and tourism as the main economic activity of this region. It also has a privileged connection to governmental and non-governmental organizations and to the local community.

Main challenges related to cultural tourism

The Algarve region is the largest tourist destination in Portugal and currently in Europe. The central coastal region of the Algarve has been dominated since 1960 by sun/beach/golf tourism, similar to that found in southern European countries on the Mediterranean coast. This model has promoted a major economic, environmental, population and urban imbalance between coastal

and inland areas. In the Algarve region, tourist activity is mostly located in the 20km closest to the coastline. For a better balance, it is necessary to **develop a more diversified tourism (cultural and natural) to be more sustainable and promote greater involvement of the population.**

Current strategic planning

The Geopark and the municipalities promote the dissemination of heritage, the discovery of the territory and organize creative tourism events. The main objective is to **offer sustainable tourism based on local values - villages, gastronomy, handicrafts, hiking and mountain biking, bird watching and geology - and involving communities.** National and municipal financial incentives are channelled towards creative handicrafts, gastronomic production and artistic, scientific and sports events.

Ideas and future perspectives

Immersive experiences that promote the meeting of stakeholders (agrifood producers and artisans, environmental protection associations, tourist entrepreneurs and residents) with visitors to promote and enhance natural and cultural heritage (material and immaterial) and activation of the local economy.

Reinforcement of the feeling of belonging to a community and territory based on the history and memory of places, through the creation of co-living and co-working opportunities.

Type of cultural heritage

- NATURAL
- INTANGIBLE
- RURAL



Cultural heritage asset description

The Algarvensis Geopark

Algarvensis Geopark is an area that includes territory from three municipalities in the central region of the Algarve - Loulé, Albufeira and Silves. It is a rural region with a high landscape and agricultural value linked to Mediterranean culture. Possessing a geological heritage of great national and international relevance, it combines a **geo-conservation strategy** and a set of **environmental education and awareness policies** to the promotion of sustainable socio-economic development based on geo-tourism activities, involving local communities, contributing to the valorisation and promotion of local products. This project aims to **involve the local population** in a strategy to diversify tourism which, especially in the municipalities of Loulé and Albufeira, is concentrated on the coastline, close to the sea.

Specific goal related to the selected asset

The Geopark project is still at an early stage, and although there are some initiatives already implemented, they are isolated from each other, lacking the cohesion that would give unity and identity to the region and boost cultural tourism

In this region, cultural tourism can be a way of **balancing the asymmetries caused by traditional sun/beach/golf tourism**.

Europeanisation: linkages between local heritage and European history and culture

In terms of landscape and cultural heritage, the region where the Geopark is located is an **evidence of the rural landscapes of southern Europe** express the European dimension of Mediterranean culture, deeply linked to the construction of European culture and history. The region is an accumulation of historical layers that begin with the natural values (geology, hydrology, fauna) expressed in the Geological Sites, the landscapes integrated in the National Network of Protected Areas, the areas belonging to the Natura 2000 Network and the paleontological records, among others.



European and international Cultural Heritage recognition(s)

- The Algarviensis Geopark is preparing the application to become a UNESCO Geopark, being officially a Geopark aspirant since 2019.
- It is an Observer Member in the Portuguese Geoparks Forum.
- The geopark region is also covered by the **Mediterranean Diet** and has several villages, such as Querença, Tor, Salir, among others, where agriculture and gastronomy are a showcase of the Mediterranean Diet. The Mediterranean Diet **was distinguished by UNESCO in 2013 as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**. The University of the Algarve is one of the partners in the defense and implementation of this heritage, and is currently organizing the 1st Congress of the Network of Higher Education Institutions for the Safeguarding of the Mediterranean Diet.

Ongoing projects and best practices

- 365 Algarve: Rediscover the Algarve through the arts (<https://www.turismoalgarve.pt/pt/menu/461/365-algarve.aspx>);
- Geoparcos: art, science and nature in the Geopark territory (<https://www.geoparquealgarvensis.pt/aprender-e-sensibilizar/atividades/item/380-geoparcos-arte-ciencia-natureza>);
- Projeto Querença: From Theory to Action – Undertaking the Rural World (<http://www.fundacao-mvg.pt/iniciativas/projeto-querenca>)

- Loulé Interfood Fest (<https://www.louleinterfoodfest.com/index.php>)

Website and social media accounts

<https://geoparquealgarvensis.pt>



5. Be.CULTOUR Community Advisors: three inspiring examples

In addition to the 16 Be.CULTOUR mirror ecosystems, three ecosystems have been selected to join the Be.CULTOUR Community as *Advisors*, since they present an added value as "multiplier networks" and "network of networks" with particular experience in Be.CULTOUR main innovation dimensions, which will add value to the Be.CULTOUR Community: Historic Environment Scotland, and two networks – CREATOUR and Future for Religious Heritage.

While not focusing on a specific heritage site, these three networks/organisations were selected as they show practical examples of how circular economy, innovative business models with a clear human-centred and cultural approach, and international cooperation can be implemented to enhance cultural tourism models and practices.

Particularly, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is one of the few organisations already clearly implementing *circular economy* strategies in cultural tourism destinations, contributing to reduce environmental impacts through targeted actions, and developing a “responsible tourism framework”¹ which was considered as a relevant reference in line with Be.CULTOUR experimentation. Through its practical experience, HES can inspire project partners and stakeholders to develop local circular economy actions in cultural tourism.

Moreover, the CREATOUR (Creative Tourism) network in Portugal represents a relevant reference for Be.CULTOUR innovative circular and human-centred business models, providing diverse examples of how rural and remote areas, mostly depopulated, could have a new life through cultural and creative tourism, engaging local communities and especially vulnerable groups (elderlies, youths, women, minority cultures) while respecting their needs and providing opportunities for communities empowerment. The challenges addressed by CREATOUR are particularly relevant for all Be.CULTOUR pilot heritage sites and can represent a good practice to inspire project partners and stakeholders.

Finally, Future for Religious Heritage (FRH) represents a European network focused on the conservation, preservation, reuse and valorisation of European religious heritage, and it was considered a relevant example of international and cross-border cooperation between heritage sites, ‘beyond’ the tourism perspective including a focus on the European value of cultural heritage and its role for cultural Europeanisation, bridging European communities. Also, by taking

¹ HES Responsible tourism framework

<https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/conservation/hes-responsible-tourism-framework/>

care of different religious heritage sites, and thus cooperating among different religions and/or their representative/symbolic monuments, FRH is also a relevant example of promotion of inclusiveness and engagement of minority cultures and vulnerable social/religious groups.

Below it is provided a synthetic presentation of each Advisor organisation, and a summary of their involvement in Be.CULTOUR activities to inspire and exchange knowledge with project partners, stakeholders and Community members.

More information can be found on Be.CULTOUR website, section on Community of Interest.

5.1 Historic Environment Scotland (UK-Scotland cultural heritage sites)

HES is an executive non-departmental public body responsible for investigating, caring for and promoting Scotland's historic environment. Their national presence and profile in Scotland, through their visitor operations, regulatory role, community engagement and learning programmes, guarantees recognition and connection throughout Scotland and internationally. Historic Environment Scotland maintains and conserves the Properties in Care with its own Conservation teams of architects, surveyors, technicians, stonemasons, joiners, electricians, painters and gardeners, who are supported by specialist staff including digital documentation experts, researchers, archaeologists, architectural historians and conservation scientists.

As a cultural heritage organisation, they are internationally recognised for their innovative digital documentation work, most notably the pioneering Scottish Ten Project; and for being at the forefront of investigating and addressing the impacts of climate change on the historic environment.

HES website: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/>

5.2 CREATOUR (Portugal rural and remote areas)

The CREATOUR research-and-application national network includes 40 creative tourism pilot projects organised by various stakeholders (from municipalities and regional development agencies to individual entrepreneurs and cultural associations). The unique locally-led ideation and development approach and the CREATOUR series of IdeaLabs have led to developing an innovation network for responsible, sustainable, and regenerative tourism through creative tourism initiatives.

CREATOUR website: <https://creatour.pt/en/>



5.3 Future for Religious Heritage (European network)

Future for Religious Heritage (FRH) is an independent, non-faith, not-for-profit organisation working to safeguard and protect religious heritage buildings and their contents. Currently, the network has +70 full members and +100 associate members from +35 countries. As a European network, FRH brings together diverse members from across the continent and beyond, facilitating the exchange of information, best practices, and joint initiatives. The FRH members encompass university departments, companies, local, regional, and national authorities, associations and individual professionals. This allows the religious heritage sector to be involved in each thematic discussion and bring in varied perspectives and solutions to the challenges addressed.

FRH website: <https://www.frh-europe.org/>

5.4 THE ROLE OF BE.CULTOUR ADVISORS IN STEERING AND INSPIRING THE COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

As mentioned here-above, Be.CULTOUR community of interest has been joined by three advisors, representing different regional and international networks; Historic Environment Scotland, Future for Religious Heritage and the CREATOUR project.

The role of these Community Advisors is to inspire, steer the activities and share learnings, challenges and solutions with the community of practice and of interest of the project. In this respect, the advisors have taken part in targeted activities where they could present key takeaways from their previous and ongoing work:

- **Be.CULTOUR 2nd Community Conversation, 24 February 2022**

During the meeting, **Historic Environment Scotland** (HES) introduced its missions and work, underlining key aspects related to circular cultural tourism. HES aims to improve people's lives, health, economy, culture and environment through a sustainable cultural tourism approach, also inspiring the historic environment-led climate change. In this context, *Doone Castle* was presented as a relevant best practice, having a positive impact on the local community from an economic perspective and for the accessibility of the area.

The **CREATOUR project** focused on the links between the culture and the tourism sectors, developing sustainable creative tourism itineraries to boost tourism in small cities and to contribute to local cultural vibrancy and holistic development. The activities organised in the various pilot areas were showcased, presenting four key dimensions of creative tourism: active participation, learning, creative self-expression, connection with local community.

Lastly, **Future for Religious Heritage (FRH)**, showcased some case studies aiming to enhance the landscape values and the human-centred approach in religious heritage tourism: Camping activities inside abandoned or neglected churches with the ambition to preserve and regenerate churches in rural areas; SKIVRE project for revitalizing the historical crafts of monasteries, creating sustainable high-quality products and establishing innovative distribution strategies involving local communities, thus activating dynamics that favour touristic flows of nature lovers; Monastero di Santa Catarina d’Alessandria project, where some bakers’ associations have rediscovered and enhanced the ancient traditions of local monastery pastry, using ancient ingredients to make the authentic recipes produced in the same laboratories used for hundreds of years.

- **Be.CULTOUR Policy Learning Lab, 9 September 2023**

One representative per each Advisor participated as key speaker in the panel conversation around *challenges and opportunities for circular cultural tourism in the post-pandemic era*, sharing their direct experience and expertise in the field. Afterwards they participated in a 2 phase workshop with the other community members: Workshop pt.1: Circular Cultural Tourism challenges definition and solution identification; Workshop pt.2: Preparation of Policy Recommendations.

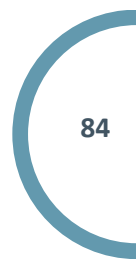
Considering their focus and in order to better advise the other mirrors ecosystems on the tools and innovations that can be implemented, the advisors were invited to join a particular break out session among the following:

- **CIRCULAR INVESTMENTS** - Circular investments for infrastructure, mobility and tourism services
- **DIGITALISATION** - Digitalisation and smart data management: exploiting the potential of digital tools for better accessibility and monitoring of cultural sites
- **SYNERGIES** - Cooperation and collaboration towards higher circularity: heritage innovation networks potential, barriers and experiences
- **INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM** - Stimulating the local innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem through cultural tourism: barriers and solutions / experiences
- **HUMAN CAPITAL** - Enhancing human capital towards human-centred development: skills, knowledge, education, culture & heritage
- **REMOTENESS** - Remoteness as value? Transformative travels in less crowded cultural sites

On top of their direct engagement and good practices in circular cultural tourism in several online and in person occasions, the advisors are invited to also get involved in the LinkedIn Working Groups set up in February 2024, with the aim of sharing news, updates, creating synergies and news collaboration and funding opportunities, as well as amplifying their network as a long-lasting impact beyond the project framework.

With this in mind, the advisors will be also invited to take part in the Be.CULTOUR webinar series, which focused on different innovation areas of the project:

- 1) ***Circular cultural tourism***: the role of Heritage Innovation Networks for co-creation and communities' empowerment - *24 February 2023*
- 2) ***Understanding the European value of cultural heritage***: Power of networks - *24 March 2023*
- 3) ***Innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism*** - *21 April 2023*
- 4) ***Values-based innovative marketing*** for less-known cultural tourism destinations - *May 2023*
- 5) ***Community-led and innovative entrepreneurship*** for circular cultural tourism - *June 2023*
- 6) ***Creative tourism and the role of arts, interpretation and storytelling*** - *September 2023*
- 7) ***Circular economy*** implementation in the tourism sector - *October 2023*
- 8) ***Innovative finance*** for circular cultural tourism - *November 2023*
- 9) ***Smart data management*** for circular cultural tourism assessment and monitoring - *December 2023*



6. Conclusions

From the activities carried out with the mirror ecosystems, it has emerged that there are common threads and potential pathways in terms of shared challenges and solutions related to circular cultural tourism, in particular:

- **CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN CULTURAL TOURISM: CREATIVE, SUSTAINABLE, BEAUTIFUL DESTINATIONS** – Circular tourism strategies, sustainable events and festivals, eco-labels for the tourism sector, collaboration and cooperation towards higher circularity in cultural destinations, the link between environmental projects and tourism, fair and responsible tourism, regenerative and transformative tourism
- **DIGITALISATION & SMART DESTINATION MANAGEMENT FOR CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM** - smart data management, digital tourism, impact assessment, digital tools for higher resilience of cultural heritage in crisis time (pandemic, war, climate change)
- **ENHANCING THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM** – Human capital development in cultural tourism destinations, skills, knowledge, education, creative tourism, experiential tourism, storytelling, proximity tourism, tourists as temporary residents, remote working destinations, industrial heritage, heritage reuse and regeneration
- **ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM, INNOVATIVE BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL MODELS FOR CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM** – innovation ecosystem and entrepreneurial ecosystem development, collaborative innovation networks, innovative finance, Sustainable infrastructures, Legislation and strategies for circular cultural destinations

6.1 CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN CULTURAL TOURISM: CREATIVE, SUSTAINABLE, BEAUTIFUL DESTINATIONS

Circular economy strategies in the tourism sector are primarily linked to the **reduction of the environmental drawbacks of the tourism industry**, such as pollution and waste generation, and beyond, by embracing the **wider notion of sustainability**. Circular economy models in the tourism sector are related to the **reduction of natural resources consumption** (energy, water, soil, biodiversity), the enhancement of **green mobility** services, recycling and reuse of materials and products in the **building sector** and in the preservation of heritage sites, as well as the promotion of **locally based food and craft products**. Moreover, circular models are also related to the

reduction of tourism pressure on over-exploited territories, overcoming mass tourism, seasonality and “stop-and-go” tourism, promoting lesser-known and less crowded destinations, but also tackling tourism dependency by diversifying the local economy and avoiding focusing on only one economic sector or tourism typology.

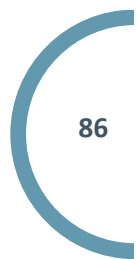
Circularity is also based on the **capacity of cooperating and collaborating between different actors**: public institutions, citizens, private companies and organisations, as well as the third sector and research actors, in a quadruple helix synergistic model. However, this cooperative capacity is not easy to build, especially in remote and depopulated areas, and should be enhanced by identifying strategies, networks/actors, and inspiring managers and leaders.

Cultural events and festivals have a great meaning and significant importance for developing a local community, both socially and economically, and preserving the local intangible and tangible heritage. Cultural events and festivals attract tourism in both crowded and remote areas, promoting and celebrating local cultural identity, crafts, music and food, but also sharing diverse cultures and traditions, fostering exchanges, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

Following the ease of Covid-19 restrictions, there has been a sharp increase in the organisation of cultural events and festivals of all large sizes. If the sustainability of these events was a challenge before the covid pandemic, now more than ever, it has become a priority to ensure festivals and cultural events are planned in environmentally, socially and ethically sustainable ways. A number of the Be.CULTOUR Mirror Ecosystems have pledged to make their local events more sustainable, green and fair, consequently, they are developing strategies and adopting innovative actions to achieve this goal.

Sustainability of cultural events

In the **Kuldiga District Municipality**, the "*Kuldiga Street Art Festival*" aims to transform old and partially abandoned industrial buildings into artworks. It has been developed as a green interdisciplinary event intending to meet a growing number of green criteria every year. By providing this kind of knowledge, citizens can contribute to urban development in a sustainable way. Kuldiga plans to become an Open-Air Art Gallery encompassing all three pillars of the New European Bauhaus initiative by being a sustainable, beautiful place made by all citizens together. The key objective of the festival is twofold: to make more creative living spaces together with inhabitants and to bring the city closer to nature by using sustainable materials in the creation of murals.



In **Leeuwarden**, the “Welcome to The Village” is a 3-day music festival, during which the main goal is to build an innovative and sustainable space to brainstorm and co-create solutions for the future. The festival has a line-up of artists, musicians, chefs and start-ups, encouraging discussion and thinking outside of the box, making it not only a music festival but also a festival of theatre, innovation, art, dance, food and design.

In **Saltaire**, during the “Living Advent Calendar”, windows are opened in the run-up to Christmas, with businesses and community buildings illuminated from 1st December until 24th December.

In the organisation of this event, community participation is encouraged, and the residents are invited to participate in workshops with artists as part of a village-wide installation.

Sustainable infrastructures

Remote cultural sites aiming to become attractive destinations for sustainable and circular cultural tourism must find innovative solutions and increase investment to **realise high-quality infrastructure**. In the context of the creating circular destinations, the goal is to rethink the entire destination as a circular one, highlighting the importance of reaching dependency in terms of energy, water, and materials through renewables, recycling, and reuse strategies. This sustainable and circular strategy must include the hotel’s sector and the promotion of heritage sites by incorporating them into regional, national and transnational cultural and touristic routes. This type of strategy often starts with an inclusive and responsible governance structure that manages the process of transforming local goods and services into tourist products by ensuring quality, providing constant monitoring of impacts and ultimately generating better income opportunities for all. This is at the core of the methodology used by **Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi in Sciacca (IT)** that applies circularity approaches starting from citizens, by creating a network of skilled people who take, transform and reuse resources from the area where they live into tourist products without waste. The project includes the reduction of plastic use and various strategies for the reuse of local products that involve citizens, accommodation companies and local artisans. One example of this strategy is the use by all project accommodations of personalised ceramic dispensers made by local potters, which are then filled with bio soap and shower gel. This project not only reduces the waste of packaging and single-use soaps, but also creates a competitive advantage for the accommodations, the potters and the destination as a whole. Additionally, for the hospitality sector (accommodations, bars and restaurants), a series of defined actions have been agreed upon to be undertaken for a more sustainable and circular way of welcoming tourists. Other initiatives include the removal of single-use plastic bottles which have been substituted with glass and the increased use of local, fresh and seasonal products.

Another example of sustainable infrastructure challenges is the case of **Timis County Council, (RO)** where the concentration of the touristic heritage in one site and the accessibility to remote surrounding areas are considered the main challenges. In order to make the rural village of Charlottenburg and its surroundings a circular cultural tourism destination, the local strategy for tourism and sustainable development has included an **incentive programme for accommodation units**, to increase the use of **green energy and short supply chains**. Moreover, the strategy includes the preservation and capitalisation of built heritage through the creation and **sponsorship of the use of natural materials in the construction** or arrangement of houses and of opportunities for the development of circular tourism activities.

Within the Be.CULTOUR community, the principles of circularity in the tourism sector have been well highlighted as a priority to be considered, but without specific concrete strategies or the application of business models. In the specific case of **SREM**, the main reason to join the project community was to create new partnerships and collaborations and exchange good practices to develop new skills and knowledge to support the development of human-centred innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism.

6.2 DIGITALISATION & SMART DESTINATION MANAGEMENT FOR CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM

Digital infrastructure, digital tools and smart data management can enhance the accessibility and sustainability of remote and less-known cultural sites. Digital tools such as applications for cultural events, virtual travels, augmented reality, and sharing economy services such as shared mobility, accommodation, guides etc., can significantly improve the overall quality of the cultural experience, as well as supporting marketing strategies.

Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and physical places, but also includes traditions, performing arts, events, knowledge, languages and skills. Some of the Be.CULTOUR mirror ecosystems focus their touristic offer on their local intangible heritage through investments in cultural events and digital tools such as artificial intelligence, boosting the creative industries and valorising their culture and traditions.

Digital infrastructures for the tourism sector

ICT, AI, 5G and IoT systems can be used for better tourism management to avoid overcrowding, enhance accessibility and safety and foster evidence-based policies to strengthen local

communities' well-being and the visitor experience. This includes the development of applications for improved travel experience, for example, to visit lesser-known and less-crowded places by discovering 'hidden treasures' or accessing creative and unconventional places. Through digital tools, visitors and residents can also be facilitated to become active actors in local sustainable development policies, expressing their preferences and needs and thus, go beyond tourism by embracing regional/local sustainable development. Moreover, implementing a human-centred approach, digital tools can be useful to monitor the performance and attractiveness of cultural sites.

A case strongly related to the use of digital tools is the one of **Kuldiga District Municipality**, whose main challenge is to **boost Circular Cultural Tourism innovations through augmented reality (AR)** solutions such as an AR city guide, an AR cultural tourism map, AR museums, augment existing 3D art and AR for restaurants and hotel dining. The local NGO "Art and Technology Centre", as well as the Municipality itself, have collected a list of best practices, such as the *Green Street Art Festival*, dedicated to local climate and digital issues. In Kuldiga, they have also been **pioneers in terms of digital data analytics for culture tourism in Latvia, monitoring and analysing the visitor flow through artificial intelligence**. This innovation helped them to identify the number of visitors to the festival and to predict these numbers in regard to the weather conditions.

The project of **Museo dei 5 Sensi di Sciacca** includes more than fifty experiences and ten audio guides .to make the destination easily discoverable to tourists in an authentic way. As part of the project, including the whole local community, a multilanguage website and web app has been created to promote and sell products and services offered by the community.

Another innovative case related to digital tools is the one of **Cyngor Gwynedd**. The Llŷn ecoamgueddfa (ecomuseum) is the first in Wales and among the first worldwide to be digitally driven. The strategy is to embrace as much AR as possible, moving away from physical brochures using AR to help visitors discover the local heritage and choose accommodation or restaurants.

Tourists as temporary citizens, remote working and digital nomads

Digital infrastructure is key for enabling territories to become "remote working" destinations. What makes an environment attractive for remote workers are the facilities and community. Moreover, in exchange, remote workers bring investment into the destination via their salaries and their own community involvement, by bringing new perspectives and point of views. Similarly, considering tourists as temporary citizens means giving them the same rights and duties. This approach ensures a more collaborative relationship between residents and visitors.

For the **Municipality of Leeuwarden**, the main goal is to create a cultural, creative and tourist offer that attracts guests and to explore the city without damaging the cultural, social and natural heritage. To ensure that, the focus is on the valorisation of its local intangible cultural heritage, **investing in cultural events to attract tourists and (young) creators.**

Similarly, **Savonlinna Development Services Ltd.** aims at boosting digital media, creative industries, local cultural production and heritage sectors to attract **not only tourists but also digital nomads and creative people as full and part-time residents to the city.** Savonlinna is looking for innovative strategies to develop the historic St. Olav's castle and Savonlinna Museum Riihisaari site as a **hub of cultural tourism** in the Lake Saimaa area. **Circular economy goals will be achieved through the user-driven development of services valorising and re-creating cultural heritage in different representations such as the digital form, ensuring a social, human-centred dimension.**

In Sciacca the main vision is **to transform individuals from passive spectators living in their community, to inhabitants aware of their value and of the interconnection between them and the territory in which they live.** A network can therefore be generated in which the skills can contribute to the well-being of the entire community. As more people get involved in the project, new ideas, stories, experiences and projects narrate the local history, traditions, cultural heritage and become resources which benefit the whole community. The aim is to generate awareness, valorise and make available the local cultural heritage to tourists, who are considered temporary citizens.

6.3 ENHANCING THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM

Among the 16 Be.CULTOUR mirror ecosystems, great importance has been given to the preservation, valorisation and promotion of local heritage, including natural, industrial and historical.

The use of digital tools, energy efficiency and circular cultural approaches, new ways for communication and promotion, and combination with sports and cultural and natural routes are all innovative strategies in tourism.

Preservation of mixed cultural-natural heritage

The preservation of historical heritage in a circular way brings many challenges in terms of the selection of materials to use, specific skills, funding and attractiveness of the sites.

In particular, in the case of the **North-West Regional Development Agency in Romania**, there is a significant challenge related to the conservation, protection, and restoration of the **Northwest LIMES heritage site**. Due to improper restorations, a poor management and insufficient funds, some features are no longer visible, are difficult to identify and or fail to attract and engage the local communities, resulting in lifeless, empty and unattractive sites. Innovative projects involving digital tools and proper **restoration linked to energy efficiency and circular cultural approaches** would boost the LIMES heritage site's **attractiveness and competitiveness**.

Similarly, in the case of the **regional development agency SREM**, the main focus is to apply circular cultural approaches to the **Sirmium archaeological site**. In this case, while the circular economy principles have been recognised, they have not yet been applied through a business model. Finding the right innovative circular approach for the preservation and valorisation of heritage is still a goal.

On the contrary, a strategic, innovative approach for valorising an historic site has been achieved in the case of the Thessaly Region with the **Underwater Museum of Alonnisos/Sporades & The Underwater Museum of Western Pagasetic Gulf**. The opening of four more **diving parks in the Sporades and the Western Pagasitikos** aims to establish the most important network of **underwater museums in the Eastern Mediterranean**, allowing tourists to dive and discover hidden underwater archaeological sites.

There is a common trend in using circular cultural tourism approaches to valorise the natural and rural heritage through its deep relation to the local intangible heritage. In particular, enhancing its relationship with the local language, the agri-food and cultural heritage through the involvement of the local communities.

In the **Algarvensis Geopark**, the **University of Algarve** combines a **geo-conservation strategy** and a set of **environmental education and awareness policies** to promote sustainable socio-economic development based on geo-tourism activities involving local communities.

A similar approach applies in **SREM's** case in the Special Nature Reserve of pond "Zasavica", located in the area of southern Vojvodina and northern Macva, with the total area of the reserve being 1825 ha. To preserve the site, educational programs for pupils and students have been established to study natural values through one-day and multi-day stays and professionally prepared programs and activities.

Strategies for communication and storytelling

A considerable part of valorising cultural heritage and enhancing its benefits for local communities and external visitors depends on how the cultural assets are communicated. Many

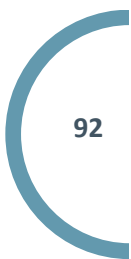
of Be.CULTOUR mirror ecosystems have developed innovative communication strategies for their local history and traditions related to crafts making, gastronomy and experiential tourism, investing in storytelling skills and the local resources available for a place-based, human-centred strategy.

Timis County Council considers circular cultural tourism approaches key for valorising the Charlottenburg village. The local objective of **keeping the memory of past times alive through a rich historical, architectural and cultural heritage** is carried out through the creation and promotion of cultural routes and the organisation of events on topics related to local architecture, traditional ethnic cultures and gastronomy.

In the case of the Wielkopolska region, **Greater Poland Tourism Organisation**, the goal is to find innovative and inclusive strategies to promote the Piast Route as a symbol to showcase and spread the authentic historical objects related to the beginnings of Poland and the Christian religion on its territory. In particular, the **key is to reshape the Piast Route image, promote it as an essential element of local identity, find new methodologies for the communication and storytelling elements and implement innovative strategies.**

In promoting the Venetian history of Nicosia and the famous Venetian city walls, **Nicosia Tourism Board** has created initiatives to fully sponsor the renovation of historic houses facades in the central area of the old town, while ensuring the respect of its socio-cultural authenticity. This approach is strengthened by organising festival and cultural events to involve the local community.

An interesting case is Stadsregio **Parkstad Limburg**, where the focus is on its rich **2000-year history**. In 2020, the 16 municipalities of South Limburg approved a new tourism vision. One of the critical elements of the new concept, *“Destination South Limburg 2030”*, is connecting the strategies for the development of the touristic sector to the true DNA of the region. A new narrative has been developed during brainstorming sessions with various stakeholders and followed by expert consultations. The conclusion was that the DNA of Parkstad resides in 5 dominant "eras" or "timelines" that mark the region and that can also be expressed visually. The timelines are Roman junction (750BC -500 AD), Knights and Robbers (500AD - 1800), Mining period: coal and the modern city (1900- 1965), Transition years: mine closures and demolitions (1965- 2000) and New élan: tourism and cultural spring (2000- the present). Visit Zuid Limburg started using this narrative by actively communicating these five timelines in every phase of the “customer journey”. The five timelines have been incorporated into themed routes and used in storytelling activities through anecdotal stories for every timeline and shared via podcasts, maps and films. Some events have been organised to support the new narrative, and the use of social



media has reinforced the approach. Moreover, a new museum dedicated to timelines has been opened.

A similar approach can be seen in the case of **Leeuwarden**, where the strategic focus on culture has been at the core of the planning. Some examples of this can be seen in the establishment of permanent artworks in public areas; in particular 11 permanent fountains with sculptures have been placed in the city. Additionally, a communication campaign has been implemented, including a documentary on national television. Another example from Leeuwarden to attract tourists is the organisation of several festivals, including the above-mentioned “Welcome to the Village” and activities focused on inclusive theatre.

Inclusion of the local communities

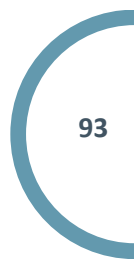
The Be.CULTOUR Mirror Ecosystems have developed innovative strategies to involve the local community through human and community-centred bottom-up approaches to valorise the local heritage.

Human-centred services and products are generally linked to placing the ‘real’ needs of people and communities at the centre of the design process, overcoming extreme standardisation and providing diverse, tailor-made experiences, considering the person’s special needs. This concept can be effectively applied to develop inclusive tourism services and products. For example, cultural tourism “for all” is based on inclusive products and services addressing people with special needs.

In particular, the Museo Diffuso dei 5 Sensi Sciacca focuses on the identities of the people living in the area by involving them in horizontal and circular economy approaches for responsible and sustainable tourism. The result is f a **local community engaged in its territory's sustainable and responsible development**. This case also shows how a non-profit community cooperative, in only two years, has become a community network engaging more than 55 local entities.

One of the goals of Sciacca is to guarantee viable long-term planning, providing socioeconomic fairly distributed benefits to all stakeholders, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities, and contributing to equality and poverty alleviation.

This makes it possible to move from a condition of fragmentation and limited integration between supply and demand in tourist and cultural services to a cooperative, participative, circular and inclusive network ecosystem that they call “Conscious Community”, based upon the Economy of Beauty.



With a similar approach, Saltaire Inspired is committed to **building on the local community's creativity, blending heritage, the arts, diversity and inclusivity** to develop a coordinated approach to a circular cultural offer of cultural experiences, venues and organisations.

Saltaire Inspired is a small organisation dependent on volunteers and residents, aiming to develop human-centred and sustainable creative approaches to co-create experiences with residents, local businesses, schools and colleges, and **visitors**. Through their projects and co-created programmes, they are connected within a complex network comprising residents, over 150 artists and designers and strategic partners and initiatives such as Arts Council England and British Council.

Creating a European sense of belonging by revitalising ancient cultural routes

Travelling 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.

Being recognised with a European label or as part of a European route often supports the visibility of a destination and enhances collaborations among heritage sites with similar characteristics, challenges or goals.

One example is the case of **Leeuwarden**, that as Capital of Culture in 2018 (LF2018), has been increasing its efforts directed at tourism, branding and events. From 2018 on, the efforts have focused on capitalising on the legacy of LF2018 with events and activities.

Also, the Veneto Region firmly focused on European recognitions in its strategy for moving the tourist masses from Venice and valorise the **Prosecco Hills**:

- In 2019, after a process started in 2008, the Prosecco Hills of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene became a UNESCO Heritage site. Veneto Region is a partner of the Association that manages this site.
- In 2016 the same area was awarded as the European Capital of Cultural Wine and is one of the members of the European Wine Cities (RECEVIN) network.

6.4 ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM, INNOVATIVE BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL MODELS FOR CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural heritage can have a role in stimulating the recognition and regeneration of shared identity and values in local communities and can strengthen the local ecosystems. Moreover, entrepreneurial skills and capacities, as well as skilled and motivated workers, are fundamental to turning remote cultural sites into places of new attractiveness. Furthermore, the involvement of many stakeholders can facilitate and enhance the impact of circular economy approaches.

Human-centred tourism is based on the enhancement of human capital, including skills and entrepreneurial capacity, empowering local communities to take advantage of 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, human-centred tourism is linked to fair and responsible tourism behaviour, paying attention to contributing to places' sustainable development and avoiding exploitative behaviour.

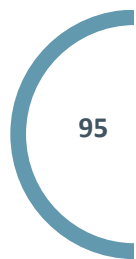
Slow and circular cultural tourism is offered to valorise less known destinations and as a way to balance the asymmetries caused by seasonal tourism and over-tourism in specific destinations.

Legislation and strategies for circular cultural destinations

Often the complex and miscellaneous legislation and regulation on topics such as trade, industrial development, competition, nature and environment, cultural heritage, safety, health and consumer protection, set at local, national and European levels, represents an obstacle to the definition of local goals to develop sustainable tourism.

Moreover, frequently, the political, legislative, and regulative frameworks for the development of tourism reflect a traditional model in support of economic growth measured in terms of GDP and jobs that does not consider the importance of the sustainability of the sector. On the contrary, the Be.CULTOUR Mirror Ecosystems have benefitted from local legislation or political strategies in favour of the establishment of human-centred circular cultural touristic destinations. Some examples of this process are:

In March 2021, the Welsh Government of **Cyngor Gwynedd** published its *"Beyond recycling Strategy"* with the aim of keeping resources in use for as long as possible to avoid waste. The goals are one planet resource use, becoming zero waste by 2050, Net Zero emissions, maximising economic potential and making resource efficiency part of Welsh culture. These circular economy principles are front, and centre to their culture and heritage-based tourism offer as they

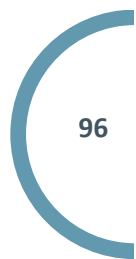


work with local heritage sites, communities and visitors to consider resource use, zero waste and emissions, especially through sustainable travel.

In 2011, the **Kuldiga** Old Town Preservation and Development Plan was approved, which comprehensively includes various aspects of the preservation of cultural and historical heritage, integrating them into the sections of economic development, environmental protection, tourism and cultural development.

In the **Region of Thessaly**, the Integrated Spatial Investment of the Northern Sporades Islands is a development strategy for the spatial unity of the Northern Sporades Islands in Thessaly. It incorporates an integrated approach, with emphasis on the sustainable development of local economies and societies, resources, increasing employment and improving the quality of life of residents and visitors of the three islands of the Northern Sporades through a new development planning framework.

In **Veneto Region**, two regional laws are dedicated to slow and green tourism: one for cycle tourism and one for building cycling routes. In compliance with these regulations, the Regional Strategic Plan for Tourism, annually updated, includes specific “slow and green” actions addressed to cycle tourism, routes and equestrian tourism. This plan is drafted with an open and participatory approach that involves local stakeholders. Moreover, there are specific management plans for the different areas of the region, which take into account all tourist aspects: from education to market promotion, including international relationship and networking.



7. Next steps

Based on the exchanges and the information gathered, ERRIN will streamline the mirror ecosystems' involvement in other Be.CULTOUR WPs: WP1 (human-centred data management system) through exploration and validation of the evaluation framework and data management systems; WP2 (guidance for improved use of ESIF) providing information to Community members as well as inviting them to review and validate innovative financial solutions proposed by the project; WP3 through the participation of mirror ecosystems' representatives in the Hackathon co-creation workshop in Brussels for the development of innovative solutions, and facilitating knowledge and potential transfer of these solutions in mirror regions; finally, further developing the peer-learning scheme in WP4 to share common challenges and barriers to circular cultural tourism and viable ways to overcome them, based on pilots experimentations and overall project research methods and tools developed.

Webpages dedicated to each mirror ecosystem have been developed and progressively updated, following up with the mirror regions' activities.

Moreover, in January 2023, following the Be.CULTOUR Policy Learning Lab held in September 2022, four Be.CULTOUR Working Groups have been set up to:

- **Facilitate knowledge and replication** in mirror ecosystems of the **methodology** developed and Implemented by Pilot Heritage Sites to co-develop strategic Action Plans for circular and human-centred cultural tourism, sharing workshops results and resources, as well as facilitating peer-learning, experiences exchange and mentoring support;
- **Foster the direct engagement of local networks in the Be.CULTOUR Community**, facilitating the ideation and implementation of circular cultural tourism actions, projects and initiatives at local level inspired by international experiences and good/best practices;
- Create **thematic hubs** where mirrors and pilots can **share news and opportunities, enhance the transferability of best practices, collaborate and make connections within and beyond their local networks**;
- Strengthen **collaborative innovation networks** within and beyond local cultural destinations, fostering European regional, macro-regional and cross-border cultural cooperation with a focus on the innovation areas of the project;
- **Learn about innovative solutions and funding/financing opportunities** in the field of circular and cultural tourism directly shared by Be.CULTOUR Community members;

- **Progressively enlarge and consolidate the Be.CULTOUR community** and share the project outcomes with external stakeholders.

The four Working Groups are in line with the topics emerging from the analysis of characteristics and challenges of mirror ecosystems, and highlighted in the conclusions of this document:

- WG 1. Circular economy in cultural tourism: Creative, Sustainable, Beautiful destinations
- WG 2. Digitalisation & Smart Destination Management for Circular Cultural Tourism
- WG 3. Enhancing the Human Dimension of Circular Cultural Tourism
- WG 4. Entrepreneurial ecosystem, Innovative Business and Financial Models for Circular Cultural Tourism

Further details on the working groups and overall activities engaging pilot and mirror ecosystems in the Be.CULTOUR Community and the related activities, fostering knowledge sharing, replication and cooperation, will be outlined in the D4.4 Report of the Peer-learning Scheme.



Acronyms

[AMA]	[Arts Marketing Association]
[DKMT]	[Euroregional Agency Danube-Criş-Mureş-Tisa Regional Cooperation]
[FRH]	[Future for Religious Heritage]
[LF2018]	[Leeuwarden-Friesland European Capital of Culture 2018]
[NWRDA]	[North-West Regional Development Agency]
[REI]	[Registro Eredità Immateriali]
[REN]	[Renewable Energy Regions Network]
[RECEVIN]	[European Wine Cities network]
[SDS]	[Savonlinna Development Services Ltd.]
[RIS3]	[Research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation]
[UNESCO]	[United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization]

