Be.CULTOUR:

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

HORIZON 2020
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Report of policy roundtable on sustainable and circular cultural tourism

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Dissemination Level

☒	**PU:**	Public
☐	**CO:**	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

Abstract

This 'Report of policy roundtable on sustainable and circular cultural tourism' results from the policy workshop organised in July 2022 in Lisbon and the policy round table organised in October 2022 by the European Commission (DG RTD and REA) with six EU funded projects under the Horizon 2020 Call H2020-SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2019-2020: SmartCulTour, Impactour, Spot, Textour, Incultum and Be.CULTOUR. These projects gathered to discuss the advancements of the respective researches and particularly the possible implications for European policies on sustainable and cultural tourism. The report contains the main findings, outcomes and proposed policy recommendations regarding three main areas: (i) EU Policy and Europeanization, (ii) Research and Innovation, and (iii) Sustainability and Infrastructure.

This report was elaborated based also on the results of the Policy Learning Lab held with Be.CULTOUR pilot and mirror ecosystems' stakeholders in Brussels, September 2022. The topics and results of the Policy Learning Lab were shared with the other EU funded projects, contributing to a common understanding of the main challenges and possible solutions towards a more sustainable, circular and resilient European cultural tourism ecosystem.

The full report is available here: Policymaking recommendation def.pdf (becultour.eu)

1.1 Partners involved in the document

Participant No	Participant organisation name	Short Name	Check if involved
1 Coordinator	CONSIGLIO NAZIONALE DELLE RICERCHE, Institute of Heritage Science	CNR	X
1.1	University of Naples Federico II – DiARC (Linked Third Party)	UNINA	
2	European Regions Research and Innovation Network	ERRIN	X
3	ICLEI Europe – Local governments for Sustainability	ICLEI	
4	Iniziativa Cube S.r.l.	INI	X
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 turn into a "value extractive" industry, generating negative environmental, social and cultural impacts on local communities and ecosystems. This project will develop specific strategies to promote an understanding of cultural tourism, which moves away from a "stop-and-go" consumer-oriented approach towards one that puts humans and circular economy models at its centre, paying attention to nature, communities and cultural diversity. "Place", intended as the *genius loci*, the ancient spirit of the site expressing its "intrinsic value" and "people" as co-creators of its uniqueness, culture, art, tradition, folklore, productivity, spirituality, as well as its "time space routine", are the focus of Be.CULTOUR, which aims at realizing a longer-term development project for the pilot areas involved.

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 300 innovators (which includes regional authorities and municipalities, clusters and associations, museums and tourist boards, entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, citizens, researchers, practitioners as well as project partners) in 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. The policy report

This 'Report of policy roundtable on sustainable and circular cultural tourism' results from the policy workshop organised in July 2022 in Lisbon and the policy round table organised in October 2022 by the European Commission (DG RTD and REA) with six EU funded projects under the Horizon 2020 Call H2020-SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2019-2020: SmartCulTour, Impactour, Spot, Textour, Incultum and Be.CULTOUR. These projects gathered to discuss the advancements of the respective researches and particularly the possible implications for European policies on sustainable and cultural tourism. The report contains the main findings, outcomes and proposed policy recommendations regarding three main areas: (i) EU Policy and Europeanization, (ii) Research and Innovation, and (iii) Sustainability and Infrastructure.

Particularly, Be.CULTOUR contributed in the definition of cultural Europeanisation and the instruments that could convey the European values and identity within communities, such as European Heritage Label and European Cultural Routes, highlighting the role of cultural heritage and cultural tourism as a vehicle to make European communities meet in a common space of shared identity and values. Also, Be.CULTOUR specifically contributed to identify innovative financing instruments which can help overcoming several barriers that prevent investment in cultural tourism in the perspective of the circular economy: lack of knowledge, decision-making, lack of incentives, limited community engagement, balancing cultural significance and economic viability, commercial risk and uncertainty, technical difficulties etc. A Revolving Circular Impact Fund in line with principles and requirements of the EU Taxonomy was discussed during the round table and introduced in the report, along with the need of adopting a "use-of-proceeds" approach in the design of the financial instruments, and the need of developing impact assessment of the investments to ensure effectiveness of results.

Finally, the innovation areas and key topics of Be.CULTOUR were discussed and introduced in this policy report, elaborating on the results of the Policy Learning Lab held with Be.CULTOUR pilot and mirror ecosystems' stakeholders in Brussels, September 2022. Specific considerations were highlighted from Be.CULTOUR regarding: sustainability and circularity; human capital development and capacity building strategies, the role of arts and creativity in tourism; entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, innovation capacity, institutional capacity and support, networks and connections; the need of developing entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems especially in remote and less-known areas; the role of cultural heritage in stimulating the recognition and regeneration of shared identity and values in local communities; the need of enhancing the capacity of cooperating and collaborating between different actors, highlighting

the cases in which local communities developed as a territorial "enterprise", such as "community enterprises", community cooperatives and foundations, re-generating trust and attractiveness; finally, the project highlighted the need for remote and less-known cultural sites aiming at becoming attractive destinations for sustainable and circular cultural tourism to find innovative solutions and increase investments to realise high-quality infrastructure, including digital infrastructure, sustainable mobility systems and tourism services oriented to circularity, in line with the European Transition Pathway for Tourism and towards circular cities and regions (e.g. circular strategies in accommodation, food chains, transport, energy, water management, etc.), for example supporting green certifications / eco-labels in the cultural tourism sector, circular procurement, sustainable mobility, resources sharing networks, biodiversity enhancement, energy communities, traditional landscape maintenance.

The topics and results of the Be.CULTOUR 1st Policy Learning Lab were thus shared with the other EU funded projects, contributing to a common understanding of the main challenges and possible solutions towards a more sustainable, circular and resilient European cultural tourism ecosystem.

Within the Be.CULTOUR process of knowledge generation, this report represented an intermediate step towards the finalisation of Be.CULTOUR policy recommendations, integrating inputs from the entire Be.CULTOUR Community (6 pilot, 16 mirror and 3 advisors ecosystems in Europe) collected during the first Policy Learning Lab held in September 2022, as well as a needed occasion for discussion, knowledge sharing and debate with other European projects on cultural tourism.

The concept note of Be.CULTOUR Policy Recommendations will be discussed again and finalised with the entire project community in September 2023 during the 2nd Policy Learning Lab.

It is advisable that this policy paper will be taken into consideration as a result of six EU funded projects, representing a large investment in knowledge, research and innovation from the European Commission.

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3. Full report online

The full report is available here: Policymaking recommendation def.pdf (becultour.eu)[1]

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[1] Spelled website link:

https://becultour.eu/sites/default/files/2023-06/Policymaking%20recommendation%20def.pdf

Acronyms

[CT]	[Cultural Tourism]
[EC]	[European Commission]
[EU]	[European Union]
[H2020]	[Horizon 2020]
[NWRDA]	[North-West Regional Development Agency]
[PO]	[Project Officer]
[REN]	[Renewable Energy Regions Network]
[REA]	[Research Executive Agency]
[R&I]	[Research & Innovation]
[RIS3]	[Research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation]
[SME]	[Small & Medium sized Enterprise]