



## Be.CULTOUR:

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



#### HORIZON 2020

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### Be.CULTOUR Guidebook “Beyond Tourism”

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#### Disclaimer

The contents of this deliverable are the sole responsibility of one or more Parties of Be.CULTOUR consortium and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the Agency REA and European Commission under the European Union’s Horizon 2020.

#### Dissemination Level

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- PU:** Public
- CO:** Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)
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## Abstract

This guidebook is a culmination of the three-year Be.CULTOUR project, co-authored in collaboration with Pilot Heritage Sites (PHS). Its content is influenced by discussions with European heritage and tourism experts who participated in the Breakfast@Sustainability event titled "What is 'circular cultural tourism,' and how can it contribute to sustainable regional development in Europe?" The guidebook advances circular tourism practices from diverse viewpoints, elucidated through narratives shared by six Be.CULTOUR PHS. The illustrated practices, ambitions, and co-created dreams with stakeholders primarily target identified local needs, particularly in remote areas, but are adaptable to other regions. As experiential accounts, our stories cater to a diverse readership within the tourism sector. To facilitate the implementation of innovative actions promoting a circular cultural tourism movement across Europe, each story is enriched with specific guiding keywords, lessons learned, and varying time perspectives (short-term up to 2 years, mid-term 2-5 years, and long-term as part of strategic planning for decades). Beyond showcasing the distinctive natural and cultural assets of destinations, the guidebook delves into the narratives of historical figures (note: statements for them are fictional quotes crafted by project partners) and introduces current heritage stakeholders. These figures act as witnesses to changes, providing insights into the transformation and evolution of the areas.

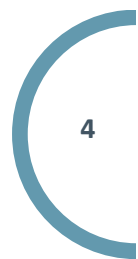
Ultimately, with input from experienced partners in the Be.CULTOUR consortium, the guidebook seeks to inspire stakeholders of European heritage sites (and beyond) to formulate their Action Plans for circular cultural tourism. It underscores that moving beyond conventional cultural tourism is a stride toward the future, where circular practices and sustainable approaches mold the tourism industry, contributing to a more resilient and inclusive society. All sections of the guidebook present various definitions and concepts beyond sustainable tourism, elucidate the Be.CULTOUR methodology, outline key project assumptions, feature voices from local partners, provide recommendations for initiating innovative tourism solutions, and offer additional examples and resources explaining the essence of embracing circular practices motivated by unique cultural and natural heritage.

## 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	x
4	Iniziativa Cube S.r.l.	INI	
5	Uppsala University	UU	x
6	Haute Ecole ICHEC - ECAM - ISFSC	ICHEC	
7	Open University of the Netherlands	OUNL	
8	APT Basilicata	APT-BAS	x
9	Diputación Provincial de Teruel	PGT	x
10	Larnaca and Famagusta Districts Development Agency	ANETEL	x
11	Laona Foundation	LAONA	x
12	Västra Götaland region	VGR	x
13	Stalna Konferencija Gradova I Opstina	SCTM	x
14	Agentia Pentru Dezvoltare Regionala Nord-Est	NERDA	x
15	Verde e Moldova	VEM	x

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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. Background information

The Be.CULTOUR Guidebook serves as a user-friendly and accessible learning document, designed with the intention of being easily followed by a diverse audience from the tourism sector. Accessible through the project homepage, the PDF has been disseminated through various project channels, including social media platforms. The guidebook is strategically crafted to be visually pleasant, featuring a storyline complemented by visual narration to enhance the overall learning experience. This emphasis on visual elements aims to make the learning process engaging and effective, ensuring that users can absorb information in a captivating manner.

To access the guidebook, interested individuals can follow the provided link<sup>1</sup>, and for a glimpse of its visual appeal, a selection of screenshots has been included on the next pages. The Be.CULTOUR Guidebook stands as a testament to the project's commitment to creating educational resources that are both informative about the methodology supporting innovative processes addressing circular cultural tourism and visually appealing.

The Be.CULTOUR Guidebook includes 35 pages, 18 pictures, 7 infographics, 2 illustrations and 6 portraits of “witnesses of circular change”.

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<sup>1</sup> Link to the page with the Be.CULTOUR Guidebook: <https://becultour.eu/becultour-guidebook>



# Annex 1 Screenshots from the Be.CULTOUR Guidebook

COVER PAGE (p. 1)



VISUAL NOTES FROM BREAKFAST@SUSTAINABILITY EVENT ON 5<sup>th</sup> OF OCTOBER 2023 (p. 13)

## LISTENING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE. BREAKFAST@SUSTAINABILITY.<sup>1</sup>



What is 'circular cultural tourism' and how can it contribute to sustainable regional development in Europe?

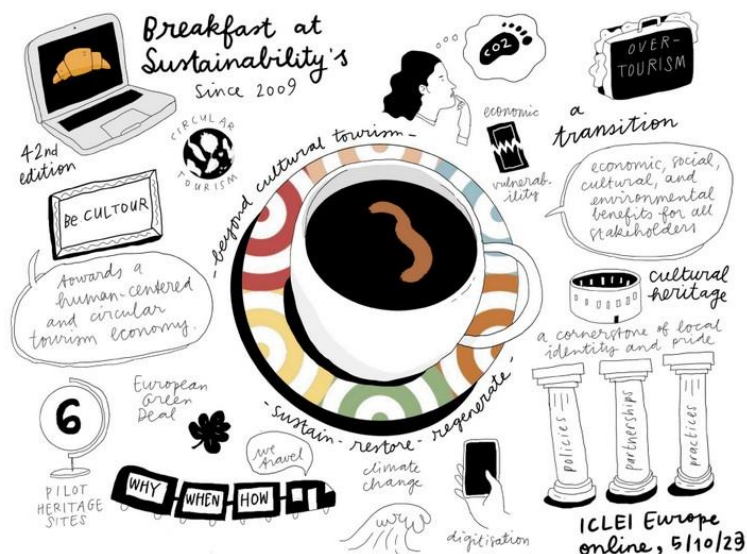
### Speakers:

Kirsti Ala-Mutka (DG GROW), Anne Grady (European Parliament), Gianluca Saba (Comune di Genova, representative of the UAEU Sustainable Tourism Partnership), Antonia Gravagnuolo (National Research Council of Italy), Maria Kapari (Joy of Culture), Minna Takala (Visit Häme)

### Moderator:

Stephania Xydia (ICLEI Europe)

<sup>1</sup> B@S occurs several times throughout the year and centres around ongoing discussions on urban sustainability in Europe. With participants and speakers predominantly engaged from Brussels, B@S stands out as one of ICLEI's most environmentally conscious and impactful [event series](#).



INVOLVED PILOT HERITAGE SITES (p. 16):



EXAMPLE OF LOCAL STORY WITH SPECIFIC GUIDELINES (p. 17):

**LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE**  
**ARAGON, SPAIN**

**From Rocks to Plates: the territorial brand of the Río Martín Cultural Park in Teruel fuses culture, landscape and local flavours.**

Nestled in the heart of Aragon, a hidden gem in Spain, the territory of Teruel holds the prestigious UNESCO's World Heritage designation for its renowned "Rock Art of the Mediterranean Basin". The Río Martín Cultural Park offers one of the most important concentrations of rock-shelters with prehistoric art in Spain, integrated into a landscape of great ecological diversity. A hiking network guides visitors through canyons, ravines, archaeological and paleontological sites and picturesque villages, offering a captivating journey through 300 million years of history. Fossils of plants, reptiles, dinosaurs, with their footprints marked on the rocks, serve as relics of a bygone era, and fossils of marine animal ancestors whisper tales about the seas that once covered this remarkable region.

Local authorities are steering efforts to safeguard this unique cultural heritage as a pivotal element in the local rural development strategy, „Wellbeing and Quality of Life“. However, daunting demographic and territorial challenges threaten this rich legacy, compounded by Teruel's role in the coal mining transition. In this context, the cultural tourism sector and the hospitality industry emerge as a linchpin for the province's socioeconomic development.



**Pepe Royo, General Manager of the Cultural Park Rio Martin**



*"The creation of the territorial brand marks a significant stride in refining our tourism offerings. It fosters improved communication with producers and local shops, enabling our visitors to elevate their experience and, consequently, amplifying our positive social and economic impact, all the while fortifying our local identity."*



Image: The Cultural Park Of The Rio Martín

**Guiding ambitions:** Holistic experience of tourism, Marketing strategy for circular ambitions, Focus on products reflecting local spirit.

**How to trigger regenerative change towards circular cultural tourism:** try to integrate circularity with the sensorial perception and the transformative experience that cultural and natural heritage offers residents and visitors.

Once the assets are recognized you can implement similar actions in a short-term perspective.



ANOTHER INSPIRATIONAL STORY (p. 29):

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE  
ROMANIA-MOLDOVA CROSS-BORDER REGION



same time. This majestic animal has been revered by both Romanians and Moldovans for centuries, symbolising power, independence, and pride. You will find it adorning the flag of Moldova and as a recurring pattern in Romanian folklore tradition. Today, the reintroduction of this highly beneficial wild graser, a result of years-long conservation efforts, is contributing to the restoration of trophic cascades that support the development of self-regulating, biodiverse ecosystems. At the same time, it opens up new pathways for sustainable local development, shaping a destination for high-quality tourism.

pathways supported by both physical and digital infrastructure, as well as thematic events. New trails enhanced with wooden benches and informative panels are inviting adventurers to experience the benefits of "forest bathing": to allow stress to melt away and the mindful connection with the environment bring about serenity, peace of mind, and profound self-discovery. For the most adventurous, Bison Land Heritage introduces an innovative mobile app for visitors to embark on a treasure hunt experience. The app combines outdoor fun and holistic environmental education for young and old, taking visitors through paths, stories and landscapes hiding surprising treasures.

The Bison Land Heritage initiative is set to bring together the cultural, natural and spiritual aspects of the cross-border region in a network of

On the other side of the Romanian-Moldovan border, rooted in the shared essence of culture,



"Our heritage is part of our identity and allowing it to falter means losing ourselves. Let us treasure it, care for it and pass it on to future generations just as it was passed down to us."

Stephen the Great, prince of Moldavia (1457-1504)



RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO INTRODUCE CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM (p. 32):

