



Be.CULTOUR:

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



HORIZON 2020

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Dissemination Level

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- PU:** Public
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Abstract

The present document falls within the project work package dedicated to Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication (WP5).

It provides collections of material and videos related to events such as conferences, laboratories, workshops, and webinars held during the BE.CULTOUR project. These conference sets of documents and videos show how information and data of the project activities were shared and promoted for dissemination purposes.



Partners involved in the document

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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 developed 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 realised a longer-term development project for the pilot areas involved.

The overarching goal of Be.CULTOUR was 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 co-developed 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 were 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 co-created innovative place-based solutions for human-centred development through sustainable and circular cultural tourism.

Collaborative “Heritage Innovation Networks” were 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 defined clear cultural tourism-related challenges requiring innovation that served as the basis for the collaboration with the 16 additional “Mirror innovation ecosystems”. Mutual learning and up-scaling of project methodology were 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 helix approach to co-design, Be.CULTOUR resulted in 6 community-led Action Plans and 18 innovative human-centred solutions which 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 have progressively built Be.CULTOUR sustainability by broadening the interregional collaboration while anchoring it to relevant EU initiatives and other collaborators in the academic, business and institutional realms.

1.1. Be.CULTOUR specific objectives

The scope of the Be.CULTOUR project was 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 deepening 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

The Be.CULTOUR project, titled "Beyond CULTural TOURism: heritage innovation networks as drivers of Europeanisation towards a human-centred and circular tourism economy," is an ambitious initiative funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. This project seeks to transform cultural tourism in Europe by promoting sustainable and circular models that emphasize human-centered development, community engagement, and environmental sustainability.

Cultural tourism offers substantial opportunities for economic growth and community development but also presents challenges, including potential negative environmental, social, and cultural impacts if not managed properly. Be.CULTOUR addresses these issues by shifting from a traditional, consumer-oriented tourism model to one that values cultural heritage, promotes community participation, and embraces circular economy principles.

The impact of Be.CULTOUR is evident through its extensive participation in conferences, seminars, and other events, which have been pivotal in disseminating the project's findings, fostering collaboration, and driving innovation in cultural tourism.

Be.CULTOUR has actively engaged in numerous high-profile events, beginning with its own kick-off meeting, which set the stage for the project's ambitious agenda. This meeting brought together representatives from all partner organizations to discuss the project's objectives, methodologies, and expected outcomes.

One of the significant participations was at the New European Bauhaus Festival, where Be.CULTOUR hosted a side event titled "Energy Beauty Participation: Cultural Heritage Adaptive Reuse as a Driver of Circular Regeneration and Sustainable Regional Development." This event featured discussions on the integration of cultural heritage and sustainability, with contributions from notable speakers such as Professor Luigi Fusco Girard and Andrew Potts from ICOMOS / Climate Heritage initiative, emphasizing the role of cultural heritage in addressing climate change. Be.CULTOUR's involvement in the "Cultural Synergies" event, in collaboration with the Culture and Cultural Heritage Partnership of the EU Urban Agenda, highlighted the intersection of cultural heritage and urban development. This event showcased how local communities can benefit from valorizing their cultural and historical wealth, promoting sustainable cultural tourism practices.

The project also participated in the "Discover North-East" conference in Romania and the "Re-Think Circular Economy Forum" in Naples, sharing insights on sustainable cultural tourism and the importance of circular economy principles. At the "ECTN Conference 2021" in Athens and the



"COP26" in Glasgow, Be.CULTOUR presented its innovative approaches to cultural tourism, emphasizing the need for sustainable practices in the tourism sector.

In addition to these events, Be.CULTOUR organized a series of Policy Learning Labs, which included study visits to successful cultural tourism initiatives in regions like Limburg, Netherlands, and Sciacca, Italy. These labs provided a platform for stakeholders to exchange knowledge, discuss challenges, and draft policy recommendations for promoting circular cultural tourism.

The project's extensive webinar series further facilitated knowledge exchange and dissemination. Topics ranged from community-led entrepreneurship and creative tourism to innovative marketing strategies for lesser-known destinations. These webinars featured prominent speakers from academia, policy, and industry, providing practical insights into implementing sustainable tourism strategies.

By actively participating in these conferences, seminars, and events, Be.CULTOUR has significantly contributed to the dialogue on sustainable and circular cultural tourism. The project's comprehensive and collaborative activities have fostered a deeper understanding of sustainable practices, encouraged regional collaboration, and highlighted the importance of human-centered approaches in transforming cultural heritage sites into vibrant, resilient, and inclusive destinations.

Overall, Be.CULTOUR represents a significant advancement in the field of cultural tourism, demonstrating the transformative potential of sustainable and circular models. The project's engagement in various events has been crucial in promoting its innovative solutions and ensuring the long-term impact of its initiatives.



3. Be.CULTOUR Kick off Meeting, March 2021

On March 4th, the meeting started at 09:30 CET with a welcome and introduction by Massimo Clemente and Luigi Fusco Girard, followed by an overview of the Be.CULTOUR research project presented by Antonia Gravagnuolo, highlighting the concept, the methodology and the work plan of Be.CULTOUR. It continued with a series of presentations from all the partners involved in the project, such as National Research Council - Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (CNR IRISS), ERRIN, ICLEI, INIZIATIVA, Uppsala University, ICHEC Brussels, Open University of the Netherlands, Aragon Region, Larnaca and Famagusta Districts Development Agency, Laona Foundation, Vastra Gotaland Region, SKGO municipalities network, North-East Romania, Verde e Moldova. After a short break, the six pilot regions, such as, Basilicata (Italy), Aragon (Spain), Larnaca (Cyprus), Västra Götaland (Sweden), (Vojvodina) Serbia, and the Northeastern cross-border area of Romania and Moldova, shared their presentations. The first day of event concluded with a discussion led by Jorge Nieto-Angulo from the European Commission.

The event of March 5th, focused more on an in-depth overview of the project. After a welcome introduction by Antonia Gravagnuolo, CNR, Jorge Nieto-Angulo from the European Commission and adviser of the project, shared a more detailed overview of the projects, including the call and the topic of the context, the objectives and the task and the grant management.



Figure 1 - Presentation of Pilot Heritage Sites

The conversation, then, was led by Be.CULTOUR partners, where they shared a detailed work plan which included the description of main activities and deliverables highlighting the link with other WPs and potential clarification. Alessandra Marasco, CNR, Peter Nijkamp and Karima Kourtiti, Open University of the Netherlands, presented the innovative statistical methods, tools and indicators for sustainable tourism impact assessment. Aliona Lupu, Iniziativa Cube, and Jermina Stanojev, Uppsala Univeristet, shared insights about the creations of synergies and efficient use of ESIFs and other EU funds for neighboring regions for sustainable cultural tourism, followed by a presentation let by Cristina Garzillo, Alexandru Matei and Stepahnia Xydia, ICLEI and Ruba Saleh, ICHEC, of the methodology for the co-creation of human-centred innovations and action plans for sustainable tourism, hackathon and workshop. The agenda continued with a presentation by Ilaria D’Auria and Gaia Marotta, ERRIN, about building the Be.CULTOUR community of interest of European and neighboring regions, followed by the exploitation of Be.CULTOUR innovative solutions, dissemination and communication, and the accelerator programme, introduced by Ruba Saleh, ICHEC, and Antonia Gravagnuolo, CNR. The event concluded with a detailed presentation by Antonia Gravagnuolo, CNR, on the project management and the ethics requirement.

Link to the agenda: https://www.iriss.cnr.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Horizon-2020-Be.CULTOUR-Kick-off-Meeting-Agenda_for-web.pdf

4. Presentation event on Open Call for Mirror Innovation Ecosystems, April 2021

In the context of Be.CULTOUR, ERRIN published an open call to join the Be.CULTOUR Community. Local and regional representatives committed to shaping the future of cultural tourism had the opportunity to benefit from a fully-funded peer-learning scheme following the pilot/mirror approach.

Via quarterly community conversations, dedicated interviews, tailored webinars, and offline learning labs (held in Brussels in 2022 and Naples in 2023), the community members interacted closely with six pilot ecosystems committed to fostering regional development through circular cultural tourism.

The open call and peer-learning program were presented on Tuesday, 13th April 2021, from 14:00 to 16:15 CET, in the framework of a ERRIN event on "Creating Destinations After a Global Pandemic: The New Competitive Advantage of Remote Areas," focused on the Horizon 2020 Be.CULTOUR project. This initiative aims to foster cultural tourism in remote areas through peer-learning schemes, emphasizing sustainable and innovative tourism practices.

AGENDA

14:00	Welcome & Introduction <i>by Ilaria d'Auria, Project & Outreach Manager, European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN)</i>
14:10	Inspirational keynote speech: The new competitive advantage of under-exploited regions as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic <i>Emma Taveri, Chief Visionary Officer, Destination Makers</i>
14:30	Beyond Cultural Tourism: innovative approaches to regional development via cultural tourism <i>Antonia Gravagnuolo, Horizon 2020 Be.CULTOUR coordinator, CNR-IRISS</i>
14:40	Coffee break
Beyond Cultural Tourism: What's in for regions?	
14:50	How to join the Be.CULTOUR Community? Apply to the call for local and regional innovation ecosystems <i>by Gaia Marotta, Project and Policy Officer, ERRIN</i>
15:05	Q&A session - with the other consortium partners
15:20	Panel discussion: the role of the regional networks and innovation ecosystems in boosting a more resilient and sustainable tourism economy <i>Moderated by Ilaria d'Auria, Project & Outreach Manager, ERRIN</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cristina Nuñez, Coordinator of NECSTOUR – European Regions for Competitive and Sustainable Tourism</i> • <i>Sander Munster, Coordinator of the EU Interregional Partnership on Virtual and Smart Cultural Tourism</i> • <i>Tim Fairhurst, Secretary General – European Tourism Association (ETOA)</i> • <i>Xavier Lechien, President – European Destinations of Excellence Network</i>
16:00	Conclusions by Antonia Gravagnuolo, Horizon 2020 Be.CULTOUR Coordinator, CNR-IRISS
16:15	End of meeting

Figure 2 – Agenda of ERRIN presentation event for mirror innovation ecosystems, April 2021



The event began with Ilaria d’Auria, Project & Outreach Manager at ERRIN, introducing the agenda and participants. Emma Taveri, Chief Visionary Officer at Destination Makers, delivered the keynote speech on the competitive advantage gained by under-exploited regions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Taveri stressed the importance of reimagining tourism strategies to attract tourists seeking less crowded, more authentic experiences. She highlighted the potential of digital transformation, sustainability, and local engagement as key factors in this new tourism landscape. Following Taveri, Antonia Gravagnuolo, Horizon 2020 Be.CULTOUR Coordinator from CNR-IRISS, presented innovative approaches to regional development via cultural tourism. Gravagnuolo explained the project's objectives, emphasizing the need to preserve and enhance cultural heritage while promoting sustainable tourism. She showcased pilot regions where the project is being implemented, demonstrating the potential of community-based tourism to drive regional development. Gravagnuolo highlighted the significance of collaboration among local stakeholders, policymakers, and tourists in creating a resilient and inclusive tourism ecosystem. After a brief coffee break, Gaia Marotta, Project and Policy Officer at ERRIN, discussed how to join the Be.CULTOUR Community and apply for the call for local and regional innovation ecosystems. Marotta detailed the steps required for regions to build and nurture ecosystems that support innovation in tourism. She provided examples of successful initiatives and outlined the necessary actions to create environments where local innovation can thrive.

The event included a Q&A session with other consortium partners, providing an opportunity for participants to engage with experts and ask questions about the project's implementation and benefits.

A panel discussion followed, moderated by Ilaria d’Auria. The panel explored the role of regional networks and innovation ecosystems in fostering a resilient and sustainable tourism economy. Panellists included Cristina Nuñez, Coordinator of NECSTOUR; Sander Munster, Coordinator of the EU Interregional Partnership on Virtual and Smart Cultural Tourism; Tim Fairhurst, Secretary General of the European Tourism Association; and Xavier Lechien, President of the European Destinations of Excellence Network. They discussed the importance of regional cooperation and shared insights on boosting the tourism sector in lesser-known destinations.

The event concluded with remarks from Antonia Gravagnuolo, summarizing the discussions and reinforcing the importance of collaboration and innovation in promoting sustainable tourism in remote areas. Gravagnuolo emphasized the need for continued efforts to create resilient and attractive tourism destinations that can thrive in the post-pandemic era.

During the presentation of the open call and peer-learning program, participants had the opportunity to receive first-hand information, ask live questions, and engage in discussions with



panellists from additional networks and partnerships, such as NECSTOUR, the EU Interregional Partnership on Sustainable and Digital Tourism, the European Tourism Organization Association, and the European Destinations of Excellence Network.

For more detailed information, please visit the [ERRIN event page](#)



5. Be.CULTOUR Community Conversations, October 2021-June 2023

Be.CULTOUR Community Conversations were online meetings that brought together members of the Community of Interest and the Community of Practice within the Be.CULTOUR project. These interactive sessions served as platforms for participants to learn and share challenges and good practices concerning circular cultural tourism.

The project initiated its series of Community Conversations on October 26, 2021, with the **First Community Conversation**. This session focused on introducing the circular approach in cultural tourism, presenting project activities, and discussing the cases of the Pilot Heritage Sites. It also served as a platform for the Mirrors to introduce themselves and share their expectations regarding innovation areas and peer learning activities.

The **Second Community Conversation** took place on February 24, 2022, and delved into insights from the first local workshop while emphasizing the importance of including local communities in the decision-making and implementation processes of circular cultural tourism strategies. Participants learned from the experiences of the six Pilot Heritage Site regions and discussed two good practices from the Community of Interest.





Figure 3 - Third Community Conversation

On April 28, 2022, the **Third Community Conversation** explored how to align bottom-up community plans with municipal, regional, or national strategies. The event featured speakers from both municipal and regional levels who shared their strategies and practices. This session facilitated an active discussion on the integration of local Action Plans into existing strategies and the challenges encountered in this process.

The **Fourth Community Conversation**, held on July 8, 2022, addressed how heritage sites were rethinking and promoting circular cultural tourism in the first 'post-COVID' summer. The session included presentations from the Pilot Heritage Sites and members of the community of interest, who shared their strategies and actions for the upcoming tourism season. This conversation also highlighted the importance of sustainable tourism practices and community engagement.

The **Fifth Community Conversation** and Christmas MeetUp were held on December 15, 2022. This festive gathering focused on the progress and needs of the Pilot Heritage Sites, the launch of the Be.CULTOUR working groups, and a discussion on winter traditions and tourism strategies in various regions. Participants shared their approaches to promoting local winter traditions and cultural heritage.

The **Sixth Community Conversation** and MeetUp occurred on June 13, 2023, focusing on financing opportunities and the presentation of a draft financial toolkit. This session provided updates on the implementation of local action plans by the Pilot Heritage Sites and showcased good practices from the community of interest. The discussion included the introduction of a newly launched financial toolkit aimed at supporting circular cultural tourism initiatives.

These Community Conversations have been instrumental in fostering knowledge exchange, collaboration, and collective problem-solving among the participants, driving positive change and enabling the development of more sustainable and inclusive tourism practices within the Be.CULTOUR project.



6. Cultural Synergies: Urban Agenda for the EU, November 2021

On 23 November 2021, the Be.CULTOUR project hosted an event on "Cultural Synergies" in collaboration with "The Culture and Cultural Heritage Partnership of the EU Urban Agenda", setting the stage for a deeper examination of how cultural heritage can intersect with urban development to foster enriched communities.

The "Culture and Cultural Heritage Partnership (CCHP) of the EU Urban Agenda" aims to identify solutions that improve the management of the historic building environment and promote culture and the quality of urban landscapes.

The webinar, moderated by Alexandru Matei, ICLEI Europe, focused on the similarities between the two initiatives, highlighting how local communities can benefit from valorising heritage and culture. This exploration highlighted the potential of local communities to flourish by embracing and valorizing their cultural and historical wealth. Such a discourse underscores the importance of community engagement in the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, suggesting a collaborative approach towards sustainable cultural tourism.



Figure 4 - Poster of Cultural Synergies: Urban Agenda for the EU

Antonia Gravagnuolo, Be.CULTOUR project coordinator and researcher at the IRISS CNR, shed light on the endeavor's dedication to co-creating and piloting human-centered innovations in the realm of circular cultural tourism. This approach not only envisages a sustainable future for tourism but also encourages the active participation of local communities in shaping their cultural narratives.

The conversation was further enriched by insights from coordinator of the partnership and German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community and Sandra Gizdulich, Italian Ministry of Economic Development, presented the experience, actions and achievements of the Culture and Cultural Heritage Partnership. Their contributions underscored the collaborative efforts within the partnership, epitomizing how collective action can lead to meaningful progress in cultural preservation and urban development.

Finally, Carlotta Viviani and Mr Sandro Billi, representing the Municipality of Florence, gave an overview of a specific action related to the management of tourist flows. This case study serves as a tangible example of the discourse in action, demonstrating how strategic planning and management can mitigate the adverse effects of tourism while enhancing the visitor experience.

This discursive event not only celebrated the synergy between cultural heritage and urban planning but also posed critical questions about the future of our cities. It challenged participants to imagine urban spaces where culture and heritage are not just preserved but are active components of the urban ecosystem, contributing to the social, economic, and environmental vitality of communities.

Full recording is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gG_KXir8ZNA

7. New European Bauhaus Festival Side Event, June 2022

Within Be.CULTOUR project on 12 and 13 June 2022 the Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-IRISS) hosted the side-event of the New European Bauhaus Festival “Energy, Beauty, Participation: Cultural Heritage Adaptive Reuse as a driver of Circular Regeneration and Sustainable Regional Development”.

The event consisted of a sharing of results of European-funded research and innovation projects such as H2020 Be.CULTOUR and CLIC, coordinated by the hosting Institution, REFLOW, Open Heritage, as well as other international projects such as Charter and Cultural Heritage in Action, structuring a dialogue with policy makers, entrepreneurs and civil society organisations engaging them in the implementation of the circular human-centred model for urban and territorial regeneration.



Figure 5 - New European Bauhaus Festival Side Event in Naples

The event was opened by Jorge Nieto-Angulo, representing the European Commission / REA. He elaborated on the essence of the New European Bauhaus themes, intricately weaving into his narrative how the Be.CULTOUR project ties seamlessly with this initiative. Following this introduction, the conference floor was graced with the inspiring speeches of Professor Luigi Fusco Girard, Emeritus Professor of Federico II University of Naples, and Andrew Potts from ICOMOS /

Climate Heritage initiative. Their speeches were not merely informative but evoked a sense of urgency and passion. They delved deep into the significance of adopting a circular model for the regeneration of cultural heritage and stressed the immediacy required in addressing climate change from a cultural lens. What was particularly striking about their talks was the emphasis on the untapped potential within the realms of arts, culture, and heritage that could play a pivotal role in steering us towards a climate-resilient future. The discussions set forth a thought-provoking narrative, pushing the boundaries of conventional thinking and inviting the attendees to ponder over the symbiotic relationship between cultural heritage and environmental sustainability.

Full program and recording are available at: <https://becultour.eu/NEB-side-event-Naples>

The recording of the event is also available at:

Part1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qs-vbS0oDCY>

Part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCoq9bedIVw&t=1s>



8. Be.CULTOUR Workshops

8.1. Workshops in pilot heritage sites, January 2023-March 2024

The Be.CULTOUR project employs a human-centred approach to foster sustainable and circular cultural tourism. This methodology prioritizes human experiences, ensuring that local communities' needs and insights are central to the development process. The approach is characterized by its inclusivity, iterative nature, and focus on collaboration. It involves stakeholders at every stage, from problem identification to solution implementation, ensuring that the developed solutions are both innovative and rooted in the actual needs of the communities. Through a series of well-structured workshops, mentoring, and continuous feedback, the project successfully engaged stakeholders, identified local needs and assets, and co-designed Action Plans for each Heritage Pilot Sites (HPS).

Action Plans are critical components of the co-creation process. They were developed in four main phases:

- **Exploration:** This phase involved identifying and understanding the local context, challenges, and opportunities in cultural tourism.
- **Co-design:** During this phase, local communities collaborated to brainstorm and conceptualize potential solutions. This stage was crucial for generating ideas that respond to local needs and incorporate sustainability and circularity principles.
- **Co-development:** In this phase, the initial concepts were developed into actionable plans. Detailed strategies and activities were outlined to achieve the project goals.
- **Deployment:** The final phase focused on implementing the developed Action Plans and monitoring their impact

The co-design phase was particularly significant, as it involved direct input from local stakeholders, ensuring that the solutions were relevant and viable. This phase also incorporated various interactive and collaborative activities, such as workshops, to refine and validate the ideas.

Three local workshops (LWS1, LWS2, LWS3) were conducted at each pilot heritage site to facilitate the co-creation process:

Table 1 - Timeline of Local Workshops

Pilot Heritage Site	LWS1	LWS2	LWS3
Aragon, Spain	09. (online), 12 (in person) 11.2021	09. (online), 12 (in person) 11.2021	31.05. (online), 02.06
Basilicata, Italy	22.11.2021 (in person)	04.05.2022 (in person)	31.05.2022 (in person)
Larnaca, Cyprus	19.-21.11.2021 (in person)	20.03., 16.04.2022 (in person)	25.06.2022 (in person)
Romania-Moldova, Cross-Border Region	08.-09.12.2021 (online)	03.-04.03.2022 (hybrid)	14.-15.06.2022 (in person)
Västra Götaland, Sweden	16.-17.11.2021 (in person)	23.-24.03.2022 (in person)	17.-18.05.2022 (in person)
Vojvodina, Serbia	07. (online), 15-17.11.2021 (in person)	22-23.03.2022, 24-25.03.2022	16.-17.05.2022 (in person)

- **LWS1 (First Local Workshop):** The initial workshop aimed to identify problems and map the strengths within the local cultural heritage. It included several key activities:
 - Interactive Introductions: Participants introduced themselves and shared their motivations for joining the project.
 - Symposium on Local Cultural Heritage: Experts presented insights on local cultural heritage, providing a foundation for discussions.
 - Ecosystem Mapping: Participants identified and mapped the local stakeholders and resources related to cultural tourism.
 - User Journey Mapping with Personas: This activity helped visualize the experiences of different user groups, highlighting areas for improvement and innovation.
 - The primary goal of LWS1 was to establish a community of stakeholders, forming the Be.CULTOUR Heritage Innovation Network.

- **LWS2 (Second Local Workshop):** The second workshop delved deeper into the ideas generated during LWS1. Activities included:
 - Asset Mapping: Participants identified and mapped local cultural and natural assets, uncovering both recognized and hidden potentials.

- World Café Method: This interactive discussion format allowed participants to explore different aspects of cultural tourism in small groups, fostering a rich exchange of ideas.
- **LWS3 (Third Local Workshop):** The final workshop focused on critically analyzing and refining the proposed actions. It utilized the Walt Disney method, where participants role-played as dreamers, realists, and critics to assess the feasibility and impact of their ideas. This method encouraged a balanced view, ensuring that the proposed solutions were both visionary and practical.

Mentoring and peer-learning were integral to the co-creation process. Local coordinators regularly consulted with mentors to tailor methodologies, provide feedback, and ensure alignment with the project's overarching goals. These mentoring sessions helped maintain coherence across different pilot sites and facilitated the sharing of best practices. Additionally, regular feedback sessions were held after MeetUps, allowing consortium partners to stay updated on the project's progress and address any emerging issues collectively.

Following each workshop, partners from the pilot heritage sites submitted detailed reports, including photos and other relevant materials, to ICLEI. These reports documented the workshop outcomes, providing a comprehensive view of the activities and ensuring that all phases of the co-creation process were thoroughly recorded. The progress reports linked the workshop results to the Local Action Plans, highlighting the evolution of ideas and the steps taken toward implementation.

The co-creation process faced several challenges, including coordinating multiple stakeholders with diverse perspectives, maintaining engagement and momentum throughout the project, and addressing practical constraints such as limited resources or logistical issues.

More information about the Be.CULTOUR Hackathon is available on the Be.CULTOUR website. In particular, Deliverable D3.5 – Action Plans and concept solutions for sustainable cultural tourism in pilot heritage sites <https://becultour.eu/results>

8.2. Policy meetings and workshops with EU-Funded Projects, June 2021- July 2022

In collaboration between 6 EU-funded projects under the Call H2020-SC6-TRANSFORMATIONS-2019-2020, Be.CULTOUR took part in several coordination and dissemination activities to share knowledge, build synergies and complementarities, and identify future research priorities based on the results achieved and lessons learnt. A series of joint workshops were organized under the lead of the European Commission, particularly Rodrigo Martín Galán and Christina Sarvani.

8.2.1. *Workshop on the State of the Art of Research and Future Priorities in Cultural Tourism, June 2021*

On June 16th, 2021, a significant online workshop was held to discuss the state of the art in research and the future priorities in the field of cultural tourism. This workshop brought together representatives from six EU-funded projects, focusing on the IMPACTOUR, SPOT, and SMARTCULTOUR initiatives. The objective was to revisit the progress made since the last meeting, particularly in light of the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to chart a path forward for research and innovation in cultural tourism.

The workshop commenced with welcome and introductory remarks, setting the stage for a day of insightful discussions. This was followed by a "tour de table" where each participant introduced themselves and outlined their expectations for the workshop. The first session focused on discussing the challenges and current problems in the field of cultural tourism research. Participants highlighted the ambiguity surrounding the definitions of cultural tourism and cultural tourists, which hampers consistent data collection and impact measurement. There was a consensus on the need for clear concepts to measure the impact of cultural tourism on various dimensions, including social, environmental, and technological aspects, across different levels from local to EU-wide scales.

The session also underscored the coordination issues among various organizations such as UNESCO, Europa Nostra, and ICOMOS. Participants stressed the importance of fostering innovation to make cultural tourism smarter and more sustainable, moving beyond traditional tourism concepts. The need for an integrated framework to evaluate all impacts of cultural tourism, emphasizing social and cultural dimensions alongside economic ones, was identified as crucial. This framework should align with the broader goals of smartness, sustainability, and resilience, considering the diverse approaches from different countries and organizations.

The second session delved into the gaps in knowledge and research needs in the field. It was noted that there is a general challenge in understanding how European tourism operators integrate into global value chains, especially given the rapid growth of tourism in Asia. The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on international tourism was a significant point of discussion, with participants sharing different regional solutions and the potential for learning from each other across Europe. The importance of the sharing and collaborative economy was highlighted, with a call for better access to digital tools and data, often held by private companies.

Participants also discussed the need for better collaboration across tourist sites and Member States to manage tourism flows sustainably. The potential for local tourism was recognized, especially as a way to reduce overcrowding at popular sites and promote less-visited areas. The importance of digital technology and data interoperability was emphasized, with participants advocating for more widespread use of digital tools to boost the sector, including e-tourism and virtual tourism. However, challenges such as private ownership of data, privacy, and ethical concerns were also noted.

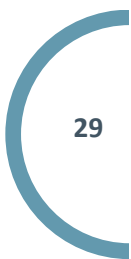
The workshop concluded with an open discussion on specific issues, providing a platform for participants to share their views and ask questions. Key takeaways included the need for a clear definition of cultural tourism, common standards for data collection, and methodologies to use empirical data alongside statistics. The discussions also pointed to the necessity of sustainable tourism development, leveraging local materials and new technologies for energy efficiency, and fostering local and regional development.

The workshop successfully identified pressing research needs, including the interoperability of data and systems, the collection of economic data, and the development of tools to manage this data. Participants stressed the importance of understanding the balance between sustainability and economic interests, the impact on local communities, and governance issues in tourism. The need for legal frameworks to protect cultural heritage while promoting tourism was also highlighted.

Overall, the workshop was a productive event that set the stage for future research and collaboration in cultural tourism. The insights gained will inform the design of future work programs, ensuring that the sector can navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic and leverage opportunities for sustainable growth.

8.2.2. Policy Round Table on Sustainable and Circular Cultural Tourism, November 2021

On November 2nd, 2021, a crucial policy round table was convened to discuss sustainable and circular cultural tourism. This event brought together representatives from six EU-funded projects



under the Horizon 2020 program, namely SmartCulTour, Impactour, Spot, Textour, Incultum, and Be.CULTOUR. Organized by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) and the Research Executive Agency (REA), the round table aimed to synthesize the research findings of these projects into coherent policy recommendations for the future of cultural tourism in Europe.

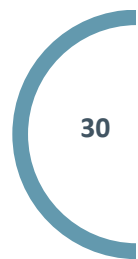
The round table began with a series of structured presentations where each project outlined its policy recommendations. The primary focus was not on showcasing individual project results but on collaboratively developing a set of unified policy recommendations. This approach ensured that the recommendations presented were holistic and integrated, addressing the diverse challenges and opportunities in the field of cultural tourism.

One of the key areas discussed was EU Policy and Europeanization. The projects collectively emphasized the importance of cultural tourism in fostering European values and identity. They highlighted the potential of instruments like the European Heritage Label and European Cultural Routes to promote shared European identity and values through cultural heritage. The round table also discussed innovative financing instruments to overcome barriers to investment in cultural tourism, particularly from the perspective of the circular economy. A proposal for a Revolving Circular Impact Fund was introduced, designed in line with EU Taxonomy principles, to support sustainable investments in cultural tourism.

In the realm of Research and Innovation, participants identified significant gaps and needs. They stressed the necessity for advanced smart data management systems and innovative statistical methods to assess the impacts of sustainable and circular cultural tourism. The discussion also touched upon the need for policies that support the development of entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems, especially in remote and less-known areas. The role of arts, creativity, and human capital development in driving innovation in cultural tourism was underscored, with calls for enhanced training and capacity-building strategies.

Sustainability and Infrastructure were also central themes. The policy recommendations included the need for high-quality infrastructure, including digital infrastructure and sustainable mobility systems, to support circular cultural tourism. The round table participants advocated for green certifications and eco-labels in the tourism sector, promoting practices like circular procurement and resources sharing networks. The discussion highlighted the importance of balancing economic viability with cultural significance and environmental sustainability.

The policy recommendations stemming from this round table were not developed in isolation. They built on the insights and outcomes of the Be.CULTOUR project's first Policy Learning Lab, held in Brussels in September 2022, which involved stakeholders from pilot and mirror



ecosystems. This collaborative process ensured that the recommendations were grounded in practical experiences and aligned with the needs of local communities.

The round table concluded with a consensus on the way forward. The participants agreed to continue their collaborative efforts, sharing knowledge and best practices to foster a more sustainable, circular, and resilient cultural tourism ecosystem in Europe. The recommendations were seen as an intermediate step, with plans for further refinement and discussion during subsequent policy learning labs and stakeholder engagements.

This policy round table represented a significant milestone in the journey towards sustainable and circular cultural tourism in Europe. It underscored the importance of collaborative policymaking, where diverse projects and stakeholders come together to address common challenges and leverage collective strengths for a sustainable future. The insights and recommendations from this round table are expected to inform future EU policies, ensuring that cultural tourism continues to thrive in a manner that respects and enhances Europe's rich cultural heritage.

8.2.3. Workshop on Cultural Tourism in Rural Areas, February 2022

On February 2nd, 2022, an online workshop was held to address the current state of research and future priorities in the field of cultural tourism in rural areas. This event, co-organized by the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) and the Research Executive Agency (REA), featured contributions from four Horizon 2020 projects: BE.Cultour, INSITU, INCULTUM, and SmartCulTour. The workshop was chaired by Christina Sarvani and Rodrigo Martin Galan, who facilitated a series of discussions aimed at identifying challenges, gaps, and potential research needs in this specialized area of cultural tourism.

The workshop began with a welcoming session, where participants introduced themselves and outlined their expectations for the day. This was followed by the first session, which focused on current approaches, challenges, and problems in cultural tourism research specific to rural areas. Each project was allocated ten minutes to present their findings and perspectives. The presentations highlighted various trends in the field, such as the increasing importance of sustainable tourism practices and the need for better integration of cultural tourism into rural development strategies.

One of the key themes that emerged was the diversity of challenges faced by researchers. These included difficulties in defining and measuring the impact of cultural tourism, coordinating among multiple stakeholders, and addressing the unique needs of rural communities. The session also



touched upon the role of digital technologies in enhancing the cultural tourism experience and the importance of creating innovative solutions to attract and retain tourists in rural areas.

After a brief coffee break, the second session commenced, focusing on research and innovation gaps in the field of cultural tourism in rural areas. Each project again had ten minutes to present their insights into the most urgent research needs. The discussions underscored the necessity for more targeted research on the socio-economic impacts of cultural tourism, the development of new methodologies for data collection and analysis, and the creation of frameworks to evaluate the long-term sustainability of tourism initiatives.

The second session also highlighted the need for collaborative research efforts that bring together academic institutions, local governments, and industry stakeholders. Participants emphasized the importance of developing policies that support rural tourism development, particularly in terms of funding and resource allocation. The potential for cultural tourism to drive economic growth and community development in rural areas was a recurring theme, with several projects showcasing successful case studies and best practices.

The workshop concluded with an open debate session, providing an opportunity for participants to engage in a more informal discussion about the issues raised during the presentations. This interactive segment allowed for a deeper exploration of specific topics, such as the role of heritage conservation in tourism, the impact of tourism on rural landscapes, and the need for educational programs to build local capacity in tourism management.

In their concluding remarks, Christina Sarvani and Rodrigo Martin Galan summarized the key takeaways from the workshop. They stressed the importance of continued dialogue and collaboration among the projects to address the challenges identified and to advance the field of cultural tourism in rural areas. They also highlighted the need for ongoing support from the European Commission to ensure that the research and innovation efforts in this area are sustained and effectively implemented.

Overall, the workshop was a valuable platform for sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas, and fostering collaboration among key stakeholders in the field of cultural tourism. The insights and recommendations generated from this event are expected to inform future research agendas and policy initiatives, ultimately contributing to the sustainable development of cultural tourism in rural areas across Europe.

8.2.4. Workshop on Policy Making, Lisbon (hybrid), July 2022

The Lisbon Workshop on Policy Making, hosted by UNINOVA at the Campus da FCT NOVA in Caparica, Portugal, on July 5th, was a significant event bringing together representatives from

projects such as IMPACTOUR, SPOT, SmartCultur, TexTour, INCULTUM, and Be.CULTOUR. The workshop, conducted in a hybrid format with a preference for in-person attendance, aimed to prepare for an upcoming meeting with the European Commission (EC) and discuss the future of project web portals.

The initial session focused on policy making and preparation for the EC meeting. It began with an introductory presentation that set the stage for the discussions, highlighting key objectives and expected outcomes. This presentation emphasized the importance of collaboration and alignment among the different projects to present a unified approach and cohesive messages to the EC.

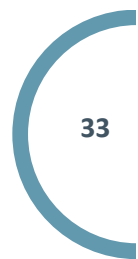
Following the introduction, participants engaged in a debate to discuss various aspects of policy making, share experiences, and identify common challenges and opportunities. This interactive session fostered a deeper understanding of the diverse perspectives within the group and helped build a consensus on critical issues to address with the EC. A wrap-up session summarized the main points from the debate and outlined the next steps, ensuring clarity on roles and the collective strategy moving forward.

In the afternoon, the focus shifted to the post-project life of the web portals. Participants delivered short presentations providing updates on the current status, achievements, challenges, and future plans of the web portals. The goal was to share best practices and innovative solutions that could benefit other projects.

Following these presentations, a debate was held to discuss the sustainability and long-term impact of the web portals. Participants explored strategies to ensure the portals remain relevant and useful beyond the life of the projects, covering key topics such as funding opportunities, partnerships, and technological advancements. The session concluded with a summary of the main insights and an action plan to ensure the longevity and impact of the web portals.

The workshop concluded with a dinner, providing a relaxed environment for further networking and fostering stronger relationships among the participants.

Overall, the Lisbon Workshop on Policy Making was a productive and insightful event, facilitating significant progress in preparing for the EC meeting and planning the future of the projects' web portals. The collaborative spirit and active engagement of all participants were key to the workshop's success.



8.3. Transfer Workshops with Chambers of Commerce, Mirabilia Network, January 2023-June 2024

A series of transfer workshops were conducted with various Chambers of Commerce across Europe, designed to enhance the dissemination and exploitation activities in sustainable cultural tourism. These workshops leveraged the results of the project and involved the Mirabilia network, which connects areas of historical, cultural, and environmental significance, often recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites.

In Perugia, Italy, on January 26, 2023, a workshop was organized by the Umbria Chamber of Commerce, Sviluppumbria, and the Mirabilia Network. It highlighted Umbria's rich historical and religious heritage, particularly the St. Francis' Route. Participants formed working groups to design strategies for sustainable tourism, emphasizing the need for enhanced stakeholder collaboration, targeted training, and a comprehensive communication strategy.



Figure 6 – Transfer Workshop in Italy, January 26th, 2023

In Granada, Spain, on March 20, 2023, a workshop was held at the Digital Business Hub, where discussions centered on Granada’s cultural heritage and surrounding natural landscapes. The workshop addressed the issue of over-tourism in the city and the promotion of rural areas. Recommendations included developing inclusive tourism strategies, involving local communities, and improving infrastructure to support sustainable tourism.



Figure 7 – Transfer Workshop in Spain, March 20th, 2023

The workshop in Dugopolje, Croatia, on March 30, 2023, focused on the cultural heritage of Split-Dalmatia County. Participants discussed the tourism potential of the region and necessary improvements. Future steps included forming a regional tourism advisory board, conducting regular workshops, and launching promotional campaigns to boost tourism in the area.



Figure 8 – Transfer Workshop in Croatia, March 30th, 2023

In Sofia, Bulgaria, on February 27, 2024, the workshop targeted key cultural heritage sites such as the Boyana Church and the National History Museum. The goal was to create sustainable tourism models tailored to the Bulgarian cultural landscape. Proposed steps involved forming a task force for sustainable tourism, securing funding, and engaging the community through various programs.



Figure 9 – Transfer Workshop in Bulgaria, February 27th, 2024

The workshop in Trikala, Greece, on February 29, 2024, highlighted historical sites and natural landscapes, with a particular focus on the Geopark. Participants brainstormed ideas for sustainable tourism and developed plans to create a comprehensive tourism plan for Trikala, launch public awareness campaigns, and establish partnerships with local businesses.



Figure 10 – Transfer Workshop in Greece, February 29th, 2024

In Albi, France, on June 13, 2024, the workshop aimed to integrate cultural tourism with sustainable practices, particularly through the promotion of the "Route of Colors." The event featured presentations and collaborative activities, resulting in proposed actions such as forming a coalition to promote the "Route of Colors," eco-certification for businesses, and marketing campaigns to attract tourists.



Figure 11 – Transfer Workshop in Franche, June 13th, 2024

These workshops successfully engaged stakeholders in discussions about sustainable cultural tourism, providing a platform for the co-creation of local action plans. Common themes that emerged included the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, infrastructure improvement, community involvement, and the promotion of sustainability.

The outcomes of these workshops highlighted the importance of establishing new networks of cooperation among local stakeholders. They emphasized the need to promote long-term sustainable development through cultural tourism by leveraging local cultural and natural values as key assets for tourism attractiveness and residents' well-being. By encouraging a collaborative and participatory approach, the workshops fostered meaningful dialogue and actions that are crucial for addressing tourism challenges and enhancing the cultural and natural heritage of various regions.

Through these efforts, the project demonstrated its high potential for ensuring the long-term sustainability and attractiveness of cultural tourism across Europe. The workshops underscored the significance of collaborative efforts in addressing tourism challenges and promoting the cultural and natural heritage of diverse regions, paving the way for continued growth and development in sustainable tourism.

8.4. Saltaire Inspired Study Visit & Local Workshop, May 2023

From May 27th to May 30, 2023, members of the Community of Practice and Community of Interest of the Be.CULTOUR project gathered in the fascinating historical post-industrial setting of Saltaire Village, where Saltaire Inspired, one of Be.CULTOUR Mirror partners, is based. Saltaire Inspired is an arts charity that organizes high-quality contemporary art events inspired by the unique historical and contemporary context of Saltaire Industrial Village, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Figure 12 - Study Visit in Saltaire, People Powered Press

The study visit and local workshop, led by ERRIN jointly with Saltaire Inspired, aimed to foster collaborations and strengthen connections among project members working in similar areas of tourism and culture, such as the adaptive re-use of industrial buildings, traditional crafts, and community engagement for sustainable tourism. The visit's objective was to assist attendees in developing policies and practices for local cultural tourism development initiatives and projects. It offered insights into human-centered, co-creative, sustainable, and circular cultural experiences. This was particularly relevant for partners from Saltaire as Bradford is striving to

become the UK City of Culture 2025, and, therefore, eager to foster connections between cultural organizations and Mirror regions with similar experiences participating in Be.CULTOUR.



Figure 13 - At Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford. Photo by Karol Wyszynski

The study visit started in Salts Mill and continued with the Saltaire Inspired Makers Fair & Open Village, including the Makers Fair, Salts Mill, Shipley, Cartwright Hall, the Industrial Museum and Haworth.

During the visit, the guests participated in the session "Connecting and Sharing with Be.CULTOUR mirrors Interactive tour the table" to get to know each other, introduce their work and ambition for a visit, and discuss the circular cultural tourism approach and challenges in the different local contexts. The visit concluded with a workshop and two Living Labs consolidating the synergies and discussions about the Capital of Cultures and sharing new ideas on community engagement and cultural heritage tourism strategies and operational approaches led by artists and cultural organisations.

The **First Living Lab**, "Strategic and operational approach to Culture – working towards a city of culture Bradford 2025" was led by Nic Greenan, Head of Culture, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. It aimed to brainstorm and build an analysis of common challenges and good practices of Be.CULTOUR Mirrors for boosting European collaboration opportunities in view of

Bradford 2025. The **Second Living Lab** "Think like a Pirate' - collaborative and creative networking with purpose: how to be more decisive, more inclusive and more creative" led by Sarah Shead, Bradford Cultural Voice, aimed to unlock the potential of creativity in circular cultural tourism approaches.



9. The Be.CULTOUR Hackathon, Brussels, September 2022

The Be.CULTOUR Hackathon, a highlight of the Be.CULTOUR project, represents a significant stride toward fostering innovative solutions for sustainable cultural tourism. This event was meticulously designed to address the unique challenges faced by deprived, remote, or over-exploited regions across Europe. By focusing on the development of circular cultural tourism services and products, the hackathon aimed to enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of these areas, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic's aftermath.

The Hackathon was set against the backdrop of six distinct European regions: Basilicata (Italy), Aragon (Spain), Larnaca (Cyprus), Vojvodina (Serbia), Västra Götaland (Sweden), and the cross-border area of North-East Romania and Moldova. These regions, each with its unique cultural and historical heritage, faced common challenges related to sustainable tourism development. The primary objective of the hackathon was to bring together innovators from various fields to develop creative, viable solutions that could be implemented in these regions to boost their cultural tourism sectors sustainably.

The process began with ICHEC launching a call for passionate innovators, open from March to May 2022. This call aimed to attract individuals and teams with creative ideas for enhancing cultural tourism through sustainable practices. The call was highly successful, garnering numerous applications from across the target regions.

Each applicant was required to submit a concept note outlining their innovative solution. These notes were then evaluated by local juries in each Pilot Heritage Site (PHS). The evaluation criteria focused on the potential for sustainable development, local impact, and the feasibility of the proposed solutions. Initially, the plan was to select one innovative solution from each PHS. However, after several discussions with the involved regions, it was decided to increase the number of selected solutions to three per PHS, with an exception for the Route of Stephan the Great and Saint, which spans both Romania and Moldova and hence had four solutions selected—two from each country. This approach was intended to provide a broader exploration of innovative ideas and to offer more training opportunities during the hackathon and acceleration period.

A total of 35 applications were received through the EU Survey platform. Each PHS established a local jury to evaluate the submissions. These juries, comprising experts and stakeholders, assessed the innovative solutions and invited applicants to pitch their ideas in person. Following these pitches and deliberations, 19 solutions were selected to advance to the next stage.



Figure 14 - Introduction to Be.CULTOUR hackathon methodology

The selected innovations were chosen based on their potential to address the challenges of deprived, remote, or over-exploited areas, focusing on creating attractive destinations in the post-COVID-19 context. The selected teams were given the opportunity to participate in the Be.CULTOUR hackathon held at ICHEC in Brussels from September 7 to 9, 2022. This event aimed to facilitate the co-development, testing, and prototyping of the solutions.

During the hackathon, 76 innovators worked collaboratively in 19 teams, moving from idea generation to the first stages of solution prototyping. This intense three-day event included participation from registered partners and stakeholders from Be.CULTOUR's pilot and mirror regions. Additionally, 19 videos showcasing the solutions were created and made available online

for public voting, garnering 2083 votes in just two hours. Concurrently, five parallel juries at ICHEC evaluated the pitches, providing a comprehensive assessment of each project.

As mentioned before, the selected teams were invited to Brussels for an intensive three-day hackathon held at ICHEC in September 2022. This event was a melting pot of creativity, collaboration, and innovation, bringing together 76 participants from different backgrounds. The hackathon followed a structured methodology, drawing on the principles of Design Sprint 3.0, which emphasized understanding, defining, ideating, prototyping, and testing solutions.

- **The three-day Hackathon at ICHEC in September 2022**

DAY 1 focused on understanding the context of the participants' Pilot Heritage Sites (PHS) and the principles of circular cultural tourism. The morning sessions were devoted to mapping the context, the value chain, and empathizing with stakeholders. In the afternoon, teams tested innovative solutions and engaged with different segments from their stakeholder maps. The day's activities aligned with the first two stages of the Design Sprint 3.0 methodology: "UNDERSTAND" and "DEFINE." Teams drafted assumptions, mapped stakes, identified key user/client segments, and co-designed empathy maps to address the most pressing needs using tools like the Cause & Effect Tree, Stakeholder Map, and Empathy Map.



Figure 15 - "PROTOTYPE": First Minimal Testable Solution (MTS)

DAY 2 continued with defining and ideating solutions. Teams focused on defining the problem statements and generating potential solutions. This stage emphasized creativity and brainstorming, encouraging participants to think broadly and consider a wide range of possibilities before narrowing down to the most viable options.

DAY 3 centered on prototyping and testing. Teams developed minimal testable solutions, ready to be assessed for desirability, feasibility, viability, and impact. They used feedback and insights from stakeholders to refine their prototypes. This iterative process ensured that the solutions were grounded in real-world needs and contexts, enhancing their potential for successful implementation.

Overall, the hackathon employed a structured approach, combining plenary sessions with hands-on group work, and provided continuous coaching to help teams progress from initial ideas to tangible, innovative solutions for sustainable cultural tourism.

A key highlight of the hackathon was the pitching sessions, where teams presented their prototypes to a panel of high-level expert jurors and engaged with the public through online voting. This not only provided valuable feedback but also fostered a sense of community and shared purpose among the participants. The event concluded with an award ceremony, where the most promising solutions were recognized and rewarded. The primary award was a four-month acceleration period provided by ICHEC to further develop the projects. Additional awards were given based on online votes and the preferences of the local juries.

The Hackathon resulted in a plethora of innovative solutions, each tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the participating regions. For instance, one team developed a digital platform that connects tourists with local cultural experiences in Basilicata, leveraging augmented reality to enhance historical tours. Another team focused on sustainable tourism in Aragon by creating eco-friendly travel packages that promote lesser-known heritage sites.

In Larnaca, a solution was developed to integrate local artisans into the tourism value chain, providing tourists with authentic cultural experiences while supporting the local economy. Similarly, a project from Vojvodina aimed at revitalizing rural areas through cultural festivals and events that celebrate local traditions and crafts. In Västra Götaland, an innovative approach was taken to digital storytelling, using immersive technologies to bring historical narratives to life for tourists.

The cross-border area of North-East Romania and Moldova saw the development of a cultural route that highlights shared heritage and fosters cross-border cooperation in tourism. This solution not only promotes sustainable tourism but also strengthens cultural ties between the two regions.



Figure 16 - Award Ceremony

The Be.CULTOUR Hackathon stands as a testament to the power of collaborative innovation in addressing complex challenges in cultural tourism. By bringing together diverse perspectives and leveraging cutting-edge methodologies, the hackathon successfully generated a range of viable, impactful solutions. These solutions are poised to enhance the sustainability and attractiveness of cultural tourism in the participating regions, contributing to their long-term development and resilience. The success of the hackathon underscores the importance of continued support for such initiatives, fostering a vibrant community of innovators dedicated to the sustainable future of cultural tourism.

More information about the Be.CULTOUR Hackathon is available on the Be.CULTOUR website. In particular, Deliverable D3.6 - Report of Be.CULTOUR Hackathon best innovative solutions for sustainable cultural tourism can be consulted.

<https://becultour.eu/results>

10. Policy Learning Labs

The Policy Learning Labs represented a moment for the Be.CULTOUR Community will put into practice the methodologies developed, exchange and learn from each other, and foster collaborations and synergies among the different project regional ecosystems.

During the project, two Policy Learning Labs were organized, which included a studio visit to mirror sites and, in different ways, contributed to discussing the tourism sector challenges and drafting policy recommendations to promote innovative circular cultural tourism approaches.

The following sections address the details of each Policy Learning Lab.

10.1. 1st Policy Learning Lab in Brussels, Belgium, September 2022

The first Policy Learning Lab on circular cultural tourism was held in Brussels from 8 to 9 September 2022. The event aimed to discuss the challenges and opportunities for circular cultural tourism in the post-pandemic era. Around 50 participants attended, including 10 representatives from Pilot Heritage Site, 21 individuals from Mirror Ecosystems, 15 project partners, and 3 advisors. The Living Lab was divided into two main parts: a panel discussion and two interactive workshops. The main objective of the Living Lab was to encourage collaboration and knowledge exchange between Mirror and Pilot Heritage Site Ecosystems, while addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with circular cultural tourism in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery. It also included a study visit in Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg, The Netherlands, one of the Be.CULTOUR Mirror Ecosystems.

10.1.1. 1st Policy Learning Lab: Panel Discussion

The Living Lab started with a panel discussion focused on the challenges and opportunities of fostering circular cultural tourism in the post-pandemic era. This discussion brought together the insights of four project advisors, each a distinguished expert in their respective field. The panel featured Vanessa Glindmeier, who serves as the Responsible Tourism Coordinator for the Cultural Assets Directorate at Historic Environment Scotland; Nancy Duxbury, who lent her expertise on behalf of CREATOUR; Jordi Mallarach, representing the interests of Future for Religious Heritage; and Emma Taveri from Destination Makers, the organization at the forefront of assisting Pilot Heritage Sites in adopting sustainable practices and solutions.



Figure 17 - First Policy Learning Lab, Brussels

Amidst the discourse, each panelist shared valuable insights on how the COVID-19 pandemic has intricately affected the domain of cultural tourism.

They stressed the urgent need for a paradigm shift towards sustainable and circular methodologies in the management and promotion of cultural tourism.

By sharing their experience and knowledge, they illuminated the multifaceted benefits that circular approaches offer, not only in enhancing the resilience of cultural tourism but also in fostering socio-economic benefits for local communities.

This conversation underscored the imperative of collective action, sustainability, and the active involvement of local communities as foundational pillars in the evolution of circular cultural tourism.

The conversation provided the frame and basis for the following workshop sessions, where the participants of the Policy Learning Lab were involved in more interactive activities aimed at drafting a set of Policy Recommendations.

10.1.2. 1st Policy Learning Lab: Workshops

After the panel discussion concluded, the participants progressed to participate in two immersive workshop sessions. These sessions were thoughtfully constructed to foster an environment conducive to active engagement and tangible learning opportunities, reflecting on the dynamic methodologies that previously characterized the local workshops conducted at the Pilot Heritage Sites. The emphasis of these workshops was placed squarely on exploring various facets pertinent to circular cultural tourism. These discussions aimed to pave the way for uncovering viable solutions and formulating strategies to address the primary challenges highlighted effectively. Participants were organized into six groups to enrich the discourse and enhance collaborative learning.

A representative led each group from the Pilot Heritage Sites, which facilitated a fertile ground for sharing experiences, successful, and pioneering ideas on implementing practices of circular cultural tourism more effectively. The directive for each group was to delve deeply into one of the critical challenges pertaining to circular cultural tourism that was previously identified in the context of the local workshops at the Pilot Heritage Site.

- **Workshops Sessions:**

Workshop pt.1: Circular Cultural Tourism challenges definition and solution identification

The first workshop followed the Be.CULTOUR methodology that was utilized in the local workshops at the Pilot Heritage Site. In this workshop, participants worked together to define the challenges encountered in their local heritage sites and to brainstorm potential solutions. By drawing on their combined knowledge and experiences, the groups aimed to identify practical and sustainable approaches to tackle these challenges.

Workshop pt.2: Preparation of Policy Recommendations

During the second workshop, the focus was on turning the conclusions from the earlier workshop sessions into practical policy recommendations. Participants collaborated to create a set of policy recommendations aimed at promoting circular cultural tourism. These recommendations were based on the solutions identified for the challenges and were intended to inform future initiatives and policies.

- **Workshops Groups:**

- **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

10.1.3. 1st Policy Learning Lab: Study Visit in Limburg, Netherlands

In the context of the first Policy Learning Lab in Brussels in September, a study visit was organized in Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg, The Netherlands, one of the Be.CULTOUR Mirror Ecosystems. This mirror has developed specific expertise in collaborating with relevant stakeholders in the field of tourism to transform an industrialized black coal mine region into an attractive tourist destination. The purpose of the visit was to engage with local cultural tourism initiatives and learn about the strategies and actions implemented in Heerlen, a city known for its industrial buildings and mines. Additionally, it aimed to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among project members, thereby strengthening the project community.



Figure 18 - Study Visit in Stadsregio Parkstad Limburg

The study visit started with a guided tour of the historical Royal Theater in Heerlen led by Anya Niewierra, director of Visit South-Limburg. The visit allowed the project members to learn about

the challenges and benefits of transforming industrial spaces into cultural hubs involving the local community. The second part of the visit to the National Mine Museum offered a comprehensive understanding of the region's mining heritage. Participants learned about the museum's efforts to preserve and promote the cultural significance of mining, while also addressing the sustainable development goals through the integration of circular practices. The visit ended at Castle Schaesberg, which was rebuilt with the use of new technological tools applied to traditional craftsmanship. Furthermore, the castle's management has introduced educational programs that instruct and promote traditional crafts. These programs offer workshops and demonstrations, allowing visitors to learn about different local and traditional crafts.

10.2. 2nd Policy Learning Lab in Sciacca, Italy, September 2023

The second Policy Learning Lab and Study Visit was held in Sciacca, Sicily, from 20 to 22 September 2023. The event provided an important opportunity for 50 participants coming from different countries in Europe to share inputs for the Be.CULTOUR policy recommendations on circular tourism and engage in knowledge-sharing and best-practice discussions.

An important part of the event was dedicated for the Be.CULTOUR Community to share inputs that will feed the Be.CULTOUR Policy recommendations on circular tourism. Representatives of Pilots, Mirrors and Innovators proposed policy recommendations in the World Cafè format. The event also hosted a Place branding co-design workshop lead by Destination Makers and a study visit to the 5 Senses Open-Air Museum



Figure 19 - Policy Learning Lab in Sciacca

10.2.1. 2nd Policy Learning Lab: World Café

The Policy Learning Lab also included debate sessions adopting the World Café format, an agile methodology allowing an informal dialogue to address concrete challenges. Each participant took part in each of the four discussion tables in turn:

1. CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN CULTURAL TOURISM: CREATIVE, SUSTAINABLE, BEAUTIFUL DESTINATIONS
 - o Innovative strategies for the preservation of tangible and natural heritage
 - o Develop sustainable infrastructures for tourism
2. DIGITALISATION & SMART DESTINATION MANAGEMENT FOR CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM
 - o Digital infrastructures for the tourism sector
 - o Strategies for place branding, communication and storytelling



Figure 20 - World Café in Sciacca

3. ENHANCING THE HUMAN DIMENSION OF CIRCULAR CULTURAL TOURISM

- Inclusion of the local ecosystems
- Creating a European sense of belonging by revitalizing ancient cultural routes

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

- Develop a human-centred quadruple helix local ecosystem in tourism
- Build an enabling environment for investments

10.2.2. 2nd Policy Learning Lab: Place-branding Workshop

The Second Policy Learning Lab hosted a place-branding workshop organized by Destination Makers to shape the future of tourism destinations at pilot heritage sites. This comprehensive workshop was designed into four interactive sessions to foster collaboration and strategic thinking among various stakeholders to promote sustainable and thriving tourism destinations. Participants began by diving into their needs and desires for the tourism destination, sharing insights to find common goals across different territories.

By utilizing the insights from the initial session, the participants envision a strategic direction for developing tourism destinations based on crucial cultural, economic, social, and environmental factors. Finally, based on these positive and negative factors, tourism operators and local authorities aimed to design better-targeted strategies and initiatives for sustainable and cultural tourism.

10.2.3. 2nd Policy Learning Lab: Study Visit in Sciacca

Within the frame of the second edition of the Policy Learning Lab, a study visit was organized in the 5 Senses Open Air Museum of Sciacca, one of the Mirror Ecosystems of the project. During the visit, Be.CULTOUR Mirrors and Pilots representatives had the chance to directly experience the immersive circular cultural tourism concept implemented by the open air museum, a best practice recognised by Cultural Heritage in Action, peer-learning scheme financed by the European Union. Indeed, the museum represents a successful example of community-led cultural initiatives that valorize tangible and intangible cultural heritage, such as crafts and traditional know-how. The model developed in Sciacca transfers tourists from passive spectators to inhabitants through an inclusive and bottom-up tourism project managed by the community, which can benefit directly from the economic revenues.



Figure 21 - Study Visit in Sciacca

The participants were guided on a sensory tour experiencing handcraft laboratories of ceramic and coral productions, hearing local stories and traditions by the "beauty storytellers". The trail also included the street art neighborhood as an expression of a contemporary meaning of heritage and visiting the Vaporous Caves of Mount Kronio and Daedalus Caves, a unique place for naturalistic and religious significance.

11. Webinars Series

Based on the knowledge of the Be.CULTOUR Community and its high-level European network, a free training and dissemination path was developed between 2023 and 2024 through nine webinars on emerging research and innovation aspects in cultural and circular tourism.

Full programs and recordings of the webinars are available at the Be.CULTOUR website: <https://becultour.eu/becultour-webinars>

- **WEBINAR 1**

Circular Cultural Tourism: The role of Heritage Innovation Networks for co-creation and communities empowerment

The webinar addressed methodologies and tools for stakeholders' engagement, serious gaming and co-creation, explaining how to bring together expert and local knowledge to let "hidden" cultural resources emerge and being recognized and fully exploited as a driver of local development, communities' empowerment and innovative entrepreneurship through circular cultural tourism.

The recording of the webinar is also available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LZ1XPpbVbE&t=4s>

- **WEBINAR 2**

Understanding the European value of cultural heritage: Power of networks

The webinar addressed the concept of Europeanisation based on the intertwine of cultural networks operating in Europe. We discussed the added value of being a member of a network and reflected on the opportunities and challenges faced by network operators. In addition, examples on the benefit from formal and informal networks were presented, as well as guidelines on how to use the networks to develop innovative solutions towards circular cultural tourism. This approach reflects the ambitions of Be.CULTOUR and constitutes an important part of the concept ideation and development of Action Plans in its pilot heritage sites.

The recording of the webinar is also available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOSvM0fWfEo&t=1s>



Figure 22 - Webinar 3: Meet the Speakers

- **WEBINAR 3**

Innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism

This webinar gave voice to prominent guests from academia, policy, business and practice to exchange views and showcase their own experience/experimentation in circular cultural tourism. It defined what is meant by innovative solutions for circular cultural tourism, what possible tools could be used to activate the process and involve the local community in the co-design, co-development and co-implementation of the solutions. Moreover, concrete examples from different continents were presented and challenges thoroughly discussed.

The recording of the webinar is also available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTNTzxGyW5M>

- **WEBINAR 4**

Values-based innovative marketing for less-known cultural tourism destinations

Among the trends that are shaping the future of travel and the emerging visitors' need, sustainability plays a key role. In this webinar we looked at international examples of effective tourism promotion based on culture and sustainability and knew the case study of the Ruhr region and the Gelsenkirchen area, that offered a practical perspective to participants to develop their tourism offer.

The recording of the webinar is also available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZeHvvmYpk&t=1s>

- **WEBINAR 5**

Community-led and innovative entrepreneurship for circular cultural tourism

The webinar addressed the challenges and opportunities of community-led entrepreneurship for circular cultural tourism. By sharing experiences of projects and initiatives operating in European regions, it discussed the great potential of less-known and peripheral destinations in which cultural assets and local resources are co-managed by communities and stakeholders. Through the case studies, we reflected on how engaging community capacity for collective care of cultural heritage could represent a key driver in fostering innovative entrepreneurship and sustainable social, cultural, and economic development.

The recording of the webinar is also available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ld-jVLz23C8>

- **WEBINAR 6**

Creative tourism and the role of arts, interpretation and storytelling

The webinar addressed creative tourism initiatives where the community, artists, and other stakeholders are involved in co-creation strategies to implement a cultural-led change in a destination. Among the creative tourism experiences, the innovative and collective storytelling, art-based practices, and the contemporary interpretation of cultural heritage through community engagement can represent a powerful driver for sustainable development, especially of less-known places. By sharing projects which, in different ways, challenged tourism issues with creative solutions, we discussed the role of arts in regeneration processes, placemaking, and shaping new promotion concepts.

The recording of the webinar is also available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Im0xtIsots>



- WEBINAR 7

BREAKFAST AT SUSTAINABILITY'S

The webinar brought together representatives of EU institutions, cultural experts, regional officers, and tourism stakeholders to discuss the unexplored potential of cultural heritage as a driver of circular tourism.

Participants in this online event acquired a better understanding of Tourism Transition Pathways in different contexts and gained key insights on how local cultural assets can drive sustainable tourism strategies.

The recording of the webinar is also available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TLQ1XxAWbg>

This webinar is part of a series of meetings called Breakfast at Sustainability's (B@S) organised by the ICLEI Europe Brussels Office and hosted by local, regional and national governments represented in Brussels.

The full programs of the Breakfast at Sustainability's meeting are available at:

<https://iclei-europe.org/iclei-events/breakfast-at-sustainabilitys/>



Figure 23 - BREAKFAST AT SUSTAINABILITY'S Poster

- WEBINAR 8

Innovative finance for circular cultural tourism

The webinar presented and discussed innovative investment models for circular cultural tourism as tools for creating shared value in local ecosystems, supporting social and community-led

entrepreneurship through sustainable impact-based finance. The experimental model of the Pledge Fund hybridised with a Project Development Assistance instrument for innovative cultural tourism enterprises/startups will be presented and discussed with representatives of financial and public institutions providing feedback and insights. Examples of "circular" investment programmes for tourism, culture, creativity and cultural heritage will be presented, supporting the regeneration of heritage sites and the generation of positive impacts for local communities.

The recording of the webinar is also available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MU_EFoViNbg

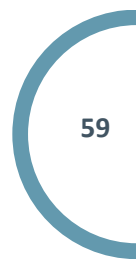
- **WEBINAR 9**

Smart data management for circular cultural tourism assessment and monitoring

To reach sustainability and circularity goals, cultural destinations need effective data management tools. In this webinar, a set of innovative smart data management and monitoring tools were shared, towards better governance and assessment of the smart/circular destination. In particular, cultural heritage digitalisation can support circular cultural tourism destination managers and operators to manage and assess tourist flows, interest and appreciation in heritage sites integrating digital tools such as 3D visualization and Digital Twin in a human-centred and people-centred perspective.

The recording of the webinar is also available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5uAW5ewC9g>



12. Task Force Meetings

During the Be.CULTOUR project, specific activities, and events have been developed to continue and promote the Task Force on "Circular Financing and Business Models for Cultural Heritage in European Regions and Cities". The Task Force was activated at CNR - National Research Council of Italy, under the previous Horizon 2020 CLIC project (www.clicproject.eu) to identify innovative financing instruments and promote circular business models for the reuse and regeneration of cultural heritage, fostering experimentation and validation in different contexts, especially in European countries.

12.1.1. Task Force Round Table on circular financing and business models, Naples, September 2023

The investment vehicle "Investire Sostenibile" was unveiled and deliberated in Naples on September 14 during a discussion forum on the topic of "Creating Social Value for the Innovation Ecosystem and Local Community: Innovative Investment Models Spanning Public, Private, and Civic Sectors." The event aimed at delving into the growth of innovative and socially impactful start-ups within the realms of sustainable tourism, cultural heritage, creativity, and preservation across Italy. It provided a distinct opportunity to grasp how these enterprises are transforming the business landscape through circular investment strategies in tourism and cultural and creative sectors, thereby benefiting the local community and positively impacting the local area.



Figure 24 - Task Force Round Table Meeting in Naples

The Round Table was a public event open for all investors and entrepreneurs interested in meaningful opportunities, socially value-oriented initiatives, or simply eager to better understand responsible innovation, collecting experts' feedback on the innovative financing instruments developed by Be.CULTOUR and orienting its development as a pilot initiative at the national level.

Among the speakers, Ivo Allegro, CEO and founder of Initiative Cube, highlighted the need for sustainable investments for initiatives that generate real cultural value and lasting impacts on communities. Indeed, prioritizing the social pillar alongside environmental sustainability requires new financial instruments combining measurable social impacts with economic feasibility.

During the event, Valeria Fascione, the Minister for Startups, Innovation, Internationalisation of Campania Region, also emphasized how the Pledge Fund represents an innovative investment model that can effectively facilitate access to venture capital in a context such as the Italian one, where it is often challenging, especially for SMEs and startups.

12.1.2. Task Force Round Table on circular financing and business models, online, June 2024

In June 2024 a dedicated meeting was organized on the topic "Circular Financing and Business Models for Cultural Heritage across European Regions and Cities."

The objective of this Task Force meeting was to introduce the investment platform "Investire Sostenibile" which has successfully launched at the national level in Italy as a result of the Be.CULTOUR project, and projected to be replicated in other EU countries, leveraging feedback, suggestions, and eventual interest to cooperate from relevant actors in the impact investment, heritage conservation, and heritage economics sectors. The meeting also aimed to gain insights and potential ways forward for the Task Force future development.

During the meeting, Antonia Gravagnuolo, the coordinator of the CLIC project, introduced the Task Force initiative to Be.CULTOUR. This was followed by a detailed presentation by Aliona Lupu, a partner of Iniziativa Cube, on the "Investire Sostenibile" platform, which is a social impact pledge investment vehicle for cultural heritage and tourism.

The panel discussion with Christer Gustafsson, who is a full professor in Conservation at Uppsala University and ICOMOS Advisory Committee Officer, focused on the potential adaptation and replication of the initiative in Sweden in collaboration with the KIC Culture and Creativity. The initiative also garnered interest from financial advisor Sander Winckel, who finds it innovative in attracting private sector funds to achieve social goals, such as preserving cultural heritage and merging commercial with non-commercial investments. Furthermore, there were discussions about the possibility of setting up another fund that could be used Europe-wide in cooperation with initiatives led by Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank.

Additionally, urban regeneration initiatives at the European level, including JASPERS, funded by the European Commission and the European Investment Bank, were mentioned. JASPERS advises



on strategies and projects aligning with EU standards and improving chances of securing EU funding, contributing to a greener, more connected, and more innovative Europe.



13. Be.CULTOUR contribution in International Conferences and Events

Be.CULTOUR was presented at several international and national conferences in many countries, disseminating and communicating its objectives, methodology, tools, approaches and especially results obtained. Below a selection of events that featured Be.CULTOUR.

13.1.1. Discover North-East conference, Romania (online), March 2021

The "Discover North-East" conference, organized by the North-East Regional Development Agency (NERDA) on March 31, 2021, was a pivotal event aimed at bringing together tourism stakeholders to discuss regional development strategies in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference, held online, served as the first significant meeting of the year focused on tourism within the North-East Region of Romania.

The event began at 11:00 AM with a welcome speech by Vasile Asandei, the General Director of NERDA. Asandei highlighted the importance of innovative projects in fostering regional development and resilience, especially in the context of the pandemic's impact on local communities and the tourism sector.

Following the opening address, Ana Paraschiv, Head of the North-East Regional Studies Center and Restart project manager, presented the "RESTART + Communities in Action" project. This segment detailed educational resources for local community development, including a practical guide on building local alliances, a community self-assessment tool, and open educational resources designed to aid in community regeneration.

The conference continued with Alexandra Albu, Head of the Projects and Partnerships Office within the North-East Regional Studies Center, who introduced the "Smart Village" project. This initiative aims to develop entrepreneurship in rural areas through circular economy principles and social innovation. Albu's presentation showcased good practices in local community development, emphasizing the potential of the Smart Village project to revitalize rural economies by equipping local populations with entrepreneurial skills.

After a short break, the conference resumed with a session on the Be.CULTOUR project, a Horizon 2020 initiative focused on cultural tourism. Roxana Pintilescu, Director of the North-East Regional Studies Center, along with Alexandru Matei from ICLEI Local Government for Sustainability in Germany and Anotolie Risina from Asociația "Verde e Moldova" in the Republic of Moldova, discussed the "Stephen the Great and Saint Cultural Route." This cross-border pilot heritage site

aims to promote cultural heritage and sustainable tourism practices between Romania and Moldova. The speakers emphasized the project's role in enhancing local tourism through innovative, human-centered, and circular economy approaches.

Antonia Gravagnuolo, a researcher at CNR IRISS and the coordinator of the Be.CULTOUR project, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the project's objectives and methodologies. Gravagnuolo highlighted the project's goal to move beyond traditional cultural tourism by building heritage innovation networks that drive Europeanisation towards a sustainable, human-centered tourism economy. She detailed the challenges and opportunities for sustainable cultural tourism, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly disrupted the tourism sector.

Gravagnuolo explained how Be.CULTOUR aims to strengthen entrepreneurship, enhance skills, and promote circular economy models in cultural tourism. She emphasized the importance of local community empowerment and co-creation processes in developing innovative solutions for sustainable tourism. The project focuses on various innovation areas, including rural co-living, augmented cultural tourism, sensorial heritage, contemporary heritage interpretations, religious heritage, nature as heritage, and industrial heritage.

The conference concluded with a debate and a summary of key points discussed throughout the sessions. Participants engaged in a lively discussion on the potential of the projects presented and their applicability to local and regional contexts. The event highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts and innovative approaches in addressing the challenges faced by the tourism sector and local communities in the North-East Region.

The "Discover North-East" conference successfully provided a platform for sharing knowledge, best practices, and innovative strategies aimed at fostering sustainable regional development and enhancing the resilience of local communities in the face of global challenges.

13.1.2. SCOUT Conference, Napoli, June 2021

The SCOUT Conference, held on June 4-6, 2021, in Naples, Italy, marked the second edition of this distinguished event focusing on socio-cultural and territorial research in tourism. The conference was organized by the University of Naples Federico II under the auspices of the Rivista di Sociologia del Territorio, Turismo, Tecnologia. It brought together academics, professionals, and students to discuss the intersection of ecotourism, local communities, and territorial experiences within the framework of a new societal paradigm.



The first day of the conference, June 4, commenced with opening remarks by notable figures from the University of Naples Federico II, including Maria Gabriella Graziano, Dora Gambardella, and Stefano Consiglio. This was followed by an introduction to the conference themes by Professor Dionisia Russo Krauss. The morning session featured keynote presentations by prominent scholars such as Jean-Pierre Lozato-Giotart, Fabio Pollice, Fabio Corbisiero, and Ferdinando Boero, who provided insights into the evolving dynamics of tourism and biodiversity. In the afternoon, a roundtable discussion on "Biodiversity and Tourism" was coordinated by Gianluca Attademo and Eugenio Zito. This session included contributions from Antonia Gravagnuolo, who presented the Be.CULTOUR project focusing on sustainable, human-centered tourism innovation, and other experts like Francesco Manfredi, Pippo Pirozzi, and Donatella Porfido. The discussions emphasized the need for sustainable tourism practices that respect and enhance local biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The second day, June 5, was dedicated to methodological workshops aimed at equipping participants with practical research skills. Fabio Corbisiero opened the session, followed by a series of seminars covering various interdisciplinary approaches and techniques for analyzing ecotourism. Topics ranged from digital tourism technologies presented by Amalia Caputo, to social research methods by Salvatore Monaco, and geographical data analysis by Maria Ronza. These sessions were designed to foster a comprehensive understanding of research methodologies applicable to tourism studies.

The final day, June 6, featured a scientific field visit to the WWF Oasi Cratere degli Astroni, a natural reserve near Naples. This excursion allowed participants to observe and discuss the practical aspects of ecotourism planning, development, and management in an urban and peri-urban context. Experts like Donatella Porfido and Valerio Giovanni Russo guided the visit, providing valuable insights into the conservation efforts and biodiversity of the reserve.

The SCOUT Conference underscored the importance of integrating ecological sustainability, community involvement, and cultural preservation in tourism practices. The event concluded with a reinforced commitment to advancing sustainable tourism models that prioritize the resilience of ecosystems and the authenticity of local experiences.

SCOUT II edition program: [Programma-ScOUT.pdf \(osservatorioturismo.com\)](https://osservatorioturismo.com/Programma-ScOUT.pdf)

13.1.3. EU Green Week, online, June 2021

The EU Green Week event organized by the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) on June 7, 2021, focused on the theme "Towards Zero-Pollution Tourism." This online

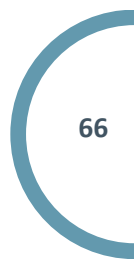
workshop brought together various stakeholders to discuss and promote green and innovative practices in tourism management.

The event began with an introduction from the co-leaders of the ERRIN Cultural Heritage & Tourism Working Group. This was followed by a series of presentations on green and innovative practices in destination management. Aivar Ruukel, a member of the European Destinations of Excellence Network Board of Advisors, highlighted innovative approaches to sustainable tourism in his region.

Next, the workshop explored regional practices with presentations on digital and green approaches to tourism, sustainable mobility practices, and natural heritage preservation. Janie Neumann, Sustainable Tourism Manager at VisitScotland, discussed how digital tools and green strategies are being employed to enhance tourism sustainability in Scotland. Ward Segers, Project Coordinator at VisitLimburg, presented on sustainable mobility practices, showcasing initiatives that reduce the carbon footprint of tourism. Ramón Lasasosa, Councillor for Culture and Festivities at Huesca City Council, shared insights on preserving natural heritage while promoting tourism. A short break provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on the presentations before the workshop resumed with a key presentation by Antonia Gravagnuolo, Project Coordinator at CNR-IRISS, on the Be.CULTOUR project. Gravagnuolo's presentation emphasized the importance of moving beyond traditional cultural tourism towards a human-centered and circular tourism economy. She highlighted the project's goal to enhance cultural heritage and landscape values through innovative, sustainable practices.

The Be.CULTOUR project aims to co-create and test sustainable human-centered innovations for circular cultural tourism. This includes promoting slow mobility systems, sustainable resource consumption, and the regeneration of natural, cultural, and human capital. The project also focuses on the valorization and adaptive reuse of lesser-known or abandoned heritage sites, fostering a healthy and beautiful environment through co-creation with local communities.

After Gravagnuolo's presentation, the workshop proceeded with breakout sessions where participants could delve deeper into specific topics. The breakout sessions included discussions on digital and green tourism, sustainable mobility practices, and natural heritage preservation. Vanessa Glindmeier from Historic Environment Scotland and Claire Munro from Zero Waste Scotland led the session on digital and green tourism. Ward Segers continued his insights on sustainable mobility, and Ramón Lasasosa facilitated the discussion on natural heritage preservation.



The event concluded with reports from the breakout sessions, summarizing the key points and takeaways from the discussions. This final session allowed participants to share their insights and plan the next steps for implementing the innovative practices discussed during the workshop.

Overall, the EU Green Week event organized by ERRIN successfully highlighted the importance of sustainable tourism practices and fostered a collaborative environment for sharing knowledge and strategies. The contributions of speakers like Antonia Gravagnuolo provided valuable insights into how cultural tourism can be transformed to support a zero-pollution future.

13.1.4. CAST final conference, online, June 2021

The CAST Final Conference, held virtually on June 29, 2021, was a significant event focused on "Sustainability and Creative Technologies at the Forefront of the Tourism Industry." Co-funded by the COSME program of the European Commission, the conference aimed to enhance business support and innovation networks to achieve greater impact in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The event began with a welcome ceremony, setting the stage for a day of insightful discussions and presentations. The first session, "Creative and Digital Technologies for Greater Sustainability in the Tourism Sector," highlighted how technological advancements can drive sustainable practices within the tourism industry. Speakers emphasized the integration of digital solutions to reduce environmental impacts and enhance visitor experiences.

Following this, the session "Drivers for Regional Economic Development and Tourism Recovery" addressed the role of sustainable tourism in revitalizing regional economies, particularly in the post-pandemic recovery phase. Experts discussed strategies for leveraging tourism as a catalyst for broader economic growth, focusing on sustainable practices that ensure long-term resilience. The next session, "Open Innovation and Co-creation for a Sustainable Tourism Industry," featured Alessandra Marasco from CNR IRISS. Marasco discussed the importance of collaborative innovation in the tourism sector, emphasizing that such approaches, previously prominent in industrial sectors, are now gaining traction in services, including tourism. She highlighted the Be.CULTOUR project, which leverages open innovation and collaborative networks to promote sustainable, human-centered cultural tourism. The project aims to co-create and test sustainable innovations through collaborative methodologies and improved investment strategies, targeting deprived and over-exploited areas to enhance inclusive economic growth and community well-being.



After a lunch break, the conference resumed with a session on "Investing in Sustainable Tourism and Technology." This session explored smart strategies for unlocking the full potential of the tourism sector responsibly. Speakers discussed various investment opportunities and technological innovations that can drive sustainability while fostering economic growth in the tourism industry.

The conference concluded with a closing ceremony that spotlighted EU support actions in the tourism sector. This final session underscored the EU's commitment to supporting sustainable tourism initiatives and highlighted available resources and funding mechanisms for stakeholders in the tourism industry.

Throughout the conference, the focus remained on fostering collaboration, innovation, and sustainability within the tourism sector. The event successfully brought together diverse stakeholders to share knowledge, best practices, and strategies for driving sustainable development in tourism. The insights and discussions from the CAST Final Conference are expected to have a lasting impact, guiding future initiatives and collaborations in the sector.

13.1.5. ECTN Conference 2021, Athens, October 2021

The ECTN Conference 2021, held from October 20-23 at the Divani Palace Acropolis Hotel in Athens, Greece, celebrated the bicentennial "GREECE 2021: 200 Years after the Revolution". The event brought together experts and stakeholders to discuss trends, case studies, best practices, and new methods in cultural tourism.

A notable contribution came from the Be.CULTOUR project, presented by Antonia Gravagnuolo during the session on walking tourism and slow travel. The presentation, titled "Beyond cultural tourism: heritage innovation networks for a circular and human-centered cultural tourism model," highlighted the project's efforts to promote sustainable and circular tourism practices. Gravagnuolo discussed how the project leverages cultural heritage to foster community engagement, sustainability, and economic development in various pilot sites across Europe.

The conference provided a platform for sharing innovative ideas and strategies, emphasizing the role of cultural tourism in regional development and sustainability. The contributions from Be.CULTOUR and other projects underscored the importance of integrating cultural heritage into broader tourism and development frameworks, promoting responsible and inclusive growth.

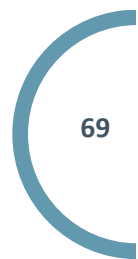
13.1.6. Poster session at COP26, Glasgow, October-November 2021

The COP26 poster session, held as part of the UN Climate Change Conference, showcased numerous projects aimed at addressing climate change and promoting sustainability. Among these was the Be.CULTOUR project, which received significant attention for its innovative approach to cultural tourism.

The Be.CULTOUR poster highlighted the project's main goal: moving beyond conventional tourism through sustainable, human-centered development that enhances cultural heritage and landscape values. This approach incorporates collaborative innovation networks and improved investment strategies to activate sustainable processes and mitigate climate change.

Key aspects of the Be.CULTOUR project include its emphasis on smart destination management, circular tourism, and cultural Europeanisation. The project fosters entrepreneurship, community spirit, and synergy with nature, addressing various crises, including environmental, social-cultural, and health challenges. Innovation areas within the project include experiences related to nature as heritage, industrial heritage, sensorial heritage, rural co-living, and the contemporary meaning of heritage. The project's community includes pilot sites in Vojvodina (Serbia), Larnaca (Cyprus), North-East Romania-Moldova (cross-border), Västra Götaland Region (Sweden), Basilicata Region (Italy), and Teruel (Spain).

The Be.CULTOUR project exemplifies how cultural tourism can contribute to sustainable regional development, providing a model for integrating cultural heritage into broader sustainability efforts. This poster accepted at COP26 underlined the potential of cultural tourism to foster resilience and sustainability in the face of global challenges.





Be.CULTOUR
Beyond cultural tourism

Heritage innovation networks as drivers of Europeanisation towards a human-centred and circular tourism economy

THE GLOBAL SCENARIO



MAIN GOAL



Move beyond tourism through a longer-term human-centred development perspective, enhancing cultural heritage and landscape values in a perspective of circular economy, through collaborative innovation networks and improved investments strategies, in order to activate sustainable processes, also to prevent climate change

Be.CULTOUR APPROACH

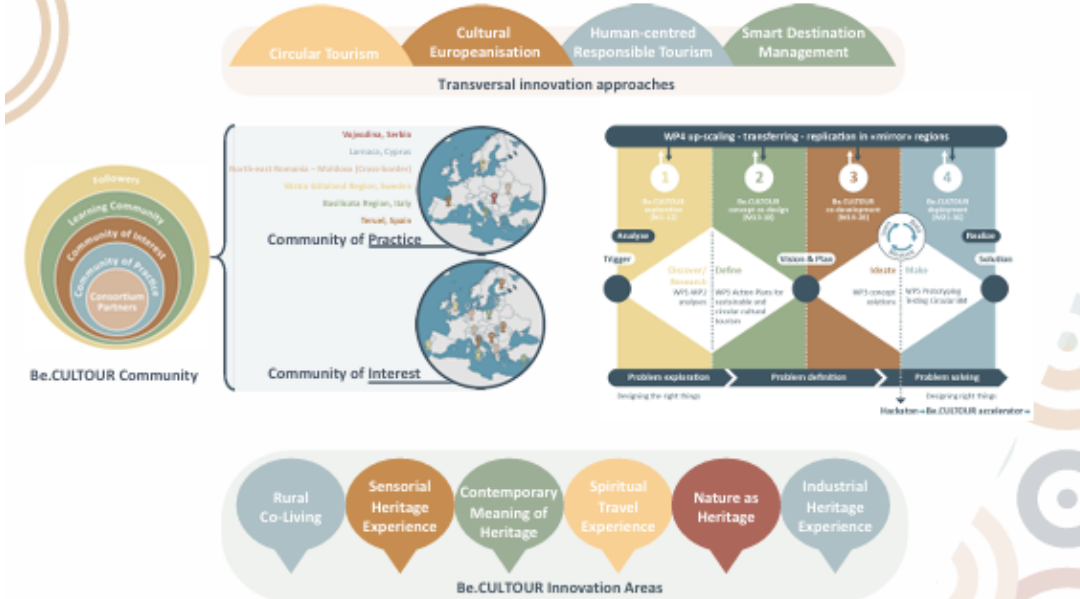


Figure 25 – Be.CULTOUR poster presented at COP26, Glasgow 2021

13.1.7. ILUCIDARE Seminar on Cultural Landscapes: Cultural Heritage as a Development Tool, Madrid, April 2022

The seminar titled "Cultural Landscapes: Cultural Heritage as a Development Tool" took place from April 25th to 28th, 2022, at the Fundación Botín in Madrid. Organized by the ILUCIDARE Project, Fundación Botín, and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, the event addressed the pressing issue of rural depopulation, emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage in fostering sustainable rural development. Experts from various countries shared their insights and case studies, showcasing initiatives aimed at reversing the trends of rural depopulation through the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage.



Figure 26 – ILUCIDARE Seminar on Cultural Landscapes: Cultural Heritage as a Development Tool

The seminar began on April 25th with an inauguration and introduction by Pablo F. Longoria, who outlined the seminar's objectives and highlighted the critical role of cultural heritage in rural development. This was followed by presentations of case studies from Yanacancha – Huaqui in Peru and the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Biosphere Reserve in Mexico. These presentations set the stage for understanding different approaches to utilizing cultural landscapes for sustainable development.

In the afternoon, Rafael Mata Olmo presented on "Territorial Heritage and Local Development in the Cantabrian Mountains (Spain)." His talk provided valuable insights into strategies and experiences of local development through the conservation of territorial heritage. The evening sessions featured Fausto Cardoso discussing the cultural landscapes of the Andean region, and José María Ballester delving into "The Intelligence of the Territory," where he emphasized the intrinsic value of landscapes and their potential for fostering community development and resilience.

The seminar continued on April 26th with a focus on planning and management of cultural and natural heritage to dynamize rural areas. The day's sessions included thematic workshops on the presented case studies, providing participants with practical insights and hands-on experience. Maiti Orfila and Joaquin Pons presented the Menorca Talayótica, Spain's candidature for the World Heritage List in 2022, highlighting the comprehensive management plan required for such initiatives. Daniel Ferrer discussed landscape heritage as an object of study, planning, and territorial development, using the Tierra de Trujillo in Cáceres as an example. Other notable presentations included José Ramón Menéndez de Luarca's exploration of the role of historic paths in territorial construction and José María Civantos's insights on traditional water systems in the 21st century.

April 27th was dedicated to participation and education. Mariano Castellanos Arenas opened the sessions by discussing the Valle de Atlixco in Puebla as a heritage landscape. This was followed by a presentation from the Fundación Botín on their heritage and territorial development projects in Cantabria. Sali Shoshi provided insights into the territory of the Kullas in Kosovo, emphasizing the importance of preserving human heritage. The day concluded with a roundtable debate, fostering a lively discussion among participants.

The final day, April 28th, focused on the economy and tourism. Jordi Treserras spoke about rural cultural tourism and territorial development, highlighting the potential for cultural heritage to drive sustainable tourism. Carmen Hidalgo discussed the industrial heritage of Madrid as a cultural resource, outlining its potential and challenges. The highlight of the day was Antonia Gravagnuolo's presentation on circular economy and the rural world.

Antonia Gravagnuolo, a researcher at CNR IRISS and coordinator of the Horizon 2020 Be.CULTOUR and CLIC projects, delivered an in-depth presentation on "Circular Economy and the Rural World." She began by introducing the Be.CULTOUR project, which stands for "Beyond Cultural Tourism: Heritage Innovation Networks as Drivers of Europeanisation towards a Human-Centred and Circular Tourism Economy." The project's goal is to move beyond traditional tourism towards a longer-term human-centered development perspective, enhancing cultural heritage and landscape values.

Gravagnuolo emphasized the need for a transition towards inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities. She highlighted the significant global and local challenges such as unsustainable linear production-consumption models, rapid urbanization, and rural exodus. The circular economy, she explained, is a sustainability paradigm that aims to decouple growth from resource consumption and promotes closed loops in production and consumption processes. This approach can mitigate climate change impacts, improve human and ecosystem health, and promote social equity.

She detailed how the circular economy principles can be applied to cultural landscape management, including the reuse and regeneration of objects, buildings, sites, and landscapes. Gravagnuolo stressed the importance of leveraging endogenous resources, such as local knowledge and traditional skills, to foster sustainable development. She provided several examples of successful circular economy initiatives, such as the adaptive reuse of rural industrial areas in Sweden and the sustainable De Ceudel community in Amsterdam.

In her presentation, Gravagnuolo also discussed the role of cultural heritage in promoting well-being and preventing unnecessary land use changes. She highlighted the potential of cultural landscapes, like historic rural terraced landscapes, to provide ecosystem services and enhance community resilience. The presentation included case studies like the "Adopt a Terrace" project in the Brenta Valley, Italy, which revitalized abandoned terraced landscapes through community involvement and crowdfunding.

Gravagnuolo concluded her presentation by emphasizing the strategic opportunities for circular rural development. She highlighted the importance of sustainable services and infrastructure for residents, circular tourism entrepreneurship, education and training, and the reuse and regeneration of cultural heritage and landscapes. The discussion that followed her presentation reinforced the critical role of cultural heritage in driving sustainable development and the need for innovative models to revitalize rural areas.

The seminar concluded with a roundtable discussion, where participants reflected on the presentations and explored future directions for using cultural heritage as a tool for sustainable



rural development. The event underscored the importance of interdisciplinary approaches, local participation, and innovative models to revitalize rural areas and preserve their cultural landscapes.

Seminar agenda: [Programa-ILUCIDARE-SEMINARIO-PROGRAMA-29-marzo-2022_2.pdf](https://www.fundacionbotin.org/Programa-ILUCIDARE-SEMINARIO-PROGRAMA-29-marzo-2022_2.pdf)
([fundacionbotin.org](https://www.fundacionbotin.org))

13.1.8. GAL Escarton workshop, Susa - Italy (hybrid), May 2022

The GAL Escarton workshop, held on May 17, 2022, focused on exploring sustainable mountain tourism under the Living Lab initiative. Organized by A.L. Escartons e Valli Valdesi s.r.l., the event gathered stakeholders to discuss innovative strategies and best practices for promoting sustainability in mountain tourism.

The workshop opened with a welcome address and an introduction to the day's agenda, setting the stage for presentations and discussions on sustainability in mountain tourism.

Aliona Lupu contributed significantly to the workshop with her presentation on the challenges and opportunities in mountain tourism. She emphasized the need for sustainable practices to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of mountain regions. Lupu shared various case studies and successful initiatives that have balanced tourism development with environmental conservation, providing a comprehensive overview of current best practices in the field.

Antonia Gravagnuolo also made a notable contribution with her insights on innovative tools and technologies supporting sustainable tourism. She discussed the role of digital platforms, eco-friendly infrastructure, and community engagement in creating sustainable tourism models. Gravagnuolo highlighted how these tools could be applied in different contexts to enhance sustainability, encouraging participants to consider their own applications of these innovations.

The workshop's interactive session facilitated group discussions and activities where participants identified practical solutions and collaborative approaches to overcome challenges in mountain tourism. This session fostered a sense of community and shared purpose among attendees, promoting the exchange of ideas and experiences.

Afternoon sessions delved into policy and funding opportunities for sustainable tourism projects. Experts provided insights into grants and funding mechanisms available to support sustainable tourism initiatives, which was crucial information for participants looking to implement or expand their projects.

The event concluded with a wrap-up session summarizing the day's key takeaways. Participants reflected on the insights gained and discussed next steps for continuing the dialogue and



collaboration initiated during the workshop. Organizers emphasized the importance of ongoing engagement and building on the momentum generated by the event.

Overall, the GAL Escarton workshop was a successful and impactful event that brought together diverse stakeholders to discuss and promote sustainable mountain tourism. Contributions from Aliona Lupu and Antonia Gravagnuolo were instrumental in providing valuable insights and practical strategies for advancing sustainability in tourism practices.

13.1.9. Mirabilia Network Event and the Charter of Cison di Valmarino, Italy, May 2022

From June 28 to 31, 2022, the Be.CULTOUR team participated in the Mirabilia Network Conference, organized by the European network of UNESCO Heritage Sites. This event, representing 18 chambers of commerce from across Italy, focused on sustainability as a competitive element in cultural tourism.

During the conference, Be.CULTOUR played a significant role by presenting its innovative model for circular and human-centered cultural tourism. This model goes "beyond tourism" by embedding principles of regenerative economy, focusing on human capital, education, and the well-being of both visitors and residents. The Be.CULTOUR project aims to leverage cultural heritage to drive sustainable economic development and inspire a shift towards responsible tourism practices.



Figure 27 – Be.CULTOUR team at Castelbrando, Cison di Valmarino, May 2022

One of the key outcomes of the conference was the signing of the "Charter of Cison di Valmarino." This charter underscores the commitment of the involved chambers of commerce to promote

sustainable cultural tourism. It sets out guidelines and principles aimed at enhancing the cultural heritage sector's sustainability, fostering local community engagement, and ensuring that tourism practices contribute positively to both the environment and society.

The Be.CULTOUR project's participation in the Mirabilia Network Conference highlighted the importance of integrating cultural heritage with sustainable tourism practices. The project's emphasis on circular economy principles and community involvement aligns with the goals set out in the Charter of Cison di Valmarino, marking a significant step towards more sustainable and inclusive cultural tourism across Europe.

Charter of Cison di Valmarino: [Carta di Cison di Valmarino_firmaMP.pdf \(becultour.eu\)](#)

13.1.10. *RURITAGE Final Conference, Paris, June 2022*

The RURITAGE Final Conference took place from June 8-10, 2022, at UNESCO in Paris, gathering experts and stakeholders to discuss the transformative power of cultural heritage in rural regeneration. The event highlighted innovative approaches to sustainable rural development and celebrated the achievements of the RURITAGE project.

One of the key contributions to the conference was presented by Igor Pucarevic, the Be.CULTOUR National Project Coordinator in Serbia. His presentation focused on the Be.CULTOUR project, which is dedicated to promoting sustainable and human-centered tourism in culturally rich, yet often overlooked, regions.



Figure 28 – RURITAGE final conference, Paris, 2022

(Source: RURITAGE website [RURITAGE Final Conference – 9 &10 June 2022 at UNESCO, Paris – Ruritage](#))

Igor Pucarevic emphasized the project's aim to co-create and test sustainable innovations in circular cultural tourism through collaborative networks and improved investment strategies. He highlighted how the project targets deprived, remote, and deindustrialized areas, fostering inclusive economic growth, community well-being, and resilience. By developing long-term heritage-led development plans, the project enhances cultural heritage and landscape values while promoting eco-friendly tourism practices.

The presentation detailed the specific initiatives undertaken in Serbia, particularly in the regions of Bač, Sremski Karlovci, and Irig in Vojvodina. These areas are rich in cultural, religious, and natural heritage, and the project has facilitated the development of a local action plan for circular cultural tourism. This plan was co-created through participatory approaches, involving local stakeholders from various sectors in nine in-vivo workshops and nine online meetings, engaging 260 participants.

Igor highlighted the project's success in building a Community of Practice and a Community of Interest, fostering knowledge-sharing and the replication of best practices across Europe. By focusing on innovative areas such as sensorial heritage experiences, rural co-living, and nature as heritage, Be.CULTOUR has significantly contributed to the sustainable development of these regions.

In conclusion, the RURITAGE Final Conference successfully showcased the impact of cultural heritage on rural regeneration. The Be.CULTOUR project, represented by Igor Pucarevic, exemplified how sustainable and human-centered tourism can drive regional development, enhance cultural heritage, and improve community resilience, aligning with the broader goals of the RURITAGE initiative.

13.1.11. Re-Think Circular Economy Forum, Napoli, June 2022

The Re-Think event held in Naples focused on sustainable transitions in various sectors, including tourism. Among the notable contributions was the presentation by Antonia Gravagnuolo from the Be.CULTOUR project, supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 program. The presentation highlighted the project's goal of moving beyond traditional tourism towards a human-centered, circular economy that enhances cultural heritage and landscape values.

Gravagnuolo addressed the challenges faced by the tourism sector, such as over-tourism, resource consumption, and seasonal fluctuations. She emphasized the importance of an ecosystemic approach where human health and natural resource regeneration are intertwined. The Be.CULTOUR project proposes a shift towards sustainable and circular cultural tourism, promoting long-term economic impacts, social responsibility, and community engagement.

The presentation outlined various innovative approaches within the project, including circular business models, co-creation tools, and collaborative innovation networks. Gravagnuolo showcased pilot sites across Europe, such as Vojvodina in Serbia, Larnaca in Cyprus, and the Basilicata region in Italy, where these strategies are being implemented to foster sustainable regional development.

Overall, the Re-Think event successfully underscored the transformative potential of integrating cultural heritage into sustainable tourism practices. The Be.CULTOUR project, through its emphasis on community involvement and responsible tourism, offers a model for addressing contemporary challenges and advancing towards a more sustainable future.

Re-Think event website: [Re-think](#)

13.1.12. International Workshop on The Urban Challenge, Naples, June 2022

The International Workshop on "The Urban Challenge" took place on June 22-23, 2022, at the Department of Architecture, University of Naples Federico II, Italy. This hybrid event was organized in collaboration with the Institute for Research on Innovation and Services for Development (CNR-IRISS), The Regional Science Academy (TRSA), Pegaso University, and the Laboratory of Research on Creative and Sustainable City.

The workshop began on June 22nd with a welcome coffee, followed by an opening ceremony. The ceremony featured key speakers including Matteo Lorito, Rector of the University of Naples Federico II, Michelangelo Russo, Director of the Department of Architecture, and Laura Lieto, an urban planner and Council Member of the city of Naples. These speakers set the stage for the day's discussions, emphasizing the importance of addressing urban challenges and leveraging cultural heritage.

The keynote presentation by Saskia Sassen from Columbia University, New York, focused on the major challenges of urban capabilities and urban landscapes. This insightful session highlighted the complexities and opportunities within urban environments, setting a thought-provoking tone for the rest of the workshop.

Following a coffee break, the first session delved into the CLIC Framework and the Cascadic Action Plan, chaired by Karima Kourtit from The Open University. Luigi Fusco Girard from the University



of Naples Federico II presented the outcomes of the CLIC HORIZON 2020 Research, followed by Ana Pereira Roders from the University of Delft, who spoke about adaptive reuse and cultural strategy. Ugo Guarnacci from the European Commission addressed the current urban challenges and the role of EU research and innovation in connecting various initiatives.

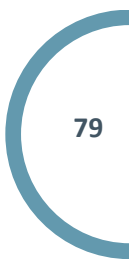
After lunch, the focus shifted to urban well-being and happiness. This session, chaired by Ugo Guarnacci, featured presentations on topics such as cityphilia and cityphobia in Flanders by Peter Nijkamp, Karima Kourtit, Bart Neuts, and Marie H. Wahlström, and the impact of creativity and digitalization on urban challenges, presented by Roberto Camagni from the Politecnico of Milan. Tigran Haas from KTH-Stockholm provided insights into the future of post-COVID-19 cities.

The afternoon continued with a session on circular cities and innovative governance models, chaired by Pui Hang Wong from Maastricht University. Giampaolo D'Andrea discussed Matera as the 2019 European Capital of Culture, and Stefano Zamagni from the University of Bologna spoke about the transition from "Urbs" to "Civitas" and the New European Bauhaus. Marilena Vecco from Université Bourgogne Franche-Comté explored cultural heritage and circular business models.

The day concluded with a roundtable discussion on the urban challenge, chaired by Karima Kourtit, featuring panelists such as Saskia Sassen, Stefano Zamagni, Roberto Camagni, Luigi Fusco Girard, Peter Nijkamp, and Tigran Haas. This session provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions and reflections on the day's themes.

On June 23rd, the second day of the workshop began with a welcome coffee and an opening ceremony led by Massimo Clemente, Director of CNR-IRISS, and Francesco Fabbrocino from Pegaso University. The initial session focused on analytical advances, chaired by Peter Nijkamp. Pui Hang Wong from Maastricht University presented on climate change policy adoption at the city level, followed by Alexandru Banica and colleagues discussing the threats and opportunities for resilience and sustainability in global cities. Zeynep Elburz from Dokuz Eylul University examined changes in spatial structures using Izmir as a case study, and Karima Kourtit addressed urban-rural dichotomies in post-COVID-19 Europe.

After a coffee break, the workshop explored contemporary experiences in urban development. Alexandru Banica and colleagues discussed building livable cities in post-socialist European countries. Francesca Nocca and Pasquale De Toro from the University of Naples Federico II proposed integrating the Level(s) evaluation tool for circular economy and cultural heritage conservation. Francesco Fabbrocino from Pegaso University spoke on the transition from city regeneration to material regeneration.



The final session, chaired by Alexandru Banica, focused on new ways of addressing urban challenges. Maria Cerreta and colleagues from the University of Naples Federico II discussed imaginaries, value creation, and cultural ecosystem services. Martina Bosone and Antonia Gravagnuolo from CNR-IRISS, along with Mariarosaria Angrisano from Pegaso University and Francesca Buglione from the University of Naples Federico II, highlighted the potential of cultural heritage adaptive reuse.

The workshop concluded with remarks by Peter Nijkamp, Luigi Fusco Girard, and Karima Kourtit, followed by farewell drinks. The event successfully brought together a diverse group of scholars and practitioners to discuss and develop strategies for tackling urban challenges, emphasizing the critical role of innovation, cultural heritage, and collaborative governance in shaping sustainable urban futures.

13.1.13. ECTN Awards, Krk - Croatia, October 2022

The European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN) hosted its 2022 awards ceremony on October 20, in Krk, Croatia, as part of the 15th Cultural Tourism Conference. This year's theme, "Relaunching European Tourism through Cultural Heritage & Digitalisation," highlighted innovative and sustainable approaches in the cultural tourism sector.

A major highlight of the event was the recognition of the Sciacca community cooperative, "Identità e Bellezza," which operates the Five Senses Open-Air Museum in Sciacca, Sicily. This project was awarded the 1st prize in the category "Cooperation between Museums and Cultural Heritage Sites." The cooperative's efforts in integrating local culture, crafts, and traditions into the tourism experience were praised for significantly improving visitor engagement while respecting and involving the local community.

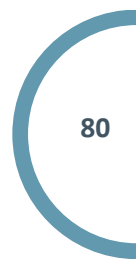




Figure 29 – Viviana Rizzuto from Sciacca Community Cooperative at the ECTN Awards 2022

The Five Senses Open-Air Museum is part of the Be.CULTOUR network, a project aimed at fostering sustainable, human-centered, and circular tourism economies. The award is a testament to the community's dedication and collaborative spirit, emphasizing the importance of local involvement in preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

The 2022 edition of the ECTN Awards received numerous entries from across Europe, with categories covering medieval heritage, digitalization in tourism, and transnational thematic tourism products. Winners were celebrated for their innovative approaches and contributions to sustainable cultural tourism, setting a benchmark for other destinations to follow. The awards ceremony provided a platform for sharing best practices and promoting networking among cultural tourism stakeholders.

Overall, the ECTN Awards 2022 underscored the significant role of cultural heritage in revitalizing tourism post-pandemic, showcasing how digitalization and sustainable practices can enhance visitor experiences and support local communities.

ECTN announcement: [Award 2022 - Sustainable Cultural Tourism development and promotion across Europe \(culturaltourism-network.eu\)](https://culturaltourism-network.eu)

13.1.14. International Conference on Creative Tourism, Regenerative Development, and Destination Resilience, Portugal, November 2022

The "Creative Tourism, Regenerative Development, and Destination Resilience" conference, held from November 8-10, 2022, in Ribeira Grande, São Miguel Island, Azores, Portugal, was a significant gathering that brought together experts and stakeholders to explore sustainable and innovative tourism practices. The event covered themes such as creative and regenerative tourism, the connection between culture, tourism, and local well-being, and the sustainability of cultural practices within tourism.

Be.CULTOUR project was presented by Ruba Saleh from ICHEC Brussels Management School, focusing on the enhancement of cultural heritage sites through innovative tourism strategies that not only preserve these sites but also promote sustainable local development. Ruba Saleh discussed how the Be.CULTOUR project contributed to revitalize cultural heritage by creating unique tourism experiences that are both eco-friendly and community-centered.

The Be.CULTOUR project contributes significantly to the field of sustainable tourism by emphasizing the importance of community involvement. Local communities are encouraged to actively participate in tourism development, ensuring that they receive economic and social benefits. The project also integrates sustainable practices into tourism activities, helping to protect and preserve local environments while promoting cultural heritage.

Overall, the conference successfully underscored the importance of integrating creative tourism with regenerative development to achieve destination resilience. The Be.CULTOUR project exemplifies this integration by combining cultural heritage with sustainable tourism practices, thereby benefiting both the sites and the local communities involved.

Conference website: <https://www.ces.uc.pt/creative-azores/#programme>

Book of abstracts: https://www.ces.uc.pt/creative-azores/documents/Book_of_Abstracts.pdf

13.1.15. SmartCulTour Final Conference on Culture as Catalyst: Redefining Cultural Tourism for Sustainable Destinations, May 2023

The SmartCulTour Final Conference, themed "Culture as Catalyst: Redefining Cultural Tourism for Sustainable Destinations," was held in Brussels on May 24, 2023. This event marked the

culmination of the H2020 SmartCulTour project, which has aimed to leverage cultural tourism as a driver for sustainable regional development across Europe.

The conference featured a range of discussions on the integration of cultural tourism with sustainable development practices. Key topics included the impact of cultural tourism on regional development, strategies for involving local communities, and the promotion of both tangible and intangible cultural assets, especially in rural and peripheral urban areas.

A significant highlight was the presentation of the Be.CULTOUR project by Ruba Saleh. Her presentation underscored the project's focus on enhancing cultural heritage sites through innovative and sustainable tourism strategies. She emphasized the importance of community engagement in tourism development, ensuring that local populations benefit economically and socially from tourism activities. Additionally, the project promotes eco-friendly practices to preserve local environments and cultural sites.

The conference successfully showcased the potential of cultural tourism to contribute to sustainable regional development. The insights shared, particularly those from the Be.CULTOUR project, provided valuable perspectives on integrating cultural heritage preservation with modern tourism practices, highlighting the project's role in fostering sustainable and inclusive growth in European regions.

Conference programme online: [SmartCulTour Final Conference – SmartCulTour](#)

13.1.16. International Conference on Cultural Tourism Advances, Brussels, June 2023

Be.CULTOUR project has co-organized the International Conference on "Cultural Tourism Advances", that took place on 27-28 June 2023 in Brussels. The Conference was organized in collaboration with the European Research Executive Agency and five other EU-funded H2020 research and innovation projects: IMPACTOUR, SmartCulTour, SPOT, TEXTOUR, and INCULTUM. The Conference aimed to explore cultural tourism's sustainable development potential by focusing on successful policy interventions, new cultural tourism trends, innovation tourism management, and business and governance models.



Figure 30 - International Conference on Cultural Tourism Advances

It covered different engaging topics that span across the spectrum of cultural tourism and its multifaceted impacts and practices. Key themes included exploring cultural tourism policy, where discussions delved into how policies can shape the landscape of tourism to foster cultural exchange while ensuring sustainability and preservation.

Similarly, the management and governance of cultural tourism were brought to the forefront, highlighting the need for effective strategies and frameworks that can support both the growth of the tourism sector and the protection of cultural heritage. The concept of dynamic visitor management systems was also introduced, suggesting a move towards more adaptable and responsive approaches in managing tourist flows to enhance visitor experiences and mitigate negative impacts on local communities and sites.

A significant emphasis was placed on the contribution of tourism to regional development and resilience. This discussion explored how cultural tourism can act as a vehicle for economic development, social cohesion, and the strengthening of regional identities. Transformative tourism was also discussed, touching upon how tourism activities can lead to profound personal and societal changes, promoting sustainability and ethical encounters with different cultures.

The conference began with an introduction from Jan van der Borg of KU Leuven. The keynote address by Greg Richards from Tilburg University set the stage by exploring the creativity of cultural tourism and its potential to foster sustainability and inclusion.

The first session focused on **participatory approaches to cultural tourism management**, moderated by Antonia Gravagnuolo from Be.CULTOUR project. Following a coffee break, the second session explored **responsible, circular, and human-centered regional development potential**. Vanessa Glindmeier from Historic Environment Scotland, Be.CULTOUR mirror ecosystem in the role of Adviser, shared her experiences at in transforming tourism at a film-induced heritage visitor attraction, emphasizing the need for responsible tourism practices. Martina Bosone and Antonia Gravagnuolo returned to discuss the co-creation of strategic action plans for cultural tourism, highlighting the collaborative processes that ensure these plans are sustainable and community-focused. Antonia Gravagnuolo introduced then a framework for assessing the impact of circular cultural tourism in less-known and remote destinations. This approach aims to provide decision support for sustainable tourism development, ensuring that cultural tourism positively contributes to local economies and environments.

The afternoon session focused on **new data methods and digital tools in cultural tourism**. Presentations included advanced tools for dynamic cultural tourism management and regional development, holistic digital cultural heritage documentation, computational text analysis for identifying cultural tourists, and the application of 3D visualization in sustainable cultural tourism planning by Peter Nijkamp, Karima Kourtit, Henk Scholten, & Yneke van Iersel from Be.CULTOUR project.

The final session focused on **future outlooks to cultural tourism trends and policies**. Eudokia Balamou from the Larnaca rural area, a pilot heritage site in the Be.CULTOUR project, contributed to the discussion by sharing results and challenges from Larnaca. Her insights highlighted the practical implications and hurdles faced in implementing sustainable cultural tourism in rural settings.

The second day began with a keynote from Ronald de Bruin of the European Cooperation in Science & Technology (COST), followed by a session on **lessons learnt from six Horizon 2020 projects in cultural tourism**. This session provided a comprehensive overview of outcomes and best practices from ongoing experimentations across diverse European regions. Antonia Gravagnuolo, representing Be.CULTOUR, shared valuable insights, highlighting the collective progress in cultural tourism and the commitment to sustainable and inclusive development.

The conference concluded with a panel discussion on contemporary and future cultural tourism trends and policy strategies, chaired by Rodrigo Martín Galán. This session identified the current state-of-the-art, gaps in knowledge, and their integration into European policies and executive branches.

Overall, the International Conference on Cultural Tourism Advances successfully highlighted the transformative potential of cultural tourism in fostering sustainable regional development. The contributions from the Be.CULTOUR project underscored the importance of innovative, responsible, and community-centered approaches in evolving cultural tourism practices across Europe. The Conference also addressed the digital domain, discussing virtual museums, augmented reality, and the potentialities of innovative technologies in preserving cultural heritage. The papers presented during the Conference will be published in a **Springer conference proceedings book** reflecting the breakthroughs and future perspectives of cultural tourism.

Conference website: <https://ees.kuleuven.be/en/culturaltourismconference>

13.1.17. ACIT23 - Accelerating Climate Innovation in Tourism, Historic Environment Scotland, September 2023

The International Conference on “Accelerating Climate Innovation in Tourism: New Approaches for Cultural Heritage” (ACIT23) took place on September 27-28, 2023, in Stirling, Scotland. Hosted by Historic Environment Scotland, this hybrid event marked the launch of HES’s Responsible Tourism Framework during Scotland’s Climate Week. The conference brought together global experts to share insights and strategies for integrating responsible tourism approaches that benefit people, the planet, and prosperity.

The conference opened with a focus on the green transition of cultural heritage tourism. Presentations highlighted how circular economy principles could be embedded in tourism practices, sharing examples of low-carbon itineraries and sustainable travel infrastructure that allow visitors to be responsible customers, emphasizing the positive environmental impacts of these practices.

Another significant session delved into cultural heritage tourism's value, highlighting its contribution to community wellbeing and sense of place. Discussions showcased how meaningful interactions between locals and visitors could be fostered by unlocking local knowledge and co-creating experiences. This session also explored training and upskilling opportunities, focusing on developing green skills and career pathways in responsible heritage and cultural tourism.

Innovation was a central theme of the conference, particularly in achieving net zero tourism. Presenters shared examples of partnerships and cross-sectoral collaborations that led to innovative approaches to decarbonizing tourism. They also discussed the role of digital and virtual processes in enhancing accessibility to heritage and cultural tourism experiences.

A significant contribution came from the Be.CULTOUR project, presented by Antonia Gravagnuolo. She discussed the project's focus on moving beyond traditional tourism to a human-centered, circular economy that enhances cultural heritage and landscape values. Gravagnuolo highlighted the project's innovative approaches, such as circular business models, co-creation tools, and collaborative innovation networks. She emphasized how these strategies are being implemented in pilot sites across Europe, including Vojvodina in Serbia, Larnaca in Cyprus, and the Basilicata region in Italy, to foster sustainable regional development.

Eudokia Balamou, the Project Coordinator for the Larnaca rural area in Cyprus, added valuable insights by sharing the results and challenges from her region. Her contribution underscored the practical implications and hurdles faced in implementing sustainable cultural tourism in rural settings.

The conference provided ample opportunities for networking, allowing participants to share ideas and identify actionable steps to improve tourism's impact on people, the planet, and prosperity through innovation. Overall, ACIT23 successfully highlighted the transformative potential of responsible tourism in driving sustainable development within the cultural heritage sector. The contributions from the Be.CULTOUR project and other participants underscored the importance of integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations into tourism practices.

13.1.18. ECTN Conference 2023, Pafos, October 2023

The ECTN Conference 2023 took place from October 18-21 at the Attikon Cultural Centre and Annabelle Hotel in Pafos, Cyprus. This event, held under the auspices of the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Cyprus, brought together experts and stakeholders to discuss trends, best practices, and innovations in cultural tourism.

The conference began with an opening ceremony featuring addresses from notable figures such as the ECTN President, the Cyprus Deputy Minister of Tourism, and representatives from the European Parliament, European Commission, and UNESCO. The evening concluded with a cultural program and cocktail reception.

The second day included parallel sessions on various topics such as digitalization, smart tourism, history, heritage, and sustainable cultural tourism. A highlight of the day was the contribution from the Be.CULTOUR project, presented by Antonia Gravagnuolo. The session titled “Beyond Cultural Tourism - Be.CULTOUR project” focused on heritage innovation networks for a circular and human-centered cultural tourism model. Gravagnuolo's presentation emphasized the

project's efforts to promote sustainable tourism through innovative approaches and collaborative networks across Europe.

The conference also featured sessions on transnational thematic tourism, including the TRACE project, which discussed SMEs transitioning to a European Circular Tourism Ecosystem, and contributions from various other Horizon 2020 projects like SmartCulTour and TExTOUR. These sessions provided valuable insights into sustainable heritage management and innovative tourism practices.

The final day included plenary sessions and presentations from finalists of the ECTN Awards 2023. Categories included digitalization advances in sustainable cultural tourism, history and heritage-related experiences, and traditional skills and crafts in sustainable tourism activities.

The conference concluded with study visits to the Archaeological Park, Old Town Pafos, and the Pafos District Archaeological Museum, offering participants a practical glimpse into the region's rich cultural heritage.

Overall, the ECTN Conference 2023 successfully highlighted the importance of integrating cultural heritage into sustainable tourism practices, with significant contributions from projects like Be.CULTOUR that are paving the way for innovative and responsible tourism models.

13.1.19. Urbanpromo, Florence, November 2023

The Urbanpromo 2023 conference, held in Florence, was a comprehensive event focusing on innovative urban planning, sustainable development, and cultural tourism. The conference spanned several days, featuring a wide array of sessions, workshops, and presentations by experts from various fields.

The event kicked off with opening remarks and a keynote session that set the stage for the subsequent discussions on urban sustainability, resilience, and regeneration. Various thematic sessions covered topics such as smart cities, green infrastructure, and the role of technology in urban development.

Maria Cerreta and Antonia Gravagnuolo presented the Horizon 2020 Be.CULTOUR project. Their presentation focused on developing circular and human-centered models to regenerate and valorize lesser-known cultural sites through sustainable cultural tourism. They discussed the project's objectives, methodologies, and the pilot sites across Europe. Innovative solutions and digital tools were highlighted, emphasizing their role in promoting sustainable tourism and community engagement.

Throughout the conference, numerous case studies and best practices were shared, illustrating successful urban regeneration projects and sustainable tourism initiatives. The sessions also

provided opportunities for interactive discussions, networking, and collaboration among participants.

The conference concluded with a plenary session summarizing the key insights and outlining future directions for urban planning and sustainable development.

A volume will be published as conference proceedings, which is currently in preparation.

For more detailed information, you can visit the [Urbanpromo 2023 program](#).

13.1.20. CHNT28 Conference, Austria, November 2023

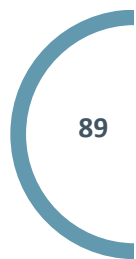
The 28th International Conference on Cultural Heritage and New Technologies (CHNT 28) was held from November 15 to November 17, 2023, in Vienna. The conference theme, "Cultural Heritage as a Resource: Technologies for the Paradigm Shift in Archaeology, Conservation and Education," brought together experts to discuss innovative approaches and the application of new technologies in cultural heritage.

One of the key sessions focused on "Climate-change related Transformation and Effects of Cultural Tourism at Heritage Sites." This session explored the impacts of climate change on cultural heritage sites and how tourism exacerbates these challenges, while also looking at potential mitigation strategies.

Cristina Garzillo and Antonia Gravagnuolo presented their work titled "Cultural landscapes under the threat of tourism and climate change: lessons from Europe." They highlighted the dual pressures of tourism and climate change on cultural landscapes, emphasizing the need for integrated approaches to manage and preserve these sites. Their presentation drew on examples from various European regions, showcasing how sustainable practices can mitigate adverse effects and enhance the resilience of cultural landscapes.

Christer Gustafsson contributed with his presentation on "Cultural Heritage and Circular Business Models." He discussed the application of circular economy principles to heritage management, which can enhance sustainability and resilience. Gustafsson underscored the importance of innovative governance and business models in adapting heritage sites to climate-related challenges while promoting sustainable tourism.

The session provided a platform for sharing knowledge and strategies to protect cultural heritage in the face of climate change and tourism pressures. The insights from Garzillo, Gravagnuolo, and Gustafsson underscored the urgent need for interdisciplinary approaches and innovative solutions to safeguard heritage sites for future generations.



The conference overall emphasized the role of technology in preserving cultural heritage, with various sessions addressing topics such as digitalization, documentation, and climate adaptation. The discussions highlighted the critical importance of sustainable practices and technological advancements in ensuring the longevity and integrity of cultural heritage sites.

Conference programme and abstracts: [Programme – CHNT](#)

13.1.21. INCULTUM final conference, Guadix - Spain, April 2024

The INCULTUM International Conference, held on April 12, 2024, in Guadix, Andalusia, was a significant gathering aimed at discussing and advancing innovative practices in cultural tourism. Organized by the University of Granada and hosted by ENTURNA, the International School of Rural Tourism, this event brought together researchers, practitioners, and stakeholders from various cultural tourism projects to present findings, share knowledge, and explore future directions.

The conference served as a platform to showcase the outcomes of the INCULTUM project, which focuses on promoting cultural tourism in Europe's peripheral regions. This initiative aims to address the challenges faced by over-touristic destinations, such as gentrification, seasonality, and the over-consumption of natural and cultural resources. By leveraging European Structural and Investment Funds, INCULTUM provides valuable insights into the management and impact of cultural heritage projects, preparing for further exploitation by the partners and triggering the next phases of implementation and replication in new areas across the European Union.

A highlight of the conference was the extensive contribution of the Be.CULTOUR project. Standing for "Beyond CULTural TOURism: heritage innovation networks as drivers of Europeanisation towards a human-centred and circular tourism economy," Be.CULTOUR emphasizes the importance of moving beyond traditional tourism. The project aims to co-create and test sustainable, human-centered innovations for circular cultural tourism through collaborative networks and improved investment strategies. Targeting deprived, remote, peripheral, or deindustrialized areas, Be.CULTOUR co-develops long-term heritage-led development projects that enhance inclusive economic growth, community well-being, and resilience.

Dr. Antonia Gravagnuolo, a researcher at the National Research Council of Italy (CNR ISPC), presented on behalf of Be.CULTOUR. Her work focuses on integrating circular economy models within heritage conservation, emphasizing the need for sustainable and regenerative practices. The Be.CULTOUR approach includes fostering local heritage innovation networks, which engage various stakeholders in developing action plans for circular cultural tourism. This methodology

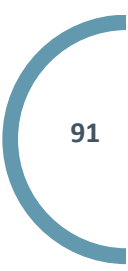


promotes cooperation at cross-border, regional, and local levels, ensuring the replication of best practices across Europe.

The conference also featured other notable contributions, such as the EUreka3D project, which explores the role of 3D digitization in promoting and preserving cultural heritage. This project demonstrated how advanced digital tools could support territory promotion and heritage diffusion, further enriching the discussions at the conference.

In conclusion, the INCULTUM International Conference successfully highlighted the importance of collaborative and innovative efforts in cultural tourism. Be.CULTOUR's contributions were particularly significant, showcasing sustainable and human-centered approaches to cultural tourism that can serve as a model for future initiatives. The event not only celebrated the achievements of these projects but also set the stage for continued exploration and implementation of innovative cultural tourism practices across Europe.

Conference website: [INCULTUM International Conference](#)



14. Final Events in Pilot Heritage Sites

From December 2023 to June 2024 a series of event took place at the Pilot Heritage Sites involved in the Be.CULTOUR project. The final events were organized to celebrate the conclusion of three years of work and shared the results and the goals achieved.

14.1. Tourism Gala in North-East Romania

On 20 December 2023, the North-East Regional Development Agency, through the EUROPE DIRECT North-East Centre and the North-East Regional Centre for Studies, organized the 8th edition of the Tourism Gala "Discover North-East".



Figure 31 - The Tourism Gala in North-East Romania

This year, the Gala was hosted by Neamț County, with Târgu-Neamț City Hall as the main partner and other partners such as Neamț County Council, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova, Moldova Invest, Center for Culture and Arts "Carmen Saeculare" Neamț, Zinutul Zimbrului Association, National Agency of the Mountain Area (ANZM), Ecotourism Association of Țara Dornelor, Association for the Promotion of the Șomuzului Valley, Iași Travel, Suceava County

Council, Botoșani County Council, OMD Piatra-Neamț and Incoming Romania Association. Media partners are TVR, TVR Iași, Viva FM, Radio Iași, Televiziunea Intermedia, Radio Hit Iași, Mesagerul de Neamț, Jurnal FM, Crai Nou, Viața Nemțeană and Ziar Târgu-Neamț.

The event is the annual meeting of regional and central actors involved in tourism and cultural activities, representatives of HORECA industry companies, local public administration, cultural institutions, academia, organizations and associations working in the field of tourism and cultural heritage from all over the region, as well as local, regional and national media. The current edition focused on stimulating partnerships in the field of tourism, with a special focus on cultural, gastronomic and regional ecotourism, as well as on the development of cross-border tourist routes connecting the North-East Region and the Republic of Moldova. The event took place at the Aristocratis Pension in Targu Neamt, at 10.30. The program of the event included: The EUROPE DIRECT "Cross-border partnerships and networks" conference, Regio.Digi.Hub Conference - Promotion and financing in regional development. A series of simultaneous workshops: Cultural and Religious Tourism- Be.CULTOUR, aflat in transition from mass tourism to eco-tourism, where was discussed the integration of spirituality in the tourism journey and the valorization of local communities through cultural-tourist routes. It also debated the role of digitalization for the rediscovery of cultural heritage and will find examples of good practices from the region. Gastronomic Tourism - Flavours of Europe, Ecotourism - EUROPE DIRECT. Gastronomic Exhibition, Contact Exchange, with information stands, distribution of information and promotional materials of the promotion associations, VR demonstrations and networking space between travel agencies.

14.2. Circular Economy Conference in Moldova

The E-Circular Conference 2023, held on November 17 at Digital Park in Chisinau, Moldova, was a significant event dedicated to advancing the circular economy. It brought together a diverse group of participants, including national and international experts, public sector representatives, business leaders, academia, and civil society members. The conference aimed to foster dialogue and collaboration on various aspects of the circular economy, focusing on sustainable waste management, extended producer responsibility, sustainable consumption, and financing circular projects.

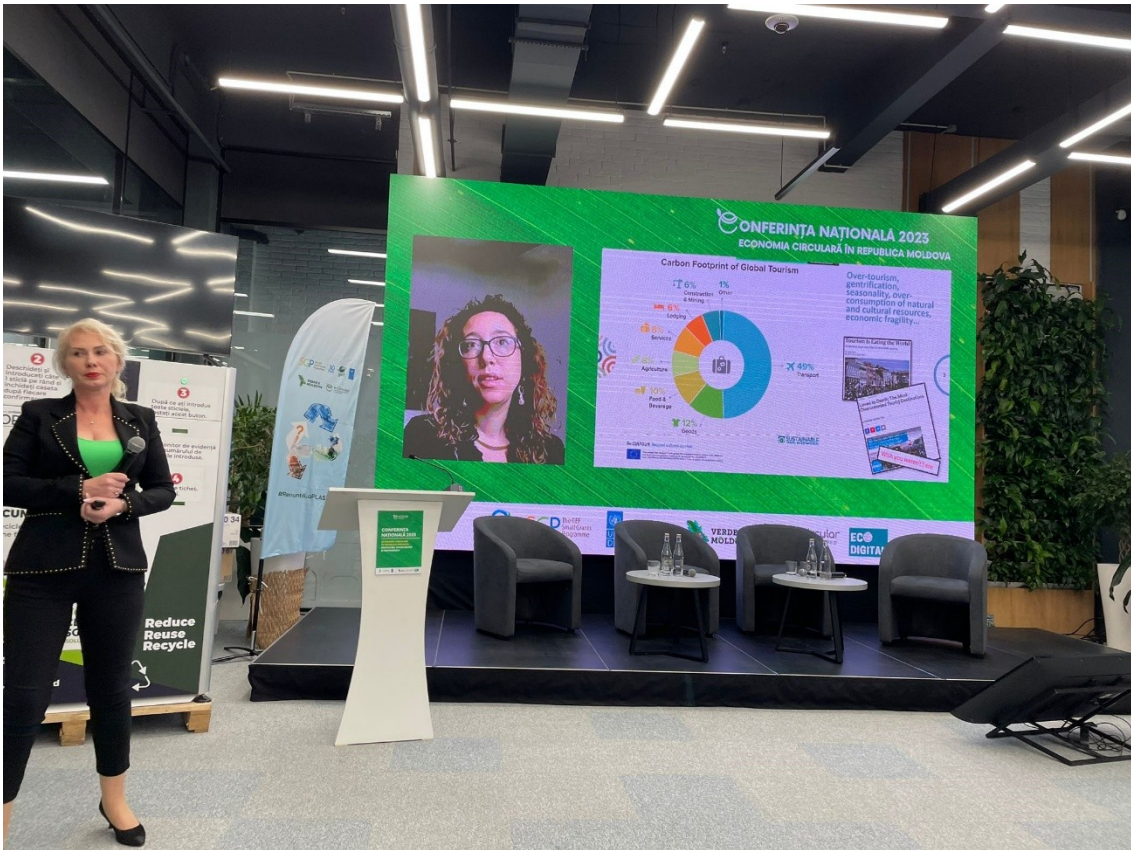


Figure 32 – E-circular conference in Moldova

The opening session set the tone for the event, emphasizing the urgent need for a transition to a circular economy to address environmental and economic challenges. Keynote speakers highlighted global and regional trends in circular economy practices, providing insights into successful strategies and innovative solutions from around the world.

One of the highlights of the conference was the presentation by Antonia Gravagnuolo, who discussed the Be.CULTOUR project. This project, funded by the Horizon 2020 program, aims to develop human-centered innovations for resilient and circular regional economies by regenerating cultural and natural heritage through cultural tourism. Gravagnuolo emphasized the project's objectives of co-creating sustainable solutions, enhancing skills and capacities, and promoting circular business models in tourism. The project targets deprived and over-exploited areas, aiming to foster inclusive economic growth, community well-being, and nature regeneration.

Throughout the day, several panel discussions and interactive sessions were held, focusing on practical approaches to implementing circular economy principles in various sectors. Topics included the role of policy and regulation in driving the circular economy, innovative business

models, and the importance of public-private partnerships. Experts shared case studies and best practices, encouraging participants to explore new opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

The conference also featured an exhibition area where businesses and organizations showcased their circular economy initiatives and solutions. This provided attendees with a hands-on opportunity to learn about new technologies and approaches that can support the transition to a circular economy.

The event concluded with a call to action, urging all stakeholders to continue working together to accelerate the shift towards a more sustainable and resilient economic model. The E-Circular Conference 2023 successfully highlighted the importance of a circular economy and provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration.

E-circular conference website: [National Conference 2023: Circular Economy in the Republic of Moldova \(e-circular.org\)](https://www.national-conference-2023.org)

14.3. Round Table Conference in Cyprus

As the final action in Cyprus, ANETEL and Laona Foundation on May 16th 2024 organised a conference on the topic of “Cultural Landscape as a powerful factor in the development of sustainable tourism and the circular economy”. The conference was held under the auspices of the Deputy Minister of Culture, Dr. Vasiliki Kassianidou, who took part in the proceedings. The meeting was preceded by a tour of the fire-affected landscape of rural Larnaca and a guided tour of Ayii Vavatsinias, one of the project communities. The meeting was attended by selected representatives of Cypriot and European organisations, including ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability), National Research Council (CNR) of Italy, ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation (RLICC) of Belgium, the Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Tourism, the Department of Town Planning and Housing, the Department of Antiquities, the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO, the Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber (ETEK), the Larnaca Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Larnaca Tourism Development and Promotion Company (ETAP), the Association of Cypriot Archaeologists (ACA), the Cyprus Architects Association (SAK), Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative (CSTI), Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), UCLan University, Phoenix Association, Larnaca Municipal Archive – Phivos Stavrideis, Larnaca Cultural Foundation for Children and Youth, the Organisation for the European Capital of Culture – Larnaka 2030 and the Women’s Association of Rural Larnaca, as well as the President of the Vavla Community Council.

During the meeting presentations were made by the Be.Cultour project coordinator, Antonia Gravagnuolo, also by Christina Garzillo on behalf of ICLEI, Professors Luigi Fusco Girardo (University of Naples) and Christian Ost (ICHEC Brussels Management School), by Artemis Yiordamli and Evdokia Balamou on behalf of of the Laona Foundation and ANETEL respectively. Architect Sevina Floridou, specializing in cultural landscapes, presented original research contacting in mapping Ayii Vavatsinias.



Figure 33 - Round table conference in Cyprus. Courtesy of Laona.org

The meeting also reviewed and discussed the text of the Larnaca Manifesto on the importance of the cultural landscape, which can act as a guide for both Cyprus and other member countries participating in the Be.Cultour project, was reviewed. The conference concluded with a constructive discussion on the content of the Manifesto.

14.4. Final Conference in Basilicata

“Playing seriously. Videogames to promote culture, sustainability and values of a territory” is the title of the final conference, in Basilicata, of the “Be-Cultour. Beyond Cultural Tourism”, the EU under the Horizon 2020 programme. Tuesday 4 June, starting from 9.30 am, at the Teatro Stabile di Potenza , for an entire day ,videogame experts, designers, but also psychologists, philosophers and entrepreneurs met to analyze the topic of online and offline digital games from different aspects , used to promote the territory and its values in an innovative way. Starting from the work of APT Basilicata, the only territorial promotion body in Italy to have equipped itself with a section

called Comics and Games with which innovative tools have begun to be put in place in order to raise awareness among a wider public and without age or geographical limits, the landscape, cultural and historical characteristics of our region.



Figure 34 - Final Event in Basilicata, flyer

After the selection of three innovative solutions inherent to the Lucanian pilot area, which participated in a Hackathon held in Brussels from September 7 to 9, 2022, as well as a four-month acceleration period, the "Lucanian Path" and "FlyOn" initiatives were realized. The first is a video dedicated to slow mobility, available on Basilicata Turistica's web channels, and the second is an immersive platform that allows people to visit and learn about, both through PCs and smartphones and oculus, the landscape, historical and cultural heritage of Vulture Alto Bradano by crossing the municipalities of Pietragalla, Acerenza, Forenza, Monticchio, Lagopesole, Melfi, Venosa and San Fele. An exploratory scenario was created for each territory containing the following interactions: A starting Virtual Tour scene with aerial 360° photo; An aerial Exploratory Immersive Video Tour with audio lasting 2/3 minutes; Accompanying narrator voice for the video tour; 3 360° Photos of historical points of interest with narrator voice; 2 360° videos of historical point of interest with narrator voice lasting 2/3 minutes. The project is available at this

address <https://www.flyvr.it/>. A demonstration for a virtual tour with oculus was offered during the event in Potenza.

14.5. Sustainable Cultural Tourism conference in Serbia

The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) organized a national conference on the topic "Sustainable Cultural Tourism" on June 18, 2024, at the "Edšeg" Cultural Station in Novi Sad. The event also marked the conclusion of the international project "BeCulTOUR: More than Cultural Tourism," which SCTM carried out in collaboration with the municipalities of Bač, Sremski Karlovci, and Irig, and in partnership with 14 international organizations, with the support of the EU Research and Innovation Programme HORIZON 2020.

During this event, the activities carried out within the project were presented, including innovative solutions in tourism promotion. A panel discussion titled "Cultural Landscapes for Communities, Tourists, and Projects" was also held. The event was officially opened by Danijela Vanušić, Assistant Minister of Culture, who emphasized that the Republic of Serbia and its institutions are putting great effort into the preservation, revitalization, and promotion of cultural, historical, and natural heritage. She highlighted that the collaboration between SCTM and the municipalities of Bač, Irig, and Sremski Karlovci demonstrated that well-planned management of cultural resources is the foundation for sustainable protection, revitalization, and promotion of cultural heritage. The Assistant Minister of Culture expressed hope that the BeCultour project would serve as a foundation for new initiatives in promoting local cultural and natural heritage. Nenad Ivanišević, Provincial Secretary for Economy and Tourism of AP Vojvodina, expressed satisfaction that Irig, one of the supported municipalities, is the fastest-growing tourist destination in Serbia. Through joint efforts of the Government of AP Vojvodina, the municipality of Sremski Karlovci, and the Karlovac Seminary, the number of tourists in this municipality increased from 819 in 2019 to 35,000 in 2023. He announced that a competition would be launched by the end of this year, in which the provincial government would provide funds for the promotion of local self-government. Ivanišević described the preservation of our cultural heritage as part of home upbringing and highlighted the necessity of demonstrating the importance of Serbia's heritage to future generations through personal example.



Figure 35 - Final event in Serbia, flyer

Steva Panić, President of the Municipality of Bač, emphasized the importance of participating in this and similar projects to ensure that Bač and its heritage shine in full splendor and become accessible to a wider audience. Miodrag Bebić, Deputy President of the Municipality of Irig, highlighted the tourism potential of this Vojvodina municipality, noting that Banja Vrdnik is the second most visited spa in Serbia, a significant success given the importance of spa tourism in our country and the numerous developed destinations. According to him, the task for the coming period is to continue promoting all tourist potentials of the Municipality of Irig and attract as many tourists as possible, as well as effectively connect Banja Vrdnik with the municipal center. Nikola Tarbuk, General Secretary of SCTM, proudly stated that BeCultour was ranked first among the projects supported by the EU Research and Innovation Programme HORIZON 2020 in the field of enhancing and developing cultural, historical, religious, and natural heritage and tourism in six European regions. He particularly highlighted, as part of the project's activities, the creation of an Action Plan for Sustainable Circular Cultural Tourism in our municipalities, providing a basis for writing and applying for projects, as well as other aspects such as branding, learning from international examples of good practice, and more.

Mr. Tarbuk announced that SCTM would initiate a national survey in local self-governments this year to map the current state of culture. During the panel discussion organized at the event, attention was paid to issues of preserving cultural heritage in relation to the dangers of consumerism that increased tourism brings, as well as the importance of people and local communities that are an integral part of the cultural landscape. It was emphasized that travel enriches tourists and that promoting and nurturing the cultural spirit can be increased through

projects and various available funds, with the best and most effective cooperation coming from local authorities, institutions, tourist organizations, associations, and informal groups.

The best results are achieved by local leaders with a vision, and regular cooperation among all interested parties is necessary for progress, with monitoring and analyzing successes and results to improve activities. The event concluded with the presentation of three innovative solutions for cultural tourism development—winners of the 2022 hackathon competition, whose implementation took place after several months of an acceleration program supported by international experts. The teams Frušking, Bač-by-Touch, and Irig Road shared their experiences during their innovative process and presented the online presentations developed with the project's prize fund.

14.6. Final Event in Montalbán, Spain

The Aragon -Teruel final event of Be.CULTOUR project was held in Montalbán on June 21st. The event, with producers, was staged the relay to be carried out by the Provincial Council for the Cultural Park of the Martín River to assume the management of the territorial distinctive, created for this area in the development of this European program. During the event were distributed also the brochures created to disseminate the outlets, producers and ambassadors, as well as a QR code that refers to the website of the Park, which now includes a section on this topic. The Be.Cultour program has been active since the beginning of 2021 with the Diputación de Teruel as a Teruel partner, through the European Programs Office, and has been developed in the Cultural Park of the Martín River. The program, which concluded this spring, was focused on developing a management model based on the circular economy, identifying innovative solutions for cultural tourism. A few days later of the final event in Montalban, The partners of the European program Be.Cultour, which includes the Provincial Council of Teruel (DPT), have signed the Larnaca Manifesto (Cyprus): "Beyond Tourism" to promote circular cultural tourism as a key resource for the region. This was one of the measures taken by the partners at the conclusion of this European project.





Figure 36 - Parque del Rio Marin. Courtesy of Diario de Teruel

14.7. Final Event in Sweden

The final event of the Be.CULTOUR project, held in Västra Götaland, Sweden, celebrated the culmination of efforts to promote sustainable and circular cultural tourism. The event, which took place in June 2023, was a significant gathering of project partners, local stakeholders, and community members who came together to discuss and reflect on the project's achievements and future implications.

One of the key highlights of the event was the presentation by Ulrika Lindh, who discussed the innovative approaches and outcomes of the Be.CULTOUR project. The project, funded by the Horizon 2020 program, aimed to develop human-centered and circular tourism models that regenerate cultural and natural heritage. It focused on six pilot regions, including Västra Götaland, targeting deprived, remote, and over-exploited areas to enhance inclusive economic growth, community well-being, and environmental sustainability.

Ulrika Lindh emphasized the project's methodology, which involved a structured process of exploration, co-design, development, and deployment. This approach led to the creation of

strategic action plans and innovative solutions tailored to each pilot site. The methodologies included digital tools, community engagement practices, and new business models that integrated circular economy principles.



Figure 37 – Final event in Sweden

The event featured various interactive sessions where participants could engage with the project's outcomes and discuss future applications of the developed methodologies and tools. Success stories and best practices from the pilot sites were shared, demonstrating how local heritage innovation networks co-developed sustainable tourism strategies.

Additionally, the event highlighted the importance of collaborative approaches in cultural tourism. The discussions underscored the need for continued innovation and the role of local communities in driving sustainable tourism practices.

The final event in Sweden showcased the significant achievements of the Be.CULTOUR project, providing a platform for ongoing dialogue and collaboration to promote sustainable and circular cultural tourism across Europe.

15. Be.CULTOUR International Conference “Beyond Cultural Tourism: beautiful, circular, human”, Naples, June 2024

The final conference of the Be.CULTOUR project “Beyond Cultural Tourism: beautiful, circular, human” took place in Naples from June 5-7, 2024. to present and discuss the outcomes of this Horizon 2020 European research initiative. It was organised by the CNR, Coordinator of the project, together with other 15 European Partners from academia, local government, social and business sector.

The conference, held at Palazzo Gravina and the Complesso Monumentale di Santa Chiara, brought together an international community to share insights and results from three years of work. More than 40 speakers participated during the 2 days of the Final Conference, who emphasized the project goal of creating a transformative travel experience that integrates culture, history, and local identities, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic and social development.

The project aimed to regenerate cultural heritage sites through sustainable, human-centered tourism, focusing on six pilot regions and involving a number of European innovators. The conference highlighted the development of innovative strategies and tools for circular economy tourism, emphasizing community empowerment and sustainable practices. The final conference presented a series of operational tools and approaches developed by project partners starting from the overall multidimensional evaluation framework based on criteria and indicators for circular and cultural tourism destinations, to heritage-led strategic Action Plans and place-branding strategies, innovative circular solutions and business models enhancing entrepreneurial capacity, suitable financial instruments, smart data management tool, and final policy recommendations at the EU and regional level.

The conference underscored the importance of transforming cultural tourism to reduce the negative impacts of mass tourism, enhance underutilized cultural resources, and foster meaningful relationships between visitors and local communities. The methodologies and best practices developed during the project were intended to be replicated across additional European regions, promoting a broader application of sustainable tourism models.

The results of the project have been discussed together with international speakers from all sectors of society: researchers, institutions, international heritage organizations, businesses, and

civil society. The debate has been enriched by the contribution of European Commission representatives and international experts in the field of cultural heritage reuse and valorization, circular economy, social innovation and sustainable finance.

They provided valuable insights into the topics discussed; in particular, on June 5th the circular and cultural theoretical-conceptual model of Be.CULTOUR, the circular cultural tourism framework, the evaluation framework and smart data management for circular and cultural tourism, policy recommendation, and the good practices and suggestions to enhance the attractiveness of European Heritage sites in less-known and remote areas.

The June 6th sessions, instead, were dedicated to an in-depth study of the action plans implementation and developed in the Pilot Heritage Sites, the hackathon and acceleration results, the diverse approaches and strategies implemented by the regions and the cooperation among different regional stakeholders, the financial tools and the social impact pledge.

The agenda of the Final Conference is available at: [Be.CULTOUR Conference 5-7 June 2024 Final Agenda.pdf \(becultour.eu\)](#)

Recordings of the Final Conference are available on Be.CULTOUR YouTube Channel at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZkj0kptOD0>

1st Day of the Be.CULTOUR Final Conference

Date: Wednesday 5 June 2024

Location: University of Naples Federico II, Department of Architecture, “Aula Magna” at Palazzo Gravina historic building

- **Session 1 - Institutional Welcome**

The first session welcomed the event with institutional greetings by Antonia Gravagnuolo, CNR Researcher, coordinator of the project and Alessandra Marasco, Senior Research of CNR-ISPC, who introduced the of The Institute of Heritage Science in the project, Luigi Fusco Girard, formal coordinator of the Be.CULTOUR, and Emeritus Professor University of Naples Federico II, who explained the role and the work of IRISS and its trans-disciplinary approach, Pasquale de Toro, Director of Department of Architecture, University of Naples Federico II, who explain the role of the Department of The Architecture, University of Naples Federico II in the project concerning of the evaluation framework.



Figure 38 - Be.CULTOUR Final Conference: Institutional Welcome

- **Session 2 - Towards a Circular and Cultural Tourism**

The second session focused on the European Union role on the Be.CULTOUR project. The session, moderated by Antonia Gravagnuolo, brought together several members of the European Commission, who participated at the conference remotely.

The session started with Rodrigo Martin-Galan, member of The Rea Agency, European Commission, who highlighted the importance of cultural tourism, most of all in the remote areas, and the importance of multi-disciplinary research approach. Christina Sarvani, DG Research and Innovation, talked about cultural heritage and the Horizon 2020 cluster2 programme and funding. She underlined the importance of safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage and increasing the innovation potential and competitiveness of the arts and the cultural and creative industries. Kirsti Ala-Mutka Policy Officer, DG GROW, European Commission, discussed about the importance of local arts and craftsmanship as a way to enhance of cultural tourism, collaborative

governance to promote cultural tourism in different European areas and the impact of cultural tourism on local employment, Anne Grady, Seconded Cultural Heritage Expert, European Parliament, talked about the European Competence such as assists and complements the actions of Member States in preserving & promoting Europe's cultural heritage (art. 167 TFUE), develops relevant policies and programmes, supports and promotes policy collaboration between Member States & stakeholders on cultural heritage e.g.NEB, Creative Europe, Horizon Europe, and also about strengthening cultural heritage resilience for climate change, where the green deal meets cultural heritage.

- **Session 3 - Circular Cultural Tourism Framework**

The session focused on the goals of the Be.Cultour project to invest and promote the regenerations of the remote and rural areas not just with technical and financial tools but also with the experience of the cultural and local heritage. The session hosted the speech of Luigi Fusco Girard, Emeritus Professor, University of Naples Federico II, and Antonia Gravagnuolo, CNR researcher and coordinator of the project. The session focused on the explanation of the Be.Cultour project: what has been done during the three years period of work, the goal and the result achieved, the economic benefits and the environmental conservation of natural and cultural heritage sites and a brief presentation of the Pilot Heritage sites projects. A framework aimed to create a balanced approach to tourism that benefits both hosts and visitors, ensuring long-term sustainability and mutual enrichment.

- **Session 4 - Evaluation Framework and Smart Data Management for Circular and Cultural Tourism**

This session aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how to effectively evaluate and manage data in the context of circular and cultural tourism, ensuring that tourism development is sustainable, culturally enriching, and economically beneficial. Moderated by Maria Cerreta, University of Naples Federico II, the session focused on the presentation of Pasquale De Toro, University of Naples Federico II, who talked about the evaluation framework for circular cultural tourism: criteria and indicators to assess the performance of circular destinations, Peter Nijkamp and Karima Kourtit, Open University of the Netherlands who shared the smart data management for circular cultural tourism: building a Digital Twin for destination management, Henk Scholten and Yneke van Iersel, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Geodan, with the topic Towards a Digitally-transformed Society: governance, threats and opportunities and Maurice de Kleijn, The



Netherlands eScience Center, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam who shared the experience of the Digital Twin of the Via Appia Antica from Basilicata to Lazio regions in Italy



Figure 39 - Pasquale De Toro presentation at the Be.CULTOUR Final Conference

This session delved into the intricacies of developing a robust evaluation framework and leveraging smart data management techniques to enhance circular and cultural tourism. It gave insights into systematic approaches for assessing tourism impacts and learn how data-driven strategies can optimize sustainability and cultural preservation.

The objectives of the session were focused on understanding the principles of a circular tourism model and its relevance to cultural tourism, exploring the components and benefits of an effective evaluation framework, learning about smart data management techniques and their application in tourism and identifying best practices for integrating data-driven insights into tourism management.

- **Session 5 - Policy Recommendations: Enhancing the Attractiveness of European Heritage Sites in Less-Known and Remote Areas**

The session outlined a series of policy recommendations aimed at improving the visibility and appeal of European heritage sites located in less-known and remote areas. By adopting these good practices and strategic suggestions, policymakers and stakeholders can foster sustainable tourism, preserve cultural heritage, and stimulate local economies.

Moderated by Pier Luigi Sacco, University of Chieti-Pescara, Department of Neuroscience, Imaging and Clinical Studies. AP10-Policy Optimizer at the EIT-KIC Culture & Creativity, the session was a roundtable discussion with Christer Gustafsson, Uppsala University, Eudokia Balamou, ANETEL Larnaca and Famagosta District Development Agency, Christian Ost, ICHEC Brussels Management School.



Figure 40 - Policy Recommendations Session

The objectives were on how to increase the attractiveness and accessibility of remote heritage sites, promote sustainable tourism practices that preserve cultural and natural heritage, stimulate local economies and communities through tourism development and enhance the visibility and recognition of lesser-known heritage sites. By implementing these policy recommendations, European heritage sites in less-known and remote areas can become more attractive and accessible to tourists. This will not only boost local economies but also ensure the preservation and appreciation of Europe's rich and diverse cultural heritage. Sustainable and

inclusive tourism practices will pave the way for long-term benefits for both visitors and local communities, fostering a deeper connection to cultural and natural heritage.

2nd Day of the Be.CULTOUR Final Conference

Date: Thursday 6 June 2024

Location: Location Monumental Complex of Santa Chiara, Naples

- **Session 1 - Inspirational Keynote Speeches**

This first session of the second day of Be.CULTOUR International Final Conference comprised the presentation of Christian Ost, Honorary Rector ICHEC Brussels Management School, President of Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation - KU Leuven and Emma Taveri, Chief Visionary Officer at Destination Makers.

Christian Ost “A reflection on economics of sustainable conversation” presentation aimed to provide a comprehensive view of the intersection between economics and sustainable conservation of cultural heritage. The key points of his speech were focused on a series of important topics. The first one was the economic values in Cultural Heritage Conservation, such as the role of economics in supporting cultural heritage conservation, the emphasis on the economic benefits such as job creation, revenue generation, and growth, in addition to cultural values and the shift towards cultural tourism and its perceived benefits. The second interested the Integration with Sustainability, such as the mainstreaming of sustainability and its incorporation into conservation processes, the four-pillar paradigm of sustainability: environmental, social, economic, and cultural goals, and the importance of the circular and collaborative economy in making conservation viable and sustainable. Then he explained the concept of Cultural Heritage as Cultural Capital, such as cultural and natural heritage as inherited resources from the past with present value, the sustainable values provided by cultural heritage, including economic benefits where he shared the model of David Throsby’s idea of cultural heritage as cultural capital. Other relevant topic discussed was the valuation methods, including the contingent valuation method for measuring non-use values and the investment cost of heritage protection, management, and conservation. The he highlighted the participatory approaches in conservation and financial models, like crowdfunding, donations, and public funding. During his presentation he shared also two important case studies: he Grand Mosque in Djenné, Mali and the CLIC European Horizon2020 project in Salerno, Italy.





Figure 41 - Christian Ost presentation at the Be.CULTOUR Final Conference

Emma Taveri's presentation focused on innovative tourism strategies and destination marketing. She discusses the importance of creating meaningful and memorable travel experiences that resonate with modern travelers. Taveri emphasized the need for destinations to differentiate themselves by focusing on their unique attributes and storytelling. She explored various marketing tactics, including leveraging digital platforms, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content to enhance engagement and reach. Taveri also highlighted successful case studies of destinations that have effectively implemented these strategies, showcasing the positive impact on visitor numbers and overall tourism growth. Furthermore, Taveri stressed the significance of sustainability in tourism, encouraging destinations to adopt eco-friendly practices and promote responsible travel. She points out that today's travelers are increasingly conscious of their environmental footprint and prefer destinations that prioritize sustainability. Throughout her presentation, Taveri provided practical tips and actionable insights for tourism professionals looking to enhance their destination's appeal and competitiveness in the global market. She encourages a holistic approach that combines creativity, technology, and sustainability to create a compelling and sustainable tourism offering.

- **Session 2 - The Action Plans developed in the Pilot Heritage Sites: Let's talk about place-branding strategies**

The session focused on sharing methodological insights and outcomes of the Action Plan development and co-implementation with the local communities. Addressing the starting point, the journey taken by the pilots and the future outlooks with the actions and branding strategies. Gioele Racca, Cristina Garzillo, ICLEI Europe talked about the Action Plans approach, implementation and post project sustainability, along with the Be.CULTOUR Guidebook – building narratives around circular heritage destinations. The presentation outlined the methodologies and outcomes of creating and implementing action plans for circular cultural tourism. Key components included a human-centred design framework, the establishment of Heritage Innovation Networks, and sustainability strategies for post-project activities. It, also, highlighted innovative cultural tourism practices, local engagement, and long-term development goals.

Then the session continued with the Action Plans implementation and lessons learnt in pilot heritage sites and what innovation networks and lessons learnt in Be.CULTOUR pilot heritage sites in Italy, Cyprus, Spain, Sweden, Serbia, Romania and Moldova.




Antonio Nicoletti, APT Basilicata, Italy, Eudokia Balamou, ANETEL Larnaca and Famagosta District Development Agency, Cyprus, Eleni Panayotou, LAONA Foundation, Cyprus 3, Laura Gascon Herrero, Provincial Government of Teruel, Spain, Ulrika Lindh, Västra Götaland Region, Sweden Igor Pucarevic, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Serbia, Roxana Slemco, North-East Regional Development Agency, Romania, Anatolie Risina, Verde e Moldova, shared their experiences and the results achieved with Be.CULTOUR project.

The session concluded with the speech of Letizia Ciaccafava, Destination Makers about, place-branding strategies for circular destinations.

- **Session 3 - Boost innovation by supporting local entrepreneurship: the Be.CULTOUR Hackathon case – Hackathon and Acceleration results**

This session was conceived as a roundtable moderated by Ruba Saleh, ICHEC Brussels Management School on Innovative circular cultural tourism solution from pilot areas. It opened up a profound discussion that brought together representative of the Pilot Heritage Site. Francesco Calderoni of Vulture-Alto Bradano area, Basilicata Region, introduced the Fly On Tour Immersivo. Ismael Pizarro Muñoz, of Spain, introduced the work of The cultural park of Rio Martin, Teruel province, Aragon region. Georgios Antoniou, of Larnaca rural cultural landscape, Larnaca Region, Cyprus, shared the experience of Needle Festivals, Victor Daggberg and Christina Shearer of Västra Götaland Region, shared the work of Forsvik and Rydal Industrial Heritage Sites, Zorica Subotić of Bač, Sremski Karlovci and Irig in Vojvodina Region, Serbia, explain the project BAČ BY TOUCH, then Viorel Miron and Cristina Baghiu, Valentin Ceban, Elena Viorela Chiper of

North-East Romania – Moldova cross-border area explained the work of The Route of Stephan the Great and Saint and The Bison Land's Heritage.

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101004627

PILOT Heritage Site	Challenge	Heritage type	Innovation areas
Vulture-Alto Bradano area, Basilicata Region, Italy	Abandonment & depopulation of rural areas	Archaeological & rural heritage	Contemporary Meaning of Heritage, Remote Working Destination, Sensorial Heritage Experience, Nature as Heritage, Proximity Travel
The cultural park of Rio Martin, Teruel province, Aragon region, Spain	Accessibility of remote areas & depopulation of rural areas	Natural heritage	Nature as Heritage, Rural co-living, Spiritual travel, Transformative travel
Larnaca rural cultural landscape, Larnaca Region, Cyprus	Over-exploitation of high-demand areas	Terraced rural landscape	Rural Co-Living, Spiritual travel, Nature as heritage, Sensorial heritage experience
Forsvik & Rydal Industrial Heritage Sites, Västra Götaland Region, Sweden	Deprived & polluted industrial heritage sites	Industrial heritage	Industrial Heritage Experience, Rural co-living, Sensorial heritage, Contemporary meanings of heritage, Nature as heritage & Remote working destination
Bač, Sremski Karlovci & Irig In Vojvodina Region, Serbia	Concentration in one site & lack of communication & synergetic action towards joint potentials	Intangible heritage, Cultural, Religious & Natural heritage	Sensorial Heritage Experience, Nature as heritage, Spiritual travel experience, Contemporary meanings of Heritage, Rural co-living

Figure 42 - Ruba Saleh presentation at the Be.CULTOUR Final Conference

The "Be.CULTOUR" presentation by Ruba Saleh focused on developing circular cultural tourism solutions across several European heritage sites. The presentation was structured around an innovators' roundtable. The presentation began with an overview of the project's funding and objectives, followed by the agenda for the roundtable. The session included also a revisit of existing practices, post-hackathon new projects, and Q&A. Several pilot heritage sites across Europe were highlighted, each facing unique challenges such as abandonment, depopulation, and over-exploitation. The presentation featured 19 innovative tourism solutions co-designed during a hackathon, addressing various heritage types and innovation areas. Examples included "Fly On Tour Immersivo" in Italy, "Stephen's Route Site Update" in Moldova-Romania, and "Forsviks CHAICE" in Sweden. The presentation introduced also the hackathon held from September 7-9, 2022, which involved 19 teams working on building feasible, viable, and resilient tourism solutions, and the acceleration training programmes that were conducted to refine these solutions, covering project structuring, marketing strategy, financial planning, and societal impact. Then the roundtable featured discussions on revised business and governance models from various innovators, presentations included personal narratives from innovators like Francesco Calderoni and Valentin Ceban, detailing their projects and the tangible impacts on their territories. Individual profiles of innovators provided insight into their backgrounds and specific

contributions to the Be.CULTOUR projects. Notable profiles included Francesco Calderoni's "Fly On Tour Immersivo" project in Italy and Valentin Ceban's work on "Stephen's Route" in Moldova-Romania.

- **Session 4 - Learn, share, replicate!**

The Session moderated by Francesca Pozzebon and Gianpiero Petruzzello, ERRIN, focused on outstanding examples from Be.CULTOUR Community of Interest, sharing the diverse approaches and strategies implemented by the regions and enhancing cooperation among different regional stakeholders.

The session was held at the Cloister of the monumental complex of Santa Chiara in Naples. The session was conceived as a fishbowl session featuring representatives from the mirror ecosystems of the Be.CULTOUR project. An inner circle composed by 6 people seated on the chairs to discuss their experiences while the rest of the participants seated around observing without interrupting. One or more chairs in the inner circle were opened to "visitors" (i.e., members of the audience) who wanted to ask questions or make comments. Participants rotated in and out of the fishbowl throughout the course of the discussion. Throughout the session the moderator, Francesca Pozzebon and Gianpiero Petruzzello asked a set of questions designed to spark the conversation in the inner circle and boost the interaction among the speakers present in the inner circle. The session featured representatives from diverse regions.



Figure 43 - Session Learn, share, replicate!

Discussion with Representatives of mirror ecosystems:

- Saltaire Inspired, Kirran Shah and Samantha Pickard
- Municipality of Leeuwarden, Lisa Van Der Lem
- Kuldiga Municipality, Artis Gustovskis
- Sviluppumbria, Valeria Tudisco
- Ecoamgueddfa Llŷn, Gwenan Griffith, Einir Young and Arwel Jones
- Historic Environment Scotland, Vanessa Glindmeier and Andrew Hunter
- University of Algarve, Ana Paula Gomes da Silva
- Wielkopolska Tourism Organization, Tomasz Wiktor and Artur Krysztofiak
- Thessaly Region, Angeliki Veneti
- Sgiacca 5 Senses Open Air Museum, Tony Russo and Desirée Li Bassi

Session 5 - Financial tools and social impact pledge

The session was focused on financial instruments, funds and social impact pledge. It collected the presentations of Aliona Lupu and Ivo Allegro of Iniziativa Cube and Gianluca Gaggiotti of Impact Europe. After these presentations the speakers welcomed a pitch session where a series of entrepreneurs introduced their companies and innovative ideas, Andrea Monaco, ARTI, Mario Amura, Emoticon (Phlay), Titti Gallucci, Eleit, Massimiliano Imbimbo, Hearth.

Aliona Lupu and Ivo Allegro shared the work of Iniziativa Cube in Be.CULTOUR project. Iniziativa has led WP2 -Creation of synergies and efficient use of ESIFs and other EU funds for neighboring regions for sustainable cultural tourism with the following objectives: analysis of policies and use of European funds (ESIFs and other EU funds active in neighbouring regions), identify together with local government officers and managing authorities in effectiveness, barriers and bottle necks; enhance the use of EU resources for the sustainable cultural tourism; Implement innovative financial instruments to leverage private investments in the sector of sustainable cultural tourism. During the presentation Lupu and Allegro explained the concept of Investire Sociale, an innovative investment model that supports the development of sustainable cultural tourism, the enhancement of cultural heritage, urban regeneration, and the circular economy, in coherence with Agenda 2030 SDGs. It offers a wide range of benefits for start-ups and SMEs, such as Equity contributions, project development assistance, in-kind contributions and other funding opportunities. On June 7th, 2023, Iniziativa published the official documents of the investment model (initially called «PledgeFund» Be.CULTOUR) on its website: a regulation for investors interested in the investment model, who were asked fill out a questionnaire differentiated for

individuals or legal entities. A notice for the initiatives interested in applying, with instructions on how to apply. After an evaluation period, 7 initiatives were selected.

Gianluca Gianotti of Impact Europe talked about the role of impact investing. Impact Europe has established comprehensive guidelines that set the standard for investing with an impact. These guidelines help investors navigate the complexities of impact measurement and management, ensuring that their investments achieve the desired social and environmental outcomes. By promoting best practices, Impact Europe raises the bar for how impact is measured and managed, fostering transparency and accountability in the impact investing space. Impact Europe has developed a unique market sizing hub that provides valuable insights into the impact investing market. This resource helps investors understand the scope and scale of opportunities within the impact space, enabling informed decision-making. With a strong and strategic presence in the EU, Impact Europe plays a crucial role in shaping finance and social economy policies. Their engagement ensures that the policy framework supports and enables the growth of impact investing across Europe. Impact Europe extends its influence globally through collaborations with Sister Networks, the Eastern Partnership, and MENA regions. These partnerships broaden the reach of their impact initiatives, fostering cross-border collaboration and knowledge exchange. Impact Europe's mission is to enable European-based capital providers to accelerate positive and lasting social and environmental change at scale. This is achieved through increased resources, collaboration, expertise, and the creation of an enabling policy framework.

The session concluded with a 5 minute pitch of 4 entrepreneurs such as Andrea Monaco, who introduced his company ARTI, Mario Amura who shared the innovative idea behind Emoticon (Phlay), Titti Gallucci who describes Eleit, and Massimiliano Imbimbo of Hearth.

- **Session 6 - Conclusions and ways forward**

In this final session Antonia Gravagnuolo, CNR Research and coordinator of the project together with Luigi Fusco Girard, Emeritus Professor University of Naples Federico II and Peter Nijkamp of Open University of the Netherlands, gave the final speech about towards innovative circular and cultural tourism.

3th Day Study Visit in Naples

On Friday participants of the conference took part at a Study visit in Naples. The visit guided by Cooperativa Sociale On.N.L.U.S La Paranza offered a comprehensive look at the richness of Rione Sanità. The Sacred Mile Tour was designed as a journey through the heart of Rione Sanità, an area rich in history, culture, and spiritual significance. The tour included a series of visits to some of the most remarkable religious and historical sites in Naples, each with its own unique story and architectural beauty.

It started at Catacombs of San Gennaro, the ancient underground burial sites dedicated to Saint Januarius, the patron saint of Naples. These catacombs are among the most important early Christian sites in the city, featuring intricate frescoes and tombs. Then, it continued to Basilica of San Gennaro extra moenia, the historic basilica, located outside the city walls, offers insight into early Christian architecture and the veneration of Saint Januarius. The group then was guided to Basilica of Santa Maria della Sanità, also known as the Basilica of Health, a stunning church built atop the Catacombs of San Gaudioso. It is renowned for its vibrant Baroque style and its role in the community, and Crypt of Saint Gaudioso ("External" section), the crypt dedicated to Saint Gaudioso, known for its unique blend of early Christian and Baroque elements. The crypt houses the tombs of several notable figures from Neapolitan history. Then the tour guide showed the group the Presepe Favoloso, an elaborate Nativity scene, which brings to life the traditions and artistry of Neapolitan craftsmen. The Presepe Favoloso is a testament to the city's rich cultural heritage. Then the tour continued to Basilica of San Severo fuori le mura, a basilica, located outside the ancient city walls. It is a hidden gem with its beautiful frescoes and serene atmosphere; the Chapel of the Bianchi, where the group discovered the historical and artistic treasures of this small yet significant chapel, which holds a special place in the religious life of the Rione Sanità community, which led the way to see the Veiled Son (Figlio Velato) by Jago, a famous Italian sculptor, a masterpiece of art that evokes deep emotion and reflection.





Figure 44 - Church of Santa Maria Maddalena ai Cristallini

Then the tour has taken the group to visit the Church of Santa Maria Maddalena ai Cristallini, dedicated to Mary Magdalene, it showcases stunning religious art and serves as a spiritual haven in the bustling district; Palazzo Sanfelice (External Facade), the impressive facade of Palazzo Sanfelice, an architectural marvel designed by Ferdinando Sanfelice. The building is known for its distinctive Baroque style and historical significance; Palazzo dello Spagnuolo (External Facade), another Baroque masterpiece by Ferdinando Sanfelice. Its striking staircase and ornate exterior make it a highlight of the tour. The visit to Rione Sanità ended to Porta San Gennaro, one of the ancient gates of Naples. This historic landmark stands as a testament to the city's rich past and enduring spirit.