Report on UNESCO's awareness raising and capacity building actions in the SmartCulTour Living Labs

Smart
CulTour

Smart Cultural Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Development of European Regions

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Title: Report on UNESCO's awareness raising and capacity building actions in the SmartCulTour Living Labs

Due date: February 2023

Submission date: February 2023 (Original)

June 2023 (Version 2)

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Type: Report

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Dissemination Level

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

History of changes

The Report on UNESCO's awareness raising and capacity building actions in the SmartCulTour Living Labs was finalized after all capacity-building trainings and their evaluations had been concluded. The original version was uploaded on February 2023, as planned. The second version was uploaded on June 2023 to account for pseudonymization of participant lists in order to comply with GDPR practices. This specifically related to removing personal identifiers in the annexes containing the 'List of participants' for all six labs (i.e. Annex 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12).

Apart for these small changes, the content of the document remained unchanged as compared to the original version.

Abstract

This report presents the awareness raising and capacity building actions implemented by UNESCO in the six SmartCulTour Living Labs, namely the Split Metropolitan area (Croatia), the Utsjoki (*Ohcejohka* in North Sami) Municipality (Finland), the Huesca province (Spain), the Rotterdam Metropolitan Region (Netherlands), the Scheldeland region in Flanders (Belgium), and the city of Vicenza (Italy).

In the context of SmartCulTour, and as Leader of Work Package 6, UNESCO is responsible for the overall coordination of the Living Labs, as well as for raising awareness and developing capacities of concerned stakeholders to harness the collective benefits of culture and tourism for society. This was pursued by presenting and promoting participatory, inclusive, people-centred, needs-driven and context-specific approaches to the sustainable integration of culture and tourism into local development practices.

This report presents, in a chronological order, the relevant activities organized in and with the six LLs throughout 2022[1], as follows:
- Split Living Lab: 4 appointments, online and in-person, between February and April;
- Utsjoki Living Lab: 3 appointments, online and in-person, between April and October;
- Huesca Living Lab: 2 appointments, online and in-person, in October;
- Rotterdam Living Lab: 1 in-person appointment in October;
- Scheldeland Living Lab: 1 in-person appointment in October;
- Vicenza Living Lab: 1 in-person appointment in November.

The presentation of the actions stems from the background situational analysis of each destination, including potential entry points with regards to the LLs' workplan implemented so far. This combined elements spurred the choice of specific training topics, while representing the underlying reasons for the adoption of context-sensitive approaches to each LL. The central role of stakeholders was a cross-cutting consideration in the design of the capacity building programmes, and it constitutes a focus across the reports, in terms of expressed interests, identified knowledge gaps, and suggested tools and methodologies that may support the sustainable development of the local tourism supply, leveraging the role of culture and tourism for sustainable growth at regional level.

Preliminary results of the actions are also showcased, though recognizing that the impact will be more visible in the medium term, especially in view of the "soft" capacity-building approach adopted, aimed at stimulating dialogue, fostering exchange, and supporting networking, while not intending to fulfil all the identified knowledge gaps and needs.

For each Lab, follow-up actions are proposed for the consideration of the broader tourism sector, and especially DMOs, as well as of relevant governmental and non-governmental actors, including managing authorities of cultural heritage sites (and notably UNESCO designated sites), in cooperation with ICH practitioners and local communities. Similarly, Academia and cultural tourism experts might take inspiration

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[1] The workshops' agendas and lists of participants are provided as annexes to each section of this report.

from the preliminary results and recommendations presented in this report to provide every LL with advice and knowledge support towards the sustainable exploitation of the destination's potentials. Lab Managers and their local networks are therefore the core target audience of the present report.

Participants' feedback was gathered for each activity, aiming to conduct an honest assessment of the overall relevance of each action to the specific LL. This also allowed to draw lessons for the potential replication of the same format in other contexts, making the proposed approach to tailored and people-centred capacity building programme design a scalable formula for other destinations that seek to sustainably improve their cultural tourism performance.

Contents

01 Introduction to UNESCO's awareness raising and capacity building actions in the SmartCulTour Living Labs

The overall goal of SmartCulTour is to support regional development of sustainable cultural tourism in European destinations, and notably in rural areas and urban peripheries, through strategies that engage stakeholders in co-creating smart cultural tourism practices. As the Leader of WP6 - "Sustainable cultural tourism laboratories (Labs)", UNESCO's role consists in the coordination of the six SmartCulTour Living Labs, including by providing support in the identification of the specific activities, methodologies and interventions to be implemented in each of them.

In this framework, and more specifically as foreseen by Task 6.6 - *Awareness-raising and capacity-building activities* (as described in Table 1 below), UNESCO is also responsible for providing opportunities to raise awareness and develop capacities of concerned stakeholders for the implementation of international standards to leverage the role of culture for local sustainable development, using methodologies and tools developed within the framework of the Organization.

Table 1. Description of Task 6.6

Task 6.6 - Awareness-raising and capacity-building activities
Moving from an assessment of the specificities of the different Labs, the project will design and deliver activities to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders (from the public and private sectors, governmental and non-profit sector) and develop their capacities to harness the collective benefits of culture and tourism for society, acting with social responsibility. Such activities will especially focus on: 1) introducing participatory, inclusive, people-centred approaches to the sustainable integration of culture and tourism in local development interventions drawing, among other things, on the dynamic models of the **Historic Urban Landscape approach** and the **World Heritage for Sustainable Tourism programme**; 2) recognizing the importance of and safeguarding **intangible cultural heritage**; 3) improving interventions to support the **creation, production, distribution and access to cultural goods and services**, in their full diversity.

With a view at ensuring that the choice of the specific capacity-building topics for each Living Lab (LL) be oriented by an informed and inclusive decision-making process, effectively meeting local partners' and stakeholders' needs and priorities, UNESCO carried out both awareness raising activities and extensive bilateral consultations with Lab Managers and key local actors, upon which tailored programmes were designed.

In particular, on 27 April 2021, UNESCO organized an *"Awareness-raising webinar on UNESCO's capacity-*

building opportunities for SmartCulTour Living Labs", which was intended to provide participants with an overview of selected tools, measures and approaches developed by the Organization to support the sustainable management of cultural resources at territorial level, with a focus on cultural tourism development and an outlook towards the post COVID-19 recovery.

More specifically, the webinar offered the opportunity to present three potential topics for the capacity-building actions, namely:

- UNESCO's approach to Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destination Management;
- The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach;
- Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

The webinar was followed by consultations with each Living Lab, held either in-person or online, in order to further discuss the proposed options and agree on the most suitable capacity-building package aligned with local stakeholders' interests and priorities, based on the underlying people-centred, needs-driven and context-specific approach.

Moving from an assessment of the specificities of the different Labs, and relying on the support of international experts, UNESCO has therefore designed tailored capacity-building activities, seeking to foster the sustainable protection, promotion and "use" of the local cultural resources within tourism supplies. In order to further align with local and regional priorities, each LL also identified specific subtopics that were integrated by UNESCO within the respective training programmes.

The originally proposed training subjects were therefore reviewed and adjusted *vis à vis* the indications expressed by local actors, which in some cases, and especially in Vicenza, resulted in the definition of a specifically tailored programme.

The final results of the consultation process with the six LLs are visualized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Living Labs' expressed preferences for the topics of UNESCO's capacity-building actions

LIVING LAB	UNESCO's approach to Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destination Management	Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)	The role of heritage interpretation and visitor centres in World Heritage properties
Split		X	
Huesca	X		
Scheldeland	X		
Rotterdam	X		
Utsjoki	X		
Vicenza			X
Tot.	4	1	1

As outlined in Table 2 above, UNESCO delivered capacity-building workshops on Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destination Management in four of the six SmartCulTour Living Labs (LLs), namely the Utsjoki (*Ohcejohka* in North Sami) Municipality (Finland), the Huesca province (Spain), the Rotterdam Metropolitan Region (Netherlands), and the Scheldeland region in Flanders (Belgium).

The learning sessions mainly drew on the four following topics stemming from the _UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit_:

- Understanding Tourism at your Destination;
- Developing a strategy for progressive change;
- Adding value through products, experiences, and services;
- Communicating with your visitors.

While in the four Labs that opted for the same training topic, the underlying approach, format and overall organization of the capacity-building were similar (with the only difference that the Utsjoki and Huesca LLs also engaged in preparatory online activities, while Rotterdam and Scheldeland preferred to condense the programme in a one-day in-person training), the actions in the Split and Vicenza Living Labs were adapted to the specific subjects and relevant objectives.

The activity in Split focused on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), relying upon the extensive experience and supporting tools developed in the context of _UNESCO's Global capacity-building programme_. With an aim at fostering the safeguarding of local intangible cultural heritage, while harnessing its potential for sustainable development, a blended approach was adopted, combining theoretical webinars presenting the key principles of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, with more practice-oriented workshops foreseeing in-person meetings and exchanges with practitioners from local communities.

UNESCO's activity in the Vicenza Living Lab consisted of an in-person workshop specifically tailored on the indications emerged from the preparatory consultations. Despite an initial inclination towards the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach, the Municipality of Vicenza eventually re-oriented its interest towards the need to improve local capacities on heritage interpretation and visitors' management, which resulted in a dedicated awareness raising activity on _"The role of heritage interpretation and visitor centres in World Heritage properties"._ The workshop also served to raise awareness on the objectives and functioning of the World Heritage system and its implications in the context of the "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto" World Heritage property, at the presence of stakeholders representing local authorities, property owners, civic associations, businesses, and individual practitioners.

It is noteworthy that the activities implemented by UNESCO in the SmartCulTour LLs, and presented in this report, are to be considered as pilot actions rather than full-fledged capacity-building experiences. Despite being underpinned by a capacity-building approach in the sense of addressing all different areas in which capacities reside, namely practitioners, institutions, communities and networks, such activities were intended as an opportunity for individual and collective knowledge advancement, networking, and inspiration towards more inclusive and sustainable solutions, in line with UNESCO's normative and policy standards, and compatibly with the scope of the SmartCulTour project.

The capacity-building actions were implemented throughout 2022, starting with the Split LL in February, and ending with the Vicenza LL in November. The activities are herein presented in a chronological order.

02 Capacity-building actions in the Split Living Lab

This section of the report outlines the contents, methodologies and preliminary results of the capacity-building actions that were implemented in the Split Metropolitan area Living Lab, and seeks to explain how they are complementary to the Living Lab's programme and relevant to local trends, needs and priorities, as well as their impact on local stakeholders and eventual follow-up actions that were identified for future implementation.

2.1. Main topics of the capacity-building

The capacity-building in the Split Metropolitan area Living Lab focused on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), relying upon the extensive experience and supporting tools developed in the context of UNESCO's Global capacity-building programme.

To start with, the activity aimed at providing participants with a common understanding of the basic principles of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and its Ethical principles as basics for ICH-oriented awareness raising.

After such an introductory session, the workshop presented community-based identification and inventorying as a method for identifying and determining ICH elements as resources for sustainable tourism development.

The third part of the activity introduced the topic of awareness raising in the context of ICH, and focused on sensitizing the local community about the importance of ICH, and eventually the value and risks associated to ICH in relation to (un)sustainable tourism interventions.

2.1.1. Key concepts of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and its Ethical principles

The first session introduced the 2003 UNESCO Convention's key concepts, the definition of "intangible cultural heritage", the domains as promoted by UNESCO and compared to UNWTO's study on ICH and tourism, and the safeguarding measures with emphasis on community participation, continuity and change in the context of tourism.

The Convention's Ethical principles were introduced and emphasised on various occasions during the workshop, especially when dealing with community participation in ICH-based tourism. The session addressed the needs listed in the *Specific Terms of Reference for the Split Metropolitan area LL[2]*, where a lack of knowledge about intangible cultural heritage, its potential within the tourism sector, and a low level of community engagement were detected.

The presentation included various case studies indicating both good practices as well as examples where ICH was misrepresented or over commercialised. The workshop envisaged group exercises where participants

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[2] Fidelbo C. ed., 2021, *Specific Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour Living Laboratories*, Deliverable 6.1 of the project.

shared their experience on working with living heritage[3]. The discussion evolved around the differences between archaeological, historical and intangible cultural heritage.

2.1.2. Identification and Community-based inventorying as a resource for sustainable tourism development

The second meeting was held in presence in Solin, and focused on identification and inventorying. Between the two sessions, participants were invited to work with communities on a specific ICH element. Based on examples from Solin and Sinj, the workshop addressed challenges in identifying and inventorying ICH, meeting the requirements of the cultural tourism sector while respecting the 2003 Convention's Ethical Principles. Inventorying was introduced as a method for mapping the potential that living heritage has in the Split Metropolitan area as an asset for sustainable tourism development. For the purpose, UNESCO's inventorying template was adjusted to the specific needs.

2.1.3. Awareness raising about Intangible Cultural Heritage for local communities

The aim of the third session was to help participants understand the importance of raising awareness about ICH to ensure its increased recognition, respect and safeguarding, discover relevant mechanisms, familiarize with the roles that different stakeholders can play in the awareness-raising process while minimizing negative consequences. The lecture included examples of good practices, especially the awareness-raising campaign conducted within the framework of the European Young Heritage Professionals Forum held in Zadar in 2019.

After the theoretical part, participants were invited to reflect upon the messages they would like to convey to valorise their ICH by integrating it into the sustainable cultural tourism offer of the area. The concepts of pride, continuity and intergenerational relations were widely articulated. On this basis, Duje Kundić, a Split-based artist and video-maker, and the pilot project members co-developed a scenario, carrying out and filming semi-structured interviews with community members.

2.2. Complementarity with the Lab's programme

As stated in the *Specific Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour Living Laboratories[4]*, the Split Metropolitan area Living Lab has identified two main priorities to be addressed, namely: 1) creating a foundation for sustainable and resilient development of tourism; and 2) developing authentic, innovative and memorable cultural tourism experiences (2021:91). Participating stakeholders have also agreed upon a set of methodologies and activities to be implemented, among which capacity building on specific topics, including Intangible Cultural Heritage (ibid. 98).

The training programme was therefore designed to address the following issues in a view to support the realization of the LLs' priority goals in the long-term: lack of knowledge about cultural assets; low level of ICH valorization, community participation and networking between the tourism sector and local communities; tourism seasonality; and lack of awareness about the rich tourism offer of the destination, especially in the

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[3] As per UNESCO's practice, the expression "living heritage" can be considered as a synonym of "intangible cultural heritage". Indeed, as set out by Art. 2 of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, intangible cultural heritage "is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history", therefore being "living".

[4] Fidelbo C. ed., 2021, *Specific Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour Living Laboratories*, Deliverable 6.1 of the project.

rural areas of the Lab.

The capacity-building action on Intangible Cultural Heritage was also complementary to the Lab's programme on other less direct levels, and notably:

- It offered an opportunity for '*enhancing the destination's resilience and sustainability*', which had been detected within the SWOT analysis (*ibid.*, 95) as one of the opportunities for the Split Metropolitan Region LL. ICH is acknowledged as a powerful tool in strengthening communities' self-esteem and contributing to its resilience. This gives ground to believe that the workshop also contributed to this wider scope, as community members were actively involved in the capacity-building workshop.
- The low level of integration of craftsmanship in the tourism supply chain, identified in the SWOT analysis as a weakness (*ibid.*, 94), has been addressed through the capacity-building workshop, and awareness has been raised on the value of traditional crafts (e.g. *opanak* shoes' production).

The capacity-building workshop also addressed various concerns expressed by LL's stakeholders from the private sector (*ibid.*, 92), as follows:

- **Tourism development should be community-based, focusing on meaningful visitor experiences.**
  The Convention and its Ethical principles are underpinned by a strong community-driven approach towards ICH identification and safeguarding processes. Indeed, intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it – without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage[5]. Therefore, the integration of ICH into the local tourism offer would naturally contribute to the development of more meaningful visitor experiences.
- **Cultural tourism resources are insufficiently valorized.**
  Through the capacity-building workshop, the identification and inventorying of ICH was introduced as a method, and various elements were pinpointed to be possibly included in the local cultural tourism offer.
- **There is a need to improve the quality of the tourism offer for the sake of visitors and well-being of local communities.**
  The capacity-building workshop introduced the Ethical principles and the principles of sustainable ICH-based tourism, emphasizing the interrelations between meaningful visitor experiences and the wellbeing of host communities.

The capacity building also tackled some issues raised by LL's stakeholders from the public sector (*ibid.*), as follows:

- **There is a need to raise awareness on cultural heritage and the potential for cultural tourism development.**
  The workshop presented methodologies of identification and valorization and, more importantly, it focused on sensitizing about the potential of ICH for sustainable tourism development, and introduced an artistic practice to help raising awareness among local communities.
- **Cultural tourism should be, among other things, small-scale and focused on the local community.**
  The workshop focused on the rights of local communities in the specific ICH-related tourism context,

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[5] Source: UNESCO website.

and offered examples of successful sustainable projects.

2.3. Situation analysis for the destination

As stated in the *Specific Terms of Reference for the Split Living Lab* (Deliverable 6.1), '*The intangible cultural heritage in the Living Lab area has been nurtured for centuries and is highly abundant. "Sinjska Alka, a knights' tournament in Sinj", "Nijemo Kolo, silent circle dance of the Dalmatian hinterland", "Klapa multipart singing of Dalmatia, southern Croatia" and the "Mediterranean diet" are cultural elements inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Experiencing the local intangible cultural heritage that is intrinsic part of the culture of life of the local community is often seen as a guarantor of the authenticity of the cultural tourism experience.' (2021:83)*

Starting from this formulation, it is clear that the area has been involved in active valorisation processes since the ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, and that there is a strong interest from the tourism sector in exploiting ICH for the purpose of sustainable tourism development. However, these endeavours seem to be rather limited to experts' work. The workshop, as well as the evaluation processes before the workshop, showed that there is a low understanding of the concept of living heritage among the general population. For instance, participants often confused ICH with archaeological and historical heritage that do not have a materialised aspect; the problem lies in the lack of a clear understanding of the terminology and the low awareness of the characteristics of living heritage. Also, besides the elements inscribed on the UNESCO Representative Lists, there is a number of elements within the Living Lab territory which are registered / valorised at national level (40 elements registered by the Ministry of Culture of Croatia), though the general awareness and knowledge about them is limited.

The positive aspects are connected with the fact that many elements of living heritage in the area are still viable and, even though on a basic level, these realities are understood, acknowledged and sustainably exploited within the tourist context.

The main challenges for a stronger valorisation of ICH through tourism are:

- Misunderstanding of ICH as historical or archaeological heritage, leading to misrepresentations;
- Low level of community participation in planning ICH-based tourism development;
- Valorisation processes depend on national safeguarding dynamics which are sometimes too slow and rigid;
- High migration rates;
- High tourism seasonality leads to several negative consequences, such as ICH elements that do not always respect the traditional calendar but are commodified in different ways for tourism purposes, or a high tourism demand only for some specific practices. In these occasions, elements are adjusted to meet the needs of the market, leading to decontextualisation and commercialisation. Another detrimental impact is the impossibility for locals working in the tourism sector to practice their own living heritage elements, especially those that are not attractive to tourists, due to the long working hours in the season peak.

The workshop asserted that there is a high level of understanding of the role that communities play in ICH safeguarding processes, as well as in ICH-driven tourism. A vast majority of the participating stakeholders acknowledged the role of communities, groups and individuals in transmitting ICH and participating in tourism activities by ensuring small-scale, sustainable, year-round tourism, bringing benefits to the sector as

well as to local communities.

To conclude, the destination has a huge potential in terms of: ICH elements already valorised and new ones to be promoted; motivation; and understanding within the tourist sector. Nevertheless, substantial means have to be invested in capacity-building for interested bearers and tourism workers, networking activities, awareness raising for the general local public, including youth, in creating campaigns and becoming ambassadors of local ICH, presenting best practices at regional and global level.

2.4. Summary of the training sessions and preliminary results

The capacity-building was oriented towards reaching a common understanding of the 2003 UNESCO Convention with a view to develop sustainable cultural tourism activities. It included four sessions focusing on key concepts and ethical principles of the ICH Convention, community-based inventorying and awareness raising on ICH.

The programme was held in a hybrid format; during the first online webinar, on 21 February 2022, key concepts and ethical principles of the 2003 Convention were discussed and participants presented their experiences related to valorisation and interpretation of ICH in the tourism context. As a homework, participants were requested to identify an element and try to fill in some basic information based on a pre-prepared inventorying card, in collaboration with community members.

The following meeting was held live in Solin on 4 March 2022, and focused on community-based inventorying as a method for mapping and valorising cultural resources for future tourism offers. The inventorying cards prepared by two participants from Solin and Sinj provided the ground to develop an interactive workshop with a strong emphasis on community participation. The chosen elements, namely the sweetbread (*sirnica*) making and the Sinjska Alka's *tournament*, offered an opportunity to discuss inventorying practices.

During the second part of the session, participants exchanged views on what ICH means for them, how they connect with, and understand it. Working in groups, they identified ICH elements that are relevant to their community, and then developed basic tourism offers/products related thereof. This exercise helped reach a common understanding about what constitutes living heritage, and detect possible threats based on the analysis of developed ideas.

Thanks to the active engagement of representatives and ICH practitioners from Solin and Sinj and their willingness to participate in the pilot project, it was decided to co-develop an awareness-raising campaign. Prior to the field work with a local artist and filmmaker, the third theoretical session took place online on 15 March 2022, focusing on awareness raising in the context of ICH. Strong emphasis was put not only on the necessity to raise awareness about the existence of ICH, its social role and value, but also on the threats and risks for its viability, especially in the context of tourism development. Indeed, unsustainable tourism development can cause misrepresentation, over commercialisation and loss of meaning of ICH for its community. Therefore, awareness-raising campaigns aimed at activating living heritage as part of the tourism offer should always take into consideration potential risks.

The final workshop, held on 8 April 2022, was conducted in a smaller group and foresaw direct field work with representatives and community members from Solin and Sinj, as well as a local filmmaker. Firstly, based on consultations with the local representatives, the ICH consultant prepared a general script and discussed

it with the filmmaker. Prior to the field work, the members of the Split LL and the consultant met with the filmmaker to discuss the objectives of the activity.

The fieldwork was held in Solin and Sinj and included semi-structured interviews with representatives from the local communities and the production of audio-video documentation. The aim of the exercise was to involve young artists in working with the local community for the sake of valorising ICH and fostering its tourism potential.

The connection between the young artist and the more experienced members of the local communities was recognised as key to the success of raising awareness. *"Relying on the power of intergenerational transmission, we hope that the results of this awareness raising campaign will be evident in the near future"*, remarked one of the participants.

2.5. Participants' feedback

Based on the individual and oral feedback gathered after each session, as well as the outcome of the group discussions, participants found the workshop useful and benefited from it not only on a theoretical level - by discovering new approaches in heritage safeguarding issues, community participation and in the context of developing sustainable tourism, but also on a personal and human level as they felt engaged in safeguarding their own heritage.

"From the capacity-building activities, we learned how to effectively preserve and develop our living heritage, and to promote a strong cultural identity among residents of different generations. The implemented activities will improve the preservation of the endangered intangible cultural heritage as an important factor not only of cultural and national identity. Within our broader efforts, we aim to enrich the local tourism supply highlighting these unique and invaluable cultural resources and attracting visitors from different cultural backgrounds, all in accordance with local sustainable development" stated a representative from the Sinj Tourist Board (SPL1).

The google evaluation form was compiled by thirteen out of seventeen participants. The results show a high level of satisfaction with the length and contents of the workshop, as well as the level of preparation of the facilitator. Participants deemed the training very useful in further developing sustainable tourism based on the valorization of ICH. The part that was found most interesting is the presentation of various case studies, to the extent that respondents suggested improving the workshop's format by adding further examples, especially from the local area. The expressed interest in continuing with similar workshops and widening the network of participants is to be considered encouraging.

2.6. Proposed follow-up

Based on the participants' feedback, as well as observations during the three-month collaboration, a two-pronged follow-up would be relevant and appropriate. The first relates to the specific capacity-building objectives, namely increasing the understanding of the key concepts of the 2003 UNESCO Convention and raising awareness about the potentials and risks attached to ICH in the tourism context; the second is referred to the Lab's broader objectives, namely *creating a foundation for sustainable and resilient tourism and developing authentic, innovative and memorable cultural tourism experiences.*

Since the processes related to the valorization of ICH are not instant and require time, both the

abovementioned aspects could be addressed through the establishment of an informal collaboration and exchange between local stakeholders and the experts who delivered the activity. Forming a network of interested partners in developing ICH-based tourism could be the first step towards a more active approach to specific local needs, while the consultant might assist with specific questions that may arise during the process.

In addition to creating a network that would have a constant ideas' exchange flow, it would be advisable to work on a needs-assessment specifically addressing the potential of the county's (Splitsko-dalmatinska) living heritage in the tourism context, using the UNESCO and UNWTO tools, as well as the ICH Tourism Toolkit currently being developed by the ICH NGO Forum. It is advisable to have an interdisciplinary research and analysis both from ICH and tourism specialists, focusing on the needs and possibilities of interested communities, rather than just on general ICH potentials.

Finally, since the Living Lab decided to work with living heritage, thus with communities, group and individuals, a follow-up meeting not only with the project's direct beneficiaries, but also with local communities who might benefit from the project, would be advisable. An idea could be to meet and discuss after the presentation of the awareness-raising campaign video, or at the end of the project, to present the results and assess the advancements towards "creating a foundation for sustainable and resilient development of tourism", which was the first priority set out in the Specific ToR for the Split LL.

A1 Annex 1. Agenda of the workshops

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION AND PROGRAMME

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM

Dr.sc. Tamara Nikolić Đerić

Facilitator - UNESCO Global Capacity Building Program

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) has been recognized as one of the resources for strengthening cultural tourism and active community participation. The workshop is therefore aimed at building the capacities of local stakeholders on the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, with an emphasis on participatory inventory and raising awareness on ICH.

The programme was envisaged in a hybrid format and was divided into four parts. Two meetings were organized online and two in-presence. After the cycle of workshops, an online presentation of the results was held.

The aim of the workshop was to acquaint stakeholders with key concepts of the 2003 UNESCO Convention, its ethical principles, and methods of participatory inventory of ICH. Activities aimed to raise awareness within the local community about the richness of local living heritage and its potentials in the context of sustainable cultural tourism development.

DATE & TIME	VENUE	TOPIC & ACTIVITY
21/02/2022		
14:00 - 16:00	Online	INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM: *How to ethically identify and inventory local knowledge for the development of cultural tourism*
04/03/2022		
10:00 - 15:00	Solin	INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM: *community-based inventorying* ▪ 10:00 - 12:00: Inventorying intangible cultural heritage - Sharing experiences. ▪ 13:00 - 15:00 Inventorying intangible cultural heritage - Meeting with communities.
15/03/2022		
14:00 - 16:00	Online	INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM: *Raising community awareness of heritage potentials in the development of sustainable cultural tourism.*

08/04/2022		
09:00 - 16:00	Solin and Sinj	INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM: *Co-Creation* In collaboration with a local artist, participants will visit two communities, and based on a previously prepared storyboard, record the process of making *sirnica* cake (Solin) and *opanak* (Sinj) as the basis of an awareness raising campaign.

A2 Annex 2. List of participants

Nº	Name	Surname	Organization / Role
Organizers / SmartCulTour partners			
1.	Ante	Mandić	Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, Split
2.	Lidija	Petrić	Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, Split
3.	Zvonimir	Kuliš	Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, Split
4.	Blanka	Šimundić	Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, Split
5.	Lovorka	Mikulić	Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism, Split
6.	Tamara	Nikolić Đerić	UNESCO Global Network of facilitators on Intangible Cultural Heritage
Participants			
7.	SPL1		Tourist Board of Sinj
8.	SPL2		Association 'Solinjani'
9.	SPL3		Tourist Board of Solin
10.	SPL4		City of Solin
11.	SPL5		Tourist Board of Dugopolje
12.	SPL6		The Alka Knights Society
13.	SPL7		City of Split
14.	SPL8		Historical Unit 'Uskoci from Klis' Association
15.	SPL9		Croatian Chamber of Economy, Cultural Tourism Section
16.	SPL10		Split-Dalmatia County
17.	SPL11		Croatian Chamber of Economy
18.	SPL12		Tourist guide

03 Capacity-building actions in the Utsjoki Living Lab

This section of the report outlines the contents, methodologies and preliminary results of the capacity-building actions that were implemented in the Utsjoki Living Lab, and seeks to explain how they are complementary to the Living Lab's programme and relevant to local trends, needs and priorities, as well as their impact on local stakeholders and eventual follow-up actions that were identified for future implementation.

3.1. Main topics of the capacity-building

The capacity-building programme for the Utsjoki Living Lab was designed to reflect the priorities and objectives expressed by local stakeholders upon specific consultations conducted by UNESCO in cooperation with the LL Manager. The two sub-topics selected by the LL included:

- Helping stakeholders to produce storytelling videos in order to enhance the visibility of Utsjoki as a cultural tourism destination;
- Enhancing cooperation among stakeholders.

On this basis, UNESCO delivered a sustainable tourism capacity-building and networking activity that brought together culture, heritage and tourism stakeholders from the Utsjoki Living Lab, covering both the private and the public sectors.

A questionnaire was designed and circulated prior to the activity to gather information about the tourism industry performance and identify threats and opportunities for sustainable cultural tourism development. The survey results formed the basis for the working sessions, where the specific topics relevant to the Utsjoki LL were covered more in-depth with a view to inform priorities and actions to be carried forward.

The two-part programme included two interactive online learning sessions, held on 26 April and 25 May 2022 respectively, introducing UNESCO's approach to sustainable cultural tourism destination management, and a more practical workshop, held on 14 October 2022, centred around the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit, with a focus on "Communicating with visitors/interpretation" and "Digital media and marketing".

3.2. Complementarity with the Lab's programme

3.2.1. Overall complementarity

The UNESCO capacity building activities complemented the Utsjoki overall programme, aligning with the marketing and visibility issues identified and discussed in the previous Living Lab's workshops. Local tourism stakeholders were particularly interested in receiving more in-depth advice and support relating to how to market the destination, which is not very well known yet and is characterized by a highly seasonal tourism, mainly focusing on the summer period due to salmon fishing in the Teno River.

Utsjoki is focusing on developing year-round tourism, while attempting - through targeted marketing efforts - to position itself not only as a pathway to Norway, but as a standalone tourism destination. Since local

tourism stakeholders understand the importance of cooperation and the interrelated influence – be it positive or negative - of different shareholders' behaviours *vis à vis* the reputation and image of the whole area, the need to build a stronger tourism ecosystem was brought into discussion during the UNESCO's capacity-building workshop.

3.2.2. Challenges

Important discussions on the inclusion of the Sámi culture in the destination's tourism offer were raised by different stakeholders during both the online sessions and in-presence workshop, spurring debates on sensitive but important issues. Indeed, instances related to the misuse of the Sámi culture in tourism have been under discussion for decades, though devising solutions in the short timeframe of the activity was of course not realistic. In addition, since the Utsjoki Living Lab accounted only for few Sámi representatives, and notably spouses of Sámi people, tackling the issue more in depth was deemed not appropriate. Nevertheless, the participatory nature of the workshop, which also provided a platform for exchanging in an equitable and non-threatening environment, allowed to delve into several aspects of the problem.

For instance, it was brought up that leading tourism organizations in Finnish Lapland often use images for their promotional strategies that are not regarded as suitable for presenting the local culture. The discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of Utsjoki as a cultural tourism destination showed how the Sámi culture can be identified as an attractor, even though the issues of misappropriation and misrepresentation were raised by several participants. What emerged, is that tourism is often too tailored to the visitors' expectations and demand, in a way that disregards the will of local communities.

This is the case, for instance, of husky rides and igloos, which are widely requested by visitors although not being part of the Sámi culture. The friction caused by clashing tourist desires and local culture practices should be addressed through an active participation of the local community in policy discussions, co-designing what kind of tourism should be developed in the region and how it should be implemented.

It was therefore stressed that it is very important that such issues are discussed and worked on also in different contexts and projects, for example by the Sámi Parliament, which is an indigenous parliament dealing with all the matters concerning Sámi in Finland, including the development of [Principles] and [Ethical Guidelines] for culturally responsible and sustainable Sámi tourism.

3.3. Situation analysis for the destination

Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to complete an assignment designed to both enhance their learning and to collect information in order to develop a situation analysis for sustainable tourism development in the destination. In addition to completing the survey themselves, participants were encouraged to distribute the online survey to tourism stakeholders in the destination to get their perspectives on local tourism challenges and opportunities. The following insights are mainly based on the information collected through the survey. Further evidences can be found in the Specific Terms of Reference for the Utsjoki LL.

3.3.1. Destination Management and Promotion

The survey helped identify the specific potential of Utsjoki as a cultural tourism destination. Due to its notable characteristic as one of the largest and quietest wilderness areas in Europe, not suffering from light pollution and mass tourism, it has an ability to create its own tourism pattern 'from scratch'. Participants identified

the uniqueness of Utsjoki in its arctic nature, the presence of trilingual and tri-cultural communities (Finnish, Sámi and Norwegian), the opportunity to develop small-scale and off-the-beaten track tourism, and its incredibly rich tourism possibilities, including Ailigas fells, Northern lights, closeness to Norway, the Arctic Ocean, and the Teno River.

Utsjoki also praises a strong living heritage, the majority of the population being indigenous Sámi. Reindeer herding is part of the local livelihoods but tourism has also an increasing role in the local economy. One of the great assets of Utsjoki is indeed that the Municipality and the local tourism stakeholders are both willing to develop Utsjoki as a tourism destination.

The survey's results provided a preliminary community-based mapping of local cultural resources, tourism attractions and experiences, highlighting its differentiation from other domestic and European destinations through a specific focus on the cultural and historical significance of the Utsjoki area. Marketing differentiation, especially from the broader area of Lapland, was recognised as one of the most urgent actions to be undertaken in order to boost sustainable cultural tourism in Utsjoki. In order to do so, it is crucial to identify relevant resources and to develop culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable offerings for travellers. This should be conducted as well as concentrating marketing efforts towards a highly targeted audience looking for authentic experiences and edutainment.

The lack of services and long distances were identified as major challenges for tourism in Utsjoki, along with the lack of cooperation between tourism operators and reindeer herders, especially when it comes to land use.

All in all, there is a strong potential for developing Utsjoki as a nationally and internationally interesting travel destination thanks to its unique nature, silence, and the growing tourism trend of seeking authentic, sustainable, and local products and services supporting small and local producers.

One of the survey's respondents highlighted: *"The selling point for Utsjoki is that there are the last wilderness areas left in Europe, light pollution-free skies for seeing the northern lights, and stars like most have never seen, as well as the overall peace and quiet. Looking at Utsjoki like every other area, or mapping its attractions, or creating the conditions for usual tourism trends, is exactly what I believe shouldn't be done. This area is unique, not just due to its cultural heritage and nature, but because it is one of the few left that haven't been converted yet into a standard travel destination".*

3.3.2. Visitor experience

Top responses for "Nearby attractions that you want to recommend tourists visit while at the destination" were the following:

- Kevo Strict Nature Reserve
- Ailigas fells
- Pulmankijärvi Lake
- Sámi Bridge
- Utsjoki Church Huts
- Route Teno (Route 970)
- Utsjoki Church
- Vadsø (Norway)
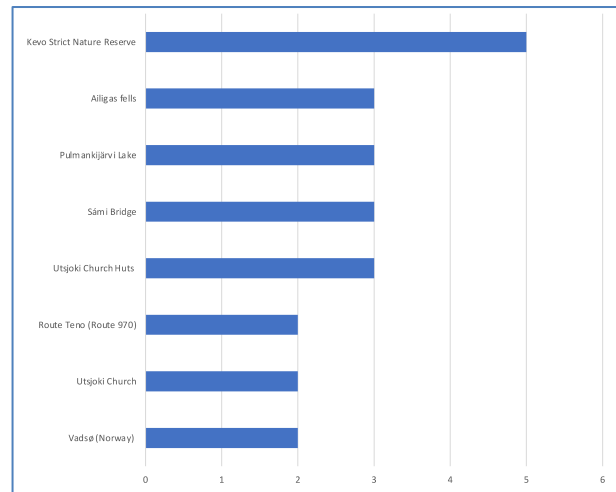
Fig 1. Survey's results: "Nearby attractions that you *want* to recommend tourists visit while in Utsjoki" (Credit: UNESCO)

Other attractions include: Vardo (Norway); Eavrujohka waterfall; Sámi museum in Karasjok; Nordkapp; Luomusjärvi EU-unions most northeast milk farm; Tenovalley road; Wilderness areas; Utsjoki Nature Information Hut; Teno river and its valley; Three villages of Utsjoki (Utsjoki, Karigasniemi and Nuorgam); Luomusjärvi lake; Sulaoja Spring Arctic time travel trek; Arctic Centre and Arktikum Pilke - Metsähallitus – Fostering natural values Local Heritage Museum; Rovaniemi Provincial Museum of Lapland; Korundi with art and music; Rovaniemi forestry museum; Ounasvaara.
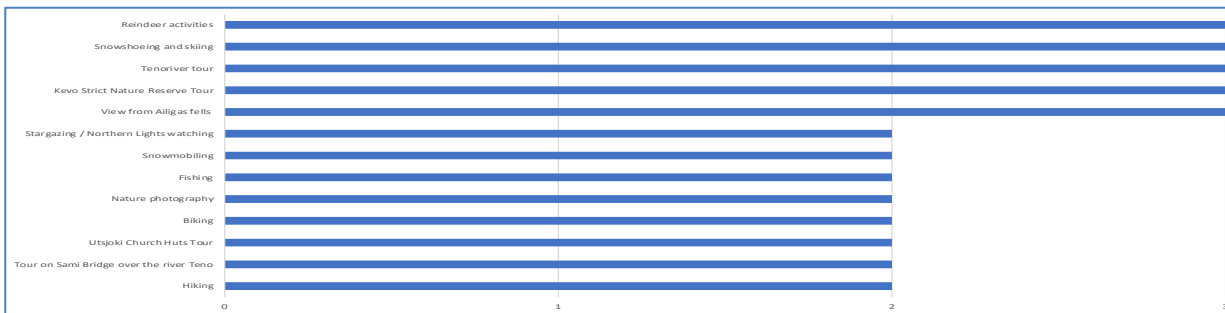
Fig 2. Survey's results: "Main tourism experiences offered and/or recommended while visiting Utsjoki" (Credit: UNESCO)

Among the tourism experiences offered and/or recommended while visiting the destination, the main responses were the following:

- Reindeer activities
- Snowshoeing and skiing
- Tenoriver tour
- Kevo Strict Nature Reserve Tour
- View from Ailigas fells
- Stargazing / Northern Lights watching
- Snowmobiling
- Fishing

- Nature photography
- Biking
- Utsjoki Church Huts Tour
- Tour on Sámi Bridge over the river Teno
- Hiking

Other experiences include: Aurora Holidays; Aurora Service Tours; Tundrasafari Finland – Day Tours; Kaldoaivi Wilderness Area; Utsjoki Nature Information Hut; Utsjoki Church; Arctic time travel trek; Parish Huts; Sulaoja Spring; Mantojärvi lake; Pulmankijärvi lake; Kirkkotuvat; Samensilta trips to Iced Sea; Husky Safaris.

Survey's respondents identified the following landmarks as making the destination culturally and historically significant:
- Utsjoki Church Huts;
- Sámi Bridge;
- Utsjoki Church.

3.3.3. Interpretation and Communication

The main actors in promoting and managing tourism around the destination are:
- Explore Utsjoki
- www.utsjoki.fi
- Lapland North Destinations (Inari-Saariselkä Matkailu Oy) – Local DMO of the municipalities of Inari, Utsjoki and Sodankylä
- House of Lapland (Lapland's official and publicly owned destination marketing company)

According to the respondents, the following local features shall be promoted:
- Utsjoki is a small and unique Sámi village on the boundary between Finland and Norway, and thus it is located on the Northern border of Europe.
- Sámi people are the only indigenous people in the EU area.
- Utsjoki is a trilingual and tricultural village: Finnish, Sámi and Norvegian cultures are alive and present in everyday life.
- Everyday life and customs in Utsjoki, including reindeer herding as one of the main livelihoods.
- Develop small-scale, off-to-beaten track tourism, not to compete with big ski centres.
- Nature is unique in Utsjoki, featuring northern lights, polar night in winter, polar day in summer, river valleys and vegetation on the borderline of taiga and tundra.
- The founding of a Center of Sámi Fine Arts is in progress
- Utsjoki is rich both in nature and culture, local traditions and heritage, all of them offering multidimensional possibilities in terms of engagement, learning, livelihoods, etc.
- Stories from the past and today could perhaps be sustaining the vision for the future.
- Strong local identity and values.
- City services in general, and mobility services more specifically, should be improved.

3.4. Summary of the training sessions and preliminary results

3.4.1. Overall impact

The UNESCO capacity-building activity received a positive feedback from the Utsjoki LL's stakeholders and its content was deemed very helpful and inspiring. The three sessions, and especially the last one onsite, inspired

participants to think bigger and develop future visions for the local tourism ecosystem in Utsjoki. Indeed, the activity helped launch a pioneering and future-oriented discussion, which had not been touched upon in previous Lab's meetings.

The workshops also spurred innovative reflections on the tourists' profile(s) Utsjoki wants to attract in order to maintain sustainable tourism development while ensuring the well-being of local people. The overall impact of the UNESCO sessions exceeded expectations, by also providing a good basis for discussing the next steps of the Utsjoki Living Lab and strategies to be implemented in the future.

Overall, the training sessions provided an opportunity to:

❖ Gain a better understanding of local cultural tourism dynamics, main issues and priorities of the key stakeholders, as well as assessing the state of advancement of the Living Lab *vis à vis* the overall project's work plan;

❖ Raise broader awareness on UNESCO, its function and mandate, and equip participants with the needed knowledge to harness its contribution towards local sustainable development through culture-based tourism;

❖ Inspire local stakeholders with examples and good practices in the field of sustainable cultural tourism, by also leveraging UNESCO's standard-setting and knowledge brokering role.

3.4.2. Preliminary results

The following results stem from the capacity-building activities, and subsequent exchanges and reflections, held in the Utsjoki Living Lab:

▪ There is a need for a clear vision on sustainable cultural tourism development (i.e. shared objectives, goals, limits, high-quality tourism, longer stays, etc). This implies, on the one hand, understanding and agreeing upon the typology of tourism that the destination aims at is key, namely small- *Vs* big-scale tourism, identification of specific attractions to be shared and sold, or even no tourism at all. On the other, identifying what the area's strengths are and developing innovative, culturally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable offerings for travellers.

▪ There is a pressing need for a honest assessment of the extent to which the Sámi culture can be part of the cultural tourism offer / product of the destination, without infringing upon the (intellectual property) rights and will of the indigenous community (see the "Principles for Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism" and the Visitor Guidance).

▪ Importance of branding Utsjoki as a cultural tourism destination by differentiating it from similar destinations, such as the broader Lapland region or Norway, through tailored storytelling and the offering of context-specific experiences. It is therefore crucial to carefully name the area to distinguish it from what is considered "Lapland" by the mass, e.g. "Authentic Arctic" or "Wild Lapland". It is important likewise to ask partner organizations, such as Visit Finland, not to bundle the area in with Lapland in their materials, but to clearly separate it as a unique area far from the theme parks of Southern Lapland.

▪ With a view to brand and differentiate the destination, the marketing efforts shall be oriented towards highly targeted audiences, looking for authentic experiences and eager to learn from their travels rather than just be entertained. In this effort, the definition of a clear narrative may also help engage a diversity of local shareholders and potential storytellers (e.g. tour guides, businesses, hotels, etc.) in communicating about the destination and telling a coherent story thereof.

▪ Immigration is increasingly relevant to combat depopulation in the area, which makes more and more difficult to find people to hire, leading to the closure of several businesses in the tourism sector.

- Utsjoki should build upon post-Covid trends, and notably the increased demand for nature-based, open air tourism, and the rediscovery of the local culture. Any tourism strategy seeking to promote sustainable development in the long run shall consider the local culture and nature as inextricably linked.

- When looking for potential source markets, Utsjoki should target those cultures having most similarities / points in common, thereby easing intercultural appreciation and understanding.

- Local businesses should make an effort towards positioning themselves within the destination's offer, including by relying on online travel marketplaces such as Tripadvisor or Booking.com and fostering alliances in order to sell the tourism product as a whole (e.g. flight & hotel & experiences).

- The Living Lab has identified some cultural tourism interventions aimed at influencing visitors' behaviours towards more respectful attitudes *vis à vis* the local nature, i.e. awareness raising campaign called *"Traces in nature"*. As a follow-up, and as part of the afterlife strategy of the LL, local stakeholders committed to mobilize resources to implement such actions.

- Northern Lights and stargazing are the key selling points for Utsjoki as a tourism destination, especially in wintertime.

- Connections to / Transportation to Utsjoki shall be improved in order to make the destination more easily accessible.

- Stakeholders shared the programme Sustainable Travel Finland, developed by the DMO Visit Finland to help the tourism industry adopt sustainable practices (similar to the UNESCO Sustainable Travel Pledge).

The following values were identified as being core to the destination:

- ❖ Sustainability, and notably maintaining the Utsjoki's beautiful and unique nature and wilderness;
- ❖ The local culture (though only selected and agreed upon cultural expressions should be shared, with the free, prior and informed consent of the Sámi community);
- ❖ The Sámi museum, which represents an *unicum* in the world;
- ❖ The local gastronomy, which nevertheless needs to be challenged in order to evolve, expand and adjust to meet the needs of a broader market audience (e.g. the local cuisine does not foresee a wide use of vegetables, while vegetarian and vegan options are more and more requested by the market);
- ❖ Educating visitors (e.g. to the respect and appreciation of the local flora and fauna) and influencing their behaviours by also improving contacts between travellers and the local people;
- ❖ "Local people should come first", and tourism shall spread out its benefits to the whole community;
- ❖ Local values, such as the sense of pride;
- ❖ Authenticity *Vs* commodification of living heritage, i.e. when a local community adjusts its heritage to the tourism demand;
- ❖ Re-thinking the audience and market target, i.e. *Vs* 1-day tourists.

3.5. Participants' feedback

3.5.1. Insights from survey participants

A short evaluation survey was developed to receive feedback from the participants on the effectiveness of the capacity building exercise. Five responses were received out of the nine participants to the workshop.

Most of the respondents agreed that the overall expectations of the UNESCO's capacity-building activity for the Lab were fully met, that the workshop and the information presented therein were useful and well organized, and that the overall activity was significantly relevant for the Utsjoki Living Lab.
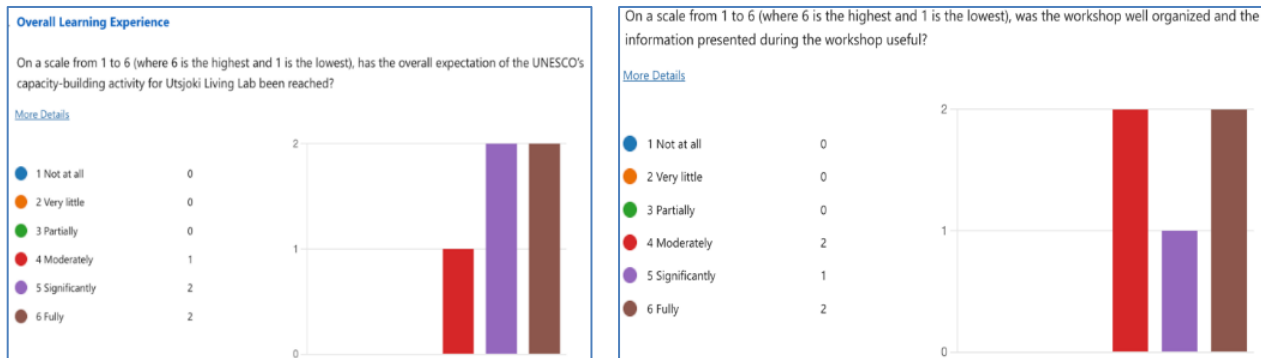
Fig 3 and 4. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

All the respondents agreed that, though at different levels, their understanding of UNESCO's approach to destination management and of how to communicate with visitors, including through digital media and marketing, increased as a result of the capacity-building workshop.
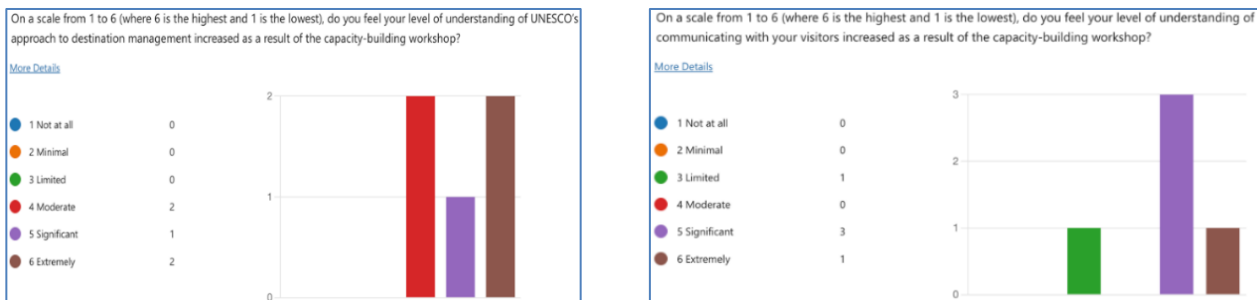
Fig 5 and 6. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)
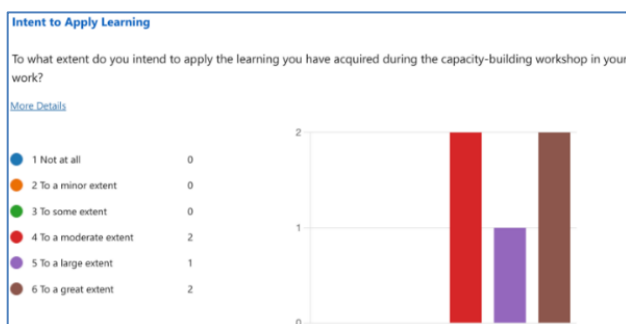
All participants committed to apply the learning acquired during the workshop in their daily work. One of the respondent wrote that it was genuinely one of the best workshops he/she has ever attended, expressing high appreciation for the in-person modality in Utsjoki.

Fig 7. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

All respondents found the Organizing Team to be available, professional, and effective, while expressing overall satisfaction with programme design and delivery and the overall quality of the workshop.

One respondent found that the main strength of the workshop was the trainer's approach: *"He combined his incredible expertise with a very empathic approach, and he seemed to truly listen and build up on what he*

heard, taking our struggles seriously".

Delivery of Capacity Building Workshop

On a scale from 1 to 6 (where 6 is the highest and 1 is the lowest), how would you rate the following?

The Organizing Team in terms of availability, professional skills and effectiveness

More Details

1 Unsatisfactory	0
2 Poor	0
3 Acceptable	0
4 Good	0
5 Very Good	3
6 Excellent	2

Overall Satisfaction

On a scale from 1 to 6 (where 6 is the highest and 1 is the lowest), how satisfied are you with the overall quality of the workshop?

More Details

1 Not at all	0
2 Very little	0
3 Partially	0
4 Moderately	2
5 Significantly	1
6 Fully	2

Fig 8 and 9. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

For future capacity-building on cultural tourism, participants hope to understand in bigger scale how tourism and UNESCO values can work together and what they can learn about it.

3.6. Proposed follow-up

The capacity building for the Utsjoki Living Lab focused on more effectively communicating with visitors through better interpretation of local cultural tourism values and resources, as well as by enhancing digital media and marketing to promote the destination. The most important discussions centered on the need of building a coherent ecosystem for tourism operators in Utsjoki and developing a joint vision for cultural tourism development locally. The following actions are recommended for follow-up.

3.6.1. Communicating with visitors

Utsjoki is known for its breathtaking landscapes, including the Kevo and Láddjujávri Nature Reserves, the Utsjoki River, and the Midnight Sun, making it a paradise for nature lovers. With its pristine wilderness and clear lakes, the region offers a range of outdoor activities such as fishing, hiking, kayaking, and wildlife watching. The destination places a strong emphasis on sustainable tourism, preserving its natural and cultural resources while offering unique and responsible travel experiences, thereby distinguishing itself from other areas in Lapland.

Utsjoki is also home to the Sámi people, one of the oldest indigenous cultures in Europe, with a rich cultural heritage and traditions that are still practiced today. However, the development of tourism poses several threats to the Sámi culture, including risks of misappropriation, whereas its elements are taken and used without proper understanding or respect, or phenomena such as misrepresentation or oversimplification that can lead to misunderstandings and cultural insensitivity. Tourism can have negative impacts on the Sámi community also in terms of increased costs of living, disruptions to traditional practices, and loss of privacy.

Increased tourism can lead to overcrowding, which, in turn, would put pressure on the fragile environment and cultural sites in the region. Uncontrolled visitor numbers and poorly managed tourism activities could lead to damages to cultural heritage sites and monuments. There is also a risk of economic exploitation, whereas the Sámi community does not receive a fair share of the economic benefits of tourism. Inadequate tourism infrastructure can lead to environmental degradation and other negative impacts on the local community. Visitors may not be culturally sensitive, leading to disrespectful behaviours that would ultimately ruin the relationship between tourism stakeholders, including both travellers and local operators, and the

Sámi community.

Going forward, the most important way to minimize the abovementioned risks is to ensure that Sámi people are involved in the planning and development of tourism in their region and that their perspectives and opinions are duly taken into account.

In terms of communicating with visitors, it will be important to:

- Foster an understanding and appreciation of Sámi culture and traditions by educating visitors about their history, customs, and beliefs.
- Encourage responsible and sustainable tourism practices that minimize the impact on the environment and local communities.
- Manage visitor numbers to ensure that the fragile natural and cultural resources of the region are safeguarded.
- Offer visitors the opportunity to experience the Sámi culture through activities such as guided tours, workshops, and cultural events (upon the free, prior and informed consent of the community).
- Encourage visitors to support local businesses, including Sámi-owned enterprises, and purchase locally-made products.
- Encourage visitors and the Sámi community to interact and exchange cultural experiences, promoting mutual respect and understanding.

In terms of follow-up activities for better communication with the visitors, the following guidance could help inform decision-making by the key stakeholders:

- Understanding the demographics, interests, and prior knowledge of your visitors will help tailor the interpretation to their needs.
- Avoiding technical jargon and keep the language simple and easy to understand.
- Offering a variety of interpretation methods such as signs, brochures, audio guides, or guided tours to cater to different learning styles.
- Use hands-on activities, games, and demonstrations to engage visitors and bring interpretation to life.
- Incorporate images, videos, and other multimedia elements to help visitors understand and retain information.
- Focusing on storytelling: providing a story or personal experience to make the interpretation more relatable and memorable.
- Explaining the significance and history of the site, and how it fits into the broader cultural or natural landscape.
- Encouraging visitors to ask questions and participate in the interpretation process, which can lead to a more meaningful and enjoyable experience.

3.6.2. Digital media and marketing

By showcasing the unique qualities and attractions of the Utsjoki region, digital media and marketing can enhance the region's reputation and attract more visitors. When managed effectively, such means can help reach a wider audience, including potential visitors from different regions, countries, and cultures. It can be more cost-effective compared to traditional marketing methods, making it accessible to smaller businesses and organizations and allow for targeted marketing and advertising, reaching specific demographics and interest groups.

Digital media and marketing could not only increase the visibility and exposure of the Utsjoki region, making it more attractive to potential visitors, but also provide them with information and resources, such as travel guides, accommodation options, and cultural experiences.

Digital media and marketing can also provide a platform for two-way communication and engagement with visitors, encouraging feedback and suggestions for improvement. It is also an effective monitoring and evaluation tool for marketing campaigns and strategies providing data and analytics for informed decision-making.

As a follow-up, the following actions could be undertaken in Utsjoki for more effective marketing and communication:

- Utilize social media platforms to target sustainable tourism audiences such as eco-conscious travellers and adventure enthusiasts.
- Partner with local influencers and bloggers to showcase the beauty and sustainability efforts in Utsjoki.
- Create engaging and informative contents like blog posts, videos, and photos that highlight the unique experiences and activities in Utsjoki, with a focus on sustainable practices.
- Optimize the destination's website for search engines, ensuring it is mobile-friendly and provides easy access to information on sustainable tourism options in Utsjoki.
- Use email marketing to promote sustainable tourism packages and attract repeat visitors.
- Run targeted online advertising to reach a wider audience and drive traffic to the website.
- Collaborate with travel companies and tour operators to offer sustainable tourism packages in Utsjoki.
- Utilize user-generated content and positive reviews to further promote the destination and highlight the commitment to sustainable tourism.

A3 Annex 3. Agenda of the workshops

UTSJOKI LIVING LAB

1st Online Session
26 April 2022
2 - 4 pm (CET)

PROGRAMME

Opening	
14:00 – 14:15	Welcome Remarks: Matteo Rosati, Officer in charge, Culture Unit, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe Mira Alhonsuo, Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland
Session 1	
14:15 – 14:30	Participants' Introduction
14:30 – 15:00	Summary of Learning Topic 1 - Understanding Tourism at your Destination Presenter: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant
15:00 – 15:30	Summary of Learning Topic 2 - Communicating with visitors/interpretation Presenter: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant
15:30 – 16:00	Question and Answer session Facilitator: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant

UTSJOKI LIVING LAB

2nd Online Session
25 May 2022
2 - 4 pm (CET)

PROGRAMME

Opening	
14:00 - 14:15	Welcome Remarks: Matteo Rosati, Officer in charge, Culture Unit, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe Mira Alhonsuo, Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland
Session 1	
14:15 - 14:30	Participants' Introduction
14:30 - 15:00	Presentation of summary of responses for the destination management survey Presenter: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant
15:00 - 15:30	Discussion roundtable Presenter: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant
15:30 - 16:00	In person workshop planning - presentation of agenda and feedback Facilitator: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant

UTSJOKI LIVING LAB

In-person Workshop
14 October 2022
9 – 4 pm (CET)

PROGRAMME

Opening	
9:00 - 09:15	Opening Remarks: Ella Björn, Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland Costanza Fidelbo, Assistant Project Officer, Culture Unit, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
Session 1	
09:15 - 09:30	Participants' Introduction
09:30 - 10:00	Recap of online workshop - Understanding Tourism at your Destination – Peter DeBrine
10:00 - 11:00	Developing a strategy for progressive change – Peter DeBrine
11:00 - 12:00	Enhancing the visitor experience – adding cultural value through products, experiences, and interpretation – Peter DeBrine
12:00 - 13:00	**Lunch**
Session 2	
13:00 - 14:00	Communicating with your visitors – setting the narrative and storytelling
14:00 - 15:30	Communicating with your visitors – harnessing digital marketing and media
15:30 - 16:00	Conclusion and next steps

A4 Annex 4. List of participants

№	Name	Surname	Organization / Role
Organizers / SmartCulTour partners			
1.	Mira	Alhonsuo	University of Lapland
2.	Ella	Björn	University of Lapland, Living Lab Manager
3.	Emma	Kirjavainen	University of Lapland
4.	Monika	Luthje	University of Lapland
5.	Costanza	Fidelbo	UNESCO
6.	Peter	DeBrine	UNESCO (consultant)
Participants			
7.	UTS1		Tourism business
8.	UTS2		Tourism business
9.	UTS3		Tourism business
10.	UTS4		Manager of Village House
11.	UTS5		University of Lapland
12.	UTS6		Municipality of Utsjoki
13.	UTS7		Tourism entrepreneur
14.	UTS8		Tourism entrepreneur

04 Capacity-building actions in the Huesca Living Lab

This section of the report outlines the contents, methodologies and preliminary results of the capacity-building actions that were implemented in the Huesca Living Lab, and seeks to explain how they are complementary to the Living Lab's programme and relevant to local trends, needs and priorities, as well as their impact on local stakeholders and eventual follow-up actions that were identified for future implementation.

4.1. Main topics of the capacity-building

The two-part capacity-building programme that UNESCO designed and delivered in the Huesca LL included an interactive online learning session introducing the Organization's approach to sustainable cultural tourism destination management, and a more practical workshop centred around the UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit, held respectively on 6 and 17 October 2022.

The capacity-building programme reflected the priorities and objectives expressed by local stakeholders upon specific consultations conducted by UNESCO in cooperation with the LL Manager, focusing on the two following sub-topics:

- Enhancing the visitor experience at cultural destinations; and
- Cultural route development".

The in-presence event offered opportunities for networking, convening a diverse set of stakeholders bringing together culture, heritage and tourism practitioners from the Huesca Living Lab, covering both the private and the public sectors.

A questionnaire was designed and circulated prior to the activity to gather information about the tourism industry performance and identify threats and opportunities for sustainable cultural tourism development. The survey results formed the basis for the working sessions, where the specific topics relevant to the Huesca LL were covered more in-depth with a view to inform priorities and actions to be carried forward.

4.2. Complementarity with the Lab's programme

4.2.1. Overall complementarity

The capacity building aligned with the Living Lab's overall programme in that it offered participants the opportunity to reflect upon new methodologies for attracting tourists, including through the creation of cultural routes, marketing and communication. The training programme mainly focused on co-creating a regional cultural tourism strategy for the region, improving stakeholders' networking and strengthening cooperation amongst relevant actors from the cultural and tourism sectors.

The Huesca province, notably through the local DMO TuHuesca, has been working since a while with social media and influencers to promote the destination. Building on such an experience, the workshop aimed to help participants realise the importance of choosing the right influencer as ambassador of the destination,

by looking at its followers and matching his/her outreach with the destination's target audience. The reflections stemming from the activity also showed the interest of influencers for remote places, hence how the depopulation experienced by the region may somehow become an attractor for a niche tourism, turning weaknesses in opportunities.

All the issues tackled during the capacity building were very much related to what had been discussed in previous Living Lab's meetings, and so were the examples dealt with in the case studies. In particular, given the nature of Huesca as a rural province where attractions – both cultural and natural – are scattered across the territory, the creation of cultural routes was particularly relevant to promote tourism in all regions by combining them into different routes, linking landmarks and stakeholders.

4.2.2. Challenges

The challenges encountered during the delivery of the capacity building activities are mainly related to the schedule: indeed, the workshop was initially foreseen to take place in early 2022, but it had to be postponed due to COVID-19. The in-presence session took place in October 2022, followed by only one more working LL meeting, undermining the potential of building upon its preliminary results. The Lab Manager indicated that the training would have had a greater impact if it had taken place a few months earlier, as it gave rise to ideas that could have also been applied to the LL's working methodologies. Nevertheless, the strengthened networking spurred by the activity will hopefully ensure sustainability of the results and a coherent action thereof.

As has been the case throughout the lifecycle of the Huesca LL, notably due its wide coverage, one of the challenges is linked to the difficulty of finding solutions at the provincial / regional level, broadening the scope beyond the single counties and their cultural resources. The workshop inspired participants to commit to the design of a coherent image of the destination, by implementing a concerted and international promotion of the province, while overcoming the current, short-sighted approach in which each county administration narrowly manages its tourist products with limited resources and a lack of a synergic approach.

4.3. Situation analysis for the destination

The ideal situation analysis for the Huesca LL should identify opportunities and challenges for sustainable cultural tourism development in the province, and therefore it should include the following:
- Information about the target market for tourism in the province, including demographic information about tourists (age, gender, income, etc.), and their motivations for visiting the area.
- An overview of the tourism industry in the province, including information about the number of tourists visiting the area, the types of accommodations and activities available, and any trends or patterns in tourism over time.
- A breakdown of the province's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to tourism. This might include information about the natural beauty of the Pyrenees, the cultural heritage of the region, and any challenges that might be faced, such as a lack of infrastructure or limited accessibility to certain areas.
- An assessment of the competitive scenario in the region, including other destinations that tourists might visit instead of, or in addition to, the Huesca province, as well as information about competitors' strategies to attract visitors.
- Examination of factors that might influence the tourism industry in the province, such as economic conditions, legal and regulatory framework (zoning laws, environmental regulations, etc.), local and

national governance, infrastructure, technological developments, as well as social and cultural factors, including attitudes towards tourism, the impact of tourism on local communities and the potential impact on the environment.

4.3.1. Survey Results

Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to complete an assignment designed to both enhance their learning and to collect information in order to develop a situation analysis for sustainable tourism development in the destination. In addition to completing the survey themselves, participants were encouraged to distribute the online survey to tourism stakeholders in the destination to get their perspectives on local tourism challenges and opportunities. The following insights are mainly based on the information collected through the survey. Further evidences can be found in the Specific Terms of Reference for the Huesca LL[6].

The survey provided valuable data and insights that can help to inform decision-making about how to improve tourism in the Huesca province and create an enjoyable experience for visitors. The region features a variety of UNESCO designated sites, including World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks.

4.3.2. Destination Management and Promotion

In terms of management and promotion, *Huesca Promoción y desarrollo del Alto Aragón, S.A.* (TuHuesca) and, in Aragon, *Sociedad de Promoción y Gestión del Turismo Aragonés, S.L.U.* (TurismodeAragón) are the main destination management authorities. Overall, the counties are responsible for the tourist promotion of the territory, within the guidelines provided by the Government of Aragon.

The tourism industry in the province could be found to be relatively small but growing, with an increasing number of tourists visiting the area in recent years. The primary target market for tourism seems to include outdoor enthusiasts and adventure seekers, as well as cultural and history buffs, and therefore the types of accommodations and activities available are primarily related to outdoor activities and cultural heritage.

The province's strengths include its natural beauty, cultural heritage, and outdoor activities, while main weaknesses are the lack of infrastructure and limited access to certain areas. Opportunities for further tourism development comprise an existing potential for growth in eco-tourism and adventure tourism, while identifiable threats are linked to the competition with other destinations and the potential negative impact on the environment.

In addition, the province could be found to:
- Be competing with other destinations in the Pyrenees and other mountainous regions, as well as with other Spanish destinations that offer a similar mix of culture and outdoor activities.
- Be affected by a variety of environmental factors, such as weather and natural disasters, as well as the potential impact of climate change on tourism.
- Have a generally positive attitude towards tourism, but concerns shall be raised about the unsustainable effects of tourism on local communities, including issues such as overcrowding, strain on resources, and negative impact on the environment.
- Have laws and regulations in place to protect the environment, despite existing challenges with

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[6] Fidelbo C. ed., 2021, *Specific Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour Living Laboratories*, Deliverable 6.1 of the project.

regards to managing the influx of tourists, and ensuring that tourism is sustainable and responsible.

4.4. Summary of the training sessions and preliminary results

4.4.1. Overall impact

The online training session for the Huesca LL emphasized the need to:
- Rethinking tourism at the destination level, understanding trends and developing new strategies;
- Enhancing the visitor experience through culture and creativity, and notably to leverage the opportunities offered by the development of cultural routes.

The in-presence training session focussed on:
- Destination management planning, including the development of a strategy for cultural route development and promotion;
- Communicating with visitors, in terms of both setting the brand narrative and storytelling and harnessing digital media and marketing.

Overall, the training sessions provided an opportunity to:
- ❖ Gain a better understanding of local cultural tourism dynamics, main issues and priorities of the key stakeholders, as well as assessing the state of advancement of the Living Lab *vis à vis* the overall project's work plan;
- ❖ Raise broader awareness on UNESCO, its function and mandate, and inspire local stakeholders by equipping them with the needed knowledge to harness the contribution of UNESCO to local sustainable development through culture-based tourism;
- ❖ Provide a safe environment for discussion and exchange among a variety of stakeholders with apparently different agendas and priorities.
- ❖ Convey to participants the methodology of creating cultural routes and how such tourism intervention can help the whole province to grow and increase visibility of lesser-known cultural resources.
- ❖ Transmit the importance of communication and how, with clear, interesting and concise messages, it can exponentially boost the interest in different local attractions, spanning nature, culture and gastronomy.

4.4.2. Preliminary Results

The following results stemmed from the implemented capacity-building activities and the reflections spurred thereof:
- The adoption of a destination management approach, along with reinforcing networking, were identified as particularly relevant to the Huesca Living Lab in its quest to devise a regional strategy for sustainable tourism development;
- Opportunity to build upon post-Covid trends when it comes to the increase in nature-based, open-air tourism and the rediscovery of the local culture;
- Need to boost the province's visibility;
- Stakeholders advocated a "responsibility pledge for sustainable tourism", aimed at engaging accommodation's owners and travellers with support from the local municipality, while better marketing and communicating cultural tourism to potential visitors (similar to the UNESCO Sustainable Travel Pledge);

- A key strategic approach for the region would be the development of tailored cultural routes, including by relying upon and connecting the several UNESCO Designated sites in an itinerary.

With regards to the latter point, participants were engaged in an exercise on "Destination Management - Creating Cultural Routes", aimed at devising potential cultural tourism routes in the region, building upon existing networks while creating new alliances.

The exercise emphasized the need to:

- ❖ Define a theme representative of local cultural and natural values;
- ❖ Identify local heritage elements, whether tangible and/or intangible;
- ❖ Create a network with a clear governance structure;
- ❖ Coordinate common activities in the main field of actions;
- ❖ Ensure a common tourism and visibility strategy.

Based on the above identified steps, participants were divided into three groups and invited to brainstorm to co-design a potential cultural route. Results of the exercise included proposals for the development of the following paths:

1. **"Monasteries of the Pyrenees"** - The Pyrenees are rich of Romanic Monastries scattered around and having an aura of magic and mystery. The diversified governance structure, including different ownership regimes, including both private and public, made it difficult to create a network so far. Participants proposed to set up a Consortium (virtual or physical) to provide information to visitors and present an overall, coherent narrative of the route. The proposal can be found to be aligned with the objectives of the UNESCO's activity on Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites.
2. **"The Shepherd route"** - The proposal focuses on the development of a series of routes around the province based on gastronomic and agricultural features, such as typical dishes, wines, traditional cuisine and modern gastronomy, therefore gathering producers from the farms with restaurants, agricultural fairs, etc. The set-up of the route(s) should be combined with desk research, aimed at avoiding duplication and upholding other already existing initiatives in the field, as well as ensuring synergies with all concerned stakeholders in a coordinated action. Last, participants proposed the creation of a sort of gastronomic calendar, combining a map of the local resources with a guide of producers, physical routes, as well as shops selling local products, including merchandising. Public financing should be sought for such an intervention, possibly combining tourism and agriculture-related funds;
3. **"Paths with history"** - The proposals implies the recovery and rehabilitation of traditional paths throughout the Huesca province, including Romanic sites, natural and geological attractions, religious and cultural heritage, with a view to reduce tourism seasonality. This should be supported by the development of tailored narratives based on selected cultural heritage sites, mythology or geology, so that tourists can create the itinerary of their choice. Participants stressed that specific attention should also be devoted to the accessibility of such paths, e.g. for wheelchairs and bicycles, as well as the use of signs. The Provincial Council could be in charge of the creation and promotion of such trails, with the support of volunteers, as well as by resorting to a dedicated app or website for its market publicizing.

Last but not least, the establishment of a route connecting local UNESCO designations came out as a result of the discussion, spanning World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves, Global Geoparks, and elements

inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

4.5. Participants' feedback

4.5.1. Insights from survey participants

A short evaluation survey was developed to receive feedback from the participants on the effectiveness of the capacity building exercise. Ten responses were received out of the thirteen participants to the workshop. On the overall learning experience, the totality of respondents felt that their expectations of the UNESCO's capacity-building activity for the Lab were met, with 70% of them affirming that the workshop and the information presented therein were extremely well organized and useful.
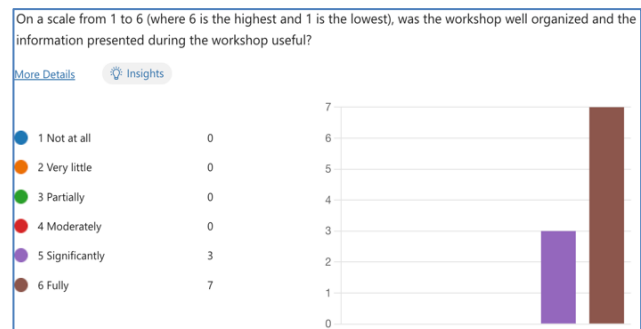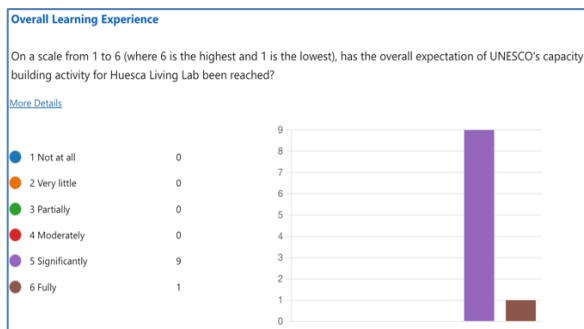
Fig 10 and 11. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

80% of the respondents found that the activity was very relevant for the Huesca Living Lab and that their level of understanding of UNESCO's approach to destination management has significantly increased as a result of the capacity-building workshop.

Though at different levels, all respondents declared that their level of understanding of digital media and marketing, as well as of how to communicate with their visitors, somehow increased as a result of the capacity-building workshop.
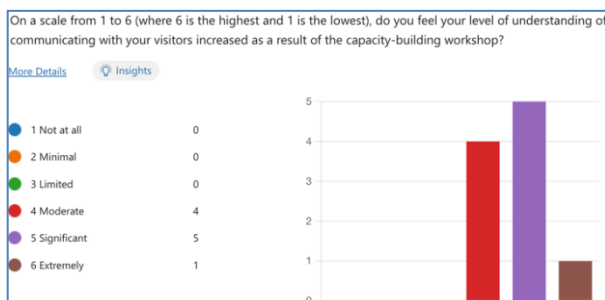
Fig 12 and 13. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)
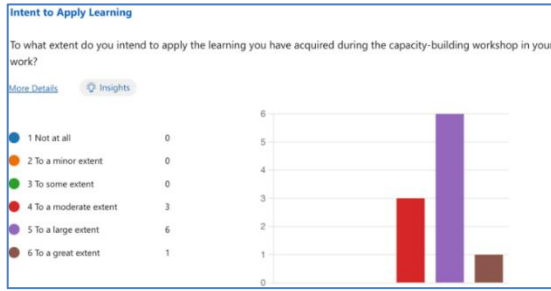
Participants seem to be generally eager to apply the learnings they have acquired during the workshop in their daily business. Below, some of the proposed ways to implement the learnings, as stated by the respondents:

Fig 14. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

- Bearing in mind the importance of offering a joint image to conduct large-scale international promotion of the Huesca province, implying the strengthening of cooperation among different actors;
- Creating new promotion products by adopting a more human approach to communication, telling stories that will attract the potential visitor, but also respecting the needs of the inhabitants of the tourist destination;
- Working on the candidature of the Castillo de Loarre for the inscription on the World Heritage List;
- Understanding the visitors better and designing new strategies to attract potential clients, including foreign target audiences;
- Identifying new strategies and ways to connect landmarks across the province among them and with the visitors (i.e. Creating a cultural route in the county of Somontano that brings together several tourist attractions);
- Understanding and trying to tackle the challenges associated with different governance structures (i.e. currently each county manages its own tourist products with a very limited budget);
- Using the Tourist Hub App that has been set up by the Chamber of Commerce.
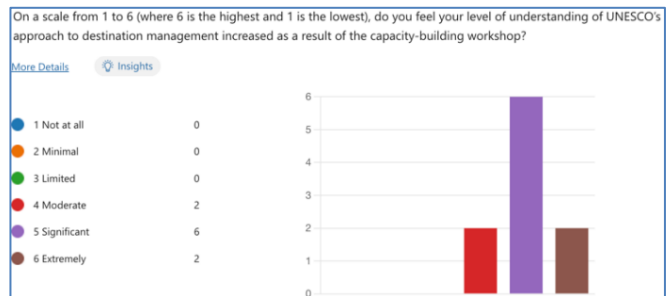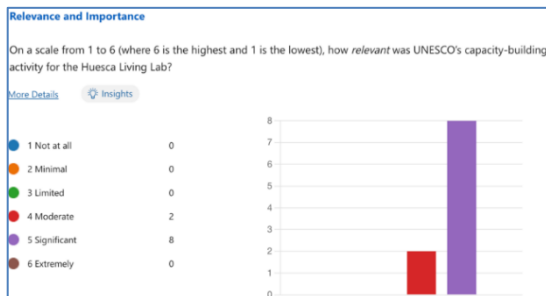
Fig 15 and 16. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

4.6. Proposed follow-up

4.6.1. Cultural Route Development

A key strategic approach for Huesca would be the development of tailored cultural routes, including by relying upon and connecting the several UNESCO Designations of the province in a trail. The steps for developing cultural routes for sustainable tourism may vary depending on the specific context and identified needs and priorities, but generally the process should include the following steps:

- **Identify the cultural heritage assets and elements:** The first step is to identify the cultural heritage assets and elements that can be used to create a cultural route. These can include

historical sites, monuments, buildings, landscapes, cultural practices, traditional festivities, etc.

- **Conduct a feasibility study:** A feasibility study should be conducted to assess the potential of the cultural route, including the availability of infrastructure, accessibility, and the expected economic and social benefits.

- **Develop a vision and strategy:** Develop a vision and strategy for the cultural route, including goals, target audiences, and key themes.

- **Create a detailed plan:** Develop a specific plan for the cultural route, including the route itself, the infrastructure required, the interpretation and promotion of the cultural heritage assets, and any necessary measures to ensure their preservation.

- **Implement the plan:** Implement the plan and develop the necessary infrastructure, such as signs, brochures, and information centers.

- **Promote the cultural route:** Promote the cultural route among potential visitors, including through tailored marketing campaigns and partnerships with tour operators, local businesses, and other organizations.

- **Monitor and evaluate:** Regularly monitor and evaluate the cultural route to assess its impact and make any necessary adjustments. For instance, it would be strategic to conduct a survey at the destination level to assess the impact of the (newly created) cultural routes (e.g. increase in number of tourists), as well as the interest generated, including the resources that were mostly appreciated by the visitors and whether they would add any more attractions in the trail(s).

- **Involve local communities and stakeholders:** Engage local communities and stakeholders in the development and management of the cultural route to ensure that it is sustainable and that it meets their needs and interests.

The development of tailored cultural routes would bring along positive impacts for the destinations, namely:

- **Promote cultural heritage:** Cultural routes can highlight the cultural heritage of a region and help preserve it for future generations.

- **Encourage responsible tourism:** By highlighting the cultural significance of a destination, cultural routes can encourage tourists to be more respectful and responsible when visiting.

- **Support local communities:** Cultural routes can bring economic benefits to local communities by promoting their culture and traditions to a wider audience.

- **Diversify the tourism offering:** By promoting cultural routes, tourists can be encouraged to explore different parts of a region and to stay longer, which can help spread the economic benefits of tourism more widely.

- **Educate tourists:** Cultural routes can provide an opportunity for tourists to learn about the history, culture, and traditions of a region and increase their understanding and appreciation of it.

4.6.2. Marketing and communicating with the visitor

The Huesca province is unique because of its combination of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and rich enogastronomic offer. The Pyrenees Mountain range runs through the province, offering opportunities for hiking, skiing, and other outdoor pursuits. The area also has a rich cultural heritage, with well-preserved medieval towns and castles and renowned religious pilgrimage sites and monasteries. All of these factors make the Huesca province a unique destination for tourists seeking a blend of adventure, culture, and history.

The adoption of a destination management approach, along with reinforcing networking among key actors

in the province, are particularly relevant to the Huesca Living Lab in its quest to devise a regional strategy for sustainable tourism development. Marketing and communicating will form an important part of the strategy, which should also build upon post-Covid trends when it comes to the increase in nature-based, open-air tourism and the rediscovery of the local culture.

The following checklist outlines some of the most common and effective communication methods to consider for follow-up:

- **Developing a stronger online presence:** This includes having a scalable website, social media strategy, and online listings that provide detailed information about the cultural experiences available in the area.
- **Creating engaging content:** This includes creating visually appealing videos and photographs, as well as writing compelling descriptions of the cultural experiences on offer.
- **Continuing to leverage local influencers and ambassadors:** Partnering with local influencers and ambassadors can help promote the cultural experiences available in the area to a wider audience.
- **Partnering with tour operators and travel agents** who can help market cultural tourism experiences to their clients.
- **Partnering with local organizations** to promote responsible tourism and provide authentic cultural experiences.
- **Hosting cultural events and festivals** can attract visitors to the area and provide them with a unique cultural experience.
- **Creating a sense of authenticity** is important to make visitors feel like they are experiencing the true culture of the area, as well as **highlighting the unique cultural experiences** that can only be found in the destination.
- **Creating package deals and itineraries:** Offering package deals and pre-planned itineraries can make it easy for visitors to plan their cultural trip and make the most of their time.
- **Emphasizing the destination's commitment to sustainability** and how it benefits the local community, including by showcasing sustainable practices on social media and other digital channels.
- **Encouraging visitors to support local businesses** and engage in sustainable activities while they are there.
- **Providing educational materials and opportunities** for visitors to learn more about the destination's culture and how to be a sustainable tourist.
- **Creating a sense of community and belonging for tourists**, for example by offering local home-stays and experiences involving everyday activities.
- **Improving communication** by providing a clear and consistent message about the destination's culture and sustainability efforts.
- **Assessing** whether these actions have had an impact on increasing the number of tourists and the sustainability of tourism development.

A5 Annex 5. Agenda of the workshops

HUESCA LIVING LAB

Online Session
6 October 2022
3 - 5:30 pm (CET)

PROGRAMME

Opening	
15:00 – 15:15	Welcome Remarks: Costanza Fidelbo, Assistant Project Officer, Culture Unit, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe Diego Lozano, Living Lab Manager, CIHEAM Zaragoza
Session 1	
15:15 – 15:30	Participants' Introduction
15:30 – 16:00	Rethinking tourism at your destination - understanding trends and developing new strategies Presenter: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant
16:00 – 16:10	**Break**
16:10 – 17:00	Enhancing the visitor experience through culture and creativity – the role of cultural routes Presenter: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant
17:00 – 17:30	Question and Answer session Facilitator: Peter DeBrine, UNESCO consultant

HUESCA LIVING LAB

In-person Workshop
17 October 2022
10 – 5 pm (CET)

PROGRAMME

Opening	
10:00 – 10:15	Opening Remarks: Alun Jones, Huesca Living Lab, CIHEAM Zaragoza Costanza Fidelbo, Assistant Project Officer, Culture Unit, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
Session 1	
10:15 – 10:30	Participants' Introduction
10:30 – 11:00	Recap of online session – rethinking tourism at your destination - Peter Debrine
11:00 – 11:30	**Coffee Break**
11:30 – 12:30	Destination management planning – developing a strategy for cultural route development and promotion - Peter Debrine
Session 2	
12:30 – 13:30	Communicating with your visitors – setting the brand narrative and storytelling - Peter Debrine
13:30 – 14:30	**Lunch**
Session 2 (continue)	
14:30 – 15:30	Communicating with your visitors – setting the brand narrative and storytelling (continue) - Peter Debrine
15:30 – 16:30	Communicating with your visitors – harnessing digital marketing and media - Peter Debrine
16:30 – 17:00	Conclusion and next steps

A6 Annex 6. List of participants

Nº	Name	Surname	Organization / Role
Organizers / SmartCulTour partners			
1.	Alun	Jones	CIHEAM Zaragoza
2.	Diego	Lozano	CIHEAM Zaragoza, Living Lab Manager
3.	Peter	DeBrine	UNESCO
4.	Costanza	Fidelbo	UNESCO
5.	Maite	Lasantas	CIHEAM Zaragoza
6.	Marie Louise	Tall	CIHEAM Zaragoza
Participants			
7.	HUE1		TuHuesca
8.	HUE2		Turismo Verde Huesca
9.	HUE3		Huesca Alimentaria
10.	HUE4		Turismo Verde Huesca
11.	HUE5		Ceder Somontano
12.	HUE6		Cámara de Comercio, Industria y Servicios de Huesca
13.	HUE7		Turismo Verde Huesca
14.	HUE8		Enodestino
15.	HUE9		Turismo Verde Huesca
16.	HUE10		Alcalde Loarre
17.	HUE11		Turismo Verde Huesca
18.	HUE12		Turismo Verde Huesca

19.	HUE13	Comarca Hoya de Huesca

05 Capacity-building actions in the Rotterdam Living Lab

This section of the report outlines the contents, methodologies and preliminary results of the capacity-building actions that were implemented in the Rotterdam Living Lab, and seeks to explain how they are complementary to the Living Lab's programme and relevant to local trends, needs and priorities, as well as their impact on local stakeholders and eventual follow-up actions that were identified for future implementation.

5.1. Main topics of the capacity-building

The capacity building for Rotterdam was designed to reflect the priorities and objectives expressed by the LL's participants upon specific consultations conducted by UNESCO in cooperation with the LL Manager. The two sub topics selected by the Rotterdam LL include:

▪ Communicating with visitors/interpretation
▪ Digital media and marketing

On this basis, on 20 October 2022 UNESCO delivered a sustainable tourism capacity-building and networking activity that brought together culture, heritage and tourism stakeholders from the Rotterdam Living Lab, covering both the private and the public sectors. The workshop was hosted by Rotterdam Partners, the local DMO. The first part of the training programme featured a session on understanding tourism at the destination, followed by a focus on enhancing the visitor experience by adding value through products, experiences, and interpretation. The afternoon session centred on communicating with visitors through digital media and marketing, providing opportunities for further reflections and exchanges.

A questionnaire was designed and circulated prior to the activity to gather information about the tourism industry performance and identify threats and opportunities for sustainable cultural tourism development. The survey results formed the basis for the working sessions, where the specific topics relevant to the Rotterdam LL were covered more in-depth with a view to inform priorities and actions to be carried forward.

5.2. Complementarity with the Lab's programme

5.2.1. Overall Complementarity

While the Rotterdam LL has mainly been focusing on the different tourism development pace of the various city neighborhoods, the destination management approach offered by UNESCO's capacity-building workshop somehow reinforced the Living Lab programme in that it allowed participants to determine what each district would need to give cultural tourism a chance. The UNESCO activity provided an opportunity to zoom out and look at Rotterdam as a whole through the lens of a visitor. It reinforced the core values of Rotterdam as a destination and spurred reflections on how the city can use such values to highlight cultural tourism offerings at district level.

In addition, the workshop provided interesting insights on how to reinforce existing partnerships with a

plethora of strategic stakeholders, including bloggers, journalists and influencers, and how tourism operators can better use these key actors to better convey other images of Rotterdam. This is in line with Rotterdam's dispersal strategy, aiming to attract tourists not only to the city centre, but also to other districts, by creating offers that may be of interest for both residents and visitors.

5.2.2. Challenges

The city of Rotterdam can be considered as a beacon of sustainable cultural tourism practices. Due to its international and intercultural essence (*"we are the world"*, in the words of the local stakeholders), the destination presents itself as *"a home away from home"*, where different cultures and people peacefully live together. Against this background, the Rotterdam Living Lab identified fostering inclusivity and raising awareness of the rich cultural diversity of the city as priority actions. In this spirit, considering the specific needs and opportunities of different neighbourhoods appears crucial for the design of new cultural experiences, concepts, and products that may benefit both visitors and residents.

In view of the high level of self-awareness of the tourism sector in Rotterdam, it would have been useful to plan for extra time to go more in depth by discussing real case-studies and examples from neighborhoods outside the city centre. Preparatory work from participants, such as brainstorming on the challenges encountered when it comes to cultural tourism development, could also have led to an even deeper discussion. Otherwise, participants expressed their overall satisfaction with the activity, namely their expectations were met and interesting exchanges of knowledge and expertise took place during the workshop.

5.3. Situation analysis for the destination

Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to complete an assignment designed to both enhance their learning and to collect information in order to develop a situation analysis for sustainable tourism development in the destination. In addition to completing the survey themselves, participants were encouraged to distribute the online survey to tourism stakeholders in the destination to get their perspectives on local tourism challenges and opportunities. The following insights are mainly based on the information collected through the survey. Further evidences can be found in the Specific Terms of Reference for the Rotterdam LL[7].

5.3.1. Destination Management and Promotion

Rotterdam is a modern, sustainable city known for its innovative approach to architecture and urban planning. It features a large port and a thriving industrial sector, but also prioritizes green spaces and alternative modes of transportation like cycling and electric vehicles.

Rotterdam Partners is the Destination Management Organization (DMO) responsible for Rotterdam's image and promotion at national and international level, including through the management of the Rotterdam Tourist Information (RTI) Coolsingel, namely the official Visitor centre of Rotterdam.

The communication and promotion of the destination is entrusted to, among others, the following social media links and platforms:

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[7] Fidelbo C. ed., 2021, *Specific Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour Living Laboratories*, Deliverable 6.1 of the project.

Inside Rotterdam
Van Nelle Fabriek Facebook page
Van Nelle Fabriek Linkedin page
Van Nelle Fabriek Twitter page
Van Nelle Fabriek Instagram page

Respondents affirmed that the following features shall be included in the destination's description on a promotion platform:

- Community importance; Architectural importance - international style etc.; Events potential; How to visit; Narratives related to architects and designers; Storytelling related to visitors; Social media links; Socialist information for architecture nerds; Contribution to modernist architecture map of Rotterdam? (Architects form an important visitor group to Rotterdam).
- Local immersive experiences: Signature tours for curious travellers; Thematic bike tours; Off-the beaten path itineraries; Rooftop tours providing a sustainable vision on the future.

5.3.2. Visitor Experience

Attractions that respondents would recommend tourists to visit while at the destination include:

Main visitor attractions include:
- Erasmus Bridge
- Markthal Rotterdam
- Kunsthal Rotterdam
- Cube Houses
- Maritime Museum
- Euromast Tower
- Diergaarde Blijdorp Zoo
- De Kuip Stadium
- Delfshaven Neighborhood
- Luchtsingel Bridge

Daytrips to:
- Amsterdam
- Den Haag
- Schiedam
- Mill Network at Kinderdijk-Elshout (WH property)

Other towns and neighborhoods:
- Schiedam (Kettle One Vodka)
- Bospolder-Tussendijken (BoTu)

- Delfshaven
- Hoek van Holland
- Rotterdam Noord
- Rotterdam Binnestad
- Vlaardingen Harbour
- Other port areas.

Other attractions and Visitor Centres:
- Chabot Museum
- Inside courtyard of the city hall
- Laurenschurch
- Verwoeste Stad
- Futureland - Maasvlakte II

Culturally and/or historically significant stories:
- WOII - Erasmus
- Development port of Rotterdam
- Modern architecture
- Multicultural food

Rotterdam is adjacent to the "Van Nellefabriek" World Heritage property. The property is managed by its current owner and operator, the private group Van Nelle Design Factory. The management of the conservation of the property's architectural, urban and environmental values is based on the cooperation between the heritage departments of the City of Rotterdam and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, which jointly drew up the property's management plan (January 2013).

Van Nellefabriek is one of the icons of 20th century industrial architecture, comprising a complex of factories, with façades consisting essentially of steel and glass, making large-scale use of the curtain wall principle. It was conceived as an 'ideal factory', open to the outside world, whose interior working spaces evolved according to the needs, and in which daylight was used to provide pleasant working conditions. It embodies the new kind of factory that became a symbol of the modernist and functionalist culture of the inter-war period, and bears witness to the long commercial and industrial history of the Netherlands in the field of importation of food products from tropical countries, and their processing for marketing in Europe

5.3.3. Interpretation and communication

The main local authorities or organizations responsible for heritage interpretation are:
- [Rotterdam.nl](), which is the gateway to municipal information and services and is responsible for heritage interpretation;
- [Chabot Museum]();
- [New Architecture Design Museum (HIM).]()

5.4. Summary of the training sessions and preliminary results

5.4.1. Overall impact

Overall, the training sessions provided an opportunity to:
- Gain a better understanding of local cultural tourism dynamics, main issues and priorities of the key stakeholders, use of online channels, as well as assessing the state of advancement of the Living Lab *vis à vis* the overall project's work plan;
- Raise broader awareness on UNESCO, its function and mandate, as well as the culture programme of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe;
- Equip participants with the needed knowledge to harness the contribution of UNESCO to local sustainable development through culture-based tourism, including by presenting examples and good practices in the field.

5.4.2. Preliminary results

Below is a summary of the main outcomes of the workshop and relevant discussions:

- **Gastronomy** was identified as the most immediate way to convey the local culture and territory to visitors, not only by proposing dishes from the traditional cuisine, but also through the use of local ingredients. The latter is especially true in the case of Rotterdam, whose **international and intercultural essence** reflects on the food industry as well.
- Destination management should be guided by the **"live like a local" principle**, implying that the tourist experience is not limited to observing / watching, but to actually participating in the local life and customs. It was noted that the local DMO, Rotterdam Partners, is already well advanced in this path through the initiative "HOW TO EXPLORE ROTTERDAM LIKE A DO~~TOUR~~IST": https://www.dorotterdam.com/the-dorist
- The following **values / positive aspects** were identified as being core to the destination:
  - Re-inventive capacity of the city to have a future-oriented perspective, including both local communities and businesses;

❖ Looking at the bigger picture by going beyond a narrow city-lens and focusing on a broader regional scale;

❖ Bold and resilient (e.g. post-Covid);

❖ No-nonsense, due to a solid awareness on the city brand;

❖ *We are the world – a* home away from home, where different cultures and people peacefully live together;

❖ Beautiful mess / patchwork / melting pot - awareness of the profound diversities coexisting in the city, especially in view of the different growth pace of some neighbourhoods compared to others, which are therefore more in need of support;

❖ Hard to get (for lazy tourists): despite the richness in both tangible and intangible values, tourists are expected to make an effort to understand the city, which then offers continuous opportunities to discover a different Rotterdam on every corner;

❖ Down to Earth / straightforwardness;

❖ Humour - for example, in the habitude to rename places as part of the city marketing strategy;

❖ A-typical Rotterdam;

❖ Contemporary;

❖ Wired for the future – public accessibility of the internet;

❖ Open-air contemporary museum;

❖ Vibrant and rich night life, with many cultural and creative events (e.g. from May to September, Rotterdam hosts a different Festival every weekend).

▪ The following **negative values / aspects** were identified as being relevant to the destination:

❖ Air pollution;

❖ Untapped potential of the city's heritage;

❖ Untapped potential of the city's history to better understand the present (e.g. a museum on migration is currently under construction);

❖ Affordable housing problem, especially affecting disadvantaged groups that are kicked out from the city centre.

5.5. Participants' feedback

5.5.1. Insights from survey participants

Due to the advanced level of competence and specialization of the participants to the workshop in Rotterdam, its learning impact on specific themes was moderate in comparison to other Living Labs. Rotterdam may actually have benefitted from a full-fledged capacity-building exercise, touching upon several domains and requiring actions at different levels, including support to policy-making, technical advice, and in-depth training. Nevertheless, such complex and articulated actions were beyond the limited scope (and budget) of the SmartCulTour project.
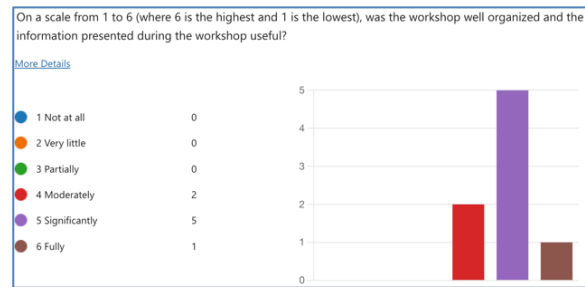
Fig 17 and 18. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

The overall feedback indicated that the Rotterdam workshop was appreciated by local stakeholders. Out of 13 participants to the in-presence workshop, a total of 8 responses were received. In particular, the totality of the respondents felt that their expectations with regard to the UNESCO's capacity-building activity were met in terms of both workshop's organization and usefulness of the provided information.
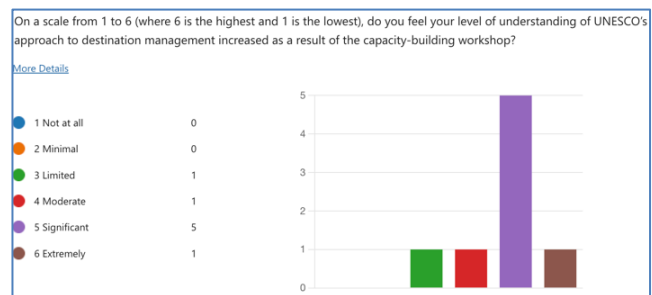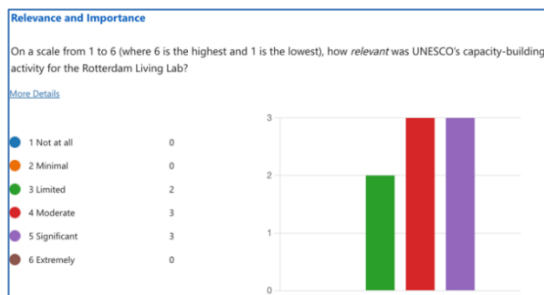
Fig 19 and 20. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

75% of the respondents found that the activity was either significantly or moderately relevant for the Rotterdam Living Lab, while the remaining 25% found its relevancy being limited. Most of the respondents thought that their level of understanding of UNESCO's approach to destination management has significantly increased as a result of the capacity-building workshop. Respondents' general level of understanding of digital media and marketing and of how to communicate with visitors partially increased alike.
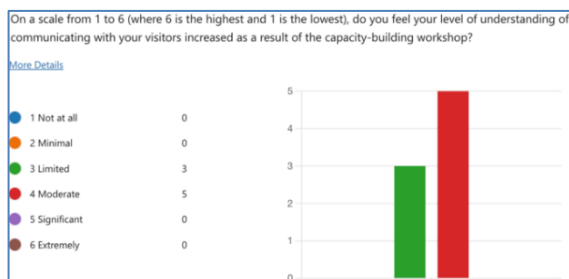
Fig 21 and 22. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)
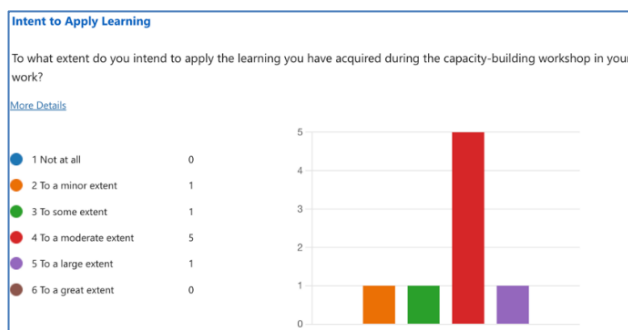
75% of respondents intend to apply the learning they have acquired during the workshop in their work, notably in the following manners:

Fig 23. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

- *"I will apply to research and lectures for students";*
- *"Information about UNESCO and UN structure was very useful and will be helpful for future projects. The brainstorm about the identity of Rotterdam was great and I will probably use this for future projects or collaborations";*
- *"I will follow up on communicating clearly the ways in which we add value to the Rotterdam ecosystem in a sustainable way (i.e. working together with local entrepreneurs, visiting important sites for sustainability programmes, etc.)";*
- *"Present the UNESCO designated sites, as well as other monumental buildings in our city, as more coherent and attractions to visit";*
- *"I will use the stories of our heritage even more and be somewhat selective in what kind of tourists we want to attract".*
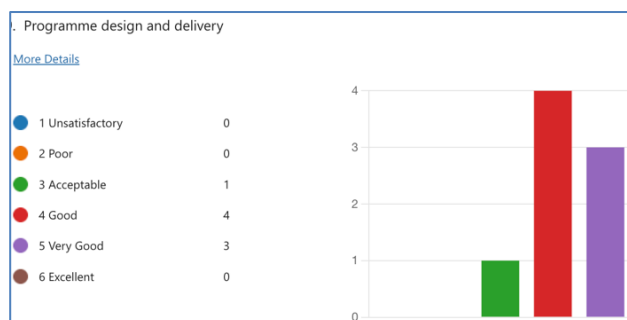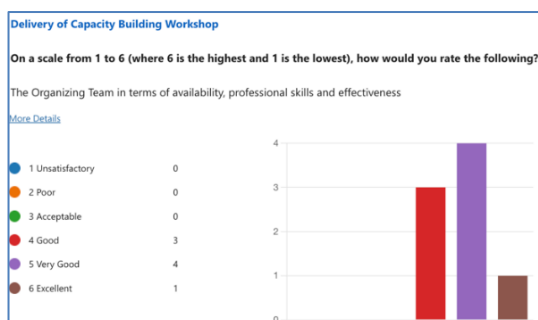
Fig 24 and 25. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

The availability, professional skills and effectiveness of the Organizing Team was appreciated by the participants, as well as the programme design and delivery. 62.5% of respondents were significantly satisfied with the overall quality of the workshop, while the others expressed a moderate enthusiasm.

Fig 26. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

According to the respondents, the main strengths of the workshop were:
- *Good to start with background about UNESCO that helped better understand its mission, main functions and activities;*
- *Great to brainstorm with other attendees about the identity of Rotterdam and how to promote*

the destination;
- *Knowledgeable UNESCO team delivering very professional presentations;*
- *An interested and well-informed audience;*
- *Vision on sustainable tourism and people-centred propositions;*

Regarding the main weakness, respondents wrote:
- *Need for more interactive sessions with discussion of specific cases, including further examples of the positive impact that cultural tourism has on local communities;*
- *Participants were already familiar with the information about the use of media, but it was nevertheless a good reminder;*
- *The link to the practical day-to-day as leisure activity providers was limited;*
- *Too much information provided on UNESCO governance;*
- *More specificity on the locations/sectors/area of business of the participants would have been an added value.*

5.6. Proposed follow-up

The capacity building for the Rotterdam Living Lab focused on more effectively communicating with their visitors through better interpretation and on enhancing digital media and marketing to promote the destination. The following actions were identified for follow-up.

- UNESCO's capacity-building workshop led to a follow-up discussion between the Living Lab and Rotterdam Partners, which agreed to work together towards the development of a coherent sustainable tourism strategy for the City of Rotterdam, and share the results of the work of the LL with the new alderman for the economy. Since the Rotterdam LL's process is remarkably bottom-up, and relevant ideas stem from entrepreneurs and citizens, the Living Lab is ideally placed to play the role of connector between the civil society and the Municipality.
- On the occasion of UNESCO's capacity-building activity in Rotterdam, previously unknown stakeholders joined the workshop. Follow-up meetings are to be scheduled with these actors to inform them more about the Living Lab and to assess whether possible collaborations can be initiated. The Rotterdam LL can also help them with connecting to other parties in order to build a sustainable network with like-minded parties who are committed to build tourism in a sustainable way.
- A key outcome from the capacity building activity was the recognized need to invest more on the destination's visibility. It is important to show what is happening in the city, share experiences, build and strengthen networks and communication, and create positive interventions.
- Future capacity-building on cultural tourism in Rotterdam shall be organized to discuss a more critical approach towards quality and high-end tourism.

A7 Annex 7. Agenda of the workshop

ROTTERDAM LIVING LAB

In-person Workshop
20 October 2022
10 am – 5 pm (CET)

PROGRAMME

Opening	
10:00 – 10:15	Welcome Remarks: Iris Kerst, Programme Manager Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Rotterdam Costanza Fidelbo, Assistant Project Officer, Culture Unit, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
Session 1	
10:15 – 10:30	Participants' Introduction
10:30 – 11:15	Understanding Tourism at your Destination - current trends and insight - Peter Debrine
11:15 – 12:00	Enhancing the visitor experience – adding cultural value through products, experiences, and interpretation - Peter Debrine
12:00 – 13:00	**Lunch**
Session 2	
13:00 – 15:00	Communicating with your visitors – setting the narrative and storytelling - Peter Debrine
15:00 – 15:30	**Coffee Break**
15:30 – 16:30	Communicating with your visitors – harnessing digital marketing and media - Peter Debrine
16:30 – 17:00	Conclusion and next steps

A8 Annex 8. List of participants

Nº	Name	Surname	Organization / Role
		Organizers / SmartCulTour partners	
1.	Iris	Kerst	Hogeschool Inholland, Living Lab Manager
2.	Ko	Koens	Hogeschool Inholland
3.	Costanza	Fidelbo	UNESCO
4.	Peter	DeBrine	UNESCO (consultant)
		Participants	
5.	ROT1		Rotterdam Partners
6.	ROT2		Rotterdam Partners
7.	ROT3		Rotterdam Partners
8.	ROT4		Rotterdam Partners
9.	ROT5		Bike & Bite
10.	ROT6		Mill Network at Kinderdijk-Elshout World Heritage site
11.	ROT7		Schiedam
12.	ROT8		Trompenburg
13.	ROT9		NBTC
14.	ROT10		Hogeschool Inholland
15.	ROT11		Schiedam
16.	ROT12		Rotterdam Partners
17.	ROT13		Hogeschool Inholland

06 Capacity-building actions in the Scheldeland Living Lab

This section of the report outlines the contents, methodologies and preliminary results of the capacity-building actions that were implemented in the Scheldeland Living Lab, and seeks to explain how they are complementary to the Living Lab's programme and relevant to local trends, needs and priorities, as well as their impact on local stakeholders and eventual follow-up actions that were identified for future implementation.

6.1. Main topics of the capacity-building

The capacity building was designed to reflect the priorities and objectives expressed by the Scheldeland LL upon specific consultations conducted by UNESCO in cooperation with the LL Manager. The two subtopics selected by the Scheldeland LL include:

- Communicating with visitors/interpretation
- Enhancing the visitor experience at cultural destinations

On this basis, on 24 October 2022 UNESCO delivered a capacity building and networking activity, bringing together stakeholders from both the culture and tourism sectors, including private businesses, representatives from local DMOs, and tourist guides.

The first part of the training programme focused on understanding cultural tourism at the destination, including current trends and insights, followed by a session on enhancing the visitor experience by adding cultural value through products, experiences, and interpretation. The afternoon session centred on communicating with visitors, and notably on setting the destination's narrative and storytelling, complemented by an interactive exchange on harnessing digital marketing and media.

A questionnaire was designed and circulated prior to the workshop to gather information about the tourism industry performance and identify threats and opportunities for sustainable cultural tourism development. The survey results formed the basis for the working sessions, where the specific topics relevant to the Scheldeland LL were covered more in-depth with a view to inform priorities and actions to be carried forward.

6.2. Complementarity with the Lab's programme

6.2.1. Overall complementarity

Throughout the Scheldeland LL workflow, the bottom-up participative ideation identified opportunities to create a cultural tourism package encompassing a variety of cultural, industrial, and military heritage, nature-scapes, and townscapes, linked by a network of 'slow mobility' (i.e. cycling and walking routes). While the Scheldt river offers a connective tissue and has been an underlying factor behind much of the existing cultural heritage in the region, the overarching storylines linking individual attractions could still be improved in order to create a distinct tourist profile for the region.

Notably, there are already important and valuable existing regional networks and strategic plans in place. *Toerisme Scheldeland* (the regional DMO) and *Toerisme Klein-Brabant* (with the municipalities of Puurs-Sint-

Amands and Bornem) look at broader possibilities for regional product development, such as the project "Castles of the Scheldt" (see also SmartCulTour Deliverable 6.2), subsidized by the Flemish government, which aims to connect the historic castles in the Scheldeland region to a wider castle-belt along the Scheldt river. Furthermore, River Park Scheldt Valley is currently being considered as one of four new National Parks, recognizing the unique landscape and recreational value and its links to local culture and economy.

So while the region has interesting and valuable individual attractions, and both stakeholder networks and attraction networks exist to a certain extent, an additional effort is needed to combine all in a multilayered product, with clear visitor profile strategies and taking into account general accessibility. Important elements in this are: (a) understanding the (national and international) visitors, both current and prospective; (b) identifying relevant communication channels and strategies; and (c) creating regional storylines to further enhance the visitor experience. All of these strategic axes were supported by the capacity-building activity of UNESCO.

6.2.2. Challenges

A main challenge for the region remains linking soft developments, such as enhanced storytelling and communication activities, with hard investments to overcome mobility thresholds. Dendermonde, being a larger, more concentrated city, is easy to reach by train and get around to on foot; however, Bornem and Puurs-Sint-Amands, while having train stations, are both more spatially dispersed, with the main attractions not necessarily being within one core area of the municipality. While leisurely cycling routes do exist, particularly the ones following the Scheldt riverbank, this is not a viable option for all visitors. Furthermore, unless specifically aimed at cycling tourists, it would require hop-on/hop-off or rental bike points. These rental bike options currently exist in the region, but are not obviously available for more unplanned trips.

6.3. Situation analysis for the destination

Prior to the workshop, participants were asked to complete an assignment designed to both enhance their learning and to collect information in order to develop a situation analysis for sustainable tourism development in the destination. In addition to completing this survey themselves, participants were encouraged to distribute the online survey to tourism stakeholders in the destination to get their perspectives on local tourism challenges and opportunities. The following insights are mainly based on the information collected through the survey. Further evidences can be found in the Specific Terms of Reference for the Scheldeland LL[8].

6.3.1. Overall attributes

The Scheldeland region is characterized by the following:

❖ **Cultural heritage**: Scheldeland has a rich cultural heritage, with a long history dating back to medieval times. Visitors can explore historic landmarks such as castles, fortresses, churches and abbeys, to learn about the region's cultural heritage and its role in shaping Belgian history. The economic function of the Scheldt river also gave rise to - now defunct - industries which left an industrial heritage trail, including the shipping wharves of Baasrode, and brickmaking near the Rupel river.

❖ **Natural beauty**: Scheldeland is home to stunning natural landscapes, including rolling hills, fertile

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[8] Fidelbo C. ed., 2021, *Specific Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour Living Laboratories*, Deliverable 6.1 of the project.

farmland, and the winding Scheldt River. Visitors can enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and boating to experience the region's natural beauty, with the Scheldt dykes in particular offering good opportunities for extended bicycle rides unencumbered by motorized traffic.

❖ **Local cuisine**: Scheldeland has a distinctive local cuisine, which includes traditional Belgian dishes and specialty beers (being home to the Duvel-Moortgat brewery). Visitors can dine at one of the region's many restaurants to sample the best of its culinary offerings.

❖ **Contemporary cultural and creative expressions**: Scheldeland has a thriving art and culture scene, with small museums and galleries showcasing local and international art, and the village of Sint-Amands particularly aligning itself with a literary tradition. Visitors can attend cultural events and exhibitions to experience the region's artistic scenario.

❖ **Friendly people**: Scheldeland is known for its friendly and welcoming people, who are proud of their cultural heritage and eager to share it with visitors.

6.3.2. Destination Management and Promotion

UNESCO Designations of the Scheldeland region are:
- [Geopark Schelde Delta](#), covering a larger area across the Belgian-Dutch border;
- [Processional giants and dragons in Belgium and France;](#)
- [Belfries of Belgium and France](#), with the belfry of Dendermonde being part of this larger inscription;
- [Flemish Béguinages](#) (in the case of Scheldeland LL, specifically the beguinage of Dendermonde).

Please define the destination/s:
- Bornem, Puurs-Sint-Amands, Dendermonde as the three municipalities central to the SmartCulTour LL. The entire region – which is a touristic region label, not an administratively recognized policy level – covers 29 municipalities (see www.scheldeland.be)

Destination Management Organizations (DMO) responsible for promoting and managing tourism:
- *Toerisme Klein-Brabant* (for Bornem and Puurs-Sint-Amands), *Toerisme Dendermonde*, *Toerisme Scheldeland* (promoting all 29 municipalities in the tourism region).
- *Toerisme Provincie Antwerpen* and *Toerisme Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen* are the two provincial DMOs under whose jurisdiction the region of Scheldeland falls, with some municipalities (e.g. Bornem and Puurs-Sint-Amands) belonging to the province of Antwerp and others (e.g. Dendermonde) situated in the province of Eastern Flanders. The provinces support tourism and recreational investment and have a domestic marketing focus.
- Visit Flanders, as the DMO for the entire Flemish region, supports local development via subsidy programmes, strategic support, quality control, etc. and is responsible for the marketing on an international level.

Website address of local authorities:
- www.toerismekleinbrabant.be
- www.scheldeland.be
- www.bornem.be
- www.puurs-sint-amands.be
- www.scheldeland.be

The communication and promotion of the destination is entrusted to, among others, the following social

media links and platforms:
- [Toerisme Klein-Brabant – Scheldeland Facebook page](#)
- [Toerisme Vlaanderen Facebook page](#)

Links to other resources or promotional materials for the destination:
- [www.toerismekleinbrabant.be](#)
- [vakantieboek scheldeland](#), [fietsnetwerkkaart Scheldeland](#), [wandelnetwerkkaarten Scheldeland](#)

Main attractions to be included in the destination's description on a promotion platform:
- Abbey of Bornem, Pavillion de Notelaer, beguinage and market square of Dendermonde, Horse Bayard story and procession, Shipping wharves of Baasrode, steam train Dendermonde-Puurs, Emile Verhaeren, the river Scheldt, the dykes along the Scheldt, free ferry services across the Scheldt, quiet areas in nature reserves (e.g. Hingene), regional products.
- See [www.scheldeland.be](#)
  - ❖ Brick factory museum in Rupel area
  - ❖ Castles of the Scheldt: Castle of Laarne, Castle Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde, Castle d'Ursel
  - ❖ Wissekerke (Waasland)
  - ❖ Puurs-Sint-Amands
  - ❖ Fortress of Liezele
  - ❖ Kalkense Meersen Donkmeer
  - ❖ Dender valley with the cities of Dendermonde, Aalst, Ninove
  - ❖ Shipping wharves of Baasrode

6.3.3. Visitor Experience

Nearby recommended attractions for tourists to visit while at the destination:

The list of recommended attractions are comparable to the main attractions to be promoted in a destination development strategy. For Bornem, these are the abbey of Bornem, Castle Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde, Castle d'Ursel, and Pavillion de Notelaer. Main points of attraction in Puurs-Sint-Amands are the Fortress of Liezele, the Emile Verhaeren museum and tomb, and the village centre of Sint-Amands. In Dendermonde, the belfry and beguinage are both inscribed on the World Heritage List as part of the "Belfries of Belgium and France" and the "Flemish Béguinages", respectively. Furthermore, the courthouse and *Vleeshuis* have an important architectural value. Finally, the city's identity is strongly linked to the Horse Bayard legend, which is celebrated via a procession once every ten years.

On a more regional level, the dykes along the Scheldt river and free ferry services across the Scheldt are worth mentioning since they provide value for slow tourism. There are various quiet areas in nature reserves, and the prospective National Park River Park Scheldt Valley offers important opportunities both for current visitation and future promotion. Similarly, the "Castles of the Scheldt" project that links the castle network along the river into a single tourism route is an opportunity to leverage.

6.3.4. Interpretation and Communication

The main local authorities or organizations responsible for heritage interpretation:
- Municipalities of Bornem, Puurs-Sint-Amands, and Dendermonde, particularly the departments of culture and heritage;

- The provincial departments of culture and heritage for the provinces of Antwerp and Eastern Flanders, as well as the Department of Immovable Heritage on Flemish level;
- On the local level, also Ethnographic circles, heritage units, Faro, Herita, local museums.

Several visitor centres or information centres exist throughout the region, namely:
- The abbey of Bornem;
- "Landhuis" in Bornem;
- The fortress of Liezele in Puurs-Sint-Amands;
- "Kaai" in Puurs-Sint-Amands;
- Tourist office of Dendermonde.

Stories about Scheldeland:

The stories of Scheldeland revolve strongly around the ebb and flow of the tidal Scheldt river and its central role as an artery for everyday life, gastronomy, mobility, and economy. Historically it played a role for the development of the brickmaking industries and shipbuilding, while also being a trade route for eels that became a staple in the local cuisine. Due to its importance for trade, several fortifications have been built along the Scheldt river across the centuries, both in terms of more medieval-style castles and the fortresses of the beginning of the 20th century.

At the same time, the river and its natural surroundings also provide artistic inspiration, and particularly in Sint-Amands a literary and artistic culture is felt with the tomb of poet Emile Verhaeren, overlooking the Scheldt turn and providing a palpable tangible remnant. Dendermonde, on the other hand, is an important local Jazz centre.

In terms of legends and folklore, none is better known than the Horse Bayard in Dendermonde, with its ten-yearly procession attracting much (inter)national attention and being routed in local history. While the procession is a rather unique and temporal event, throughout the museum exhibits, the story is told on a daily basis.

A toolkit aimed at communicating on/promoting Scheldeland through stories is available at https://scheldeland.sector.tov.be/

6.4. Summary of the training sessions and preliminary results

6.4.1. Overall impact

Overall, the training sessions provided an opportunity to:
- Gain a better understanding of local cultural tourism dynamics, main issues and priorities of the key stakeholders, as well as assessing the state of advancement of the Living Lab *vis à vis* the overall project's work plan;
- Equip participants with the needed knowledge to harness the contribution of UNESCO to local sustainable development through culture-based tourism and inspire local stakeholders with examples and good practices in the field;
- Offer a platform for diverse stakeholders to brainstorm about priorities and communication strategies for the region, from an international scope.

6.4.2. Preliminary results

Below is a summary of the outcomes of the discussions held during the UNESCO's capacity-building workshop. The Scheldeland region is in its discovery phase, hence it has further, still untapped potential to develop; however, this shall be built upon shared values and responsibilities.

In terms of the destination profile, the following **values** were identified as being core to the destination through stakeholder consensus:

- Blue / green - dynamic nature;
- Gastronomy and local products (e.g. beer);
- Identity - historical and artistic values;
- Living experience - urban *Vs* rural;
- Friendly and warm hospitality;
- Scheldt river as a living vein flowing from the past through the present towards the future;
- Dynamic entrepreneurs and hospitality sector;
- Authentic regional culture (e.g. traditional craftsmanship, carnival, local products, giants, etc.);
- Silence - place for escaping from everyday life (e.g. sanctuary/zone of silence of Hingene).

These values are linked to the existing resources, as well as current and ongoing developments:

- In the Scheldeland region, nature and culture, and their respective values, form part of a whole and cannot be separated. This connective tissue is a strong point for regional attractiveness.
- The destination is pretty well known for bike tourism (e.g. castles' route) and hiking, strengths that are also supported by higher-level government interventions. The tourism offer already envisages a route connecting B&Bs along the way, providing luggage transfer from one stop to the next, as well as arranging picnics in-between. This typology of tourism offer shall be further explored and expanded.
- Very easy to enjoy an authentic experience in the destination, i.e. "living like a local", for instance by lodging in small-scale accommodation (local culture of B&Bs).

However, in order to build on these values and leverage the ongoing developments to their fullest potential, while taking into account a need for sustainable growth, some local barriers need to be overcome:

- The lack of tourism infrastructures and the difficulty in reaching the destination make the adoption of a destination management approach even more crucial.
- Development of high-end travel in the Scheldeland region is fully in progress and renovations are ongoing. For instance, the region already has Michelin-starred restaurants. However, still a lot of work shall be done in maximizing accessibility (e.g. for disabled people), as well as to meet the needs of poorest people, including from very different cultural backgrounds (Scheldeland is very diverse in its composition). Currently, the participation of people from migratory backgrounds in cultural tourism activities is rather low, which is both a challenge and an opportunity.
- In order to maximize sustainability, there is a need to raise awareness among all actors involved in the tourism industry, and notably people working in the hospitality sector towards ultimate end-users (e.g. cleaning ladies in hotels shall be knowledgeable on how to implement sustainable solutions, bike rental options can be offered more proactively instead of retroactively).
- Sustainability dilemma: there is a demand, but not a supply, for sustainability.
- Business tourism (linked to the Pfizer, Novartis, Alcon plants) is a still untapped market in Scheldeland although there is already some cooperation between these businesses and local meeting facilities providers.
- Improved tourism flow management will require changes to existing spatial planning and urban strategies.

In the discussion, participants agreed that the Scheldeland region needs to create and communicate a strong local identity and brand, and the following aspects were highlighted:

- Importance of differentiating the destination from neighbouring ones, by relying on local specificities.
- Need to adopt a "hidden gem" approach to discover the Scheldeland region; in this endeavour, recurring to influencers / bloggers would significantly help make the destination better known.
- The promotion of Scheldeland shall start from the "Scheldt", namely the river that flows across the region.
- Importance of developing a comprehensive storytelling, presenting the destination and providing guidance for its interpretation. The identification of nearby sites that fit the overall destination's theme was also recognized as a further untapped potential.

6.5. Participants' feedback

6.5.1. Insights from survey participants

Out of the 16 participants to the workshop, only five provided their feedback through the ad-hoc questionnaire. Given the low responsiveness rate, the results presented below shall be considered as partial, and therefore cannot be deemed fully reliable.

Most of the respondents felt that the overall expectations of the UNESCO's capacity-building activity for the Scheldeland Living Lab were met in terms of both workshop's organization and usefulness of the provided information.
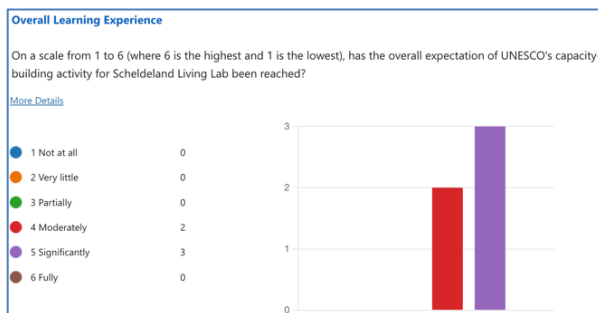
Fig 27 and 28. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

60% of the respondents found that the activity was significantly relevant for the Scheldeland Living Lab, while the remaining 40% thought its relevancy being either moderate or limited. Nevertheless, almost all respondents affirmed that their level of understanding of UNESCO's approach to destination management has meaningfully increased as a result of the capacity-building workshop.
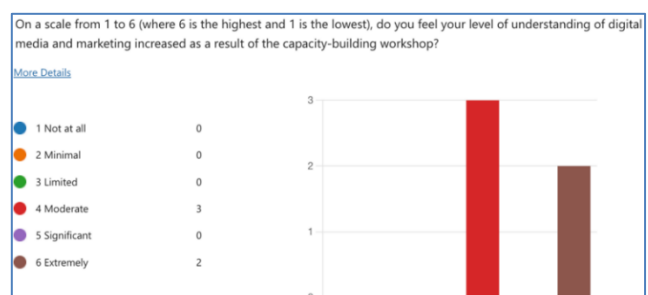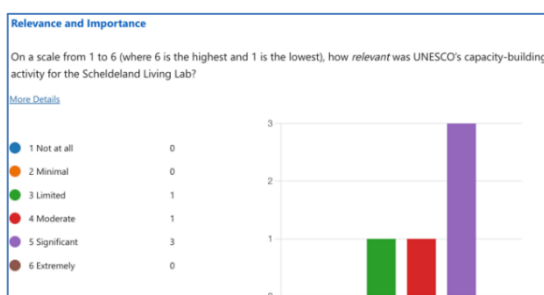

Fig 29 and 30. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

60% of the respondents felt that their level of understanding of digital media and marketing moderately increased as a result of the capacity-building workshop, while the other 40% deemed the workshop extremely useful in this regard.
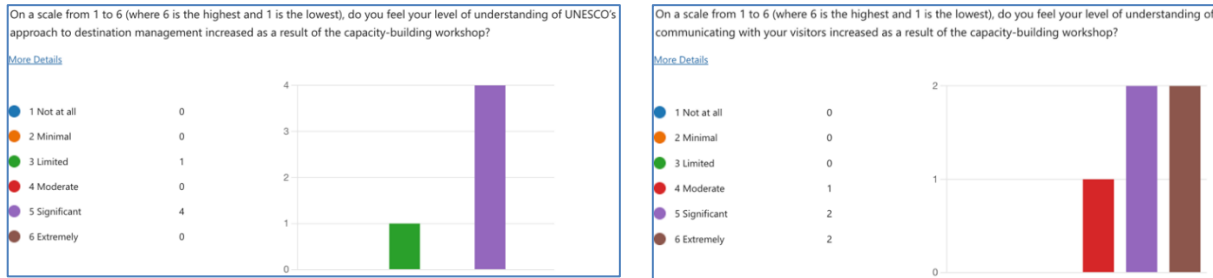
Fig 31 and 32. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)
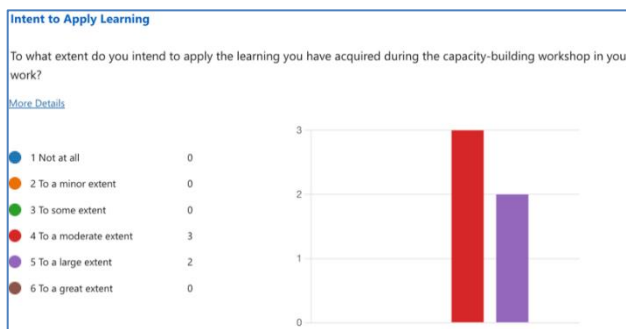
Fig 33. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

Though at different levels, the totality of respondents agreed that their level of understanding on how to communicate with their visitors increased as a result of the capacity-building workshop. 40% of respondents declared that they will apply the acquired learning in their daily work to a large extent, while the remaining 60% will do so to a moderate extent.

In terms of how they will apply the learning, respondents provided the following examples:
- *"Offering the tourist a varied pack of possibilities in visiting Scheldeland: culture, nature, food etc."*
- *"Working together out of the base with existing values, creating a network full of challenges for a total experience and discovery of sustainable and ecological travelling. Using modern media to communicate with the visitors and organize good and easy possibilities to discover the region."*

Respondents affirmed to be satisfied with the programme design and delivery, as well as in terms of availability, professional skills and effectiveness of the Organizing Team, and thus overall quality of the workshop.

Fig 34. Evaluation survey's results (Credit: UNESCO)

According to the respondents, the main strengths of the workshop were:
- *"Being able to learn about UNESCO and the possibilities it creates concerning sustainable tourism";*
- *"The chapter about communication was very good. Also the preface into the special sustainable travel pledge";*
- *"The workshop was well-focused on the situation of Scheldeland, by keeping overarching larger themes relevant and translating these to the local level. It provided a good mix between theory, practical international experience and workshop activities with participants".*

One respondent stressed: *"as was the case in other workshops (both within SmartCulTour and also the ones I've experienced via Visit Flanders), there often remains an imbalance of participation, with such workshops mainly being attended by public servants at various levels (municipal, provincial, national) or certain NGOs. Private sector entrepreneurs and larger companies are often largely missing in these discussions. In a way it creates a self-selection bias because workshops then often consist of participants who are already aware/passionate for change towards sustainable (cultural) tourism."*

For future capacity-building on cultural tourism in Scheldeland, participants hope to *"use UNESCO as a stepstone to international tourism for our region"* and that "*time-permitting, following the previous point, a learning trajectory could be set up to acknowledge that, in a first stage, capacity-building activities are more likely to attract 'early adopters', and strategies can be devised to translate experiences and findings to further professional networks (via e.g. chambers of commerce etc.). So it would in a way follow up the capacity-building activities with a communication plan towards the wider sector"*.

6.6. Proposed follow-up

The capacity building programme for the Scheldeland Living Lab focused on more effectively communicating with their visitors through better interpretation, while discussing ways of enhancing the visitor experience at cultural destinations. It can be noted that, following the workshop organized by UNESCO, within the Scheldeland LL a session was held to develop and discuss potential tourist personas and map the relevant tourism services from the point of view of supporting an enhanced and tailored visitor experience.

6.6.1. Communication with visitors

For a more effective communication with the visitors, the following measures could be considered to help guide follow-up activities also after the SmartCulTour project has ended and prioritize actions to promote sustainable cultural tourism in Scheldeland:

- **Developing cultural tourism products** such as guided tours, cultural walks, and themed packages that showcase the region's unique cultural identity.
- **Collaborating with local museums**, cultural institutions, and art galleries to offer cultural experiences to visitors and provide heritage interpretation.
- **Encouraging** (the development of) **traditional crafts and skills**, such as local food and beverage production, textiles, and other art forms, and link them to a coherent storytelling.
- **Highlighting the cultural heritage and traditions** of the region, including historical and religious landmarks.
- **Promoting cultural events and activities**, such as festivals, concerts, and exhibitions, to attract visitors.
- **Developing partnerships** with local communities, cultural groups, and artists to promote cultural diversity and foster cultural exchange.
- **Offering training** and support to local service providers and tour guides to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide quality cultural experiences to visitors.
- **Providing information** and resources to visitors through visitor centres or other venues, including interactive interpretation, brochures, maps, and online information, to help them discover and engage with the local culture.

The Scheldeland region can use digital media and marketing to promote its unique culture to the visitors, including:

- **Social media campaigns:** Scheldeland could better use popular social media platforms like Facebook,

Instagram, and Twitter to showcase the region's cultural offerings, such as festivals, food, and art.

- **Virtual tours and 360-degree videos**: Scheldeland could create virtual tours and 360-degree videos of its castles, museums, and other cultural landmarks, allowing visitors to experience the region from the comfort of their own home.
- **Interactive websites:** Scheldeland could create an interactive website featuring information about the region's history, culture, and attractions. Visitors can explore the website to learn about the region before visiting in person.
- **Influencer marketing:** Scheldeland could strategically partner with influencers and travel bloggers to promote the region's cultural offerings on their social media channels.
- **Video content:** Scheldeland could create engaging video content, such as promotional videos, travel blogs, and cultural documentaries, to showcase the region's unique culture and heritage.
- **Audience broadening:** By utilizing these digital media and marketing strategies, Scheldeland could reach a wider audience, promote its cultural offerings, and encourage more tourists to visit the region.

6.6.2. Enhancing the visitor experience

In order to enhance the visitor experience, the destination could consider to foster existing efforts and create new strategies to further:

- Promote the unique cultural and historical significance and natural heritage of Scheldeland, such as historic buildings, cultural landmarks, monuments that reflect the region's unique past and traditions, as well as scenic landscapes and natural beauty, including rolling hills, fertile farmland, and picturesque waterways and natural parks. Encourage tourists to explore these attractions in a responsible and sustainable way.
- Offer sustainable tourism experiences, offering visitors the chance to explore the region in an environmentally responsible way, including opportunities for biking and hiking, guided eco-tours, sustainable food and beverage options, and sustainable accommodations.
- Encourage responsible travel practices by providing information to tourists on how they can reduce their impact on the local environment and community, such as using public transportation, avoiding single-use plastics, and respecting local customs and traditions.
- Partner with sustainable tourism organizations and join eco-certification programmes to promote Scheldeland as a sustainable destination.
- Offer visitors the opportunity to experience authentic Belgian culture and cuisine, as well as participate in traditional festivals and events.
- Showcase the region's vibrant art and cultural scene: Scheldeland is home to many museums, art galleries, and cultural institutions.

A9 Annex 9. Agenda of the workshop

SCHELDELAND LIVING LAB

**In-person Workshop
24 October 2022
10 am – 5 pm (CET)**

PROGRAMME

Opening	
10:00 – 10:15	Opening Remarks: Griet Geudens, Manager of the Scheldeland Living Lab Costanza Fidelbo, Assistant Project Officer, Culture Unit, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
Session 1	
10:15 – 10:30	Participants' Introduction
10:30 – 11:15	Understanding cultural tourism at your destination - current trends and insight – Peter DeBrine
11:15 – 12:00	Enhancing the visitor experience – adding cultural value through products, experiences, and interpretation – Peter DeBrine
12:00 – 13:00	**Lunch**
Session 2	
13:00 – 15:00	Communicating with your visitors – setting the narrative and storytelling – Peter DeBrine
15:00 – 15:30	**Coffee Break**
15:30 – 16:30	Communicating with your visitors harnessing digital marketing and media – Peter DeBrine
16:30 – 17:00	Conclusion and next steps

A10 Annex 10. List of participants

Nº	Name	Surname	Organization / Role
Organizers / SmartCulTour partners			
1.	Griet	Geudens	Toerisme Vlaanderen, Living Lab Manager
2.	Bart	Neuts	KU Leuven
3.	Costanza	Fidelbo	UNESCO
4.	Peter	DeBrine	UNESCO (consultant)
Participants			
5.	SCH1		Hof van Coolhem
6.	SCH2		Toerisme Scheldeland
7.	SCH3		DMO Antwerp
8.	SCH4		Faro
9.	SCH5		Leisure park De Schorre
10.	SCH6		Toerisme Dendermonde
11.	SCH7		Shipping Wharf Museum
12.	SCH8		B&B owner
13.	SCH9		Tourist guide
14.	SCH10		Toerisme Aalst
15.	SCH11		Tourist guide
16.	SCH12		KU Leuven
17.	SCH13		KU Leuven
18.	SCH14		Toerisme Puurs-Sint-Amands
19.	SCH15		B&B owner
20.	SCH16		B&B owner

07 Capacity-building actions in the Vicenza Living Lab

In the context of the inclusive preparatory consultations conducted by UNESCO regarding the type of awareness raising and capacity building actions to be conducted in the Vicenza Living Lab, stakeholders agreed on the need to invest in activities that would shift the focus from a purely cultural matrix to a more experiential and relational one.

This choice stems primarily from a long-standing desire expressed by villas' and palaces' owners who, over the years, have tried to create a prototype visitor center with the objective of not only presenting their properties, but also of highlighting the whole territorial network, to be understood as wider than the urban landscape space.

Upon UNESCO's proposal, the Municipality of Vicenza, along with other key local actors, agreed on "The role of heritage interpretation and visitor centres in World Heritage properties" as the preferred topic for the capacity-building activity. A workshop on the subject, including a focus on the serial World Heritage (WH) property "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto", was therefore organized on 24 November 2022 at the International Library "La Vigna".

This report outlines the contents, methodologies and preliminary results of the awareness-raising and capacity-building action that was implemented in the Vicenza Living Lab, and seeks to explain its complementary to the Living Lab's programme and relevant local trends, needs and priorities, as well as its impact on local stakeholders and eventual follow-up actions that were identified for future implementation.

7.1. Main topics of the capacity-building

The activity implemented in the Vicenza LL aligns with the "The Role of Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites", an inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary initiative launched in 2018 to investigate how visitor / information / interpretation centres can contribute to the broader management goals of World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks, and to provide advice for their enhancement. The activity included the organization of thematic workshops aimed at promoting exchange, developing capacities and reinforcing networking cooperation in the region.

Four workshops were held so far in Palermo (Italy, 2018), Bamberg (Germany, 2019), Ercolano (Italy, 2021), and Buzău (Romania, 2022), focusing respectively on a preliminary mapping and exchange of relevant practices in Europe, Interpretation of Heritage and Sustainable Development, Working with Communities, and Tourism Sustainability and Visitors Management.

The activity in Vicenza built on the background research conducted in preparation to the Buzău workshop, exploring the potential contribution of visitor centres to the management of UNESCO designated sites, promoting sustainability, supporting visitor management, influencing behaviors during visits, and collecting data on visitors' numbers and activities along with information on their needs and motivations.

As a spin-off of the workshop on Interpretation of Heritage and Sustainable Development held in Bamberg, and in order to promote the transformative potential of heritage interpretation by developing a specialized

training opportunity for World Heritage site managing authorities, in 2021 the UNESCO Regional Bureau and Interpret Europe joined forces to launch the first-ever [Capacity-building course on interpretive planning at World Heritage properties (WH-Interp)](#) in Europe. Building on the fruitful experience developed with the pilot course, the WH-Interp initiative continued with the organisation of a second regional course in 2022. So far, WH-Interp directly benefited 42 World Heritage sites by raising awareness and building competencies of professionals and site managing bodies.

In line with the cross-cutting contribution that the heritage sector can make to society, heritage interpretation is a structured approach to non-formal learning that promotes the exchange of significant ideas related to heritage and can play a unique role in fostering effective and inclusive heritage management, particularly through ensuring greater alignment with sustainable development goals and introducing participatory approaches.

The mentioned courses aim at broadening the vision of WH interpretation by aligning its meaning-making process with multi-layered values around the property, starting from the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) to encompass issues related to the sustainable development of broader territories. The courses also seek to encourage people to reflect upon UNESCO's mission and fundamental principles in a way that allows the transfer of findings at heritage sites into their meaningful experience, while developing participants' skills and maximising opportunities for the effective improvement of WH site management systems through the integration of interpretive planning.

In line with the above, the UNESCO capacity-building workshop in the Vicenza Living Lab aimed to introduce participants to *"The role of heritage interpretation and visitor centres in World Heritage properties"*. The first part of the workshop provided insights on the objectives and functioning of the World Heritage system and its implications in the context of the ["City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto"](#) World Heritage property. In the second part, UNESCO raised awareness on the results and lessons learnt from the two initiatives on Visitor Centres and World Heritage interpretation, with a context-specific approach focusing on the city of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas located within the boundaries of its Municipality.

7.2. Complementarity with the Lab's programme

The capacity-building action implemented by UNESCO was fully complementary to the overall programme of the Vicenza LL, especially for its proposed objective of co-developing an innovative city image through the active engagement of stakeholders in the integration of the Outstanding Universal Value of the WH property into the broader cultural, environmental, societal, and economical context.

The efforts made to attract visitors by branding Vicenza as the "city of Palladio" proved indeed not to be very effective in the face of a survey conducted during the work of the LL. Instead, what emerged from the survey is a renewed interest in integrative processes with the community and its traditions, be they culinary but also socioeconomic, interpenetrating that bleisure matrix that brings back a diverse, modern, and eager audience. This ties in with a long history of entrepreneurship and business in the city and the entire surrounding area, which manages to involve more sectors and is potentially more attractive than Palladio. Also, human activity has transformed the landscape in Vicenza, making it akin to cultural values and conveying unique, complementary messages that undoubtedly enrich the entire heritage interpretation processes.

Stakeholders' willingness to further develop values-driven heritage interpretation can well be sustained by a capacity building approach aiming to develop a simultaneous understanding of the social (especially groups of interest involved in the established actions and organizations) and cognitive (in terms of awareness,

knowledge, capacities and skills) dimensions. The workshop's focus on interpretation thus assumes a crucial role, given the absence of an innovative information center in Vicenza that can provide the tools (to both stakeholders and visitors) to understand the tangible but especially intangible aspects of the destination. Moreover, introducing the concept of heritage interpretation, including the underlying needs and the value it brings, showed the full complementarity between the priorities of the LL and the relevance of developing, implementing, and maintaining capacity-building activities over time.

7.3. Situation analysis for the destination

The cultural tourism sector in Vicenza is composed of a wide array of stakeholders with different interests and priorities, which is not always conducive to effective and efficient cooperation dynamics. One of the objectives of the LL aimed therefore at identifying common challenges and actionable strategies. In this framework, three strategic axes were identified by LL participants, and relevant focus groups established on food tourism, bleisure, architecture and cultural heritage.

Vicenza is characterized by a diverse and rich cultural capital though in an unsystematic context, with networks that are often not duly integrated and supply arrangements sometimes overpowering the local capacity for management, implementation, and systemization. The coordination of a complex and articulated supply system (and cultural capital) such as Vicenza and its surrounding area clearly requires a process that jointly leverages meanings, experiences, and relationships.

The destination possesses a distinctive tourism dynamic with openings to the themes of self-discovery, exploration, and learning. Interpretive value is increasingly useful in revealing meanings and relationships belonging to heritage, not based on instructive vectors but rather connected to places, topics or elements that intersect the personality or experience of the visitor. However, local stakeholders realized that the interpretive path is jeopardized also because the values pertaining to their identity and cultural system are often not duly embedded in the destination's narrative. This leads to a tourism offer comprising a few standardized elements to be conveyed to tourists: for instance, significant efforts have been invested in the Palladian brand, which nevertheless has turned out not to be the primary lever of attraction for the destination.

Connecting the local cultural capital to the visitor experience, therefore, requires a preliminary, joint effort towards fostering identification, ownership and understanding among all players and actors actively or ancillary involved in the design of the tourism offer.

7.4. Summary of the training sessions and preliminary results

7.4.1. Summary of the training sessions

During the half-day on-site workshop, UNESCO presented the core pillars of the overall WH framework through the lens of the increasing importance of placing heritage conservation within a broader range of economic, social and environmental values and needs.

The World Heritage Convention (1972), the Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the WH Convention (2015), and the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the WH Convention (2021) were briefly introduced, as well as recent trends and the main outcomes of the pioneering activities launched by this Regional Bureau in the past years.

Workshop participants were encouraged to reflect about the potential relevance of the presented topics and experiences to the World Heritage property "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto", and notably opportunities and challenges that may arise. Participants were then invited to share their reflections, whilst presenting already initiated or ongoing initiatives aimed at communicating about the World Heritage site and its values, as well as their results and/or potential improvements.

An open floor discussion was held with the aim of exchanging ideas and building consensus on some possible actions to be possibly implemented in Vicenza, with a view at developing a city image that integrates the "Palladian" heritage into the broader cultural, environmental, societal and economical context. Beyond sustainable tourism, the exercise also sought to discuss local development and cohesion, as part of an integrated strategy for Vicenza.

The exercise also built on already collected information and analyses conducted in previous stages of the SmartCulTour project, including for WP4 (data collection for the LL indicators on sustainability, cultural development and resilience of the destination), WP5 (SmartCulTour Platform) and WP6 (Specific Terms of Reference for the Vicenza LL).

The activity targeted local right holders and stakeholders, spanning the city administration (Municipality of Vicenza), managing authorities of cultural heritage sites, heritage property owners, the tourism sector (business operators, tour guides, DMOs, tour operators), as well as the civil society more broadly (community groups, professional and civic associations, youth, cultural and tourism experts from the academia, etc.). The concurring presence of such a diverse audience, reflecting the diversity of local interest groups and community actors, provided space for inclusive discussion about what locals consider relevant and most needed, thereby multiplying the impact of the activity.

Key local organizations/attractions who actively participated in the workshop included:

- Culture Commission of the Municipality of Vicenza;
- Villa Valmarana ai Nani (part of the serial World Heritage property "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto");
- Palazzo Valmarana;
- Palladian Routes;
- Europa Nostra.

The activity was hosted by the International Library La Vigna, which is specialized in food, wine and agriculture and conserves over 62,000 volumes dating from the 15th century to the present. The historic building in which the Library is located was renovated by Carlo Scarpa, one of the leading architects of the 20th century.

7.4.2. Preliminary results

The pilot capacity-building action in the Vicenza Living Lab turned out to be a good opportunity for: 1) equipping local stakeholders with the needed knowledge to harness the contribution of World Heritage, and more specifically of the "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto" WH property, to local sustainable development through a more qualified, aware, and mindful culture-based tourism; 2) raising broader awareness on UNESCO, its function and mandate, as well as the culture programme of the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, with specific reference to its tourism-related activities, namely the Regional workshops on Visitor Centres and WH-Interpretation; 3) gaining a better understanding of local cultural tourism dynamics in the destination, including by discussing main issues and priorities with key stakeholders; 4) inspiring local stakeholders with examples and good practices in the field of sustainable cultural tourism, by also leveraging UNESCO's standard-setting and knowledge brokering role.

The initiative spurred reflections on the potential for rethinking the integrated planning and management of Vicenza as a cultural tourism destination, while promoting the broader values of sustainability, peace and intercultural dialogue. Avenues for empowering existing tourism facilities and networks were discussed, based on stronger synergies and partnerships and on a "newly raised awareness about the role that World Heritage can play as an enabler for the adoption of a systemic approach at destination level, leading to a fruitful dialogue between the tourism and the cultural sectors towards more sustainable forms of cultural tourism", as stated by one of the participants.

7.5. Participants' feedback

The workshop attracted numerous and diverse participants and generated their interest as demonstrated by the lively open-floor discussion, spanning issues of site management system and governance, reflecting on their respective institutional roles and responsibilities, as well as on the need to foster links among different sectors and strands of tourism activities. On the one hand, productive exchanges concerned the differences and similarities in priorities of the actors involved in tourism production, as well as the willingness to open discussion boards on the emergence and systemization of new business relationships. On the other, the session was enriched by inputs and reflections derived from existing examples of visitor / interpretation centers, their functions, and the set of benefits that are - or could be - derived from them.

If for some participants the workshop offered an initial opening to the topic, for others it provided a step forward in realizing how UNESCO's underpinning values are often not enough known and understood. The themes of identity and belonging, which emerged repeatedly throughout the workshop, were discussed in relation to the recognized (Outstanding) *Universal* Value of World Heritage properties that, according to some participants, leads to perceiving such heritage as "global and thus remote", paradoxically impairing local ownership. The discussion made clear how this misconception finds its reasons in a misunderstanding of the expressions "World Heritage" or "UNESCO designated site", from which derives the identified need of raising broader awareness on the overarching objectives of the WH system. The creation of an interpretation centre is therefore suggested as a means of conveying value-driven heritage interpretation by leveraging at the same time UNESCO's founding principles and a more sustainable approach to the territory and its heritage.

Participating stakeholders agreed upon the need to develop a coherent approach to tourism communication, which is no longer exclusive to one's own activity, but increasingly strives to connect multiple layers and realities, thus making the meaning of the experience multifunctional.

UNESCO's workshop spurred the interest of key players in establishing more solid networks, for which interpretation centres may contribute to create a platform. For instance, the owner of a villa and a stakeholder involved in cycling tourism confirmed the readiness and capacity of their businesses to possibly host the interpretation centre and act as a reference for other stakeholders. Even more, the intention to broaden the network of relationships beyond the provincial boundary was expressed, forming a cultural network based not only on the architectural capital (as the Venetian villas could be) or slow tourism routes, but enriched by elements with a strong experiential value and providing an overview of the territory, such as food and wine, culinary routes, and creative events.

7.6. Proposed follow-up

The workshop turned out to be an important opportunity to foster networking and cooperation with some

key participating stakeholders, and the [Palladian Routes](#), a Network of the owners of the Palladian Villas that are part of the serial WH property "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto". The primary objective of the network is to pass on and enhance the Palladian heritage by restoring the vitality of its underlying values. Palladian Routes runs a Visitor Centre in Vicenza, located at Palazzo Valmarana.

After the workshop, UNESCO visited the centre and engaged in a fruitful discussion with both the Director, Mr Gazzola, and Ms Braga Rosa, owner of the Palazzo, on the potential for the Visitor Centre to further expand its functions by both considering the WH property as a cultural tourism destination and as a local ecosystem, thereby benefitting both visitors and the local community, while upholding the values of sustainability in line with UNESCO's mission.

The workshop also offered an opportunity to reiterate the role that the International Library "La Vigna"[9] already plays, and could potentially further play, as the headquarters of the LL. In fact, with the aim of establishing a permanent space for pursuing analysis, study and discussion on local sustainable tourism development and other key relevant issues, the LL established its premise at the Library. The goal is for it to host roundtable discussions, record and monitor changes and activities over time, and be the hub of events and meetings useful for strengthening the identity of local actors and the vector for sharing values with the entire territory. This has the broader purpose of keeping the exchange between stakeholders and experts active, fostering peer learning practices, and serving as a pool for good practices for the sustainable cultural development of Vicenza, including by leveraging UNESCO's fundamental values.

Indeed, some participants have already planned sectoral and cross-sectoral operational meetings to be held at the Library, such as events organized by Palladian Routes - an enterprise network of Venetian villas. The intent is to forge more structured and solid relationships between different business entities, broadening the network of actors involved, as well as consider activating an interpretation center that may enhance value-driven processes for the benefit of both visitors and the local community.

Presented with objectives that will follow steady evolutionary dynamics, in the short term meetings with experts will be organized to keep focusing on macro themes to better direct the co-creative effort. Foremost, among them, is the mutual acquaintance for the establishment and/or enlargement of an inter- and cross-sectoral business network, aimed at managing and assessing changes and initiatives that are implemented. In this way, it will be possible to monitor progress over time and, if necessary, redirect efforts in a unified manner and in accordance with mutually agreed-upon goals.

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[9] The International Library "La Vigna" is recognized by the Italian Ministry of Culture for its very important collection of essays, books and works regarding cuisine, agriculture, and oenology.

A11 Annex 11. Agenda of the workshop

9.45 | 10.00   Registrazione dei partecipanti

10.00 | 10.15   Apertura dei lavori (UNESCO, Università Ca' Foscari)

10.15 | 10.45   UNESCO - "Introduzione al sistema del Patrimonio Mondiale"

10.45 | 11.30   UNESCO - "Introduzione al ruolo dell'interpretazione del patrimonio e dei Centri Visitatori nei siti del Patrimonio Mondiale"

11.30 | 12.00   Coffee Break & Visita alla Biblioteca Internazionale "La Vigna" ed allo spazio Carlo Scarpa

12.00 | 13.00   Workshop - I partecipanti saranno incoraggiati a riflettere sulla potenziale rilevanza delle esperienze e degli argomenti presentati in relazione al sito del Patrimonio Mondiale "Città di Vicenza e le Ville Palladiane del Veneto", ed in particolare sulle opportunità e sulle sfide che ne potrebbero derivare.

TEMATICHE: Presentazione del sistema del Patrimonio Mondiale nell'ambito della più ampia missione dell'UNESCO tesa alla costruzione della pace ed allo sviluppo sostenibile.

LINK UTILI: World Heritage Convention (1972), Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the WH Convention (2015), Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the WH Convention (2021), Regional workshops on the role of Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites (2018, 2019, 2021, 2022), Regional Course on Interpretive Planning at World Heritage Properties in Europe (WH-Interp) (2021, 2022)

Ingresso su invito RSVP

@Biblioteca Internazionale "La Vigna"
Palazzo Brusarosco Zaccaria, contrà Porta Santa Croce, 3 (Vicenza)

A12 Annex 12. List of participants

№	Name	Surname	Organization / Role
		Organizers / SmartCulTour partners	
1.	Matteo	Rosati	UNESCO
2.	Costanza	Fidelbo	UNESCO
3.	Raffaella	Lioce	Ca' Foscari / Biblioteca Internazionale La Vigna, Living Lab Manager
4.	Michele	Bettin	Ca' Foscari
		Participants	
5.	VIC1		Biblioteca Internazionale La Vigna
6.	VIC2		Biblioteca Internazionale La Vigna
7.	VIC3		Ca' Foscari University of Venice
8.	VIC4		Rete 33 Srl
9.	VIC5		Europa Nostra
10.	VIC6		Palazzo Valmarana
11.	VIC7		Palladian Routes
12.	VIC8		Consorzio Gambellara DOC
13.	VIC9		PEDON SPA / Biblioteca Internazionale La Vigna
14.	VIC10		Architectural firm GECKO
15.	VIC11		IUAV
16.	VIC12		Istituto Tecnico Superiore per il Turismo
17.	VIC13		Ca' Foscari University of Venice
18.	VIC14		IUAV

19.	VIC15	Municipality of Vicenza
20.	VIC16	Architectural firm GECKO
21.	VIC17	Villa Valmarana ai Nani
22.	VIC18	NUR HOME INTERIORS
23.	VIC19	Tourist guide
24.	VIC20	Spazio Scarpa - Biblioteca Internazionale La Vigna

08 Conclusions

The awareness raising and capacity-building activities conducted by UNESCO in the six SmartCulTour Living Labs proved to be successful in that they provided opportunities for knowledge advancement, discussion and exchange among local actors from the culture and tourism sectors, spanning public bodies, private businesses and civil society organizations. 84 participants directly benefitted from UNESCO's actions across the six Labs, beyond the SmartCulTour partners and Lab Managers, namely 17 additional people that took advantage of the workshops likewise, for a total of 101 beneficiaries.

As foreseen by its role as WP6 Leader, UNESCO's role in the project focused on improving dialogue, cooperation and co-decision between relevant stakeholders in the cultural and tourism sectors, in order to ensure an appropriate and equitable balance between cultural sustainability and economic development of targeted communities, with special reference to tourism. In this spirit, the first significant result of UNESCO's actions in the LLs is to be considered the positive impact that such learning experiences provided in terms of improved networking, as in most cases the presence of UNESCO was a catalyst to attract stakeholders that would have not otherwise been reached out to.

Linked to this first tangible outcome, the activities allowed to raise broader awareness on the importance of aligning cultural tourism development activities with international cultural benchmarks. As the custodian of the most advanced international legal framework in the field of culture, UNESCO works at global level to define and support the implementation of normative, policy and operational standards to protect cultural heritage and foster the role of culture for sustainable development.

This was the assumption guiding UNESCO's participation in SmartCulTour since the beginning, namely that a cultural tourism project should find inspiration and guidance in those normative and policy standards approved at international level to provide an orienting framework to the sustainable management and "use" of cultural heritage and expressions. Against this background, UNESCO committed to sensitize concerned stakeholders on the need for tourism strategies to be inscribed within a broader and cross-sectoral policy vision, fostering beneficial relationships between the protection and promotion of local cultural resources and sustainable development processes.

Through the delivery of awareness raising and pilot capacity building actions in the six LLs, UNESCO aimed to promote the recognition of the inherent potential of local cultural resources to contribute to all dimensions of sustainable development, supporting communities and territories, as well as to ensure that tourism brings benefits to the protection and promotion of the diversity of local cultural expressions.

The capacity-building programmes offered an overview of UNESCO's functions and mandate in the field of culture, equipping participants with the needed knowledge to harness its contribution towards local sustainable development through culture-based tourism. They also helped inspire local stakeholders with international good practices, on the one hand by leveraging UNESCO's standard-setting and knowledge brokering role, and on the other by offering external and unbiased views on local dynamics and trends. This was further sustained by the high-level expertise of the intentional trainers hired for delivering the workshops, who brought their longstanding experience into each of the local realities.

On 15 December 2022, an in-presence meeting with all Lab Managers was organized to take stock of the preliminary results of the capacity-building activities implemented throughout the year. Although the common impression is that their actual impact will only be visible in the medium to long-term ("at least one or two years", Lab Managers affirmed), it nevertheless provided a useful opportunity for an honest exchange and assessment of the implemented actions. On the occasion of the meeting, the results of the evaluation carried out by the University of Modul on the SmartCulTour Living Labs were also presented, and notably the interviews conducted with LLs' stakeholders.

Among its findings, the evaluation conducted by Modul evidenced how the capacity-building actions delivered by UNESCO were deemed as one of the most significant added values brought in by the project. As anticipated in the introduction, they are to be considered as pilot actions (rather than full-fledged capacity-building programmes), though underpinned by a capacity-building approach in the sense of addressing all different areas in which capacities reside. Despite this "soft" training approach, the activities succeeded in spurring interest and creating virtuous dynamics within local networks, demonstrating that knowledge advancement and reinforced networking were cross-cutting needs in all the Labs.

In line with the overall project's context-specific and needs-driven approach, the capacity-building actions were tailored on a case by case basis, depending on local preferences. For instance, the number and length of the sessions varied from Lab to Lab, depending on stakeholders' availability and interest to engage. In some LLs, both online and in-presence sessions were delivered, whilst in others only the latter were held. It is noteworthy that, in those cases where a blended approach was adopted, such as in Split, Utsjoki and Huesca, and local stakeholders were kept engaged for a longer time-span, key issues at destination level could be discussed more in depth.

On a content level, LLs could express their preference not only on the macro-themes, but also with regards to the most relevant sub-topics to the local tourism system, spanning communicating with the visitors, heritage interpretation, visitors' management, cultural route development, and community-based ICH inventorying.

UNESCO's activities had an immediate impact both in terms of raising awareness on the objectives, processes and activities of the SmartCulTour project and its Living Labs across a wider audience, and of strengthened networking and cooperation among key local players. This is testified, among others, by the case of **Rotterdam**, whose capacity-building workshop was hosted by Rotterdam Partners, the local DMO, and was attended by several stakeholders beyond the LL's usual outreach.

Following the activity, the Living Lab and Rotterdam Partners agreed to work together towards leveraging the city's potential as a sustainable cultural tourism destination. In early February, a meeting was held at the premises of the Municipality where the results of the LL's work were shared with the new alderman for the economy. Discussions are currently ongoing on avenues for future cooperation, including the possible funding and implementation of the interventions co-designed by local stakeholders in the context of the LL.

In some more remote realities where the tourism supply is less developed and there are less opportunities for cultural cross-contamination, such as **Utsjoki**, the contents and ideas brought in by UNESCO spurred original reflections and visions, challenging to some extent the usual way of thinking of local actors. For instance, the activity helped highlight the importance of sustainability in all its dimensions, and issues related to its practical translation into concrete actions through the development of more sustainable tourism services, as well as the key role that may be played by effective communication, were extensively discussed.

The case of the **Split** LL stands out because the implementation of capacity-building actions had already been identified in itself as one of the key priority interventions to support the development of the tourism supply system at destination level. The LL's focus on local communities' involvement also coincided with the participatory and inclusive principles underpinning UNESCO's approach to Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), as set out by art. 15 of the 2003 Convention on the participation of communities, groups and individuals in the identification, transmission, safeguarding and management of such heritage.

The activity demonstrated the potentials of living heritage for cultural tourism development, helping identify new opportunities in the context of visitor experience design by integrating therein local cultural resources that were previously neglected. The satisfaction of participants to the workshop was also sustained by the tangible outputs produced as a result of the activity, namely promotional videos for an awareness raising campaign on two important local ICH elements, namely the "Sweetbread (sirnica) making" and the "Sinjska Alka, a knights' tournament in Sinj", the latter being inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

From a content-wise perspective, the activity in **Huesca** primarily focused on cultural route development and on the benefits that the creation of thematic trails and/or paths could bring to the tourism system, pushing attractions scattered around the destination to join forces towards offering a coherent image and fostering visibility of lesser known local cultural resources. The possibility of connecting UNESCO Designated sites and elements in the province into a route, so as to leverage their potential for local sustainable development, was also extensively discussed as a further chance for Huesca. Overall, as per the set objectives, the capacity-building activity supported the LL in advancing towards the development of a cultural tourism strategy for the province, identifying key trends to be leveraged and relevant interventions to be implemented.

In the case of **Scheldeland**, the overarching values promoted by UNESCO through its activities helped further strengthen local awareness and ownership of the principles upon which the region is building up its shared brand identity, and notably sustainability, the intrinsic connection between nature and culture, and the wellbeing of local communities. In other words, the workshop helped validate the destination's narrative that is being co-developed by local stakeholders, while providing further food for thought.

The training programme in **Vicenza** was very much appreciated by local stakeholders, especially for its innovative inspiration and its complementarity with respect to the ongoing discussions at destination level, such as the need to: 1) overcome the narrow "Palladian brand" by expanding the local tourism offer through integrating the plenty of available local cultural assets (including living heritage); 2) boost heritage interpretation through the establishment of a dedicated service centre; 3) build a shared identity based on UNESCO's underpinning values as embodied by the "City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto" World Heritage property.

With hindsight, the capacity building actions might have been even more incisive and effective if they had taken place earlier in the lifecycle of the LL, so as to set the stage for other project's activities, including the identification of smart cultural tourism interventions to be implemented in the six destinations. The reason for the chosen timing, however, depended on the one hand on the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed the activities by obliging UNESCO and Lab Managers to postpone their organization; on the other, consultations with local actors for the identification of the preferred topics were time-consuming, though being pivotal to the delivery of meaningful actions.

To conclude, the actions implemented by UNESCO in the SmartCulTour LLs are to be considered a successful

experience to be possibly replicated, by also exploring potential opportunities for making such knowledge, practice-oriented hubs scalable in other contexts. UNESCO's participation in SmartCulTour allowed to develop a format that could inspire other actors and regions to develop context-specific and people-centred capacity building programmes in line with relevant international normative and policy standards, designing a scalable formula for other destinations that seek to sustainably improve their cultural tourism performance.