Final conference to disseminate project results and on objectives for improving sustainable cultural tourism

Smart \\ CulTour

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

Deliverable

D8.3



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 870708



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Deliverable D8.3

Title: Deliverable Final conference to disseminate project results and address objectives for improving sustainable cultural tourism

Due date: April 2023

Submission date: June 2023

Approved by Leader of Work Package: Alun Jones (CIHEAM Zaragoza)

Type: Report

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Dissemination Level

\boxtimes	PU:	Public
	CO:	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)





The SmartCulTour Final Conference was conceived as a main dissemination action at the end of the project, with the aim of summarizing, presenting and discussing the main project achievements (learnings, Living Lab experiences, WP results, and integrated proposals and recommendations) amongst project teams, researchers, stakeholder representatives and policy-makers (national and international).

The final conference took place on Wednesday 24 May 2023 from 9:15 to 18:30 in the Herman Teirlinckgebouw building of the Flemish Government, a partner of the project consortium. The theme chosen for the conference was "Culture as Catalyst: Redefining Cultural Tourism for Sustainable Destinations".

The SmartCulTour Final Conference was attended by 70 participants in the conference room and by 69 participants through online streaming. These experts came mainly from leading tourism bodies (UNESCO and ICOMOS), international organizations, independent national and international experts, the scientific and academic community and the tourism industry.

The impact of the planning, organization and dissemination of the event was reflected in the level of attendance and type of attendees. The interest and quality of the presentations highlighted the potential impact of the project results and recommendations for the development of cultural tourism, understood from a broad perspective: urban, rural, heritage, adventure sports, gastronomy, oenology, etc.

Contents

Abstract	
Contents	
Contents	۷ ۷
Background, objectives and organisation of the conference	3
Programme	4
Participation	10
Conclusions	12



Background, objectives and organisation of the conference

The SmartCulTour Final Conference was conceived as a main dissemination action at the end of the project, with the aim of summarizing, presenting and discussing the main project achievements (learnings, Living Lab experiences, WP results, and integrated proposals and recommendations) amongst project teams, researchers, stakeholder representatives and policy-makers (national and international).



The organization of the SmarCulTour Final Conference (Task 8.3.2, under the task SmartCulTour "Afterlife" Strategy for Smart Sustainable Tourism) was under the responsibility of CIHEAM Zaragoza, with the collaboration of the coordinator, the whole consortium, and especially the WP leaders for designing the programme and delivering the presentations.

The final conference took place on Wednesday 24 May 2023 from 9:15 to 18:30 in the Herman Teirlinckgebouw building of the Flemish Government, a partner of the project consortium. The theme chosen for the conference was "Culture as Catalyst: Redefining Cultural Tourism for Sustainable Destinations" for the following reasons:

While several post-Covid tourism trends are based on more general changes in consumer behaviour, such as the emphasis on health, safety and well-being, and the increasing use of digital technologies, cultural tourism remains one of the main motivations for travel.

In other areas, visitors are increasingly looking for destinations that prioritize environmental sustainability and responsible tourism practices. Natural and outdoor attractions, such as national parks, gardens and scenic routes, are expected to remain popular with tourists.

The trend towards local and authentic experiences will also accelerate as international travel increases and visitors seek to immerse themselves in local culture and interact with locals, learning about local traditions and sharing their own experiences.

By presenting the SmartCulTour project tools and sharing Living Labs' experiences with key audiences, the conference explored these emerging trends and identified priorities for destinations to harness the power of local culture and values to redefine the visitor experience.



Programme

The full-day conference was structured in 7 different sessions: an opening session; a session on culture and tourism; urban cultural tourism; the future of rural cultural tourism; an interactive workshop on tools and methodologies for sustainable cultural tourism; a session on participatory decision-making approaches in cultural tourism policy-making; and a closing session. In addition, there was a presentation by an MEP on "Cultural tourism as a motor for local development - from EU regional policy to the New European Bauhaus" and closing remarks by the SmartCulTour coordinator.

In order to reach a wider audience, and based on the experience that, after the Covid-19 pandemic, many people did not attend events in person, it was decided to webcast the whole Final Conference through the VIMEO platform.

8:45	Welcome & Registration
9: 15	Introduction to the day – Jan van der Borg, KU Leuven University
9:20	Opening session Jan van der Borg, KU Leuven University Vincent Nijs, Visit Flanders Louise Haxthausen, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office with the European Union in Brussels Kirsti Ala-Mutka, DG GROW Jordi Tresseras, President, ICOMOS-ESPAÑA
10:30	Coffee break
11:00	 Session on culture and tourism - An integrated approach to enrich the visitor experience Fabrizio Orlando, Global Director, Industry Affairs, Trip Advisor Prof. Dr Germán Ortega Palomo, Universidad de Málaga Piet Jaspaert, Vice President, Europa Nostra Matthew Rabagliati, Head of Policy, Research and Communications, UK National Commission for UNESCO



	 Tamara Nikolić Đjerić, Professional-programme manager, Batana Ecomuseum 		
	Chair and rapporteur: Peter Debrine, UNESCO		
12:15	Lunch		
12.13	Luncii		
13:45	 Urban cultural tourism – Envisioning the future! Lidija Petrić, FEBT, Split Living Lab Iris Kerst, Rotterdam Living Lab manager and programme manager of the Expertise Network Sustainable Urban Tourism Tim Fairhurst, European Tourism Association Caroline Fischer, TExTOUR David ter Avest, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences Chair and rapporteur: Ko Koens and Jeroen Klijs, Breda University of Applied Sciences 		
	J.)		
14:30	 The future of rural cultural tourism and its potential to promote rural development Fernando Blasco, TuHuesca Polihron Karapachov, DG AGRI Guillaume Corradino, Euromontana Francisco Vigalongo, Cultural Heritage & Tourism, European Regions Research and Innovation Network Klaus Ehrlich, RURALTOUR Chair and rapporteur: Alun Jones, CIHEAM Zaragoza 		
15:15	Interactive workshop on the SmartCulTour tools and methods to achieve Sustainable Cultural Tourism Chair and rapporteur: Ella Björn, University of Lapland & Bert Smit, Breda University of Applied Sciences		
16:00	Cultural tourism as a motor for local development – from EU regional policy to the New European Bauhaus – Marcos Ros, Member of the European Parliament		
	Participatory decision-making approaches in cultural tourism policy-making		
16:10	 Ms Tamara Nikolić Đjerić, Professional-programme manager, Batana Ecomuseum Ms Griet Geudens, Scheldeland Living Lab Manager Ms Astrid Dickinger, Modul University 		

Max Dubravko Fijacko, Tourism Expert, Interpret Europe



	 Mr Giacomo Lozzi, European Network of Living Labs Chair and rapporteur: Matteo Rosati & Costanza Fidelbo, UNESCO
16:55	Coffee break
17:25	Closing plenary policy round table on the future of cultural tourism Mr Manos Vougioukas, ECTN Mr Simone Moretti, Breda University of Applied Sciences Ms Ruba Saleh, Be.CULTOUR Mr István Ujhelyi, Member of the European Parliament Chair and rapporteur: Bart Neuts, SmartCulTour Coordinator
18:25	Closing remarks - Bart Neuts, SmartCulTour Coordinator
18:40	Light networking buffet

Brief overview of the sessions

Session	Speakers	Overview
Opening session	Jan van der Borg, KU Leuven University Vincent Nijs, Visit Flanders Louise Haxthausen, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office with the European Union in Brussels Kirsti Ala-Mutka, DG GROW Jordi Tresseras, President, ICOMOS-ESPAÑA	This session presented the importance of sustainable cultural tourism, the main results and lessons learned from the SmartCulTour project and the initiatives of the main tourism organizations such as the European Commission, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the role of Tourism Flanders.
Session on culture and tourism - An integrated approach to enrich the visitor experience	Fabrizio Orlando, Global Director, Industry Affairs, Trip Advisor Dr Germán Ortega Palomo, Universidad de Málaga Piet Jaspaert, Vice President, Europa Nostra Matthew Rabagliati, Head of Policy, Research and Communications, UK National Commission for UNESCO	As cultural tourism becomes increasingly competitive, there is likely to be a greater focus on innovation and creativity in product development and marketing. This could include the development of new cultural experiences, routes and itineraries, events and products, as well as new marketing channels such as influencer marketing and experiential marketing. This session explored:



	Max Dubravko Fijacko, Tourism Expert, Interpret Europe Tamara Nikolić Đjerić, Professional-programme manager, Batana Ecomuseum Chair and rapporteur: Peter Debrine, UNESCO	 What impact digital transformation is having on the visitor experience through the incorporation of ICTs into cultural tourism product and service development (e.g. virtual and augmented reality, mobile apps, smart city technology, etc.); How partnerships between tourism businesses and local communities can create more meaningful and authentic experiences for visitors; How storytelling, including through heritage interpretation, art, music, and other forms of cultural expressions, is becoming a powerful tool to engage visitors and create a deeper connection with the local culture; How sustainable tourism practices are becoming increasingly important to visitors, and how businesses can adopt sustainable practices to attract and retain eco-conscious visitors; How visitors are increasingly seeking authentic cultural experiences, what "authentic" means in this context, and how destinations can provide better opportunities for cultural immersion in their tourism offer.
Urban cultural tourism: Envisioning the future!	Lidija Petrić, FEBT, Split Living Lab Iris Kerst, Rotterdam Living Lab manager and programme manager of the Expertise Network Sustainable Urban Tourism Tim Fairhurst, European Tourism Association Caroline Fischer, TEXTOUR David ter Avest, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences Chair and rapporteur: Ko Koens and Jeroen Klijs, Breda University of Applied Sciences	Exciting transformations are under way in the world of urban cultural tourism. Traditional hotspots such as Amsterdam and Venice are experiencing mounting pressure from visitors, emerging destinations that focus on experiences of daily life and community engagement are rapidly gaining popularity. The implications of such changes raise questions about the future of cultural urban tourism, and how we can make it sustainable or even regenerative (and what actually is regenerative cultural tourism). We discussed these topics in a lively and interdisciplinary panel discussion featuring experts from diverse fields such as industry, urban planning, local communities, cultural sectors, and academia. Together, we explored what the future of urban cultural tourism might hold and how we can work towards achieving it.
The future of rural cultural tourism and its potential to promote rural development	Fernando Blasco, TuHuesca Polihron Karapachov, DG AGRI Guillaume Corradino, Euromontana	Tourism is an activity that contributes directly and indirectly to the development of rural areas, but this development must be sustainable. Rural tourism in all its forms, including cultural tourism,



	Francisco Vigalongo, Cultural Heritage & Tourism, European Regions Research and Innovation Network Klaus Ehrlich, RURALTOUR Chair and rapporteur: Alun Jones, CIHEAM Zaragoza	also has a high potential to stimulate local economic growth and social change due to its complementarity with other economic activities, its contribution to GDP and job creation, and its capacity to promote the dispersion of demand over time and over a wider territory. In this session we explored the different types of rural tourism, its characteristics, its relationship with culture and local development, and discuss tourism trends and the future of rural forms of cultural tourism and its potential.
Interactive workshop on the SmartCulTour tools and methods to achieve Sustainable Cultural Tourism	Chair and rapporteur: Ella Björn, University of Lapland & Bert Smit, Breda University of Applied Sciences	Arts-based and design-sciences-based methods and tools for social interventions are both very useful, but different. Why should you mix these two approaches? Placemaking as an art-based method combined with service design methods like the House of Quality and the Ideation Washing Machine was introduced in this interactive workshop by using a user-case.
Cultural tourism as a motor for local development – from EU regional policy to the New European Bauhaus	Marcos Ros, Member of the European Parliament	Marcos Ros, Member of the European Parliament (Committee on Regional Development and Committee on Culture and Education) presented the cultural paradigm for a new political era through the European Green Deal, the Urban Agenda and the Renovation Wave. He focused his speech on the New European Bauhaus and the European Parliament's position on it.
Participatory decision- making approaches in cultural tourism policy- making	Tamara Nikolić Đjerić, Professional-programme manager, Batana Ecomuseum Griet Geudens, Scheldeland Living Lab Manager Astrid Dickinger, Modul University Giacomo Lozzi, European Network of Living Labs Chair and rapporteur: Matteo Rosati & Costanza Fidelbo, UNESCO	Participatory decision-making approaches can help ensure that cultural tourism policies and initiatives are sustainable and aligned with local priorities and values. By involving local communities and other stakeholders in the decision-making process, policy-makers can better understand the social, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism, and develop policies and initiatives that promote sustainable development. This session explored the forms of stakeholder engagement in tourism research and policy development (experiences of involvement and engagement of Living Labs, stakeholder communities and groups, tools and games to stimulate interaction), as well as community stakeholder participation in tourism policy development (Living Labs, case studies and stakeholder input frameworks).

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Closing plenary policy	Manos Vougioukas, ECTN	Cultural tourism plays an important role in the
round table on the	Simone Moretti, Breda University	European economy, estimated to represent 37 %
future of cultural	of Applied Sciences	of the total tourism sector. While tourism
tourism	Ruba Saleh, Be.CULTOUR	encourages access to and appreciation for the
	István Ujhelyi, Member of the	extensive collection of European cultural heritage,
	European Parliament	there are important current and future challenges
	Chair and rapporteur: Bart Neuts,	and opportunities to account for, such as
	SmartCulTour Coordinator	overtourism, digital transitions, green transitions,
		workforce shortages, accessibility, etc. This
		closing session explored potential trends and
		needs from the point of view of visitors, industry,
		and policy in order to help provide a roadmap for
		sustainable cultural tourism development.
Closing remarks	Bart Neuts, SmartCulTour	The conclusions were given by the project
-	Coordinator	coordinator who summarized what was
		presented at the conference and all the work
		carried out by SmartCulTour during these 3 and a
		half years. He also thanked all the attendees for
		their participation (both in person and online) and
		the work of the partners during the project.



OParticipation

The SmartCulTour Final Conference was followed by a total of 139 participants (70 attended in person and 69 by online streaming). The table below shows the participants' country of origin:

Table 1. Countries of origin of the participants at the SmartCulTour Final Conference

Online Country Total In person **Argentina Austria Belgium Bulgaria** Canada Croatia **Denmark Finland** Germany Greece **Hungary Ireland** Namibia **Netherlands Norway Portugal** Serbia **South Africa Spain USA TOTAL**

Table 2. Number and % of participants from EU and Non EU countries.

Countries (n)	In person	Online	Total
EU (15)	67 (96%)	51 (74%)	118 (85%)
Non EU (8)	3 (4%)	18 (26%)	21 (15%)
TOTAL	70 (50.4%)	69 (49.6%)	139 (100%)

Participants came from 23 different countries (15 from EU and 8 non EU, Tables 1 and 2). Belgium (27), Spain (26), Italy (17) and Croatia (13) were the most represented countries in total, with not much difference between in-person and online participation. This is due to the fact that all these countries are members of the consortium and where most effort was put into the promotion of the event.

As for the professional profile of the participants, the conference was attended by leading tourism bodies (UNESCO and ICOMOS), international organizations, independent national and international experts, the scientific and academic community and the tourism industry. Particularly noteworthy is the participation of



two MEPS, István Ujhelyi (Vice-Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism) and Marcos Ros (Member of the Committee on Regional Development and the Committee on Culture and Education), and several DGs of the European Commission.



Figure 1. Photos of the event. Left to right and top to bottom. Opening session; Session on culture and tourism - An integrated approach to enrich the visitor experience; The future of rural cultural tourism and its potential to promote rural development; Interactive workshop on the SmartCulTour tools and methods to achieve Sustainable Cultural Tourism; Cultural tourism as a motor for local development – from EU regional policy to the New European Bauhaus (MEP Marcos Ros).



Conclusions

The SmartCulTour Final Conference provided a key opportunity to disseminate the findings (results, conclusions and recommendations) of the project and evidence of some key aspects and outcomes for sustainable cultural tourism. The effectiveness of the multi-level and multi-disciplinary approach of the SmartCulTour project was evident through the mix of speakers, and attendees, from policy, practice and research.

The impact of the planning, organization and dissemination of the event was reflected in the level of attendance and type of attendees. The interest and quality of the presentations highlighted the potential impact of the project results and recommendations for the development of cultural tourism, understood from a broad perspective: urban, rural, heritage, adventure sports, gastronomy, oenology, etc.



Final event programme leaflet





Final Conference on sustainable cultural tourism under the H2020 SmartCulTour project

Culture as Catalyst: Redefining Cultural Tourism for Sustainable Destinations

24 May 2023 Herman Teirlinckgebouw (Havenlaan 88, 1000 Brussels)

Although a variety of tourism trends post-Covid are based on more general changes in consumer behaviour, such as the emphasis on health, safety, and well-being, and the rising use of digital technologies, cultural tourism continues to be one of the main motivations for travel.

In other areas, visitors increasingly seek out destinations that prioritise environmental sustainability and responsible tourism practices. Outdoor and natural attractions such as national parks, gardens, and scenic routes are expected to continue to be popular among tourists.

The trend for local and authentic experiences will also accelerate as international travel increases and visitors seek to immerse themselves in the local culture and interact with locals, learning about local traditions and sharing their own experiences.

By introducing the SmartCulTour project tools and sharing the different experiences of the Living Labs with key target audiences, the conference will explore these emerging trends and identify priorities for destinations to harness the power of culture and local values to redefine the visitor experience.







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8:45	Welcome & Registration
9: 15	Introduction to the day – Jan van der Borg, KU Leuven University
9:20	Opening session Ian van der Borg, KU Leuven University Vincent Nijs, Visit Flanders Louise Haxthausen, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office with the European Union in Brussels Kirsti Ala-Mutka, DG GROW Jordi Tresseras, President, ICOMOS-ESPAÑA
10:30	Coffee break

Session on culture and tourism - An integrated approach to enrich the visitor experience

As cultural tourism becomes increasingly competitive, there is likely to be a greater focus on innovation and creativity in product development and marketing. This could include the development of new cultural experiences, routes and itineraries, events and products, as well as new marketing channels such as influencer marketing and experiential marketing.

This session will explore:

- What impact digital transformation is having on the visitor experience through the incorporation of ICTs into
 cultural tourism product and service development (e.g. virtual and augmented reality, mobile apps, smart city
 technology, etc.);
- How partnerships between tourism businesses and local communities can create more meaningful and authentic experiences for visitors;
- How storytelling, including through heritage interpretation, art, music, and other forms of cultural expressions, is becoming a powerful tool to engage visitors and create a deeper connection with the local culture;
- How sustainable tourism practices are becoming increasingly important to visitors, and how businesses can adopt sustainable practices to attract and retain eco-conscious visitors;
- How visitors are increasingly seeking authentic cultural experiences, what "authentic" means in this context, and how destinations can provide better opportunities for cultural immersion in their tourism offer.
- Fabrizio Orlando, Global Director, Industry Affairs, Trip Advisor
- Prof. Dr. Germán Ortega Palomo, Universidad de Málaga
- Piet Jaspaert, Vice President, Europa Nostra
- Matthew Rabagliati, Head of Policy, Research and Communications, UK National Commission for UNESCO
- Max Dubravko Fijacko, Tourism Expert, Interpret Europe
- Tamara Nikolić Đjerić, Professional-programme manager, Batana Ecomuseum

Chair and rapporteur: Peter Debrine, UNESCO





11:00



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13:45

14:30

Lunch

Urban cultural tourism — Envisioning the future!

Exciting transformations are under way in the world of urban cultural tourism. Traditional hotspots such as Amsterdam and Venice are experiencing mounting pressure from visitors, emerging destinations that focus on experiences of daily life and community engagement are rapidly gaining popularity. The implications of such changes raise questions about the future of cultural urban tourism, and how we can make it sustainable or even regenerative (and what actually is regenerative cultural tourism).

We will discuss these topics in a lively and interdisciplinary panel discussion featuring experts from diverse fields such as industry, urban planning, local communities, cultural sectors, and academia. Together, we will explore what the future of urban cultural tourism might hold and how we can work towards achieving it.

- Lidija Petrić, FEBT, Split Living Lab
- Iris Kerst, Rotterdam Living Lab manager and programme manager of the Expertise Network Sustainable Urban Tourism
- Tim Fairhurst, European Tourism Association
- · Caroline Fischer, TExTOUR
- David ter Avest, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences

Chair and rapporteur: Ko Koens and Jeroen Klijs, Breda University of Applied Sciences

The future of rural cultural tourism and its potential to promote rural development

Tourism is an activity that contributes directly and indirectly to the development of rural areas, but this development must be sustainable. Rural tourism in all its forms, including cultural tourism, also has a high potential to stimulate local economic growth and social change due to its complementarity with other economic activities, its contribution to GDP and job creation, and its capacity to promote the dispersion of demand over time and over a wider territory.

In this session we will explore the different types of rural tourism, its characteristics, its relationship with culture and local development, and discuss tourism trends and the future of rural forms of cultural tourism and its potential.

- Fernando Blasco, TuHuesca
- Polihron Karapachov, DG AGRI
- Guillaume Corradino, Euromontana
- Francisco Vigalongo, Cultural Heritage & Tourism, European Regions Research and Innovation Network
- Klaus Ehrlich, RURALTOUR

Chair and rapporteur: Alun Jones, CIHEAM Zaragoza

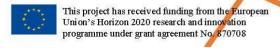
Interactive workshop on the SmartCulTour tools and methods to achieve Sustainable Cultural Tourism

Arts-based and design-sciences-based methods and tools for social interventions are both very useful, but different. Why should you mix these two approaches? Placemaking as an art-based method combined with service design methods like the House of Quality and the Ideation Washing Machine are introduced in this interactive workshop by using a user-case.

Chair and rapporteur: Ella Björn, University of Lapland & Bert Smit, Breda University of Applied Sciences



15:15







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Cultural tourism as a motor for local development – from EU regional policy to the New European Bauhaus – Marcos Ros, Member of the European Parliament

Participatory decision-making approaches in cultural tourism policy-making

Participatory decision-making approaches can help ensure that cultural tourism policies and initiatives are sustainable and aligned with local priorities and values. By involving local communities and other stakeholders in the decision-making process, policy-makers can better understand the social, cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism, and develop policies and initiatives that promote sustainable development.

This session will explore the forms of stakeholder engagement in tourism research and policy development (experiences of involvement and engagement of Living Labs, stakeholder communities and groups, tools and games to stimulate interaction), as well as community stakeholder participation in tourism policy development (Living Labs, case studies and stakeholder input frameworks).

- Ms Tamara Nikolić Đierić, Professional-programme manager, Batana Ecomuseum
- · Ms Griet Geudens, Scheldeland Living Lab Manager
- Ms Astrid Dickinger, Modul University
- Mr Giacomo Lozzi, European Network of Living Labs

Chair and rapporteur: Matteo Rosati & Costanza Fidelbo, UNESCO

16:55

16:10

Coffee break

Closing plenary policy round table on the future of cultural tourism

Cultural tourism plays an important role in the European economy, estimated to represent 37 % of the total tourism sector. While tourism encourages access to and appreciation for the extensive collection of European cultural heritage, there are important current and future challenges and opportunities to account for, such as overtourism, digital transitions, green transitions, workforce shortages, accessibility, etc. This closing session will explore potential trends and needs from the point of view of visitors, industry, and policy in order to help provide a roadmap for sustainable cultural tourism development.

17:25

- Mr Manos Vougioukas, ECTN
- Mr Simone Moretti, Breda University of Applied Sciences
- Ms Ruba Saleh, Be.CULTOUR
- Mr István Ujhelyi, Member of the European Parliament

Chair and rapporteur: Bart Neuts, SmartCulTour Coordinator

18:25

Closing remarks - Bart Neuts, SmartCulTour Coordinator

18:40

Light networking buffet



