

Final report on experiences and findings from the Living Labs



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



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Deliverable
D6.5

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A

bstract

As leader of **Work Package 6 on “Sustainable cultural tourism laboratories”**, UNESCO coordinated activities in the six SmartCulTour LLs, namely the Split Metropolitan area (Croatia), the Utsjoki (*Ohcejohka* in Northern Sami) Municipality (Finland), the Huesca province (Spain), the Rotterdam Metropolitan Region (the Netherlands), the Scheldeland region in Flanders (Belgium), and the city of Vicenza (Italy).

This Deliverable 6.5, titled “Final report on LLs experiences and findings,” as foreseen by Task 6.7 (outlined in the table below), offers a comprehensive account of the six SmartCulTour LLs, spanning their entire journey from initiation to the conclusion of the project, with some LLs potentially continuing beyond the project’s timeline.

Task 6.7 – Identifying drivers and critical requirements for sustainable cultural tourism development

Each Lab will deliver a **final assessment report on the findings of the respective interventions**, their **impact in terms of sustainable cultural tourism development**, and the **critical contextual factors**. The WP Leader will bring the main conclusions and findings of the six Labs together, feeding into WP7, and specifically Task 7.3. This will result in a **consolidation of experiences and findings of the six Labs**, identifying **success criteria**, **solutions that support real change** in cultural tourism destinations and that may be used in a strategy to ensure an **efficient use of European Structural funds**.

This Report provides both a summary and a review of the SmartCulTour LLs’ experiences. It moves from an assessment of the specific context dynamics, resources and values of the six destinations, and it spans processes, tools and methods therein adopted towards instilling a sustainable, critical thinking into key tourism stakeholders and shareholders, including actual and potential cultural tourists.

Deliverable 6.5 comprises **two distinct, though strictly interrelated components**. The first component concerns the overall SmartCulTour Living Labs’ experience, and starts with an **Introduction** that provides a concise overview of the project’s journey within the demanding and inspiring realm of the LLs. The conclusive section of the first component is broad in scope, comprising **Final Recommendations** that are derived from the knowledge gained during the project, and the **Conclusions**, which draw upon the main transversal findings from the LLs’ processes and experiences, and seek to outline what future Lab Managers should know about participatory approaches to sustainable cultural tourism development.

More specifically, the **Final Recommendations** target researchers and practitioners that plan either to establish new LLs, mainly in the context of – but not limited to – an EU-funded and multi-partner project, or to existing LLs that wish to improve their performance towards achieving medium- to long-term objectives of sustainable cultural tourism development.

The **Conclusion’s** main outcome is that the SmartCulTour Living Labs (LLs) demonstrate the success of using such a tool for creating multi-stakeholder networks for sustainable cultural tourism development and planning, allowing for multiple perspectives and collective intelligence. Indeed, the process of collaboration and networking during the LLs was considered more important than fully achieving the initial objectives, as it led to improved cooperation and boosted the LL’s innovative co-creation potential.

The use of tools and methods provided by Work Package 7 (WP7) enhanced participants' engagement and local ownership, creating a **safe environment for equal expression** and **reducing power imbalances**. Different approaches were adopted for long-term sustainability, either by establishing physical venues for the LL or by integrating its legacy into existing networks and projects.

UNESCO's capacity-building activities were highly valued since they addressed local skills gaps while promoting integrated cultural tourism management and sustainable development processes. **Exchange visits among the LLs** facilitated learning from international good practices, while offering opportunities for testing and validating the interventions co-created within LLs. **Practice abstracts and videos** were produced to provide practical information and inspiration for other destinations.

It is concluded that the SmartCulTour LLs' experiences, tools, and findings have the potential for **scalability** and **diffusion**, linking theoretical and practical components to positively impact local communities. In addition, funding, stakeholder engagement, scalability and generalisability, regulatory barriers, knowledge sharing, and intellectual property were identified as common **challenges for future Lab Managers**.

This General part is complemented by **five Annexes**, respectively presenting:

- The **Template** that was provided to the Lab Managers to support them in the drafting process of their respective LLs' reports within D6.5 (Annex 13);
- An **overview of WP7 tools** used in the SmartCulTour Living Labs (Annex 14);
- An overview of different **EU funding schemes** and their potential links with interventions identified and designed in the context of the SmartCulTour project, providing LLs' participants and regional authorities with insights for potential **afterlife funding strategies** (Annex 15);
- The results of the SmartCulTour **Living Labs' evaluation conducted by Modul University** (Vienna, Austria), whose main goal was to uncover factors contributing to success and value co-creation in the six different LLs, as well as to identify the challenges faced in and by the LLs in order to gain insights and provide guidance on what shall be improved for future LLs to ensure high-quality outcomes (Annex 16); and
- The Deliverable's **Reference list** (Annex 17).

The second component of the Deliverable consists of **contributions from each Lab Manager**, offering an overview of the six LLs' experiences, namely:

- A **brief summary of the LL's workflow** introduces each section, followed by an explanation of the main activities (compared to the original workplan outlined in D6.1, i.e. the *Specific Terms of Reference for the SmartCulTour LLs*), key LL participants, including related internal dynamics, as well as service-design methods and art-based tools used to improve stakeholders' engagement and networking.
- A presentation of the **results and impacts of each LL**, including main challenges encountered throughout the process, and key goals achieved compared to the set objectives.
- A section reflecting on **sustainability aspects and follow-up actions**, both in terms of outcomes from the LLs' experiences, and with a view at the afterlife strategy of the LLs themselves (where applicable) as entities that can be catalyst for sustainable change in cultural tourism. In addition, each Lab Manager proposes follow-up recommendations for the LL based on his/her specific knowledge of the context and its recognised and potential impact, identifying strategic axes to be potentially explored and leveraged in the future.

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01 Introduction to the SmartCulTour Living Labs' procedural workflow

1.1. SmartCulTour Living Labs within the project's work package structure

As leader of **Work Package 6 on “Sustainable cultural tourism laboratories”**, UNESCO coordinated activities in the six SmartCulTour LLs, namely the Split Metropolitan area (Croatia), the Utsjoki (*Ohcejohka* in Northern Sami) Municipality (Finland), the Huesca province (Spain), the Rotterdam Metropolitan Region (the Netherlands), the Scheldeland region in Flanders (Belgium), and the city of Vicenza (Italy).

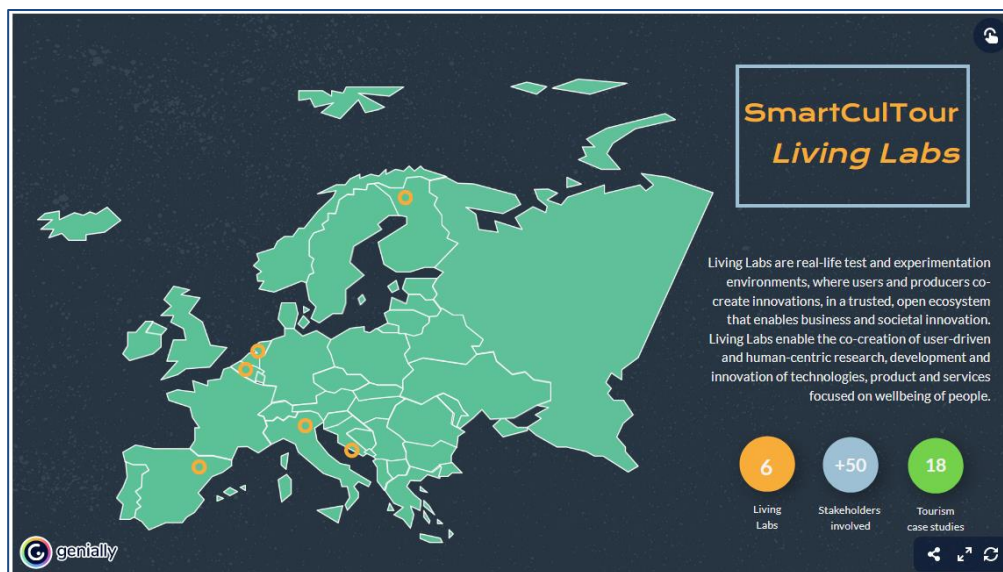


Figure 1. Map of SmartCulTour LLs' locations

The selection of the six (cultural tourism) destinations was aimed at ensuring different geographical and typological coverage, with three destinations having a strong urban/city-based identity, and the other three being focused on larger areas or rural contexts. Such intrinsic differences, complemented by the project's overall **needs-driven and context-specific approach**, urged a centralised coordination and continued guidance to ensure, as far as possible, that the six LLs (LLs) delivered the agreed tasks in a consistent manner, while adapting the tools and methods developed within the project to their specific needs.

This role was chiefly performed by UNESCO, which supported the LLs since their establishment and throughout their lifecycle in the development of their respective workplans and operational functions, including through tailored capacity-building actions, as well as in the identification of meaningful activities, methodologies, and interventions to be implemented in each of them. In particular, **UNESCO facilitated the coordination** of activities in the six LLs by promoting cooperation, co-creation, and co-decision between relevant stakeholders to support strategic planning, policy development, and the identification of interventions towards more sustainable forms of cultural tourism.

This task was particularly important as the LLs are the **cornerstone of the SmartCulTour project**, linking the theoretical with the practical and empirical components. The success of the project largely depended on the capacity of the Labs to make the best use of the SmartCulTour tools, while testing and trialling them and thereby contributing to their amelioration and refinement in a **two-way process**.

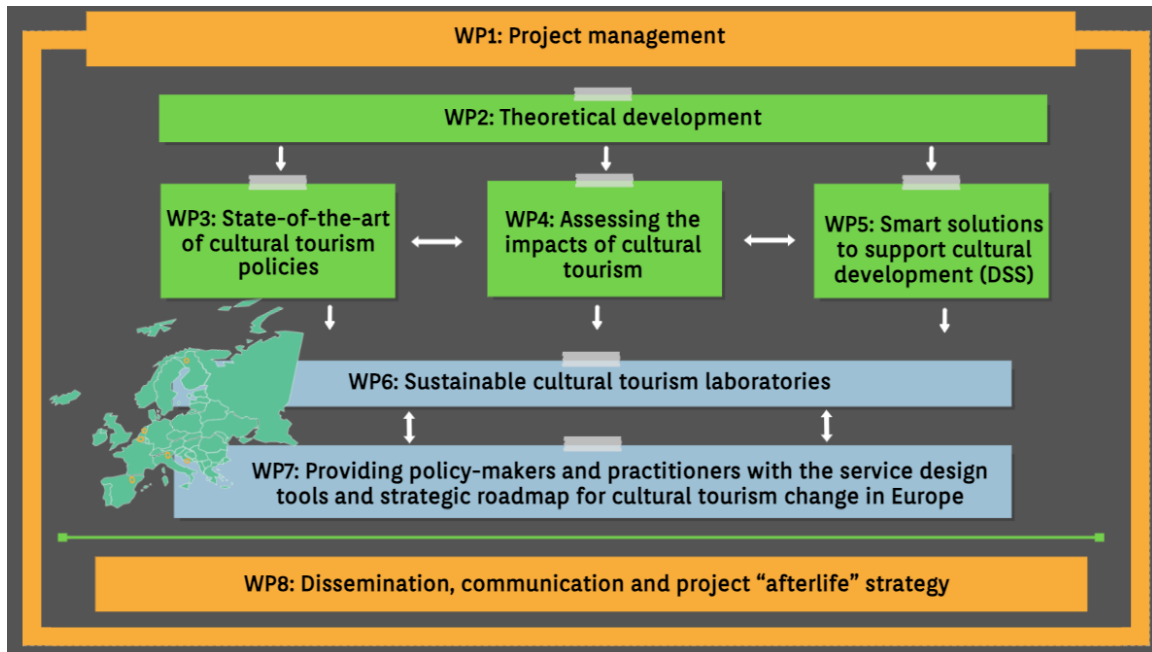


Figure 2. SmartCulTour Work Packages

1.2. Living Labs as multi-stakeholder entities

In recent years, LLs have increasingly been adopted as an exponent of open innovation participatory stakeholder networks, also supported by the European Commission, which instigated projects based on LL environments as part of the advancement of European innovation spaces that combine users, firms, and other stakeholders into co-creative processes (Dutilleul et al., 2010). While initially a R&D-based concept, Sørensen and Torfing (2011) discuss how these so-called open innovation systems have become increasingly popular in public administration as a result of the complexity and multi-stakeholder nature inherent in public developments. In addition to their characteristic as **open laboratories**, with a focus on innovation, co-creation, and testing of innovative solutions, the LLs are **living entities** by their very essence. This relates both to their real-life experimentation and feedback loops and participating stakeholders, which may vary according to the topics and objectives of each specific meeting and are fundamentally built on voluntary contributions (Leminen et al., 2012).

Within the LL approach, it is important to distinguish intrinsic differences between lab typologies. The SmartCulTour project adopts the approach of **provider-driven labs**, which are characterised by their focus on **local knowledge creation** and **theory development**, rather than direct practical business innovations (Leminen et al., 2012). In such situations, primary investigators are often educational institutions and research centres and by including **local multi-stakeholder creative thinking**, new societally relevant knowledge and the process of knowledge-creation itself become significant outputs. Even though the generated knowledge is shared across the network for the wider benefit of all participants, the potential marketable effects are less directly transferable. It is worth noting, though, that the goals of the Labs tend to evolve throughout the project's lifecycle, as a new awareness may arise along with newly discovered priorities. Furthermore, a LL initially set up as a provider-driven action can, at the end of the project, be

reformatted as an enabler-driven action in order to translate the newly formed knowledge into policy strategies and actions. These possible changes are relevant when considering potential afterlife strategies.



Figure 3. Graphical representation of the SmartCulTour LLs

Such a dynamic nature also implied the necessity to balance the **comparability of results** across LLs with the high degree of **flexibility** necessary to adapt to the specific circumstances. From a managerial point of view, this was one of the main challenges, as standard approaches could not meet the different contexts' needs, and therefore **place-based solutions** had to be identified and developed on a case-by-case basis.

One of the main tools that the Labs' coordinator resorted to is **bilateral consultations** with Lab Managers, as well as with key Labs' stakeholders, if and when relevant. This approach allowed not only to tailor the way forward to each specific context, but also to ensure the endorsement of selected activities by all stakeholders leveraging **local ownership**. This was particularly relevant *vis-à-vis* participants from the private sector, whose continued engagement in the LLs was highly dependent on the **perception of the advantage** they could obtain from their involvement (as a H2020 Research and Innovation project, SmartCulTour was not equipped with funds to reimburse participants' time efforts; hence, their involvement was voluntary-based and at their own cost).

In this light, work under WP6 was very closely linked with WP7's activities and objectives, especially with regard to the production of art-based tools and service-design methods seeking to maximise stakeholders' co-design and engagement.

The issue of stakeholders' engagement and active participation was especially sensitive in the context of the **Covid-19 pandemic**. The LLs kicked-off starting from February/March 2021, in a period in which restrictive sanitary measures were still in place in most European countries, therefore preventing Lab Managers from organising in-person meetings. The difficulty of meeting physically led to partial delays in the development and implementation of some activities. In response, **hybrid and/or virtual meetings** were resorted to, also thanks to the development of **online tailored-tools** that proved effective and hence potentially fit for purpose even in a future non-Covid-19 context.

1.3. Living Labs coordinating activities

1.3.1. Standard and Specific Terms of Reference as guidelines

UNESCO guided Lab Managers in the inception and establishment process of the LLs, notably by organising a **Preparatory workshop for the inception meetings** (4 February 2021, online), providing advice and presenting practical tools, as well as developing supporting materials for their organization (template invitation, draft agenda, general PPT of the SmartCulTour project, etc.) and for communication and outreach purposes.

From a more strategic point of view, the drafting of **Standard Terms of Reference (ToR) for the LLs (D6.6)** provided the general framework upon which individual LLs have developed specific ToR through wider stakeholder consultations and engagement.

The definition of Standard ToR for the SmartCulTour LLs was intended to ensure **consistency in the overall approach**, LLs' establishment and operational modalities, implementation and evaluation methodology(ies), thus making the different LLs' results measurable and comparable among them. In addition, the standard ToR provided guidance to harmonise - to the widest extent possible - the composition, number and balance of participants, typologies of activities, data gathering, etc., setting a **common strategic direction for WP6**.



Figure 4. Cover of Deliverable 6.6 - Standard Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour LLoratories

Drawing on the Standard ToR, each LL developed its own **Specific Terms of Reference (D6.1)**, based on a template produced by UNESCO in close consultation with all involved Consortium partners.

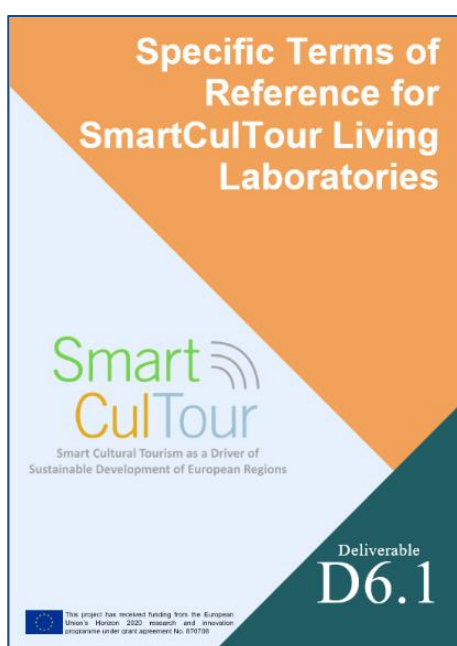


Figure 5. Cover of Deliverable 6.1 - Specific Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour LLoratories

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Figure 6. Table of Contents of the Specific Terms of Reference for the Huesca LL

The information contained in the Specific ToR stem from the outcomes of the Labs' pre-inception and inception phases, including a context analysis, a preliminary and participatory assessment of needs and priorities, and a scenario planning exercise. In addition, the Specific ToR provide data on the typologies and number of participants to the LLs, their functions and scope, as well as a work plan for their activities in support of sustainable cultural tourism (SCT) development.

The Specific ToR have guided the LLs' work, offering a **common ground and understanding** of their expected outputs and core activities to both internal and external partners. Due to their abovementioned living nature, the Labs have adjusted their trajectory throughout the project's implementation, based also on the experience gained and relevant findings, which are herein presented.

1.3.2. Structural meetings across Living Labs

Coordination and harmonisation among the 6 LLs was further ensured through the organization of **monthly online meetings** attended by Lab Managers and relevant Consortium partners aiming to discuss the state of advancement of the six LLs, ensure coordination among them and with other WPs, and provide strategic direction and guidance on the follow-up. Such meetings were also key to exchanging experiences among the Labs, leading to the creation of an expert network on the management of SCTL, mainstreaming best practices and critically analyzing less successful ones. In addition, two main **monitoring mechanisms** were set up to support reporting on the LLs' activities and implemented tools and methodologies, namely a **template PowerPoint presentation** to be updated on a monthly basis and presented at the all-LLs meeting, and a **form for reporting on each LL session**, to be shared with the Labs' coordinator for timely update and monitoring.

Given the interdependence between WP6 and WP7, UNESCO also supported the organization of **bilateral meetings between WP7 leaders and Lab Managers** in order to identify the most suitable service design methods and art-based tools to be used in each Lab, seeking synergies and overall consistency between the LLs' work plans and the WP7 Toolkit¹ (see Annex 14 for an overview of WP7 tools and methods used in the LLs). In addition, the participation of UNESCO in **bi-weekly meetings with WP7** partners guaranteed smooth coordination and joint planning between the tools and methods produced within WP7 and the LLs. The transfer of knowledge from WP7 to Lab Managers was also ensured through the organization of a **Training of Trainers on WP7 tools and methods**, which took place from 16 to 18 March 2022 and was hosted by the Huesca LL.

SmartCulTour Training of Trainers Workshop				
PROGRAMME & AGENDA				
16 - 18 March 2022				
In-presence, Zaragoza and Loarre, Huesca (Spain)				
Wednesday, 16 th March				
Time	Activity	Trainer / Facilitator	Participants	Comments
Afternoon	Arrival of participants in Zaragoza and accommodation in the hotel(s)			
Time TBC	Dinner together (facultative)			
Thursday, 17 th March				
Time	Activity	Trainer / Facilitator	Participants	Comments
8:00 – 9:30	Bus transfer to Loarre (Huesca)			
9:30 – 9:40	Introduction to evaluation - D3.4	BUAS (Jeroen Klips)	Lab Managers and SmartCulTour partners	
9:40 – 13:00	Creative Techniques I*			
9:40 – 9:50	Introduction to the Huesca context: strategic objectives of the Living Lab	IAMZ – CIHEAM (Rocio Juste and Alan Jones)	Lab Managers and SmartCulTour partners	
9:50 – 10:50	Place-making method for stakeholder engagement	BUAS (Bert Smit)	Lab Managers and SmartCulTour partners	Case-study: Huesca
10:50 – 12:00	Design process crafting (using inputs from the Platform)	ULAP (Mira Alhonsuo, Ella Björn)		
12:00 – 13:00	Systems and visitor flow mapping (including walking through the Old Town of Loarre)	UNIVE (Dario Bertocchi)		
10:00 – 13:00	SmartCulTour Game*			
10:00 – 13:00	Gameplay Session of the SmartCulTour Game* Debriefing the Game	BUAS (Wilco Boode and Kevin Hutchison)	10-15 Huesca LL stakeholders	Case-study: Huesca
13:00 – 15:00	Networking Lunch + Visit to the Loarre Castle			
Friday, 18 th March				
Time	Activity	Trainer / Facilitator	Participants	Comments
08:15 – 9:45	Bus transfer to Zaragoza (IAMZ-CIHEAM campus)			
9:45 – 13:30	Creative Techniques II			
9:45 – 10:45	House of Quality	BUAS (Bert Smit and Ko Koen)	Lab Managers and SmartCulTour partners	Case-study: Huesca
10:45 – 11:45	Ideation washing machine Multi-method process flow	ULAP (Mira Alhonsuo, Ella Björn)		
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee break			
12:00 – 13:00	Destination design road mapping	BUAS (Bert Smit and Ko Koen)	Lab Managers and SmartCulTour partners	Case-study: Huesca
13:00 – 13:30	Open discussion and closing remarks			
*Please, note that these two sessions will run in parallel.				

Figure 5. Agenda of the SmartCulTour Training of Trainers Workshop on WP7 tools and methods

¹ See Smit, B., Alhonsuo, M., Björn, E. & Melissen, F. (Eds.) (2022). *The SmartCulTour Toolkit. Deliverable 7.3 of the Horizon 2020 project SmartCulTour (GA number 870708)*, published on the project web site on November 2022: <http://www.smartcultour.eu/deliverables/>.

1.3.3. Supporting shared learning through capacity-building and exchange of experiences

As Leader of WP6, UNESCO coordinated the organization and reporting of the exchange learning experiences that were undertaken among the six SmartCulTour Laboratories between May and October 2022². The main objective of such activities was to strengthen international cooperation between researchers, advisors and local stakeholders participating in the network of the Labs, develop opportunities for further international cooperation and learning, and support the transfer of knowledge on practical initiatives that could positively influence sustainable cultural tourism development at destination level.

In order to broadly share interesting local cultural tourism interventions that were identified, supported, initiated or integrated within the SmartCulTour LLs, these interventions were presented in Deliverable 6.2 - “Production of abstracts and practice videos on tested interventions” with a communication purpose and an underlying scalability rationale³.



Figure 8. Cover of Deliverable 6.2 - Production of abstracts and practice videos on tested interventions

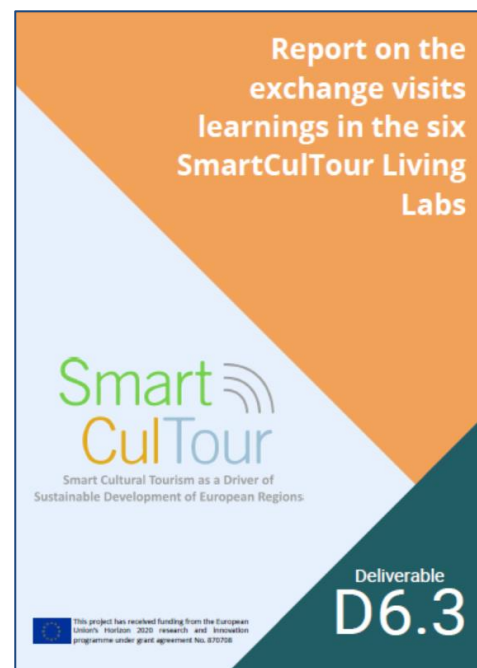


Figure 9. Cover of Deliverable 6.3 - Report on the exchange visits learnings in the six SmartCulTour LLs

UNESCO was also responsible for raising awareness and developing capacities of LLs' 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 strategies and practices of the LLs'

² Fidelbo, C., & Neuts, B. (Eds.) (2022). Report on the exchange visits learnings in the six SmartCulTour LLs. *Deliverable D6.3 of the Horizon 2020 project SmartCulTour (GA number 870708)*, published on the project web site on December 2022: <http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/deliverables/>.

³ Fidelbo, C., & Neuts, B. (Eds.) (2022). Production of abstracts and practice videos on tested interventions. *Deliverable D6.2 of the Horizon 2020 project SmartCulTour (GA number 870708)*, published on the project web site on December 2022: <http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/deliverables/>.

destinations⁴.



Figure 10. Awareness-raising webinar on UNESCO's capacity-building opportunities for SmartCulTour LLs

Figure 11. Cover of Deliverable 6.4 - Report on UNESCO's awareness raising and capacity building actions in the SmartCulTour LLs

On 28 February 2023, the SmartCulTour Consortium organised a webinar aimed at providing concerned stakeholders from the six LLs, as well as other interested representatives of municipal and regional authorities, foundations, and SMEs in the cultural and tourism sectors with ***“A guide to European funding programmes for cultural tourism initiatives”***. The webinar provided participants with a general overview of different EU funding channels - ranging from Creative Europe, Erasmus+, LIFE, Horizon Europe, and the Single Market Programme, to ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and Interreg, supported by testimonies of liaison agencies, consultancy organizations specialised in assisting proposal preparations, and funding recipients. The workshop focused on identifying the scope of various funding mechanisms and the importance of linking organisational/destination goals to higher-scope European objectives such as the EU Green Deal, EU Fit for the Digital Age and Inclusive EU. Together with a further analysis provided in Annex 15 of this Report, focusing on the different EU funding schemes and their potential links with proposed SmartCulTour interventions,



Figure 12. SmartCulTour webinar - “A guide to European Finding programmes for cultural tourism initiatives”

⁴ See Fidelbo, C., & Rosati, M. (Eds.) (2023). *Report on UNESCO's awareness raising and capacity building actions in the SmartCulTour LLs. Deliverable D6.4 of the Horizon 2020 project SmartCulTour (GA number 870708)*, published on the project web site on February 2023: <http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/deliverables/>.

insights are provided to LLs' participants and regional authorities for potential afterlife funding strategies.

1.4. Structure of the report

The present Deliverable 6.5 - "*Final report on experiences and findings from the LLs*", as foreseen by Task 6.7 (outlined in Table 1 below), offers a comprehensive account of the six SmartCulTour LLs, spanning their entire journey from initiation to the conclusion of the project, with some LLs potentially continuing in its afterlife. This Report provides both a summary and a review of the SmartCulTour LLs' experiences, moving from an assessment of the specific context dynamics, resources and values of the six destinations, and spanning processes, tools and methods therein adopted towards instilling a sustainable, critical thinking into key tourism stakeholders and shareholders, including actual and potential cultural tourists.

Table 1. Description of Task 6.7

Task 6.7 – Identifying drivers and critical requirements for sustainable cultural tourism development
Each Lab will deliver a final assessment report on the findings of the respective interventions , their impact in terms of sustainable cultural tourism development , and the critical contextual factors . The WP Leader will bring the main conclusions and findings of the six Labs together, feeding into WP7, and specifically Task 7.3. This will result in a consolidation of experiences and findings of the six Labs , identifying success criteria , solutions that support real change in cultural tourism destinations and that may be used in a strategy to ensure an efficient use of European Structural funds .

On 15 December 2022, a **LLs session** took place in Breda (the Netherlands), during which Lab Managers collectively reflected on the following question: "*What information should future LL managers be aware of regarding participatory approaches to sustainable cultural tourism development?*". Such an exercise was aimed at reflecting upon the key elements that shall have informed D6.5, as well as at adjusting and eventually validating its tentative Table of Contents. Subsequently, an online meeting was organised on 13 March 2023, where the template was thoroughly explained to Lab Managers, and additional feedback was gathered from them. Finally, UNESCO held individual bilateral meetings with each Lab Manager and the SmartCulTour project coordinator. The primary objective of these meetings was to address particular elements of the report and guarantee a **synchronised and cohesive portrayal of the SmartCulTour LLs' experiences and achievements** in the overall Deliverable.

It can therefore be concluded that Deliverable 6.5 is the outcome of a **collaborative brainstorming and co-drafting effort** involving multiple stakeholders, both within and beyond the SmartCulTour LLs. This is reflected in the Deliverable's structure, consisting of **two distinct, though strictly interrelated components**.

The first component concerns the overall SmartCulTour Living Labs' experience, and started with the **Introduction** (Chapter 1), providing a concise overview of the project's journey within the demanding and inspiring realm of the LLs. This first component, which is broad in scope, also comprises the **Final Recommendations** (Chapter 8) knowledge gained and lessons learnt during the project, and **Conclusions** (Chapter 9) that draw upon the main transversal findings from the LLs' processes and experiences, and can be found near the end of this report.

This General part is complemented by **five Annexes**, respectively presenting:

- The **Template** that was provided to the Lab Managers to support them in the drafting process of their respective LLs' reports within D6.5 (Annex 13);
- An **overview of WP7 tools** used in the SmartCulTour Living Labs (Annex 14);

- An overview of different **EU funding schemes** and their potential links with interventions identified and designed in the context of the SmartCulTour project, providing LLs' participants and regional authorities with insights for potential **afterlife funding strategies** (Annex 15);
- The findings and results of the SmartCulTour **Living Labs' evaluation conducted by Modul University** (Vienna, Austria), whose main goal was to uncover factors contributing to success and value co-creation in the six different LLs, as well as to identify the challenges faced in and by the LLs in order to gain insights and provide guidance on what shall be improved for future LLs to ensure high-quality outcomes (Annex 16); and
- The Deliverable's **Reference List** (Annex 17).

The second component of the Deliverable consists of **contributions from each Lab Manager**, offering an overview of the six LLs' experiences (Chapters 2 to 7), namely:

- A **brief summary of the LL's workflow** introduces each section, followed by an explanation of the main activities (compared to the original workplan outlined in D6.1, i.e. the *Specific Terms of Reference for the SmartCulTour LLs*), key LL's participants, including related internal dynamics, as well as service-design methods and art-based tools used to improve stakeholders' engagement and networking.
- A presentation of the **results and impacts of each LL**, including main challenges encountered throughout the process, and key goals achieved compared to the set objectives.
- A section reflecting on **sustainability aspects and follow-up actions**, both in terms of outcomes from the LLs' experiences, and with a view at the afterlife strategy of the LLs themselves (where applicable) as entities that can be catalyst for sustainable change in cultural tourism. In addition, each Lab Manager proposes follow-up recommendations for the LL based on his/her specific knowledge of the context and its recognised and potential impact, identifying strategic axes to be potentially explored and leveraged in the future.

Although each LL had its own goals and evaluation criteria, the SmartCulTour Consortium deemed essential to assess the six LLs across **common evaluation criteria and standards**. This was done in a **three-phase mixed-methods research process** (including in-depth interviews, focus groups, and a co-creation workshop) by engaging Lab Managers and participants from the SmartCulTour LLs. Such an evaluation process allowed researchers from the Modul University to document detailed information about their thoughts and behaviours, while offering a holistic picture of the workflow and the reasons behind specific choices made, spanning LLs' composition, activities and progresses, co-creation dynamics, outcomes, value created, sustainability, and an outlook towards their future. The overall research and evaluation process, and therefore the relevant findings, were conducted with a higher-level scientific view.

The main goal of this extensive evaluation process was to uncover **factors contributing to success and value co-creation in the six different LLs**. Furthermore, **challenges faced in and by the LLs** were of interest to gain insights into what shall be improved for future LLs to ensure high quality outcomes. In brief, the conclusive section of the Deliverable seeks to outline **what future Lab Managers should know about participatory approaches to sustainable cultural tourism development**.

02 Experiences and findings from the Scheldeland Living Lab

2.1. Brief summary of the Living Lab's workflow

2.1.1. Main activities as per the workplan

A number of preparatory research activities were conducted prior to the Scheldeland LL inception phase. Particularly in the autumn of 2020, socio-demographic, touristic, cultural and environmental data were collected for the Scheldeland region in order to evaluate the current cultural touristic conditions and establish a baseline for future evaluation. As part of primary data collection activities, Toerisme Vlaanderen and KU Leuven, i.e. the Lab Managers, collaborated with the local municipalities in order to set up an extensive resident survey across Scheldeland. On 25 February 2021 a first information meeting, aimed at public administrators/policy makers of Scheldeland municipalities, the relevant provinces and the wider tourist region DMOs, was organized in order to acquaint the policy makers with the project, the consortium partners, the objectives, and the WP structure. The main objectives for the Scheldeland LL were discussed and choices were made to focus activities on three specific municipalities within Scheldeland: Bornem, Dendermonde and Puurs-Sint-Amands.

The inception meeting was organized in March 2021 and was again predominantly aimed at public administrations and policy makers of the three Scheldeland municipalities, and notably tourism and cultural heritage experts on local, regional and provincial level. The scope of this meeting was to connect participants and discuss shared needs, characteristics and visions for the area. Via a combination of breakouts and plenary sessions, a higher-level ambition for the LL was described as: “Within the Scheldeland LL, we work together across sectors/communities through concrete, current, dynamic, innovative actions, with respect for the past and with an eye to the future, towards a sustainable cultural-touristic and flourishing destination where people meet and connect around the themes of tidal nature, water, heritage and culture.” Via brainstorming a further focus for future intervention ideas was decided as “The poetry of coming and going, linked to the ebb and flow of the river. Translating the tidal nature of the area to regional-specific heritage (e.g. industrial heritage, crafts).”

The governance framework – as will be discussed further below – of the Scheldeland LL was organized around a dual structure of an Advisory Board (AB) – also referred to as Steering committee – and a Workgroup (WG). This structure was implemented to further support participatory design processes within the LL and was based on a number of considerations, namely: (i) the integration of policy makers is needed for planning, promotion, financial support and elevation of initiatives; (ii) the presence of policy makers might potentially inhibit bottom-up participatory processes and limit free brainstorming potential of the LL; (iii) the inclusion of decision-making stakeholders in workgroups might create power imbalances.

Therefore, policy makers and higher-level administrations (municipalities and provinces) formed the Advisory Board, whose role was to set out the main objectives and general criteria to which potential cultural tourism interventions needed to adhere, while at a later stage also discuss and select highest-potential intervention

options. The workgroup in turn consisted of a heterogeneous varied group of cultural heritage experts, nature guides, volunteers, tourism entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, etc. and had the aim to bring together expert and local knowledge from different fields and with different interests to co-create specific cultural tourism interventions. The WG thus formed the heart of the Scheldeland LL where local stakeholders were invited to participate in bottom-up ideation of cultural tourism in the Bornem, Dendermonde, and Puurs-Sint-Amans region, as a contributor to sustainable growth.

The setup of the Workgroup sessions followed a design-thinking process similar to the double-diamond model (see Figure 13) of ‘Discovery’, ‘Define’, ‘Develop’, and ‘Deliver’, with converging and diverging phases, and was supported by an external consultant. Four workgroup meetings were organized in quick succession between September 2021 and October 2021. The intensive agenda was, on the one hand, informed by the Covid-19 pandemic, whereby loosening of local lockdowns meant that in-person meetings had again become possible in the autumn of 2021, and, on the other hand, it could ensure that the LL stakeholders would not forget about the project and project steps during periods of inactivity.

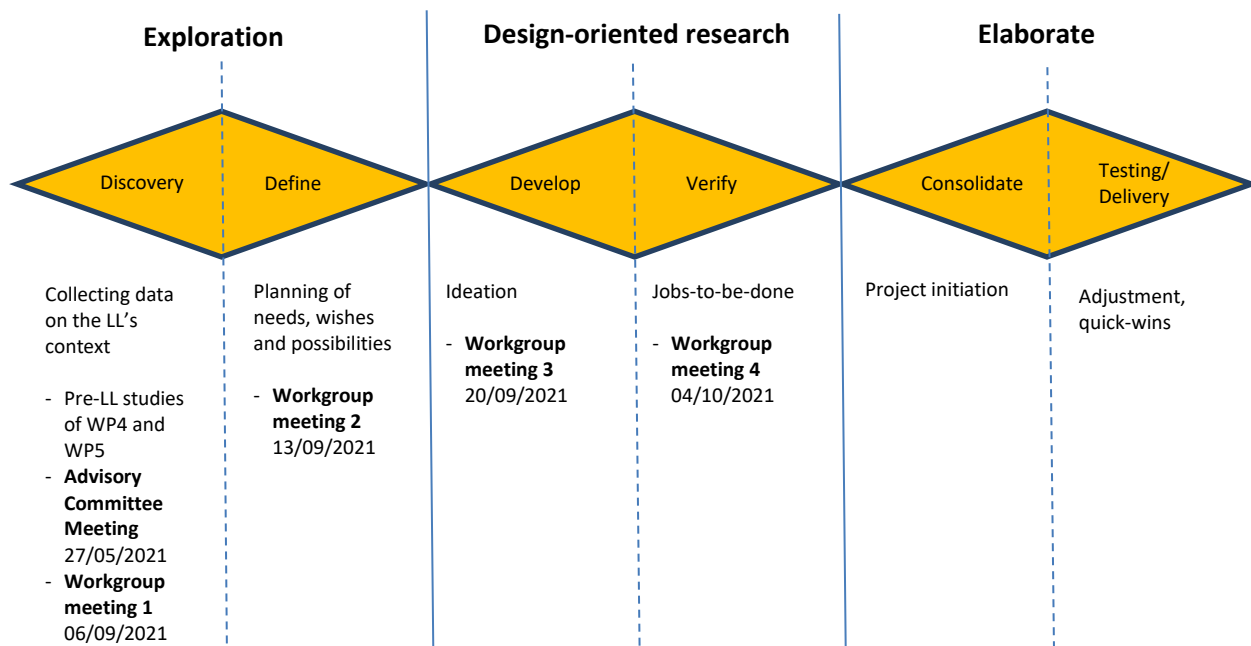


Figure 13. Flow of Workgroups according to design-thinking process in the Scheldeland LL

After the conceptualization phase of the WGs, starting from 2022 the focus shifted towards a more practical operationalization, i.e. the ‘Elaboration’ phase. The ideas that were developed co-creatively during the WG meetings were discussed with policy makers in two AB meetings at the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022, after which a policy-backed choice was made to continue operationalization of one initiative. To this extent, new critical stakeholders were identified and integrated into a newly composed organ: the Feedback Group (FG). This group combined a few key stakeholders from the AB, WG and new participants, and focused on more direct actions with the aim to materialize the local ‘active and soft mobility’ cultural route that was proposed for Scheldeland. These activities were further integrated into the LL exchange visits, whereby the foreign visitors could serve as a test-case for some of the experiences to be offered/enhanced, while practice videos were produced to highlight key attraction elements to be linked across the cultural route.

Table 2. Overview of the Scheldeland LL's workflow

LL Meeting	Date	Stage of Double-diamond design model	Activities / Tools / Methods
Information meeting	25/02/2021	None	Presentation of SmartCulTour project , aimed at setting the agenda and agreeing on inception meeting date
Inception meeting	15/03/2021	None	Identifying destination characteristics and common ambitions/goals and success criteria. Tools used: OPERA method (Own suggestions, Pair suggestions, Explanations, Ranking, Arranging) and Q-Sort methodology
AB meeting 1	27/05/2021	None	Establishing LL governance (with Advisory Board and Workgroup), identifying stakeholders via stakeholder mapping , and setting up workflow
AB meeting 2	30/06/2021	None	Discussing operational steps and constitution of workgroups
WG meeting 1	06/09/2021	Discover	Discussing the LL context across three domains (Heritage & Culture, People & Society, Nature & Water) to identify particularities, communalities, opportunities, differences etc. using a sticky note sorting game .
WG meeting 2	13/09/2021	Define	Presentation of UN SDGs, trends and their connection with cultural tourism. Identifying local challenges and reconceptualization challenges into more manageable and actionable topics in terms of initiators, actions, goals and target groups, adopting an Opportunity Tree approach.
WG meeting 3	20/09/2021	Develop	Ideation phase to develop potential cultural tourism interventions based on the recognized challenges (and corresponding opportunities), adopting a serious play (specifically Lego Serious Play) approach.
WG meeting 4	04/10/2021	Verify	Further elaboration of developed ideas in terms of objective, target group, primary/secondary stakeholders, advantages/disadvantages via a project initiation canvas .
AB meeting 3	22/11/2021	Verify	Presentation of cultural tourism product ideas developed in WG meetings to the Advisory Board and scoring of interventions via House of Quality selection tool.
AB meeting 4	14/02/2022	Verify	Choice of preferential cultural tourism product idea (i.e. development of a local cultural tourism route) to focus on for the remainder of the project and outlining next steps towards operationalization.
Individual contacts	15/02/2022 to 19/04/2022	None	Selection of new project members, related to the choice of intervention and subsequent creation of a new governance organ: the Feedback group.

FG meeting 1	03/05/2022	Consolidate	Introduction of new members to the project and workflow, setting out plan of action and further developing the cultural tourism route.
Exchange visits	20/06/2022 to 22/06/2022	Consolidate	Hosting of LL representatives from Utsjoki and Huesca. Organization of field trip around various Scheldeland cultural heritage attractions that are to be integrated in the cultural tourism route in order to test their attractiveness for an international audience.
Practice abstracts and videos	14/09/2022 to 15/09/2022	Consolidate	Filming of LL testimonials and various locations around Scheldeland, also focusing on attractions to be included in the Scheldeland cultural tourism route.
UNESCO capacity building	24/10/2022	None	Organization of the UNESCO's capacity-building workshop on communication with visitors, cultural heritage interpretation, and enhancing the visitor experience at cultural tourism destinations.
FG meeting 2	19/01/2023	Consolidate	Further developing the cultural tourism route by focusing on practical routing and linkages through systems mapping and identification of potential visitor segments through personas .
Closing meeting	01/06/2023	Testing / Delivery	Presentation of the business case of the Scheldeland cultural tourism route as developed within the WG meetings, providing a blueprint and further plan of action.

2.1.2. Key stakeholders

Table 3. List of participants to the Scheldeland LL

Nº	Role	Description (Organization)
Lab Managers / SmartCulTour partners		
1.	Lies Boonen, Lab Manager (2020-2021)	Toerisme Vlaanderen
2.	Griet Geudens, Lab Manager (2022-2023)	Toerisme Vlaanderen
3.	Bart Neuts, Senior researcher	KU Leuven
4.	Vanessa Ágata de Abreu Santos, Research assistant	KU Leuven
5.	Caro Govers, Research assistant	KU Leuven
LL Participants / Local stakeholders		
6.	AB & FG	Heritage and tourism expert (Municipality of Bornem)
7.	AB	Coordinator Living and Wellbeing (Municipality of Bornem)
8.	AB	Tourism Department (Municipality of Dendermonde)
9.	AB & FG	Museums of Dendermonde (Municipality of Dendermonde)
10.	AB & FG	Tourism expert (Municipality of Puurs-Sint-Amands)

11.	AB	Event expert (Municipality of Puurs-Sint-Amands)
12.	AB & FG	Tourism coordinator at regional DMO (Toerisme Klein-Brabant)
13.	AB & FG	Tourism coordinator at regional DMO (Toerisme Scheldeland)
14.	AB	Policy and knowledge coordinator (Tourism Province Antwerp)
15.	AB	Project coordinator (Tourism Province Eastern Flanders)
16.	WG & FG	Professional guide (Bornem Cultural Council)
17.	WG	Past director of cultural centre Terdilft
18.	WG & FG	Independent nature guide in Klein-Brabant
19.	WG & FG	City guide and member of workgroup Cultural Patrimony
20.	WG	Artist and member of Cultural Forum
21.	WG	Municipal Council Dendermonde and floral parade Sint-Gillis
21.	WG	Provincial heritage site (Shipping wharfs Baasrode)
22.	WG	Member of nature organization (Dendermonding)
23.	WG	Municipal employee (Tourism Dendermonde)
24.	WG	Collaborators at nature association ('s Heerenbosch)
25.	WG & FG	Volunteer (VZW Steam train Dendermonde-Puurs)
26.	WG	Accommodation provider
27.	WG	Management of LAB education
28.	WG	Environmental department (Municipality of Puurs-Sint-Amands)
29.	WG	Historian involved with GEOpark (Heritage Niel)
30.	WG	Project management of Rivierpark Scheldevallei (Regionaal Landschap Schelde-Durme)
31.	WG	Expert in cultural anthropology (Stilt Waerbeke)
32.	WG	Heritage interpreter at Flemish Centre for cultural heritage (FARO)
33.	WG	Employee at nature and forest institute (INBO & Natuurpunt)
34.	WG	Employee (Flemish Waterways)
35.	WG	Employee at environmental department (Municipality of Puurs-Sint-Amands)
36.	WG	Volunteer at provincial heritage site (Shipping wharfs Baasrode)
37.	FG	Hof van Coolhem (Oevers VZW)
38.	FG	Management of provincial heritage site (Shipping wharfs Baasrode)
39.	FG	Industrial Heritage expert (ETWIE)

Figure 14 gives an overview of the governance structure of the Scheldeland LL which was already alluded to in the previous section. Importantly, the LL tried to adopt a co-creative participatory approach without being limited by existing power relations or policy agendas, while also recognizing the need of higher-level policy support for practical realization of community initiatives. Therefore, in a first phase, representatives of the various relevant policy levels (municipality, province, regional DMOs) were invited to an Advisory Board (AB) which set out the general project ambitions and relevance for the Scheldeland region, as well as the success criteria for potential initiatives. Selection of key stakeholders for the Workgroup (WG), while being informed by the AB, was aimed at bringing together a broad and varied selection of participants from public and private sector organizations, with backgrounds covering the varied local tourism-sector (i.e. natural and cultural attractions, guides, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, guides, accommodation providers, creative

industries), as well as more academic expertise in history and anthropology.

The dynamic within the LL WG sessions and the cooperation between the AB and WG was positively evaluated and there were no obvious differences in interests and priorities between public/private representatives or nature/culture/tourism sector stakeholders. This might partly be explained by the relatively limited touristic development of the region. Since potential negative effects of visitor flows are not felt in the three municipalities, there is no immediate preservation concern around a growth in visitor numbers.

There was, however, a noticeable imbalance between public-private partners' engagement, with a much higher rate of participation of people working in public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and as volunteers. Private, for-profit entrepreneurs either did not participate or dropped out after the initial session(s). This could be explained by the indirect and long-term project focus, not having any direct tangible effects on the economic bottom-line, while still requiring active – and sometimes intensive – participation. This situation was further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which initially caused significant loss of revenue for hospitality enterprises, thus shifting their focus more to economic needs and recovery priorities in the post-Covid period. While the relative lack of for-profit companies was not a large limitation for the Scheldeland LL, mainly due to the nature of the tourism product relying predominantly on public spaces and public actors, it would, naturally, have been of interest to maximally represent the diversity of the tourism industry.

In the third phase of the LL – after inception and goal setting, and ideation, key stakeholders of the AB and WG – particularly the WG participants whose proposed intervention was selected for further adoption – were combined into a Feedback group, further expanded with a selection of additional stakeholders identified as particularly significant for the intervention's potential operationalization.



Figure 14. Governance structure of the Scheldeland LL

2.1.3. SmartCulTour tools and methods

The tools and methods used within the Scheldeland LL were selected based on the relative need of the LL and its process during various stages of its lifetime, organized according to (i) inception stage, (ii) exploration phase – consisting of 'Discovery' and 'Define', (iii) design-oriented research stage – consisting of 'Develop'

and 'Verify', and (iv) elaboration stage – consisting of 'Consolidate' and 'Testing/Delivery').

2.1.3.1. Inception stage

The inception of the LL predated delivery of the SmartCulTour D7.1 and D7.3, which outline the service design and art-based methods proposed to support participative co-creation within the Labs. However, the Q-Sort methodology was already developed and proposed as an explorative method for visioning of future tourism development by complementary and competitive stakeholders. Thus, during its inception stage, the LL adopted two techniques, complementing the initial research activities, as follows:

- **OPERA-method:** The OPERA-acronym stands for Own suggestions, Pair suggestions, Explanations, Ranking, and Arranging and is a simple stepwise process to be adopted in workshops in order to prevent that a vocal minority dominates discussions. The method was particularly useful in the online session (since, due to the Covid-19 lockdowns, in-person meetings were not possible at that moment) and consisted of giving all participants individual time to construct ideas and arguments on key questions, then discuss these pairwise in smaller breakout sessions, elaborating on ideas in a larger plenary group, and finally democratically voting on ranking and arranging key ideas, arguments and priorities for cultural tourism development in the Scheldeland region. The results of the session were thus inclusive and supported by all participants.
- **Q-Sort methodology:** The Q-Sort method was adopted by inviting LL stakeholders, at the end of the meeting, to follow a link to an online software tool where 48 cultural tourism statements had to be ordered on level of agreement. It proved a limitation to not be able to collect responses in real-time during the meeting, since not all participants followed up on the online questionnaire afterwards. Furthermore, since the initial meetings focused uniquely on policy makers in the Scheldeland region, there was no large diversity in received answers. Even though the invitation was further shared with a wider tourism stakeholder group, potential respondents that had not yet been aware of the SmartCulTour project were not as inclined to answer an extensive survey. As a whole, due to the lack of heterogeneity in respondent composition and the inability to conduct the Q-Sort methodology within a meeting, the results were ultimately not very insightful for the case of Scheldeland – also because the shared vision for regional tourism development had already been established through the OPERA-method.
- **Stakeholder mapping and value networks:** Within the first AB meeting, stakeholder mapping was performed together with the experts of the municipalities, provinces, and regional DMOs in order to identify critical stakeholders of the Scheldeland tourism system to be approached for the LL workgroups. Representatives of the AB were actively involved in identifying and inviting relevant local community stakeholders, ensuring place-specific significance. The stakeholder mapping was therefore predominantly used for identification, and less as a basis of discussion on shared value creation.

2.1.3.2. Exploration stage

Within the Scheldeland LL, three tools/approaches were used with the aim to adequately cover the research needs without overburdening the participants with additional research methodologies that might lead to overlapping objectives and results.

- **SmartCulTour Platform** and resident survey results: These instruments were more passively consumed by the Scheldeland LL stakeholders, meaning that researchers from the SmartCulTour consortium collected, analysed and presented these statistical data as part of a general scene-setting

of the destination state-of-the-art. The information served to establish the initial state on a variety of dimensions, ensuring that participants had a general and broad understanding of relevant indicators. These data are particularly relevant to ensure a common denominator across a heterogeneous stakeholder group with varied expertise and interests.

- **Sticky notes sorting game:** Sticky notes are a very common tool for consultation, collaboration and brainstorming. Due to the high level of familiarity of participants and its low threshold, it does not require a long introduction. Just like with the OPERA-method, a useful characteristic of the sticky note sorting game was to allow each participant to first write down their individual thoughts, prior to sharing and discussing these in larger groups. Within the Scheldeland LL, respondents were divided across three groups, and invited to think about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Scheldeland related to three topics: 'Heritage & Culture', 'People & Society', and 'Nature & Water'. Interactions between the topics, particularly focusing on cultural tourism as a vehicle, were also discussed and structured across a provided template (see Annex 1). The method was easy and quick to implement and allowed for both individual and communal thinking, as well as guiding a structured thought process.
- **Opportunity Tree:** The Opportunity Tree-style collaborative tool was adopted during the second WG meeting as a way to structure the thinking process around needs, best practices, and opportunities to improve local sustainable cultural tourism development in terms of actions, resources, and people. The Opportunity Tree structure – albeit taking a slightly different form in the Scheldeland LL, as seen in Annex 1 – was considered particularly useful to frame the more general challenges and opportunities from the sticky notes exercise into more direct needs, potential solutions to such needs, and actionable contextual factors within the Scheldeland region.

2.1.3.3. Design-oriented research stage

After the initial two WG sessions in which general opportunities and challenges were identified and potential solutions and related actions were explored, the next two WGs had a clear focus on ideation and concretization in the form of intervention potentials within the Scheldeland region.

- **State-of-the-art of interventions:** A selection of best practices from the [State-of-the art of European Cultural tourism interventions developed within the SmartCulTour WP3](#) was made, based on relevance for the Scheldeland region and covering all five taxonomies. These cases were then presented at the start of the third WG session in order to serve as an inspiration for the development of potential local cultural tourism interventions. This was considered as an optimal way to acquaint the LL stakeholders with such other European cases.
- **Serious play:** In order to further support creative thinking in the 'Develop' stage, one of the serious play approaches, outlined in [SmartCulTour D7.1](#), was followed, specifically the LEGO Serious Play method. The choice for LEGO Serious Play over the SmartCulTour Game in this stage of the LL was related to the timing of the session, which took place prior to the finalization of the Game. Within this session, participants formed three groups to further develop a potential cultural tourism intervention that could leverage the strengths of the destination to solve a recognized challenge. Lego building blocks were used to visualize elements of the design and to improve general engagement. The method was found to be inclusive and appreciated by participants, with creative designs being combined with flipchart roadmaps. At the end of the session, each group shared their developed idea in a plenary discussion. The serious play workshop then fed into WG4, in which actionable points of the developed ideas were outlined in a structured project initiation canvas (see Annex 1).

- **Dynamic House of Quality:** The Dynamic House of Quality, as discussed in the [SmartCulTour Toolkit](#), is seen as a method useful for the ‘Discovery’ and ‘Define’ stage. In the Scheldeland LL, however, the tool was instead used to support the decision-making process of the AB. At the end of the WG sessions, three potential cultural tourism initiatives were ideated and mapped out across a project initiation canvas. In order to select priorities and development preferences, local policy makers then used the structure of the Dynamic House of Quality to score each proposed intervention on its estimated effect on local needs. The House of Quality set-up allowed for an objective and structured decision-making process and was efficient and easy in use, both for the researchers and for the participants.

2.1.3.4. Elaboration stage

The elaboration stage was considered as a continuation of the double-diamond design model in the Scheldeland region. Namely, after the potential of each cultural tourism intervention was verified and a preferred product development was selected, a next stage was required to support a more direct and practical operationalization. This included identifying relevant networks, sales channels, investment support, marketing planning, etc. Three further SmartCulTour tools and methods were adopted in this stage, namely:

- **Customer journey mapping:** Given the fact that the proposed innovation which was preferred by the AB related to the creation of an experience package linking different cultural tourism elements and focusing on soft modes of transportation – in effect creating a regional cultural tourism route, an important activity was to further detail the project in terms of customer journey. While the SmartCulTour Toolkit identified this Customer journey mapping as a tool for ‘Discovery’ and ‘Define’ stage, in Scheldeland the tool was not used to create an understanding of current tourist behaviour, perceptions, and interests, but rather to identify new customer journeys of hypothetical visitors based on an, as of yet, non-existent product. Creating hypothetical touchpoints was found useful in order to identify gaps in the service offering that would need to be filled before a product could be brought to market.
- **Participatory systems mapping:** Related to the previous Customer journey mapping, a GIS-based systems map was developed for Scheldeland in order to geographically map different primary elements of the tourism systems to be combined into a cultural tourism route. This map visualizes stakeholder/attraction networks and the connective tissue – in a real sense, walking and cycling routes – between them and could identify points of conflict and bottlenecks to be solved. Since tourism is a spatial activity, this method was seen as an essential element for the development of a route-based intervention.
- **Persona development tool:** Tourism personas were once again strongly related to the customer journey mapping. Indeed, depending on the type of persona, the customer journey might be different, so the two methods are strongly interrelated. Within Scheldeland, the tourism personas were first of all created by KU Leuven researchers based on data from visitor surveys of Scheldeland. The personas were then discussed and validated by the FG. The exercise was useful in order to understand the variety and similarities and differences between visitors to the Scheldeland region and to identify which visitor segments would potentially be interested in the proposed cultural tourism initiative.

2.2. Results and impact

2.2.1. Main challenges in achieving the expected results

One of the main limitations to the development opportunities for Scheldeland is a relative lack of accessibility of the region. At first glance, this seems counterintuitive, since the area is located within the triangle Brussels-Antwerp-Ghent, with also Mechelen being close by (approximately 20 km). Furthermore, Bornem, Puurs-Sint-Amands and Dendermonde are connected to these major cities by railway. However, (i) international visitors are predominantly concentrated in the main art cities, with their relatively short length of stay in Flanders not conducive to regional exploration, and (ii) domestic visitors are more likely to undertake day-trips from their homes, using private cars or bicycles. Due to these considerations, the cultural tourism development initiatives developed within the WG sessions focused primarily on domestic visitors, developing initiatives that could be linked to the popular nodal and longer-distance cycling routes (see <https://www.flandersbybike.com/>) with both the Scheldt route and Art City route crossing the Scheldeland region.

Related to the first challenge, a number of prime attractors to the region are not continuously available and/or only available for group-based visits. While part of the attractiveness lies in so-called public goods (e.g. the Scheldt river basin and quays for cycling/walking, nature areas), which are of course freely accessible, some of the important cultural heritage resources are not, due to a lack in visitor markets size making it economically unfeasible to operate on a continuous basis. This is, among others, the case for the steam train Dendermonde-Puurs, which is fully operated and maintained by volunteers and only runs on Sundays during July, August and September, and with the rolling heritage not being on display in the organization's warehouse. Similarly, the Abbey of Bornem is generally only open for guided visits, after appointment. The castle Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde (also known as Bornem castle) allows for guided visits between April and September, on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 14h. The shipping museum of Baasrode has exterior and interior spaces, whereby the exterior domain can be visited daily, while interior exhibitions are only available on weekends between 14-18h.

Naturally, this creates barriers for further exploitation of these resources. Some important steps have been taken in order to improve accessibility to some attractions at least. The fortress of Liezele is a good example whereby the renovations to the fortress museum and fortress itself also focused on developing attractions for the local community (e.g. escape rooms, café, nature area for walking and cycling), thus not being fully dependent on an extra-local visitor market. Furthermore, via the 'Castles of the Scheldt' tourism development project, aimed at creating a route along the Scheldt river castles of Flanders, the castle of Bornem received subsidies for the development of an experience centre to improve the visitor experience beyond the guided visits. Similarly, 'De Notelaer' pavilion on the Scheldt dykes was recipient of a €400,000 investment in order to construct small-scale heritage accommodation and a tourist information centre to be available year-round.

Within the Scheldeland LL, stakeholders shared awareness of these structural limitations, therefore focusing on realistic development opportunities for local and regional visitors, targeting group-based visits that can be managed around the limited opening hours of some of the cultural attractions, and/or suggesting attraction elements of open-access nature linked to the popular local cycling routes.

2.2.2. Main results achieved compared to the set objectives

In the original ToR of the Scheldeland LL (as defined in SmartCulTour D6.1), the needs and priorities were defined as:

- **Professionalism:** Establishing learning networks, facilitating training and knowledge sharing to professionalize the local tourism sector.
- **Quality upgrade:** Increasing the quality of the walking and cycling route networks and realizing strong cross-links between the rivers and the heritage, the cities and the villages.
- **Focus:** The focus in Scheldeland lies on the river landscape and heritage. Developing and opening up heritage sites as tourist hotspots, i.e. shipyards, castles, heritage in city and village centres, brickyards, etc., is a way to reposition and rebrand the region.

The inception meeting defined the particular focus for the project as: “The poetry of coming and going (linked to ebb and flow) is used as an overarching approach for tourism development. We translate the tidal character into a region-specific heritage, e.g. industrial heritage, crafts, steam train Puurs-Dendermonde, shipbuilding history, which is typical of the region and we connect it to the broader heritage offering in the region. War history via the forts, castles (Marnix, d'Ursel) and fortresses (Lieveke, Bornem).”

Within the SmartCulTour LL, the objective of supporting professionalization of the local tourism sector could be considered partly achieved. Through the research steps undertaken (resident surveys, creation of tourism personas, systems mapping, the SmartCulTour Platform), useful information on the state of the destination and the visitor expectations was created that could serve future development plans. It has to be acknowledged though that this information primarily serves the public organizations. Training activities aimed at private sector enterprises were not envisioned and, apart from the capacity-building workshop offered by UNESCO, the SmartCulTour LL interventions only indirectly improved private sector professionalization.

A quality upgrade in a physical sense could not be achieved within the scope of the SmartCulTour budget given the Research and Innovation scope of the H2020-funded action, and the corresponding lack of investment opportunities. From a networking-perspective, though, the objective of establishing cross-links between nature, heritage and locations was largely achieved, with stakeholders from different fields and municipalities collaborating within the LL and the cultural tourism innovations that were ideated within the WGs all creating said linkages of cultural-natural visitor experiences. This also followed the required focus of the initiative on the river landscape and associated heritage. Particularly the preferred (after adopting a House of Quality-inspired ranking in the 3rd and 4th AB meeting) cultural tourism initiative that has been further developed into a business plan was centred around the development of a cultural attraction route, linking natural and cultural heritage experiences, and combining it with slow route networks.

While, in this sense, the main results of the Scheldeland LL thus cover the needs and ambitions set out at the start, it also has to be recognized that the outputs are still largely intangible and further require local actions in terms of true product development in line with the SmartCulTour-designed proposal.

2.2.3. Direct and indirect interventions designed, initiated and/or implemented

Within the Scheldeland LL, there was a structured stepwise process towards creating cultural tourism

interventions, linked to the governance structure of the Lab and the meeting planning, as outlined in Figure 14. This stepwise process could be considered as part of the indirect interventions implemented within the LL, namely the participatory process followed to ensure co-creative development solutions, supported by the tools and methods identified earlier.

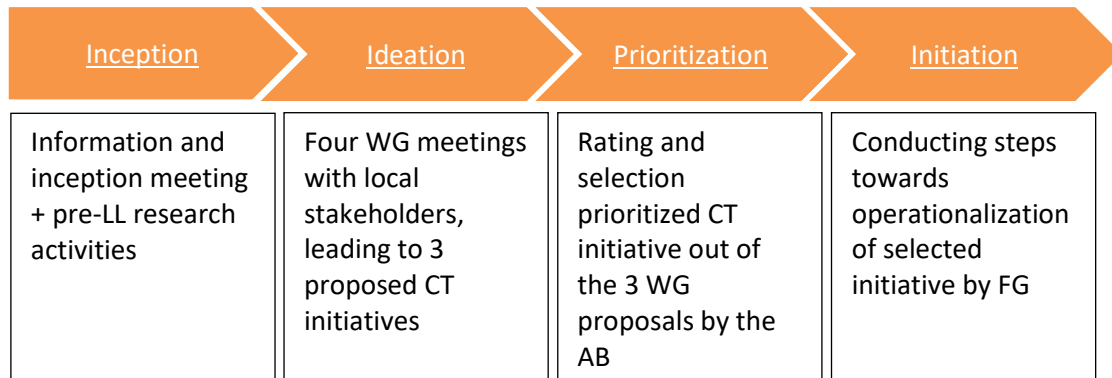


Figure 15. Process towards design of interventions

Particularly relevant in terms of intervention design were the four WG sessions organized in the autumn of 2021. Based on a number of explorative activities, stakeholders worked in groups to create and propose three alternative cultural tourism interventions to be implemented in Scheldeland. The three bottom-up initiatives were:

- A **sensory visitor experience for visually impaired visitors**, aimed at group-based visits, guiding interested groups along the Scheldt and including the Shipping museum, the steam train, and the carillon as part of the trajectory;
- A **360°-experience of the tidal nature area around the Scheldt bend**, to be achieved through the creation of a viewing platform at Vlassenbroek. The observation and experience tower is integrated with the nature area Rivierpark Scheldevallei and the Scheldt river Geopark developments.
- An **active multimodal cultural route for group-based visitors** (schools, companies, youth camps, etc.); a **car-free trajectory** linking diverse means of mobility (steam train, walking, cycling, river ferry) and **connecting main heritage attractions**. A central experience in the concept is to start offering overnight accommodation on the steam train carriages.

Within the AB meetings, the three suggestions were discussed and the municipal, provincial and regional stakeholders decided that the third initiative covered most needs and was most realistic in terms of short-term development potential. While all ideas had merit, the first proposed initiative of creating a sensory visitor experience would require an intensive effort in order to update heritage interpretations for visually impaired people. The second proposal is inspired by other successful examples of landmarks in the landscape and along important cycling routes (e.g. the see-through church at Borgloon). Even though interesting, two main limitations prevented further consideration: (i) such construction would require significant investments, as well as a relatively long planning trajectory; and (ii) being a single-point attraction, it offered less opportunities for cultural tourism development across the region.

By contrast, the third intervention was deemed both realistic in its approach and also linked well with the different sustainability dimensions as per the 2030 Agenda, creating potential value for people, the economy, and the environment. The proposal can specifically contribute to Goal 1, by promoting healthy lives and well-

being through active mobility; Goal 4, by promoting lifelong learning opportunities through engagement with cultural heritage venues; Goal 8, by promoting inclusive and sustainable growth for the region via inclusion of local stakeholder networks in the product offer; Goal 13, by combatting impacts of unsustainable and CO₂-emitting mobility modes in favour of slow tourism trajectories; and Goal 15, by promoting the sustainable tourist use of local ecosystems. Having settled on the third proposal, the Scheldeland LL intervention was thus ultimately aimed at developing a strategy to connect individual attraction points and experiences via a soft mobility cultural-nature route, designed primarily for local overnight groups and day visitors. The intervention intended to upgrade the regional profile by attraction linkages – and communal storylines for the area – and approached the challenge of accessibility by mapping a nodal multimodal network of trains, bicycles and walking. While the WG participants had proposed this general idea, initially identifying visitor segments, potential trajectories, stakeholders, and key success factors, implementation required more concrete steps and efforts and further research activities. Based on data from visitor surveys, four personas of Scheldeland visitors were created, and overlaps between the travel motivations, preferred accommodations, and typical means of transportation of each group and the proposed cultural route were investigated. A GIS-based systems map was created in order to spatially identify key attractions, potential starting points, critical bottlenecks, etc. Both exercises assisted the creation of a dedicated customer journey for the multimodal cultural route. Together with the public stakeholders it was further discussed how the route could be brought to market, identifying potential sales and booking channels.

A number of important attraction elements along the route were showcased in [SmartCulTour D6.2](#), namely Hof van Coolhem, Bornem Castle, and the Steam train Dendermonde-Puurs. While the hard infrastructure investments needed to develop these attractions were related to efforts outside of the SmartCulTour project, the proposal stemming from the Scheldeland LL can create important synergies and both leverage and support their further development. In particular, stakeholders of the steam trains and Hof van Coolhem were connected in order to explore the possibility of creating a similar social care project in the exploitation of a potential accommodation offering in the steam train carriages.

Given the central position of the steam train Dendermonde-Puurs not just as activity, but also as potential accommodation provider, representatives of the VZW Stoomtrein Dendermonde-Puurs were supported in the development of a proposal for creating carriage-based accommodation, which entails both structural engineering and identifying potential spots along the trajectory where a sedentary carriage can be placed and where sanitary options can be constructed/provided. To this extent, stakeholders from the non-profit were introduced to the accommodation experts and certifiers of Toerisme Vlaanderen, and were supported in applying for development funding from the same organization. Unfortunately, the funding application was unsuccessful⁵ at this point in time.

At the end of the SmartCulTour project, it also has to be observed that the intervention is only tangible in the sense that the individual attraction elements already exist, but that further and continued local action is needed to create a tangible route. Partially due to a lack of funding opportunities from within the project, most that could be achieved in product development terms was to write a business plan⁶ to potentially bring the route to market.

⁵ Rejection of the application was due to the fact that the funding in question related specifically to accommodations on and around long-distance cycling routes in Flanders and the proposed location of the accommodation unit was deemed to be too far from the cycling trajectory.

⁶ The business plan (in Dutch) can be consulted at <http://www.smartcultour.eu/final-scheldeland-living-lab-meeting/>

2.2.4. Lessons learnt

Within the Scheldeland region there was already a strong cooperative network with regional DMOs such as Toerisme Scheldeland and Toerisme Klein-Brabant, ensuring cross-municipal collaboration. Unlike is sometimes the case, there was also no notable dissonance in viewpoints between nature-based, cultural, and tourism stakeholders, potentially due to the smaller-scale nature of the visitor economy. This meant that potential tourism development was not approached sceptically by other stakeholders, but that its potential positive contribution to cultural and nature protection and valorisation was generally agreed upon.

Important heritage attraction elements are either open access areas (predominantly nature-based attractions) or owned by local governments, thus also cementing a potential for cooperation. Furthermore, there was important support from local municipalities for a number of non-profit organizations. Particularly noteworthy here was the cooperation of Puurs-Sint-Amands with the VZW Stoomtrein Dendermonde-Puurs and with Hof van Coolhem. There was a marked difference in the integration of some private stakeholders, particularly Bornem castle, where visitors can tend to be seen as a financial necessity rather than an opportunity.

While we could thus consider a collaborative and positive atmosphere, as well as a willingness to support bottom-up co-creative efforts in cultural tourism development, both the relatively small visitor market and the lack of project-specific funding opportunities did inhibit the process. On the one hand, the modest current tourism situation meant that it is in many cases not feasible to have continuous and flexible opening hours for individual visits. On the other hand, the lack of direct funding support meant that ideas with potential greater potential to break the *status quo* (e.g. the observation platform at Vlassenbroek) were disregarded out of practical considerations.

Recommendations for future LLs in this context would therefore be to clearly establish the potential and the end goal that can be supported within the project, as well as the steps that would still need to be required from the afterlife. In reality, this can often mean that, within the project phase of Research and Innovation activities, strategic plans and business plans are a natural end point. However, this can create risks, as was seen in the Scheldeland case where the application for a Flemish subsidy was rejected.

Another recommendation would be the choice for a suitable governance framework. In the Scheldeland LL, the division between an Advisory Board and a Workgroup was inspired by the diversity of stakeholders, the need for political support of potential interventions, and the requirement of a balanced playing field among participants to the creative stages, in order to ensure an equal voice and to prevent that practical considerations inhibit out-of-the-box thinking. Having both an AB and a WG ensured that project ambitions were outlined in a general sense according to policy interests, while co-creation could be maximally fed from bottom-up stakeholder ideas. The governance structure followed the idea of the 'reversed management pyramid' (see Figure 16), whereby it is the role of 'management' – or in our case the AB – to establish ambitions, objectives, needs, as well as the criteria to which potential solutions need to adhere, while 'employees' – in our case the WG – has the freedom to creatively identify solutions that achieve the ambitions within the solution criteria.

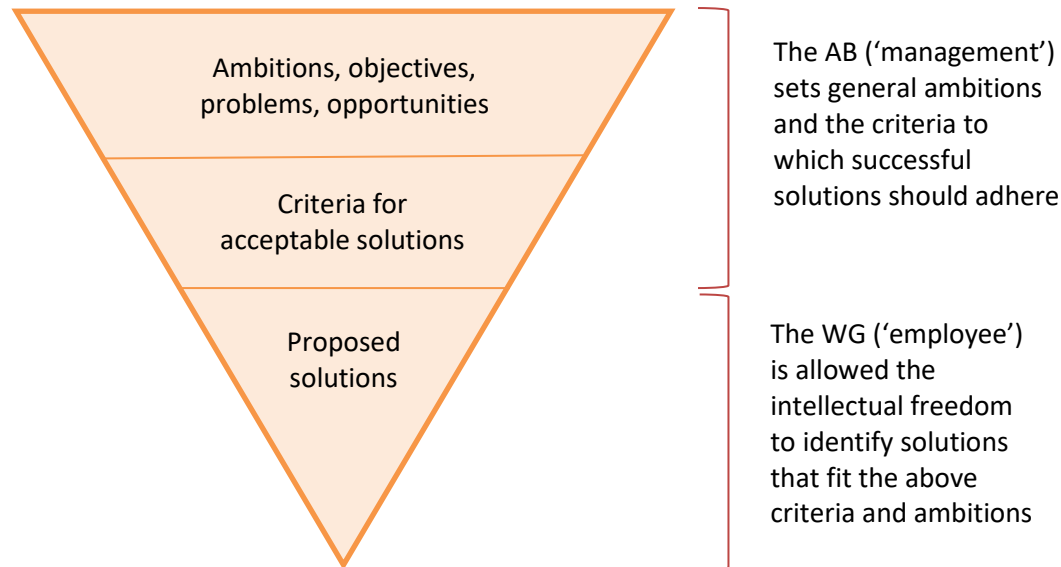


Figure 16. Conceptual idea of governance structure

2.3. Sustainability and follow-up

2.3.1. Sustainability of the outcomes and afterlife strategy for the Living Lab

The final outcome of the Scheldeland LL sessions is a business plan with outlined steps for further implementation of the identified intervention, offering key Scheldeland stakeholders process guidelines to be followed. The sustainability of the outcomes is ensured by the uptake of the ideas within stable entities (the local municipalities and key regional DMOs). While it is not envisioned that the Scheldeland LL remains operational in its current form – and in reality the form of the LL had already undergone different stages during the project – the established collaborative networks between its stakeholders will remain active and the various key entities (municipalities of Bornem, Puurs-Sint-Amunds, Dendermonde, Castle of Bornem, Hof van Coolhem, VZW Stoomtrein Dendermonde-Puurs, Shipping wharves of Baasrode) are already involved in continued cooperative projects, such as 'Castles of the Scheldt river' and the creation of a new stop for the steam train at the children's playground and cultural heritage site of Sint-Pietersburcht.

Rather than an exact afterlife of the SmartCulTour LL, what is important is the continuation of shared visions and stakeholder networks, and this has been achieved by ensuring that the proposed intervention was framed within relevant policy ambitions and integrated important additional local projects and networks. Through this strategy, the SmartCulTour LL outcomes have important synergies with other current Scheldeland projects.

2.3.2. Follow-up recommendations for the Living Lab

An important further step towards implementation of the SmartCulTour intervention – but also more general regional development – is the mobilization of external financial resources. A first, albeit unsuccessful, attempt was made by VZW Stoomtrein Dendermonde-Puurs to receive development funding from the Flemish government. Other projects within the region have been more successful in this sense, with both Bornem Castle and De Notelaer pavilion receiving funds for the improvement/development of new visitor

experiences. Besides the Flemish funding, the European Regional Development Fund could, given a good link between the project and the programme actions, provide opportunities in this sense and need to be carefully investigated. This is further discussed in Annex 15.

The region has further submitted the nature area Rivierpark Scheldevallei to be considered as an official National Park. While success of the application is not assured at this point, together with the [UNESCO Global Geopark Scheldt Delta](#), the region should continue to raise awareness and leverage these designations and other relevant tourism brands for further regional development, in order to improve the visitor economy while avoiding that these nature areas become single, standalone point attractions. There are strong opportunities for linking natural with cultural heritage, particularly in the Scheldt estuary, where nature and culture have gone hand-in-hand with visible remnants in the fortifications, shipbuilding, brickworks, etc. Such opportunities can only be truly leveraged via further collaboration and networking.

A Annexes to the Scheldeland Living Lab report

Annex 1 – Overview of different phases of the Scheldeland Living Lab

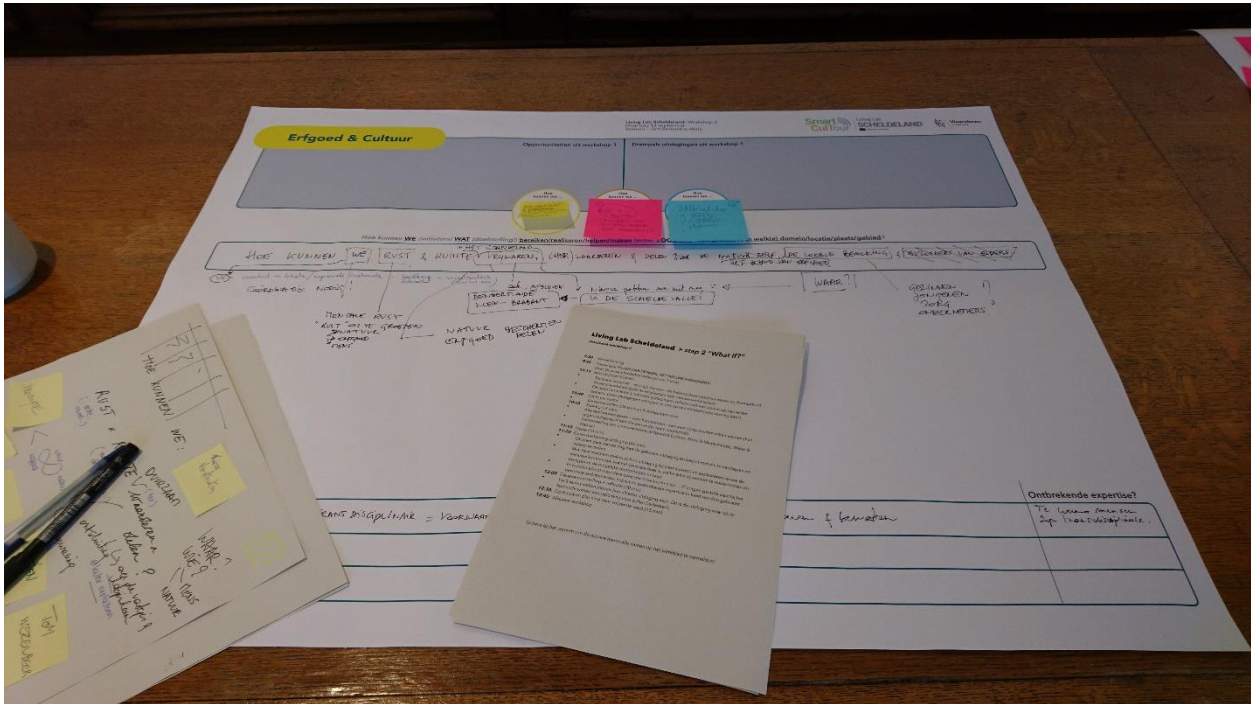
1) Example of post-it sorting exercise (LL meeting 6 September 2021)



2) Participants working on Opportunity Tree exercise (LL meeting 13 September 2021)



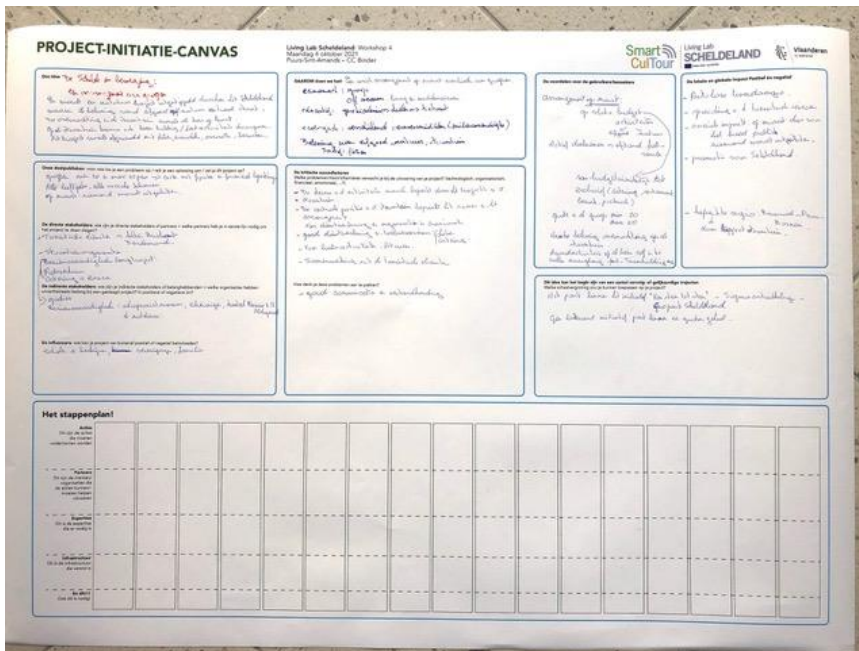
3) Example of Opportunity Tree style exercise (LL meeting 13 September 2021)



4) Ideation via Lego Serious Play (LL meeting 20 September 2021)



5) Example of project initiation canvas (LL meeting 4 October 2021)



6) Testing cycling route during exchange visit (LL exchange visit 20-22 June 2022)



7) Proposal of final business plan for Scheldeland LL stakeholders (presented on 01/06/2023)

<http://www.smartcultour.eu/final-scheldeland-living-lab-meeting/>

03 Experiences and findings from the Huesca Living Lab

3.1. Brief summary of the Living Lab's workflow

3.1.1. Main activities as per the workplan

The objective of the Huesca LL in the context of the SmartCulTour project was to foster the development of the cultural tourism sector through the co-design of a common strategy based on practical initiatives and the establishment of networking and co-creation spaces. Discussions are ongoing with the local DMO, TuHuesca, which has been co-leading the Lab along with CIHEAM Zaragoza throughout its lifecycle, on the potential continuation of the LL experience after the end of SmartCulTour.

The main goal of the Lab is to establish a common strategy and agree on shared objectives in order to enhance tourism, and more specifically cultural tourism, in the Huesca province. Stakeholders agree on the potential consisting of a wide diversity of high-quality tourism products and enough human resources in the sector, though everything is rather fragmented.

The Huesca LL Managers, together with the main local stakeholders and members of the LL, decided to hold several meetings that could facilitate the envisaged process to meet the proposed objectives. In the end, eight meetings were held, namely seven working meetings and one closing event to take stock of results and reflect upon the LL's afterlife.

In the first meeting, the LL participants were introduced to what the LL was going to consist of within the SmartCulTour project, its objectives, expected impacts, and the tools and methods that would have been put at their disposal to co-design a sustainable cultural tourism strategy for the Huesca province. After a round of presentations, participants explained their motivations for participating in the LL, as well as their expectation from the LL and the overall project.

During the second working session of the LL, and in coordination with WP7 partners, a participatory dynamic was implemented (see Annex 3) for the participants to identify the main local needs and priorities. The main conclusion drawn from such an exercise was the overarching objective of the LL, namely the establishment of a common strategy for sustainable cultural tourism development in the province. The fragmentation of cultural tourism initiatives and the lack of effective coordination across local actors was recognized as a critical limit for tourism development, and reinforce networking set as a key target. In this context, participants confirmed their willingness to co-design a common roadmap to optimise joint efforts.

The goals of the third meeting were to co-design sustainable cultural tourism initiatives to be implemented in the territory of Huesca based on the WP3 taxonomy, by enhancing the encounter and exchange among participants in a collaborative atmosphere, thereby laying the foundations upon which to build future networks through and for strengthened collaborations.

In the fourth meeting, Huesca LL participants (including public entities, academia, the local DMO, managers, practitioners and businesses in the cultural and tourism sector) pilot-tested the SmartCulTour Game, one of the project outcomes expected to have the biggest territorial impact. The serious game approach allowed to engage stakeholders in the co-design of cultural tourism policies, and at the same time foster knowledge on cultural tourism and awareness on potential interventions to make it more sustainable for local communities,

the environment and the business sector.

At the fifth and sixth meetings, LL participants worked on identifying and defining concrete areas of opportunity to design sustainable, people-based tourism services through different creativity techniques, with a view to devise solutions accordingly. Participants were then invited to transform ideas into pilot service concepts, and to build prototypes of such concepts to be shared and discussed with the other working groups.

During the last working meeting, LL participants conceptualised a sustainable cultural tourism development strategy for the province, brainstormed and reflected upon the underlying vision both individually and in group, co-defined its strategic objectives and relevant guidelines, and listed the Strategy's key actions.

Finally, during the last meeting, Huesca LL Managers presented the main tangible output of the LL, namely "Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy"⁷, and closed the SmartCulTour workflow, thanking all the participants for their commitment, contribution, time, and praising the achieved results.

Table 4. Overview of the Huesca LL's workflow

LL Meeting	Date	Stage of double-diamond design model	Activities / Tools / Methods
Inception meeting	March 2021	Discover	Stakeholders' tourism considerations based on the comparison between statements
2nd meeting	May 2021	Discover	Identification of main needs and priorities and SWOT analysis for the Huesca province / Collection of useful information to co-design the future strategy
3rd meeting	November 2021	Define	Institutional presentation of the LL; identification of initiatives; UNESCO's awareness-raising presentation
4th meeting	May 2022	Discover / Define	Testing WP7 tools (SmartCulTour Game)
5th meeting	June 2022 (online)	Define	Presentation and validation of the results of the Huesca LL; implementation of the Q-Sort methodology; needs and priorities and SWOT analysis
6th meeting	June 2022	Develop	Co-design of activities and indirect interventions to support the development of a future tourism strategy
7th meeting	November 2022	Develop	Finalise and focus the initiatives proposed in previous meeting; co-draft the index of the strategy linked with the initiatives identified and the conclusions of UNESCO's capacity-building activity; How these initiatives show us the approach of the strategy: Definition of the objectives, mission, vision, key actors, target beneficiaries and duration of the strategy
8th meeting	May 2023	Develop	Presentation and validation of the final version of "Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy"

⁷ See below para 3.2. *Main results achieved compared to the set objectives.*

3.1.2. Key stakeholders

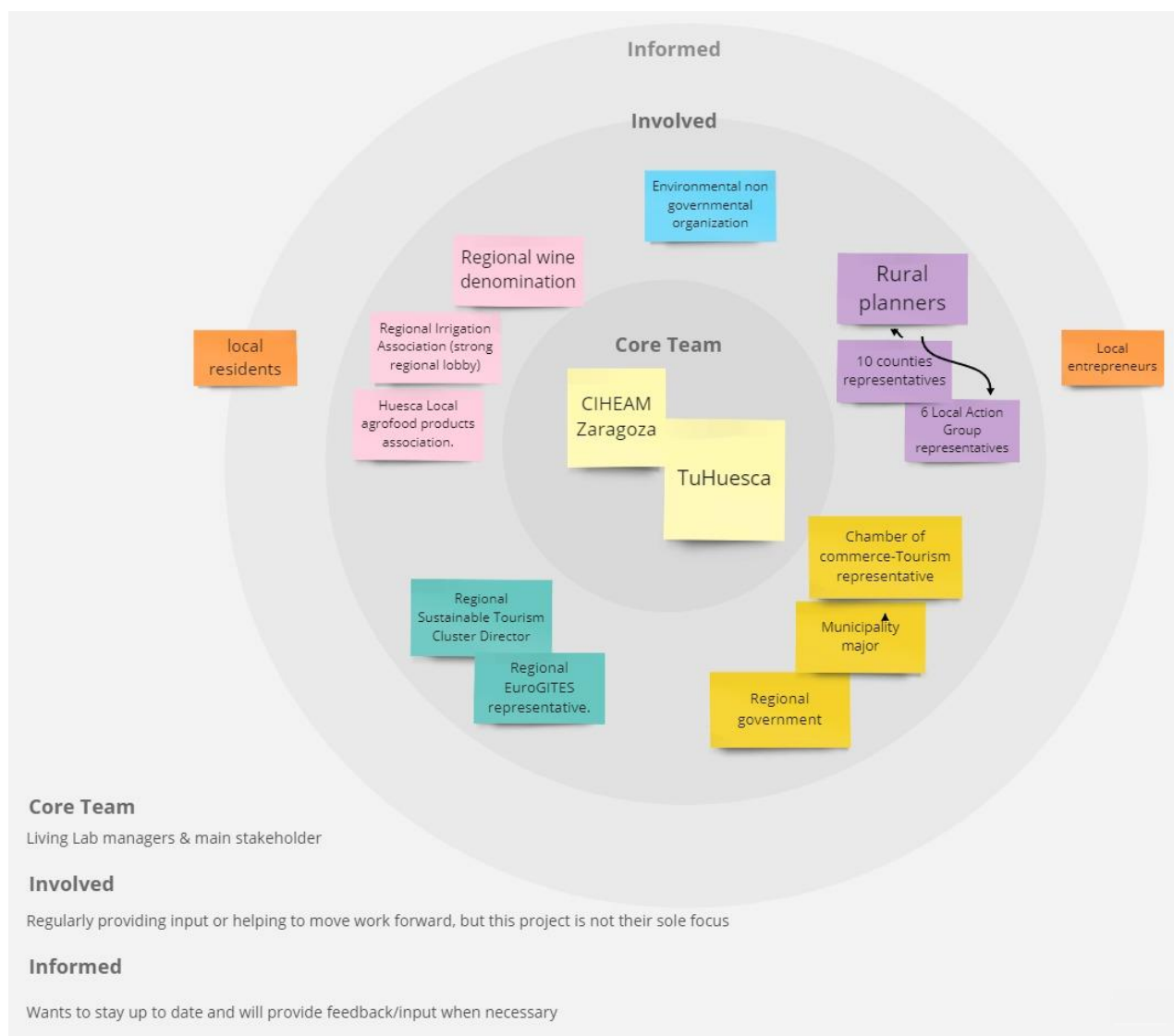


Figure 17. Governance structure of Huesca LL

Table 5. List of participants to the Huesca LL

o	Role	Organization
Lab Managers / SmartCulTour partners		
1.	Rocío Juste, Lab Manager	CIHEAM Zaragoza
2.	Diego Lozano, Lab Manager	CIHEAM Zaragoza
3.	Alun Jones, Director of Projects and SCT WP8 Leader	CIHEAM Zaragoza
4.	Clara Guelbenzu, Communication manager	CIHEAM Zaragoza
LL Participants / Local stakeholders		
5.	Member of management team	Regional Sustainable Tourism Cluster
6.	Member of management team	Regional EuroGITES

7.	Member of management team	Tu Huesca (Regional tourism authority)
8.	Cultural expert	County of Somontano de Barbastro
9.	Tourism expert	County of Litera y Bajo Cinca
10.	Tourism expert	County of Cinca Medio
11.	Tourism expert	County of Hoya de Huesca
12.	Tourism expert	County of Jacetania
13.	Tourism expert	County of Sobrarbe
14.	Rural development expert	Local Action Group (LAG) Somontano
15.	Member of management team	LAG Monegros
16.	Member of management team	LAG Hoya de Huesca
17.	Member of management team	LAG Oriental Huesca
18.	Tourism representative	Huesca Chamber of Commerce
19.	Member of management team	Huesca Local agri-food products association
20.	Expert	Regional Irrigation Association (strong regional lobby)
21.	Member of management team	Enodestino (Wine Company)
22.	Project Manager	CERAI (Environmental non-governmental organization)

Since its inception, it was decided that LL Huesca had to count on the participation of the regional tourism authority and be made up of the tourism experts of each county (*comarca*), since they are the people who know the work best. Furthermore, as Huesca has different types of tourism, it was also decided to include stakeholders from the domains of nature tourism, the agri-food sector, private companies, etc.

Discussions began with the different participants. They were formally invited to be part of the LL, and its final composition was the result of all those who accepted the invitation.

The level of participation within the Huesca LL was consistent, with a positive participatory dynamic throughout its lifecycle. Some of the participants occasionally missed a LL meeting due to previous commitments, but this was unusual compared to the general commitment.

Few additional stakeholders from the tourism and cultural sector of Huesca (from some counties, regional associations of sport tourism, local action groups, the Pyrenees working community, and academia) had accepted to be members of the LL, though did not actually take part in meetings.

3.1.3. SmartCulTour tools and methods

Due to its strong bottom-up approach, the process of identification of the tools and methodologies to be used in the Huesca LL was the result of a truly participatory process. To better understand the reasons behind the tools' selection, due consideration shall be given to the LL's composition, which was less of an academic nature and more practice-oriented, mainly consisting of technical experts from the tourism and culture domains, as well as companies from different sectors. Introducing some of the SmartCulTour tools proved therefore difficult because several LL members didn't understand the potential benefit deriving from their use. Nevertheless, in Huesca LL the following tools were pilot-tested:

- **Ice breaker:** In order for the participants to get to know each other a little better, an “ice breaker” exercise was carried out. Each of the participants had one minute to introduce themselves by saying their name and entity/organization to which they belong, as well as to express their expectations

regarding the LL. During this minute, the rest of the participants could detect key words in the presentation and translate them into the post-it notes available for this purpose.

- **SWOT-Matrix:** The SWOT-Matrix focused on identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the tourism sector in the Huesca LL.
- **Needs and priorities:** As can be derived from the name, this method was a crucial step in identifying the main needs and priorities of tourism in Huesca.
- **The SmartCulTour Game:** This Game allowed participants to swap the roles of different actors in the region and to understand, through their point of view, their difficulties and challenges, as well as their interests. The wide diversity in the LL composition, spanning from private companies to regional authorities, county experts, culture and tourism operators, the Agro-food sector, etc., enabled a rich exchange, where the needs, priorities, and difficulties of all stakeholders were represented.
- **Visitor Flow Mapping:** This method allowed the LL participants to be aware of the most visited tourist spots in the province of Huesca, as well as to familiarise themselves with the tourist flow. It was considered particularly helpful in identifying areas that are frequently or less frequently visited by tourists.
- **Opportunity Tree:** This visual tool was used to discover new tourist products in the province of Huesca through the non-linear organisation of ideation flows, experimentation, and the identification of gaps.
- **House of Quality:** Covering a large territory, the Huesca LL faced difficulties with choosing destinations for the interventions. Likewise, as it had participants from a wide variety of sectors, it also had to deal with diverging interests of each represented sector. This tool made it possible to align the needs of stakeholders with the goal of creating new tourist attractions.
- **Ideation Washing Machine:** This tool helped LL participants engage with an open-minded approach, when creating interventions to make them more innovative, especially through innovative tourist attraction methods, while ensuring the sustainability of the interventions.
- **Multi-method process flow:** This tool was used together with Visitor Flow Mapping with the aim of identifying the cultural assets of Huesca that represent the culture and traditions of the area, as well as thinking of new tourism concepts that would attract more tourists.
- **Destination Design Roadmapping:** This method allowed LL participants to materialise the ideas that emerged across the meetings into concrete initiatives, by simulating a given situation and accordingly co-creating new strategies to attract tourists to the region. In the stakeholders' perception, this more practice-oriented approach leading to the design of concrete interventions marked the difference compared to the first meetings, which, on the contrary, consisted of more of explanations and co-creation.
- **Q-Sort methodology:** This tool was used during the first LL meeting to present the visions of the different LL members and help understand the different points of view regarding tourism in Huesca. This helped to establish the basis of respect and understanding that has prevailed throughout the LL process.

3.2. Results and impact

3.2.1. Main challenges in achieving the expected results

The biggest challenge attached to the LL's management was conveying to the participants the understanding that the Lab's coverage should have targeted the whole province of Huesca. Conversely, in Huesca, each county manages its own budget and tourist attractions, so initially participating stakeholders tended to solely focus on their own territory when discussing challenges and envisaging relevant activities to tackle them. The said obstacle was overcome once the participants understood the need for such a holistic and integrated vision, agreeing upon the need to work together for a common goal, and notably to cooperate in a joint cultural tourism development effort for the province, fostering the growth of all regions, towns, and villages.

Another issue, partly interrelated with the previous challenge, was that the regional tourism authority (TuHuesca), which has been co-leading the LL, defended its political choices on tourism strategies and policies, while the technical experts from the counties did not always agree with those decisions. This led to minor discussions, which shall nevertheless be deemed as a positive outcome of the LL since they provided local stakeholders the opportunity to advocate with concerned authorities the need to treat all the counties and towns equally, thereby promoting Huesca as a whole cultural tourism destination. The general atmosphere of the LL is nevertheless to be assessed as productive and enriching, as these minor disputes never undermined the workflow's effectiveness.

The major challenge within the Huesca LL is probably to be identified in the management of local stakeholders' expectations and lack of prospects for a concrete follow-up. Indeed, although LL participants expressed appreciation and gratitude for the work conducted in the LL, some of them have repeatedly questioned the actual possibility of carrying out the designed interventions and/or results obtained from the sessions, mainly due to limited budget availability at local level.

3.2.2. Main results achieved compared to the set objectives

The objective of the Huesca LL in the context of the SmartCulTour project was to foster the development of the cultural tourism sector through the co-design of a common strategy based on practical initiatives and the establishment of networking and co-creation spaces. The main goal of the Lab was to define a common strategy and agree on shared objectives in order to enhance tourism, and more specifically cultural tourism, in the Huesca province.

Considering the goals identified in the Specific Terms of Reference for the Huesca LL (D6.1), it can be concluded that the established objectives were fully met. As a direct output of the seven LL's working meetings, the "Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy" was co-drafted and launched, containing the SWOT analysis, mission, vision, key destination's values, strategic objectives and guidelines to support the development of sustainable tourism initiatives to be implemented across the province of Huesca⁸.

Despite the initial obstacles encountered during the process, which partly hindered the LL's capability to achieve the set goal, in the end the commitment and motivation of both Lab Managers and stakeholders enabled the achievement of the expected results, with great satisfaction of all the participants.

The only doubt that remains is whether, once the project will end, local stakeholders will have the capacity and resources to implement the Strategy, and more broadly whether the work carried out within the LL will continue, leading to tangible and more long-term outcomes.

⁸ The strategic plan (in Spanish) can be consulted at <http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/final-huesca-living-lab-report/>

As a lesson learnt, it would have been desirable to have a post-project budget to continue financing the LL, including the identified sustainable cultural tourism interventions, or alternatively to have reached an agreement with the Regional Government to ensure the continuity of the LL. Hopefully, TuHuesca, the regional DMO, will take over and ensure an afterlife to at least some of the solutions devised through the LL's experience.

3.2.3. Direct and indirect interventions designed, initiated and/or implemented

The interventions that were introduced in the practice abstracts and videos of [Deliverable 6.2](#) were pre-existing cultural heritage attractions in the province of Huesca. Even though not initiated through the project, both interventions form an indelible element of the strategic position of Huesca in terms of its cultural tourism development strategy. As such, from the point of view of the LL, which had people involved in both, some improvements could be proposed that could make the interventions more attractive, while the attractions would form part of a more nodal network of integrated cultural tourism offerings to support "Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy".

In the case of the Somontano Wine Route, which especially focuses on visits to wineries, LL participants proposed to join it with another fundamental pillar of Huesca, namely its gastronomy, and combine them to make such a cultural tourism product more attractive and reach a wider audience.

In the case of the Cultural Park of the Vero River, as well as of the widely unknown Paleolithic cave paintings in the area, the LL proposed to create a route through all the villages of the region promoting their attractions: Alquézar, the river walkways, Buera oil mill, various churches, nature trails, etc.

On the occasion of UNESCO's capacity-building workshop held on 17 October 2023, participants also explored the possibility of creating a dedicated "UNESCO designated sites cultural and natural route". Indeed, the province of Huesca features a variety of UNESCO designations, including World Heritage properties, Biosphere Reserves and Global Geoparks, as well as elements inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List. Connecting such destinations in an itinerary may well accompany the shift towards reinforced networking and collaboration among key local stakeholders, thereby leveraging the sustainable tourism offer of the area.

Regarding the direct intervention that were created during the sixth and seventh meeting held on the 13th of June 2022 and 29th of November 2022, work was carried out on the main result of the LL, i.e. the "Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy". This document summarises the results⁹ of the seven meetings held by different stakeholders in the province's tourism sector and aims to serve as a guide to boost tourism and make Huesca a preferred destination for those seeking quality cultural and sustainable tourism.

⁹ Report on Huesca LL meetings: <http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Report-on-Huesca-Living-Labs-meetings.pdf>

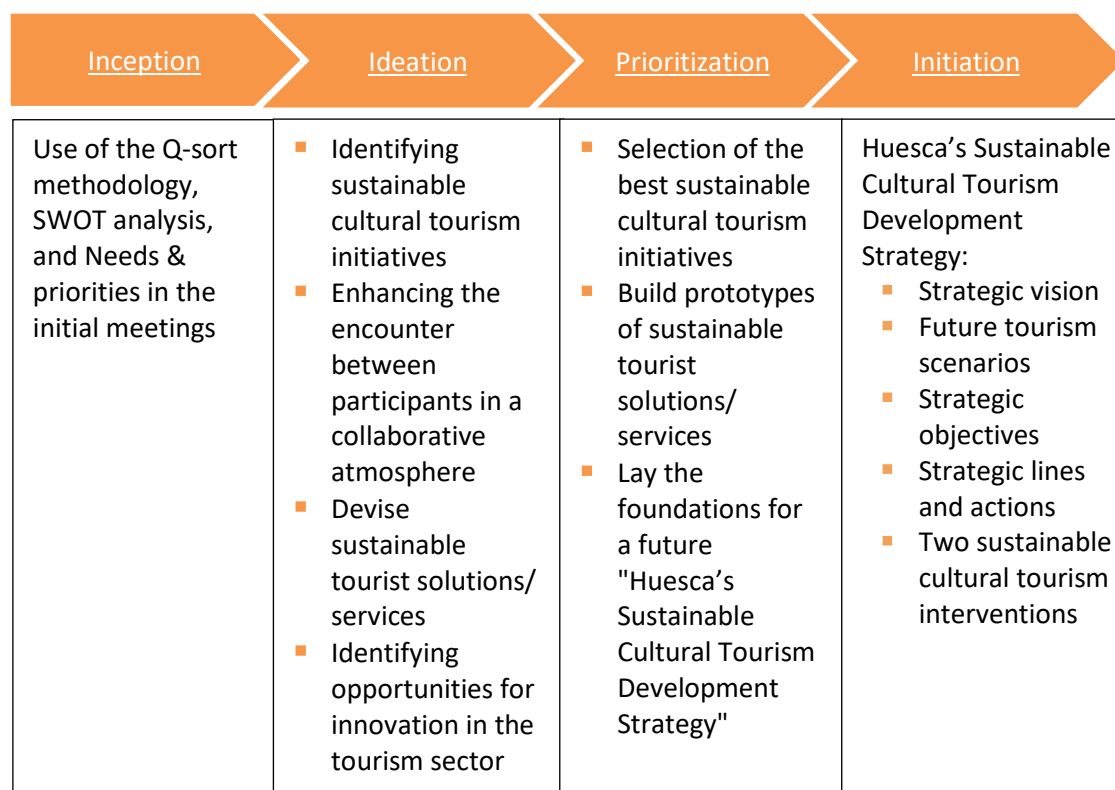


Figure 18. Process towards design of the Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy

Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy contains the following contents:

Strategic vision: *"To be the driving force behind the development of the territory, bringing women into leadership and coordinating ideas and efforts to achieve this. A Huesca that is open to the outside world and, at the same time, connected to its environment and its roots to be recognised as a unique, authentic place that arouses emotions and the desire to return".*

Future tourism scenarios related to technological development, the professionalisation of the sector and the connection between resources and products.

Strategic objectives that will enable Huesca to become a first-class tourist destination, focusing especially on female leadership, the training of leaders and teams, the need to incorporate the participation of all sectors in decision-making, and the planning of the impact on the territory and the population, at an economic, social and sustainable level.

Strategic lines that will make it possible to achieve the strategic objectives set out, as well as actions within the framework of each strategic line.

Two sustainable cultural tourism interventions, co-created by all the LL participants, could be implemented in the coming years. Both interventions are intended to be scalable throughout the province of Huesca, and not only implementable in one of its counties. Participants initially identified specific areas of opportunity, upon which people-centred sustainable tourism services were envisaged; the following step consisted of the ideas being transformed into service concepts. These concepts were prototyped and shared with the rest of the LL's working groups, to jointly evaluate them and reach a consensus on the key actions for their implementation, to support Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy.

The two co-designed initiatives can be presented as follows:

- **Proposal A. Recreational and family weekend in nature**

- **Proposal B. Relaxing gastronomic experience with children**

The first service proposal is aimed at transmitting the values of the local nature to visitors and tourists. The objective is to establish a didactic programme in schools showing the benefits and opportunities of nature, giving rise to the obtainment of a tourist “passport” for children. The idea is to train tour operators in the area so that they can provide a global and unbiased experience that shows all tourist attractions in the area, as well as offer activities for both youth and elders, targeting specific age groups. The objectives of the activity are to entertain, while enabling visitors to relax, find peace and quiet, and disconnect digitally. They also seek to keep children engaged and raise their interest in local natural values and knowledge.

The second initiative is aimed at leveraging the gastronomic offer of the area and highlighting the value of local products and traditional culinary living heritage in the province of Huesca. The aim is to make both children and parents aware of the local gastronomic offer, while offering targeted menus, including traditional dishes and local products, at a reasonable price. Typical food products could also be sold as souvenirs. The proposal would be complemented by different activities in which the local gastronomic culture is prominent, such as cooking lessons with children, oil production, grape harvesting to make wine, cheese, etc.

3.2.4. Lessons learnt

The experience of the Huesca LL is to be considered successful as communication among stakeholders was very fluid and effective, diversity of opinions was respected, and very interesting debates were held. Due to the heterogeneity of the group, several different points of view were represented, adding value to the discussion and therefore enriching its outcomes. This is proved by the feedback provided by participants on how grateful they were for having a common, free and safe space to talk to agents of the sector.

In terms of tourism destination management, the key pre-condition towards making a real change is being able to bring together a group of decision-makers who live in the territory and feel to be part of the local community. The process of understanding the destination and its needs, as well as co-designing relevant interventions to attract and / or improve tourism, is fundamental for real solutions to emerge and be implemented.

Carrying out these solutions requires to engage with the main local stakeholders in a time-consuming process, identifying the most appropriate people to be invited to be part of a LL, and continuously stimulate their commitment and ownership. Being the LL a space for co-creation, it is necessary to have profiles of people who are open to trying out new tools and methodologies and who respect the decisions and opinions of the other members. Another lesson learnt lies in the importance of involving local populations, to ensure that their interests and priorities are duly considered by political and economic decision-makers.

Finally, it is also crucial to research, map and analyse the needs of the town, village or region targeted by the LL. In the case of Huesca, this has been a very important factor because, at a national level, the province is a sort of “forgotten” territory in terms of services and facilities. So, when designing the different interventions, the difficulty of accessing some places in Huesca due to the lack of infrastructures, services, etc., had to be taken in due consideration.

3.3. Sustainability and follow-up

3.3.1. Sustainability of the outcomes and afterlife strategy for the Living Lab

Sustainability has been part of the Huesca LL discussions since the first meeting. As a fundamental part of the project, the Lab wanted to convey the need for all initiatives and activities to be sustainable from a broad point of view, and notably in economic and environmental terms.

In the proposal linked to nature tourism, sustainability is implicit in the initiative in that it aims to bring nature closer to everyone and increase awareness on its values, while allowing visitors to have a good time, rest, find tranquillity, undergo digital detoxification, and keep the children engaged.

As for the intervention related to providing a relaxing gastronomic experience to families with children, sustainability tends to orient traditional gastronomy and the use of local products. The objectives are for the visitors to be able to spend a special day in the open air and keep the children engaged and interested.

3.3.2. Follow-up recommendations for the Living Lab

The following are the follow-up recommendations for the Huesca LL:

- Implement the strategy created in the LL meetings, i.e. “Huesca’s Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy”, by engaging all the LL members.
- Continuation of the LL with funding from the regional government or even try to keep it running without funding if Huesca and the counties can continue to participate.
- Follow-up on the proposed initiatives and (after a x period of time) assess whether the regional government and / or any county has implemented them.
- Keep meeting, networking and cooperating in the design and implementation of initiatives (including through the SmartCulTour tools and methods) in order to position Huesca as one of the Spanish destinations with most international presence, while also increasing the number of national tourists coming to visit the province.
- If the LL continues after the end of the SmartCulTour project, maximize the local population’s involvement, since they are fundamental actors who should be involved in the decision-making process, towards the design of the tourism strategy and actions that may have an impact on the different towns, villages and areas.
- Seek more attention at the national level, as well as from the regional or autonomous government, in order to increase the budget allocated to the province of Huesca in the forthcoming years.

A Annexes to the Huesca Living Lab report

Annex 2 – Links

- Report on Huesca LL meetings:
<http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Report-on-Huesca-Living-Labs-meetings.pdf>
- Link to the blog post with Huesca's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy:
<http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/final-huesca-living-lab-report/>

Annex 3 – Tools and methods implemented in the Huesca Living Lab

1) Ice breaker (2nd LL meeting – 13 May 2021)


ICE BREAKER

Warm up your participants with an ice breaker! Decide your own way to do it. Good ice breaker includes short introductions of participants and laughs.

ACTIVITY STYLE: all together

WHAT YOU NEED: just participants

SUGGESTED DURATION: 10 minutes

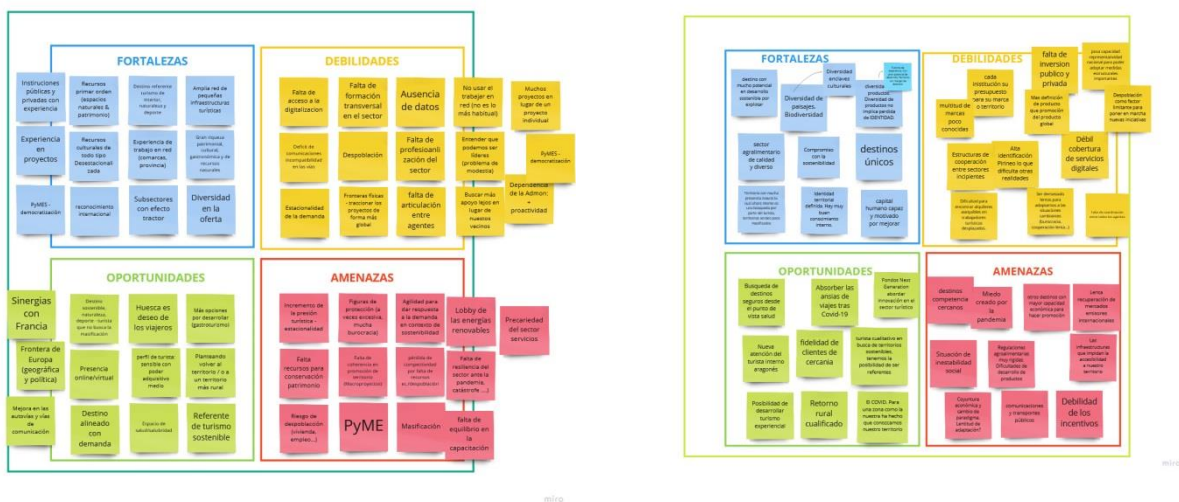


Rocío Juste Ballesteros		<p>Palabras clave</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Co-creación</td><td>Proyecto</td><td>Realidad</td></tr><tr><td>Huesca</td><td>Territorio</td><td>Diversión</td></tr></table>	Co-creación	Proyecto	Realidad	Huesca	Territorio	Diversión
Co-creación	Proyecto	Realidad						
Huesca	Territorio	Diversión						

Fernando Blasco		<p>Palabras clave</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Diputación</td><td>Herramientas</td><td>Desarrollo</td><td>Ayuntamientos</td></tr><tr><td>Huesca</td><td>Co-crear con otros destinos</td><td>Huesca la Magia</td><td></td></tr></table>	Diputación	Herramientas	Desarrollo	Ayuntamientos	Huesca	Co-crear con otros destinos	Huesca la Magia	
Diputación	Herramientas	Desarrollo	Ayuntamientos							
Huesca	Co-crear con otros destinos	Huesca la Magia								



2) SWOT-Matrix (2nd LL meeting – 13 May 2021)



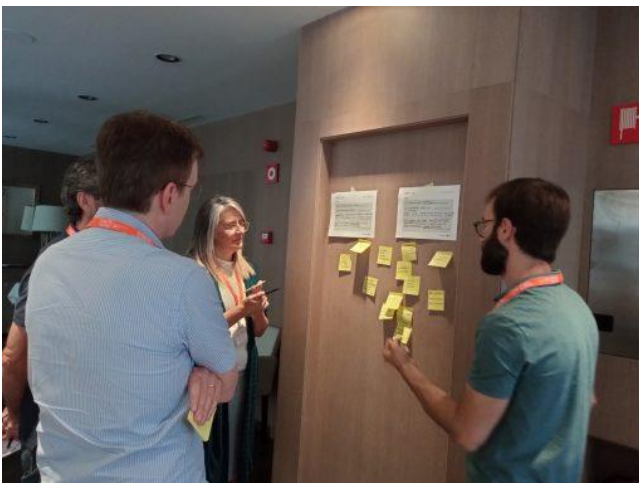
3) Official presentation and identification sustainable cultural tourism initiatives to apply in the territory of Huesca (3rd LL meeting – 10 November 2021)



4) SmartCulTour Game (4th LL meeting – 17 March 2022)



5) Devise sustainable tourism solutions/services applicable to the territory of Huesca (6th LL meeting – 13 June 2022)



6) Lay the foundations for the “Huesca’s Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development Strategy” (7th LL meeting – 29 November 2022)



04 Experiences and findings from the Utsjoki Living Lab

4.1. Brief summary of the LL's workflow

4.1.1. Main activities as per the workplan

The Utsjoki LL started its operations on February 12, 2021, with a hybrid inception meeting for the local tourism stakeholders. The session started with the University of Lapland and UNESCO introducing themselves and presenting the project's goals and respective roles. Participants consisted of local tourism entrepreneurs and employees, the municipality's tourism coordinators, a local reindeer herder, a local artist, and representatives from the village association, the Sámi Parliament, Metsähallitus (a state-owned enterprise that produces environmental services), and the Kevo Subarctic Research Institute of the University of Turku. There were 13 participants in total. There was a lot of discussion during the group work, and the willingness to develop cultural tourism in the area was recognised. Different needs and challenges were jointly identified, while good practices in cultural tourism were also shared from elsewhere in Finland and abroad.

The second meeting was held in April 2021, and the purpose was to discover and define local cultural/natural assets to generate new ideas for developing sustainable cultural tourism in Utsjoki. The wrap-up of the needs and problems in the first session was presented and discussed, and then it was moved to create some new ideas based on local cultural assets. The main purpose was to identify the potential of cultural tourism development in Utsjoki and raise local cultural pride and empowerment when it comes to designing and planning new services for the area. The Huesca LL Manager presented cultural tourism and social media marketing actions in the destination and, on this basis, LL stakeholders discussed new ideas for the Utsjoki LL relating to social media marketing.

The third LL session was held in July 2021 and had a more informal atmosphere since it was more exchange-based and included an open discussion about the visibility plan for the Utsjoki LL and ideas on spreading information about the Sámi culture. While in Inari, which is a neighbouring municipality, the Sámi museum Siida exists since 1959, there is not a museum in the area of Utsjoki providing information about Sámi culture. Also, issues related to tourism marketing were discussed. Among others, good examples of marketing videos were identified in the discussion and considered to be important for boosting the destination's visibility. The problem of filming reindeer for marketing purposes without permission was also raised in the discussion. The University of Lapland team received a total of twelve answers to the visitor survey while attending the [Utsjoen Lumo \(Ohcejohka šearrá\) festival](#)¹⁰. The main results of the survey were that Utsjoki would need an information board, including information about all the local tourism services. The surveys also revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic led to an increase in domestic tourism in Finland, and that some of the respondents were visiting Utsjoki for the first time. The number of visitors during the summer of 2021 was predicted to be smaller due to stricter salmon fishing restrictions and because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the fourth hybrid meeting held in October 2021, the UNESCO capacity-building activities and some of the WP3 interventions were presented to the Utsjoki Lab to be of inspiration for deciding which type of tourism

¹⁰ [Utsjoen Lumo](#) is a cultural week, which offers different events relating to Sámi music and culture. It is organised every year early in the summer.

intervention would suit Utsjoki's needs and challenges. Since there were no Sámi representatives directly participating in the LL, and due to the sensitivity of Sámi cultural issues, the Lab decided to rather focus on interventions based on tourists' behaviour in nature. UNESCO's approach to Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destination Management, including a specific focus on digital and social media marketing, was chosen as the topic for UNESCO's capacity-building activity in the Utsjoki LL.

The fifth LL session was held in February 2022 and consisted of an inspiring art-based evening, followed by a workshop held on the next day for generating ideas for the videos and other outreach materials to be prototyped to raise tourists' awareness about behaving respectfully in nature. The art-based evening was organised in the covered fireplace and areas surrounding it next to the river Teno. The art-based session aimed to gather the LL stakeholders together to test the art-based and performative approaches to generate new ideas to be utilised at the following day's workshop. In the art-based evening, the placemaking method was tested and different videos were projected on the snow, stimulating discussions on their potential utilisation in a tourism context. The next day's workshop consisted of group work and provided guidelines for the University of Lapland team to produce prototypes of the interventions based on tourists' behaviour in nature.

The sixth session was held in May 2022, when the prototypes created were tested outdoors next to Village House Giisá. The session was part of the well-being and cultural week (*Utsjoen Hyvän mielen viikko – Buorre miela vahkku Ohcejogas*) in Utsjoki. The ideation workshop was open to everyone, and local people participated to test the pilot interventions' prototypes, alongside project workers and visitors from the Huesca and Scheldeland LLs. The second part of the day consisted of a UNESCO capacity-building session online. Some participants participated to the workshop on-site, at the Hotel Utsjoki premises, while most of the LL stakeholders attended online. The session generated discussion about Utsjoki's tourism development, by also focusing on local people's engagement in the design of the local tourism offer, including whether tourism should be developed and to what extent. The results of the online visitor survey were also presented and discussed.

The last session was held online in March 2023. The idea was to present the results of the testing of the interventions in May 2022 and gather more feedback from the interventions. After the discussion, the Strategy Roadmap tool was used to plan the afterlife of the LL and the deployment of the interventions. The interventions ideated were recognized as important and considered valid initiatives to be further developed.

Table 6. Overview of the Utsjoki LL's workflow

LL Meeting	Date	Stage of Double-diamond design model	Activities / Tools / Methods
Inception meeting	12.2.2021	Discover	The activities aimed at identifying the main problems and needs for cultural tourism development in Utsjoki, and sharing existing good practices accordingly. The WP7 tools used in the session were the sticky notes sorting game and the Opportunity Tree tool to discuss needs, good practices and resources needed to carry out the good practices / improve the sustainability of the local cultural tourism offer.
2nd meeting	21.4.2021	Discover/Define	Discovering and defining the local cultural/natural assets and generating new ideas

			for developing sustainable cultural tourism in Utsjoki. The WP7 tools used in the session were the Picture as probes and Multimethod Process Flow to identify and discuss the local cultural assets and the Role play method to play out the results.
3rd meeting	8.7.2021	Define	Discussing and developing the Lab's communication and visibility plan. The visitor survey was also conducted for the visitors in Utsjoki.
4th meeting	6.10.2021	Define	Introducing UNESCO's capacity-building activities and WP3 interventions for the Lab, and discussing the Lab-tailored interventions and the capacity-building topic.
5th meeting	3.2.2022	Develop	Engaging participants in cooperative works and art-based ideation by using the Placemaking method in nature, and generating ideas for the storytelling video clips (or other useful material) of their chosen interventions related to tourists' behaviour in nature. WP7 tools used in the sessions were the Placemaking method and the Customer journey.
6th meeting	25.5.2022	Develop/Deliver	Testing the interventions aiming at influencing tourists' behaviour in Village House Giisa. The exchange visitors from the Huesca and the Scheldeland LLs took part in the session.
7th meeting	20.3.2023	Deliver	Developing the strategic roadmap for the selected intervention together with the local stakeholders. WP7 tool used in the session was the Strategic roadmap for cultural tourism change.

4.1.2. Key stakeholders

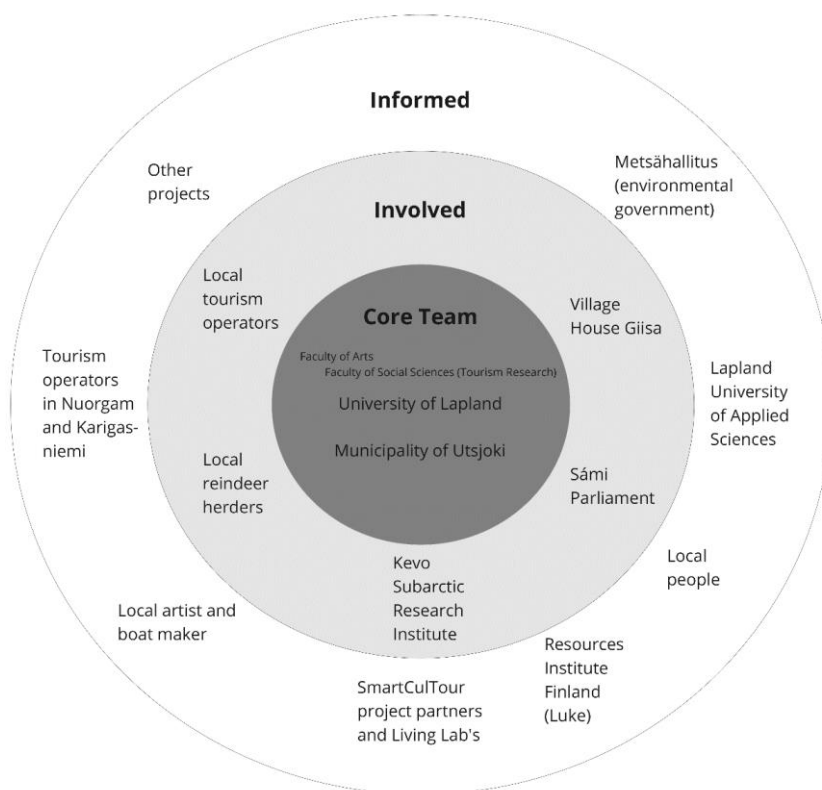


Figure 19. Stakeholder mapping of Utsjoki LL

Table 7. List of participants to the Utsjoki LL

Nº	Role	Organization
Lab Managers / SmartCulTour partners		
1.	Ella Björn, Lab Manager	University of Lapland
2.	Mira Alhonsuo, Lab Manager	University of Lapland (during the time of working in the project)
3.	Monika Lühje, Professor/researcher of Tourism Research	University of Lapland
4.	Satu Miettinen, Work Package 7 leader	University of Lapland
LL Participants / Local stakeholders		
5.	Sustainability and Communications Specialist	Municipality of Utsjoki, public sector, governmental
6.	Coordinator	Sámi Parliament, public sector, governmental
7.	Station manager / Researcher	Kevo Subarctic Research Institute, public sector, governmental
8.	Researcher	Resources Institute Finland (Luke), public sector, governmental
9.	Park Superintendent	Metsähallitus (a state-owned enterprise that produces environmental services), public, governmental

10.	Reindeer herder	Entrepreneur, Reindeer herding area of Paiskunta, private sector, governmental
11.	Tourism entrepreneur	Holiday Village Valle, private sector
12.	Hotel manager	Holiday Village Valle, private sector
13.	Receptionist	Holiday Village Valle, private sector
14.	Tourism entrepreneur	Aurora Holidays, private sector
15.	Tourism worker	Aurora Holidays, private sector
16.	Village association	Secretariat, private sector, NGO
17.	Hotel manager	Hotel Utsjoki, private sector
18.	Tourism specialist	Municipality of Utsjoki, public sector, governmental
19.	Artist/entrepreneur	Private sector
20.	Tourism entrepreneur	Lomakeskus Napakettu, private sector
21.	Tourism entrepreneur	Holiday Village Nuorgam, private sector

The Utsjoki LL consisted of participants from both the public and private sectors. Tourism entrepreneurs and employees from the private sector formed the largest number of stakeholders in the Lab. The public sector representatives from the Municipality of Utsjoki, the Sámi Parliament, and research institutes brought their knowledge, among others, about land use rights and problems, natural sites and living conditions of protected species, conflicts in the area, tourists' behaviour, and Sámi culture. The research institutes have pointed out the problems linked to the traces left in nature by misbehaving visitors and tourists. The tourism and communication specialists and Sámi Parliament representatives shared their knowledge on ethical Sámi tourism, sustainable marketing, and strategies for influencing tourists' behaviour. All the stakeholders pointed out similar types of issues when it comes to land use, tourists' behaviour in nature, and providing correct information about the Sámi culture. There has been discussion on how to deal with marketing and filming reindeer, which are always someone's property. Local tourism entrepreneurs have shared their knowledge about tourists' behaviour, as well as where, and in which situations, tourists would most likely need more help and more information while visiting Utsjoki.

In the first LL session, in addition to the research and organising team of the University of Lapland, there were 13 participants (9 onsite and 4 online), but some of them didn't join the following sessions. This is probably linked to the fact that they might have found the project too abstract, or haven't recognised their role in it. The final composition of the LL was made up of stakeholders who were most interested in engaging by sharing their knowledge and working together to develop tourism in the area. The research institutes' representatives didn't join later meetings since they were aimed at developing context-specific solutions for sustainable cultural tourism development in Utsjoki, while the researchers did not have a thorough understanding of the destination's dynamics, and therefore refrained from taking part in the planning and decision-making processes towards the interventions' identification.

In addition, the Utsjoki LL had only one Sámi representative among its participants, while it would have been desirable to have more Sámi participants in the Lab. That was one of the reasons why the interventions were not based on Sámi culture after all. The stakeholders decided to focus instead on issues related to tourists' behaviour in nature since it was a likewise pressing issue, though less sensitive. The issues related to Sámi culture and tourism are dealt with within other projects directly led by the Sámi Parliament.

4.1.3. SmartCulTour tools and methods

Different SmartCulTour tools and methods were used in Utsjoki LL's workshops in different stages of the service design process. In the inception stage, the need for further developing sustainable cultural tourism in the destination was discovered, while in the exploration stage, the local cultural assets and problems were identified. After the research stage, the local cultural tourism interventions were identified and defined, and finally, in the elaboration stage, the interventions were developed further and tested.

4.1.3.1. Inception stage

The inception phase involved methods that were used to share good cultural tourism practices and identify problems and needs relating to cultural tourism development in Utsjoki. The methods used were the Sticky notes sorting game and the Opportunity Tree.

- **Sticky notes sorting game:** The sticky note sorting game was used in the hybrid inception meeting to gather discussed ideas on paper. The idea was to write down the needs and challenges when it comes to developing cultural tourism in the area. Also, good practices were discussed and written down on sticky notes. The sticky note sorting game was used to facilitate brainstorming and gather several ideas in a short period of time. Since participants tended not to write down ideas on paper directly, the facilitator (Lab Manager) had to take the lead. By implementing the tool, it was found that it works better if the facilitator does not participate in the group work but rather acts as an external observer. In this way, the group is forced to be more active on its own.
- **Opportunity Tree:** The Opportunity Tree was used after the sticky notes sorting game in the inception meeting. The method worked well for visualizing and collecting shared information. The sticky notes of the needs and challenges formed the roots of the tree, the best practices for answering those specific needs and challenges formed the trunk of the tree, and the resources needed and opportunities raised formed the branches of the tree. The method helped combine the shared needs and challenges into shared best practices.

4.1.3.2. Exploration stage

The exploration stage included methods and tools that were used to identify the local cultural tourism assets that could be utilised when planning new cultural tourism concepts. Picture as probes and Multimethods process flow were the methods used in the ideation process and for sharing stories of local cultural assets.

- **Pictures as probes:** Pictures as probes were used in the second hybrid LL meeting to give a personal touch to the workshop and provide participants with the opportunity to present their favourite place or cultural tourism activity to the others by showing a picture from their mobile phone. The method helped with ideation and storytelling based on the local places shared. In the online session, the presentation of the pictures took a long time, but it contributed to team-building as it helped introduce one another's preferences.
- **Multi-method process flow:** The Multi-method process flow was used together with the Picture as probes method. The picture was selected among the pictures shared in the group and used as background data for the new tourism concept. The idea was to create a tourism concept based on the chosen local cultural asset (picture, e.g. of a place or cultural activity). The concept development was based on a matrix, where participants wrote ideas on the place and stories and senses supporting the tourist (learning) experience in the specific place or participating in a specific cultural tourism activity. The method provoked discussion, and when presenting the results by using role-play

methods and small figures, it created laughter in the group. The online group didn't use the Miro-board because of the problems and difficulties in using it, but notes on the discussion were anyway taken in a Word document.

4.1.3.3. Design oriented research stage

The design-oriented research stage included the Placemaking method, which was tested to get richer insights from stakeholders into the place-based values which supported the interventions created in the Utsjoki LL.

- **Placemaking method:** The placemaking method was used in the art-based opening evening session for the fifth LL workshop. The method uses art-based and performative approaches. Several videos were projected to showcase different surfaces inside a hut and to spur participants' creativity. Participants were expected to choose a spot of their preference outside and do bodily movements if they preferred to. The idea was to demonstrate the meaning of certain important places for them and build connections to the land and to other people. It was designed to work as a warm-up session for the next day's workshop. It was hard to inspire and encourage participants to be creative since they didn't fully understand the purpose. Anyhow, one of the participants immersed herself by lying down on a bench and looking at the projected video on the ceiling above her. A more vivid and open discussion about the experience would have been desired after the experiment. More guiding questions could have been planned beforehand to open the discussion. For instance, how did you [participant] feel during that experience? What were you thinking while doing it? What was the place you chose, and why? Did you receive any new ideas when watching the videos projected in the snow?

4.1.3.4. Elaboration stage

The elaboration stage involved methods to create and develop cultural tourism interventions further based on the research conducted and ideas emerged in the previous workshops. Customer journey mapping helped ideate the customer journey for the interventions and the Strategic roadmap for cultural tourism change was used to plan the following steps for implementing the interventions.

- **Customer journey mapping:** Customer journey mapping was used in the fifth LL hybrid meeting after the art-based evening used to ideate customer journeys for the interventions, based on littering problems and fostering tourists' respectful behaviour in nature. The customer journeys gathered ideas on how to provide new information for tourists regarding everyone's rights and how to properly behave in nature, as well as how to present Sámi culture in tourism. After all, LL participants opted for interventions mainly focusing on tourists' behaviour in nature, and a lot of new ideas aimed at delivering concrete information for tourists were generated. The Traces in Utsjoki intervention was developed further based on the participants' ideas after that session.
- **Strategic roadmap for cultural tourism change:** The Strategic roadmap for cultural tourism change method was used in the last LL online session in March 2023 with the aim to help envision the future of the Utsjoki LL, as well as future steps towards the implementation of the pilot interventions. The method was used as a basis for future-oriented discussion. Some parts of the matrix of the strategic roadmap were harder to fill at this point, such as when it comes to how to test the intervention and evaluate the strategy for the intervention. Anyhow, the method worked well for pointing out the common goal, vision, and local strengths of the LL to further develop sustainable cultural tourism in Utsjoki. The tool received feedback that could be used in the future to help with strategic planning.

4.2. Results and impact

4.2.1. Main challenges in achieving the expected results

The main challenges to achieve the expected results were the weak local ownership over the interventions and the lack of resources and finance. Although the interventions were seen as applicable and important for Utsjoki, due to the lack of time and resources stakeholders did not take ownership or started working on them. The Lab Manager was not based in Utsjoki, which may have caused additional difficulties in keeping the stakeholder engagement high. The implementation of the interventions would have been easier if they had been selected in an earlier stage of the project and if there would have been more financial support, e.g. establishing an info board for Village House Giisá. Nevertheless, the Tourism MasterPlan project¹¹ for Utsjoki, which is currently under planning, might potentially consider some of the accomplishments of the Utsjoki LL as part of its strategic goals. The development of sustainable cultural tourism will continue requiring the strong participation of stakeholders and the social acceptance of the community. In the Masterplan project, a concrete action plan is expected to be devised for long-term tourism development in Utsjoki.

Another challenge was the low level of involvement from local Sámi representatives in the LL although they were repeatedly invited to attend its meeting and initiatives. Different kinds of services could have been designed and prototyped based on safeguarding the Sámi cultural heritage if there had been a possibility to hear the local voices of Sámi people in the planning process. This challenge was mitigated by the fact that LL participants were in close relationship with Sámi people.

An additional challenge was the lack of cooperation. Local people who are considerably against new changes and development were not joining the meetings, which made innovation and planning more difficult. Also, new sustainable solutions have to be built, e.g., trails in the fells to guide the visitor flows, which has been under discussion and probably will be developed further in the near future.

4.2.2. Main results achieved compared to the set objectives

Based on the discussion during the round tables of stakeholders, the main priorities were placed on offering practical information to tourists and creating a storytelling tourism product. Enhancing tourists' knowledge about Sámi culture and giving essential information on how to behave respectfully in the destination were deemed useful for maintaining sustainability and protecting the local cultural and natural heritage. Informing tourism entrepreneurs on how to handle Sámi culture in tourism was considered important as well.

The main tangible result of the Utsjoki LL is the tested pilot of the *Traces in Utsjoki* intervention. As the direct project intervention, *Traces in Utsjoki* will support the production of storytelling, marketing and knowledge sharing videos in order to enhance the visibility of Utsjoki while informing the visitors on how to behave respectfully towards the vulnerable Arctic nature

The LL stakeholders' feedback on the intervention was good. They found the intervention rather an easy way to tackle the issues of tourists' misbehaviour. *Traces in Utsjoki* intervention would guide tourists to behave in more responsible and respectful ways in nature, and it could offer an easy and playful way for children to learn how to act in a responsible way during hikes. The objectives of the LL were adjusted during its lifecycle since, at first, its scope also included issues related to the unsustainable "use" of the Sámi culture for tourism purposes. The objectives were adjusted mainly due to the lack of Sámi representatives among the LL's

¹¹ Municipality of Utsjoki. <https://www.utsjoki.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/eltek-2023-2-9-esityslista-1.pdf>

participants.

One of the Lab's tangible results were practice videos, which showcase the proposed interventions to tackle tourists' misbehaviour in nature and the placemaking activity that was implemented in the Ailigas Fell. The videos received good feedback from the local stakeholders and are visible on the project's webpage¹².

The UNESCO capacity-building activity was considered a success since local stakeholders enjoyed the presentation from UNESCO and felt that the workshop effectively addressed key issues regarding the marketing of Utsjoki as a sustainable tourism destination, as well as the management of visitor flows. UNESCO's activity spurred new ideas and discussions aimed at building a local tourism ecosystem and at profiling the typologies visitors that Utsjoki wishes to attract, as well as at agreeing upon the desired volume of tourism.

One objective of the Utsjoki LL was to set up a community of practice and bidirectional flow of information between different local actors. This objective was achieved by organising LL meetings in a hybrid form and on different premises in Utsjoki during the project's lifespan, which supported the local stakeholders equally and offered ways for everyone to participate also online. The intervention testing was held outdoors and it was an open event, which helped the local people also to attend and give their input and feedback on cultural tourism interventions.

4.2.3. Direct and indirect interventions designed, initiated and/or implemented

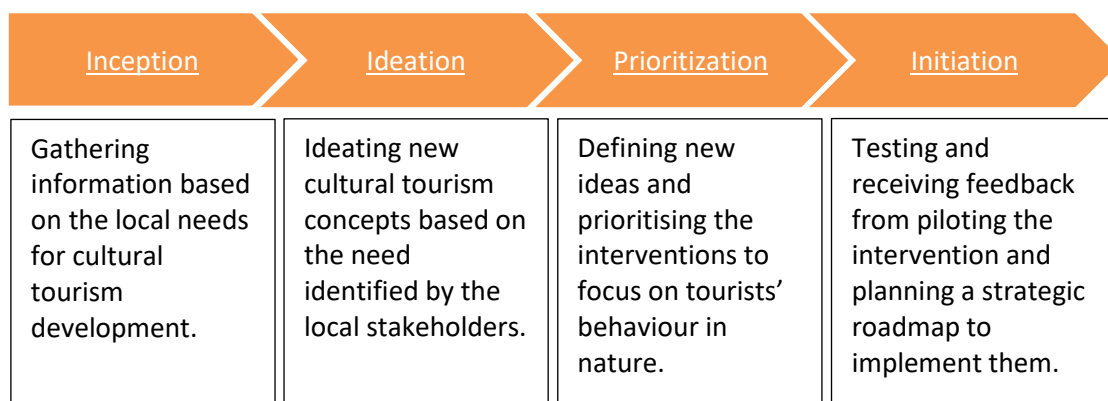


Figure 20. Process towards the design of interventions

The identification of relevant interventions for Utsjoki started in the LL workshops. The need for giving information to tourists on everyone's rights, nature behaviour, and Sámi culture was raised in the first workshop and discussed further in the following session. The tools used were designed to identify the main problems and then to define, develop, and finally deliver the solution to the raised problems and needs. The process involved local stakeholders and their insight on what type of intervention would suit best for Utsjoki's circumstances.

The **Traces in Utsjoki**¹³ intervention was developed further by the University of Lapland project team and presented and tested by the LL stakeholders, local people, and visitors from Huesca and Scheldeland LLs. The

¹² [Traces in Utsjoki: inspiring respectful visitor behaviour in nature areas](#) – Utsjoki LL intervention.

¹³ Ibidem.

objective of the intervention is to manage and influence Utsjoki visitors' behaviour and actions in nature and to raise environmental and cultural awareness through a playful and functional bingo game, picture taking and uploading to an online gallery, and informative and humorous posters relating to littering and behaving in nature. The actual implementation of the intervention has not happened yet, but the Municipality of Utsjoki is considering to implement it, since it is a rather easy way to work towards sustainability and do good for the local people and nature. Potential opportunities for funding could come from the European Regional Development Fund, particularly the Interreg Nord investment priority 6 on the improved conservation of the environment or the continuous call system for small-scale projects under Interreg Aurora (see Annex 15 for further discussion).

After the expected implementation, the Traces of Utsjoki would have positive impacts on safeguarding nature and reducing littering. On the one hand, it would make visible what are the most littered spots and offer ways to focus marketing efforts and guidance on those specific sites. On the other, it could also positively affect local people's attitudes towards tourism if visitors started behaving in more sustainable and respectful manners, thereby reducing the current littering problems affecting local nature. Furthermore, it would also have a positive impact on local people's cultural identity by increasing participation through sharing information about the local culture and natural resources. The proposed intervention would also give tourists the feeling of doing something good for the local community while on their travels, and it would be a fun and educational way for children to learn how to act in nature. Besides that, the hikes would also become more playful for children by giving them a chance to pay attention to certain things (litter, etc.) while hiking. The online photo gallery foreseen by the Traces in Utsjoki intervention would offer a channel to express oneself creatively by taking pictures and learning about different traces in nature.

Placemaking in Utsjoki supports the intervention Traces in Utsjoki and the idea of "exploring without a trace". A specific place can have a significant but different impact on each person, be it a local or a visitor. It can show deep traces of culture, remind us of childhood memories, or be otherwise meaningful. Visiting new places can evoke these memories, feelings, and senses and help build new connections and experiences in visited destinations. The objective of the Placemaking exercise is that the tourist visits an area or place that is meaningful for the local people and quiets down, building a deeper connection to the place, time, nature, and local culture.

The identification of the intervention started with the ULAP project researcher's idea to involve more art-based methods among the tools and methods of WP7. The Placemaking method was tested together with the DEA (Dialogues and Encounters in the Arctic) project and developed further in the SmartCulTour project through its testing in the Utsjoki LL art evening, in Ailigas fell for the visitors from the Huesca and Scheldeland LLs, and the Huesca workshop for the project partners. The Placemaking method was carried out in three different ways: using performativity in nature, using technology such as videos and a handheld projector for storytelling and sharing the cultural value of the places, and combining performativity in nature and technology. The activity itself could be used in tourism, and local tourism entrepreneurs could use the Placemaking exercise as part of their existing service offering, for example during a guided hike in the fells.

Tourism companies could use Placemaking methods for supporting local sustainable tourism goals and enhancing the tourists' holistic experience of the local culture and places during their travels, thereby creating meaningful and memorable experiences and connections in and with nature. The method could also offer new entrepreneurial opportunities for the local people, namely for local tourism entrepreneurs to organise guided tours by supporting the creativity and self-reflection of the visitors. The Placemaking exercise would help safeguard the local cultural and natural heritage while tourists would acquire new knowledge and

a deeper understanding of local natural surroundings and culturally important places.

4.2.4. Lessons learnt

The LL experience was deemed to be positive by Utsjoki's participating stakeholders and showed the importance of cooperation among local stakeholders. Utsjoki is a small municipality consisting of three small villages, and the cooperation between local tourism operators and stakeholders is crucial for the local service providers and tourism development in the area. The workshops were appreciated by participants, and notably the opportunity provided for improved local networking, and even though tangible results might be accomplished only in a longer period of time, strengthened cooperation among key actors and players through inclusive participatory processes was considered as being an indispensable precondition. The intrinsic living nature of the Lab was reflected in the ways meetings were carried out, by providing diversified channels to exchange, discuss and test new methodologies, while co-designing new ideas for tourism services.

Key stakeholders in the LL were the municipality of Utsjoki, local tourism operators, reindeer herders, and village association representatives. A higher involvement from local livelihood representatives, such as fishermen or boat makers, would have enriched the LL experience even more.

The need for a tourist information board gathering the local services altogether was identified through the survey conducted among visitors in Utsjoki. Tourism-related services like signs on the trails in nature, as well as a QR-code for providing information to tourists during their hikes, were discussed within the LL.

4.3. Sustainability and follow-up

4.3.1. Sustainability of the outcomes and afterlife strategy for the Living Lab

The LL worked as a tool for stakeholder involvement and co-creation, but its continuation would require Utsjoki's stakeholders taking responsibility for the meetings' organization and coordination. It would be advisable to set up an online platform or joint group for discussion to share ideas and plan upcoming meetings. The shared goal should be recognised and defined by local stakeholders, with a clear division of roles and responsibilities towards its accomplishment, leveraging the positive results stemming from the improved cooperation spurred by the LL's experience.

The afterlife strategy of Utsjoki LL was planned using a strategic roadmap for cultural tourism (see Annex 4) together with the LL stakeholders in the last LL meeting. Its main aim was to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss potential avenues for the intervention's joint implementation.

The implementation of *Traces in Utsjoki* would be rather easy, despite having a great impact on sustainability. The tourism MasterPlan project¹⁴ is going to support similar goals discussed and shared in the SmartCulTour project. The MasterPlan project highlights the value and significance of Utsjoki's nature and location for tourism, including typical local livelihoods such as salmon fishing, which has been discussed within the SmartCulTour project as well. The MasterPlan project includes the development of a long-term strategy including different stakeholders in the planning process.

¹⁴ Municipality of Utsjoki. <https://www.utsjoki.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/eltek-2023-2-9-esityslista-1.pdf>

The SmartCulTour project contributed to increase the local understanding of the importance of stakeholders' commitment and community's acceptance of the long-term strategy planned to be devised in the MasterPlan project. The discussion held showed indeed that stakeholders share the same vision on tourism growth, and notably agree that it should be sustainable to ensure the preservation of Utsjoki's special features, including its high standards of living for local inhabitants and communities. This requires both tourists and entrepreneurs to be committed to sustainability, spanning its economic, social, environmental, as well as cultural dimensions, including by leveraging the community's social pressure to act in sustainable and respectful ways.

4.3.2. Follow-up recommendations for the Living Lab

The recommendations for the LL to achieve sustainable cultural tourism development objectives in the medium to long-term:

- **Networking** with key partners on a specific initiative is highly important. The interventions could achieve their full potential only if all key stakeholders engage in the process.
- **The financial resources should be well planned** since the beginning of the process, and funding possibilities should be mapped out for the intervention's success.
- **Involving local people in content development**, such as for storytelling videos or other outreach materials for tourists, in a view to raise local cultural pride and build cultural identity.
- **The intervention that could benefit many businesses** would do good for the local community and livelihood in general.
- If the intervention is **easy for tourism companies to put into use**, it would benefit them economically and also improve their digital and marketing skills. It could offer new channels to market the company's sustainable actions and make its services visible. It would raise the awareness of local people and tourists to behave in sustainable ways and be respectful towards nature, culture, and other people.

A Annexes to the Utsjoki Living Lab report

Annex 4 - Strategic roadmap for Utsjoki cultural tourism



Strategiatiekartta

toimintasuunnitelma
kohti asetettuja
tavoitteita ja kestävän
matkailun aloitteiden ja
interventioiden
toteuttamista.

ESITEHTÄVÄ 1: Ymmärrä – Ajatukset kohti strategiatyötä

Miksi strategiatiekartta?

Pienellä
panoksella

Järkevää
suunnittelua
tukien muita
alueen
toimenpiteitä

Matkailun
masterplan
tekeillä - pitkä aika
väli, vastuullisen
matkailun hanke
on loppu

Mikä on ryhmänne yhteinen tavoite?

Kestävä
matkailu

Vastuullisen
matkailun
viesiintä

Utsjokele ei
kuka tahansa
lähde, tukee
vastuullisuutta

Matkailu tukee
saamelais-
kulttuurin
elinvoimaisuutta

Sertifiointi,
saamelais-
kulttuurin
esiintuomista
matkailu-
palveluissa

Tulevaisuuden visio: Miltä Utsjoki näyttää matkailukohteena vuoden, viiden vuoden entä 20 vuoden päästä?

Matkailu kasvaisi,
mutta kestävästi
(matkailijat ja
yrittäjät ovat
sitoutuneet
kestävyyteen)

Arvostetaan
Utsjokea
sellaisena kun
Utsjoki on

Utsjoki on
säilyttänyt
erityispiirte
ensä

Elinvoimainen
matkailusektori
joka on
vastuullisesti
hoidettu

Mitä ovat ryhmänne vahvuudet kehittää Utsjokea matkailukohteena?

Hienosti eri
sidosryhmien
välillä yhteistyötä,
jaetaan samat
arvot

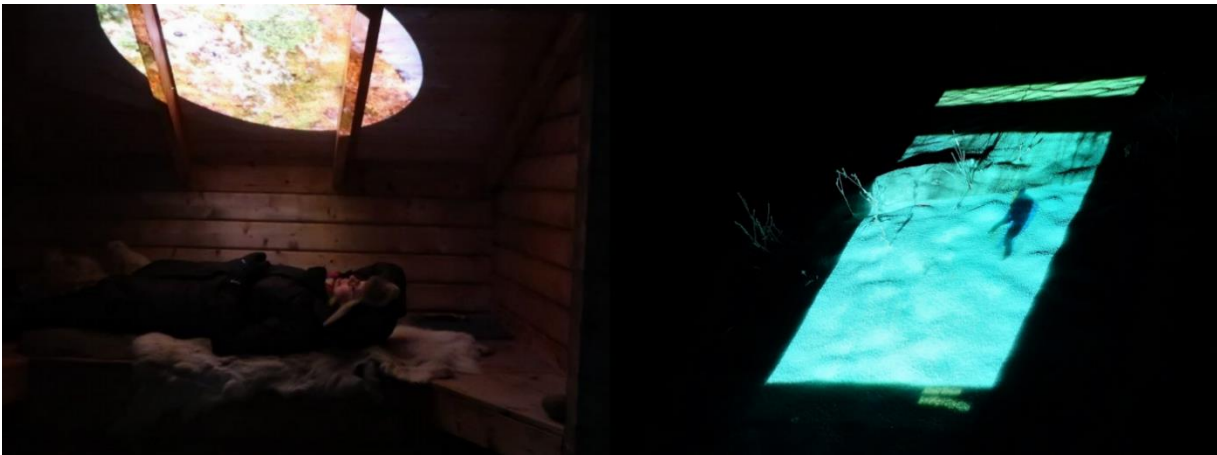
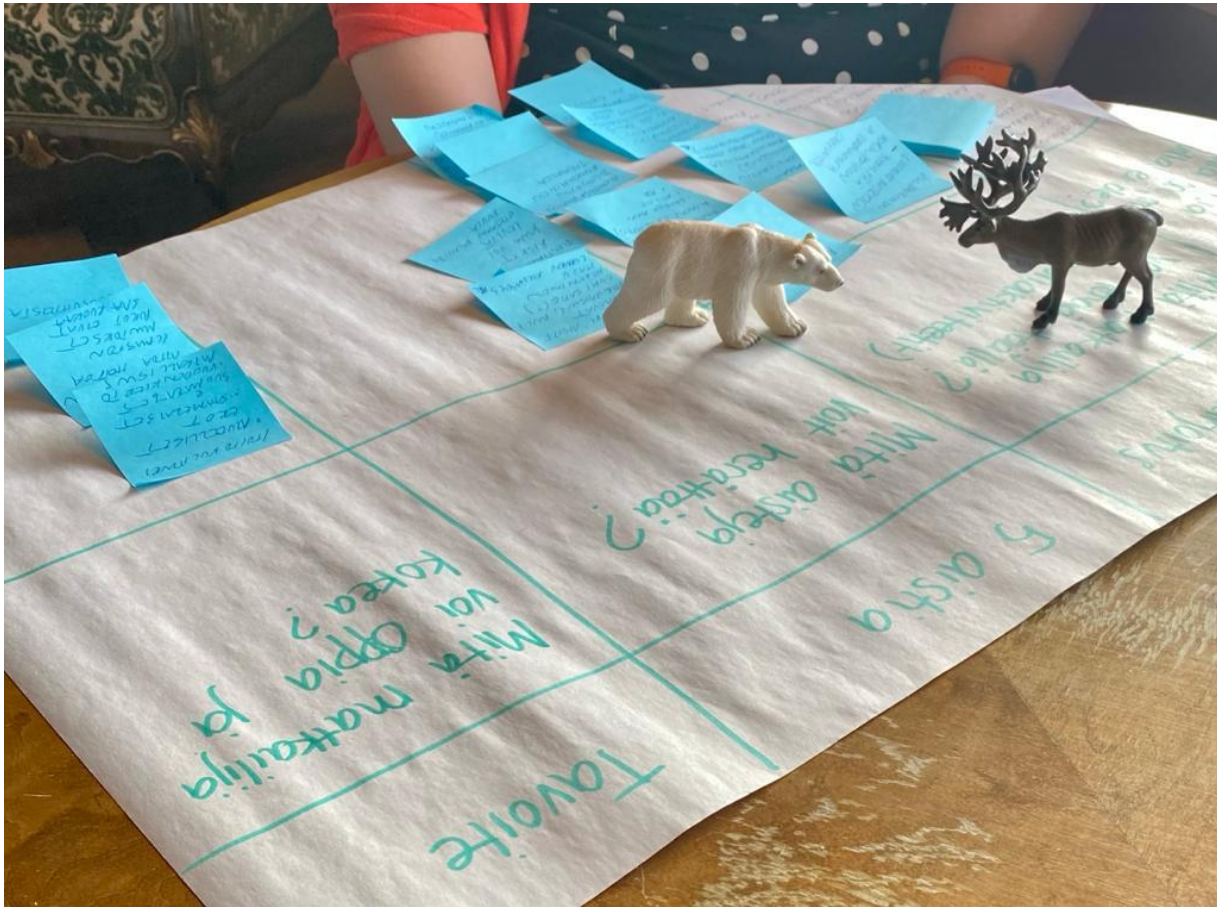
Ei olla valmiita
sietua myymään
rahan takia,
perusteet jolle
rakentaa

Yrittäjät
ovat
paikallisia
ihmisiä

Ollaan osa
yhteisöä,
sosiaalinen
paine

Annex 5 - Pictures of Utsjoki Living Lab workshops and placemaking experiment





Annex 6 - Traces in Utsjoki intervention



Traces in Utsjoki



[Linkki protoon](#)

05 Experiences and findings from the Split Living Lab

5.1. Brief summary of the Living Lab's workflow

5.1.1. Main activities as per the workplan

The Split metropolitan area LL (hereinafter Split LL) has shown quite a dedication to the SmartCulTour project goals throughout its duration. Hence, it has run nine official LL meetings and thirteen activities dedicated to the project results' dissemination, education and awareness-raising on the role of cultural tourism in achieving sustainability and resilience for not just the LL stakeholders but also the community living in the LL area.

The first inception meeting was held in February 2021 with potentially interested stakeholders to introduce them to the SmartCulTour project and the planned activities of the LL. A month later, i.e. in March 2021, the second (virtual) LL meeting was organised. Three focus groups were held with representatives from tourism, culture, and institutions, to discuss the valorisation of culture through tourism in the LL area.

During the third meeting in April 2021, the LL members participated in the [Awareness-raising webinar on UNESCO's capacity-building opportunities for SmartCulTour LLs](#). The fourth LL meeting was held in September 2021, with the LL Manager initiating the co-design process using Brainstorming and Sticky Notes Sorting methods to perform the root-cause analysis of cultural tourism development in the LL area. At the fifth meeting, held in November 2021, the Q-Sort methodology and Opportunity Tree methods were applied to co-design interventions for the cultural tourism development in the Split LL area.

The sixth meeting (hybrid event with an on-site workshop in Solin) was held in February 2022 and consisted in a capacity-building workshop for the Split LL stakeholders, co-organized by FEBTS and UNESCO. The workshop focused on UNESCO's Community-based approach towards intangible cultural heritage safeguarding.

During the seventh meeting held in April 2022, the Lab manager introduced the SmartCulTour Game, while at the eighth meeting, held in May 2022, the House of Quality method was implemented, and the SmartCulTour dashboard was presented. In March 2023, the ninth meeting was held, with the participation of the Rotterdam LL Manager and an academic employed in the Rotterdam LL activities, who both shared their experiences with the Split LL members and presented the design thinking methodology, which has shown to be very useful in the co-creating activities.

In between the official meetings, thirteen activities were performed to disseminate the Split LL activities and to raise awareness about the need to enhance sustainability and resilience in cultural tourism development. In this regard, in June 2021, the Split Lab Manager hosted a special session on Smart solutions for sustainable cultural destinations in the post-COVID-19 era as part of the [ToSEE - Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe](#), 6th International Scientific Conference: Smart, Experience, Excellence (Opatija, Croatia).

In October 2021, a FEBTS team member presented a paper at the [3rd International Conference on Cultural Sustainable Tourism \(CST\)](#) in Portugal, reflecting on experiences drawn from the Split LL. In the same month, the Split LL hosted a [World Tourism Day event](#) with a panel discussion on sustainable cultural tourism development in the territory of the Split LL. The LL Manager organised a workshop for the LL members on soft skills in cultural tourism development in October 2021. In December 2021, the Lab Manager organised a panel discussion with UNESCO representatives and representatives from the cultural and tourism sector in the LL area on intangible cultural heritage and tourism development in Split.

The seventh activity, held in April 2022, concerns the participation in the 8th International Historic Cities Congress in Solin, where the Lab Manager and the FEBTS team project leader presented the project and shared the experiences from the Split LL. In April 2022, the Lab Manager participated in a meeting with partners SEA-EU Universities and presented activities and participatory tools developed within the SmartCulTour project and used within Split LL. In May 2022, the LL members from Solin and Sinj hosted a film production on intangible heritage, focusing on interventions selected as part of UNESCO's capacity-building activity for the Split LL.

During May 2022, the FEBTS and the Split LL hosted the exchange visit with stakeholders from the Rotterdam and Vicenza LLs. In June 2022, the Lab Manager, the project team leader and one of the LL members participated in the exchange visit to the Rotterdam LL. In October 2022, the Split LL hosted a panel discussion on the Future of tourism development in the territory of the LL (Tourism in Split 2023). The Lab Manager, the project team leader and one of the LL members took part in the exchange visit to the Vicenza LL in October 2022. Finally, in March 2023, the Lab Manager participated in the 9th International Historic Cities Congress in Solin to reflect on challenges associated with participatory cultural tourism development in the territory of the LL.

After the closure of the Project, FEBTS intends to continue with the LL activities. There are currently two ideas among which a consensus is trying to be reached. The first idea is to continue the LL activities under the FEBTS umbrella, in which case both LL stakeholders and students would be involved, and the LL practice course introduced. The second option suggests embedding the LL's activities within the broader [Split Smart City Hub initiative](#), with the municipality as the leading partner, as already discussed with the city authorities.

Table 8. Overview of the Split LL's workflow

LL Meeting	Date	Activities / Tools / Methods
Inception meeting	February 2021	Inception meeting organised by the FEBTS team and the LL Manager with the potential LL stakeholders.
2nd meeting	March 2021	LL stakeholders' focus group discussion organised by the LL Manager about valorisation of culture through tourism in the LL area.
3rd meeting	April 2021	Awareness-raising webinar on UNESCO's capacity-building opportunities for SmartCulTour LLs for the LL members via Teams platform.
Activity 1	June 2021	The FEBTS hosted a special session on Smart solutions for sustainable cultural destinations in the post COVID-19 era.
4th meeting	September 2021	The LL Manager organised the meeting initiating the co-design process: brainstorming, sticky notes sorting exercise.
Activity 2	October 2021	A FEBTS' team member presented a paper at a conference, reflecting on experiences drawn from the Split LL.

Activity 3	October 2021	The FEBTS hosted a World Tourism Day event: a panel discussion on sustainable cultural tourism development in the territory of the LL was organised by the LL Manager.
Activity 4	November 2021	The LL Manager held a workshop on soft skills in cultural tourism development for the LL members.
5th meeting	November 2021	The Lab Manager held a meeting with stakeholders to co-design interventions using the Q-Sort methodology and Opportunity Tree.
Activity 5	December 2021	The Lab Manager organised a panel discussion on intangible cultural heritage and tourism development in the territory of the Split LL, with the participation of UNESCO and local representatives from the cultural and tourism sector.
6th meeting	February 2022	The Lab Manager and UNESCO co-organised a capacity-building workshop for the Split LL stakeholders on ICH safeguarding and its potential for sustainable cultural tourism development.
Activity 6	March 2022	The Lab Manager and the Project team leader participated in the 8 th International Historic Cities Congress in Solin, presenting the project and sharing the experiences from the Split LL.
Activity 7	April 2022	The Lab Manager participated in a meeting with partners from SEA-EU Universities and presented activities and participatory tools developed within the SmartCulTour project and used within Split LL.
Activity 8	April 2022	The LL members from Solin and Sinj hosted the production of two films on their intangible cultural heritage.
7th meeting	April 2022	The Lab Manager organised a meeting to introduce the SmartCulTour Game to LL stakeholders.
Activity 9	May 2022	The FEBTS and the Split LL hosted the exchange visit with stakeholders from the Rotterdam and Vicenza LLs.
8th meeting	May 2022	The Lab Manager organised a stakeholders meeting where the House of Quality was implemented and the SmartCulTour dashboard was presented.
Activity 10	June 2022	The Lab Manager, the project team leader and one of the LL members participated in the exchange visit to the Rotterdam LL.
Activity 11	October 2022	The Split LL hosted a panel discussion on the Future of tourism development in the territory of the LL .
Activity 12	October 2022	The Lab Manager, the project team leader and one of the LL members participated in the exchange visit to the Vicenza LL .
Activity 13	March 2023	The Lab Manager participated in the 9 th International Historic Cities Congress in Solin.
9th meeting	March 2023	The Split LL hosted a stakeholder meeting to implement a design thinking workshop led by the Rotterdam LL Manager and an academic employed in the Rotterdam LL activities.

5.1.2. Key stakeholders

The stakeholders that have participated in the LL are from both the public and private sector, as well as from local NGOs. Table 9 and Figure 21 below provide an overview of the different categories of stakeholders involved. The LL was established as a part of the Department for tourism and economy at the Faculty of economics, business and tourism, Split (FEBTS). The LL team included all researchers involved in the project

employed at the Faculty. The Lab Manager is indeed a Professor at the Department for tourism and economy.

Table 9. List of Stakeholders of the Split LL

Nº	Role	Organization
Lab Managers / SmartCulTour partners		
1.	Ante Mandić, Lab Manager	FEBTS
2.	Lidija Petrić, Split LL team	FEBTS
3.	Smiljana Pivčević, Split LL team	FEBTS
4.	Davorka Mikulić, Split LL team	FEBTS
5.	Blanka Šimundić, Split LL team	FEBTS
6.	Zvonimir Kuliš, Split LL team	FEBTS
LL Participants / Local stakeholders		
7.	Representative of the tourism board of Split, public sector	
8.	Representative of the tourism board of Solin, public sector	
9.	Representative of the tourism board of Dugopolje, public sector	
10.	Representative of the tourism board of Sinj, public sector	
11.	Representative of the Split-Dalmatia county (working on cultural tourism projects), public sector	
12.	Representative of the city of Solin, public sector	
13.	Representative of the Chamber of commerce, Split, public sector	
14.	Representative of the Chamber of commerce, Split – section for cultural tourism development, public sector	
15.	Representative of the Heritage Hotel Antique, Split, private sector	
16.	Representative of the Stella Croatica, Klis – ethno park, private sector	
17.	Representative of the Heritage hotel Vestibul, Split, private sector	
18.	Representative of the Explora – travel agency, cultural tourism specialist, private sector	
19.	Representative of the Kairos vine cellars – vine and heritage routes, private sector	
20.	Representative of the Local association Kliški Uskoci, Klis, NGO	
21.	Representative of the archaeological museum, Split, cultural institutions	
22.	Representative of the museum of Croatian archaeological monuments, Split, cultural institutions	
23.	Representative of the museum of the Sinjska Alka, Sinj, cultural institutions	

The governance structure within the Split metropolitan area LL starts with the FEBTS as a partner institution of the SmartCulTour project and the leading regional academic institution in economics, business administration and tourism. It was decided that the LL Manager should be a FEBTS team member, instead of the outsourced partner institution to accomplish necessary work. In this way, it was secured that FEBTS kept control over all activities performed within the LL and that all team members participated in the LL activities together with the other stakeholders. However, the Lab Manager kept the coordination of the LL centralized and was responsible for all the processes during the project's lifecycle.

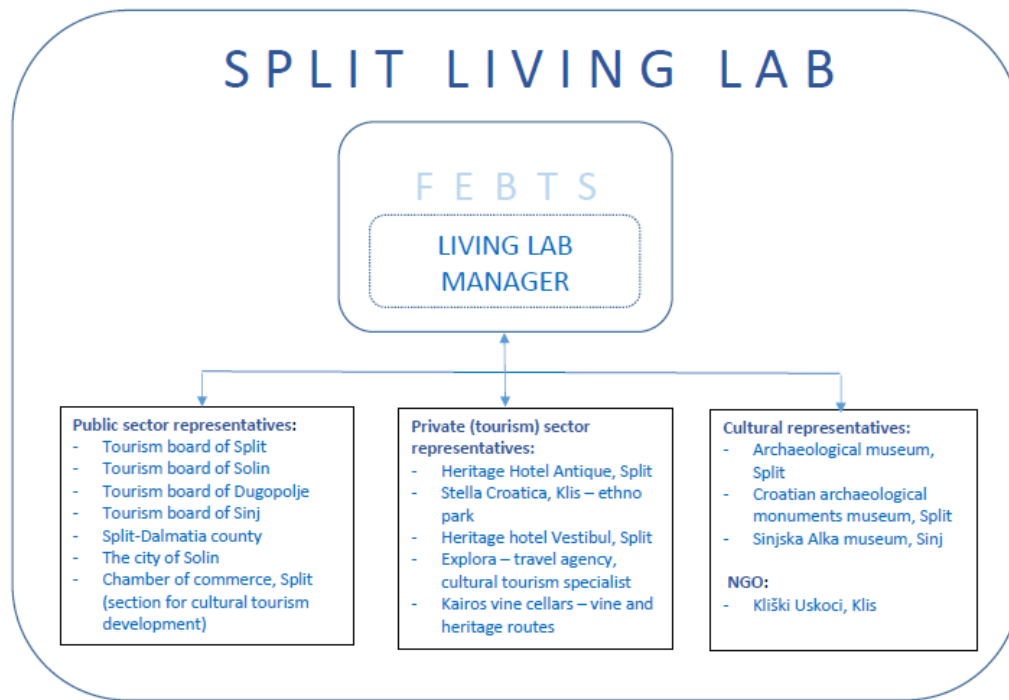


Figure 21. The Split LL governance structure

The stakeholders involved in the Split LL have diversified experiences and expertise, including tourism management, cultural heritage preservation, archaeology, museum curation, hotel and ethno park management, travel agency services, and vine and heritage route development. The main interests represented in the LL seem to be the promotion and development of cultural tourism in the region, as well as the preservation and enhancement of the local cultural heritage. Although there may be some differing views and interests among stakeholders, no significant clashes among them emerged throughout the LL's experience.

The stakeholder meetings revealed several different interests and priorities. The public sector representatives highlighted the gap between the potential for cultural tourism development and the current sector's performance, the need to raise awareness of cultural heritage and its potential for sustainable tourism, as well as the importance of prioritising cultural, and notably archaeological, tourism that is sustainable, responsible, authentic, small-scale, and focused on the local community.

The private sector representatives emphasised the high potential for cultural tourism development in the LL, but also the low level of its expression due to internal factors such as low education and motivation, lack of institutional support, and the need for reinforcing partnerships and sharing a joint vision to frame governance. They also highlighted the essential role that cultural tourism may play in the sustainable development of the LL area as a destination, alongside the need to foster cultural tourism education at the university level.

The representatives of tourism boards stressed the necessity to exploit the full potential of cultural tourism development, which is hindered by the lack of interest and poor collaboration among involved stakeholders. They emphasised the importance of improving communication and collaboration among tourism operators and cultural experts to enhance cultural heritage valorisation, increase the use of new technologies and creative ways for cultural heritage presentation, collaborate, initiate new projects, as well as identify and connect key partner stakeholders to promote cultural tourism.

Finally, the stakeholders belonging to cultural institutions highlighted the need to valorise the enormous richness of local cultural resources, both tangible and intangible, and raise awareness of the potential for local cultural tourism development. They also emphasised the need to enhance local involvement in cultural entrepreneurship through synergies between cultural institutions and local entrepreneurs, promote sustainable, responsible, and community-based cultural tourism, and foster cooperation and knowledge enhancement across the LL to stimulate cultural tourism development.

Based on the information provided in D6.1 – Specific Terms of Reference for SmartCulTour Laboratories (2021), there are some areas where the interests of different stakeholder groups could potentially clash or collide, such as:

Table 10. Interests of stakeholders

Stakeholders	Sustainable and responsible tourism	Prioritisation of cultural tourism development	Education and awareness
Cultural sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree that cultural tourism should be sustainable, responsible, authentic, small-scale and focused on the local community. Focus on the need to safeguard and protect cultural heritage while promoting it for tourism. 	Prioritise cultural (archaeological) tourism development.	Emphasise the need to raise awareness of cultural heritage and the potential for sustainable cultural tourism development, as well as the key importance of enhancing knowledge across the LL to stimulate cultural tourism development.
Public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree that cultural tourism should be sustainable, responsible, authentic, small-scale and focused on the local community. 		
Private businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree that cultural tourism should be sustainable, responsible, authentic, small-scale and focused on the local community. 	Focus leans towards improving collaboration and partnerships between stakeholders to enhance cultural heritage valorisation and build a recognisable destination branding.	Specifically mention the need to foster cultural tourism education at the university level.
Tourism board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasise the need for creative ways of presenting cultural heritage and new technologies to 		

	enhance tourism development.		
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While there are some areas where the interests of different stakeholder groups could potentially clash or collide, there is also considerable overlap and agreement on the need for sustainable and responsible cultural tourism development, education and awareness-raising, and collaboration and partnerships between stakeholders. The challenge was to find ways to balance, trade-off and integrate these different perspectives and priorities into the development of a strategic roadmap for the LL.

5.1.2.1. Participation dynamics within the Living Lab

The Split LL had a relatively stable set of stakeholders throughout its lifecycle. However, some stakeholders have stepped in or out at specific moments. For example, the LL purposefully invited some additional stakeholders to the capacity-building workshop organised by UNESCO. Additionally, some new stakeholders were involved in the process of filming interventions in Solin and Sinj. Further, some stakeholders have lost interest and stopped participating in the LL's activities. This was particularly the case for tourism businesses (e.g. hotel managers) due to the lack of understanding of personal benefits associated with participation in the LL's network, as well as the re-start of tourism activities after the stalemate caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, during which the LL had held its first meetings.

Overall, the participation dynamics of the LL in Split have been characterised by a high degree of stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The Lab Manager, namely the research team at the FEBTS, played a central role in organising and facilitating the overall LL process, while stakeholders from various sectors were actively involved in all meetings and activities.

5.1.2.2. Missing stakeholders and relevant explanation

There could be various reasons why some stakeholders did not want to participate actively in the LL. One possible reason is the lack of remuneration or incentives for participation, as some stakeholders may have been reluctant to invest their time and resources without clear benefits or rewards. Another reason could be the perception of insufficient buy-in, and notably the lack of full understanding of the potential benefits of the LL. Last but not least, competing priorities may have led some stakeholders to decide not to engage.

Additionally, FEBTS faced challenges in reaching out to some stakeholders or faced resistance from some others due to concerns about the project's impact or implementation. The lesson drawn from the Split LL experience is that effective stakeholder engagement requires a well-designed communication and outreach strategy that consider the diverse needs and interests of stakeholders.

The Split LL primarily involved stakeholders who were directly related to the cultural tourism industry, including tourism businesses, cultural organisations, and local authorities. While these stakeholders are undoubtedly important, there may have been other participants who could have brought additional value to the LL. Although it is difficult to speculate on they could have contributed to the LL without specific information about whom these would have been and what role they would have played, it is likely that they would have provided unique perspectives, expertise, and resources that would have enriched the co-design process and the implementation of interventions.

For example, community-based organisations, including residents and grassroots initiatives, could have provided a unique perspective on the social and cultural impact of tourism development in the area. It's

possible that these stakeholders did not participate in the LL for a variety of reasons, some of which are mentioned above.

To encourage greater participation from a diverse range of stakeholders, it might be useful for the Split LL to proactively engage with attracting a wider range of stakeholders and communicate the benefits of their participation. It is recommended to encourage them not to be passive attendees of the LL meetings, but also to propose and participate in different activities of their interest.

The FEBTS and the most active LL members are eager to continue with the LL activities after the project closure. However, the organizational and governance issues are yet to be decided. The establishment of a more formal governance system with differentiated roles and responsibilities for different categories of stakeholders might be considered, which could help ensure that all voices are heard and that everyone has a meaningful role to play after the project.

5.1.3. SmartCulTour tools and methods

The British Design Council (2019) elaborated on the design process through the so-called Double Diamond process model. In this model, the left-side diamond represents the problem space which focuses on the discovery and definition of the problem, corresponding to the Inception and Exploration stages, respectively. The right-side diamond, which represents the solution space, focuses on developing and delivering solutions, and ends when evaluated, thus corresponding to the Design-oriented and Elaboration stages.

Based on the information provided and following the process model for developing destinations, the following SmartCulTour tools and methods were adopted and used in the Split LL.

5.1.3.1. Stage of 'Discovery and definition of the problem'

- **Q-Sort methodology:** This method was useful for identifying and prioritising the most relevant cultural tourism assets and challenges in Split, as well as for generating a common understanding among LL participants. It helped engage LL participants by providing a structured framework for their input, and it was used at the right moment of the LL's lifecycle, during the initial stages of the project. The immediate results were a clear identification of the most pressing issues and opportunities, which contributed to fostering exchange and dialogue among stakeholders. This method did not generate new views *per se*, but it did help consolidate existing ones and create a shared vision for the LL.
- **Content analysis:** Content analysis was used to evaluate the data collected from different sources, such as interviews, surveys, and online platforms. The analysis helped identify emerging themes, patterns, and trends related to cultural tourism development in Split. The results of the content analysis were presented to the LL participants and other stakeholders, and they provided valuable insights for the development of the LL activities and outputs. The use of content analysis contributed to enhancing the LL's shared knowledge and supporting evidence-based decision-making.
- **Focus groups:** Focus groups were used to gather in-depth feedback from LL participants and other stakeholders regarding their perceptions, needs, and priorities related to cultural tourism development in Split. The focus groups were held at different stages of the LL's lifecycle, and they helped engage participants and foster exchange and dialogue among them. The immediate results of the focus groups were a better understanding of the local context and the identification of key challenges and opportunities for cultural tourism development. Overall, the use of focus groups was appropriate and useful, and it contributed to achieving the LL's objectives.

- **House of Quality:** This method was useful for mapping out the relationships between different cultural tourism assets and stakeholders in Split, as well as for identifying areas for improvement and innovation. It helped engage stakeholders by providing a comprehensive and structured way to analyse and prioritise different aspects of the LL, and it was used at the right moment of the LL's lifecycle, during the mid-stage of the project. The immediate results were a clearer understanding of the interconnections between different parts of the LL, as well as a better alignment of project objectives with stakeholder needs and priorities. This method did not generate new views *per se*, but it did help consolidate existing ones and refine their implementation.
- **Sticky notes sorting exercise:** The sticky notes sorting exercise was used to prioritise the ideas generated through the brainstorming sessions. LL participants and other stakeholders were invited to sort the sticky notes based on their perceived importance and relevance. The exercise allowed to identify the most promising ideas for further development and implementation. The immediate result of the sticky notes sorting exercise was a clear and shared understanding of the priorities and preferences of the LL participants and other stakeholders. The sticky notes sorting exercise contributed to boost the LL's participatory and inclusive approach.
- **Capacity-building workshop:** UNESCO's capacity-building workshop aimed at raising awareness and enhancing the knowledge and skills of the LL participants and other stakeholders related to community-based safeguarding and valorisation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH)¹⁵. The workshop, which was organised in collaboration with UNESCO and was held in a hybrid format (on-site and online), provided participants with a better understanding of the concept and practice of community-based safeguarding and valorisation of ICH, and its relevance for cultural tourism development. The immediate results of the capacity-building workshop were an increased knowledge and awareness of the LL participants on the discussed topics and their potential applications in Split and its metropolitan area. As a key result, UNESCO's capacity-building activity contributed to enhancing the LL's capacity to design and implement community-based approaches to cultural tourism development.

5.1.3.2. Stage of 'Developing and delivering solutions'

- **Brainstorming:** Brainstorming was used to generate and develop ideas for LL activities and outputs. The LL participants and other stakeholders were invited to participate in brainstorming sessions, where they were encouraged to share their creative and innovative ideas related to cultural tourism development in Split. The brainstorming sessions were held at different stages of the LL's lifecycle, and fostered stakeholders' engagement, exchange and dialogue among them. The immediate results of the brainstorming sessions were a pool of diverse and relevant ideas that were further developed and refined by the LL team. Overall, the use of brainstorming was appropriate and productive in that it contributed to enhancing the LL's creativity and innovation capacity.
- **Opportunity Tree:** This method was also useful for identifying and prioritising opportunities for sustainable cultural tourism development in Split, as well as for generating a common understanding among LL participants. It helped engage stakeholders by providing a visual and interactive way to explore different possibilities, and it was used at the right moment of the LL's lifecycle, during the initial stages of the project. The immediate results were a clear identification of the most promising opportunities and potential synergies, which contributed to foster exchange and dialogue among stakeholders. This method did not generate new views *per se*, but it did help consolidate existing

¹⁵ For further information, see [UNESCO contributes to sustainable cultural tourism development in two SmartCulTour Laboratories](#) and [UNESCO builds capacity for sustainable cultural tourism in the SmartCulTour Laboratories](#).

ones and create a shared vision for the LL.

- **Design thinking:** Design thinking is a creative problem-solving approach that leverages empathy, collaboration, and experimentation. In the context of sustainable cultural tourism development, design thinking can be used to identify and develop innovative solutions to complex challenges. In the Split LL, design thinking was used as a tool for generating and evaluating new ideas for sustainable cultural tourism activities. LL participants were encouraged to adopt a creative and open-minded approach to problem-solving, and to work collaboratively to generate new and innovative ideas. The outcomes of the design thinking process provided a useful starting point for further discussion and decision-making.
- **SmartCulTour Game:** The SmartCulTour Game is a tool developed for facilitating participatory planning of cultural tourism activities. In the Split LL, the Game was used to engage LL participants in a fun and interactive way, and to encourage collaboration and discussion among stakeholders. The game involved a series of challenges related to different aspects of sustainable cultural tourism development, such as creating a marketing plan or designing a cultural activity. The outcomes of the Game provided useful insights into the priorities and perspectives of different stakeholders regarding local sustainable cultural tourism development.
- **SmartCulTour Platform:** This tool was designed to provide stakeholders with access to data and insights related to tourism in the Split region. It was found to be useful in providing stakeholders with a centralised source of information, and in encouraging dialogue around tourism development. The immediate results were a better understanding of the impact and outcomes of the LL, as well as a more informed and engaged stakeholder community. This tool did not generate new views *per se*, but it did help consolidate and communicate existing ones more effectively.

Overall, each of these tools has been useful in the context of the Split LL for engaging LL participants, identifying priorities and perspectives, generating new ideas, and evaluating the potential impact of future sustainable cultural tourism development interventions.

5.2. Results and impact

5.2.1. Main challenges in achieving the expected results

One of the main challenges that the Split LL experienced was the difficulty in retaining tourism businesses involved in LL activities. Despite their initial engagement and willingness to participate, many businesses struggled to maintain their involvement over time. To tackle this challenge, the LL team worked to establish more regular communication channels with these businesses, providing them with updates and opportunities to contribute to ongoing discussions. Additionally, the team emphasised the potential benefits that continued involvement in the LL could bring to their businesses, such as increased visibility and opportunities for collaboration.

Another challenge was related to the limited availability of resources and funding to support LL activities. This made it difficult to sustain momentum and implement some of the proposed initiatives. To address this challenge, the LL team looked for alternative sources of funding and sought to leverage existing resources and networks to support their activities. For example, they worked to engage local stakeholders and tap into their expertise, capacities and resources to help support the LL's objectives.

A third challenge was related to the complex and multi-faceted nature of the LL's objectives. With so many different stakeholders and objectives involved, it was challenging to align everyone's interests and ensure that all LL participants remained engaged and committed to the process throughout the end. To address this challenge, the LL team focused on fostering open and transparent communication, promoting inclusivity, and establishing clear objectives and goals that everyone agreed upon and could work towards. The team also tried to be flexible and adaptable to the needs and interests of different stakeholders, recognising that everyone had different perspectives and priorities.

Overall, while these challenges were significant, the LL members and management were able to successfully navigate them through ongoing communication, collaboration, and a commitment to the LL's objectives. By working together and staying focused on their goals, LL members were able to achieve some meaningful results and lay the foundation for continued progress in the future.

5.2.2. Main results achieved compared to the set objectives

The Split LL's desired long-term goals were: being more sustainable year-round cultural tourism, connecting coastal and rural areas and reducing high seasonality and spatial pressures in the urban communities of the coastal strip.

To fulfil these objectives, the following activities were proposed:

- Bring together critical stakeholders to create a shared vision of sustainable cultural tourism;
- Raise awareness of the potential of tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- Identify challenges, determine the priorities and co-design a roadmap to a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future;
- Detect various risks and establish a practical approach to monitor the sustainability and resilience of cultural tourism destinations;
- Co-design adequate solutions to mitigate critical challenges in the destination.

Through the process of working with the LL members during the SmartCulTour project cycle, the listed activities were performed on a number of meetings / workshops (as numbered in Table 8) by employing

different service-based methods (as shown under 5.1.3), and the two main priorities, together with the set of interventions, were outlined (Figure 22) as a result of the participation/co-creative process.

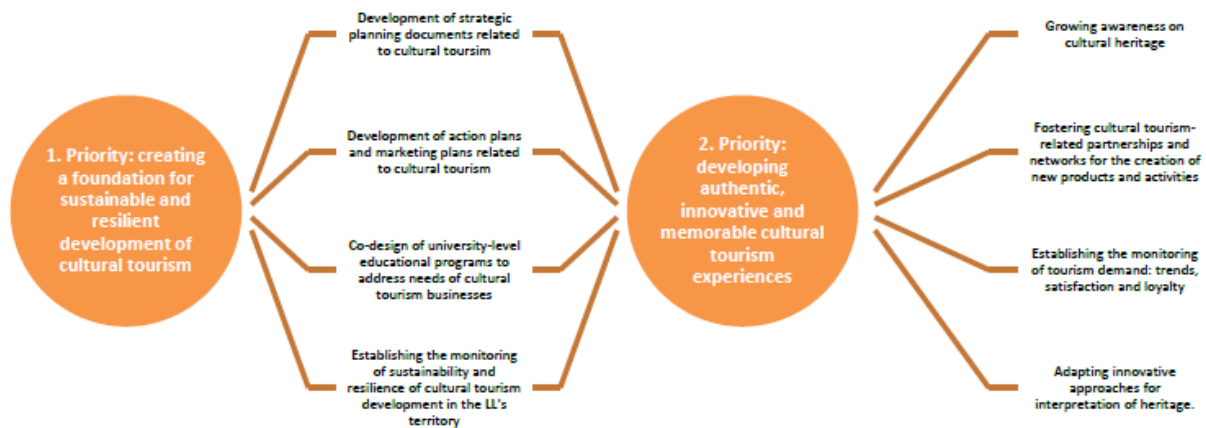


Figure 22. LL priorities and needs (interventions) stemming from the context analysis

Following the identification of two principal priorities, i.e: (1) creating a foundation for sustainable and resilient development of cultural tourism and (2) developing authentic, innovative and memorable cultural tourism experiences, a strategic participatory process involving all stakeholders and the FEBTS team was employed to evaluate the portfolio of the potential interventions and to identify critical interventions for the LL.

The most critical interventions associated with the two above-mentioned priorities that were identified by the LL participants relates to:

- Developing tailored educational programmes (targeting different stakeholder groups, i.e. academia, tourism and cultural organizations, DMOs) to support capacity development; and
- Raising awareness of relevant stakeholders involved in cultural tourism development.

It is worth mentioning that these two interventions (and the associated needs) were recognised by all LL participants as a precondition to fruitfully engage and fulfil the declared priorities.

Overall, the LL has been successful in implementing the outlined activities and to support the identification of key needs and priorities, which were realistic and relevant to the context. The LL has faced challenges such as insufficient networking and cooperation between critical relevant stakeholders, lack of awareness of heritage and cultural tourism development, and insufficient institutional support. However, these challenges were partially tackled using various SmartCulTour tools, which helped foster exchange and dialogue among local stakeholders and develop innovative solutions collaboratively.

To elaborate further, while the tools used in the LL were helpful in facilitating participatory processes, they were not sufficient to address all the challenges that the destination faces. The Split metropolitan region is a complex destination, with many interrelated factors influencing its cultural tourism development, and addressing these challenges requires more than just using tools. One major constraint in the LL was the level of stakeholder involvement. Despite efforts to engage all relevant stakeholders, some were hesitant or uninterested in participating in the LL activities. This limited the effectiveness of the tools in generating new ideas and solutions. Therefore, increasing awareness and building capacities of the local community to participate in cultural tourism value chains, including by engaging in participatory decision-making processes,

is crucial. Moreover, raising awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and sustainable tourism development and fostering local community capacities to participate in the development of the destination is essential. This requires a comprehensive approach that should involve the participation of different stakeholders, including the academia, and be sensitive towards their different needs and interests. Therefore, while the results stemming from the SmartCulTour LL experience shall be considered positive in terms of generating new ideas and solutions for cultural tourism development in Split, addressing the complex challenges of the destination requires a more comprehensive and sustained effort that involves a broader range of stakeholders and structurally builds awareness about cultural tourism's potential benefits.

5.2.3. Direct and indirect interventions designed, initiated and/or implemented

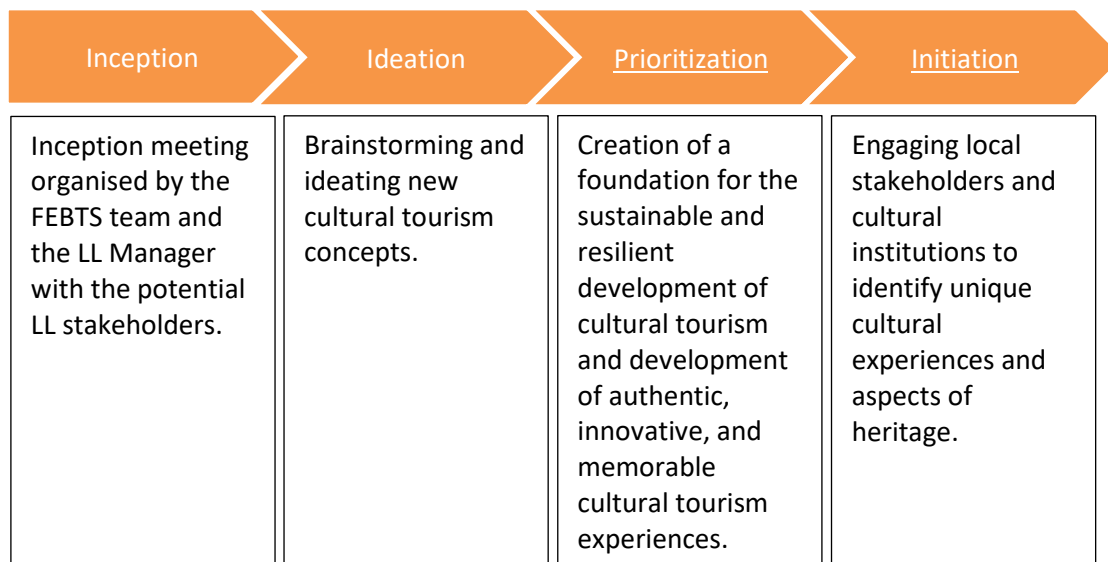


Figure 23. Process towards design of interventions

As presented in [Deliverable 6.2 - Production of abstracts and practice videos on tested intervention](#), the Split LL co-designed two smart cultural tourism interventions towards more sustainable forms of tourism at the destination level.

In Horizon 2020 projects, practice abstracts and videos are created to share information and recommendations from various stakeholders involved in the project. These materials serve as examples to potentially be replicated in different contexts. The SmartCulTour project's Task 6.4 focuses on producing practice abstracts and videos specifically related to cultural tourism. These materials highlight interventions identified by the SmartCulTour Labs that are considered interesting and insightful. The interventions can be ongoing in the region, supported by the Labs, implemented within the project, or co-designed by stakeholders for future implementation. The goal is to contribute to the sustainable development of cultural tourism and enhance the destination's sustainability and resilience.

The priority identified was the creation of a foundation for the sustainable and resilient development of cultural tourism on the territory of the LL. This priority involved co-designing university-level educational programmes to address the needs of cultural tourism businesses. The co-design process involved engaging with cultural tourism businesses to understand their specific needs and challenges and then designing educational programmes that would help address these needs and build resilience in the face of future

challenges. This intervention has not been implemented completely yet; therefore, the impacts can only be speculated on. However, it has the potential to support the development of sustainable cultural tourism in Split by building the capacities of local businesses. In this regard, what awaits FEBTS as the Split LL leading partner in the project afterlife is to find out what specific knowledge is needed by different stakeholder groups (via questionnaire or focus groups), what kind of activities should be undertaken to develop them, and how they shall be delivered. In addition, educative programmes must be created and delivered.

The second priority identified by the Split LL was the development of authentic, innovative, and memorable cultural tourism experiences, with the critical first step of raising awareness of the local cultural heritage and creativity. This priority involved engaging with local stakeholders and cultural institutions to identify unique cultural experiences and aspects of heritage that could be developed/valorised to be better presented and promoted to tourists. The co-design process involved developing strategies to create a narrative and raise awareness of these heritage aspects among local community members. Again, the intervention and the strategy still need to be implemented; therefore, the impacts could only be speculated. However, it has the potential to support sustainable cultural tourism in Split by promoting more authentic and unique experiences that are less likely to lead to overtourism.

What has been discussed among the LL members is the need to develop awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns adjusted to different groups of stakeholders (children, local population, tourism and complementary activities' employees) on cultural assets in the region and how they can be preserved and valorised through tourism.

The practice abstracts discussed above provide concrete examples of what has been done so far to implement these interventions in practice. For example, the abstract on the cultural heritage of Sinj describes how the community is involved in the creation, conservation, restoration, and reconstruction of weapons, clothing, and accessories used in the annual chivalric tournament Sinjska Alka. This intervention helps to preserve the tradition and transmit skills to future generations. The abstract also proposes the organisation of heritage interpretation workshops and the production of souvenir items related to the tradition, which could help promote sustainable tourism development and create economic opportunities for the local community. Similarly, the abstract on making traditional Easter bread in Solin describes how the local community is using culinary heritage to create tourism business opportunities and foster employment. The abstract proposes the commercialization of traditional culinary products, the organisation of culinary workshops, and the development of niche tourism. These interventions can contribute to sustainable tourism development by promoting local traditions and creating economic opportunities for the community. Potential impacts of the interventions described in the practice abstracts:

1. Making traditional Easter bread-Sirnica in Solin - the link between the past and the future

- **Economic impact:** This intervention has the potential to create economic benefits for local communities by promoting traditional food production, increasing demand for locally-sourced ingredients, and generating income for local businesses that provide services such as transportation, accommodation, and food. Additionally, the promotion of traditional food production may also attract tourists to the area thereby generating revenue from tourism-related activities.
- **Social impact:** This intervention has the potential of fostering social cohesion, bringing together local communities and creating a sense of shared cultural identity through the preservation and promotion of traditional food production. By involving local residents in the production process, this intervention can also create opportunities for strengthened social interaction and

collaboration.

- **Cultural impact:** This intervention has the potential to promote the safeguarding and valorisation of the local living heritage by showcasing traditional food production methods and recipes. By sharing this knowledge and tradition with visitors, this intervention can also raise awareness and appreciation for the local culture.
- **Environmental impact:** This intervention has the potential to promote sustainable food production practices by using locally-sourced ingredients and reducing the carbon footprint associated with transporting food over long distances.

2. The cultural heritage of Sinj: the story of Alka

- **Economic impact:** This intervention has the potential to generate economic benefits for local communities by promoting cultural tourism, attracting visitors to the area, and creating revenue for businesses that provide tourism-related services such as transportation, accommodation, and food.
- **Social impact:** This intervention has the potential to foster a sense of community and shared cultural identity by celebrating the local cultural heritage and promoting its preservation. By involving local residents in the promotion of cultural tourism, this intervention can also create opportunities for social interaction and increase appreciation of cultural diversity.
- **Cultural impact:** This intervention has the potential to raise awareness and appreciation for local cultural heritage by showcasing the story of Alka, a traditional event that has been celebrated for centuries. By sharing this knowledge with visitors, this intervention can also contribute to the preservation and celebration of the local cultural heritage.
- **Environmental impact:** This intervention has the potential to promote sustainable tourism practices by encouraging visitors to explore the area in an environmentally responsible way and by promoting the preservation of natural and cultural resources. The intervention has a low environmental impact as it primarily involves the promotion and preservation of intangible cultural heritage. However, there could be some environmental impacts related to increased tourism, such as waste management and carbon emissions from transportation. To mitigate these impacts, sustainable tourism practices should be promoted.

In terms of funding opportunities, communities sought funding predominately from local sources. However, national or EU-level sources could be explored to support the implementation of these interventions, as further outlined in Annex 15.

5.2.4. Main contextual (both success and failure) factors

5.2.4.1. Success Factors

- **Strong stakeholder engagement:** One of the main success factors for the Split LL was the active involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, including local businesses, NGOs, cultural institutions, and academic institutions. This allowed for a collaborative and inclusive approach to co-designing interventions, which ultimately led to their successful implementation.
- **Co-design process:** The co-design process was an essential element of the success of the Split LL. By involving stakeholders in the design of interventions, the LL was able to create more targeted and effective solutions meeting the needs and expectations of the local community.
- **Local ownership:** The local ownership of the LL was a crucial success factor, as it ensured that the LL's activities were rooted in the local context and aligned with local needs and priorities. This helped

build trust and support from the community, which was essential for the sustainability of the LL.

- **Diverse interventions:** The Split LL's diverse range of interventions, including both direct and indirect ones, allowed for a more comprehensive and holistic approach to sustainable cultural tourism development. This allowed to address various challenges and opportunities and create a more resilient tourism sector.
- **Transferability:** The interventions were designed with transferability in mind, meaning that they could be replicated in other cultural tourism destinations. This potential for wider adoption and replication contributes to ensure the long-term sustainability of the interventions.

5.2.4.2. Failure Factors

- **Lack of funding:** Funding was a significant challenge for the Split LL, as securing financial support for interventions was often difficult. This limited the LL's ability to implement certain interventions and, in some cases, hindered sustainability.
- **Limited infrastructure:** The lack of infrastructure, particularly in some of the rural areas of the LL, was a challenge for the LL's innovative impetus toward local development, limiting the range of possible interventions, such as the difficulty of overcoming the difficult physical accessibility to some cultural heritage sites.
- **Lack of cooperation among stakeholders:** While stakeholder engagement was a success factor for the Split LL, stakeholders had conflicting interests and priorities and were not always committed to the LL's common goals. This limited the LL's ability to implement certain interventions and created challenges in ensuring a coordinated approach to sustainable cultural tourism development.
- **Limited attention from local authorities:** The Split LL faced challenges in gaining support from local authorities, which limited the LL's capacity to access funding, secure infrastructure improvements, and create an enabling policy environment for sustainable cultural tourism development.

Overall, the success of the interventions in the Split LL depended on a combination of factors, including the active involvement of stakeholders, a focus on sustainability and resilience, and the use of innovative technologies and tools. However, failure factors, such as structural limits, lack of cooperation, and low attention from local authorities, shall also be addressed to ensure the long-term success of sustainable cultural tourism development in the destination.

5.2.5. Lessons learnt

Based on the experience of the Split LL, key lessons learned include:

- **Importance of stakeholder engagement:** The involvement and engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, businesses, and government authorities, is crucial for the success of sustainable tourism development. This requires effective communication, collaboration, and co-creation of solutions to address the challenges and opportunities of cultural tourism.
- **Emphasis on local culture and heritage:** The LL experience highlighted the importance of preserving and promoting local cultural heritage as a key factor in attracting and retaining sustainable cultural tourism. Authenticity and innovation in cultural tourism experiences were found to be crucial for enhancing visitor experiences and increasing the competitiveness of the destination.
- **Role of education and training:** The development of educational programmes and training opportunities for tourism stakeholders, including university-level programmes, was identified as a priority intervention to support sustainable cultural tourism development. This highlights the need

for lifelong learning and capacity-building efforts to enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of tourism stakeholders.

- **Importance of partnerships and collaboration:** Partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders, including public-private partnerships, were identified as essential for sustainable cultural tourism development. This requires the establishment of effective governance structures, policies, and regulations that promote collaboration and facilitate decision-making processes.
- **The LL as a tool for stakeholders' involvement, co-creation, and co-decision:** The Split LL demonstrated the effectiveness of the LL approach in addressing sustainability challenges in tourism destinations. The co-creation process ensured that the interventions were tailored to the specific needs of the destination and its stakeholders. The LL also provided a platform for stakeholders to participate in co-decision making and monitoring, which helped ensure buy-in and foster collaboration.
- **Challenges related to funding:** One of the main challenges identified was the limited availability of funding to support sustainable cultural tourism initiatives. The LL experience highlighted the need for innovative financing mechanisms, such as crowdfunding and public-private partnerships, to support sustainable cultural tourism development. While the educational programme programmes might, if organized via a transnational partnership, apply for Erasmus+ funding, improvements of visitor experiences could be covered by various regional Interreg programmes, specifically Interreg ADRIAN, Interreg Central Europe, or the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme. All of these require international consortia though. An alternative resource might be the SMP, depending on future call topics (see Annex 15 for further details).
- **Recommendations for establishing LLs in other contexts:** The Split LL experience provides valuable insights into establishing LLs in other contexts. These include:
 - a. Identifying and prioritising sustainability challenges in the destination;
 - b. Building and sustaining stakeholder engagement and ownership;
 - c. Promoting co-creation and co-decision-making;
 - d. Establishing effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and ensure accountability;
 - e. Ensuring sufficient funding and resources to sustain LL activities over the long-term.

Overall, the Split LL experience provides valuable insights into the importance of stakeholder engagement, local culture and heritage, education and training, partnerships and collaboration, and innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable cultural tourism development. These lessons can be applied to other contexts to support the development of sustainable cultural tourism practices.

5.3. Sustainability and follow-up

5.3.1. Sustainability of the outcomes and afterlife strategy for the Living Lab

The Split LL has decided on the future steps to ensure the sustainability of its outcomes in the medium to long-term. The LL's designed interventions and the changes spurred by its existence and activities have been documented in practice abstracts and videos, which will serve as a reference for future initiatives. The LL has also contributed to the creation of a network of stakeholders, who are expected to continue collaborating for implementing joint sustainable tourism practices in the destination.

In terms of the afterlife of the LL itself, there are several proposals:

- Firstly, a **transfer of ownership plan** has been discussed. The LL has been established as a collaboration between the local government, the tourism industry, and the academic community, and the plan could be to transfer ownership to a local DMO or municipality after a certain period. This would ensure that the LL continues operating even if the original LL stakeholders should step out. As already stated, the idea is to continue with the LL activities within the broader Split Smart City Hub initiative, already promoted by the Split municipality. If this was the case, the Cultural Tourism Lab would become one among other labs associated with the development of Split and its surrounding area.
- Secondly, the LL could **develop partnerships with key stakeholders in the tourism industry**, such as hotels, restaurants, and tour operators, to ensure that the interventions that have been delivered are sustained over time. These partnerships could be formalised through agreements that outline the responsibilities of each stakeholder and the benefits of continued collaboration.
- Thirdly, the LL could set up a **physical venue**, which could serve as a hub for its activities. The venue could be equipped with the necessary facilities for conducting research and experimentation, as well as hosting workshops, seminars, and other events. This physical venue would provide a sense of permanence and continuity to the LL's activities and serve as a focal point for stakeholders in the tourism industry.
- Finally, the LL could set up **networking platforms** to enable ongoing collaboration between stakeholders. These platforms include online forums, social media groups, and regular meetings and workshops. These platforms could provide a space for stakeholders to share their experiences and exchange ideas, as well as stay up-to-date with the latest developments in the tourism industry.

Overall, the Split LL could implement a range of strategies to ensure the sustainability of its outcomes and the afterlife of the LL. By building partnerships with key stakeholders, establishing a physical venue, and setting up networking platforms, the LL could create a strong foundation for ongoing collaboration and knowledge-sharing in the tourism industry.

5.3.2. Follow-up recommendations for the Living Lab

Based on the discussions, work conducted, and findings / lessons learned in the Split LL, the following follow-up recommendations can be made:

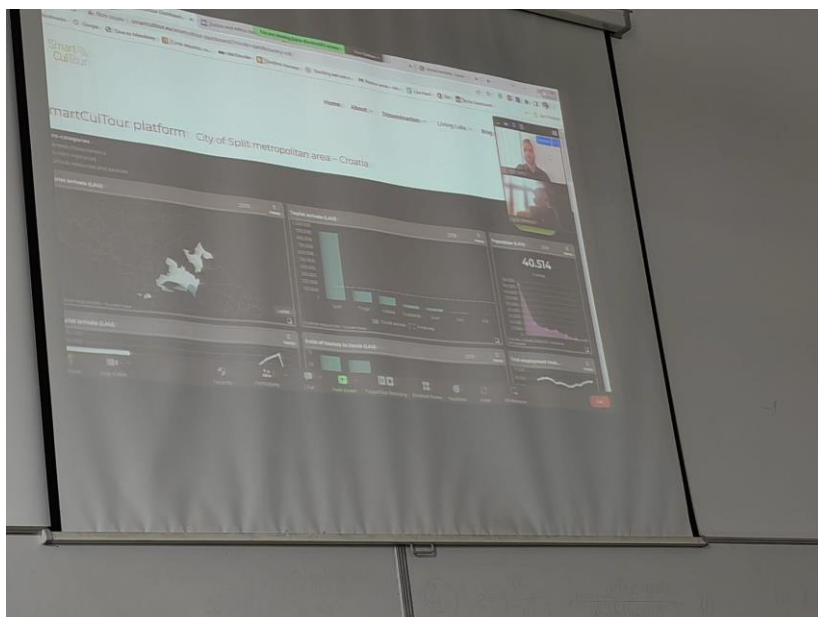
- **Foster collaboration and networking:** The Split LL should continue to foster collaboration and networking among stakeholders, including local businesses, universities, government bodies, and cultural institutions. This can be done by organising regular meetings, workshops, and events to discuss and share ideas for sustainable cultural tourism development.
- **Mobilise resources:** The LL should work towards mobilising resources at the municipal and regional level as well as from the EU sources to fund the designed interventions (see Annex 15). This could involve developing proposals for funding opportunities, partnering with local authorities and tourism organisations, and seeking out private sector investment.
- **Develop local skills and capacities:** The LL should focus on developing local skills and building capacities in areas such as sustainable tourism practices, cultural heritage preservation, and community engagement. This could involve designing and delivering training programmes, mentoring local entrepreneurs, and engaging with local schools and universities.
- **Develop educational programmes:** The Split LL should continue to co-design and implement educational programmes that help to preserve and promote local cultural heritage. These

programmes should be aimed at both tourists and locals and should be designed to increase awareness of cultural heritage's importance and promote responsible tourism.

- **Raise awareness:** The LL should continue to raise awareness among both visitors and communities on the importance of sustainable cultural tourism development. This can be done through targeted marketing campaigns, educational programmes, and community events.
- **Establishing partnerships with other LLs:** The Split LL should explore opportunities to establish partnerships with other LLs working on sustainable cultural tourism development, including the Rotterdam LL with which strong cooperation was already established. This could involve sharing knowledge, expertise, and best practices, and collaborating on joint initiatives and projects.
- **Promoting the LL concept:** The Split LL should continue to promote the LL concept to other destinations, both within Croatia and internationally. This can be done through networking events, presentations, and workshops, as well as by sharing best practices and success stories.
- **Establishing a physical venue:** The Split LL should consider establishing a physical venue, where visitors can learn more about local cultural heritage and participate in educational programmes. This can help raise awareness of the LL and its objectives and serve as a hub for stakeholder engagement and co-creation.
- **Offer Split University students to actively engage in the LL within regular curricula:** It is recommended that future LLs consider offering engagement in LL activities to university students within regular curricula. This can provide benefits for both the students and the LL. The students can gain practical experience in their field of study and contribute to the development of sustainable cultural tourism in the LL destination. Meanwhile, the LL can benefit from the fresh perspectives and ideas that the students bring, as well as potentially foster a sense of ownership and engagement from the younger generation.

A Annexes to the Split Living Lab report

Annex 7 – Activities of the Split Living Lab





Annex 8 – Cultural Tourism Interventions

- Blog-Post on recent stakeholder meeting
<http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/empowering-stakeholders-from-house-of-quality-to-educational-programs/>

06 Experiences and findings from the Rotterdam Living Lab

6.1. Brief summary of the Living Lab's workflow

6.1.1. Main activities as per the workplan

The SmartCulTour LL in Rotterdam kicked-off its activities with an inception meeting on April 15th, 2021. In order to get to know the participants and stimulate interaction among them, including exchanges on the challenges related to local cultural tourism, the Lab Manager resorted to the Q-Sort methodology and pictures as probes. The second meeting of the LL was held on June 8th, 2021, when participants were introduced to the Miro Board and the Double Diamond model. The meeting offered the opportunity to discuss the methods to be used and what neighbourhoods to focus on. The LL ended up selecting three neighbourhoods: Bospolder-Tussendijken, Hoek van Holland, and Afrikaanderwijk.

Tours with local stakeholders were thus organized between September and October 2021 to the three selected neighbourhoods, and participatory mapping was used by the participants to identify the most interesting spots, as well as which attractions / things / interventions they were hoping for. The fourth Rotterdam LL meeting was organized on November 9th, 2021. System maps, value networks, and visitor flows were presented to key partners from the three neighbourhoods, and a roundtable meeting was held to present the relevant findings and to prepare for the House of Quality meeting.

In January 2022, interviews were conducted with individual stakeholders to determine priorities of outcomes for the three districts. These interviews served as preparation for the House of Quality and SmartCulTour Game session in February, and to determine indicators of successful sustainable tourism development. As a result of the interviews, it was decided to continue with only two out of the three identified neighbourhoods, namely Bospolder-Tussendijken and Hoek van Holland. Indeed, the interviews revealed that in Afrikaanderwijk the community was not interested in developing tourism yet, so activities were halted.

House of Quality/Serious Game sessions for Hoek van Holland and Bospolder-Tussendijken were organized on March 24th and March 31st, 2022, respectively. Lab participants, i.e. policymakers, residents, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders, played the SmartCulTour serious game, with a view to develop scenarios to achieve the previously established goals. In April and May 2022, a creative session, resorting to roadmap and Ideation Washing Machine as methods, was organized per each district to build a destination design roadmap that shows which interventions could be phased in to support sustainable cultural tourism development.

Based on the roadmap session, the core LL team created a possible list of ten interventions per neighbourhood, which were then presented to various stakeholders, such as the Municipality of Rotterdam and Rotterdam Partners (local DMO)¹⁶. So far, it was unclear who could actually implement these

¹⁶ <http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/a-roadmap-for-hoek-van-holland-and-bospolder-tussendijken/>

interventions. In the Bospolder-Tussendijken neighbourhood, at the time of writing, discussions are still ongoing with entrepreneurs and Rotterdam Partners on how to actually implement some or parts of the interventions in the future. This is because the stakeholders in the neighbourhood are now more in tune with each other, and there is more clarity about the local cultural tourism development potential.

In general, during the above process, there was a continuous coordination between the LL Manager, Iris Kerst, and the various researchers from Breda University of Applied Sciences who were involved in the LL's workflow, such as Bert Smit and Ko Koens. Iris Kerst was mainly responsible for organising the day-to-day LL activities, while the researchers mainly focused on the methodology for the meetings and the SmartCulTour tools more in general.

Table 11. Overview of the Rotterdam LL's workflow

LL Meeting	Date	Stage of Double-diamond design model	Activities / Tools / Methods
Inception meeting	15-04-2021	Discover	First online meeting to get to know the participants and the challenges related to cultural tourism in Rotterdam. Tools: Q-Sort methodology and pictures as probes.
2nd meeting	08-06-2021	Discover / Define	Second online meeting where the Miro Board and the Double Diamond model were presented to the participants. Participants identified the following three neighbourhoods as the geographical scope of the LL: Bospolder-Tussendijken, Hoek van Holland and Afrikaanderwijk.
3rd meeting	September & October 2021	Discover / Define	Tours with local stakeholders to the three identified neighbourhoods to explore the opportunities related to cultural tourism. Tools: participatory mapping used by the participants to find out which spots in the neighbourhoods were the most interesting for them and which spots / things / interventions they were missing.
4th meeting	09-11-2021	Define	Presenting system maps, value networks and visitor flows to key partners for the three neighbourhoods / roundtable meeting to present findings from system maps and visitor flows to prepare for the House of Quality meeting.

5th meeting	January 2022	Define	Interviewing individual stakeholders to determine priorities of outcomes for the three districts. These interviews served as preparation for the House of Quality and the SmartCulTour Game session in February and to determine indicators of successful sustainable tourism development. As a follow-up to the interviews, it was decided to continue with only two out of the three identified neighbourhoods, i.e. Bospolder-Tussendijken and Hoek van Holland.
6th meeting	24-03-2022 & 31-03-2022	Develop	Tools: House of Quality / Serious Game: Hoek van Holland & Bospolder-Tussendijken → the SmartCulTour serious Game was played together with policymakers, residents, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders, to develop scenarios to achieve the previously established goals for Hoek van Holland.
7th meeting	14-04-2022 & 18-05-2022	Develop	A creative session is organised per district to build a destination design roadmap that shows which interventions could be phased in to achieve sustainable cultural tourism. Tools: roadmap & Ideation Washing Machine.
8th meeting	May 2022 until now	Deliver	Based on the roadmap session, the core LL team created a possible list of ten interventions per neighbourhood. These interventions were presented to various stakeholders such as the Municipality of Rotterdam and Rotterdam Partners.

In addition to the above-listed LL's meetings, the capacity-building activity on "Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destination Management" delivered by UNESCO, along with the exchange visit learnings with both the Vicenza and Split LLs, also provided important opportunities for networking and for gaining further insights into the Rotterdam context and its cultural tourism potential.

- Exchange visit Learning hosted by the Split LL: 11-13 May 2022
- Exchange visit Learning hosted by the Rotterdam LL: 1-3 June 2022
- Exchange visit Learning hosted by the Vicenza LL: 12-14 October 2022
- UNESCO's Capacity-building Workshop: 20 October 2022

6.1.2. Key stakeholders

Table 12. List of participants to the Rotterdam LL

Nº	Role	Organization
Lab Managers / SmartCulTour partners		
1.	Iris Kerst, Lab Manager	Inholland University of Applied Sciences
2.	Ko Koens, Researcher / Lab Manager	Breda University of Applied Sciences
3.	Bert Smit, Researcher / Method developer	Breda University of Applied Sciences
4.	Jessika Sabil- Weeber, Researcher / Workshop / Method developer	Breda University of Applied Sciences
5.	Jeroen Klijs, Researcher	Breda University of Applied Sciences
6.	Simone Moretti, Researcher	Breda University of Applied Sciences
7.	Frans Melissen, Researcher	Breda University of Applied Sciences
8.	Representative of local DMO	Rotterdam Partners; DMO
LL Participants / Local stakeholders		
9.	Connector / inhabitant of Bospolder-Tussendijken	Rotterdam Partners: DMO
10.	Representative of social design company	Arttenders
11.	Social designer	Arttenders
12.	Cultural Director	Cultuur Concreet
13.	Tourism policy officer	Municipality of Rotterdam
14.	Hospitality policy officer	Municipality of Rotterdam
15.	Built environment policy officer	Municipality of Rotterdam
16.	Culture policy officer	Municipality of Rotterdam
17.	Neighbourhood manager	Municipality of Rotterdam
18.	Project leader	Rotterdam Festivals
19.	Director of cultural Knowledge Centre with regards to cultural heritage	Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed Rotterdam
20.	Tour guide	De Rotterdam Tours
21.	Local entrepreneur	Curious Typhoon Studio
22.	Hospitality Concept Designer	Entrepreneur
23.	Researcher/architect	Inholland University of Applied Sciences
24.	Project manager	Inholland University of Applied Sciences
25.	Student and resident	Inholland University of Applied Sciences
26.	Student	Breda University of Applied Sciences

During the Rotterdam LL cycle, a diverse range of stakeholders were involved both from the public and private sectors, spanning civil society members, inhabitants, project leaders, cultural directors, policy officers, district directors, entrepreneurs, marketers and students. The stakeholders' experiences and expertise are equally diverse and include social design, cultural events, urban planning, art centres, film festivals, tourism marketing, and applied sciences. These stakeholders were able to step in and out from the LL at every moment of the LL cycle, according to their specific interests and based on each meeting's agenda.

The Municipality of Rotterdam plays a crucial role in the LL as it is responsible for urban planning, tourism management, and cultural policies in Rotterdam. Other stakeholders, including Rotterdam Partners and Rotterdam Festivals, work closely with the municipality to promote cultural tourism and urban leisure activities in the city. Besides, local inhabitants, entrepreneurs, and students provide valuable insights into the needs and aspirations of the community and the potential for sustainable tourism development. Representatives from the Municipality of Rotterdam and Rotterdam Partners were involved in every LL meeting.

Throughout the LL's lifecycle, there were varied participation dynamics, with stakeholders stepping in and out at different stages. For example, the first meeting was open to all interested parties, but subsequent meetings involved a more specific group of stakeholders, notably comprising the municipality of Rotterdam and Rotterdam Partners. The LL also established an internal governance system with differentiated roles for different categories of participating stakeholders. The stakeholder's roles varied from merely providing insights (entrepreneurs from the two neighbourhoods) to actively contributing to the co-creation of innovative solutions and the co-design of tourism interventions.

The LL would have benefited from additional stakeholders, such as transport companies, tour operators, and hospitality businesses, as well as from a greater participation from the local inhabitants. Since the invitation to join the LL was extended to the widest possible audience, the reason for their non-participation could be identified in the perception that the LL did not address their interests. Conversely, their participation could have brought added value to the LL's outcome, especially in developing sustainable tourism strategies that are inclusive and economically viable.

6.1.3. SmartCulTour tools and methods

6.1.3.1. Inception stage

In the Rotterdam LL, the following tools and methods were implemented during the inception stage:

- **Pictures as probes:** This tool was effective in facilitating discussions and promoting active participation from the stakeholders. It helped to identify preferences, perceptions, and attitudes toward tourism development in the city. By using images, the team was able to create a common ground for discussion and enable people to express their ideas and opinions in a more visual and tangible way.
- **Q-Sort methodology:** This method helped to identify and rank stakeholders' needs and priorities in Bospolder-Tussendijken and Hoek van Holland, structuring the data collected during LL meetings and developing a shared understanding of stakeholders' expectations. Through stakeholder involvement, it was ensured that their voices were heard and that their needs were considered in the project's planning and decision-making processes.

6.1.3.2. Exploration stage

In the exploration stage, the following tools and methods were utilised:

- **Stakeholder mapping:** This tool identified key actors and their roles in the tourism development process, helping understand the complexity of the stakeholders' network and develop appropriate strategies for engagement and communication. This was useful to understand the complexity of the stakeholders' network and to develop appropriate strategies for engagement and communication. It was also beneficial to identify potential conflicts and areas of collaboration among the stakeholders.

- **Visitor flow mapping:** This method visualised the movements and activities of tourists in the city, identifying main attractions, points of interest, and areas of concentration. It provided valuable information for improving the visitor experience and managing overcrowding. The stakeholders in Hoek van Holland found this tool very useful as it provided them with insight into the different visitor flows and what margin for sustainable change was still to be explored.

6.1.3.3. Design-oriented research stage

During the design-oriented research stage, the following tools and methods were employed:

- **Dynamic House of Quality:** The Dynamic House of Quality was used to evaluate the quality of tourist services and identify areas for improvement. This tool helped identify the most important factors for the stakeholders in the tourism sector and to prioritise their needs and preferences. Among the stakeholders, this tool was perceived as the most complex, as it requires a time-consuming effort to jointly fill out an Excel spreadsheet. This tool turned out to be less dynamic than the other ones.
- **SmartCulTour Game:** To engage stakeholders in a fun and interactive way, the SmartCulTour Game was used. This serious game allowed the simulation of different scenarios and evaluate their impact on the tourism industry and the city. It contributed to fostering dialogue and collaboration among the stakeholders and provided a platform for them to share their views and ideas while looking at pressing issues from a new perspective.
- **Ideation washing machine:** The ideation washing machine was used to generate creative and innovative ideas for tourism development in the two neighbourhoods. This tool encouraged brainstorming and spurred the exploration of new possibilities for enhancing the visitor experience. By involving stakeholders in this process, it was possible to create a shared vision for the future of tourism in the neighbourhoods with out-of-the-box ideas.

6.1.3.4. Elaboration stage

In the elaboration stage, the following tools and methods were utilised:

The **destination design roadmap** was used to develop a strategic plan for tourism development in the city. This tool helped identify the most critical steps for achieving the set objectives and prioritizing relevant actions. By involving stakeholders in this process, it was ensured that the plan was aligned with their needs and expectations and that they were committed to its implementation. For each neighbourhood, the top ten list of interventions was presented with a proposed timeline. A year later, the Rotterdam LL is currently working together with an entrepreneur and someone from Rotterdam Partners to launch some interventions in Bospolder-Tussendijken.

Overall, the SmartCulTour tools and methods were found to be very useful in engaging stakeholders and achieving the project's objectives. They helped structure the LL meetings, clearly identify stakeholders' needs and priorities, visualise tourist flows and activities, evaluate the quality of tourist services, generate creative ideas, and develop a strategic vision for the targeted areas.

6.2. Results and impact

6.2.1. Main challenges in achieving the expected results

The Rotterdam LL has faced several core challenges during its lifecycle, which have impacted its ability to achieve the expected results. Some of these challenges are intrinsic to the LL's nature and dynamics, while

others are related to the broader context of the destination and the SmartCulTour project.

One of the main challenges faced by the LL was related to the engagement and participation of stakeholders. Despite efforts to involve a diverse range of stakeholders in the LL, some groups were still underrepresented or not sufficiently engaged. This limited the potential for exchange and collaboration among stakeholders and hindered the development of sustainable cultural tourism initiatives in the destination. To tackle this challenge, the LL team worked on developing more targeted and effective communication strategies as well as implementing measures to ensure equal participation and involvement of all stakeholders. Nevertheless, this did not result in the anticipated broadened and diversified range of stakeholders.

Another challenge faced by the LL was related to funding and resource limitations. Due to budget constraints, planned interventions were postponed, which affected the LL's ability to fully realise its potential. One of the main challenges was the lack of ownership and budget. Some stakeholders were not fully committed to the LL project, and they were not willing to invest resources in the project. This made it difficult to secure funding, which in turn limited the activities that the LL could undertake. The lack of ownership also made it difficult to establish clear responsibilities and accountabilities for the project, which affected the implementation of activities.

An additional challenge was stakeholders' finger pointing at each other. The different stakeholders had their own interests and priorities, and they were not always aligned with the overall objectives of the LL project. This made it difficult to establish a common vision and strategy for the project, as well as to allocate responsibilities and resources effectively. As a result, progress was often limited, and the LL was not able to achieve the stage where we could implement some of the interventions. As a lesson learnt, it would be helpful to reserve some budget at the beginning of a project like SmartCulTour so as to have some seed funds to kick-off pilot interventions.

Overall, the LL team adopted a proactive and adaptive approach to tackle these challenges, seeking to identify and address potential obstacles before they could impact the LL's progress.

6.2.2. Main results achieved compared to the set objectives

In the context of Work Package 6, Deliverable 6.1. provides the specific Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Rotterdam LL (LL), as follows:

Objective 1: Set up a community of practice and facilitate a bi-directional flow of information among multi-actor communities.

Result: The project has contributed to building a community of practice, particularly in the Hoek van Holland region, where SmartCulTour was accompanied by a student project and follow-up work was done to engage the community. In Bospolder-Tussendijken, community-building was more difficult, albeit the Lab continues to be active here and the community appears to be coming together.

Objective 2: Develop capacities, explore innovative solutions, and design interventions for leveraging cultural tourism at the destination level.

Result: Several innovative solutions and design interventions were developed, tested in the Lab, and then included in the SmartCulTour Toolkit (WP7). Stakeholders enjoyed the activities and noted they enriched their perspective with regard to cultural tourism. They particularly enjoyed playful tools that gave them direct feedback, but they could also see the value of other tools.

Objective 3: Identify success and failure factors, as well as best practices to be replicated in other contexts.

Result: The project has sought to be honest and open with regard to success and failure factors, both during the project and in presentations and academic outputs. The LL experiences were discussed at the annual meeting of the NBTC, focusing on the learning experiences rather than just successes. This approach was appreciated by the participants.

Objective 4: Provide input and feedback to other Work Packages of the SmartCulTour project, testing and trialling service-design and arts-based methods, decision-support tools, and capacity-building tools.

Result: The project provided input and feedback to other Work Packages of the SmartCulTour project, testing and trialling service-design and arts-based methods, decision-support, and capacity-building tools. However, the use of the developed Decision Support System (DSS) was not possible due to limited interest and the timing of its completion.

Objective 5: Bring together various stakeholders and use ideas of co-design and participation to create a shared vision for the development of place-related heritage.

Result: The LL aimed to bring together various stakeholders and use co-design and participation ideas to create a shared vision for the development of place-related heritage. However, stakeholders' capacity and willingness to take joint ownership were difficult to develop, and a full set of interventions could not be designed within the project timeline.

Objective 6: Design new cultural tourism products, experiences, and visitor flows that enrich the city and are in line with the local way of life.

Result: The Lab developed new cultural tourism products, experiences, and visitor flows that enrich the city and are in line with the local way of life. Stakeholders enjoyed these activities and noted their value in enhancing cultural tourism perspectives.

Objective 7: Explore opportunities to develop new cultural tourism products that encompass 'modern' culture (e.g., street art, architecture, multiculturalism) and benefit local communities.

Result: The Lab explored opportunities to develop new cultural tourism products encompassing 'modern' culture and benefiting local communities. This included activities related to street art, architecture, multiculturalism, and other aspects of contemporary culture.

Objective 8: Identify existing thresholds for successful development, specifically in terms of marketing, cultural heritage supply, and accessibility.

Result: The Lab aimed to identify existing thresholds for successful development in terms of marketing, cultural heritage supply, and accessibility. However, specific results related to this objective were not mentioned in the provided text.

Overall, the Rotterdam LL has made progress towards achieving its objectives, although there is room for improvement. The Lab continues to exist and grow, applying for ENOLL certification to become an EU-recognised LL.

6.2.3. Direct and indirect interventions designed, initiated and/or implemented

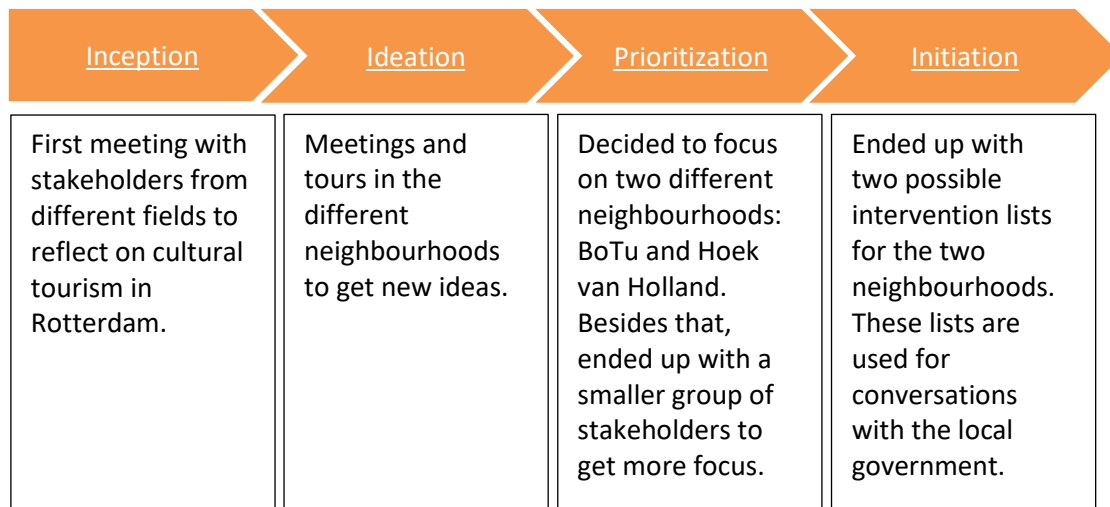


Figure 24. Process towards design of interventions

Indirect intervention: Planning for the future of Bospolder-Tussendijken & Hoek van Holland

The co-design process leading to the identification / design of relevant interventions, their implementation, their impact, and potential opportunities for funding, was initiated to address challenges faced by the Bospolder-Tussendijken and Hoek van Holland neighbourhoods in terms of tourism development and tourism valorisation of cultural resources. The challenges identified include a lack of collaboration among different stakeholders, missing elements from the FAITH Model (Facilities, Accommodation, Infrastructure, Transport, Hospitality), and the lack of an overview of both intangible and tangible cultural resources per neighbourhood. The objective of the intervention was to create a roadmap and planning for the future of the neighbourhoods, outlining the next steps that shall be taken for sustainable cultural tourism development. At this stage, we could already see that the implementation of direct interventions couldn't work.

Direct interventions

To implement direct interventions, financial resources are necessary. The resources needed for implementation depend on the idea and the involved stakeholders. The government or a joint group of entrepreneurs can be responsible for funding the next step. The skills and expertise necessary to design, plan, and implement the intervention and reach the desired objectives include having the right mix of stakeholders, enough ideas for the future, and being in the last phase of the co-creation/design thinking process. One person or organisation should lead, and another should actively join the conversation with the stakeholders to ensure that their opinions and ideas are included, and we can continue our ideas from the roadmap to the real world. It is important to make sure that, for every idea on the roadmap, there is someone responsible for it.

Creating an overview of the required next steps for cultural tourism development in the neighbourhoods will positively affect stakeholders involved in the co-creation process, as they could have a significant economic impact in the future. Impacts like the number of tourists, opportunities for locals, and public expenditure in cultural tourism can be taken into consideration while creating a roadmap for the future. We can now see that the roadmap-list that was designed is actually going to be used, as we engaged in conversation with the right stakeholders, and the time has actually come to do something with the recommendations produced in

the previous year.

6.2.4. Lessons learnt

The main lessons learned from the LL's experience in the context of sustainable cultural tourism development include:

- **Importance of collaboration and networking:** The LL's experience has highlighted the importance of collaboration and networking among different stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism development. The LL provided a platform for stakeholders to work together, share ideas, and develop joint strategies for sustainable cultural tourism development.
- **Need for improved tourism-related services and facilities:** The LL's experience has emphasised the need for improved tourism-related services and facilities. This includes enhancing the quality of accommodation, transportation, and other services for tourists, as well as developing new and innovative tourism products that are environmentally and socially sustainable.
- **Focus on sustainable cultural tourism development:** The LL's experience has emphasised the importance of focusing on sustainable cultural tourism development. This means developing tourism activities that respect and promote local cultural heritage, traditions, and values, while minimising negative impacts on the environment and local communities.
- **LL as a tool for stakeholder involvement and co-creation:** The LL's experience has shown that the LL can be an effective tool for stakeholder involvement, co-creation, and co-decision-making. The LL provided a platform for local communities, businesses, NGOs, and government agencies to work together and develop joint strategies for sustainable cultural tourism development.
- **Importance of monitoring and evaluation:** The LL's experience has emphasised the importance of monitoring and evaluation in sustainable tourism development. Regular monitoring and evaluation of tourism activities and their impacts can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that tourism development is socially, culturally, and environmentally sustainable.
- **Our biggest lesson:** It is crucial to determine the necessary resources, including both financial and human capacity, before the start of a LL in order to effectively implement interventions. Without a clear understanding of the required resources and division of roles and responsibilities among involved actors, it is difficult to plan and execute sustainable solutions that will meet the needs of the community.

Financial resources are needed to fund the various activities and interventions that will be undertaken within the LL. This includes funding for equipment, materials, and personnel. Without adequate funding, it will be challenging to carry out the planned activities, and the LL may not be able to achieve its intended outcomes.

Human capacity is also essential for the success of a LL. The LL requires individuals with different skills and expertise to be involved in various stages of the process. For instance, community members may have valuable insights into the needs and challenges of the local area, while academics and researchers can provide technical expertise and data analysis. Therefore, it is essential to identify the necessary roles and expertise required for the LL and ensure that the necessary human resources are available.

6.3. Sustainability and follow-up

6.3.1. Sustainability of the outcomes and afterlife strategy for the Living Lab

The Rotterdam LL was designed with sustainability in mind, not only in terms of the interventions that were implemented but also in terms of the Lab's afterlife. To ensure the longevity of the LL's outcomes, a number of strategies were put in place.

Firstly, partnerships were formed with local stakeholders, including businesses, community organisations, and the municipality, to ensure their continued involvement and ownership of the outcomes. This helped to ensure that the interventions implemented by the LL were integrated into the daily operations and practices of the stakeholders.

Secondly, the LL worked to develop the capacity of local stakeholders to continue the work beyond the lifetime of the LL. This included training and capacity-building activities, such as workshops on sustainable tourism practises and co-creation methodologies.

Thirdly, the LL established a physical venue, the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Rotterdam, which continues to serve as a hub for co-creation and experimentation in the field of sustainable tourism. This space has become a central point for networking and collaboration between stakeholders and continues to attract new partners. Besides that, Inholland University of Applied Sciences is very active in this space, not only in terms of educational tracks, but also by thriving to find new European research projects.

Overall, the sustainability strategy of the Rotterdam LL focused on developing the capacity of local stakeholders, establishing partnerships, and creating physical and virtual spaces for continued collaboration and experimentation. The 'transfer of ownership' to the Urban Leisure & Tourism Lab Rotterdam ensured the continuation of the LL's legacy and its impact on sustainable tourism development in the city.

6.3.2. Follow-up recommendations for the Living Lab

Regarding the learning process during the SmartCulTour project, the following recommendations for the future of the Rotterdam LL can be given to the team and stakeholders:

- **Strengthen Community Engagement:** Continue efforts to build a community of practice by actively engaging stakeholders and fostering a bi-directional flow of information. Encourage participation from diverse multi-actor communities and ensure their voices are heard throughout the project. For example, the voices of children from the different neighbourhoods were not incorporated into SmartCulTour.
- **Enhance Stakeholder Involvement:** Expand the use of tools and methods that promote stakeholder engagement, such as "Pictures as Probes" and the "Q-Sort methodology." These tools proved effective in facilitating discussions and capturing stakeholders' preferences, perceptions, and attitudes. Consider adapting these tools for different stages of the project to maintain stakeholder involvement and ownership. From different stakeholders in Rotterdam, we noticed the need to come up with new ways of participation.
- **Improve Stakeholder Mapping:** Further develop the stakeholder mapping tool to gain a comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders' network. Identify key actors, their roles, and

potential areas of collaboration or conflict. This will help in devising effective strategies for engagement, communication, and collaboration. The field of stakeholders is changing constantly, that's why we need to map the stakeholders of the Rotterdam LL more often.

- **Refine Visitor Flow Mapping:** Continue using visitor flow mapping to visualise the movements and activities of tourists in the city. This information is valuable for improving the visitor experience, managing overcrowding, and identifying opportunities for sustainable change. Regularly update and analyse the visitor flow data to make informed decisions regarding tourism development. This is something that we want to deepen for Bospolder-Tussendijken in a new research project.
- **Foster Creativity and Innovation:** Continue utilising tools like the SmartCulTour Game and the Ideation Washing Machine to foster creativity, generate innovative ideas, and encourage out-of-the-box thinking. These tools have proven effective in engaging stakeholders and developing a shared vision for the future of tourism. Consider adapting and expanding these tools to involve a wider range of participants and increase their impact to make sure participation fatigue won't appear. A term that we hear often here in Rotterdam.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Strengthen collaborations with relevant organisations, local businesses, and community representatives. Forge partnerships that can contribute to the implementation of interventions and leverage the potential of cultural tourism. Engage with Rotterdam Partners, entrepreneurs, and other key stakeholders to enhance the development and execution of interventions identified through the LL process. And make sure that it is clear from the beginning that there is enough time and financial resources to really test interventions.
- **Establish Sustainable Governance:** Consider establishing a sustainable governance structure for the Rotterdam LL to ensure its long-term viability. This includes securing funding, defining roles and responsibilities, and creating mechanisms for ongoing collaboration, knowledge exchange, and decision-making. This is something that we are looking into while we are preparing our application for the European LL network.

By implementing these recommendations, the Rotterdam LL can further enhance its effectiveness in engaging stakeholders, generating innovative ideas, and achieving the objectives of the SmartCulTour project.

A Annexes to the Rotterdam Living Lab report

Annex 9 - Links

- Blog Post on the Rotterdam LL activities
<https://www.tourismlabrotterdam.nl/type/europees-project/>
- Blog-Post on the roadmap for Hoek-van-Holland and Bospolder-Tussendijken
<http://www.SmartCulTour.eu/a-roadmap-for-hoek-van-holland-and-bospolder-tussendijken/>

Annex 10 - Strategic roadmap session for Hoek-van-Holland Bospolder-Tussendijken

1) Roadmap session in Bospolder-Tussendijken



2) Roadmap session in Hoek van Holland

07 Experiences and findings from the Vicenza Living Lab

7.1. Brief summary of the Living Lab's workflow

7.1.1. Main activities as per the workplan

The launch of the SmartCulTour project immediately found broad consensus and support from the municipality, finding a viable institutional reference to involve a wider pool of stakeholders, many of whom were already aligned with the previous municipal initiative *#CittàBellissima*¹⁷. The aim was to implement a broader reflection on the issues of culture, tourism and key factors of the tourism and cultural offer system of the city of Vicenza. For this reason, an evaluative approach was followed through mapping tools and apt to record inputs and reflections.

Having created a shared knowledge base on the project's cornerstones, the focus shifted towards greater stakeholder engagement and comparison with other categories (e.g., Managers / Owners / Operators of (components of) UNESCO's designated sites, tourism-related professionals). This made it possible to use more qualitative tools for collecting feedback and visualising opportunities, albeit finding initial difficulty in the use of such tools by tourism stakeholders. In this regard, the use of the SmartCulTour Platform was introduced to facilitate the process, which was followed by targeted workshops for conducting interviews and administering questionnaires to tourists.

The availability of data prompted the LL's data-driven approach, reflecting on the quality of information they can provide, and how they can help better understand cultural tourism dynamics and devise relevant strategies for its sustainable development. In this case, the SmartCulTour Platform became the pivot for visualizing and sharing these data, bringing together the stakeholders involved so far. WP7 tools were resorted to for fostering the participatory approach leading to the creation of an initial focus group, aiming to broaden the tourism branding of Vicenza beyond the Palladian image. This activity was designed by cultural associations and stakeholders and directed first to the audience of local players, through the creation of promotional videos concerning more cross-cutting cultural aspects of the city. Basically, it was intended to work towards a new awareness and sensitization of an (often intangible) cultural heritage not frequently understood as a possible tourism lever.

Thanks to stakeholders' active participation, it was possible to proceed with the creation of three focus groups dedicated to different cultural aspects related to sustainable tourism development. Thus, while maintaining the theme related to the city's enormous architectural heritage (thus devoting itself to a greater dissemination of secondary events and a cultural-historical itinerary that goes beyond the Palladian Renaissance architectural strand alone), it was also explored how culinary aspects related to food and wine may be an important driver for tourism development in Vicenza. For this reason, there was an attempt to reach out to operators and entrepreneurs related to this sector, finding an important gap in systematisation,

¹⁷ *#CittàBellissima* initiative was a participatory process promoted by the Municipality of Vicenza from 2020 as a separate project to candidate the city as Italian Capital of Culture 2024. It included several working tables, among which one was focused on cultural tourism. With the launch of *SmartCulTour* project, the LL of Vicenza took its root within this context, facing cultural tourism discussion based on what was previously addressed.

communication, and training in tourism matters. A third group considered the importance of Vicenza's industrial hub, which attracts a niche of *bleisure* tourism. It was found that, in recent years, many companies have promoted joint cultural offerings for their clients, materialising the LL's effort to reinforce networking beyond individualism.

In the pursuit of these objectives, the *International Library La Vigna* was identified as having the potential to become a pole for research and meeting for all the involved players. For several years, the library has been managing historical archives of some local companies and preserving an exclusive collection of texts on Italian and local culinary culture. Initial activities - privately financed - have led to the use of *Spazio Scarpa* for public events and outreach efforts supporting training initiatives, and small grants for the restoration of historical texts and cultural works.

In general, the last two meetings (see Table 13) were aimed at identifying needs related to this type of activity and supporting UNESCO's values and principles in view of its capacity-building activity, which raised attention on the key role of interpretation and the usefulness of a dedicated centre for both local stakeholders and tourists. In response, *Palazzo Valmarana Ai Nani* laid the groundwork for an evolution of the existing cultural network involving Palladian assets and shareholders, suggesting joining forces for the set-up of a Visitor Centre, and offering itself as an exchange hub for the various cultural stakeholders.

Table 13. Overview of the Vicenza LL's workflow

LL Meeting	Date	Activities / Tools / Methods
1st Preparatory meeting	17 th September 2020	<p><i>Type and scope of the activities</i></p> <p>Round table at the Municipality of Vicenza to introduce the SmartCulTour project and connect it with the already existing table on cultural tourism within the initiative “#CittàBellissima” promoted by the Municipality.</p> <p>Brainstorming on culture, tourism, and attractiveness of the city to detect determinants of Vicenza's core attractiveness and differentiation elements.</p> <p><i>Attendances</i></p> <p>Main stakeholders involved were part of the cultural sector, among them: public authorities, Universities, Research centre and VET, BSOs, Cultural Stakeholders (Museums, Palladian Office, Libraries, Theatres, Festivals, Architects, etc.), communication and marketing experts.</p> <p><i>Tools and methods</i></p> <p>Brainstorming, Resources and Value Map, Stakeholders mapping and value networks.</p>
2nd Inception meeting	15 th March 2021	<p><i>Type and scope of the activities</i></p> <p>Online workshop to introduce the SmartCulTour LL and its objectives. The main scope and programme were co-designed with participating stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Attendances</i></p> <p>Managers of (components of) UNESCO's designated sites (owners of villas, palaces, network of owners), public authorities, tourism guides and travel operators, students, civic society associations, professionals, culture stakeholders.</p>

		<i>Tools and methods</i> Brainstorming, Tree of Opportunities (Miro), Q-Sort
3 rd meeting	12 th April 2021	<i>Type and scope of the activity</i> Roundtable/online webinar to introduce the SmartCulTour Platform, sharing knowledge and good practices to conceptualise ideas and plan the next phase of co-creation. <i>Attendances</i> Managers of (components of) UNESCO's designated sites (owners of villas, Palaces, network of owners), Public Authority, Tourism guides and Travel Operators, Students, Civic society associations, professionals, culture stakeholders. <i>Tools and methods</i> SmartCulTour Platform
4 th meeting	18-25 th October 2021	<i>Type and scope of the activity</i> Series of workshops in the city of Vicenza to interview tourists despite the pandemic context. <i>Attendances</i> Students, tourism professionals, and cultural stakeholders. <i>Tools and methods</i> Surveys/interviews (100+ answers gathered and analysed), adaptation of personas tools.
5 th meeting	6 th December 2021	<i>Type and scope of the activity</i> Online workshop: Data interpretation to build a roadmap for sustainable cultural tourism development in Vicenza. The main questions addressed during the online workshop were: <i>What can data and big data teach us? How can we develop cultural tourism with a knowledge-based approach, through the use of the SmartCulTour Platform?</i> Reflection about how to: (i) analyse data collected via the interviews, (ii) understand what these data tell us (iii) reflecting on cultural tourism development, placing visitors at the core of the strategy. <i>Attendances</i> Public authority, tourism guides and travel operators, civil society associations, professionals, cultural stakeholders. <i>Tools and methods</i> SmartCulTour Platform
6 th meeting	30 th March 2022	<i>Type and scope of the activity</i> First experimental focus group to co-design a tourism promotional video, aimed at raising awareness of Vicenza's hidden cultural heritage by connecting art, music, dance, literature, and architecture. <i>Attendances</i> Cultural associations (dance, music, art), managers of cultural assets / sites, library. <i>Tools and methods</i> Sticky notes sorting game, storyboard.

7 th meeting	May -June 2022	<p><i>Type and scope of the activity</i></p> <p>Series of focus groups to co design the proposal for sustainable and smart cultural tourism development, addressing the following three main topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vicenza: city of architecture ▪ The culture of food and wine ▪ Industrial Tourism <p><i>Attendances</i></p> <p>Cultural associations (e.g., Palladian Routes), heritage owners, architects, food and wine companies and consortiums, libraries, corporate museums, and company archives.</p> <p><i>Tools and methods</i></p> <p>Systems mapping</p>
8 th meeting	September 2022	<p><i>Type and scope of the activity</i></p> <p>Series of meetings to develop the following LL's activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ La Vigna Library: the knowledge generates innovation for a <i>Food Culture and Tourism</i> development (synergies with Cities 2030 project) ▪ Palladian Routes at Palazzo Valmarana: Evolving the Palladian Visitor Centre <p>Some meetings were also used to prepare the ground for UNESCO's Capacity-Building activity in the Vicenza LL¹⁸.</p> <p><i>Attendances</i></p> <p>Cultural associations, heritage owners, architects, food and wine companies and consortiums, libraries.</p> <p><i>Tools and methods</i></p> <p>Design thinking, Honeycomb mapping</p>

7.1.2. Key stakeholders

Table 14. List of participants to the Vicenza LL

Category	Name of organization	Period of participation
Public authority	Municipality of Vicenza	Since the preparatory meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Private sector (cultural heritage site)	Palazzo Valmarana (Vittor Luigi Braga Rosa)	From the inception meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Private sector (cultural heritage site)	Villa Valmarana ai Nani	From the inception meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Manager	Palladian Routes : Network of Palladian Villas	From the inception meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
University	IUAV University (researchers)	From the beginning until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
University	University of Vicenza	Since the preparatory meeting until the 3 rd

¹⁸ See [UNESCO builds capacity for sustainable cultural tourism in the SmartCulTour LLoratories](#)

		meeting
Cultural organization	Vicenza Museum Network	Preparation meeting
Cultural organization	Bertoliana Library	Preparation meeting
Cultural organization	International Library La Vigna	Since the preparatory meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Cultural Company (architecture/festival)	Gabbiani / Dedalus Minosse	From the preparation meeting until the focus group
Tourist guides	Tourist guides / We Guide / Associazione Guide Turistiche	From the inception meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Travel and event	Maltauro Travel Designer, event organizations	Since the preparatory meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Other	Federazione Ciclismo Veneto	Since the inception meeting until the 5 th meeting
Travel	Association of European Bus Operators	Since the inception meeting until the 5 th meeting
Travel Agencies	Gentes Viaggi	Since the 3 rd meeting until the 5 th meeting
Cultural Association	Itinerari Letterari	From the inception meeting until the 5 th meeting
Civic society organization	Associazione vicentini nel mondo	From the inception meeting until the 5 th meeting
Civic society organization	WIN Woman Association	From the inception meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Architects	Architects	From the inception meeting until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Companies Museums	Companies' museums	Since the focus groups until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Wine companies	Consorzio Berici	Since the focus groups until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
Food companies	Food companies / restaurants / chefs	Since the focus groups until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop
VET	ITS turismo	Since the focus groups until the last activity, including UNESCO's capacity-building workshop

7.1.2.1. Participation dynamics within the Living Lab

At the beginning of the LL, several stakeholders potentially interested in the project and its implementation were involved. However, only a part of them showed real interest in pursuing the overall project's results and attending related activities until the end. Participation turned out to be fragmented for various reasons.

One reason might be the different cultural participatory pathways' management. The LL has indeed followed the evolution of multiple participatory pathways related to the cultural matrix, with a non-existent and/or ineffective network at its basis. The proposed cultural participatory pathways also crossed different timelines challenging the initial implementation of the Vicenza LL's roadmap.

Then, the course of the SmartCulTour project was perceived by some stakeholders as too long and protracted, causing demotivation, disengagement, loss of focus, resources, and potential stakeholders. To work in the best possible way, it was therefore decided to establish an internal “governance system” (see Figure 25) based on the three main focus groups agreed upon during the 7th meeting, namely: *Vicenza as the City of Architecture*, its *Food and Wine Culture*, and its *Industrial Tourism*. Based on these three working tables, participating stakeholders co-designed proposals for sustainable and smart cultural tourism development for the city of Vicenza.

The below figure shows participating stakeholders divided according to their own field of cultural tourism concern. Starting from the outermost circle, we can see cultural associations and tourism organizations, the blue circle identifies other relevant cultural associations mainly related to tangible cultural heritage, then food and wine companies; in the middle, as core reference point for all mentioned participating stakeholders’, we have the *International Library La Vigna*, Ca’ Foscari University and the Municipality of Vicenza coordinating the overall governance of the LL.

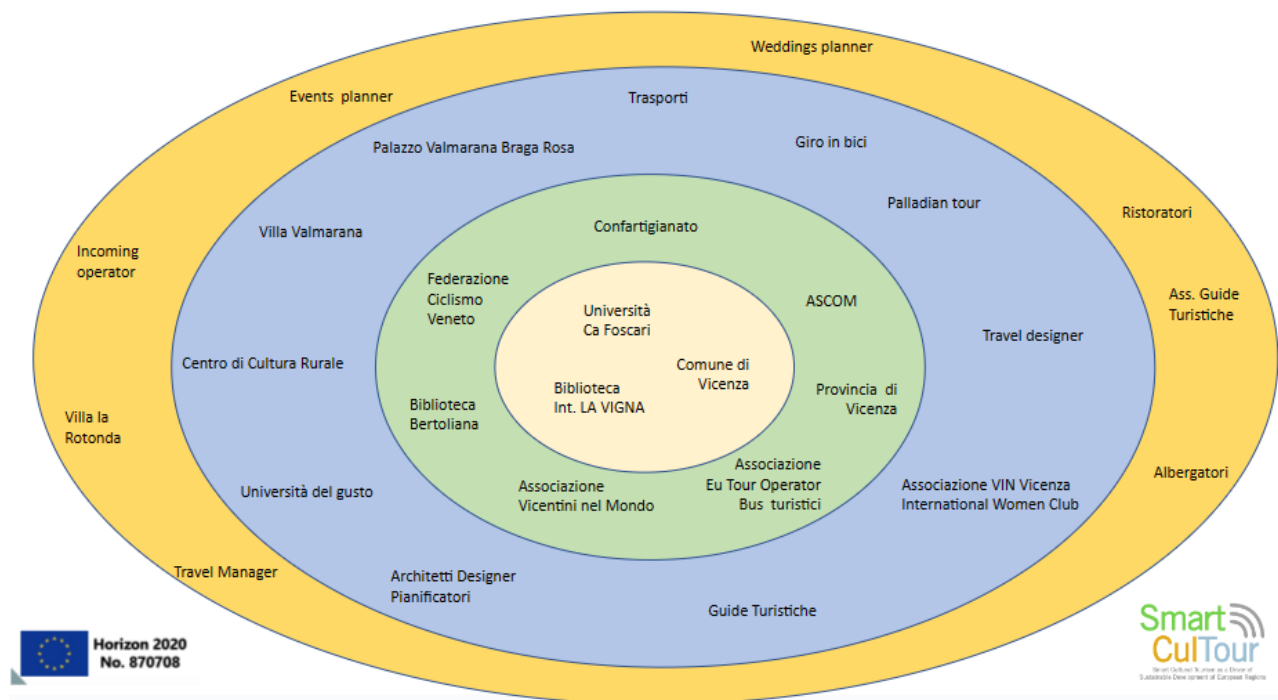


Figure 25. Stakeholders' governance system of Vicenza LL

7.1.2.2. Missing stakeholders

The participation of more stakeholders would certainly have further benefitted the LL in terms of richer debate, stronger networking, and fostered cooperation for future projects. Some of the invited stakeholders were discouraged by the conflicting interests within the LL, not understanding in full the scope of SmartCulTour project and bringing instances to the various tables that were not under the scope of the LL.

All in all, it can be concluded that the fragmented participation combined with the lack of possibilities, the Covid-19 pandemic context in which part of the project took place, and the numerous deadlines to be met, are among the main reasons why more stakeholders did not participate, or some participants did not remain engaged until the end.

7.1.3. SmartCulTour tools and methods

The SmartCulTour tools and methodologies (as developed in the [SmartCulTour Toolkit – Deliverable 7.3](#)) initially adopted in the Vicenza LL were brainstorming tools, Systems Mapping, stakeholder mapping, and value networks according to an evaluative approach to the Vicenza area.

This set of tools and methodologies was deemed appropriate for the early stages of the LL to create a transparent basis for exchanging within the working group, to know their priorities and interests, and possible spheres of action, and consequently activate dialogue among them. This has primarily helped in identifying and categorising the various individuals, organizations, and communities that are involved in or impacted by cultural tourism initiatives. This helped understand the different perspectives and interests at play, enabling effective engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Moreover, more possible partners who share similar goals and values in terms of culturally sustainable tourism have been identified by using stakeholder mapping and value network analysis. This method pooled resources, information, and skills to develop and promote sustainable tourism initiatives by creating relationships with local communities, cultural institutions, government authorities, and tourism groups.

Value maps and brainstorming tools aided in the identification of available resources and assets within the cultural community: natural attractions, heritage sites, cultural events, local craftspeople, local traditions, and other activities fell under this category. By recognising these resources, they have been harnessed efficiently to enhance the visitor experience and provide sustainable economic prospects for the residents. At this stage, brainstorming tools and roundtables helped generate ideas and concepts for sustainable tourism experiences that highlight the destination's cultural diversity and authenticity. It allowed various viewpoints and local expertise to be incorporated into the planning and design of tourism activities by including relevant stakeholders in the brainstorming phase. Then, through the identification of value networks, it was possible to reconstruct how value in tourism processes is created, held, and distributed. By understanding these processes, reflections shifted to ensure an equal distribution of gains and reduce negative consequences.

The outputs of these first steps have sustained the formulation of sustainable tourism activities and plans. Some players (mainly policymakers) could use such frameworks to promote responsible tourism practices and preserve cultural assets by incorporating inputs from many stakeholders and considering the value of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible.

During the *Inception Meeting*, the **Opportunity Tree** (using Miro digital collaboration platform - see Annex 12) and the **Q-Sort methodology** were used to pursue the reflection just initiated, although stakeholders encountered some difficulties due to the lack of experience with such tools. Nevertheless, this allowed to devise a systematic framework for brainstorming on a range of different topics, exploring new directions and possibilities in a visual way, by also branching out from central goals.

By providing a visual representation of complex ideas, different pathways, and alternatives, the Opportunity Tree assisted stakeholders in identifying the potential benefits and drawbacks of each choice. Evaluation of the viability, benefits, and disadvantages of the proposed ideas was easier once they had been developed and mapped. By enabling side-by-side comparison and analysis of many possibilities, the branching structure facilitates prioritisation, synergy, and decision-making based on variables including resource availability, possible impacts, and alignment with objectives. Some players noticed the overlapping and interdependency

of various paths, brainstorming and projecting again on creative and innovative approaches that include different ways to leverage existing resources. All this considered, the Opportunity Tree showed up as an important collaborative tool to engage stakeholders and encourage active participation in decision-making.

The **Q-Sort methodology** was adopted to better understand each subjective viewpoint, by collecting qualitative data and encouraging stakeholders' interaction. In this way, individual ideas and preferences were investigated to gather significant insights for a variety of scenarios comprising research and consensus-building. Unfortunately, since the methodology was deemed as too time-consuming and complex, the feedback from many stakeholders was negative.

While still maintaining the resulting base obtained, it was decided to proceed with different but still related focus groups, introducing the [SmartCulTour Platform](#) to participating stakeholders and facilitating the follow-up (see Annex 12). In addition to this ad-hoc platform, surveys, and interviews with tourists were programmed. Through these complementary ways and the tools provided by WP7 to boost the LL's participatory approach, an attempt was made to align the goals pre-posed using the Q-Sort – observing trends and reaching consensus, prioritization and decision-making, self-awareness, engagement, and evaluation – trying to bring them out in different ways in the next steps.

One tool used complementarily to the SmartCulTour Platform was **Systems Thinking (or Systems Mapping)**. As previously mentioned, the Platform was conceived as a dashboard designed to collect and present cultural tourism-related data, thus useful for directing discussions and reflections on tourism feasibility paths, as well as establishing a database and activating data collection and monitoring mechanisms, overall supporting decision-making processes. The activities developed around this tool were conducted and implemented with the support of academics and their expertise to support the interpretation of qualitative data. This revealed the need to work on improved training opportunities and skills enhancement, especially in pursuing the LL's long-term goals and conducting targeted activities to achieve them. In general, in relation to the focus groups created around the three tourism macro-topics mentioned above, the interpretation of these data supported inclusion and the engagement of players related to the world of tourism and culture.

Systems Thinking, instead, was used with the aim of supporting the understanding of system complexity by visually depicting the relationships and interactions between various components. Through that, stakeholders were able to identify critical elements, feedback loops, and causal links within the system, leading to an increased understanding of how the system works. In parallel with the use — including predictive use — of the data provided by the SmartCulTour Platform, systems mapping highlighted indirect consequences that are not always obvious. These findings were shared with decision-makers to enable them to foresee and address potential negative or unintended consequences.

Moreover, systems thinking supported the identification of leverage points in the system where interventions can have the most impact. Stakeholders could discover important drivers or factors that have a disproportionate influence on the system's behaviour by analysing the relevant causal relationships. These leverage points provided chances for focused interventions that can result in significant system improvements. The use of this tool enhanced the adoption of a collaborative approach to problem-solving and decision-making, by promoting cooperation and facilitating a shared understanding of the system among stakeholders by highlighting the interdependence of the diverse components. That is why the term *systems thinking* has been mostly used, stressing a more holistic approach that provides a view of the interconnections and dynamics within the system.

7.2. Results and impact

7.2.1. Main challenges in achieving the expected results

Among the core challenges experienced in achieving the expected results within the LL, it should be mentioned the combination of the multiple interests of the stakeholders involved along with the extended timeline of the arranged meetings. Such a combo has engendered less motivation to pursue all the activities proposed among some of the first participating stakeholders, resulting in the consequent lack of involvement of additional specific actors. Both these factors, i.e. the plurality of stakeholders' interests and the overall project's timeline, influenced the general understanding of the SmartCulTour initiative.

Moreover, many actors underlined the difficulty of working online, while trying to keep stakeholders working together mainly based on their own willingness to participate. This led to a lack of understanding in terms of active participation in the LL as a competitive advantage for the future of the city.

However, expected results have been met and a fruitful discussion is currently ongoing with the main group of stakeholders participating in the whole SmartCulTour project, focusing on the three major topics jointly agreed upon (namely, Vicenza as the city of architecture, its culture of food and wine, and Vicenza industrial tourism). Indeed, dividing cultural tourism actions into these three macro topics made it possible to mitigate and reduce any negative impact of the challenges faced during the launch of the LL.

7.2.2. Main results achieved compared to the set objectives

By taking the objectives set in Deliverable 6.1 - Specific Terms of Reference of the Vicenza LL, the main exemplificative outcomes resulting from the LL experience are **the creation of taste-related cycling routes thanks to the [Palladian Routes](#) network**. The success of this operationalization meets the need for a cultural network system that could also understand local gastronomic culture and not continue to rely on the private initiative of a few wineries or entrepreneurs. Indeed, as emerged from the SWOT analysis, the vicinity of the hills and the amazing landscape to be explored slowly, together with plenty of high-quality products regarding food and wine, are to be recognised as main strengths of the city, though struggling with the general lack of integrated cultural tourism packages and the poor knowledge of Vicenza's cultural tourism offer and history.

These findings spurred the development of several interventions aimed at transferring the knowledge acquired through the SmartCulTour project to both policy-makers and local stakeholders. The creation of taste-related cycling routes represents a clear example of leveraging the hidden heritage and unique places surrounding the city to organise tailor-made events offering unexpected experiences where different cultural tourism patterns meet each other.

On the one hand, this action met a better and greater understanding of the operators and actors related to tangible cultural assets, in understanding heritage as collective and rediscovering its value. This supports and will support creating unified and integrative physical and ideological pathways to the point of adding experiential value for tourists and interpretive value for the local area and community. On the other hand, it supports the creation of sustainable routes along the lines of slow tourism in a way that connects multiple realities and incentivizes the discovery of intangible assets. This aims to eliminate those sorts of cultural and experiential bubbles that split the supply system between the cultural matrix, so far intended as the Palladian heritage alone, and the gastronomic matrix, capable of activating tourist demand but so far ancillary and barely complementary to the rest of the system of local attractions.

However, currently the gastronomic cycling routes are still not fully realized yet in any official manner. While the creation of a public cycling route is relatively straightforward, it needs to be ensured that the stakeholders along the proposed cycling routes are fully integrated in order to properly link cycling (along public routes) with experiences provided by private and public attractions. As of this point, stakeholders have not yet provided official documents to support this development.

The idea of bleisure tourism was subsequently introduced, further enhancing the bridge between culture and business, which is very popular in the Vicenza area. Indeed, the latter has been agreed to be implemented in the future among all participating stakeholders.

Generally speaking, the most successful outcome resulting from set objectives consisted in the creation of a truly interested working group of stakeholders, able to strengthen existing relationships in the area around the three focus groups previously mentioned: architecture, bleisure tourism, food and wine. The major objective of the LL was to develop a network of stakeholders and interested players to share ideas, knowledge, and key good practices to jointly denote a new perspective for the development of sustainable cultural tourism in Vicenza. A perspective that aims to enhance the excellence of Vicenza and its territorial surroundings, starting from Palladian villas inscribed on the World Heritage List since 1994, continuing with the masterpieces of Tiepolo, the Basilica of Monte Berico, the hilly landscapes, and ending with local cuisine and products.

Finally, to make the set objectives even more realistic and relevant to the context, a physical and living meeting venue was provided to the LL experience, namely the International Library “La Vigna”, which turned into an open innovation LL.

7.2.3. Direct and indirect interventions designed, initiated and/or implemented

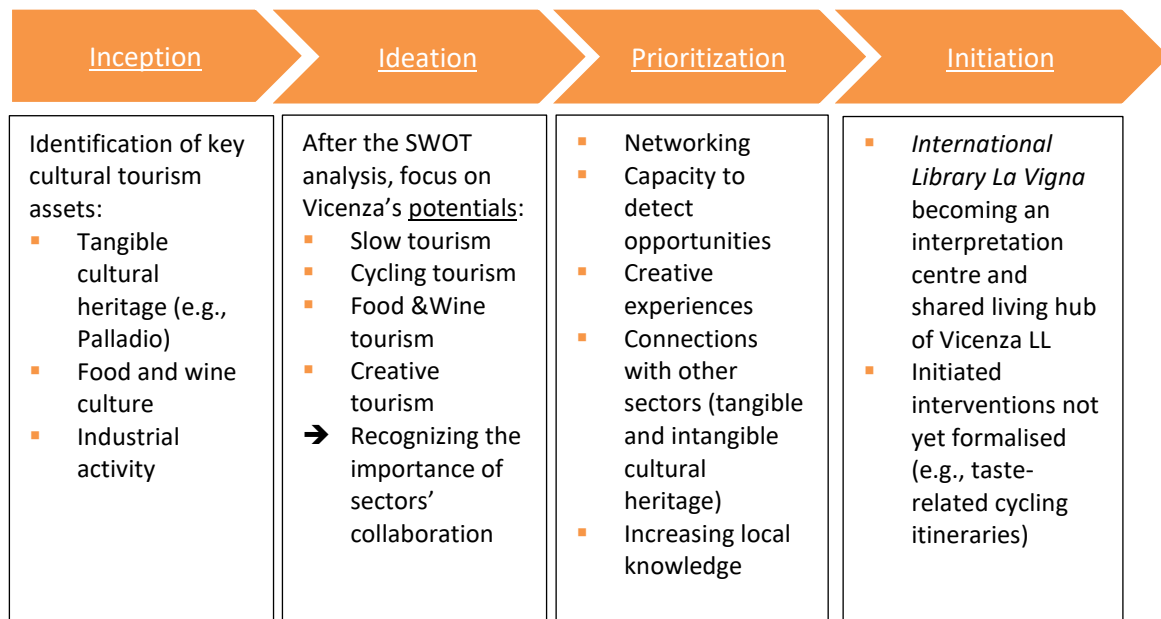


Figure 26. Process towards design of interventions

Concerning the co-design process leading to the identification of relevant interventions to be implemented towards more sustainable forms of tourism, Vicenza LL Managers and stakeholders decided to organise three focus groups divided according to the three chosen topics previously mentioned, namely architecture, food and wine, bleisure tourism. Starting with these three main topics, many ideas and activities for the future

were envisaged.

Further, the dialogue between the various stakeholders made it clear that there is still a lot of unexpressed potential within the Vicenza area, as for instance the stockfish routes between Norway and the Veneto region. The two main strands identified as umbrella-interventions relate to the **choice of the International Library La Vigna as the LL venue** and **activities related to Vicenza's new identity** to pursue, such as the creation of taste-related itineraries between historical heritage and flavours. These two broad interventions were conceptualized by LL's stakeholders as their own active engagement for the amelioration of Vicenza's cultural offer, relying on the intellectual capital of SmartCulTour guidelines and good practices. Nevertheless, lack of sufficient funds and overall motivation all along with stakeholders' commercial confidentiality are challenges still to be solved in order to fully operationalize the said interventions.

The goal of the main tangible intervention is to guarantee a space for the activities that the LL will be implementing after the end of the SmartCulTour project. This aims to gather - through an internal governance system – stakeholders and actors to continue the implementation, design and pursuit of the LL's goals. Becoming such a reference living hub for the city, the *International Library* will keep the LL and its activities alive through periodical meetings and events focused on the main cultural tourism topics agreed upon. In particular, the *International Library* aims to make concrete the various ideas sketched during the whole process of the SmartCulTour project, ensuring documentation and formalization of such creative streams with statements of intent, declarations of interest, memoranda of understanding, or press releases.

Indeed, this activity covers all spheres of initiative related to the three working tables, where the *International Library* wants to position itself as a working hub to support new working tables, periodic meetings, research, archiving of operations, informational meetings, and space to structure new relationships as well as strengthen existing ones.

The overall objective is to support the establishment of a visitor and interpretation centre, along with a structured network of players and stakeholders, to promote slow cultural tourism experiences linked to local traditions. Any necessary investment will be mainly private (some players have already demonstrated interest in supporting some activities and working towards participating in any call for funding – regional, national) and will be directed mostly towards structural interventions, renovations, and technologies. These require a pool of expertise related to cultural projects' management, territorial design, data analysis, consultancy and advocacy, tourism-related competencies, cooperation, and coordination (i.e., mediators). Economic impacts are expected to directly emerge through new entrepreneurial and local opportunities, leveraging the dynamics of local businesses in pursuing a systemic networking approach to increase spillovers and benefit locally by involving local businesses and entrepreneurs, local farmhouses, and wineries, local gastronomy, owners of cultural heritage sites, tourism entrepreneurs, local community, and incoming operators.

All possible impacts stem from a unique element of success that also serves as a challenge: stakeholders' coordination. It is crucial for the success of interventions that public, private, and institutional bodies have common ground for dialogue. The creation and beneficial effects of a system-approach and a cultural network format is based on elements of cooperation, coordination, and competition. For this reason, likewise, the possible obstacle or challenge to the overall achievement of the LL's goals lies in the lack of these elements, where multiple circumstantial factors (mostly social and economic) do not allow the strategic alignment of common interests and goals.

Referring to **the activities related to pursue Vicenza's new identity**, the goal is to create a different experiential value for cultural tourism in Vicenza and its area by connecting the beauty of architecture and landscape with food and wine enterprises.

The major goals of this activity concern the enhancement of tourism assets that see Vicenza overcome the conception as just being closely linked to Palladio. This is intended to provide space for new forms of cultural and creative expressions related to contemporary, modern, and local elements and forms of socialisation. These factors are intended to leverage local cultural awareness and sense of identity in understanding tangible assets in a timeless way (not necessarily related to historicity, including common and contemporary spaces) and intangible assets as assets representing local pride and distinctiveness for the acquisition of competitive experiential value in the tourism market.

This, too, strictly refers to the establishment of an interpretation centre targeting tourists, the community of entrepreneurs, citizens and key actors involved in the overall supply system. This process wants to lean on the pool of experts who have shown interest in applying for private investment and participation in calls for funding applications.

Moreover, this needs a greater reference to the dashboard for preliminary and ongoing management of tourism flows. It can actively support the effort to create the offer and translate it then into policies for territorial management. Ca' Foscari University in Venice, in collaboration with the Vicenza LL, supported its creation and data collection, which were particularly necessary to achieve the LL's goals.

The challenge is to train new and old players in spatial planning, territorial design, data analysis, consultancy, advocacy, and tourism-related competencies. The goals aim to bring out new values from properties and assets in the Vicenza area (and in the city itself) hitherto having an ancillary role. Therefore, the intervention may have social impacts on the local community's attitude towards tourism, on local community participation in tourism, and on renewing the sense of identity and ownership of their tangible and intangible assets.

In general, local communities (in terms of social cohesion and hospitality), civic associations, cultural operators, event organisers, owners of cultural heritage sites, tourism entrepreneurs, and local businesses may benefit and be positively affected by this impact. Having a shared ground for discussion among public, private, and institutional bodies is essential for the success of interventions. Cooperation, coordination, and cooptation are the fundamental building blocks of a systemic approach and a cultural network format that produce positive impacts.

7.2.4. Lessons learnt

Summarising the LL's experience, the first main lesson learned with regards to Vicenza as a tourism destination was that the Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio is not as much known globally as he is at a local level. This prompts reflection on what new forms of sustainable cultural tourism routes can be developed.

It was noted how the food and wine scene is strong in tradition and attractiveness. This is linked to new trends that see forms of slow tourism and routes being developed far beyond the city's boundaries by welcoming instances close to the value of nature and landscape. This does not exclude the tangible cultural part, thanks to the presence of villas and buildings of high architectural, historical, and artistic value in the surroundings. This has prompted consideration of more connections of the latter, preferring the form of routes, a trend that has emerged successfully, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic that deflects

large tourist flows by allowing more outdoor activities. The understanding and participation of the actors involved aim, to implement a differentiated supply system that binds multiple elements with experiential potential, and a greater consideration of the cultural matrix as a repository of identity traditions.

It is necessary to work on more effective programming and communication, especially supporting interpretation and identification with intangible assets.

Finally, it has been acknowledged how the initiatives of many local entrepreneurs and businesses (still predominantly private) is already moving towards small combinations of experiences. This dynamic has activated the creation of small business museums, highlighting stories of entrepreneurship, know-how, and relationships with the local area. Again, this leverage is also being recognised as a useful development matrix for establishing new connections and making tourism processes inclusive, co-designed, and co-tutored.

Another important lesson learned concerns participating stakeholders. Being many is not always equal to productivity. When the various stakeholders involved reached a common working theme through a design thinking process, not all of them were interested in participating in the overall project. Although it is common to start with many, the key is to work and plan in small groups with the same vision for the future of the LL. For this reason, when dealing with co-creation and co-design, much has been learned in terms of gathering diverse perspectives and expertise that can be harnessed to develop innovative and sustainable solutions. In this process, it has been seen how the LL can provide a platform for testing and experimenting with new tourism products, services, and technologies in a real-world setting. Involved stakeholders can actively participate in the testing and analytical phases, providing feedback, and suggesting improvements, which enhances the effectiveness and relevance of the solutions.

By linking these aspects with the overall topic of promoting cultural sustainable tourism and the activities pursued, it became clear how important it is to engage tourists in this process by generally directing the efforts to end-users (tourists are stakeholders on their own, while with *end-users* they are not the only ones included). This has been encapsulated in a new perspective that tries to incorporate feedback, preferences, and needs to promote satisfying and experiential experiences.

Moreover, keeping in mind that cooperation and networking between stakeholders were weak at the outset, the LL aimed to transmit the importance of knowledge sharing and learning. During the participative processes, an important lesson that has been learned was the significance of exchanging ideas, and best practices, fostering collaboration, capacity building, and continuous improvement.

Above all, to keep firm the principle of sustainability that is intended to characterise the work of the LL, has been devoted to the local community (civic, business, association realities, etc.). Thought has been given, and work will continue, on how and to what extent to assess the environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourism initiatives. It has been stressed to explore, research, and involve stakeholders in the assessment process while integrating their perspectives on sustainability, generally ensuring that the initiatives align with the values and goals of the local community too.

Finally, one trait that was emphasised by participants was how the proposed activities and goals stimulated a sense of ownership, empowerment, and shared responsibility among them, which can be further enhanced, leading to more inclusive and successful tourism initiatives.

7.3. Sustainability and follow-up

7.3.1. Sustainability of the outcomes and afterlife strategy for the Living Lab

The main strategy put in place to ensure the overall sustainability of the LL was the transformation of the International Library “La Vigna” into a unique venue open to innovation, both in the medium and long-term.

Thanks to the identification of a physical venue for the LL, La Vigna Library has since emerged as the pioneering symbol of social sustainability within the LL experience. All topics addressed during the co-design process of the LL have been successfully gathered into a single living hub in which the synergy between the various projects proposed represents the occasion for the emergence of further ones within the same physical context.

The **social sustainability** of the whole LL is not only the result of having brought together the main working focus groups - architectural landscape, food, and wine, industrial tourism - in one specific place, but also derives from the set-up of a network of relationships among participating stakeholders within the same venue. The valuable combination of these two aspects makes this place even more socially sustainable for the future potential of the project, especially in the development of more sustainable forms of tourism.

The LL supports social innovation and the co-creation of sustainable solutions through the formation of these relationships. Indeed, stakeholders can share ideas, competencies, and resources while collaborating to address shared concerns connected to the focus groups selected. As a result, the LL encourages active and inclusive participation of all stakeholders, supporting a plurality of ideas and the involvement of various groups. This contributes to ensuring that decisions made in the LL meet the needs and values of all stakeholders, encouraging broader and longer-term social sustainability.

The LL's network of connections can also act as an agent for the spread of sustainable projects and solutions on a greater scale. The ideas and techniques produced in the LL can be shared and used in other sectors and areas of interest through collaborations and partnerships with other individuals and organizations, resulting in a greater social effect.

Generally, it has been thought to be necessary to integrate the LL approach into the current institutional structures and processes. This entails obtaining long-term commitment and resources from appropriate entities such as universities, research institutes, local DMOs and regional partners, aiming to increase the chance of ongoing support and funding beyond individual projects or initiatives. This is strictly linked to and dependent on the creation of a regular communication and participation mechanism, such as advisory boards, forums, or user groups, to guarantee that the LL remains relevant to changing demands.

Consequently, this will activate strategies to document and disseminate LL's information and insights. With the latter, it is intended to discuss best practices, host seminars or conferences, or develop online knowledge exchange platforms to generally contribute to the progress of sustainable practices by actively sharing knowledge and lessons learned. This is meant to assure a culture of (ongoing) learning, encouraging continuous evaluation, monitoring, and feedback to measure the efficacy of operations and suggest areas for improvement.

Collaboration and cooperation have a broader objective, namely, to create chances for cooperative funding, shared responsibilities, and mutual support, as well as to strengthen the sustainability of the LL's activities.

Last but not least, the possibility of replicating or scaling up the model in different contexts could be explored. The operations and afterlife strategy of Vicenza LL have also laid the foundation for standards, frameworks, or toolkits that could aid in the creation of new LLs or the improvement of existing ones.

7.3.2. Follow-up recommendations for the Living Lab

- **Keep the exchange between stakeholders and specialists alive** by supporting peer learning practices, organising roundtable talks and focus groups on macro concerns to better drive the co-creative endeavour. For this operation, the full potential of skills and knowledge transfer shall be realised by continuing to work on participatory methodologies and identifying specific needs for ongoing interventions.
- **Serve as a centre of events and meetings beneficial for building local actors' identities** and as a **driver for sharing values** within the entire territory, functioning as a **repository of good practices** for Vicenza's long-term cultural development, including by leveraging UNESCO's core values.
- **Establish more structured and stable partnerships** between diverse commercial organisations, widen the network of players involved, and consider activating an interpretation centre that might improve value-driven operations for the benefit of both visitors and the local community.
- **Establish design and innovation ateliers** to familiarise stakeholders with different policies, as well as access European projects and funds. This is within a set of recommendations intended to find broad scope for long-term programming through the development of sector-specific workshops and the acquisition of cross-sectoral expertise.
- **Set-up an internal governance system** capable of promoting mutual knowledge for the creation and / or enlargement of a cross-sector business network, management, and **monitoring changes, progress and activities over time**. This will make it possible to, if necessary, redirect efforts in a unified manner and according to agreed upon goals. It is suggested that the local Municipality performs the steering function. Organisations and local actors that should be considered as possible networking partners (with special benefits for small tourism-related enterprises) include wholesalers, tourism sector firms and organizations, public authorities or agencies, and volunteer groups or NGOs.
- **Involve a strategic facilitator** who is only indirectly interested in the growth of tourism. This facilitation by individuals or organisations enables economic growth to take place in a more cohesive and planned manner. When entrepreneurs play the role of facilitator, there is a risk that their approach is overtly enterprise-oriented, and that they tend to seize the development for personal benefit or that innovations stemming from the LL are appropriated by a small group of people. Facilitators should therefore be selected from cultural organisations, sector organisations, volunteer organisations, organised interest groups, chambers of commerce, and environmental organisations.
- Alternate formal and informal settings, spanning frontal presentations, open discussions, co-creation workshops and focus groups.
- Keep track of the LL's progresses by drafting periodic reports tackling programme development, feasibility evaluation, as well as monitoring and evaluation schemes.
- Keep working in Italian, but still pursue a limited **use of English** to allow stakeholders to acquire new communication and interpersonal competencies, opening more opportunities to the outside world of the LL - i.e., international, or national calls and / or funds in the context of sustainable cultural tourism-related multi-partner projects. Nevertheless, beware that **the use of English does not raise any obstacles to the LL's dynamics**. Both local lab managers and participating stakeholders need to be confident with the working language to provide the full output potential of the LL experience at local, national, and international levels.

- **Encourage current local initiatives and structures to collaborate and network by facilitating knowledge sharing, best practices exchange, and collaborative projects** to harness pooled skills and resources.
- **Clearly communicate and illustrate the importance and benefits of participatory approaches to sustainable cultural tourism development**, in a view to make the contribution of the LL benefits effective and tangible within the entire LL area. Showing how these techniques can result in positive outcomes, such as increased community empowerment, higher quality visitor experiences, and improved protection and valorisation of local culture, will increase participation and attract (often by virtue of necessity) new players in the long-term.
- **Pursue internal coordination to jointly participate in national and international tourism-related events**, such as buy-ins or B2B events by also leveraging Vicenza's notoriety for foreign trade relations. Other experiences report how it is also possible to decide on a single candidate to attend large buy-in events representing the community of practitioners and stakeholders, thus limiting the (tendentially onerous) expenses of attending these events. In the internal creation process, the LL should work on strengthening the cooperation with provincial, regional, and national bodies and entities for the promotion of fairs and events similar to the objectives or modes of buy-in and B2B (or other) events.
- **Adopt the principles of agile management to further increase flexibility, speed reaction times, improve cooperation and increase innovation.** More must be done towards promoting an agile management mindset and culture, focusing on adaptability, supporting experimentation, and promoting a collaborative problem-solving approach. This is mostly directed to promote open communication, empower team members, and strengthen their ownership of the process. It is therefore **recommended to maintain cross-functional teams** composed of individuals with various knowledge and competencies to ensure that, by bringing people from various backgrounds together, collaboration, creativity, and a holistic approach to problem-solving can be developed.
- **Follow human-centred design (HCD) processes** focusing on stakeholders' (and targeted future users') wants, preferences, and experiences. For example, interviews, observations and surveys can be resorted to with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the local context and identifying major critical areas and opportunities. The integration of HCD techniques into the LL ensures (and will ensure) that the innovation and solutions created are truly user- and stakeholder-centric, relevant, and meaningful, while encouraging collaboration and iterative learning, which leads to more effective and meaningful results.
- **Define concrete goals** to not just outline the challenges but to even encounter the desired outcomes, so that alignment with the needs of the players is ensured. This aims to encourage collaboration and the participation of a multidisciplinary team to produce a rich pool of ideas, stimulate creativity and varied views, facilitate brainstorming sessions, workshops, or design thinking exercises.
- **Provide participants with prospective solutions**, allowing the rapid visualisation of concepts in order to collect feedback on the functionality, usability, and relevance of the solutions and further develop their design in a participatory way.

A Annexes to the Vicenza Living Lab report

Annex 11 – Link to the intervention's blog post

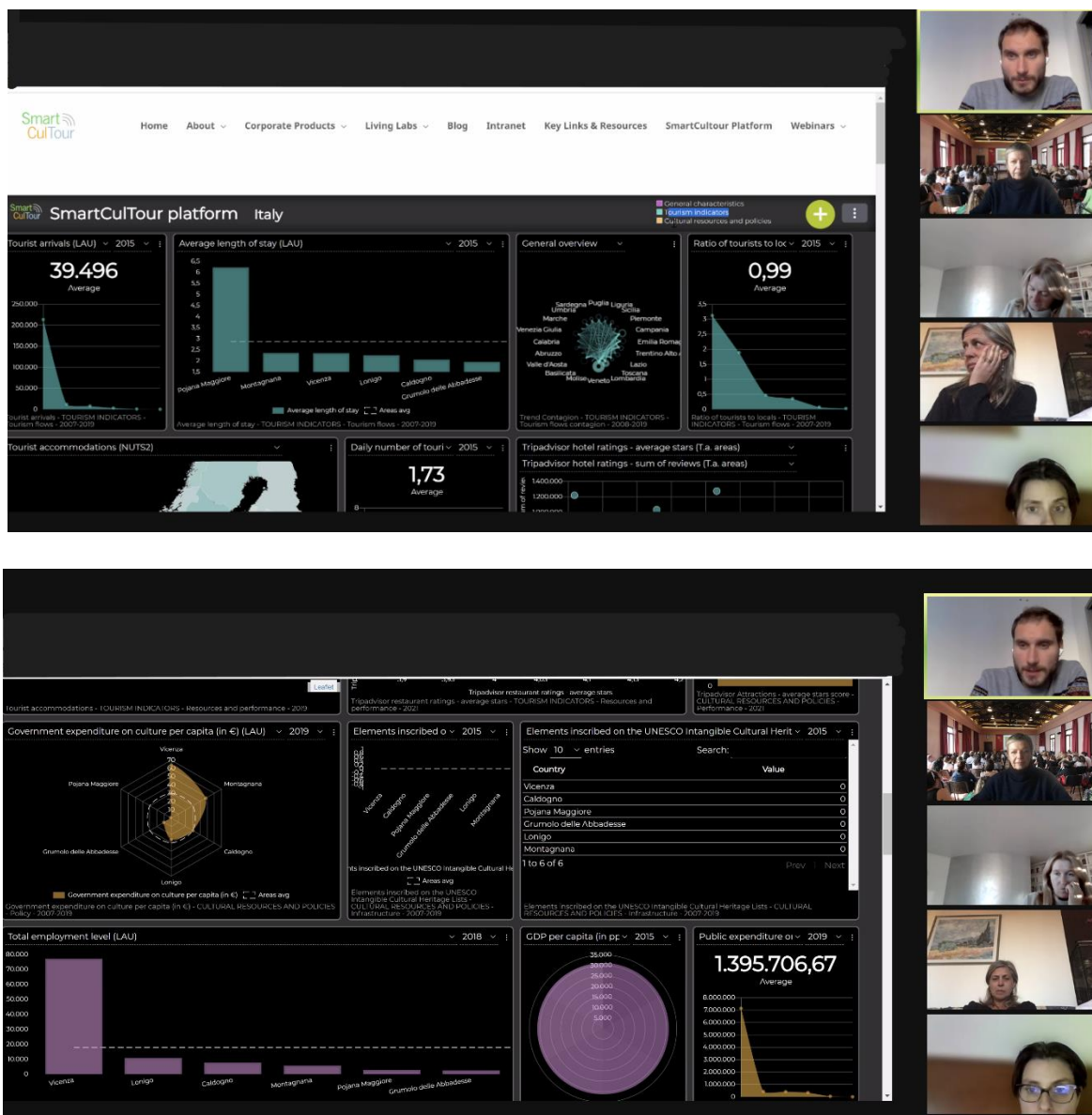
<https://www.lavigna.it/it/lavigna/attivita/progetti/smartcultour>

Annex 12 – Methods and Tools used at the Vicenza Living Lab

1) MIRO digital platform for designing the Opportunity Tree



2) Introduction to the SmartCulTour Platform



08 Final Recommendations

8.1. General recommendations for the set-up of a Living Lab on sustainable cultural tourism development

Stemming from the lessons learnt in the context of the SmartCulTour project, the following **recommendations** can be formulated for researchers and practitioners planning to establish **provider-driven LLs**, mainly in the context of - but not limited to - a sustainable cultural tourism-related multi-partner project:

- **Clearly define the LL characteristics and ambitions at the start of the project in order to provide realistic expectations** and thus prevent expectation disconfirmation, which would impair local stakeholders' sense of ownership towards the project and its objectives. This implies committing to the extent of available resources, including time, financial and human resources, which must be attentively considered and assessed in advance in order to reduce the risk of losing local trust.
- **Appoint a local Lab Manager**, i.e. a local institution (university, research centre, DMO, etc.), to ensure the day-to-day management of the LL. Local partners have a deeper understanding of local dynamics, and can normally already count on a well-established partners' network, which facilitates the setup of the Lab spanning identification of potential participants, taking contacts with them, selecting a venue, etc. Also, local institutions may already be aware of existing instances and potential clashes within the local community, thereby being prone to a conflict-sensitive approach and more attentively contributing to the preliminary setting of the LLs' overall objectives.
- **Work in local languages** as much as possible. Although this is highly country- and context-dependent (with some SmartCulTour LLs facing more language barriers than others), working in local languages is more comfortable for the stakeholders, eases communication and puts everyone on an equal footing, creating conditions for more productive dynamics and contributing to a horizontal sharing of decision power among participants.
- Whenever possible, **frame/embed the LL into already existing local initiatives/structures**, so as to avoid duplication, develop synergies and ensure more effective and efficient outcomes. However, a careful assessment is suggested *vis-à-vis* the objectives of such pre-existing entities, and notably whether open participatory processes are envisaged and all interested stakeholders are available to join. Relying on already existing networks can be pivotal for ensuring long-term sustainability of the LL, which also boosts the project's impact in the long run. Such longevity can be further maximised via socio-spatial embedding of the Lab, for instance by establishing a permanent physical hub that is integrated into the local community, or by activating network partners, often local administrations or DMOs, that have the capacity to support further activities.
- **Adapt participation methods to local contexts, and create buy-in for participating stakeholders** in order to boost their commitment and active engagement, as well as to ensure efficient and also innovative outcome opportunities. This is especially true for representatives of civil society and private stakeholders, who tend to prioritise their own interests and businesses over LL's activities if they do not perceive a clear benefit in participating. Budget allowing, possibilities should be explored to reimburse expenses for participants in the LL, as this may contribute to increasing their overall level of availability and engagement.

- **Ensure enough flexibility in your planning and limit the use of standardised solutions** to accommodate local needs and desires, as well as to respect the living essence of the Labs and the ongoing nature of the co-designing process. In particular, in the case of projects based on tailored, objective-driven, and context-specific approaches, take into account that your envisaged course of action may significantly change if it happens not to be in line with local stakeholders' wishes. Do not commit on behalf of the Lab prior to having consulted local stakeholders.
- **Plan in advance** to ensure that eventual delays on the local side do not impair the overall project's timeline. Beware that the schedule of local processes, including institutional / official decision-making processes, might not be aligned with that of the project, requiring to strike a balance.
- **The Project document is not an exact science:** usually, project proposals tend to be very theoretical and not to reflect the actual situation on the ground, given the inevitable lack of accurate data and information at the proposal drafting stage, combined with lengthy selection processes and the evolution of the circumstances. Due to their living nature, this aspect can affect Labs more than any other activity of the project, so leave a margin of manoeuvre and ensure adjustment mechanisms for continuous improvement to review the initial strategy and plans as needed, based on feedback from monitoring.
- **Establish proper governance frameworks and ensure legal clarity on ownership of Lab's results**, to minimise uneven cooperation across stakeholders (e.g., citizens sometimes being somewhat neglected as compared to representatives from predominantly government and academia), prevent power imbalances from potentially limiting user-involvement, and for private enterprises to refrain from participation due to intellectual property issues. This could be achieved through disentanglement between steering committee functions (as part of a general governance board) and day-to-day coordinating functions, and notably by appointing a Lab Manager, i.e., a dedicated coordinator or 'honest broker' to steer equal user engagement.
- **Ensure a clear division of roles and responsibilities among the partners**, especially between the Lab Managers and the leaders of other WP planning to test their tools or to deliver specific activities in the Labs. Ensure also that such a division of tasks is appropriately reflected in the project's budget, and that each partner owns the needed resources to deliver the agreed programme, as well as is familiar enough with the proposed tools and methods in order to make selections that are relevant for the local context, rather than proposing tools primarily due to personal background knowledge.
- **Set up an effective and efficient monitoring mechanism**, including regular meetings (the frequency can be agreed upon at the beginning of the project), template materials for reporting, etc., to facilitate the centralised management of the LL(s), while ensuring that all actors are on the same page.
- **Establish common frameworks for evaluation and impact assessment** of participatory approaches in order to move beyond the purely moral view and ensure that proper strategies are adopted to reach the expected social impacts. Impact assessment should include measurements of social, economic and cultural outcomes in the short, medium and long-term. Annex 16 provides a detailed overview of the structured evaluation method used to assess the processes of the SmartCulTour LLs.
- Prior to the project's end, **provide participants with a roadmap / plan of action for the future** in order to help them translate ideas that emerged in the context of the Lab into concrete results. In case the realisation of such ideas requires some funding which cannot be provided in the context of the project, ensure that the roadmap includes a business plan for its future and potential financing.
- **Develop action plans for diffusion of results** in order to allow for local integration into existing structures, transferability, replication, and reproduction of experiments elsewhere, as well as

scalability (f.i., in terms of geographical and content expansion, actor and resource scaling) of the innovative findings stemming from the LL's experience.

- **Ensure the inclusion of local communities, cultural groups, government entities, tourism operators, NGOs, and academia**, by building trust, creating open channels of communication, and facilitating activities that foster dialogue, collaboration, and cooperation. Future Lab Managers should prioritise community involvement in cultural tourism planning and decision-making by organising community discussions, workshops, focus groups, and participatory mapping exercises as effective approaches.

On the occasion of the **3rd SmartCulTour General Assembly**, held on 15 December 2022 in Breda (the Netherlands), and kindly hosted by the Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAS), UNESCO held a **LLs session** with the following objectives:

- Present and discuss the results of the LLs' evaluation conducted by Modul (see Annex 16);
- Provide a platform to exchange the main lessons learnt, good practices, and challenges from the LLs' experience;
- Assess the relevance and potential future impact of UNESCO's capacity-building actions in the LLs;
- Launch a general reflection on the relevance, effectiveness, and appropriateness of resorting to the "LL" tool.

The session turned out to be a good opportunity for discussing the results of the LLs' evaluation conducted by Modul through interviews with both Lab Managers and local stakeholders, therefore comparing the different perspectives of these two categories of stakeholders, as well as similarities and differences in perception across the six LLs. In addition, the gathering enabled an open reflection on lessons learnt, challenges and opportunities from the LLs, including preventive actions that should be taken into account since the early design and establishment of a LL to ensure effective participatory and inclusive processes. The main outcomes of the discussion can be summarised as follows:

- **Loosing unengaged participants is not always detrimental to the LL's experience**, as it might help coalesce participating stakeholders around a set of shared objectives and the design of an implementable roadmap for their achievement, while contributing to an even more fruitful and productive atmosphere.
- **Ensure that the LL's strategic direction and objectives are the outcome of a truly participatory process, trusting and following it consistently**. Do not skip any phases of such a process, since each of them is functional to nurturing participants' ownership and therefore achieving the overall LL's results.
- **Clearly identify the appropriate stakeholders to be involved and the relevant expertise needed** in the LL, according to the local context and the underlying objectives. For instance, LLs can be functional for bottom-up brainstorming towards the drafting of solid and comprehensive project proposals to apply for subsequent EU funding.
- **Mind the "human factor"**, since it plays a crucial role within the LL's dynamics at any level, including by influencing the relationships between the Lab Manager and the participants, and among participants themselves.
- **Tailor the meetings' number and frequency to the LL's workplan and expected results, as well as to stakeholders' availability**, while ensuring full respect for time effectiveness and efficiency principles. Be aware that if the meetings' schedule is too tight, this could make participants feel overburdened and therefore undermine their commitment; on the contrary, a too loose meetings' timeline might disperse energies and weaken the LL's outcomes and innovation potential.

- **Ensure that the tools that you plan to use in the LL are already prototyped prior to the activities' kick-off.** In this sense, you can rely on the [SmartCulTour Toolkit](#) for participatory and bottom-up approaches to sustainable tourism destination development, which was successfully tested in the six project's LLs.

8.2. Recommendations for Living Labs to achieve medium- to long-term objectives of local sustainable cultural tourism development

Based on the discussions, work conducted, and identified findings and lessons learned, the following recommendations for LLs to achieve medium- to long-term objectives of local sustainable cultural tourism development can be formulated:

- **Foster networking and collaboration with key stakeholders:** LLs should continue to engage and collaborate with key stakeholders in the local tourism industry, including tourism operators, cultural institutions, local communities, and government agencies. This collaboration should aim to create a shared vision and goals for sustainable tourism development and establish networks for knowledge generation, exchange, and capacity-building.
- **Mobilise resources for sustainable tourism development:** LLs should work with municipal and regional authorities to secure funding and resources for sustainable tourism development projects. This can include funding for infrastructure development, marketing and promotion, and community-based tourism initiatives.
- **Develop local skills and capacities:** LLs should prioritise capacity-building activities that focus on developing local skills and knowledge related to sustainable tourism. This can include training programmes for tourism operators, cultural institutions, and local communities on sustainable tourism practices, as well as support for local entrepreneurs to start and grow sustainable tourism businesses.
- **Raise awareness of local values:** LLs should engage with visitors and local communities to raise awareness of the importance of local cultural values and attributes for sustainable tourism development, as well as of their vulnerability. This can include initiatives to better interpret local culture and heritage, as well as activities that encourage visitors to interact with and support local communities.
- **Promote sustainable tourism practices:** LLs should continue to promote and implement sustainable tourism practices, such as reducing waste and energy consumption, supporting local economies, and promoting responsible tourism behaviour among visitors.
- **Establish a long-term vision and plan:** LLs should work towards establishing a long-term vision and plan for sustainable cultural tourism development in their respective destinations. This plan should be based on the findings and lessons learned from the LL process and should involve all key stakeholders in the local tourism industry.
- **Establish strong partnerships with networks or trade associations:** LLs should maximise the attractive power of their goals by networking with organizations that already have a prominent presence in the local socio-economic context, and often incorporate other relevant initiatives to achieve their long-term objectives. By exploring synergies and opportunities, participatory approaches can be integrated into these programmes, leading to improved effectiveness and sustainability. It is important to avoid duplication by considering the unique characteristics of the area and assessing the potential for replicating experiences, while ensuring alignment with the interests of existing initiatives.

Overall, the key to achieving medium- to long-term objectives of local sustainable cultural tourism development is sustained collaboration, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building among key stakeholders. LLs can play a crucial role in this process by providing a platform for stakeholders to work together towards a shared vision for sustainable tourism development in the destination.

09 Conclusions

Deliverable 6.5, i.e. the *Final Report on experiences and findings from the SmartCulTour* LLs, is the outcome of three years of extensive work, as well as of a truly joint brainstorming and synergic co-drafting effort from the several actors involved, both within and beyond the SmartCulTour Consortium. UNESCO is the main editor of this Report in quality of leader of WP6 - “Sustainable Cultural Tourism Laboratories”, having had the responsibility to provide centralised coordination, continued guidance, strategic support and technical assistance throughout the overall SmartCulTour LLs’ experience.

The SmartCulTour LLs shall be considered as a successful experience of the **creation of multi-stakeholder networks for sustainable cultural tourism development and planning** in the six chosen destinations, relying on a **broad and multifaceted expertise**. Indeed, the establishment of such entities led to the gathering of a diverse range of stakeholders, from researchers, to cultural and tourism experts, DMOs, entrepreneurs and businesses, policy makers, and users, allowing for multiple perspectives to be taken into account and for collective intelligence to potentially lead to new insights, while fostering collaborations at different societal levels.

One of the key learnings from the SmartCulTour LLs’ experience is that **the process was more relevant than the end result**, with improved cooperation and networking during the LL timespan being more important than the starting objective. Due to the interactive and open nature of such entities, the originally identified outcome was often subject to change throughout the LL’s lifespan. Such openness and flexibility can be considered strengths of the approach since they align with a **co-creative vision of citizen - and full stakeholder - participation**, with LLs’ participants perceiving a key role in influencing the end results.

The use of WP7 tools and methods significantly improved the level of participants’ engagement and local ownership, in that they provided a safe environment where all stakeholders could express themselves equally, thereby reducing power imbalances that tend to affect co-creation dynamics in real life. Most importantly, collective brainstorming led to the **identification of new challenges and opportunities**, which LLs’ participants had the opportunity to discuss and build upon through guided techniques, allowing them to fully exploit the innovative potential of the LL’s empirical context.

While some LLs have opted for the **establishment of a physical venue**, thereby laying the foundation for permanent structures that will survive the SmartCulTour project’s lifespan while continuing to pursue its overarching objectives, others have opted for their legacy to be somehow **inherited by other already existing or newly created networks and hubs**, and for their findings and results to feed recently kicked-off projects, which may eventually operationalize them into concrete follow-ups. Both of these scenarios shall be considered likewise relevant from a **long-term sustainability** perspective, inasmuch as they respect the leading role of local stakeholders and boost ownership of the end results. In other words, the **afterlife strategies** adopted differ from one Lab to the other, in respect of the core principles underpinning the overall SmartCulTour endeavour, notably the maximisation of context-specific and community-based approaches towards **collective decision-making in cultural tourism planning**.

Being **provider-driven**, the SmartCulTour LLs were characterised by a focus on **knowledge-creation and theory development**. This was supported by the fact that the functions of Lab Managers were mainly performed by universities, educational institutions, and research centres, and therefore LLs were used for educational purposes and for pursuing new societally relevant knowledge, with the process itself being part of the outcome. Within provider-driven labs, generated knowledge is shared across the network, and the Lab's actions aim to provide benefits to all participants, for instance in the form of new research outputs, market knowledge, business solutions, and improved development strategies.

In this same spirit, the **awareness-raising and capacity-building activities conducted by UNESCO** in the six SmartCulTour LLs 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 organisations. Jointly designed and delivered with each LL through an inclusive consultative process, these capacity-building actions addressed local skills gaps to equip stakeholders with knowledge and tools for the design and planning of cultural tourism interventions that are consistent with UNESCO's approach and in accordance with the local cultural resources and priorities.

In particular, broader awareness within the SmartCulTour LLs community was raised on the importance of **aligning cultural tourism development activities with international cultural benchmarks**, thereby supporting the implementation of normative, policy, and operational standards at the local and regional level to protect cultural heritage. UNESCO's activities also promoted **integrated cultural tourism management**, inscribed within a **broader and cross-sectoral policy vision** that fosters beneficial relationships between the protection and promotion of local cultural resources and sustainable development processes.

As evidenced in the evaluation conducted by Modul, the capacity-building actions delivered by UNESCO were deemed by LLs' participants as one of the **most significant added values brought in by the project**. Though being pilot actions driven by a "soft" training approach rather than full-fledged capacity-building programmes, UNESCO's activities were underpinned by a capacity-building approach in the sense of addressing all different areas in which capacities reside. This was complemented by the high-level expertise of the trainers delivering the workshops, who brought their longstanding experience into each of the local realities. The activities succeeded, therefore, in spurring interest and creating virtuous dynamics within local networks, further demonstrating that knowledge advancement and reinforced networking were cross-cutting needs in all six Labs.

The **multifaceted nature and expertise of the SmartCulTour partners**, along with the **international exchange visits organised across the six LLs**, helped inspire local stakeholders with international good practices to be replicated in local contexts. This was optimised by travelling Lab Managers and stakeholders, i.e., experts and practitioners from the culture and tourism sectors, offering external and unbiased views on the local dynamics and trends of the visited LL. Such a fruitful exchange dynamic was conducive to ameliorating the tourism offer of the six destinations by upholding the lessons learnt from the other Labs.

The exchange visits across the six Labs were envisaged as proper visitor experiences, allowing for the enjoyment of local cultural resources and authentic interactions with the local community, while providing the opportunity to familiarise with locally selected interventions and WP7 tools and methodologies. By leveraging the presence of travelling LLs for **pilot testing of the identified prototype interventions**, the hosting LL was able to carry out a preliminary assessment of their feasibility and gather experienced feedback on their market potential and sustainability in the long run. Moreover, the implementation of the same

SmartCulTour tools in LLs belonging to the same exchange cluster (urban or rural) led to comparable experiences and results, thereby enriching the visit's relevance for participants.

Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered by some LLs with the operationalization and actual implementation of the co-designed direct interventions, mainly due to the lack of available funding in the short term, the process leading to their formulation helped **local stakeholders coalesce their interests and potential resources' investment around agreed priorities**, which further enhanced opportunities for public-private partnerships. The interventions identified by the six LLs were subject to an attentive analysis *vis-à-vis* their expected impact, and the relevant lessons learnt, in the context of the European state-of-the-art of cultural tourism interventions, as presented in Deliverable 3.4.

The ultimate objective of the **practice abstracts and videos produced within Task 6.4** was to provide practical information, recommendations, and good practices on context-specific, sustainable cultural tourism interventions as role models for inspiration and potential replication in other destinations. Their intrinsic dissemination purpose is aimed at the interventions' translation through horizontal diffusion, identifying the necessary resources and processes to support their replication and reproduction elsewhere, thus explicitly factoring in changing contexts. Potential diffusion strategies may consist of either the replication of Lab structures in order to transpose the lessons learned from one Lab onto another, or education and training via capacity-building programmes.

Within SmartCulTour, the former diffusion strategy materialises in D6.6, i.e. the **Standard Terms of Reference for the LLs**, which provided somewhat of a blueprint for their initial establishment in the six, so-much-diverse LLs destinations. The latter was instead fulfilled by both the exchange visits organised among the six Labs, which served to **mainstream localised knowledge throughout the international network of the SmartCulTour community**, as well as by UNESCO's participation in SmartCulTour, whose main tangible output was the development of a **context-specific and people-centred capacity-building programmes, aligned with relevant international normative and policy standards**. These pilot capacity-building activities could indeed inspire other actors and regions, serving destinations that seek to sustainably improve their cultural tourism performance, a **tested, scalable formula**.

The potential for scalability and diffusion of the SmartCulTour LLs' experiences, tools and findings shall be considered the direct and anticipated consequence of having envisaged the **LLs as the project's cornerstone**, linking the theoretical with the practical and empirical components, and notably ensuring the testing and trialling of the outputs produced by other Work Packages, thereby contributing to their amelioration and refinement in a two-way process. Through the platform offered for **experimentation and validation**, the LL setting also allowed for stepwise scaling up of solutions by identifying key bottlenecks throughout the testing periods, and thereby **optimising the implementation process**.

It can be concluded that the final and transversal outcome of the six SmartCulTour LLs was a **positive social impact in terms of spurring the involvement of local communities in the development of sustainable cultural tourism, improving networking and collaboration across key sectoral actors**, along with **devising sustainable local development scenarios for cultural tourism planning**, with innovations tailored to local collective needs rather than short-sighted commercial ones.

None of the mentioned activities and results would have been possible without the inspiring, highly-competent, and unfaltering cooperation that UNESCO enjoyed with the whole project Consortium, as well as with all stakeholders in the LLs. LLs' outcomes were boosted by the **passionate commitment of SmartCulTour Lab Managers and partners**, who have individually and collectively faced the several challenges encountered throughout the LLs' experience, demonstrating **flexibility** and professionalism. Most importantly, **creative**

and out-of-the-box thinking allowed to overcome unusual obstacles, which is even more the case because the LLs' inception period coincided with the **most restrictive period of the Covid-19 pandemic**, therefore requiring additional capacity to adapt to unexpected circumstances.

Beyond the Recommendations provided in section 5 of this Report (see above), spanning **general recommendations for the set-up of a LL on sustainable cultural tourism development** and **recommendations for LLs to achieve medium- to long-term objectives of local sustainable cultural tourism development**, the legacy of the SmartCulTour LLs for future Managers may consist in anticipating the challenges that they would most probably encounter while designing, setting up, and running a LL.

As conceptualised by the **SmartCulTour project coordinator**, these **challenges** include:

- **Funding and sustainability:** Securing long-term funding and ensuring sustainability of the LL can be challenging since they usually require ongoing financial resources for maintaining infrastructure, staff, and operations. In many cases, LLs are project-based, hindering the ability for a sustainable afterlife if local partners are not prepared or capable to continue operations.
- **Stakeholder engagement and collaboration:** Engaging and involving diverse stakeholders can be challenging since the success of LLs relies on active participation across various groups: businesses, researchers, policy-makers, users, etc. Stakeholders might have conflicting interests, limited time availability, or limited engagement. This is particularly true when the activities are considered high effort with low reward, which is more likely to be the case in LLs where the goal is policy-making or knowledge generation, rather than marketable product development.
- **Free riding of participants:** A potential further challenge somewhat related to the first two points is that the lab's potential to generate broadly shared, successful outcomes, can provide opportunities for free riding on other network partners' efforts. Especially in those LLs where potential benefits are usually more indirect and shared, it is very difficult to move from ideas and strategies to tangible actions due to a lack of (financial) initiative by network partners.
- **Scaling and generalizability:** Scalability can be both an opportunity and a challenge in LLs. In particular, the standardization from a specific local context towards scaling up of successful small innovations and generalising findings can be difficult. Contextual factors could impact the transferability of results to other regions or communities.
- **Regulatory and policy barriers:** While not limited to innovation via LLs, existing regulatory frameworks might sometimes impede innovation ideas. Navigating regulations and guidelines requires proper knowledge of the legal situation which might not always be present within bottom-up creative processes.
- **Knowledge sharing and intellectual property:** LLs require the open and free sharing of knowledge across participants. In a public setting, this might be less of an issue, but when the network involves private business partners that might be in competitive environments, there is not always a necessary openness to share business data that could be relevant for the network as a whole.

Information on the afterlife and future SmartCulTour LLs-related activities will be made available on the [SmartCulTour website](#).

Annexes to the Final report

Annex 13 – Template of D6.5 - Final report on experiences and findings from the Living Labs



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

Deliverable D6.5

Title: Final report on experiences and findings from the Living Labs

Due date: 30 June 2023

Submission date: June 2023

Approved by Leader of Work Package: Matteo Rosati (UNESCO)

Type: Report

Author List: Name (Institution)

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Dissemination Level

☒ **PU:** Public

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

A

bstract

INSTRUCTIONS

To be developed by UNESCO

Table X. Description of Task 6.7

Task 6.7 – Identifying drivers and critical requirements for sustainable cultural tourism development

Each Lab will deliver a **final assessment report on the findings of the respective interventions**, their **impact in terms of sustainable cultural tourism development**, and the **critical contextual factors**. The WP Leader will bring the main conclusions and findings of the six Labs together, feeding into WP7, and specifically Task 7.3. This will result in a **consolidation of experiences and findings of the six Labs**, identifying **success criteria**, **solutions that support real change** in cultural tourism destinations and that may be used in a strategy to ensure an **efficient use of European Structural funds**.

01 Introduction to the SmartCulTour Living Labs

INSTRUCTIONS

To be developed by UNESCO

02 Experiences and findings from the XX Living Lab

2. Brief summary of the Living Lab's workflow

2.1. Main activities as per the workplan

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 600 max.) – Please use track-change

By taking the moves from the workplan contained in the *Specific Terms of Reference* for your Living Lab (section 1.7 "Work plan and strategic roadmap", table 3), as well as the reports and monitoring PPTs that you were asked to produce on each LL meeting (which shall be used as a basis and starting point for the present report), please describe the overall workflow of your Living Lab, focusing on the most significant implemented activities. Beyond providing a narrative description, please also fill in the below recap table with information on each LL meeting that was held throughout the project's lifecycle. If possible, it would also be good to link the meetings to the stages of the double-diamond design model: Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver, since it then provides an additional link to WP7 (even if not all tools/methods used were the same).

Table X. Overview of the XX Living Lab's workflow

LL Meeting	Date	Stage of Double-diamond design model	Activities / Tools / Methods
Inception meeting			
2 nd meeting			
3 rd meeting			
4 th meeting			
5 th meeting			
6 th meeting			
Etc.			

2.2. Key stakeholders

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 400 max.) – Please use track-change

Please list in the table below the stakeholders (only role and organization, to be in line with GDPR requirements) that have participated in the LL.

Table X. List of participants to the XX Living Lab

Nº	Role	Organization
Lab Managers / SmartCulTour partners		
1.		
2.		
3.		

4.		
5.		
LL Participants / Local stakeholders		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		
Etc.		

Complement the table with a narrative explaining from what categories they come from (e.g. private Vs public sector; governmental vs non-governmental, etc.), providing an overview of the different experiences, expertise and main (clashing?) interests represented in the LL (e.g. civil society Vs Municipality Vs tour operators, etc).

Explain the overall participation dynamics in the LL, i.e. if some stakeholders stepped in/out at specific moments of the LL's lifecycle; if, to some meetings, you purposefully invited some stakeholders rather than others; if you established an internal "governance system" within the LL, with differentiated roles for different categories of participating stakeholders; etc.

Reflect on what other stakeholders would have brought an added value should they have participated in the LL, and the reasons why this did not happen (e.g. no remuneration for participation? Perception of an insufficient buy-in? Etc.)

2.3. SmartCulTour tools and methods

2.3.1. Inception stage

2.3.2. Exploration stage

2.3.3. Design-oriented research stage

2.3.4. Elaboration stage

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 800 max.) – Please use track-change

Take the moves from Annex 2. “Living Appendix - Specific Tools and methodologies” to the Specific Terms of Reference for your Living Lab, as well as from the “Overview of current state of LL” (resulting from the consultations held by Bart and Costanza with Lab Managers in November/December 2021 – documents to be shared separately by UNESCO) and list the SmartCulTour tools and methods that were adopted / used / implemented in your LL¹⁹, describe the relevant process, its outcomes, and provide a feedback on their relevance in the context of the overall project’s objectives and vis à vis the needs and priorities of local stakeholders / LL participants.

If you had originally planned for a tool / method that then was not used, please explain the reasons why this happened. Conversely, should you have used a tool that you had not planned for at the beginning, please describe the reasons why you opted for it.

Try to answer to the following guiding questions (non-exhaustive list): was the tool appropriate / useful? Did it help engage LL participants? Was it used at the right moment of the LL’s lifecycle? What were the immediate results? Did its implementation contribute to foster exchange and dialogue among local stakeholders? Did any new views come out of the discussion thanks to the use of that specific tool? Etc.

¹⁹ The tools/methods to be considered are: Sticky note sorting game, Pictures as probes, Opportunity Tree, The Placemaking tool, Q-Sort Methodology, Stakeholder mapping, Persona development tool, Customer journey mapping, Participatory systems mapping, Visitor flow mapping, Dynamic House of Quality, SmartCulTour Game / other form of Serious play, Benchmarking and Honeycomb mapping, Multi-method process flow, Ideation washing machine, Destination design roadmapping, Strategic roadmap for cultural tourism change and Policy round tables for cultural tourism change. See <https://smartcultour.maglr.com/toolkit/smartcultour-toolkit> and also D7.1. Furthermore, was the SmartCulTour Platform used in the LLs: <http://www.smartcultour.eu/smartcultour-platform/>. Finally, were the best practice cultural tourism intervention examples (WP3) used explicitly within the LL?

03 Results and impact

3.1. Main challenges in achieving the expected results

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 400 max.) – Please use track-change

Please describe 3 to 5 core challenges / obstacles that the LL has experienced and that may have limited the achievement of the expected results. Such challenges can be linked to the LL's intrinsic nature and dynamics, to the broader destination's context where the LL is located (phenomena such as: structural limits i.e. infrastructure; lack of cooperation among stakeholders; lack of funding; weakened local ownership; low attention from local authorities, etc. that undermine the potential for the LL destination to further develop sustainable cultural tourism.), as well as to the SmartCulTour project itself.

Describe how you tackled these challenges and what mitigation measures, if any, were / should be adopted to reduce their negative impact / overcome them.

3.2. Main results achieved compared to the set objectives

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 500 max.) – Please use track-change

By taking the moves from the objectives set in the Specific Terms of Reference for your Living Lab, elaborate on the main results of the LL's experience.

Try to answer to the following guiding questions (non-exhaustive list): What are the main tangible outcomes resulting from the LL experience? Why and to what extent can it be considered a success? Were the set objectives realistic and relevant to the context? Were the objectives adjusted throughout the LL's lifecycle, and why? Etc.

3.3. Direct and indirect interventions designed, initiated and/or implemented

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 800 max.) – Please use track-change

As foreseen by Task 6.3 – "Evaluating and assessing interventions in sustainable cultural tourism practices", as well as by Task 6.4 – "Testing selected interventions to support sustainable cultural tourism development", each LL was requested to co-create smart cultural tourism interventions to be implemented towards more sustainable forms of tourism at destination level.

In this section, please describe the co-design process leading to the identification / design of relevant interventions, their implementation (if any), their impact (either expected or actual), as well as (potential) opportunities for their funding.

Please refer to your LL's interventions that were the subject of the practice abstracts and videos (see [D6.2 - Production of abstracts and practice videos on tested interventions](#)). Additional insights on the interventions' expected / potential impacts might be derived from the analysis conducted by Simone Moretti in the context of Deliverable 3.4 - "Framework of cultural tourism interventions" (currently being updated with the experiences / interventions from the LLs).

Should you deem it useful and appropriate, please feel free to also provide information on *additional* (meaning beyond those contained in D6.2) interventions that were identified / discussed in the context of the LL's meetings and that could well accompany the destination's shift towards more sustainable forms of cultural tourism development.

3.4. Lessons learnt

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 400 max.) – Please use track-change

Please describe the main lessons learnt from the LL's experience, with regards to (non-exhaustive list):

- *The tourism destination where the LL is located, and notably solutions that supported / may support real change towards sustainable cultural tourism development;*
- *Key stakeholders and related needs for strengthened networking;*
- *Need for improved tourism-related services / facilities;*
- *The LL in itself as a tool for stakeholders' involvement, co-creation and co-decision, including recommendations for establishing LLs in other contexts;*
- *Etc.*

The lessons learnt outlined in this section shall then be further elaborated in section 4.2. on "Follow-up recommendations for your Living Lab" and in section 5.1. on "General recommendations for the set-up of a Living Lab on sustainable cultural tourism development", respectively.

04 Sustainability and follow-up

4.1. Sustainability of the outcomes and afterlife strategy for the Living Lab

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 400 max.) – Please use track-change

Please explain the strategy that was put in place to ensure the sustainability of the LL's outcomes in the medium to long term (including of the designed / implemented interventions and of the change that was spurred through the existence of the LL and its activities), as well as the proposed / planned afterlife of the LL itself (e.g. transfer of ownership to the local DMO, University / Research centre; identification of a physical venue for the LL; set up of networking platforms, etc.)

4.2. Follow-up recommendations for the Living Lab

INSTRUCTIONS (words: 400 max.) – Please use track-change

Please provide follow-up recommendations for your respective Living Labs, based on the discussions held, work conducted and identified findings / lessons learned, towards the achievement of medium to long-term objectives of local sustainable cultural tourism development.

Examples: fostering networking with key partners on a specific initiative; mobilizing resources at municipal / regional level to fund the designed interventions; develop local skills and capacities on a specific topic; raise awareness of both visitors and communities on local values towards more sustainable forms of tourism; etc.

A Annexes to the XX Living Lab report

INSTRUCTIONS

Please feel free to include any annex that you deem key for a better understanding of your LL's experience, and especially tangible outputs stemming from the work of the LL (e.g. roadmaps, strategies, business plan for the implementation of CT interventions, feedback questionnaires, etc.).

05 Final Recommendations

5.1. General recommendations for the set-up of a Living Lab on sustainable cultural tourism development

5.2. Recommendations for Living Labs to achieve medium- to long-term objectives of local sustainable cultural tourism development

INSTRUCTIONS – Please use track-change

This section shall present consolidated recommendations from the experience of the six Living Labs. Some preliminary inputs are already listed below. Each Lab Manager is required to validate and complement the tentative below list with lessons learnt from his/her own LL's experience, especially focusing on what future Lab Managers may need to know about participatory approaches to sustainable cultural tourism development.

It would also be advisable that partners contribute to this section not only from the perspective of the LLs themselves, but also from the lenses of the connections between their broader role within the project, i.e. as WP leaders, and the implementation of relevant tasks and tools in the LLs (for instance, pros and cons of the use of the WP7 Toolkit in the LLs, including the added value on prototyping the tools in advance; the role of the LLs as sources for data and information feeding WP4 and WP5; etc.).

06 Conclusions

INSTRUCTIONS

To be developed by UNESCO, with the contribution of Bart and Astrid, based on the inputs provided by Lab Managers in their reports, as well as on the Modul evaluation's results.

In particular, Bart will add a part to cover the various European funding programmes and how they could (or could not) suit certain types of cultural tourism investments. Inspired by the webinar and the funding documents of NecstOUR and DG Grow.

LAYOUT INSTRUCTIONS

Please follow the below instructions while drafting the document:

Lists

You can use the headings to organize your text.

1. **Numbered lists.** Use this format for numbered lists.

■ **Bulleted lists.** Use this format for bulleted lists.

Figures and Tables

Please take into account the following rules when elaborating your tables and figures:

- quote all the figures and the tables in the text,
- number figures and tables from 1 to n,
- indicate the units you are using,
- tables numbers must be easily legible; consider using landscape orientation for wide tables,
- do not cut tables or figures between two pages; if a table is too long, divide it and insert a header (Table n, cont.) in the following page,
- format the original digital files in such a way as to ensure good quality reproduction, particularly in the case of pictures and figures,
- table headers and figures feet are in **Calibri 11 bold**

Line spacing: 1,15 + "Add space after paragraph" (apart from bulleted lists)

Table N. SmartCulTour working meetings

Meeting	Frequency	Type
Team meetings	As necessary	To be decided by teams (face to face + tele-conference)
Task meetings	As necessary (to be decided by Task leader)	To be decided by leader (face to face + tele-conference)
WP meetings	As necessary (to be decided by WP leader). Separate WP meetings will be scheduled in project General Meetings	To be decided by leader (face to face + tele-conference)
Executive Board Meetings	Bi-monthly + during project General Meetings Extraordinary meetings may be convened	Normally by tele-conference Face to face at General Meetings and in extraordinary cases
General Meetings (incl. Gen. Assembly meetings)	Annually Extraordinary meetings may be convened	Face to face (Extraordinary meetings may be organised through tele-conference)

Annex 14 - Overview of WP7 tools used in the Living Labs

1. Tools for identifying the problem space

SmartCulTour Tool	Description	Outcome
Placemaking	An arts-based approach to create in-depth understanding of places, culture and natural/geographical values. Can be adopted in multiple ways, e.g. by asking participants to bring a picture or video of a place in their own neighbourhood on which they have imprinted and explain the personal significance.	Learn about different values, perceptions, memories, and traditions of landscape and culture.
Q-Sort methodology	A mixed methods approach to identify differences in priorities and worldviews among stakeholders by making participants ordinally sort a wide range of statements in terms of their agreement.	Sets of (shared or dissonant) worldviews to identify diversity in interests.
Stakeholder mapping	Stakeholder mapping can done in a variety of ways. One approach categorizes stakeholders along three layers: crucial, important, relevant. A stakeholder network map also adds information about relationships between stakeholders to highlight interdependences and vulnerabilities. As a participatory approach, it can help participants understand the complexity of local cultural tourism networks.	A stakeholder network map that visualizes the local cultural tourism ecosystem.
Persona development	Personas describe function-based needs, wishes and behaviours of representative groups of visitors in a narrative fashion. Personas can be created via a combination of available (survey) data and personal locational experience.	A limited (3 to 6) set of created personas, containing information on generalized visitor behaviour and needs, wishes and values.
Customer journey mapping	Provides a time-based flow of the visitor experience via a series of relevant touchpoints or activities. Ideally these touchpoints are accompanied by customer evaluations in order to identify bottlenecks and problem areas in the destination. Information can come from tacit or explicit knowledge of participants.	Generic journey maps for different visitor profiles are created in order to summarize and share tacit and explicit knowledge on tourist itineraries.
Participatory systems mapping	A spatial representation of a geographical map, depicting the tourism resources in various layers. Through combined expertise of local stakeholders, layers can be enriched to include (historic) events, public transport, planned real estate development, and qualitative information.	A collaboratively created systems map depicting the destination's resources on a geographical scale.
Visitor flow mapping	Can be seen as an extension to the systems mapping, providing a sequence of geographical touchpoints that tourists combine while visiting a destination. It identifies key attractions and supporting tourist resources on particular trajectories.	A map that indicates visitor flows across the destination, highlighting relevant trajectories.
Dynamic House of Quality	The Dynamic House of Quality supports decision-making in high complexity destinations with many stakeholders by weighing and balancing the different needs of stakeholders in relation to the expected impacts of potential interventions. The structured approach helps to prioritize interventions as well as clarify individual preferences between participants, supporting an open discussion.	A structured scorecard per intervention in relation to their potential to solve specific needs, potentially leading to a ranking of priorities.

Source: Smit et al. (2022)

2. Tools for creating a solution space

SmartCulTour Tool	Description	Outcome
SmartCulTour Game	The SmartCulTour Game is an example of a gamification approach. Specifically, the game aims to engage stakeholders to learn about each other's interests and priorities via a roleplaying approach. Via a hybrid combination of a digital dashboard and back-end, a mobile app, and physical intervention cards, players create interventions or support other players' interventions to achieve certain goals and needs. Interventions are then evaluated and discussed on potential destination impacts.	Better understanding of multi-stakeholder perspectives and potential selection of preferable interventions.
Benchmarking and Honeycomb mapping	The technique is meant to document visitor experiences on location, giving information on the visitor's behaviour and values. Benchmarking refers to documenting experiences against expectations, potentially using the Polarsteps application for providing location mapping. A follow-up Honeycomb mapping exercise then analyses and discusses the pictures across different themes: sustainability, learning, accessibility, credibility, findability, and memorability.	If a travel app such as Polarsteps is used, a visitor route is mapped. Furthermore, at specific locations, pictures and emotions/experiences are collected which are later thematically grouped, helping to understand how the destination is viewed during a trip and what its strengths and weaknesses are.
Multi-method process flow	Multi-method process flow is adapted from the 3S principle of Storytelling, Sense, and Sophistication and is designed to help participants formulate ideas that further develop unequal assets through a multi-sensorial and storytelling experience. Starting from tangible/intangible local assets, through various steps, the sense of place, narrative, sensorial impacts and learning experiences are mapped out in order to create memorable tourism interventions.	Further developing original ideas and insights into multi-sensorial and educational visitor experiences.
Ideation washing machine	A brainstorming method to engage creative thinking. The method inspires participants to build unique and unexpected combinations, to see how a product or service can be developed by combining different elements. This is done by asking participants to first individually write down three things: (i) a local intervention/cultural tourism product, (ii) a placemaking keyword or emotion that describes a strength of place, (iii) a hobby or object that makes them happy. These are then randomly combined within a group and participants are challenged to combine the three themes into a new potential tourist experience.	Creative potential tourism interventions. While potentially not wholly implementable, they can have seeds of interesting elements or be starting points for further discussion.
Destination design roadmapping	A more structured timeline approach that lets stakeholders critically engage with the development of primary experiences, as well as supporting facilities and other interventions for different groups of visitors. It can facilitate	Improves understanding of the complexity of tourism development and integrates

	discussions on the desirability and impacts of individual experiences by framing them in a larger development framework.	supporting facilities in the planning.
Strategic roadmap for cultural tourism change	Similar to the previous tool, it offers a structured approach for mapping future directions of cultural tourism change by prioritizing the order of implementation in terms of long-term goals. It works as an action plan for sustainable tourism initiatives within a larger strategic framework.	Clear visualized action plans that identify tourism strategies, policies and products and services needed, offering concrete implementation steps.
Policy round tables for cultural tourism change	Policy round tables ideally follow the more grassroots level developments. After drafting initial interventions, policy round tables then help frame the initiatives in a wider context. Using the strategic roadmaps as a starting point, policy recommendations are drafted that could support the needs of the proposals.	Around 4-5 clearly formulated policy recommendations that identify supporting policy needs for ideated interventions.

Source: Smit et al. (2022)

Annex 15 - Cultural tourism interventions within EU Funding Frameworks

In this part of the report, we further build on the February 28, 2023 SmartCulTour Webinar ‘A guide to European funding programmes for cultural tourism initiatives’ and on the guidelines of the European Commission on the range of funding programmes relevant for the broader tourism sector within the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and Next Generation EU¹⁹. Next, we specifically look at the outcomes of the SmartCulTour LLs and analyse whether additional funding mechanisms could be sought to support the project afterlife and practical interventions.

1. General overview of EU funding for tourism

At the most basic level, 17 different programmes can be identified within which tourism subsectors, specified topics, geographically demarcated areas, and types of organizations might seek financial support. The Commission’s guide on EU funding organizes these 17 programmes by (i) eligibility: who can apply?, (ii) programme topic: which actions can receive funding?, and (iii) type of support: what kind of funding? Table 15. provides an overview of the calls – at least the ones where the annual work programme has been adopted – according to these characteristics.

Table 15. EU funding opportunities for tourism-related projects

Programme	Eligibility						Topic/Focus					Type of support		
	Academia	Business (non-SME)	Private individuals	NGO	Public authority	SMEs	Comp., research,	Crisis recovery	Skills	Smart/digital	Sustainable tourism	Financing	Grants/Subsidies	Technical assistance
Creative Europe														
Digital Europe														
Erasmus+														
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)														
European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF)														
European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)														
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund														
European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)														
Horizon Europe														
InvestEU														
Just Transition Fund (JTF)														
LIFE Programme														
REACT-EU														
Recovery and Resilience Facility														
Single Market Programme (SMP)														
Support by European Bank for														

¹⁹ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/eu-funding-and-businesses/funding-guide_en

Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)														
Support by the European Investment Bank (EIB)														

Of the 17 potential funding mechanisms, we can try to identify main objectives per programme, since some funding mechanisms are primarily aimed at skill enhancement or knowledge creation, while others have a strong development incentive. Furthermore, quite a few of the funding opportunities mentioned above are part of the EU recovery programme specifically aimed at alleviating the negative effects caused by Covid-19, therefore being very specific and potentially less structural in nature. Furthermore, while some programmes offer full, non-refundable grants, others can depend on partial co-financing or provide loans, guarantees or equity investments, rather than grants and subsidies.

1.1. Main programme objectives: skills enhancement

Erasmus+ provides funding with a specific aim for knowledge development and networking, primarily covering mobility and training activities for educational purposes. While tourism is not a specifically identified programme component, tourism-related capacity-building activities can be covered within Erasmus+. While the funding is open for public authorities, SMEs and academia, in practice it is likely of primary interest to academic institutions.²⁰

The **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)** was set up to provide resources to assist in the recovery post Covid-19 in the 2021-2027 period, with the activities centred around improved labour participation, educational and skills policies, health systems, and inequality reduction and integration. Within the tourism ecosystem, the funding can primarily assist supportive policies on youth employment measures, and investments in jobs and skills within green and digital transitions²¹.

1.2. Main programme objectives: improving resilience

The **European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Displaced Workers (EGF)** has a specific focus on supporting individuals in finding new opportunities via further education and training, career advice, and co-financing of job searches after large-scale restructuring events. While not having a narrow tourism focus, the programme is open for various sectors and has previously been used by some European regions that experienced significant shocks in the hospitality sector employment.

InvestEU has similarities with ESF+ in that it aims to support the EU economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic. Investments to improve tourism's competitiveness, sustainability, and value chains can be supported under the programme. Importantly though, the InvestEU budget only serves as a guarantee for other private or public investors. It does not provide non-refundable funds in the form of grants but instead aims to mobilize private and public investment by sharing associated risks through guarantees, loans, equity, and other types of support.

²⁰ An example of Erasmus+ funding used for such purposes is the EUHeritage project (<https://www.euheritage.eu/>) which aims to create a transnational curriculum on digital skills, transferable competences, soft skills, and experience tourism for cultural heritage professionals.

²¹ See for instance the dual learning programme at the Hasselt Hotel School, which combines theoretical with practical skill enhancement (<https://www.hotelschoolhasselt.be/about-6>).

REACT-EU provided specific resources additionally aimed at fostering development in the context of the social consequences from the Covid-19 pandemic. It formed part of the NextGenerationEU recovery package and channelled additional funding towards the ERDF and ESF programmes. Therefore, the REACT-EU resources and its tourism-related components have been implemented through the regional and national cohesion policies and these two programmes can be further consulted for more information on the scope of the support.

Yet another programme linked to the recovery needs after Covid-19, is the **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RFF)** which forms the centrepiece of the NextGenerationEU recovery plan and financing reforms and investment from the pandemic start in February 2020 until 31 December 2026. The national recovery and resilience plans, drafted on EU country level, are responsible for identifying potential investments and key reforms, of which tourism-specific projects could be a part.

The **Just Transition Fund (JTF)** is linked to social and economic costs that might result from transitioning to a climate-neutral economy, providing potential funding for tourism SMEs to support green capital investments. In particular, the JTF finances projects located in territories particularly impacted by the transition towards climate-neutrality due to the closure of mining activities or GHG intensive industries. Since all EU countries identify eligible territories, the programme is less widely applicable as some of the other funding mechanisms.

The **Single Market Programme (SMP)**, as a successor of the COSME programme, aims to improve the strength and resilience of the European single market, particularly by providing tools to recover and repair from the Covid-19 crisis. While the work programme has various annexes, particularly relevant for tourism is Annex 2 which focuses on improving the competitiveness, capacity-building and sustainability of enterprises, particularly SMEs, and supporting their market access²².

The **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**, as its name suggests, aims to support rural areas in overcoming structural problems such as a lack of employment opportunities, skill shortages, lack of connectivity and essential services, and depopulation. The main focus is therefore on strengthening the socio-economic fabric through the creation of new rural value changes, of which tourism activities might be part of the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans. Within the EAFRD, aside from direct grants, microcredits, guarantees and equities can also be made available for rural enterprises and projects. While wide-ranging in its potential support – e.g. covering conservation efforts of small-scale built heritage, building or renovating tourist offices, updating visitor information, creating new leisure, recreational or sports activities – the framework is naturally limited to rural destinations and a tourism-related investment focus should be included in the CAP Strategic Plans in order to be eligible.²³

The **LIFE programme** has no specific tourism theme but funds projects in environmental and climate action and could therefore be leveraged for tourism interventions related to green transitions, particularly the circular economy, energy efficiency, and renewable energy measures. Funding can be provided if projects align with the annual calls for proposals. Importantly, the LIFE programme does not finance large-scale

²² An example of a tourism-related COSME project is Tourbit, which aims to foster the digitalisation of tourism SMEs (<https://tourbit.eu/>).

²³ An example of its application in cultural tourism interventions is the diversification of farm income through agrotourism in Arcevia, Italy (https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/eu-funding-and-businesses/funding-guide/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development_en) whereby the EU contribution assisted in the renovation of the 19th century house for visitor accommodations.

infrastructure projects²⁴.

1.3. Main programme objectives: regional and sustainable development

The **Creative Europe programme** can, within the specific framework of tourism, support the safeguarding, development, promotion and competitive positioning of the cultural and creative sector in Europe, including architecture, music, literature, performing arts, films, festivals, cultural tourism, the European Capitals of Culture, and the European Heritage Days. The funding supports regional economic development through potentially financing tourism and cooperative projects and branding efforts, with the sole limitation being its sectoral boundaries.²⁵

The **European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)** is evidently concerned with maritime environments, therefore somewhat limiting its general usefulness for cultural tourism. Nonetheless, within the programme's focus on protecting aquatic biodiversity, low-impact fishing and aquacultural activities, it also supports developments of a blue economy under community-led local development principles, which might include eco-tourism and pesca-tourism projects, accommodations, tourist trails, gastronomy, and tourist activities.²⁶

The **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund** is among the most adopted programmes for strategic and infrastructure-related interventions in tourism development and is thus more widely applicable for cultural tourism initiatives. The ERDF aims to correct development imbalances between European regions and strengthen economic, territorial and social cohesion. The Cohesion Fund is more specified towards investments in environment and trans-European transport networks, and only covering EU countries with a per capita Gross National Income in the 2015-2017 period of less than 90% of the EU average. The ERDF highlights five objectives which are all potentially relevant for tourism investments, namely: (i) Promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity; (ii) Investing in a greener, low-carbon transition towards a net-zero carbon economy and resilient Europe; (iii) A more connected Europe by enhancing mobility; (iv) A more social and inclusive Europe; (v) Fostering the sustainable and integrated development of all types of territories and local initiatives. If potential tourism investments comply with the relevant objectives, enabling conditions, or minimum requirements established by the programme, funding is possible. A specific type of cooperation initiatives that are partly funded under the ERDF programme are the European Territorial Cooperation regulation or Interreg programmes, which promote cross-border, transnational, and interregional cooperation. Interreg itself consists of a variety of programmes, focusing on cross-border, transnational, or interregional cooperation, which each programme outlining main objectives, regulations, and requirements (<https://interreg.eu/>).²⁷

²⁴ For instance, LIFE SUSTAINHUTS aimed to increase the energy resilience of mountaineering tourism infrastructure (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/life/publicWebsite/project/details/4399>).

²⁵ An application of Creative Europe funding can be found in the Cultural route of the Council of Europe 'Follow the Vikings': a transnational project that has the aim to improve accessibility and interpretation of transnational Viking heritage via maintaining and enhancing the Viking Cultural Route, developing a stakeholder network and assisting in knowledge transfer and quality improvement throughout the network and more general European heritage sites (<https://www.followthevikings.com>).

²⁶ For instance, the Mar das Illas project in Galicia, Spain, helped to boost fishers' earnings by diversifying traditional fishing practices through pesca-tourism (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/on-the-ground/good-practice/projects/cooperation-supporting-marine-tourism-businesses-fisheries_en.html).

²⁷ Many examples can be found of tourism-related Interreg projects. The FACET project funded under the Interreg 2 Seas programme focused on the facilitation of adopting circular solutions by tourism and leisure entrepreneurs (<https://www.interreg2seas.eu/en/FACET>).

The support provided by the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)** can help to finance sustainable practices and associated market trends in tourism, particularly under three relevant programmes: (i) Inclusive Tourism Framework, which aims to help growth in tourism sectors through investments in hotels and tourism operators; (ii) Integrated Cultural Heritage Framework, which supports regional development through heritage resources acting as drivers for economic growth. As such, the EBRD could fund projects located near or within cultural heritage sites (enhancing the area's commercialisation), as well as funding projects that improve sustainable management, connectivity and accessibility, and operations of cultural heritage attractions themselves; (iii) Small Business Initiative, whereby the EBRD offers consultancy on aspects such as strategy, digital marketing, operations, quality management, energy efficiency, and financial management to SMEs. It should be noted that the EBRD primarily provides financing in the form of loans, equity investments and guarantees and therefore does not offer non-refundable grants as part of its regular operations.

Similar to the EBRD, the **Support by the European Investment Bank (EIB)** takes the form of loans, guarantees, equity investments and advisory services, with a primary aim to promote regional development in priority cohesion regions, either via SME projects (provided the amount does not exceed €50 million), urban regeneration projects, and investments in tourism infrastructure, particularly mobility, in poorer regions.

1.4. Main programme objectives: knowledge generation and innovation

The **Digital Europe work programme** is a biannual work plan that supports digital transformations in key areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced computing, data infrastructure, and governance and processing. While tourism is thus not a core component of the programme objectives, through its support for the creation of data spaces, tourism, cultural heritage and mobility could leverage some of the funding opportunities.

Horizon Europe, the successor of Horizon 2020 is first and foremost a research programme aimed at improving state-of-the-art research and innovation within a wide range of scientific fields. It is as such, primarily of interest to academic institutions, although consortia also integrate SMEs, NGOs, public authorities, and larger corporations for multifaceted knowledge generation. Tourism-related research projects can be funded under cluster 2 – Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society, if fitting the proposed work plan.²⁸

2. EU funding opportunities and SmartCulTour Living Lab interventions

After the generalizing overview of EU funding opportunities for tourism-related interventions, we can now try to identify potential financial resources to further support the proposed SmartCulTour interventions within the six LLs, related to their context, their objectives, the region(s) involved, and the project partners. From Table 15 it is clear that three grant programmes offer the most potential, namely:

- The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) for **Huesca and Utsjoki**, where a partial transition towards non-agriculture related industries is envisioned via an expansion towards cultural tourism;
- Erasmus+, in particular for the **Split LL** where an educational programme is envisioned to support lifelong learning and capacity-building in the cultural and tourism sector;

²⁸ For instance, the TeXTOUR project (<https://textour-project.eu/>) aims to co-design sustainable cultural tourism strategies to improve deprived areas in Europe and beyond.

- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), predominantly framed within the relevant Interreg programmes to help support needed investments in infrastructure, visitor experience management, and/or interpretation for **all the SmartCulTour LLs**.

Importantly though, while these European programmes offer grant opportunities, they require cooperation across larger international networks, necessitating cross-border collaboration with other partners, most often within a particular Interreg-region.

Table 16. EU funding possibilities to support SmartCulTour afterlife

Activities initiated during SmartCulTour	Ongoing processes and needs at end of SmartCulTour	Potential EU funding opportunities linked with ongoing needs
ROTTERDAM		
Three neighbourhoods were selected in the city fringe (Hoek van Holland, Afrikaanderwijk, Bospolder-Tussendijk) and via co-creative methods with local inhabitants a cultural tourism development action plan was established.	For Hoek van Holland and Bospolder-Tussendijk ten possible interventions per neighbourhood were identified, often related to themed routes, linked with local culture and gastronomy. The ideas included four routes (a story route, a beach route with experiential and event spaces, a beach chair route, and a history/culinary route), 3 gastronomic experiences (eating in old war bunkers, a bio market, and a local dining experience), two novel accommodation forms (a nature camping, a culture and gastro camping), and a winter wellness experience. These need to be implemented through uptake by local partners (public authorities and/or entrepreneurs).	The interventions proposed in Rotterdam are quite varied and of different thematic scope and magnitude. While some of them could realistically be implemented with limited external funding, others might potentially be included as part of a regional development project in a ERDF application. Specifically for the region, the Interreg Vlaanderen-Nederland programme and Interreg North West Europe programme both have a strategic line on enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism that assist the promotion of sustainable and balanced tourism by embedding it into local initiatives and strategies.
SCHELDELAND		
Throughout a community-based ideation, a local multi-modal cultural route was proposed, linking different cultural tourism attractions with low-emission mobility, culminating in a business plan.	The business plan outlined various investment needs and opportunities, most importantly: (i) a flexible system for rental bicycles near train stations, (ii) virtual audio and video guides to improve accessibility of attractions, (iii) further integration of unused railroad via railbikes, and (iv) potential improved accommodation offering linked to historic steam train carriages.	The interventions proposed in Scheldeland could potentially be included within a larger regional project in a ERDF application. Specifically for the region, the Interreg Vlaanderen-Nederland programme and Interreg North West Europe programme both have a strategic line on enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism that assist the promotion of sustainable and balanced tourism by embedding it into local initiatives and strategies.

UTSJOKI		
The focus of the SmartCulTour intervention fell on place management, specifically informing visitors on how to behave respectfully and responsibly in nature via a ‘Traces in Utsjoki’ intervention which combined a bingo game, an online picture gallery, and informative posters related to littering and nature behaviour.	While the ‘Traces in Utsjoki’ interventions have been prototyped, they have not been implemented more widely yet and its larger-scale implementation would require modest funding.	Utsjoki, situated in a predominantly rural EU region, might find potential in the EAFRD programme, since the approved CSPs of Finland include the support of expansions towards non-agricultural activities, although in case of the nature-based behavioural guidelines these are more likely to fit ERDF funding, for instance in the Interreg Nord investment priority 6D on the improved conservation of the environment or the Interreg Aurora programme under RSO 4.6 Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism. Given the modest nature of financial needs, particularly the continuous call system for small-scale projects ²⁹ under Interreg Aurora might be of interest here.
HUESCA		
A “Sustainable Tourism Strategy of the Province of Huesca” was developed within the framework of the LL, containing a SWOT analysis, mission, vision, values, strategic objectives, strategic lines to be developed and sustainable tourism initiatives to be implemented.	Two specific initiatives to be further developed are (i) a recreational and family weekend in nature, and (ii) a relaxing gastronomic experience with children. The first initiative aims to offer a didactic programme in schools and train tour operators in the area to provide orientation for both children and parents. The second initiative aims to link gastronomic heritage with child-friendly experiences via cooking workshops, oil production, grape harvesting, cheeses, etc.	As a predominantly rural region, the Huesca strategy might be supported under the EAFRD programme, particularly since the approved CSPs of Spain include interventions to diversify non-agricultural activities. A second potential development programme that might be beneficial for supporting child-friendly tourism interventions is the ERDF, which can support tourism infrastructure, educational programmes, capacity-building, and collaboration and partnerships. For instance the Interreg POCTEFA programme, relevant for the Huesca region, has a strategic objective on enhancing the role of cultural and sustainable tourism and fostering integrated and inclusive social, economic and environmental local development, culture, natural heritage, sustainable tourism and security in areas other than urban areas.
SPLIT		
With critical stakeholders a foundation for sustainable and resilient cultural tourism was developed through a shared vision and steps were initiated to co-design an educational	The development of the educational programme is still an ongoing process that should further be supported through public-private collaboration. Within the framework of providing authentic and unique visitor experiences via	A potential subsidy programme to assist in the development of the educational programme is the Erasmus+ funding, particularly Key Action 2 on Strategic Partnerships. Importantly though, Erasmus+ would require the creation of a transnational partnership, since the programme emphasizes international

²⁹ <https://www.interregaurora.eu/projects/calLs-for-applications/>

<p>programme. Furthermore, focusing on the enhancement of the visitor experience and local community-integration to raise awareness of valuable heritage aspects.</p>	<p>community-integration in cultural heritage venues, pilot interventions were introduced in the tradition of Easter bread-Sirnica in Solin and in the cultural heritage of Sinj, but more support is needed to upscale these interventions to sectoral level.</p>	<p>cooperation and mobility. Improvements to the visitor experience in individual SME attractions might potentially be funded under the SMP, depending on future call topics. Alternatively, if framed within a larger consortium, the Interreg ADRION programme and Interreg Central Europe, both under RSO 1.4 Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship, Interreg Italy-Croatia under strategic objective RSO 4.6 Enhancing the role of cultural and sustainable tourism, and Interreg Danube Transnational Programme under investment priority 1B to increase competences for business and social innovation, could all provide opportunities to support investments in both educational programmes for the cultural-tourism sector, and improvements of the product offering for visitors.</p>
<h3>VICENZA</h3>		
<p>Policy-makers and cultural tourism stakeholders were linked and a physical space was set up to further cooperation on a shared vision for Vicenza's cultural tourism. Through supportive data analysis, some initial steps were taken in terms of expanding the tourist offering via taste-related cycling routes on the Palladian Routes network. The combination of gastronomy and culture was further identified as important for a potential new segment of bleisure tourism.</p>	<p>Further product creation is required in order to provide proper new visitor experience on a gastronomy-culture nexus. The Vicenza LL provided a start to bring together stakeholders from different sectors, but more investment and specific cooperation is required to create additional experience clusters.</p>	<p>Expansion of the product offering via gastronomy-cultural tourism linkages are most appropriate for ERDF-based grant proposals. For Vicenza, there are several potential programmes available, among which Interreg ADRION and Interreg Central Europe, linking the proposal to RSO 1.4 Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship, as well as Interreg Italy-Austria, under RSO 4.6 Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism.</p>

Annex 16 - Results of the Living Labs' evaluation

Annex 16 provides a comprehensive overview of LLs and relevant evaluation methodologies, drawing on theory and literature. The second part of the Annex focuses on LLs' specific outcomes: due to their highly context-specific nature, lessons learned through the specific contextual lens are of importance. However, for the sake of generalization and creation of knowledge, the aggregation of findings across the LLs is likewise essential. Accordingly, these findings are elaborated with a first section focusing on the in-depth interviews and the elicited success factors and lessons learned per each LL. A more general paper on value co-creation within and beyond LLs has also been written and submitted for review in a peer-reviewed academic journal, but to date a final decision had not been made by the journal (see D7.6). The overall research and evaluation process, and therefore the relevant findings, were conducted with a higher-level scientific view.

1. Evaluating Living Labs

There are notably a few evaluation tools dedicated to Living Lab (LL) evaluation. According to Overdiek and Genova (2021), these evaluation tools can be classified into three distinct types, namely:

- Those evaluating a lab as an organization and looking at its operational process;
- Those reflecting on the lab methodology, its approach and practice in different project phases; and
- Those that develop indicators to assess the impact of a LL on a regional creative innovation context.

It is important for researchers and LL teams to identify what type of evaluations they are ultimately looking for, as different evaluation objectives will require using different types of tools to assess the LLs. In the following section, different evaluation tools will be introduced according to each category.

1.1. Evaluating a living lab as an organization and looking at its operational process

All LLs are unique and complex in nature with different sets of objectives (Overdiek and Genova, 2021). There are various ways for LLs to evaluate their activities and processes.

ENoLL 20 Indicators

The **European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL)**³⁰ believes that LLs should foster an environment where users and producers can innovate together and undertake four main activities, namely co-creation, exploration, experimentation, and innovation (Overdiek and Genova, 2021). To evaluate LLs, ENoLL proposed to use the following **six “common attribute areas” for assessment**:

1. **Active user involvement**, which refers to the methods and practices incorporated in the LL process.
2. **Multi-method approach** as there is no one-size-fits-all living methodology and each LL approach must combine and customize methods that best fit the local context.
3. **Multi-stakeholder participation**, in the sense that the involvement of all Quadruple Helix actors (i.e., Citizens, Government, Industry, Academia) must be an intrinsic part of the process.

³⁰ The [European Network of Living Labs](#) (ENoLL) is the international, non-profit, independent association of benchmarked Living Labs. ENoLL facilitates knowledge exchange, joint actions, and project partnerships between its historically labelled +480 members in Europe and worldwide. Its aim is to promote the Living Labs concept in order to influence EU policies, enhance Living Labs and enable their implementation at a global level.

4. **Orchestration**, which looks at the LL beyond its characteristic of being a meeting point for societal actors, acknowledging it as a spring board for external players (stakeholders and shareholders) of the larger innovation ecosystem
5. **Real-life setting**, meaning that activities must take place in a real-life context.
6. **Co-creation**, which builds on ideas of active user involvement by proposing the user as an actor.

Within the 6 common attributes, ENoLL has also created the **20-Key indicators** below to further evaluate the performance of a LL (ENoLL 2019, p. 6):

- *Evidence of co-created values from research, development and innovation*
- *Values/services offered/provided to LL actors*
- *Measures to involve users*
- *Reality usage of contexts, where the LL runs its operations*
- *User-centricity within the entire service process*
- *Full product life-cycle support – capability and maturity*
- *LL covers several entities within value chain(s)*
- *Quality of user-driven innovation methods and tools*
- *Availability of required technology and/or test-beds*
- *Evidence of expertise gained for the LL operations*
- *Commitment to open processes*
- *Intellectual property rights principles supporting capability and openness*
- *Openness towards new partners and investors*
- *Business-citizens-government partnership: strength and maturity*
- *Organization of LL governance, management and operations*
- *Business model for LL sustainability*
- *Interest in capacity to be active in EU innovation systems*
- *International networking experience*
- *Channels (e.g. web) supporting public visibility and interaction*
- *People/positions dedicated to LL management and operations*

The ENoLL 20 indicators evaluate the LL performance as a whole, providing users with a more holistic view.

SISCODE Self-assessment

This tool, which was developed by the **SISCODE**³¹ project, focuses on evaluating the co-creation process and the Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) of Living Labs (Schmittinger et al., 2020; Overdiek and Genova, 2021). The self-assessment questionnaire developed by the project aims at investigating qualitative aspects of three indicators, namely the stakeholders, co-creation, and dissemination of the LL. The two main goals of this evaluation are to trigger appropriate reflection and stimulate organization learning (Schmittinger et al., 2020; Overdiek and Genova, 2021). Figure 27 shows the SISCODE self-assessment example.

SISCODE is an assessment tool originally developed for collaborative healthcare systems that has been reworked into an evaluation tool for multi-stakeholder innovation contexts. It consists of a 12-dimensional scaled evaluation tool that captures stakeholders' perception and experience. It is targeted to help

³¹ **SISCODE** was an EU-funded H2020 project aimed at stimulating the use of co-creation methodologies in policy design, using bottom-design-driven methodologies to pollinate Responsible Research and Innovation, and Science Technology and Innovation Policies.

stakeholders to understand three main points:

- The local situation and context needed to create innovative solutions;
- The ecosystem willingness to adopt and scale up;
- The steps that need to be taken by progressive regions to allow information sharing, twinning, and coaching to achieve successful results.

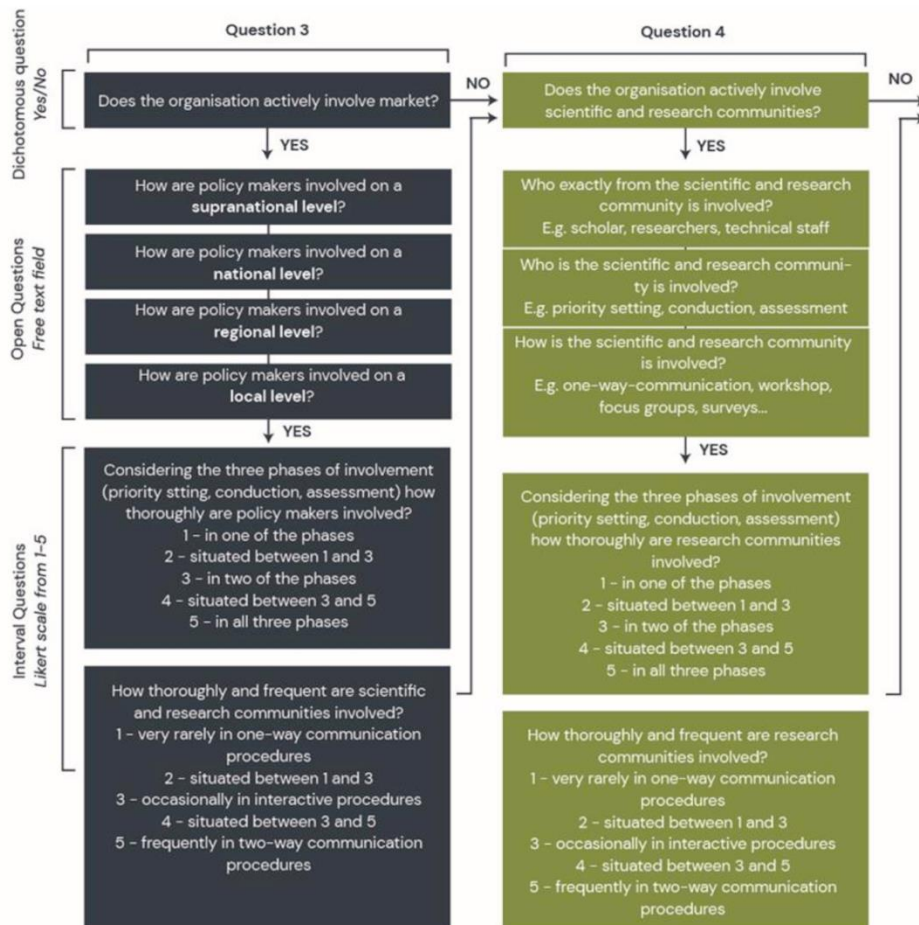


Figure 27. SISCODE Self-assessment example (Schmittinger et al, 2020, p. 119-142)

1.2. Evaluating the Living Lab's co-creation principles and methodologies

1.2.1. The Five Key Principles of Living Labs: value, sustainability, influence, realism and openness

Ståhlbröst and Holst (2012) introduced the five key principles to establish the foundation for designing LL operations, and upon which the value of LLs can be assessed of LLs. The 5 key principles are:

Table 17. The Five Key Principles, Ståhlbröst & Holst, 2012

Principle	Definition
Value	Delivering value for all partners (throughout the value chain)
Sustainability	Follow scientific advice to help maintain a healthy environment as well as to help make progress towards delivery of all of the sustainable development goals

Influence	Acknowledging that all partners have influence in the product innovation process
Realism	Innovation should be conducted in as close to real life environment as possible
Openness	To have an open process to benefit from multiple perspectives

Value

To create value for all partners, “it is important to understand their needs and motivations, as well as how these needs can be met by an innovation” (Ståhlbröst & Holst, 2012). Discussions in LLs allow organizers/Lab managers to identify the context of values from a multi-stakeholder perspective, which guides the LL process to deliver innovations that are perceived to be valuable for all parties (Ståhlbröst & Holst, 2012).

Sustainability

LLs’ objectives should balance the sustainability aspects in terms of environmental, social (and cultural), and economic impact. Moreover, another important aspect of sustainability of the innovations/interventions developed by LLs should account for the afterlife of the project and the prospect of dissemination of the information and knowledge in the long run.

Influence

To achieve influence in the LL, it is important for organizers to acknowledge that all partners are qualified and should be actively involved, engaged, and co-create in the innovative process. Involving more stakeholders in the innovation process can improve the quality of the outcomes or interventions (Ståhlbröst & Holst, 2012). Moreover, it is important to clearly document the concepts, prototypes and the solutions that stakeholders contributed to during the LL sessions.

Realism

Realism is an important aspect of a LL as its activities should be carried out in a realistic, real-life setting rather than a laboratory context. To keep the LL realistic, organizers/Lab Managers should involve stakeholders with different backgrounds and create multi-level perspectives that allow LLs to keep up with the rapidly changing environment (Ståhlbröst & Holst, 2012). To foster realism, LLs should facilitate realistic use situations by creating environments for testing and evaluating products or services in ways that are like the real world, and by testing and evaluating products and services in users’ real-world environment (Ståhlbröst & Holst, 2012).

Openness

Openness of the LL process is important to ensure that a variety of perspectives will be accounted for. Having a multi-perspective process can ensure a faster and more successful idea development. It is important for LLs to allow people of different backgrounds and expertise to engage in open collaborations, as this provides the LL itself with a variety of knowledge and experiences from different areas and domains, which is conducive to multi-perspective innovations and solutions. Collaborations among actors such as academia, the public sector and other enterprises can further strengthen the innovation capacity within the LLs (Ståhlbröst & Holst, 2012; Burbridge, 2017).

1.2.2. Living Lab Markers

The Living Lab Markers evaluate the qualitative conditions of how the LL methodology is implemented with eight core indicators. Since each LL has a unique objective and is complex in nature, the indicators can be adapted to the individual LL needs. The eight indicators are the following:

- 1) Need formulation and iterative process
- 2) Role of users and stakeholders

- 3) Plurality of users and stakeholders
- 4) Involvement of users and stakeholders in the co-creation and prototyping process
- 5) Test conditions
- 6) Outputs
- 7) Accessibility and dissemination of the output
- 8) Ability to act

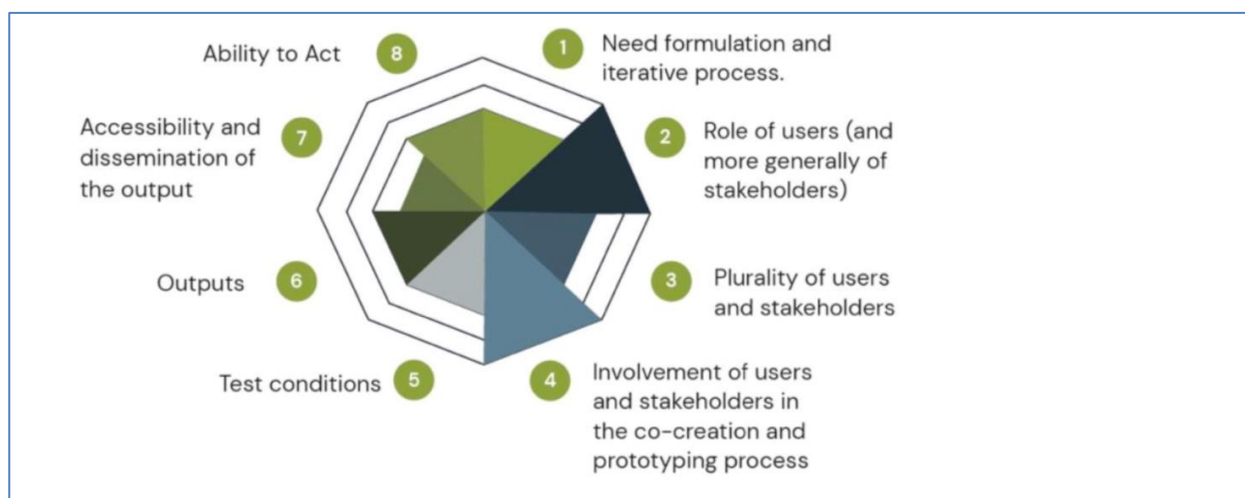


Figure 28. Visualization of the LL Markers (Overdiek and Genova, 2021)

Each of the LL Markers is to be evaluated by LL participants, Lab managers, or any actor involved in the LL. Since it is possible to easily generate visuals across various LLs, and to evaluate based on a comparison of beginning and end state, this evaluation tool seems to be ideal for the evaluation to be carried out in the six SmartCulTour LLs, namely the Split Metropolitan area (Croatia), the Utsjoki (*Ohcejohka* in Northern Sami) Municipality (Finland), the Huesca province (Spain), the Rotterdam Metropolitan Region (the Netherlands), the Scheldeland region in Flanders (Belgium), and the city of Vicenza (Italy).

Table 17. Detailed overview of LL Markers

	Marker 1	Marker 2	Marker 3	Marker 4	Marker 5	Marker 6	Marker 7	Marker 8
	Identification of the need/challenge of the region and iterative process	Role of stakeholders	Plurality of stakeholders (companies, public authorities, researchers)	Involvement of stakeholders in the co-creation and prototyping process	Test/feasibility of intervention	Outputs (product, service, teaching program, tourist attraction...)	Accessibility and dissemination of the intervention	Ability to Act and capacity building based on intervention
LIVING LAB								
Initial phase	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Intermediate Phase	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1
Ending phase	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	2
0	The problem was not questioned/reworked	Stakeholders are not consulted	There is no collective	Stakeholders are not involved in the co-creation process	Stakeholders are only queried	The LL does not lead to a solution	Access to the intervention is not taken into account	The intervention does not aim to transmit knowledge and skills (methodology, processes, expertise, know-how) in addition to the output

1	The challenge was questioned by stakeholders.	Stakeholders are consulted	The LL relies on/ involves plurality of stakeholders of the same nature	Some stakeholders are involved in the ideation process that allows solution to emerge	The intervention is tested by the stakeholders in laboratory conditions	The LL leads to a "viable solution"	The LL seeks to enable or promote access to the intervention for the members of the collective or a limited	The intervention promotes the transmission of knowledge and skills
2	The challenge has been reworked with some stakeholders.	Stakeholders are involved in the operational management of the LL	The LL relies on/ involves plurality of stakeholders of different natures with converging interest	Stakeholders are involved in the construction of interventions	The intervention is tested by the stakeholders in realistic conditions (simulation of real conditions)	The LL continues with the creation of a sustainable structure or community	The LL seeks to extend access to the intervention to new beneficiaries on its territory	The intervention promotes the capacity to act of stakeholders (development of knowledge and skills)
3	The challenge was questioned and redefined with stakeholders throughout the LLs.	Stakeholders are involved in the strategic management of the LL	The project relies on/ involves a plurality of stakeholders of different natures with divergent interests	Stakeholders are involved in the construction of viable interventions (work on the viability of the intervention once it has been developed)	The intervention is tested by the stakeholders in real conditions	The LL also seeks to foster new collaborations in the community, new users beyond the project	The LL seeks to extend the intervention to new beneficiaries on other territories by promoting the replicability and recoverability of the project	The intervention promotes the capacity of stakeholders to disseminate and transit the knowledge and skills they have acquired through the LL

As each LL is unique in nature, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to systematically compare and evaluate LLs' organization, process and impacts. LLs are contextual and are limited in geographic scope, the solutions or interventions provided are often specific to the LL's location/geographical scope (Karvonen & van Heur, 2014) and are not generalizable. Moreover, due to the context-specific goals and complexity of LLs, they seldom follow a structured approach to setting up, conducting, and learning from experiments (Scholl & Kraker, 2021).

The unstructured approach of LLs created the challenge for researchers and scholars to systematically evaluate their processes, impacts, and effectiveness. In addition, most LLs are short-term oriented, thus increasing the difficulty to assess and compare across labs (Ballon, et al., 2018; Schuurman, de Marez, and Ballon, 2016). Furthermore, according to Ballon et al. (2018), evaluating the impact of LLs is especially challenging due to two main factors, and notably as it is hard: 1) to establish a causal link between actions, decisions, and effects; but also 2) to define the scope of the impact.

Therefore, based on the objective of the evaluation, it is up to the researchers to decide how precise or how in-depth they would want to assess each LL. Accordingly, for the evaluation of the experience of the six SmartCulTour Living Labs, it was decided to apply the LL markers as an evaluation tool, as well as to resort to in-depth interviews with participants and Lab Managers. The interview guideline was based on the principles set forth for LL evaluation by Ståhlbröst and Holst (2012).

2. Methodology for evaluating the SmartCulTour Living Labs

A three-phase mixed methods research process was adopted for evaluating the six SmartCulTour LLs' experience, including in-depth interviews, a focus group and a co-creation workshop (see Figure 29 below).

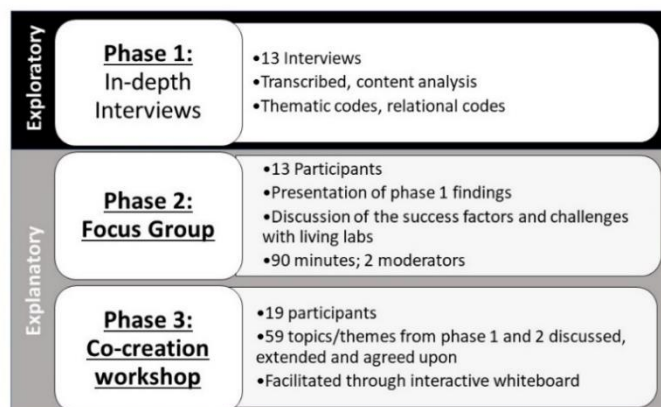


Figure 29. Evaluation process of the SmartCulTour LLs

2.1. Data Collection

To have a holistic perspective of the LLs process, we decided to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with all six SmartCulTour LL Managers, and at least one LL participant from each Lab, based on referral from each Lab Manager. In-depth interviews allow researchers to document detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours (Boyce and Neale, 2006). They also offer a holistic picture of what has happened in the process and the reasons behind (Boyce, and Neale, 2006).

The first phase was exploratory, aiming at uncovering all dimensions of the LLs and gaining insights into the value created; phases 2 and 3 were explanatory, aiming to further understand and substantiate the initial results.

In total, 13 in-depth interviews (Table 18) were conducted between August and November 2022 to better understand the SmartCulTour LLs process. All interviews were conducted online and were between 45-90 minutes long. To evaluate the LLs' co-creation principles and methodologies, the interview questions were developed following "The Five Key Principle" developed by Ståhlbröst and Holst (2012), surrounding the themes of value, sustainability, realism, influence, and openness. Moreover, according to Warren and Karner's (2005) research, the questions were kept open-ended to allow the respondents to freely express and consequently maximize the insights captured from different anecdotes. The LL Markers tool was also utilized in the evaluation process for better visual comparison across different LLs, as well as of the different perspectives between Lab Managers and participants.

Table 18. List of interviewees

LL Location	LL Manager	LL Participant/ Stakeholder	Interview' dates
Scheldeland	Griet Geudens/DMO	Regional DMO	08/08/2022 21/09/2022
Utsjoki	Mira Alhonsuo, Ella Björn/Researcher	Local government	11/08/2022 04/10/2022

Split	Ante Mandić/Researcher	Local DMO	07/09/2022 12/10/2022
Rotterdam	Iris Kerst/Manager of LL	Artist/Entrepreneur	17/08/2022 09/09/2022
Vicenza	Raffaella Lioce/DMO	Entrepreneur/Events and Tourism specialist	07/10/2022 13/10/2022
Huesca	Diego Lozano/Project Manager	Regional DMO	08/11/2022 12/12/2022

2.2. Analysis

To increase the reliability and validity of the result, the analysis process was kept rigorous and transparent. The analysis steps of this research are described below. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The four analysis phases suggested by Vaismoradi et al. (2016) were followed, namely initialization, construction, rectification, and finalization.

In the initialization phase, transcripts were read, and meaning units were highlighted. Following the process, coding was conducted using wordstat, a text coding software. Coding is performed to minimize the amount of raw data that is relevant to the research questions, as well as to capture a more in-depth insight of the interviewee's responses (Vaismoradi et al, 2016). There are numerous ways to code interview information. In this research, two types of coding were used, namely conceptual codes and relationship codes. Conceptual codes are given by identifying key elements, domains and dimensions of the study phenomenon, while relationship codes are created to identify the links between elements, domains and dimensions (Vaismoradi et al, 2016).

In the construction phase, themes are classified, compared, and labelled. To enhance the validity and reliability of the themes, peer checking was performed. Finally, each identified theme was defined and described with supporting quotes from the interview. In the rectification phase, researchers must both immerse and at the same time have a distance lens when processing the data to allow critical thoughts to establish. Subsequently, stabilizing the data was done through illustration of the relationship of the themes through a figure or graph. Lastly in the finalization phase, researchers present a narration to document and describe the study phenomenon. Linking the story to the literature of the themes shows how it contributed to the existing knowledge (Vaismoradi et al, 2016).

2.3. Results

The results of the LL evaluation allow to draw conclusion regarding some critical factors associated with running LLs. The analysis identified thematic fields regarding the success of a LL, the operations, goals' achievement, progress and workflow, and value of such an effort. Below, a more detailed explanation of these themes is provided.

Table 19. Thematic fields for the success of a LL

Main Concepts/Themes	Emerging Sub-themes, categories
Success factors	Right participants, ownership of goal(s), empathy, network building, facilitate creating ideas, academic involvement, being dynamic as participant, transparency, realism
Value	Tools, network/connections, clarity of outcome, participatory character, open communication, influence on outcome, creativity, innovation, and future plan
Progress and workflow	Dynamics between participants, structured workflow, communication style, outcome realism, sustainability, fabricated process, meeting frequency, meeting places, sequencing, scale, hybrid, place/location need
Future and impact	Commitment, capacity-building, reflection opportunity, accessibility of outcome, actual outcomes, restrictions, goal(s) Achievement
Roles	Manager (connector, facilitator), Stakeholder, Researcher, Municipality, DMO, Missing stakeholders, Initiator, Change in participants, partnerships
Challenges	Reactance, taking responsibility, managing expectation, changing participants, time management, no impact on outcome, too many demands on participants, dependence on stakeholders, disputes from prior occasions

2.4. Success factors

Among the critical success factors, the **involvement of the right participants** was repeatedly mentioned as key. On the one hand engaged individuals, and on the other hand the actors that can bring an intervention or innovation to life. It was repeatedly mentioned that the local municipality (and/or other relevant local governmental authority) and political will has to be involved and engaged. Participants also appreciated the **academic involvement** that helped facilitate generation of ideas. Finally, **ownership of the goal** was deemed essential, as if individuals do not identify with the intervention, it will not be implemented.

Among participants it is important to have **good communication, empathy**, as well as to **listen actively**, be interested in others' ideas and be open for networking. Being **active and dynamic** as a participant was indeed observed to be a highly valuable trait.

The **building of a network** was frequently mentioned as one of the biggest benefits of the LL process. Five interviewees mentioned that the building of a network, as well as having access to local stakeholders they would usually not be in touch with, is a benefit they valued very much.

Regarding the collaboration and the workflow, key to success were perceived to be: **transparency in decision-making** and **realism** in all activities and envisioned outcomes.

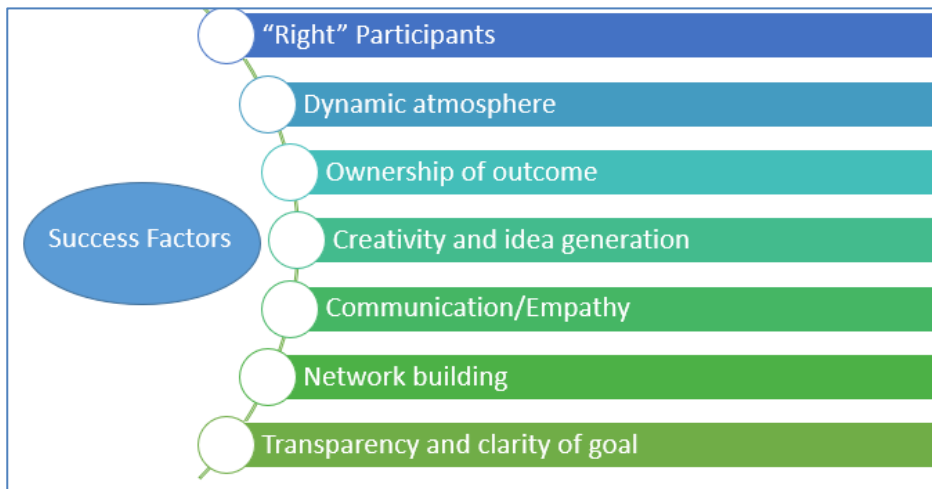


Figure 30. Success factors of a LL

2.5. Value of the Living Lab

The respondents of the in-depth interviews found the **tools** employed by the LLs very valuable, and especially the Service Design and Art-Based Methods for Co-Design and Stakeholder participation developed within WP7. They allowed for inspiration, discussion, feedback, creativity and development. The LL participants repeatedly mentioned the **participatory character, open communication, influence on outcome, creativity, innovation** and the **specific future plan** they could come up with as true values of the LL experience. A dimension frequently mentioned was also the clarity of the outcome that was ultimately achieved and highly valued.

A strong benefit for participants was the creation of a network they did previously not have access to. Participants appreciated the opportunity to make new contacts, connections and ultimately to enlarge their network in the respective region or city.

2.6. Progress and workflow

The progress and workflow within the LLs has been mentioned by the participants in various ways. First, it was deemed important to have **well-structured LL meetings**. Since participants engage in LL activities on a voluntary basis, and additionally have to juggle the demands of their jobs, an **efficient structure and timing** of the meetings was deemed important. Furthermore, **structured workflow** with **transparent communication** and **timely invitations and organization** of both online and in person activities was deemed essential and generally appreciated. The communication style was also mentioned in a very positive way. The Managers of the six LLs achieved a timely, transparent, engaging and overall positive communication process and information flow.

Meeting frequency was also a topic of discussion. Some LL participants reported on too frequent meetings, while others mentioned too few meetings in some phases of the LLs. However, overall, the meeting frequency was deemed adequate. Place of the meetings was also mentioned in various ways. First, it was mentioned that it would be good to have a **dedicated space for the LL**, specifically in remote rural areas. One of the respondents further mentioned that a dedicated room for the LL would be a benefit. All other LLs were fine with not having a permanent working space/room/place. Some mentioned that it was nice to have a different meeting place every time as one would get to know better the other stakeholders, their specific localities/premises (when hosted by them), which contributed to build trust within the LL group. LL

participants mentioned that they were fine with the online meetings during the time of physical distancing restrictions due to the COVID pandemic. However, it was deemed very important to **meet in-person** to really get to know each other.

The outcome realism was also mentioned in the remit of progress, as participants deemed it important to not lose sight of the ultimate goal/the final intervention in light of their meetings. Having a focus on sustainability, both in the way meetings were held but also regarding the outcome, was a theme frequently mentioned by the respondents. Sustainability was an important aspect when agreeing upon the final intervention.

One LL reported that at times the process seemed to some extent fabricated. This means that sometimes the meeting sequencing seemed to be more geared towards the deadlines set forth by the overall project timeline than what would have been the demand of the specific LL. However, this did not impact the workflow or the outcome in any negative way.

2.7. Future and Impact

The respondents of the interviews mentioned the future vision as well as improvements that could be applied to the LL process.

First, to realize the **innovations in the real-world**, commitment by some participants is necessary. It was noted that it is a positive feature to have many stakeholders included in the initial phase of the LL. However, it was also stressed that the participation of those who have the monetary capacity and political will to put the intervention into practice is essential at a later stage of the process. Accordingly, commitment of these individuals, organizations and businesses is crucial to the future success of the intervention.

The LLs were judged to have a **lasting impact** on the regions and local communities. Since this was a transversal goal across all LLs, it shall be considered as a very positive outcome. The **capacity-building** activities, and especially UNESCO's workshops, were specifically mentioned as **main drivers of this long-term impact** and the **positive influence the entire effort had on the LL's area**.

Interviewees further mentioned that the LLs offered a forum for reflection that the partaking stakeholders typically do not have. The plurality of stakeholders, the open communication and participatory drive are key in shaping a **fruitful reflection environment**. This is expected to have a profound impact on future developments and continued collaboration among stakeholders.

A long-lasting impact is also expected in all but one of the LLs due to the roll out of the intervention chosen by the LL stakeholders. The realism of the outcome was mentioned positively by multiple interviewees. Furthermore, the **accessibility of the outcome** was considered a critical factor regarding the long-term impact. The LL participants agreed that the LL activities, goals and aims were geared towards their needs. Accordingly, they concluded that **the LLs fostered goal achievement, were aligned with their needs, and facilitated a lasting impact**.

2.8. Roles

The findings also provide insights into which roles are important for running successful LLs. First respondents concluded that one must have the **"right" participants**. This means that the participants appreciated stakeholders that were engaged, participated regularly, contributed to discussions, and shared the goal to move the LL forward.

The LL Manager has a crucial, two-fold role, namely as facilitator and communicator. In the role as facilitator, the LL Manager was appreciated as the individual bringing in the structure, tools and methods that allow the LL participants to act and work within the LL. Facilitating competencies such as moderating, debating, offering creative tools and initiating experimentation within the LL were positively mentioned. Furthermore, it was the LL Manager who collected the outputs, put them in perspective and fed them back to the participants after the meetings, providing the entire group with the opportunity to reflect upon the outcomes.

LL Managers also had the role of communicators; in that capacity, their role was to connect stakeholders and offer them a platform for engagement and exchange. This also involved keeping participants up to date, organizing and announcing meetings and events in a timely manner, distributing information among participants, resolving potential conflicts, being always open for suggestions and feedback. Both roles, the LL Manager as communicator and facilitator, were considered equally important.

There was consensus among the respondents that it is important to have an **as inclusive as possible stakeholder group among the LL participants**. This may range from entrepreneurs, DMOs, municipality representatives, policy makers, academics, residents to tourists. Entrepreneurs were considered very important as they are often at the heart of service provision for tourists and residents alike, and they often shape components of the actual tourist product. Participants acknowledged that it might be difficult for entrepreneurs to partake in such an extensive LL effort as they are busy with running their business and meeting their customers' demands. This often does not allow them to be absent from their business for too long. Destination Marketing Organizations were likewise deemed critical for LLs in tourism as they are in touch with many tourists, are familiar with their needs and know the local tourism market and stakeholders very well. They can be essential in bringing an innovation/intervention to life. Municipalities and policy makers were also considered imperative for operationalizing an intervention, and it was noted how often it is important to have support and the political will to move a region forward with a specific activity. Respondents agreed that this is only possible when municipalities are actively involved in the LL. There was a lot of positive sentiment towards academic involvement in LL as well. The ideas, concepts and tools brought in by the academic partners were appreciated and valued, as they were perceived as the ones that helped facilitate out-of-the-box thinking as well as creativity.

Given the high number of participants in light of the inclusive character of LLs, it is evident that there is some **fluctuation in terms of participation**. This is due to some individuals changing their jobs, new responsibilities at the stakeholder's organization or some may simply have lost interest in participating in the LL. In that case, it was mentioned as time consuming to brief the new representatives, and as a consequence a lot of knowledge was lost. A further reason for changing composition is the fact that, at different points in time, based on the contextual activity being undertaken, different stakeholders were needed in the LLs. Accordingly, participants' structure changed throughout the LL's lifecycle.

During the phase when the LL participants agreed on an intervention and concluded which innovation should have been implemented, it was deemed important to have partaking stakeholders who have the capacity to carry the idea through, namely those individuals/organizations that have the power to bring the idea to life. This also needs a sense of responsibility and ownership. Ownership in the sense that the innovation is an initiative of the LL for the region, and thus owned by the individuals that envisaged it and implement it in real life.



Figure 31. Roles within a LL

2.9. Challenges

Challenges was another theme that emerged from the in-depth interviews. Respondents specifically mentioned that it was challenging to manage expectations, in terms of the purpose, involvement and outcome of the LLs. It was therefore essential to be clear on the common LL vision.

Changing participants is a reality in longer lasting LLs. Some people may change their position, not be interested anymore, or simply the focus of the LL may develop in a different direction. Accordingly, participants' structure changes. Too many demands on the participants were also mentioned as a constraint. Furthermore, it is important to have those stakeholders present and involved that are instrumental in putting the vision/innovation of the LL in practice. Dependence on one individual stakeholder might be a serious concern. These key players then also need to take responsibility for the outcome. Reluctance, lack of willingness to contribute, despite being part of a LL, also hinders progress and is a severe challenge.

LL participants have their on-the-job roles that may be demanding, and for some of them it is not feasible to spend extensive time on the LL's activities. Therefore, it is very important to manage time wisely, have well prepared sessions and effective, timely meetings.

Some LLs' participants mentioned that they had the concern that they would not have a real impact on the outcome. It was therefore stressed as important to make the limitations and opportunities of the LL transparent from the outset to avoid expectation disconfirmation.

3. Evaluation of the key principles of the SmartCulTour Living Labs

This section presents the findings of the LL evaluation in line with the five principles by Ståhlbröst and Holst (2012).

Table 20. Key principles and relevant findings

Key principles of LLs	Findings
Value	LLs were considered very valuable - Value was generated through various means (tools, connecting, participation, co-creation, place-based relevance, creativity, capacity building, etc...).
Sustainability	The outcomes/interventions of the LLs were considered very sustainable, as well as the process.
Influence	The managers and stakeholders agreed that all participants had the opportunity to influence the outcome, and that the process was truly participatory.
Realism	The outcomes seemed realistic to everyone as they are deeply connected to actual places they are envisioned for. Nevertheless, the process could have been more “realistic” at times.
Openness	The process was open, many perspectives were taken into account, and the overall good benefitted from that.

One of the key principles of LLs is value. **Value** should be generated through the specific LLs, a notion shared by all interviewees. The LLs were considered as very valuable, and this value was generated through various means, such as the network of stakeholders brought together in the LL, as well as the tools provided, the co-creation, creativity, and place-based relevance. Details on the value generation within and beyond the LL can be found in a working paper by Dickinger and Kolomojets (2023)³².

Sustainability was a guiding principle in the LL organization and facilitation. Participants to the research stated that an effort was made to avoid unnecessary travel and that the meetings and event facilitation were sustainable as well. Furthermore, the interventions agreed upon in all six LLs were underpinned by sustainability principles. Participants explained that sustainability is such a guiding principle in tourism that a solution that does not consider sustainability would be unthinkable.

A further dimension of sustainability from literature is the **afterlife and long-term impact of LLs**. Since the participants truly valued the newly established network and saw a benefit in future collaborations, it can be concluded that this dimension of sustainability was also met.

The LL managers and stakeholders agreed that **all participants had the opportunity to influence the outcome, the decision-making process was transparent**, and all parties were heard. It was considered a **truly participatory process**. **Influence** is another guiding principle of LLs. Accordingly, literature foresees that many stakeholders are part of the project to improve the quality of the outcomes. This was clearly the case in the six SmartCulTour LLs. It is safe to conclude that **all partners were actively involved, engaged, and got opportunities to co-create**, which is in line with what theory on the LL process and evaluation suggests.

When asked about realism, there was agreement among respondents that the outcomes are realistic to the

³² See SmartCulTour Deliverable 7.6.

participants. The outcomes were context-sensitive and deeply connected to the actual LLs' locations, thereby offering great potential. The realism and context specificity of the outcomes also was considered one of the main benefits of the LLs. The interventions were also tested considering the locality of the respective LL. The process was considered less realistic at times, which is mainly due to demands by the project management and timelines that had to be respected within the remit of a large EU Project. Accordingly, the timeline set by the demands of the project did not entirely align with the needs of the specific LL. However, this was only a minor concern. Furthermore, some of the activities included in the LLs (tools) felt a little unrealistic to some of the participants.

Literature on realism suggests that environments for product and services testing and evaluating should be mirroring the real world. This is accounted for in the LLs that still got to the testing and implementation stage. Furthermore, the products and services should be tested and evaluated in the users' real-world context, a criterion also met in the LLs that managed to get into the testing and implementation stage.

Openness is the final principle of LLs to report on. The composition of LLs is connected to the considered openness. Stahlboröst and Holst (2012) suggest including individuals of different backgrounds and expertise to engage in the collaboration. This is exactly what was done in the initial phase of the LLs aiming at including as many diverse individuals and organizations as possible. This was particularly beneficial in the ideation phase, where the plurality of perspectives is essential. Furthermore, collaborations among various actors such as industry, academia and the public sector remained past the duration of the LLs.

The process was praised by the LLs' participants to be very open and transparent. All perspectives were considered and the overall good benefitted from that. If an idea was discarded, it was made transparent why a different route was followed. This was a notion that was appreciated by the participants. The tools and activities in the LLs, such as the SmartCulTour Game, helped participants change perspective and take the role of other different stakeholders. Experiencing these perspective shifts enabled the participants to be more open towards different perspectives and mindsets. The openness and understanding of different viewpoints now allow for collaboration across different actors that did not use to work together in the past.

4. Specific insights and key learnings from the SmartCulTour Living Labs

This section presents the findings of the interviews with the LLs Managers, as well as the Marker tool evaluation based on the insights from LLs' participants, as explained above. The Marker tool visuals provide the perspective of the LL Manager at the beginning of the LL and at the end of its lifecycle. Sometimes reference is made to the markers provided by the LLs' participants, especially if they were strongly differing from the Lab Managers' perspective.

4.1. Rotterdam LL

The Rotterdam LL Managers initially excelled in M3 (Plurality of users and stakeholders), followed by M1 (formation of the need and iterative process), while M2, M6, M7, and M8 showed similar performance. However, post-project analysis showed a significant decrease in the value of M3, while M1 emerged as the dominant feature. M2, M7, and M8 maintained their performance, and M6 slightly improved. Furthermore, M4 (involvement of users and stakeholders in the co-creation and prototyping process) and M5 (test conditions) did not start in the first project phase. Equally important were M2, M6, M7, and M8. In the last project phase, M1 increased as the needs' formulation was done; however, less different stakeholders were involved. Also, M6-related outputs grew. It is essential to note that stakeholders had different perspectives on two items, and notably M7 (Accessibility and dissemination of the output) and M8 (ability to act) dominated their view. This is great as it shows that the participants felt they could influence the outcome.

This assessment is very self-critical. Participants felt they made great progress in the LL, albeit some feel the outcome could have been more elaborate.

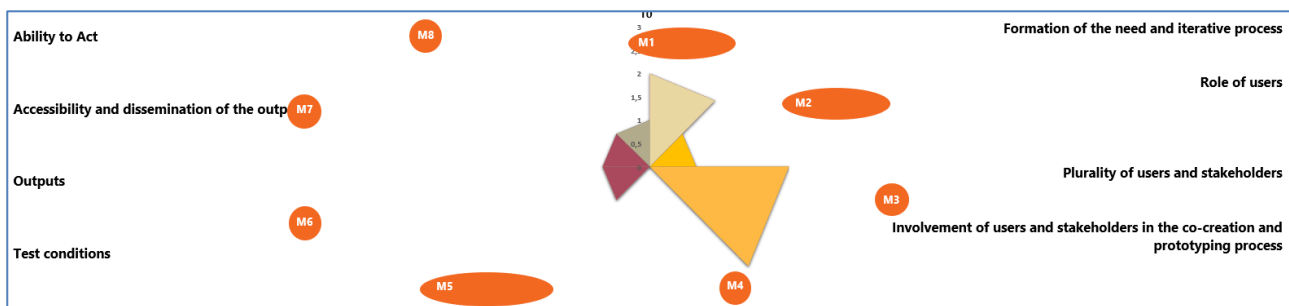


Figure 32. Perspective of the Rotterdam Living Lab Manager at the beginning of the LL

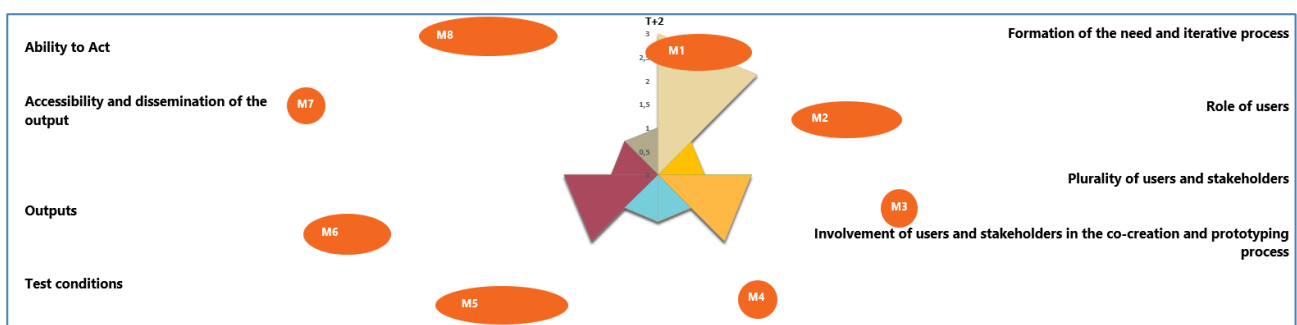


Figure 33. Perspective of the Rotterdam Living Lab Manager at the end of the LL's lifecycle

We will now deep dive into some specific characteristics of this LL. The Rotterdam LL had a dedicated location for its meetings, namely a resource that other LLs did not have. This was considered as an advantage but not a precondition. Many of the findings relate to the participants and the process of the LL.

First, it was important to have the right participants, including decision-makers from the local government, to bring the identified/designed intervention to life, although sometimes it was hard to motivate these actors to engage. Furthermore, there were heavy demands on individuals due to their jobs that made regular participation in meetings difficult. It was therefore important to have effective structure in the meetings. Very beneficial were the conversations in the sessions due to the diverse background of the individuals, the dynamics were great, and people were very open to discuss and contribute. The LL tools were well received and considered integral to help people take on different perspectives and leave their usual thinking patterns behind. Interesting was the notion that there was a focus on social sustainability that made individuals stay in touch and deepen the connection and newfound network beyond the LL.



Figure 34. Key Findings from the Rotterdam LL

4.2. Scheldeland LL

Before the project, the Managers of the Scheldeland LL perceived similar value across most aspects, with the exception of M3 (involvement of users and stakeholders in the co-creation and prototyping process) that had the highest value. M6 and M7 were not considered at this stage. However, post-project analysis showed that all aspects had grown and were now performing equally well for Lab Managers. The same findings held true for the perspectives of stakeholders, with the only exception being that M5 (test conditions) was slightly less valued.

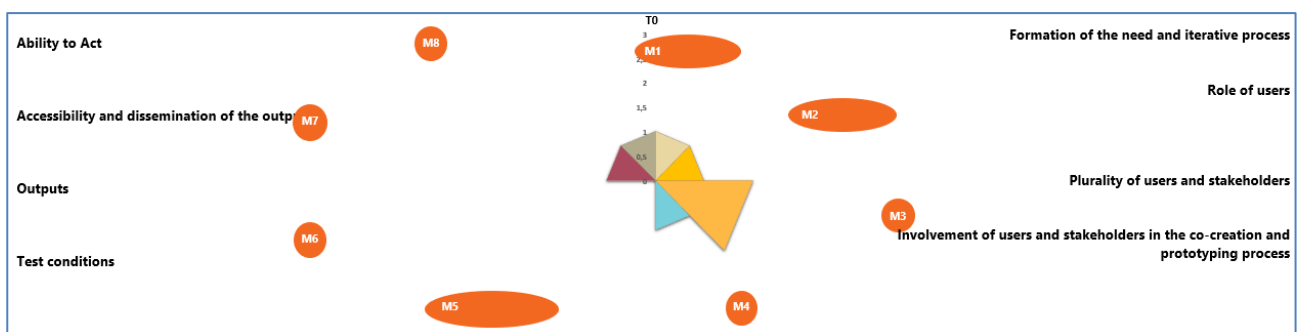


Figure 35. Perspective of the Scheldeland Living Lab Manager at the beginning of the LL

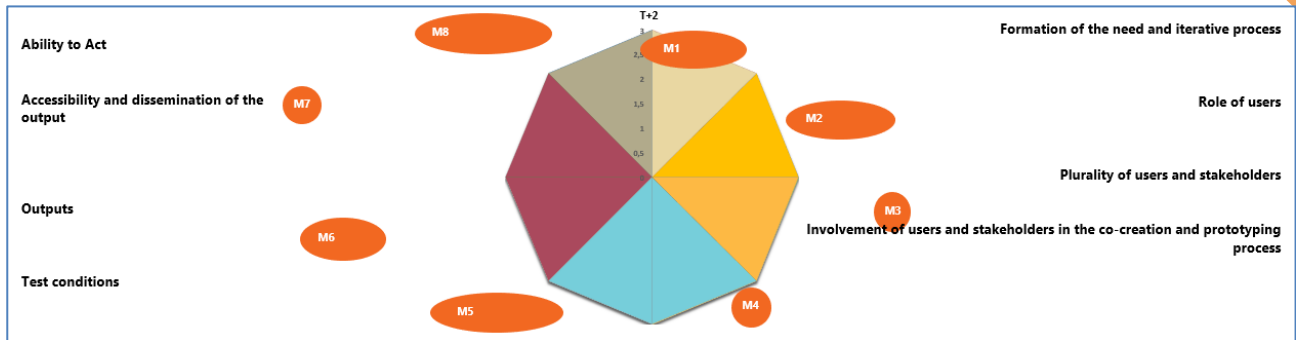


Figure 36. Perspective of the Scheldeland Living Lab Manager at the end of the LL's lifecycle

There were several very specific learning opportunities from the Scheldeland LL. The LL process was discussed from different perspectives. First, it is important to mention that the Lab Manager was considered an important facilitator and in that a crucial element to the success of the LL. The communication, and more specifically providing inputs in the meetings and supporting participants in the implementation of the offered tools, was assessed as important. These tools were deemed essential concerning the creativity and idea generation in the LL and to support decision-making processes. The transparency of decisions and the importance of the rationale behind them were also mentioned in this LL.

The composition of the LL with a) a diversity of stakeholders and b) inclusion of those stakeholders that are normally more difficult to reach out to was important. There is also big interest in this LL to stay in touch and collaborate beyond the borders of the LL. More specifically, the municipalities that started working with each other are interested in continuing their collaboration. The structure of this LL seems to have shifted during the project period. This was commented on and documented with adding stakeholders needed for implementation and taking ownership of the project.

Furthermore, a specific feature of this LL was the governance structure, with an Advisory Board setting the LL's strategic direction and a more operational working group. This seems to have worked well in the Scheldeland context, as the interviewees mentioned the benefits of an Advisory Board. A learning opportunity for the LL participants were the exchange visits, providing opportunities to gain insights into the other LLs, share experiences, and learn.



Figure 37. Key learnings from the Scheldeland LL

4.3. Split LL

The Managers of the Split LL initially valued M1 (formation of the need and iterative process) the highest, followed by M3 (plurality of stakeholders), M4 (involvement of users and stakeholders in the co-creation and prototyping process), and M8 (ability to act). M2 (role of users) and M6 (outputs) were considered less important in the beginning, while M5 and M7 were not considered at all, which is natural at the beginning of a LL.

However, post-project analysis showed that all aspects had grown in value for Lab Managers, with only M1 maintaining the same importance. More specifically, M2, M4, M5, and M8 performed equally as important as M1. These findings were also reflected in the stakeholders' experiences.

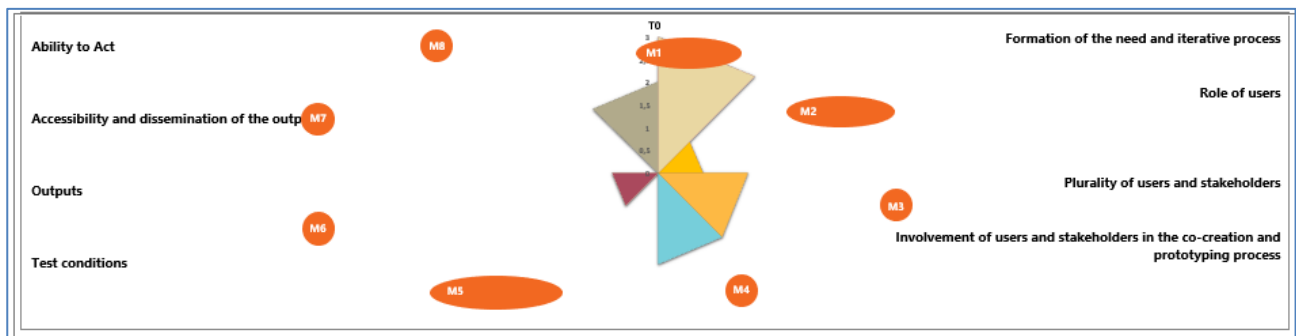


Figure 38. Perspective of the Split Living Lab Manager at the beginning of the LL

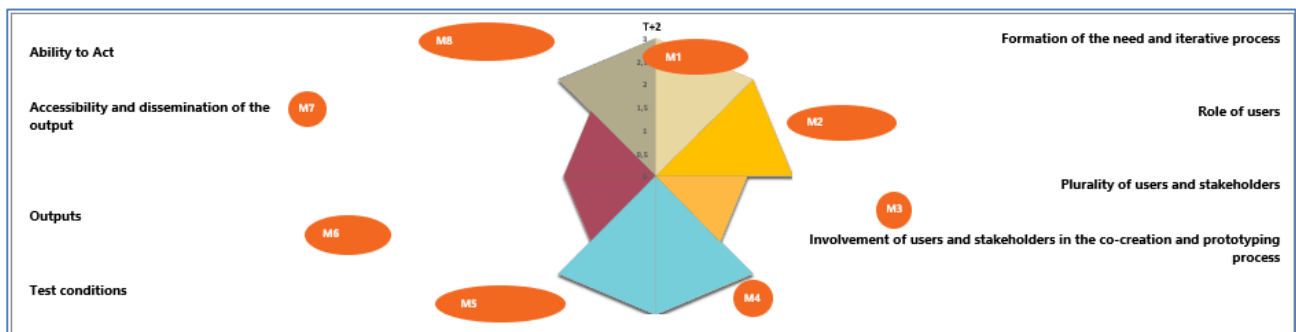


Figure 39. Perspective of the Split Living Lab Manager at the end of the LL's lifecycle

Looking deeper into the root causes through the in-depth interviews shed further light on the specifics of the Split LL. One very laudable insight is that in the context of the LL, actors really tried to understanding each other. The work atmosphere was very empathetic, there was a focus on solutions rather than problems, even though some participants may have had differences in their work history. The tools were mentioned as drivers to adopt a different perspective, a trait considered very beneficial.

In terms of the LL's management, the DMO was considered an ambassador for the project and integral to the project's success. Good time-management skills were required specifically with the entrepreneurial partners, as they had high demands on them in terms of duties, especially during the tourist high season. A further role for the Managers was the facilitation. They were expected to put the loose ends after meetings together, give inputs and summarize meetings to facilitate continuation at the next meeting. There was the sentiment that the presence of a dedicated LL Manager throughout the project is key, as well as a dedicated budget to be able to make a real impact and secure continuity. In the Split LL, this role was taken on by an individual on top of his usual job.

A great observation in this LL was the fact that **the tools and interventions helped bridge the perspectives of academia and industry**. The inputs and creativity by academia allowed moving past one's typical opinions and perspectives. A further learning relates to the need to carefully manage expectation to show what a LL can facilitate to set common goals, motivate, and at the same time avoid disappointment.

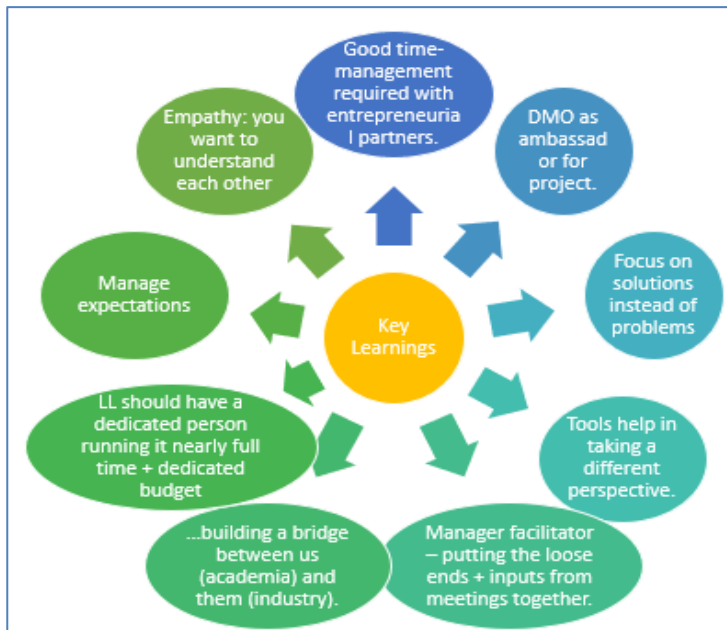


Figure 40. Key learnings from the Split LL

4.4. Utsjoki LL

Before the project, all aspects except M5 (test conditions) were considered active by the Managers of the Utsjoki LL, with M3 (plurality of users and stakeholders) being valued the highest. In the post-project stage, it was found that only M7 (accessibility and dissemination of the output) had maintained its lower level, while all other aspects had grown significantly in value for the Managers. Although M4 (involvement of users and stakeholders in the co-creation and prototyping process) and M5 (test conditions) were valued the most in the final phase, stakeholders' perspective indicated that M3 (plurality of stakeholders) was the highest performing element. This is interesting, as stakeholders were already happy with the plurality of stakeholders, while Lab Managers would even want a broader range of individuals participating.

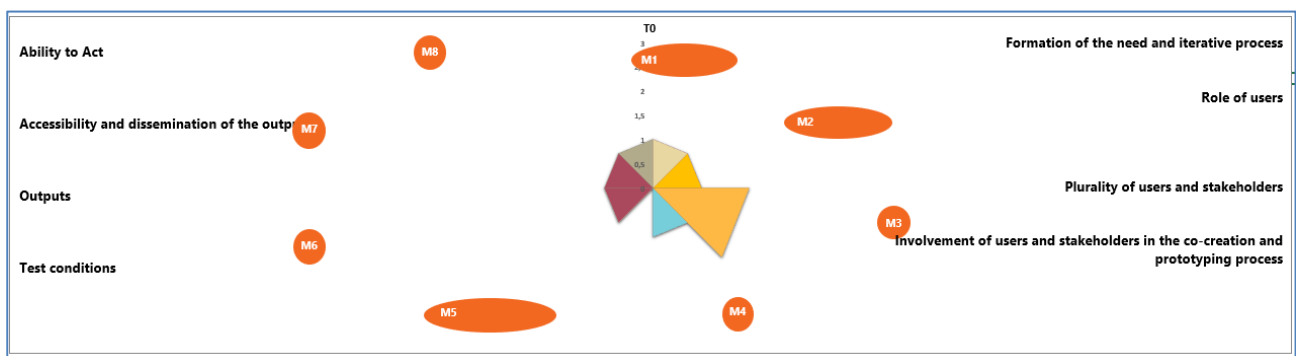


Figure 41. Perspective of the Utsjoki Living Lab Manager at the beginning of the LL

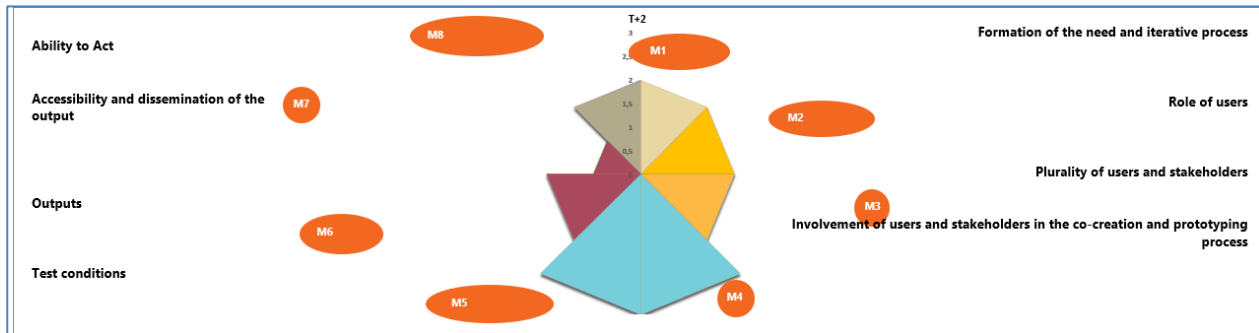


Figure 42. Perspective of the Utsjoki Living Lab Manager at the end of the LL's lifecycle

Further insights into the functioning of this LL are herein provided. In the Utsjoki setting, it was mentioned that there was a specific, well received quality to meeting in-person among the participants after not having been able to see each other due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For some meetings the LL resorted to online meetings, which were facilitated with *ad-hoc* conferencing tools. This was true for most LLs; however, the benefit of in-person meetings was so strongly mentioned exclusively in the feedback gathered from this LL.

Meeting facilitation was also addressed from the perspective of having a physical location for the meetings. In this LL the sentiment was that a dedicated room or even building would have been very beneficial for the LL progress and meetings. This is in contrast with other LLs, where no specific venue was deemed necessary.

Communication was also mentioned in a different way in this LL. The quality of communication seemed to be very high and constructive. Participants wanted to understand each other and struggled to do so. Even participants who had conflicts in the past tried to understand each other's perspective.

The interaction in the LL was also assessed very favourably. The accessibility of a wide range of stakeholders was a big benefit. In particular, the interaction with the municipality was mentioned in a very positive way. The diversity of the group in the interaction was deemed a benefit, and the importance of having the right stakeholders included was considered as a critical factor for the LL's success. Furthermore, a different aspect of communication was mentioned, namely that some meetings and capacity-building activities were partly delivered in English, which was considered a challenge because some participants were not comfortable in expressing themselves in English.

Finally, the LL Managers and their role were discussed. First, the Managers were appreciated for being great facilitators, bringing in knowledge, methods, and tools for the LL to work productively. Furthermore, the Managers needed to also manage the expectations of participants as to what was possible to achieve within the LL.



Figure 43. Key leanings from the Utsjoki LL

4.5. Vicenza LL

At the outset, the Managers of the Vicenza LL only focused on M1, M2, and M3, with M3 (Plurality of users and stakeholders) being the most pronounced aspect. However, in the post-project phase, M1 was not considered important anymore, because the formation of needs had been fulfilled. The value of M3 decreased as, in the end, fewer stakeholders were necessary to finalize the intervention. At this stage, M6 (Outputs) became the most significant aspect, followed by M2, M3, M4, M5, and M7, which were all deemed equally important. However, according to the stakeholders, all aspects had developed equally and had similar values in terms of achievement.

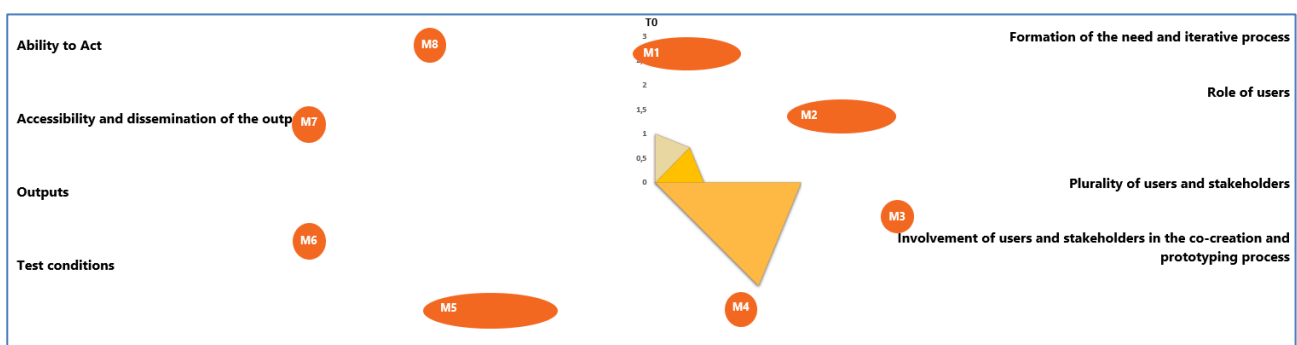


Figure 44. Perspective of the Vicenza Living Lab Manager at the beginning of the LL

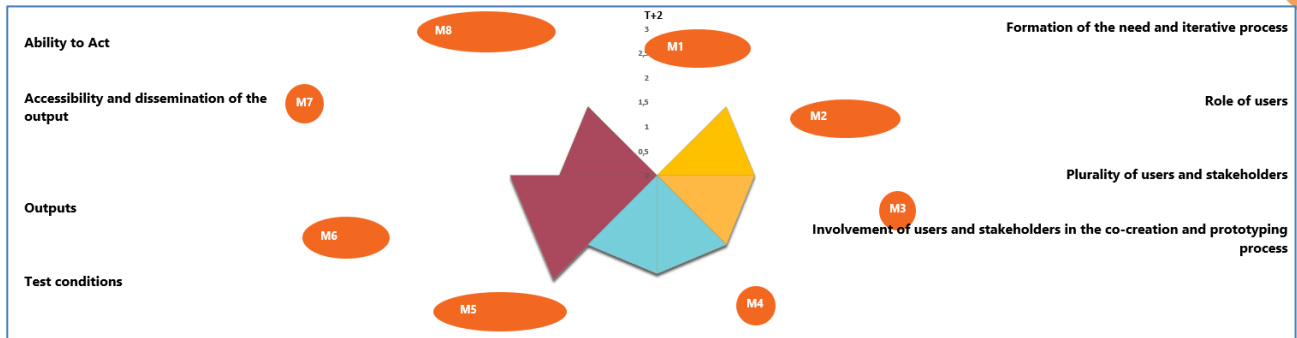


Figure 45. Perspective of the Vicenza Living Lab Manager at the end of the LL's lifecycle

Key learnings from the Vicenza LL include the communication and social dimension within the LL. Respondents mentioned that it was a challenge getting individuals to collaborate and understand the common goal and problem. This made the initial phase of finding participants and eliciting the needs of the destination important. This is in line with the observation that, in the initial phase, a high number of participants was necessary and great to have, while in later phases of the LL not so many participants were needed anymore. A crucial element, however, is the interaction among participants. The outcome, according to the participants, is highly dependent on the presence and participation of proactive individuals.

The dynamics and collaboration within the Vicenza LL benefitted from the tools and methods brought in by the LL Manager. Participants appreciated the open playful approach. Also, the data provided by academics and researchers were used later in the project and valued by the participants. The tools also helped participating individuals to collaborate. An initial issue was the systems thinking approach adopted by the project, as it was necessary to explain its relevance to the participants, alongside the need for collaboration for collective success.

The LL process was described as smooth and well organized. However, sometimes the timing of meetings could have been better envisaged. Generally, in the Vicenza LL there was the sentiment that the time span between meetings was too long.



Figure 46. Key leanings from the Vicenza LL

4.6. Huesca LL

Initially, the Managers of the Huesca LL paid the most attention to M3 (plurality of users and stakeholders) and M7 (accessibility and dissemination of the output), followed by M1, M2, and M4, while M5, M6, and M8 were not considered to be high at the start of the project. However, after the project, it was found that the value of all aspects had improved substantially and were equally important, with only M3 (plurality of users and stakeholders) and M5 (test conditions) having a lower value. These findings were consistent with the perspective of the stakeholders.

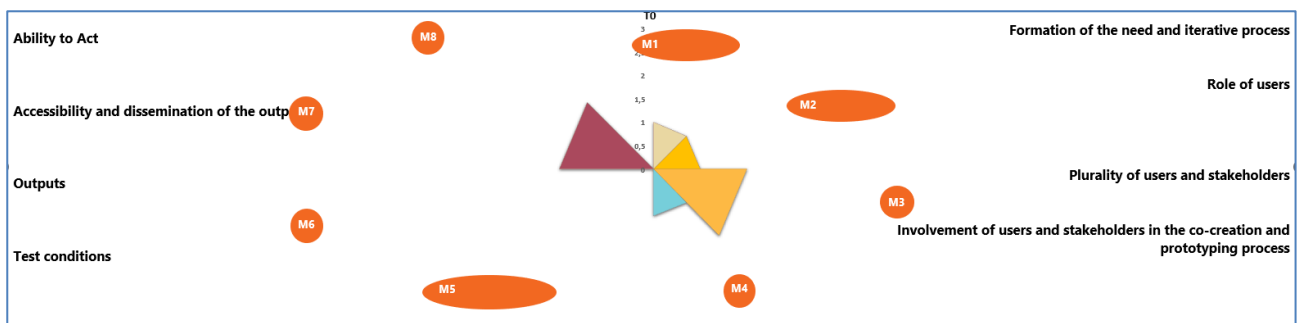


Figure 47. Perspective of the Huesca Living Lab Manager at the beginning of the LL

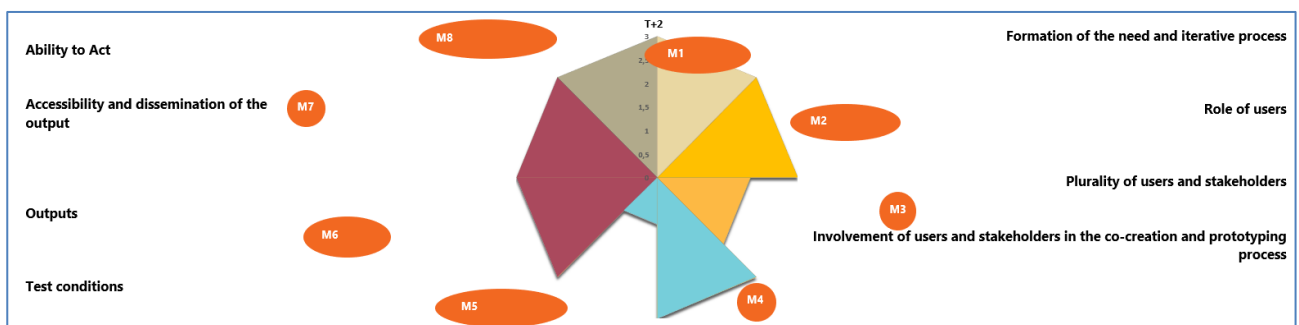


Figure 48. Perspective of the Huesca Living Lab Manager at the end of the LL's lifecycle

A specific characteristic of this LL is the fact that a company was hired to perform the dynamization tasks in the LL, while all other Labs relied on the Lab Manager or participating academics to introduce tools and methods. In this case, a professional company was responsible to do that. The participants commented in a very favourable way about the dynamization, which was well received among all stakeholders.

The value of the social dimension of the LL was mentioned in the feedback from Huesca. Participants appeared to be sincerely grateful to be part of such an initiative, seeing its benefits and being motivated to collaborate. One of the key benefits mentioned are the connections made and the network created that are considered pivotal to the LL's success.

This LL also commented on the structure and workflow of the entire process. There was the opinion that a dedicated space or meeting room would have facilitated the collaboration. There always had to be *ad hoc* locations that were not deemed ideal. However, the meetings themselves had a productive structure, which was essential to keep all stakeholders engaged and eager to participate. This is related to the above notion that the facilitation with tools and methods was important. Finally, the LL was considered a success as the outcome of the LL is valuable for the community.

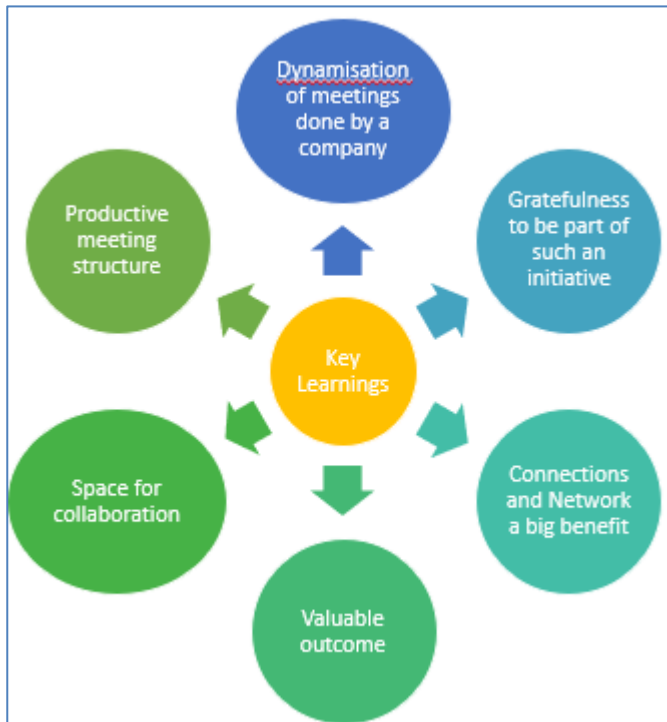


Figure 49. Key leanings from the Huesca LL

5. Insights and Limitations

Despite various contributions, this study has limitations that may inspire further research. The research uses qualitative mixed methods with an exploratory and explanatory research phase. A major benefit is that the evaluation draws on predetermined criteria that are deemed essential for the success of LLs. Accordingly, concepts by other scientists were tested in this evaluation and extended when necessary. Since the value creation became an integral finding, the focus of this central concept was given in the evaluation study 1. This goes beyond the concepts presented in the introductory section on LL evaluation. It is important to produce generalizable guidelines on how to best conduct LLs, but also on what outcomes can realistically be expected to justify the use of this tool for innovation and policy making.

Typically, LL assessments are done for one or maybe two local LLs, with findings investigated through a strictly contextual lens. Since this evaluation could draw on insights from six different LLs with varying scope and context, we hope to offer broader generalizability.

As mentioned above, LLs are highly contextual; accordingly, the findings must be interpreted in light of the context of the tourism region/destination. However, effort has been made to aggregate the insights beyond the contextual lens as shown in section 3 of the present Annex. Accordingly, we believe that, given the effort made, some generalizability is justified and the findings can serve as guideline on how to conduct LLs and create value beyond the mere process.

Although in-depth interviews provide a lot of detailed information that might otherwise not be available, there are a few limitations. In-depth interviews are prone to biases such as interviewer bias, confirmation bias and leading questions. Furthermore, the choice of respondents might also be prone to self-selection bias.

A further limitation is the nature of the LLs. The LLs under investigation were organized as **provider-driven**

labs, with a major focus on **local knowledge creation** and **theory development**, rather than direct practical business innovations. The dynamics in user-driven LLs may therefore differ, and so would their evaluation (Leminen et al., 2012). Accordingly, future research could investigate different types of LLs, and/or compare different types among them.

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