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## FAB ROUTES

*Digital Skills to promote EU Cultural Routes*

### *The Fab Routes Strategy Model*





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## The Fab Routes Strategy Model

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### Introduction

Cultural Routes are among the internationally supported programs which approach tourism not only because of its economic impact, but also as a tool for social enhancement and innovation.

The competitiveness of the tourism industry in Europe is closely linked to its capability to implement **sustainable forms of development**, to which Cultural Routes have the opportunity to contribute. The quality of tourist destinations is strongly influenced by their natural and cultural environment and even more by their level of integration with the existing cultural and tourism services ecosystems. The focus on the building processes of the European identity through tourism, the core of the cultural routes' projects, is a strategic asset that should be used as a driver for better coordination among partners and stakeholders at all territorial levels. This is even more important in the time of the pandemic, when limitations to mobility are supporting the rediscovery of nearby destinations and slow tourism, one of the strengths of Cultural Routes.

The Fab Routes project pursued a twofold **objective**. First of all, the project aims at designing a new training methodology and educational modules able to foster and enrich the knowledge and transversal competences of the staff members of Cultural Routes of the CoE. Secondly it focuses on building a new strategy model aiming at improving the Cultural Routes capability to respond to their mission as defined by the priority fields of action.

How to manage their particular kind of heritage, how to understand the audience and plan targeted activities, how to develop an adequate governance model and how to create efficient and sustainable clustering opportunities with SMEs and cultural tourism supporting actors are among the priorities Fab Routes wants to target.

This **toolkit** describes the strategy model designed by CAST from November 2020 to June 2021, by adopting a participatory methodology. As represented in Figure A, it includes 5 parts: Mission (based on the priority fields of actions); Governance; Networking; Communication and Monitoring.

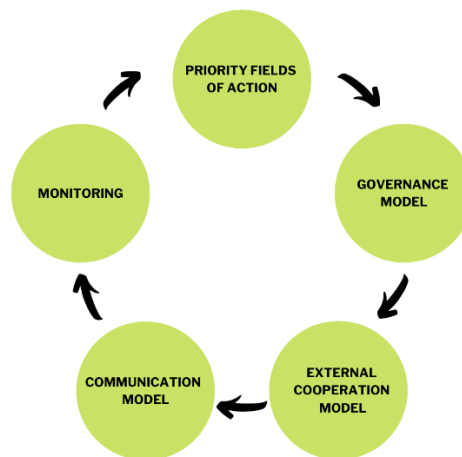


Figure A – Strategy Model

Identifying the **Mission** (or strategic objectives) of the Route represents the initial decision and a necessary prerequisite for the following governance choices. The objectives of the Route derive from the interaction between external sources (Council of Europe, regulatory bodies, investors and supporting institutions, stakeholders) and internal sources (members of the network) and are shaped by the power-dependence dynamics in place between the parties involved. In these dynamics, the **priority fields of actions** play a pivotal role. Defining clearly the Mission contribute to Cultural Routes management in many ways:

- They serve as filters to separate what is important from what is not
- They clearly state what the goals to be achieved are and how to achieve them
- They communicate a sense of intended direction to the entire network
- They define “who” the customer is and “what” the products and services offered are

**The Mission** and their connection with the priority fields of actions are developed in **Chapter 1**.

The **strategic objectives** directly influence the designing process of the Route governance system. The Route design implies the definition of the internal network configuration (aimed at defining the hierarchy and the delegation system and at specifying the attributions of authority and responsibility) and the structuration of the main operational processes (e.g., goal-setting techniques, decision making processes, control systems, information systems, auditing and reporting systems, people management and development systems) aimed at stimulating the translation of architectural choices into concrete goal-oriented behaviors.

The **governance model** of a Route consists of an organizational architecture and a set of operational processes. In analytical terms, governance choices are part of a wider strategic process which involves four separate but interdependent levels of choices.

- How work gets done



- Who does what
- All activities that involve more than one member impose the breakdown of the tasks between different actors and the management of interdependence between these tasks
- Routes usually involve members with different backgrounds and goals, a balance is needed between global integration and local involvement and responsiveness

**Chapter 2** deals with the methodology for designing a proper **governance**.

The design process' outcomes influence the choices related to the development and management of relations with external subjects and the definition of the coordination methods between the network and stakeholders. This is also in line with the need to specifically respond to one of the priority fields of actions on Cultural Tourism (Resolution CM/Res (2010) 52), which states that CRs should seek partnerships with public and private organizations active in the field of tourism (being culture taken as granted) in order to develop tourist products and tools targeting all potential publics.

**Cultural Routes** are transnational cooperation projects in the field of culture. Being grassroots projects, CRs face a number of challenges in implementing the required priority fields of action included in the program. If we look at their institutional form (see previous chapter on governance), it is evident that this network's function should not be confused with that of private tourism stakeholders. Cultural Routes mainly act as magnets, multipliers and connectors in already existing culture and tourism ecosystems.

For this reason, it is crucial supporting them to identify the key stakeholders and design ad hoc strategies based upon the assets and characteristics of the areas on which they operate. In other words, give CRs suitable tools to better integrate their **external cooperation networks**.

In **Chapter 3** we will outline the methodology used in order to address the issue of designing an efficient **strategy to strengthen cooperation networks** along CRs members' regions; we will then present the main results of the overview performed on the Fab Routes project partners; finally, we will present some general recommendations, also outlining useful guidelines for other CRs and in conclusion we will provide templates and tools to implement the proposed method for other Routes.

Once the organizational choices regulating and directing internal and external interactions have been defined, the selection of strategies and rules for the external communication and promotion of the Route activities becomes crucial. Suggestions for a proper **communication strategy** will be provided in **Chapter 4**.

Finally, a fundamental choice concerns the definition of a **monitoring system** capable of continuously assessing the consistency of the actions performed with respect to the objectives and



values of the Route. The monitoring system provides the guidelines to build its own strategy model and will be presented in a separate file.

## 1. Discovering Cultural Route's Mission

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As already explained in the Introduction, before defining any kind of strategy, Routes should have a clear picture about their own **Mission**. Despite the fact that Cultural Routes have not the legal entity of a private company, their multifaceted nature calls for a wide range of skills, competences and approaches, including the ones related to strategic management.

In the following pages, we will first try to better clarify what a **Cultural Route** is, we will then give a general definition of what a Mission is for companies and further develop our approach by highlighting how Cultural Routes recognized by the Council of Europe have an overarching Mission already set by the program itself.

Cultural Routes have been defined as new wide-ranging cultural assets connecting diverse and homogeneous elements of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage and related to contiguous or far apart territories so as to create a new knowledge system (ICOMOS, 2005).

**UNESCO**, back in the early 1990's, launched a Cultural Route related program making way for regional projects such as "the Slaves' Route", "the Silk Route" or the "Route des Ksour". The approach used by this international organisation was the connection between migration streams and the way cultural exchanges allowed interaction and amalgamations among different societies. According to UNESCO, Cultural Routes are to be interpreted as "routes made up by tangible elements whose cultural meaning stems from multidimensional dialogues and exchanges among countries and regions, thus outlining people's steady and interactive flows along routes in space and time"<sup>1</sup>.

The detection and development of Cultural Routes has been entrusted by UNESCO to a Special **ICOMOS Committee** (CIIC: Cultural Routes International Committee), whose goal is the study and improvement of Cultural Routes in connection with monuments, buildings, archaeological finds, landscapes and cultural sites valorisation and preservation<sup>2</sup>.

CIIC has therefore elaborated the **ICOMOS Declaration of Cultural Routes**, ratified on the 4th of October 2008 during the sixteenth Council General Assembly. Other than the definition of "Cultural Routes", the Declaration features their classification, research methodology, valorisation, preservation, use and correct management.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/routes94.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.icomos-ciic.org/CIIC/CIIC.htm>

Other **international bodies**, such as the European Commission, have a different approach to Cultural Routes: they are means for economic development and mentioned in a number of DG Grow actions, promoting a series of activities centred around this topic (mainly COSME and EASME actions).

On the other side, in the last 10 years, the Council of Europe has signed two joint programs with the DG Grow first and with the DG Regio in 2018 in order to further consolidate the role of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe program in the European Territorial Cooperation initiative thanks to its contribution to the macro regional strategies.

According to the Council of Europe<sup>3</sup>, **Cultural Routes** are a cultural, educational heritage and tourism cooperation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of routes based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values. (CM/Res(2013)66).

They are essentially communication mediums and tools for cultural exchange between nations and cultures, or better still, tools for strengthening European identity. With this aim they are the object of a specific program launched in 1987 and completed with further resolutions (1998's n°4 and currently in force 2010's n°52, 2013 n°66 and 67) which define the "Council of Europe Cultural Routes" identification criteria.

The Cultural Route concept is, in fact, based on the **relationship between tourism and culture**, both in terms of cultural assets and their use for tourism purposes. In this sense, tourism is a tool to pursue a specific mission.

**Fab Routes partners**, being certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, have to set their mission within the boundaries defined by the above-mentioned statutory documents. Far from being a restriction, the resolutions of the program are playing a crucial role in setting the general mission that each Cultural Route has then to interpret through actions and strategies. But before outlining the general mission set by the CoE's program, let us have a closer look to what a mission is.

Looking at the general narrative on strategic management, one can easily find the definition of a company's mission:

"A **mission statement** is used by a company to explain, in simple and concise terms, its purpose(s) for being. The statement is generally short, either a single sentence or a short paragraph. These statements serve a dual purpose by helping employees remain focused on the tasks at hand, as well as encouraging them to find innovative ways of moving toward an increasingly productive achievement of company goals. A company's mission statement defines its culture, values, ethics, fundamental goals and agenda. Furthermore, it defines how each of these applies to the company's stakeholders: its employees, distributors, suppliers, shareholders and the community at large use

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/about>

this statement to align their goals with that of the company".  
(<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/missionstatement.asp>).

If we move now our attention to the CM/Res(2013)67 and we focus on the list of **priority fields of action**, it seems evident that the mission set by the program is the one concerning the five fundamental goals for the networks, namely:

1. Cooperation in research and development;
2. Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage;
3. Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans;
4. Contemporary cultural and artistic practice;
5. Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.

The program further explains the criteria and guidelines to be followed pertaining the priority fields of action, thus building a **set of guidelines** around which each Cultural Route is called to design its own strategy. Recalling the general mission of the program is one of the fundamental steps the Management Body of Cultural Routes should take when it comes to involve the route's partners in the definition of common activities, also because it contributes to set the boundaries of shared responsibilities in the route's duties assignment.

Furthermore, as already stated in the Introduction, the five priority fields of action and the way in which the routes want to develop them, may influence the **governance** of the Route. Some partners might be more skilled in a field of action, or have a better institutional compliance with it, leading the collective management body of the network to assign specific duties to specific partners. What is clear is the strong relationship between the priority fields of action and the strategic model that each Route wants to follow:

### 1. Cooperation in research and development

In this field of action, the projects must:

- play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together;
- show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European cultures;
- illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe;
- lend themselves to research and interdisciplinary analysis on both a theoretical and a practical level.

This priority field of action is linked to both **internal and external networks** (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). The internal networks of the Route (the governance) might influence or be influenced by the way in which each single Route manages the relationship with research centers and universities. Some routes are used to have a specific internal network of universities and research centers, formally involved in the route's activities. Others might be used to seek support for research while strengthening external networks.

## 2. Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage

In this field of action, the projects must:

- enhance physical and intangible heritages, explain their historical significance and highlight their similarities in the different regions of Europe;
- take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning;
- identify and enhance European heritage sites and areas other than the monuments and sites generally exploited by tourism, in particular in rural areas, but also in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring;
- take account of the physical and intangible heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe;
- contribute through appropriate training, to raising awareness among decision makers, practitioners and the general public of the complex concept of heritage, the necessity to protect, interpret and communicate it as a means for sustainable development, and the challenges and opportunities it represents for the future of Europe.

This priority field of action is much more concerning the capability of each Route to strengthen cooperation with a variety of national and international institutions in the field of cultural heritage, with particular focus on dissemination and outreach actions. The enhancement of memory is also a communication action that could be planned within the strategy to be developed with **external cooperation networks**. Some routes might decide to integrate this priority field of action in their **communication strategy** (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).

## 3. Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans

In this field of action, the projects must:

- include the organization of activities with groups of young people in order to promote in-depth exchanges aimed at developing the concept of European citizenship, enriched by its diversity;
- place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts;
- encourage de-compartmentalization by organizing exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe;
- constitute pilot schemes with a limited number of participating countries and be provided with sufficient resources for meaningful assessment in order to generate prototypes that can serve as reference models;
- give rise to cooperation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels.

This priority field of action is linked to both **internal and external networks** (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). The internal networks of the Route (the governance) might influence or be influenced by the way in which each single route manages the relationship with schools and education institutions. Some routes are used to have a specific internal network of schools (i.e.: The Phoenician's Route) and education/training centers, formally involved in the route's activities. Others (i.e.: ATRIUM) might be used to seek for specific partnership with schools or associations involved in education and training, while developing specific projects and external networks.

#### 4. Contemporary cultural and artistic practice

In this field of action, the projects must:

- give rise to debate and exchange, in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective, between the various cultural and artistic expressions and sensibilities of the different countries of Europe;
- encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture;
- highlight, in contemporary cultural and artistic practice, the most innovative practices in terms of creativity, and link them with the history of skills development, whether they belong to the field of the visual arts, the performing arts, creative crafts, architecture, music, literature or any other form of cultural expression;
- give rise to networks and activities which break down the barriers between professionals and non-professionals, particularly as regards instruction for young Europeans in the relevant fields.

This priority field of action is much more focusing on the capability of each route to strengthen cooperation with a wide range of national and international institutions in the field of art and creativity, with particular focus on actions supporting the dissemination of valuable content and

messages during events and expositions. This priority field of action is also a powerful **communication action** that could be planned within the strategy to be developed with **external cooperation networks** (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 3).

## 5. Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

In this field of action, the projects must:

- take account of local, regional, national and European identities;
- actively involve print and broadcast media and make full use of the potential of electronic media in order to raise awareness of the cultural objectives of the projects;
- promote dialogue between urban and rural cultures, between regions in the south, north, east and west of Europe, and between developed and disadvantaged regions;
- promote dialogue and understanding between majority and minority, native and immigrant cultures;
- open up possibilities for cooperation between Europe and other continents through the special affinities between certain regions;
- concern themselves, in the field of cultural tourism, with raising public awareness, drawing decision makers' attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of sustainable development of the territory and seek to diversify both supply and demand, with a view to fostering the development of quality tourism with a European dimension;
- seek partnerships with public and private organizations active in the field of tourism in order to develop tourist products and tools targeting all potential publics.

This priority field of action sets the goals for enhancing the capability of the Route to better **integrate local tourism and cultural systems**, underlying the need to plan the strategic actions within the framework of sustainability (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).

To conclude, the **route's Mission** is to pertain to the priority fields of action, by adapting them to the route theme; to the specific governance model; to the strategy put in place to strengthen external cooperation networks; to the specific adopted communication plan.

## 2. The Governance Model of a Cultural Route

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### 2.1 Methodology

#### 2.1.1 The five main dimensions of governance models

**The Route governance system** defines the configuration of the internal network (by defining the hierarchy and the delegation system and specifying the attributions of authority and responsibility) and the structuration of the main operational processes (e.g., goal-setting techniques, decision making processes, control systems, information systems, auditing and reporting systems, people management and development systems) aimed at stimulating the translation of architectural choices into concrete goal-oriented behaviors.

The design of the Route governance system is a deliberate process through which the organizational configuration is structured and the main operational processes defined.

In particular, it consists of choices implying the definition of<sup>4</sup>:

1. The **hierarchy** and formal relationships between local units, and between local units and the Managing Body of the Cultural Route;
2. Formal network **coordination solutions** (also through the introduction of specific departments dedicated to promoting coordination);
3. **Operational processes** to manage decision making, goal-setting and control, exchange and dissemination of information between center and periphery and between peers, conflict avoidance and resolution.

The design process is constrained by several contingency factors, specifically:

- Route goals;
- Domain characteristics;
- Value system and priorities of the members;
- Route size (both in terms of countries involved and number of partners);
- Characteristics of the partners;
- Availability of competencies and resources.

Through **governance system's design**, the actual organization of the Route is shaped, and some relevant organizational dimensions emerge<sup>5</sup>:

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<sup>4</sup> Child J., 1984, *Organization*, New York: Harper & Row.

Daft R.L., Murphy J., Willmott H., 2017, *Organization, theory and design. An international perspective*, Andover: Annabel Ainscow.

<sup>5</sup> Mintzberg H., 1979, *The structuring of organizations*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

- **Degree of centralization**

This dimension refers to the hierarchical level that has authority to make strategic decisions. When decision making takes place at the Managing Body of the Route level, the network is centralized. On the contrary, when decisions are taken at the local level, it is decentralized.

- **Locus of the authority**

The locus of the authority refers to the centralization/decentralization of power in the network. Power can be centralized at the top, through the formal authority system, or can be emergent and legitimized through competencies and skills locally available.

- **Degree of formalization**

It refers to the degree of reliance upon written rules (typically defined in terms of guidelines and procedures). Routes adopting a formalized approach behave according to predefined paths of action and specific compliance-control systems are established. On the other hand, networks adopting an 'informal' approach do not predefine their behavior and adjust it to the contingent situation being tackled.

- **Degree of specialization**

This dimension refers to the degree of focalization of each partner on specific domains or activities. A high degree of specialization means that each partner has specific competencies on particular domains or processes. Evidently, specialization has to be supported by valuable resources, knowledge and expertise. A low degree of specialization refers to a situation in which partners are polyvalent and do not possess specialized knowledge or resources.

- **Degree of partner's interaction**

It is the degree to which route activities are conceived and performed collectively. A high degree of interaction means that route's activities are transversal and require the involvement of two or more partners. A low degree of interaction refers to a situation in which partners act almost autonomously, without collaborating with others.

### 2.1.2. The contribution of local units

Another critical element of the governance system adopted by Cultural Routes concerns the contribution provided by the local units composing the network. In fact, Cultural Routes are typically composed of many members, often different from each other in terms of skills, representativeness,

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Ranson S., Hinings B., Greenwood R., 1980, The structuring of organizational structures, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25, 1-17.

Daft R.L., Murphy J., Willmott H., 2017, *Organization, theory and design. An international perspective*, Andover: Annabel Ainscow.



freedom of action, resources available, involvement in cultural activities. This variety results in different behaviors.

Therefore, the Managing Body of the Route should assess each unit's **degree of contribution** to develop ad-hoc interventions to stimulate its proactivity. To this end, always drawing inspiration from the literature on the organization of international companies, it may be helpful to define an analytical framework to frame the contribution of each unit and define coherent intervention strategies.

This scheme develops on two dimensions<sup>6</sup>:

- **Proactivity**, i.e., the unit's level of commitment and vitality, measures the number of initiatives developed and participation in cooperative activities.
- **Strategic relevance**, i.e., the relevance for the Route of the tangible and intangible cultural assets presents in the unit's location and the relevance of the competencies and skills of the human resources involved.

#### Local unit's contribution to the Cultural Route

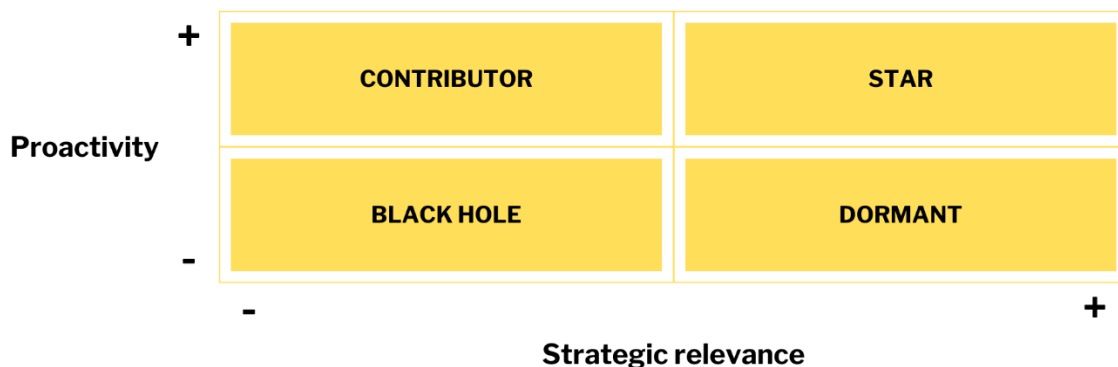


Figure 2.A - Local unit's contribution to the Cultural Route

**Stars** are partners with strategic competencies or connected with relevant stakeholders and are very active in cooperative activities.

<sup>6</sup> Paterson S.L., Brock D.M., 2002, The development of subsidiary-management research: review and theoretical analysis, *International Business Review*, 11, 139-163.

Jarillo J.C., Martinez J.I., 1990, Different roles for subsidiaries: The case of multinational corporations in Spain, *Strategic Management Journal*, 11(7), 501-512.

Bartlett C.A., Ghoshal S., 1989, *Managing across borders: The transnational solution*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

While missing core resources and not having specific tangible or intangible resources to leverage in the Route, **Contributors** are very active and are supporting in meaningful ways the pursuit of the Route's goals.

**Dormant partners** have the potential to perform as critical players in the Route but are not showing concrete behaviors to support the achievement of cooperative goals.

**Black holes** are partners that do not show any cooperation-supportive behavior and haven't any peculiar resources to leverage in the network. The Cultural Route can adopt different strategies to stimulate the development of non-star partners.

**Partners missing proactivity** should be stimulated and motivated to contribute to the achievement of cooperative goals. This may happen by providing them with better-suited incentives or by involving them in decision making processes.

In particular, dormant partners should be involved in **cooperative activities**, e.g., by creating occasions of collaboration between them and the stars. In the long run, it could be helpful to engage them in the goal-setting process, trying to align their peculiar goals with those of the Route.

The task of improving on the dimension of **strategic relevance** is more complicated. Possible strategies relate to the possibility of developing specialist competencies (e.g., by providing them with training initiatives) or to the possibility of stimulating them to discover and leverage local cultural resources (even intangible). These processes are less predictable and require a longer time.

**Black holes** lack both potential and commitment. They should be exposed to tightly-suited training activities to develop some specialist competencies (e.g., communication through social media, reporting, translation of general initiatives into initiatives aimed at specific target groups – children, elderly people, students, etc. –, event organization), thus allowing them to contribute more actively to the Route. In the long run, the specialization may also stimulate the construction of experience and the development of critical competencies, paving the way to the improvement of the partner's strategic relevance.

In the same way, **contributors** should be oriented toward specific fields of activities: if they direct their proactivity to particular domains, over time, they may develop critical competencies, thus improving their strategic relevance.

### 2.1.3 Ideal types of governance models

Considering the variables detailed above and the analysis of available data, two dimensions appeared fundamental for understanding the governance model implemented by Cultural Routes<sup>7</sup>:

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<sup>7</sup> These dimensions have been developed by referring to the theoretical debate related to international enterprises. In particular: Bartlett C.A., Ghoshal S., 1989, *Managing across borders: The transnational solution*, Boston: Harvard

-**Global integration:** degree of cooperation and coordination in the Cultural Route.

-**Local responsiveness:** degree of autonomy attributed to the local partners in the definition and implementation of their activities within the Cultural Route.

Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 explain the relevant variables of each dimension and detail the situations in which each variable takes maximum or minimum values.

**Table 2.1: Global integration**

<b>Global integration</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
<i>Degree of partner interaction</i>	Partners act almost autonomously. Initiatives are planned and performed without involving other partners.	Partners work together. Initiatives are jointly planned and performed.
<i>Degree of coordination</i>	Cooperation is loosely coordinated. Coordination is achieved through few formal rules.	Cooperative behavior is tightly coordinated. Coordination takes place through plans and mutual adjustment.
<i>Exchange of information</i>	The exchange of information between partners is very limited, and is confined to formal communication channels	The exchange of information between partners is rich and continuous. It takes place through a wide range of channels, formal and informal.
<i>Relevance of Route brand</i>	The brand of the Route is weak, and it is not widely known	Strong brand of the Route and high reputation among stakeholders.

**Table 2.2: Local responsiveness**

<b>Local responsiveness</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
<i>Degree of decentralization</i>	Decision making processes are centralized on the Managing Body of the Route. The MB keeps the final decision for all strategic,	Decision making processes are performed at the local level. This means that local partners bear the responsibility of all planning, implementation, and marketing



	financial and operative decisions impacting on the Route.	activities. The Managing Body of the Route is informed about what is being organized locally.
<i>Degree of local units' specialization</i>	The Managing Body of the Route and the local partners are not specialized. They lack specific competencies and expertise on the Route's fields of action.	The local partners have specific knowledge, competencies, and expertise on processes and stakeholders that are relevant for the Route.
<i>Relevance of local resources</i>	Human and financial resources are concentrated on the Managing Body of the Route.	The local partners contribute to the Route with relevant human and financial resources.
<i>Local leadership</i>	The authority belongs to the Managing Body of the Route. All processes are controlled by the MB.	Leadership is diffused and based on each partner's capability of managing specific area of activities. Each partner takes the lead of one or more processes. Leadership is dynamic and emergent.

By relating the two relevant dimensions in their polarized representations (very low and very high), we obtain a 2x2 matrix. Each quadrant represents an **ideal type of governance model** of the Cultural Route.

This ideal typology has been selected as the primary output since it allows each project partner to reflect on its governance characteristics and positioning its governance with respect to the ideal types presented. It is a self-reflection and self-analysis tool that can stimulate concrete organizational interventions. "An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sided emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct. In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a utopia"<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Weber M., 1949, *The methodology of the social sciences*, Glancoe: The Free Press, p.90.

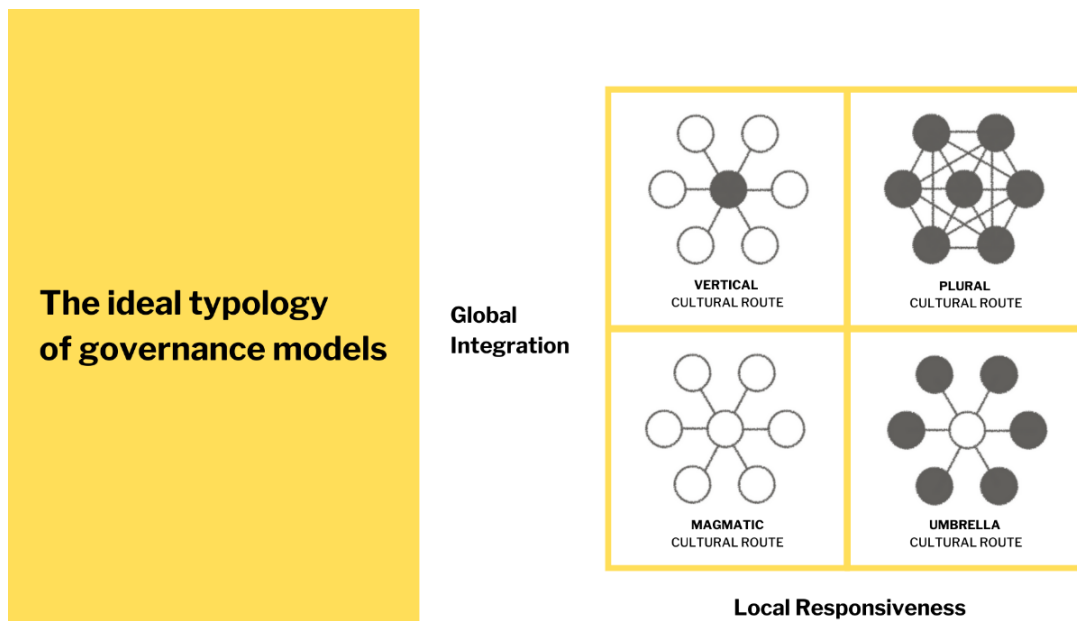


Figure 2.B - The ideal typology of governance models

The **ideal typology** is important to allow the understanding of the current situation of each Cultural Route (in terms of proximity/distance from one type or another). This approach also allows reflecting on possible trajectories of change and considering the variables available to stimulate this change.

### Magmatic Cultural Route

*Weak Managing Body of the Cultural Route, Weak local partners*

- *Low local responsiveness*
  - Centralization
  - Low specialization of local units
  - Limited local resources
  - Authority to the Managing Body of the Cultural Route
- *Low global integration*
  - Limited interaction between units
  - Low coordination
  - Limited information exchange
  - Limited relevance of the Cultural Route brand
  - Limited resources dedicated to the coordination



The Magmatic Cultural Route consists of a network in which the **coordination** between the partners is minimal, typically based on formal rules defined centrally and passively adopted by the partners. The **decision making processes** and the (few) cooperative activities of the Route are controlled by the Managing Body of the Route and are implemented locally without particular adaptations. The Magmatic Cultural Route is configured as a rather loose superstructure that develops limited, homogeneous and repeated actions. The cost and effort required to local partners and the Managing Body of the Route are limited. The cost of coordination operated by the Managing Body of the Route is also limited.

### Vertical Cultural Route

*Strong Managing Body of the Cultural Route, Weak local partners*

- *Low local responsiveness*  
Centralization  
  
Low specialization of local units  
  
Limited local resources  
  
Authority to the Managing Body of the Route
- *High global integration*  
High vertical interaction between units  
  
High vertical coordination  
  
High vertical information exchange  
  
High relevance of the Cultural Route brand  
  
Relevant resources dedicated to vertical coordination

The Vertical Cultural Route operates as a tight network, directed and managed by the Managing Body of the Cultural Route. The Managing Body of the Route is configured as a critical player and hub for the entire network: **decisions** are made centrally, all communication and coordination processes take place to and from the Managing Body of the Route. Local activities are based on indications that originate from the center; all local adaptations are precluded. The Managing Body of the Route has relevant skills and dedicates many resources to the management of the Cultural Route.

### Umbrella Cultural Route

*Weak Managing Body of the Cultural Route, Strong local partners*

- *High local responsiveness*  
Decentralization  
  
High specialization of local units  
  
Relevant local resources  
  
Local leadership
- *Low global integration*  
Limited interaction between units  
  
Low coordination  
  
Limited information exchange  
  
Limited relevance of the Cultural Route brand  
  
Limited resources dedicated to the coordination

The activities of the Umbrella Cultural Route are led by the **local partners**. These, on the basis of the considerable skills and resources available, autonomously develop activities and initiatives. The Cultural Route brand is also added to these initiatives; the global brand is just a complement to that of the local partner. The Managing Body of the Route basically operates information gathering and sharing activities but does not coordinate local initiatives; the resources used by the Managing Body of the Route are minimal. It should be noted that this network is highly loose, although very active locally.

## Plural Cultural Route

*Strong Managing Body of the Cultural Route, Strong local partners*

- *High local responsiveness*  
Decentralization  
  
High specialization of local units  
  
Relevant local resources  
  
Local leadership
- *High global integration*  
High horizontal interaction between units  
  
High horizontal coordination  
  
High horizontal information exchange

High relevance of the Cultural Route brand

Relevant resources dedicated to vertical coordination

The Plural Cultural Route is characterized by dual focus, i.e., strict coordination of the units and high capacity for local adaptation. This network is not based on a predefined and formalized **hierarchy**; vice versa, each local partner takes the lead of the initiatives and processes on which it has greater skills or experience.

The **level of specialization** of the partners is very high, and each of them becomes a center of specialized skills and experiences for the entire network.

The **interactions** between the partners are very relevant and develop based on the involvement of the partners themselves in cooperative initiatives. The strict coordination takes place through mutual adjustment between the partners; however, it is very complex and implies high costs and efforts since it essentially takes place between peers and without the support of predefined rules.

The Managing Body of the Route operates as a *primus inter pares*, i.e., it controls the activities for which it has specific skills and leaves the lead of the others to the more experienced partners.

The **exchange of information** and communications is horizontal and is very intense between the partners involved in specific initiatives. The Managing Body of the Route and the local partners channel significant resources and skills into the Cultural Route.

## 2.2 The actual governance of the Routes

### 2.2.1 How we investigated the Routes' governance

In order to develop the Fab Routes governance model, it is critical to understand the most salient features of the governance models adopted by the project partners. However, understanding the **governance system** adopted by each Route is not an easy task. In fact, while formal documentation (statutes, organizational charts, formal procedures) provides some insights, the actual way of functioning of the organization cannot be inferred through document analysis.

In particular, the **degree of centralization**, probably the most salient characteristics of any governance system, cannot be understood by referring to formal documents: in this case, it is essential to understand how and where decisions are taken, besides any formal responsibilities. It is a matter of locus of decision making processes. Indeed, the same organizational chart may apply to different centralization-decentralization settings (Figure C).



## The locus of control: center vs periphery

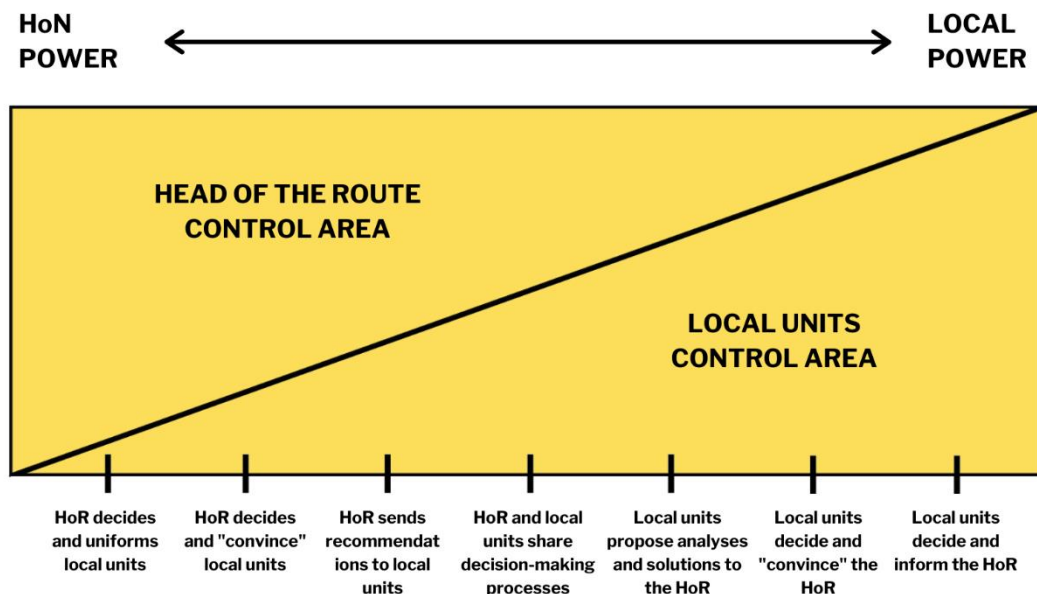


Figure 2.C - The locus of control: center vs periphery

More in general, the understanding of the **operational processes** and the actual functioning of the structural architecture requires more sophisticated investigation methods.

Hence, a **three-step investigation method** with direct and rich involvement of the project partners has been defined:

### 1. Analysis of formal documentation

The **statute** of each route has been analyzed in detail to represent the structure and the system of formal authority and responsibilities. When available, also other official documents (e.g., organizational charts) have been put under scrutiny. This first recognition allowed a preliminary understanding of the general architecture of each Route and its functioning.

### 2. Semi-structured interviews with the Managing Bodies of the Cultural Routes

One-to-one semi-structured **interviews** with each Managing Body of the Route have been conducted to gather additional (and more affluent) knowledge about the most relevant organizational dimensions (formalization, centralization, specialization, leadership style; degree of interaction) and the magnitude of the different contingency factors (goals, domain, culture and values, size, partner's characteristics, competencies and resources available).

To this end, the interview structure has been defined in advance, taking the organizational dimensions and the contingency factors into consideration. Interviews have been recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. From these interviews, a more realistic representation of the various governance models has emerged.

### 3. Focus group involving the Managing Bodies of the Cultural Routes

To complement and challenge the understanding of the governance models, a **meeting** with all Managing Bodies of the Routes has been convened. The Managing Bodies of the Routes have been invited to share and discuss approaches and practices to network governance. Each Managing Body of the Route has been asked to describe the governance model, focusing on some crucial aspects (which have been identified by analyzing the transcriptions of the interviews) of **internal coordination choices**. Then, by working in groups, participants had to propose solutions to manage typical coordination problems efficiently. Finally, the proposed solutions have been discussed and commented on in a plenary session.

To promote the commitment and stimulate a more articulated discussion, participants have been exposed to **discussion techniques** based on BEI (Behavioral Event Interviews - questions in which they had to describe a situation or a decision they had faced in their role of Managing Body of the Route), CIQ (Critical Incident Questions - participants have been asked to think of a critical or controversial situation they had met in their role of Managing Body of the Route), and role-playing. The meeting has been recorded and transcribed. The analysis of the discussion allowed a final refinement of the different governance models adopted by project partners.

Based on the knowledge developed through the previous investigation process and relying on the scientific literature on the organization of international enterprises, in this report, we propose an **ideal typology of governance models for Cultural Routes**.

The reference to the literature on the organization of international enterprises is deemed meaningful since most of the problems faced by Cultural Routes are similar to those experienced by companies acting on global markets and studied by such literature.

#### 2.2.2 What is your ideal type?

In this section we associate each Cultural Route to an ideal type. To the aim, we used the information collected by the interviews, focus groups and formal documentation.

##### a) Atrium

<http://www.atriumroute.eu>

Non-profit Association: "ATRIUM Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th century In Europe's Urban Memory interpreted to promote human rights and democracy"  
The Managing Body of the Route is in Forlì, Italy.

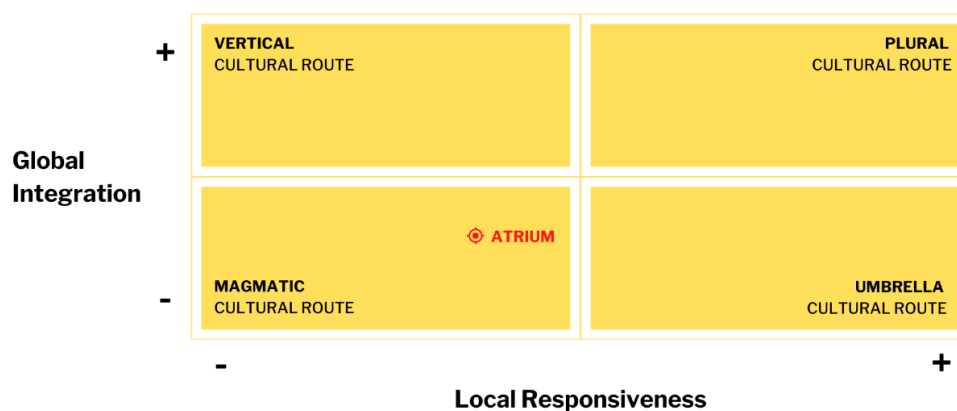
Members are public bodies and universities.

## Global integration

- The members speak different languages and use English to communicate.
- The route need to identify a common cultural and commercial vision.
- Activities are coordinated through formal rules and procedures to ensure conformity of behavior.
- Some partners are slow in reacting during some common initiatives.

## Local responsiveness

- The authority of the Managing Body of the Route is recognized by the members of the route
- Problems in managing the network: many standard activities are performed, at least those related to the priority fields of action of the Council of Europe, but the Managing Body of the Route does not have not enough staff to involve the network in all the fields of action.
- Historical and cultural differences: members have a common interest on the dissonant architecture, but their heritage is located in very different contexts and is leveraged according to the local peculiarities. This should be considered a double-edged element (positive and negative) according to the way it is considered.
- Members are mostly public bodies and the commitment is in some cases linked also to the policy makers.
- The Managing Body of the Route proposes activities to the members, and in some cases the willingness to participate is low.
- Many members do not have the time to participate in common activities, they are more focused towards the promotion of their own territories. Members are mainly small cities which have different competencies and are under-staffed.



## b) The Phoenicians' Route

<https://fenici.net/>

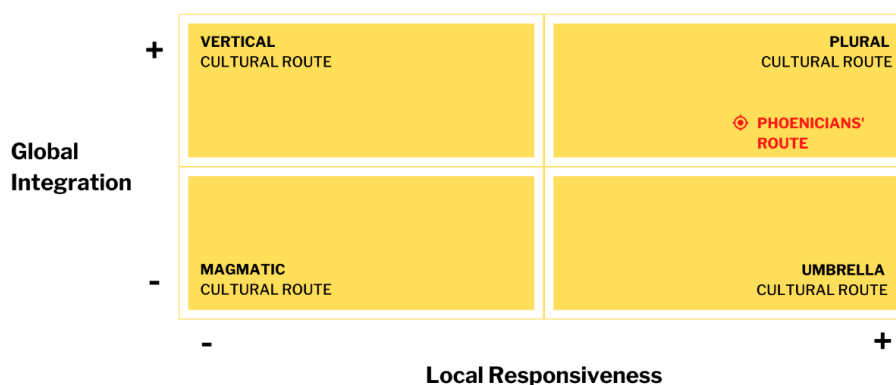
Association «Confederazione Internazionale La Rotta dei Fenici» the Managing Body of the Route is in Castelvetro, Italy 142 members: national authorities, regions, provinces, municipalities, public bodies, chambers of commerce, associations, foundations, museums, universities and research centers.

### Global integration

- Until 2009, the route adopted a very hierarchical approach. Nowadays, coordination is less hierarchical/vertical.
- Coordination is emergent, based on mutual adjustment. Activities are coordinated through the self-interested behaviors of the involved members.
- The Managing Body of the Route shares guidelines and good practices.
- All the members, especially the national representatives, are stimulated to share knowledge.
- Communication and information sharing within the network are rich and continuous.
- The Managing Body of the Route oversees activities and communication processes.

### Local responsiveness

- The Managing Body of the Route exercises its formal authority through the delegate members of every country of the Route.
- Members are very active.
- All members have a positive attitude toward participating in cooperative initiatives.
- Members organize local activities, but the President and the Director are always informed about them and they are invited to be present.
- Delegate members pursue the establishment of new contacts and interact with their local stakeholders.
- The Phoenicians' Route is like a virtual space where the members can be active.



### c) VIA REGIA

<https://www.via-regia.org/eng/index.php>

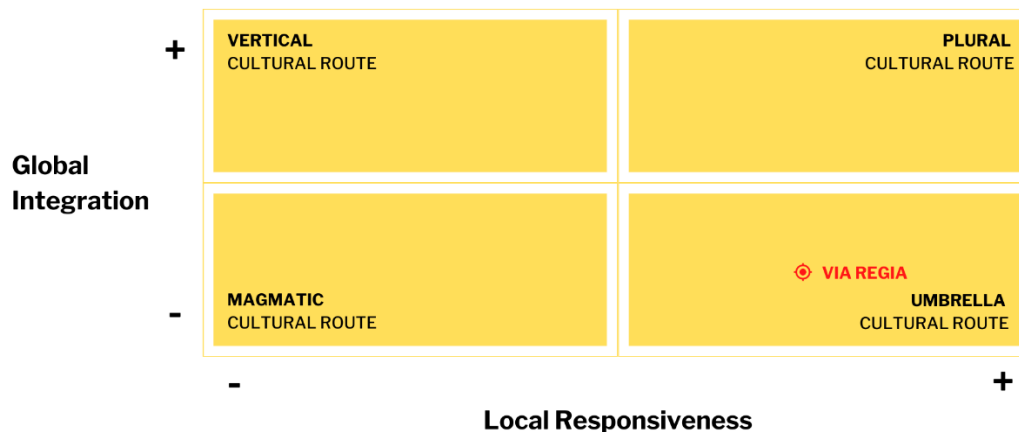
- The network is a non-profit organization having no legal capacity and non-profit oriented. It is named "VIA REGIA – Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe"
- The Managing Body of the Route is based in Erfurt, Germany
- They have more than 100 members: municipalities, communities, associations, enterprises, single persons and churches.

#### Global integration

- The Managing Body of the Route tries to gather and disseminate information, knowledge, and experience but some activities are performed without informing it.
- The Managing Body of the Route manages the relations with ICOM, international museum associations, UNESCO, European Union and Council of Europe. Its internal authority is rather formal, not substantial.
- Members behave with high autonomy. There are few global initiatives. For example, in Ukraine, a private museum opened a VIA REGIA restaurant, a VIA REGIA hotel and settled a VIA REGIA map, but the museum informed the Managing Body of the Route only when the projects were already implemented.
- The members contribute with respect to their specific field of activity (e.g., museums contribute to the historical research, small villages contribute to tourism and so on)
- The routes are grouped in the nations and together they send one representative to the cultural authorities.
- They have a symposium every two years. The Managing Body of the Route interacts with a few members several times a week, but with other members it may happen that communications take place every couple of years.

#### Local responsiveness

- Different types of members, and all are equal in the network. Everyone can take part in decision making processes, it doesn't matter if it is a large municipality or a single person.
- The greatest part of activities is locally planned and locally managed.
- The VIA REGIA online Library has been developed to allow members to make available to the network their historical research related to the Route.
- A transnational VIA REGIA's Day has been planned.
- The most active members are single persons and small associations. Larger institutions are less active.
- Many members participate in the Route to gain visibility being part of this thousands years old connection through Europe.



#### d) Routes of the Emperor Charles V

<http://www.itineracarolusv.eu/>

- It is a non-profit association, "Cooperation Network of European Routes of Emperor Charles V"
- The Managing Body of the Route is in Yuste, Spain.
- 66 members: municipalities, regions provinces, associations, foundations, museums and 9 collaborating members.

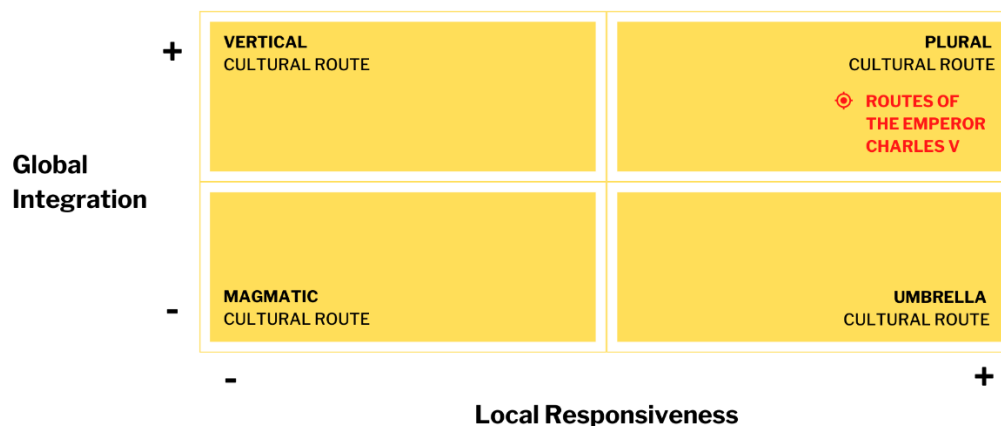
#### Global integration

- The Managing Body of the Route oversees cooperative initiatives but does not define what members have to do. It helps members realizing their projects.
- The Managing Body of the Route is always informed by the members when they organize activities.
- The Managing Body of the Route stimulates inactive members to organize activities but also to participate in EU projects.
- The Managing Body of the Route stimulates the diffusion of good practices among the members.
- The Route has a permanent forum to discuss how to develop academic research.
- The Managing Body of the Route manages the international relations, but, at the same time, all the members perform the same role with respect to their local territories.
- Many of their members play a multiplication role to spread the information about the Route's events in the territories. In this way, they can have a bigger impact on local areas.
- The Managing Body of the Route is constantly in contact with one representative member per country who plays a coordination role with respect to the members in his country.

#### Local responsiveness

- The Managing Body of the Route, like every other member, proposes and participate in common activities.

- Leadership is emergent and everyone participates as much as possible.
- Each member develops its own activities and can invoke the support of the Managing Body of the Route for contacting other members potentially interested.
- When the Managing Body of the Route or one or more members develop a pilot activity in one domain of the Route, they are invited to share their experience with other partners.
- EU projects are used to support specific activities, but the structural funds mainly come from the membership fees and from special grants coming from the members (like Extremadura).
- Once a year, a big event is organized in Brussels and more than 2000 volunteers are involved by a local association.
- The Route provide its members with relevant international visibility. Members are aware that the activities they develop within the Route will reach a lot of people and this is a very relevant motivation factor.
- The Managing Body of the Route and other specialized partners help members developing products related to the Route that can have an impact on their territories



#### e) Routes of the Olive Tree

<https://olivetreeroute.gr/en/>

- It is a non-profit association "Cultural Foundation the Routes of the Olive Tree".
- The Managing Body of the Route is in Kalamata, Greece.
- They have 182 members but 106 have the right to vote during the General Assembly. Members are museums, olive oil producers, associations, universities.

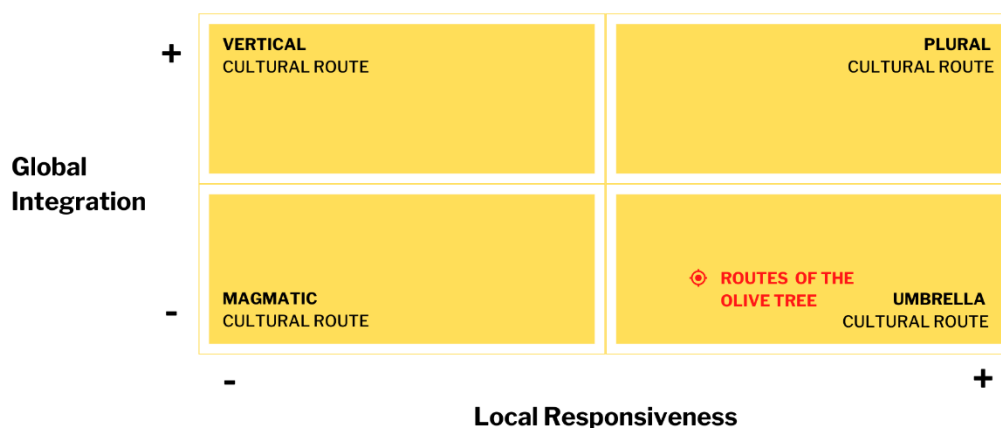
#### Global integration

- The Routes of the Olive Tree has been originated by an initiative of the Chambers of Commerce. Coordination is based on formal rules and hierarchy.

- The Route involves six geographical areas. Each area has an ambassador who coordinates and manages local initiatives. The Managing Body of the Route interacts with the ambassadors and with few important members (e.g., Città dell'Olio and the Chamber of Commerce of Imperia, in Italy).
- Some ambassadors (who are often volunteers) are not motivated and engaged with the goals of the Routes.
- The Managing Body of the Route proposes activities and procedures. Sometimes, the Managing Body of the Route mediates between the members and public and cultural institutions.
- Communication processes take place through email.
- The number and variety of members prevent tight coordination and cooperation.

### Local responsiveness

- Some countries are very active (e.g., Morocco), while many others are not (e.g., Syria).
- Few joint activities are organized, for example, the «Festa dell'olio d'oliva» organised by the Imperia Chamber of Commerce.
- There is a lack of engagement of local communities.
- The Managing Body of the Route tries to establish cooperation opportunities with private companies. However, relationships with the private sector are difficult to implement.



### f) AEJ – European Routes of Jewish Heritage

<https://www.jewishheritage.org/european-routes/>

- It is a non – profit association named “AEJ - European Association for the preservation and appreciation of Jewish culture and Heritage.
- The Managing Body of the Route is in Luxembourg.



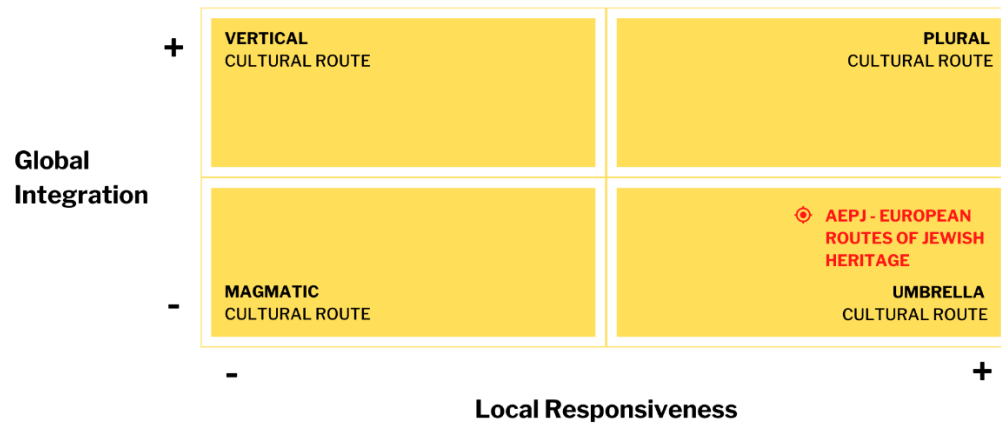
- The members are public bodies, NGOs, associations, foundations and the Federations of Jewish communities.

### **Global integration**

- The Managing Body of the Route is supported by a Scientific Committee and a Board of Directors. Together, they define the work plan for the Route.
- Two strategic meetings are convened every year: The General Assembly (with all members) and the Incubator Project (with the managers and the Scientific Committee). In these meetings, they plan conferences, workshops but also individual mentoring activities. Once a month, there is an “AEPJ meeting working session” where every partner presents in detail its projects and common problems are discussed.
- Coordination is mostly formal, based on rules to ensure conformity of behavior and to generate homogeneous outputs. However, the meetings are powerful means for achieving more spontaneous coordination solutions.
- To keep the members informed about the AEPJ projects they have an internal mailing system, called “AEPJ Internal Affairs”, that is addressed to the managers of the Route.
- Different communications channels are established for the different projects of the Route.
- The Managing Body of the Route informs the members about the benefits they can achieve through common projects.
- The AEPJ is mainly in contact with national bodies, which normally delegates the management of the Route to a specialized body in Jewish heritage.
- The Managing Body of the Route sets guidelines for the national leaders to stimulate them establishing their own networks. The idea is to have contact with the leaders of the Route, and to allow them spreading the strategies of the network.

### **Local responsiveness**

- AEPJ aims to act as a meta-route. AEPJ tries to bring opportunities to the members, mostly focusing on promotion and communication.
- There are some active members (e.g., Italy, France, Poland, Lithuania, Georgia and Azerbaijan). Other members do not show the same degree of proactivity.
- The Route recognizes the different policies and attitudes of each national member and does not interfere with national policies.
- The AEPJ basically run 2 main projects: one is the European Days of Jewish Culture, that is a festival they celebrate every year in September, and the other one is the European Route of Jewish heritage.



### 3. External cooperation model

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#### 3.1 Methodology

There is no Cultural Route like another. This statement has been the baseline for the organization of data collection for Fab Routes Intellectual Output 1. Developing a **model strategy** implies starting from the general needs of Cultural Routes networks to generalize the fields on which the strategy should focus on. To do so, we have used a mix of different methods, always having the Route's first-hand day by day experience as a fil rouge:

- 1) We have organized **semi-structured interviews** with Managing Body of the Cultural Route (see Annex A), one for each project partner in order to get a general overview about the route's operational models within and outside their own network (see also previous chapter on governance).
- 2) We have then prepared a **template** in order to gather data about best practices and experiences developed by the routes themselves, with the aim of building a common repository of case studies and supporting the interaction among the route's members. Each member and Managing Body of the Route usually organize and implement a number of valuable project/best practice/experiences/case studies to promote the cultural contents of the Route. We were interested in projects which made possible and enhanced a long-term cooperation with the cultural and tourist system of different route member's areas. We asked the routes to involve their own partners in gathering five best practices and to fill in the template (see Annex B) about cooperation and networking experiences with research entities, cultural/historical associations and institutions, tourism professionals also including those developed in the framework of EU funded projects.
- 3) Finally, we have performed an analysis of the **best practices** we have received from the CRs and selected the most significant ones in order to allow detecting the strategies and procedures usually put in place by CRs when it comes to networking and cooperating: at the national level of a given member country; at the local level with private partners; at the local level with CRs members; at the regional or transnational level.

Fab Routes represents one of the rare opportunities the CRs have to work together and to exchange modus operandi, good practices and strategies to deal with new challenges. For this reason, we have developed the model strategy using a **co-creation approach**, with the aim of capitalizing upon the existing knowledge expressed by the Managing Body of the Route and their partners.

In line with these premises, we have organized a **workshop** in which Cultural Routes have been requested to share their experiences in terms of current strategies put in place to integrate the culture and tourism ecosystems.

After a short presentation of the general data gathered through the templates (see details in following paragraph), we have assigned to each route the duty to present one selected practice out of the 5 compiled:

1. **European Route of Jewish Heritage:** Online Routes Incubator 2021
2. **European Routes of Emperor Charles V:** Tourist Product Club of Charles V
3. **ATRIUM:** ATRIUM Plus project
4. **Routes of the Olive Tree:** Creation of a local Cultural Route: Route de l'Olivier, Case study: Kythera Island (Greece)
5. **VIA REGIA:** travel tips VIA REGIA from Paris to Kyiv
6. **Phoenicians' Route:** Smart Ways model

Sharing **best practices** and experiences has allowed a better understanding of the strategies put in place by other CRs to create partnerships and better work together with the culture and tourism ecosystems along the routes. It has been also the opportunity for a better understanding of participants' own strategies to create new partnerships, that might have been unnoticed until now. Listening to the experience of peers has been a source of inspiration and new ideas' generation for the Fab Routes partners and has also allowed to identify common methods and challenges that will be included in the Fab Routes Model Strategy.

During the **workshop**, the CRs participants have been requested to work in parallel virtual rooms using their own available competences and skills to answer to the following question: *"Which are the key elements/ methods to collaborate and create partnerships between Cultural Routes and their culture and tourism ecosystems?"*.

Within the same virtual room, each participant and member of a given CR has been asked to first work individually to identify the key elements he/she is currently using to collaborate and create partnerships with their culture and tourism ecosystems (at each member area level). Later they have been asked to discuss as a group these key elements and propose a step-by-step sequence to **build the cooperation with culture and tourism ecosystems**. Finally, they have been asked to give, during the final plenary session, a synthetic power point presentation (1-2 slides) summarizing the key elements identified and suggested logical sequence.

In the following paragraph, before proposing an analytical framework suitable for generalizing the results and challenges to be faced, we will present the **results** of the peer to peer and co-creation activities implemented during the project.

### 3.2 Best Practices collected and main conclusions from interviews and workshop

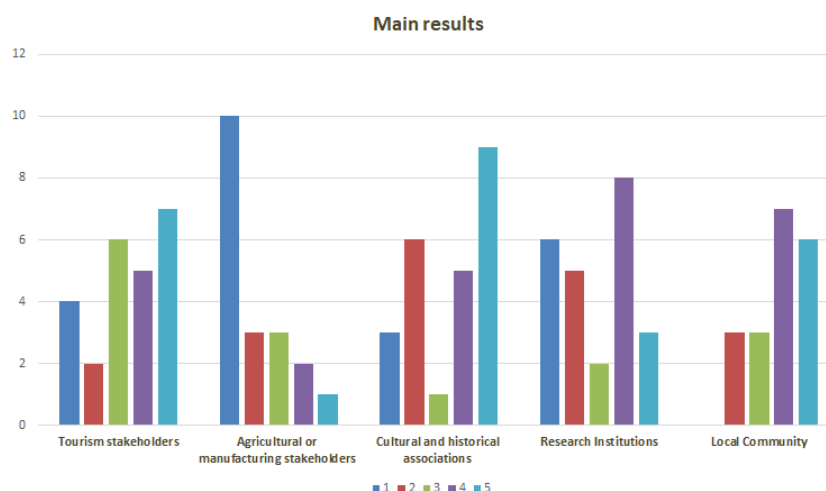
**Best practices** have been widely used in the international cooperation programs and transformed into policy instruments by a number of international institutions. The idea behind the collection and dissemination of best practices is that their exchange can lead to positive changes in a number of fields. The European Commission understands best practices as effective and efficient examples that could be transferred in order to improve or solve a problem or address a specific issue.

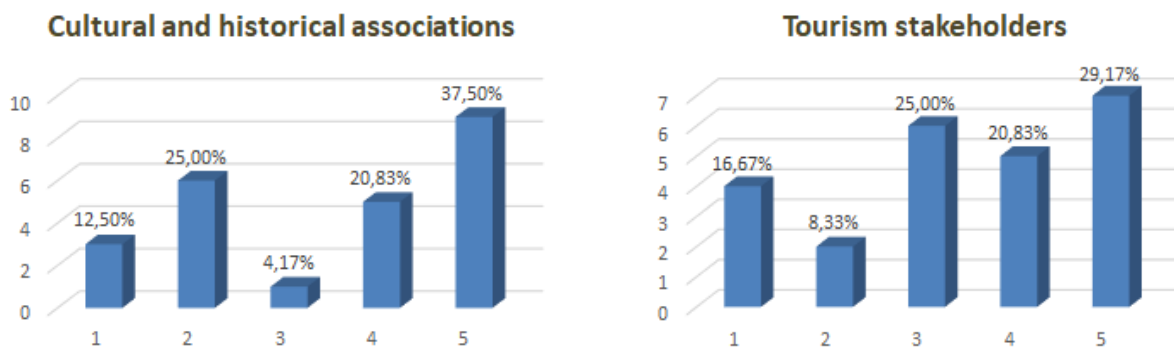
When it comes to training and capacity building, as in the case of Fab Routes, best practices could be the informal starting point for organising formal training. In other words, in building the strategic model to give CRs the right tool to improve their capability to integrate their existing culture and tourism ecosystem, we have collected a set of best practices to build a repository freely accessible to project partners. One best practice per partner has then been selected to implement the **peer-to-peer workshop**, where the participants have had the possibility to learn from previously tested experiences.

#### 3.2.1 Overview of Best Practices

Through a **template** designed by CAST to build a repository of best practices (see Annex B), we were able to collect relevant information regarding CRs external cooperation activities and their integration with the culture and tourism ecosystems. Managing Bodies of the Routes and some of their partners were given the responsibility for filling out these templates, highlighting five of their best practices on the topic. In what follows, main results are presented and briefly commented.

**Degree of collaboration of stakeholders with the CR in your location/city during the project (1 Not relevant, 5 Maximum relevance)**





Regarding the **degree of collaboration** from CRs and stakeholders in their location during the project, the main results show that CRs have a higher degree of collaboration with cultural and historical associations (37,50%), than with tourism stakeholders (29.17%), while with agricultural or manufacturing stakeholders they collaborate less than any other kind of organizations considered. Moreover, they have an intermediate degree of collaboration with Research Institutions and Local Communities. Some routes have several research projects in collaboration with universities, while we can see some difficulties in involving their local communities.

The **results** confirmed what CRs already had anticipated during the Managing Body of the Route interviews. In fact, some of them expressed their difficulty in creating new tourism products and especially in building fruitful partnerships with tourism stakeholders, such as tour operators, because they often pursue just profit-oriented objectives rather than social and cultural ones.

On the other hand, **VIA REGIA** is focusing on raising awareness about the Route among the German general public with a project called "Council of Europe Cultural Routes – Awareness Raising Project and Publicity in Germany". The lack of awareness about the existence of the Cultural Routes is considered the main problem that prevents the possibility of creating new relationships with tour operators.

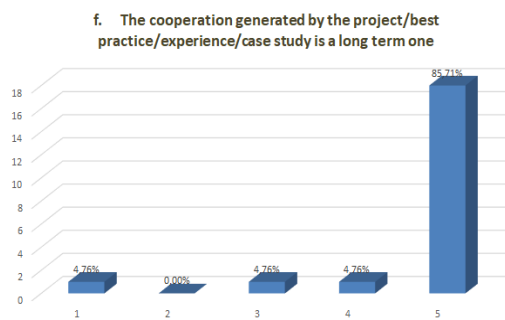
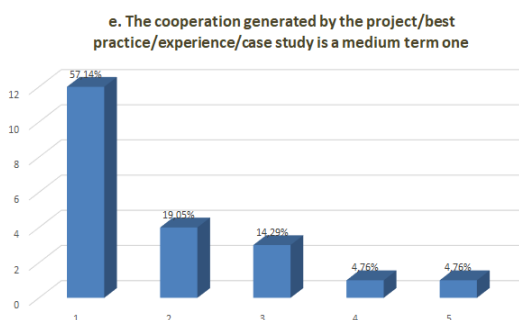
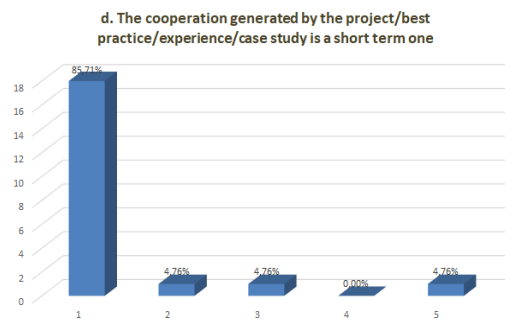
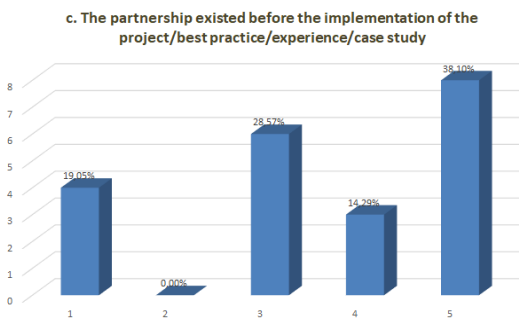
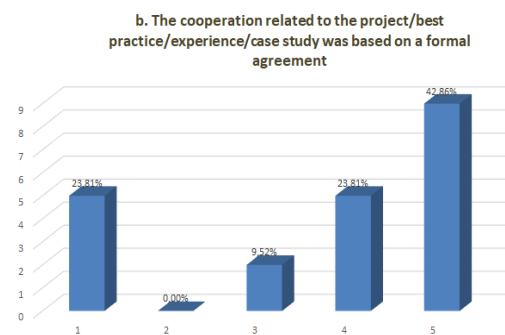
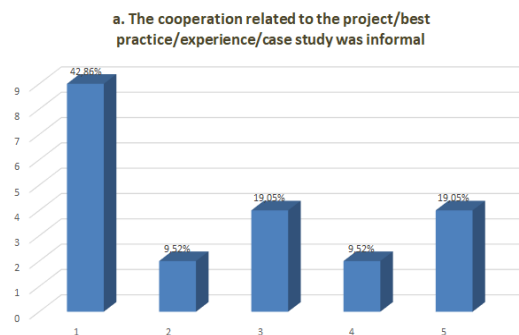
However, some of the Cultural Routes are more advanced in terms of connection with the tourism ecosystem, such as **Emperor Charles V** and **Phoenicians' Route**. For example, Emperor Charles V channels tourism promotion through the regional and provincial governments who are members of their network, and were able to create new tourism products in collaboration with "Paradores de España Network" to promote activities on gastronomy related to Charles the V. In turn, the **Phoenicians' Route** developed a tour operator network which groups 200 tour operators involved in educational tours. With this network, they want to enhance less known destinations for a more sustainable tourism.

Regarding the cooperation with agricultural and manufacturing stakeholders, it becomes evident that depending on the nature of the Route, not every CRs has interest in building relationships with them. In fact, just the **Phoenicians' Route** and the **Routes of the Olive Tree** have been related to this kind of stakeholder. While the Phoenicians' Route collaborates with the agricultural and



manufacturing stakeholders and with other CRs (such as Iter Vitis, European Route of Ceramics and Routes of the Olive Tree), the Routes of the Olive Tree is based on the agricultural sector. In fact, their selected best practice “Creation of a local Cultural Route: Route de l'Olivier, Case study: Kythera Island (Greece)”, which is a cultural itinerary based on the creation of a new tourism product related to cultural heritage and typical local products, is a clear example of this connection with the sector.

**Please, thinking about the most important stakeholder, give your opinion about the following sentences (1 totally disagree – 5 totally agree)**



Regarding the cooperation established with main stakeholders, it is clear that the CRs cooperation is based on **formal agreements** (42.86 % formal against 29% informal agreement). They are mainly

**long term agreements** (85,71%) and in most cases the relationships existed already before the specific project reported (38,10%).

From Route to Route the **degree of opening to partnerships** with new stakeholders depends on different factors. One of them seems to be the heritage they try to enhance: if their heritage can be subjected to misunderstanding, as it happens with ATRIUM, it is much more difficult to establish new cooperation because this heritage has its own way to be interpreted, which is also difficult to transfer.

Moreover, the routes normally have very strong **core values** that influence their internal organization but also their external cooperation approach. For these reasons, it is easy to understand why CRs have built very strong relationships with certain stakeholders, while with others they have more difficulties. Therefore, most of the best practices reported consisted of continuing the relationship with existing partners.

### 3.2.2 Best Practices selected

In this paragraph, the best practices selected from each CR will be briefly described.

#### a) **ATRIUM:** ATRIUM Plus project – ATRIUM GO! Product



In order to translate dissonant heritage into a tourist attraction for students, ATRIUM has worked, thanks to a transnational cooperation program (Italy-Croatia), exploring ethical and responsible storytelling and tourism experiences addressed to young generations. The project aim was to create an **ATRIUM cultural-tourist product addressed to schools** by involving students themselves in its fine tuning. Furthermore, training sessions addressed to tour guides on the ATRIUM themes and its specific storytelling have been organized.

The project activities have involved five Italian and Croatian municipalities, five schools and a number of cultural associations to improve the quality and contents of school trips related to totalitarian regimes. The participatory process of co-design with the involvement of students (itinerary, storytelling, educational workshops, brand, promotional materials) in each territory



(ATRIUM GO! School tours of architecture and power in the XXth century), has allowed to enlarge the **network of schools**, cultural contents providers and tour guides services in the pilot areas participating in the project.

#### b) **Phoenicians' Route:** Smart Ways model



"**Smart Way**" means a "Path Way" that acts as a collector of heritages, communities and single services, developing a territorial quality offer, enhancing service standards of companies and territories involved, developing cooperation between different parts of the supply chain and promoting innovative service activities. It also allows to identify the attractive resources in terms of "Sustainable Tourism" in the areas involved and enhance the existing ones through networking activities and sustainable integrated tourism chain.

The development of the **road theme** is understood as a route to follow by stages with its own and original characteristics, a new mode through which pathways are structured based on slow, sustainable, creative, experiential, social, accessible and responsible tourism. A circuit between different realities, aimed at increasing the visits of sites and areas with lower affluence.

The Smart Ways model is addressed to the **territories** members of the Phoenicians' Route. Starting from the members of the Cultural Route, the proposal is extended to neighboring areas, which in turn become members of the Route until the Smart Way is created. The goal is to create a territorial quality brand.

The partners of the Smart Way are selected by the technical managers of each involved country and by the local Phoenicians' Route members involved. The criteria applied are historical, geographical and qualitative (quality standards and various certifications), sharing the CRs values, and relation to the theme of the project. External operators/stakeholders are informed through capacity building meetings, actions foreseen by European projects and communication actions. At the end of the process, the Tour Operators who are members of the Tour Operator Network of the Phoenicians' Route can build their own customized offers along the Smart Way.

c) **VIA REGIA:** travel tips VIA REGIA from Paris to Kyiv



A **journey** along the VIA REGIA promises exceptional experiences. Metropolises of European importance like Paris, Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig, Wroclaw, Krakow, Lviv, or Kyiv are situated at the road. Numerous former residences revive long gone eras with pompous castles and extended parklands. VIA REGIA developed a **route course** for individual motor tourists and published it online with points of interest (POIs) and GPS indications, as well as a brochure. The aim of the project is to provide concrete information material for individual tourists including country information, basic touristic infrastructure, information for cyclists, on regional railway, power banks for electric vehicles, camping spots, etc. as well as history and sights of the cities and villages.

In order to develop the specific targeted product, **networking activities** have involved the coordination of 79 tourism offices along the way and the collaboration with Dreamango, an online tour planner which is Europe's largest portal for planning a motorized journey.

d) **European Routes of Emperor Charles V:** Tourist Product Club of Charles V





This is a “Club of Hostelry, Handcrafts and Agro-food Excellence” intended to give visibility to **tourist products** distributed along the length of the different routes travelled by the King and Emperor Charles of Hapsburg. It seeks to integrate into the cooperation network of the European Routes of Emperor Charles V – and its European Cultural Itinerary – the whole industry of the hostelry, handcraft and agro-food production in the cities and regions through which the different routes pass.

The **companies** participating in the product club must belong to municipalities that are members of the network. It is the municipalities' own technicians who are responsible for convening and including interested companies in the project. In addition to belonging to a partner municipality of the network, they must meet the requirements specified in the manuals of each label.

When a company wants to join the **Tourist Product Club (TPC)**, a training day on the Routes of Charles V is organized, addressed to those interested in participating in the project. The whole project is centralized in the management office of the network but each of the municipalities where there are companies linked to the product club, is itself in charge of the dissemination, management and evaluation of its companies, being monitored at all times by the Management Body.

Currently, **30 private tourist enterprises** have joined the TPC and with the collaboration of the travel agency “A6 Route Travel”, they have given a real shape to the club to be marketed in the tourist world by creating three tour packages: “Extremadura, Imperial Retreat”, “The Emperor through Cantabria, discover its treasures” and “Charles V and the Rueda’s wine Route”.

#### e) **Routes of the Olive Tree:** Creation of a local "Route of the Olive Tree" Cultural Route Kythira Island (Greece), Attica Islands Region



Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



The creation of a local "Routes of the Olive Tree" Cultural Route in Kythira offers the island a new "destination identity" with multiple benefits for the entire local economy and society. The Route has a new complete and quality **tourism product** based on cultural heritage but also on traditional local products, such as olives, olive oil, honey, etc., strengthening all sectors of the economy (primary, secondary, tertiary) as well as different forms of thematic tourism.

**Local products** largely define the cultural distinctiveness of a place and help in the interaction of the Cultural Route with the local community, an important advantage for its proper functioning and success. With the integration of local products, the Cultural Route acquires greater dynamics and strengthens its special character.

This initiative is based on a three-step approach:

**Action 1:** Creation of a local action group and signing of an agreement by which its members are committed to operate in accordance with the rules of solidarity of civil society: social participation, volunteering, social dialogue for the good of their place.

**Action 2:** Establishment of a management body and implementation of the route. Preparation of a business plan with a description of ways of operation and financing of the entity.

**Action 3:** Preparation of a list of specifications by sector of companies and producers, per produced local product, etc., that will be connected to the Route. Recording of the necessary interventions for their connection (for example, improvement of spaces, accessibility, etc.). Evaluation, signing of Cooperation Protocols and Charter of Good Management, awarding a route signal.

#### f) European Route of Jewish Heritage: Online Routes Incubator 2021



The **AEPJ Incubator Project** is a 3-year program. A center for development of Jewish Heritage Routes: cultural, educational, heritage and tourism cooperation projects with a transnational importance and significance. The AEPJ Incubator serves as the tool for channeling support, training, consulting, mentoring and assistance for institutions and associations that are developing this type of projects, as well as for those who want to develop a project from scratch. It also serves as a tool

to explore possible collaborations between participants, as well as the creation of new projects in collaboration with different organizations.

In terms of **external cooperation strategies**, the AEPJ incubator works on a two-step approach. Every year, a call for applications for those interested in participating and being part of the European Route of Jewish Heritage is opened. This call is open to all types of organizations, institutions and associations, with the ability to create and operate a cross-sectional project, with different stakeholders. Projects on a local level with potential to develop regionally or nationally, as well as projects already operating on regional or national levels that wish to upgrade are also welcome. Institutions can present their route from a geographical or conceptual approach.

The second step is a **training program** for those that have been selected through the call, ensuring the endorsement of the values of the CR and also the transferring of tools and knowledge to help participants develop their projects thanks to the mentoring of the route's scientific committee members.

### 3.3 Comparing views about how to develop an external networking strategy

During the **workshop**, six homogeneous groups with members of the CRs project partners have been created and asked to work in parallel sessions, in order to highlight which are in their opinion the key elements and methods to collaborate and create partnerships between Cultural Routes and their culture and tourism ecosystems. The aim of the exercise was to involve different members of each CR in a **self-brainstorming** on this issue and to come later through a group discussion, to a shared sequence of steps they agree should be followed.

We have here reported the **results** of this exercise, with the experience and opinions of each CR, which could be replicated by other CRs while conducting capacity building for their members and while further developing their training activities.

#### Atrium

**Tailor-made presentations** for the different recipients, explaining very well who we are and what we do, because we have to be very cautious in conveying the right message and principles.

Cultural sector:

- Relationship with **cultural sector** is good but could be improved requesting bigger support in ATRIUM activities (depending on and adapting to local territories) promoting and validating the CR's activities

Tourism sector: Weak relationship at the moment. We could tackle it:

- Organizing **training courses** addressed to tour guides at local and transnational level
- Strengthening the **relationship** with the **tourist offices** and info points of our member towns

- Asking to member towns to put up **signposting** indicating the architectural heritage
- Addressing very **specific segments** of the tourism market (e.g. schools, individuals interested in architecture or dissonant heritage and memory)

### The Phoenician's Route

- Start with **Research**: Scientific Historical Investigation
- **Bottom-up** approach
- The **involvement** of local stakeholders and local communities
- **Capacity Building** meetings
- The creation of the CR product (Smart Ways based on community-based, creative, responsible, accessible, experiential tourism) and **Interpretation** Centers
- **Integration** at international level with the other Smart Ways
- **International promotion** in collaboration with TO and national/regional and local tourism authorities

### VIA REGIA

- Bottom-up approach
- **Never address tourism** and city administrations **first**
- Contact the **people** working with passion (teachers, museum directors, local historians, guides, artists, etc.)
- Create small projects at local level to **develop identity**
- Winning the **press** for your theme and create **publications**
- **Be present!** (fairs, open days, info stands at local events, etc.)
- **Group together** with the partners you want
- Create a **local working group**
- Make the **theme** so popular at location that it becomes **part of official strategies**
- For cultural stakeholders: **inspire** them, be excited, and pay them

### Route of the Emperor Charles the V

In the case of Charles V, most of the partners are municipalities and regions, which is an advantage when you think about external cooperation development. This implies special **formal agreements** with the Culture and Tourism Ministry for instance to cooperate with other routes, as the case for example of Spain (creation of a Tourism Association of Spanish Cultural Routes).

Issues to consider:





- Cultural Routes and the work of the Council of Europe are not well known (there is a lack of visibility), but one option to activate transnational networks is to benefit from the initiatives organized to foster **cooperation among certified Cultural Routes**.
- Most of the Members are **small cities** and municipalities and this is a crucial point. Small realities have much more interest and sometimes better facilities to develop activities related with the CR. When it comes to big cities it is much more difficult to work on CRs as they have many other priorities or many other products to offer, and tourists have a different behavior in these cities. It is important to find a solution for a **balanced participation** and involvement in the activities of the routes for big cities.
- As main stakeholders we have **other partners** (associations, foundations, museums), which usually focus very much on the activities of the network without the need of worrying about other cultural and tourism priorities.
- It is quite a natural activity to cooperate with the tourism and cultural sectors, but at the same time we need to tackle issues like visibility, size of partners and funding.

### Routes of the Olive Tree

- Creation of a **local action group** and signing of an **agreement** by which its members are committed to operate in accordance with the rules of solidarity of civil society: social participation, volunteering, social dialogue for the good of their place.
- Establishment of a **management body** and implementation of the route in which the cultural and tourism sector participates. Preparation of a **business plan** with a description of ways of operation and financing of the entity.
- Preparation of a list of **specifications by sector** of companies/ tourist agencies and producers, per produced local product, etc., that will be connected to the route.
- Evaluation, signing of Cooperation Protocols and Charter of Good Management, awarding a route signal.

### AEPI

- **Define** the potential **audiences**, the different elements and their needs
- **Profile** - are the visitors Jewish, are the stakeholders Jewish
- **Map** out the interests of the different stakeholders and what are their **needs** in the ecosystem
- **Managing** the objectives and **expectations** of the stakeholders (some stakeholders might have the idea to educate for example, while others might want to make profit on tourism), so need to balance these expectations
- **Standards** - create a way of setting them
- **Credibility** and how to manage the workload to be responsible and credible.
- Stakeholders may not see the **value** of being a part of the Route and involvement. It is important to present it in a way that shows why **participation** is valuable - show the opportunities and highlight the advantages of collaboration.

- **Build trust** between institutions and organizations, defining the objectives that define the relationships.
- Organizations are wary, competitive and territorial - need networks to **break down barriers** and ways to show how collaborative efforts can promote growth for all.
- **Professionalism** - training and interaction with authority bodies develop potential which are explorative and creative.
- Route managers - would be useful for them to understand the **mindset** of the **tourism** industry - and insider perspective. What are the priorities of the tour operators? Let them come in and educate route managers and vice versa.
- **Understand** each other's fields.

### 3.3.1 Lessons learned and conclusions

As a conclusion of the reflections that CR partners have shared during the different project's dynamics, the main positive and negative aspects related to working with the culture and tourism ecosystems are summarized in what follows.

#### Main positive aspects:

- Important role of participating in EU funded projects to further develop the networks.
  - *"It was a key element to make the network grow in terms of members and doing things together"* (AEPJ)
- Peer to peer learning and exchange of good practices was highly appreciated by all six Cultural Routes
  - Educational trips to exchange experiences between Cultural Routes are very useful
- More commitment from small towns than larger cities
- Schools are a great target for the cultural and tourist activities of the routes
  - For Atrium for example, it has been identified as their niche market
- Opportunity for lesser-known areas to be part of a Route, to have visibility (as highlighted by VIA REGIA and Charles V)

#### Main problems detected:

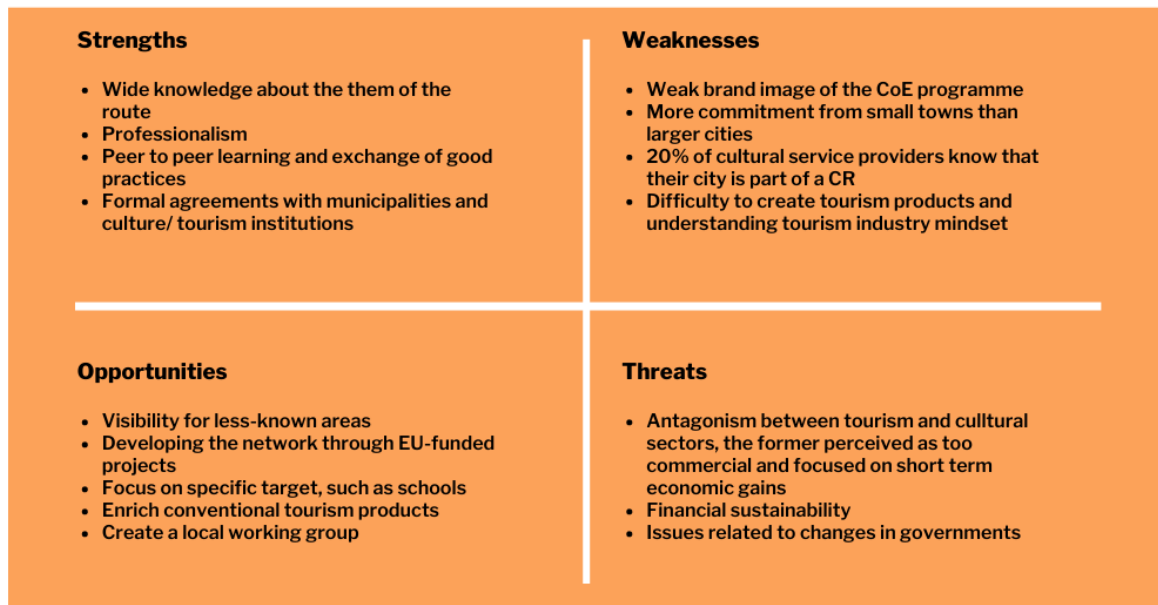
- Brand of the Council of Europe Program too weak
  - Lack of awareness about the existence of the program: 20% of cultural service providers know that their city is part of a CR
- Difficulty to create tourist products



- Antagonism between tourism and cultural sectors, the former perceived as too commercial and focused on short term economic gains
- Lack of funding for maintenance and promotion.
  - Financial sustainability of CRs is an issue, most rely on volunteers or personnel which is paid for other institutions
- Lack of appreciation of the potential of CR for regional development, also because they do not know the program.
  - Training for regional policy makers is needed
- Governance: overcoming differences in legal frameworks and policy mandates between all levels of governance responsible for the territories concerned by the route
  - Issues related to changes in governments (Atrium reported this)
- Stakeholders' engagement is challenging
- Language issues, being members from different countries
- Communication issues between the Managing Body of the Route and the members
- CR have different members. For example, Atrium does not have any private members
- Training needs: some of the areas recognized by the Managing Body of the Route were marketing and tourism, digitalization, good practices from other routes in heritage management, tourism product development, event management, communication, digital tools, heritage interpretation
- Creating some common quality standards: this is a contested terrain, since some networks are in favor of standardization (such as Phoenician's Route, AEPJ) while some are not (such as VIA REGIA)
- Monitoring the impact of CRs is difficult, due to lack of competences, lack of budget, number of destinations, among others.



## SWOT Analysis



### 3.4 Recommendations to better integrate Cultural Routes in their culture and tourism ecosystems

Taking into consideration the input received regarding the main challenges and opportunities Cultural Routes face in terms of **partnership development** during the interviews to the Managing Body of the Route and the workshop performed with representatives from the CRs, as well as the best practices shared by each CR, in this section the core of the model strategy is proposed, which can assist Cultural Routes to better collaborate with the cultural and tourism sectors.

#### 3.4.1 The 'I-CEE' (Identifying, Connecting, Engaging, and Enabling) Stakeholder Engagement Approach

To design the collaboration strategy, it was deemed useful to capitalize on the experience gained through past and current EU funded projects. In particular, the **I-CEE approach** was employed, which stands for: Identifying, Connecting, Engaging and Enabling stakeholder's engagement. The purpose of this 4-stage methodology is to take a structured and systematic approach to stakeholder's involvement, which it is deemed fundamental to generate effective partnerships.

This methodology has been developed in the framework of the Ruritage project<sup>9</sup>, a Horizon 2020 project that deals with the regeneration of rural areas through cultural and natural heritage valorization. Their methodology in turn was built from the notions of the **BiodivERsA Stakeholder**

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ruritage.eu/>

**Engagement Handbook<sup>10</sup>**. In this case, we are adapting the methodology to the specific needs of Cultural Routes' networks, to engage culture and tourism stakeholders.

The **four stages** of the methodology are complemented with examples from best practices from Cultural Routes, both partners and non-partners of the Fab Routes project.

In what follows, these four stages will be explained and they are briefly illustrated in Figure 3.A.

### I-CEE approach adapted to Cultural Routes

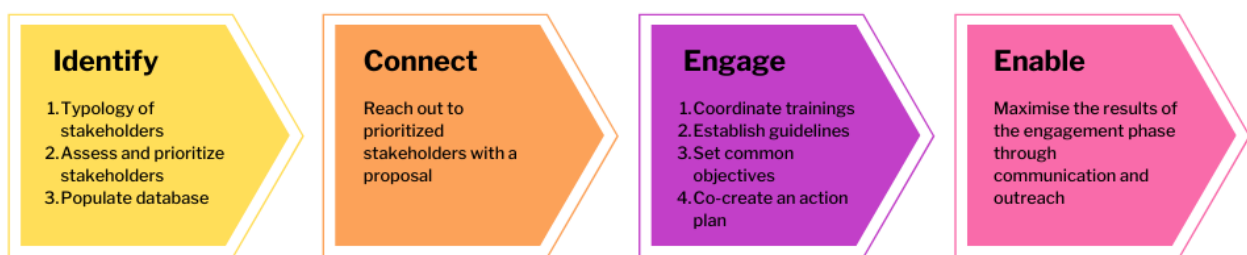


Figure 3.A

#### 3.4.2 Four stages of the I-CEE Methodology

The I-CEE methodology proposes **4 stages** to effectively identify and engage stakeholders in a structured and systematic way. Each of the four stages has been adapted to the needs of cultural routes members in order to involve relevant stakeholders with whom they could partner and cooperate.

The **first stage** related to stakeholders' identification is given substantial importance, as it allows a correct understanding, assessment and prioritizing of the relevant stakeholders, and facilitates the following stages of connecting and engaging with them, as well as enabling ongoing cooperation after the partnership has been established.

##### Stage 1: Identify

This stage in turn is composed of 3 parts: developing a typology of stakeholders, assessing and prioritizing stakeholders to contact and finally, populating the database.

**a) Typology of stakeholders:** Before starting the process of stakeholder mapping, it is deemed useful to establish the typology of stakeholders we are interested in. In the case of Cultural Routes

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.biodiversa.org/702>

and in line with their five priority fields of actions, the type of stakeholders to involve are the following (also briefly represented in Figure B)

### Typologies of stakeholders to involve



Figure 3.B

**Tourism sector (public and private):** The tourism sector is one of the core group of stakeholders to involve and it is a very broad one, formed by private and public actors. Through partnering with these stakeholders, Cultural Routes will be able to co-create new cultural tourism products with them, identify potential target audiences, promote the new products in relation with the routes, etc.

These stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

Private sector:

- Tour Operators/ travel agencies (both at local and international level)
- Hotels and other accommodation providers
- Local Tourist Guides
- Restaurants and Cafes
- Transport companies
- Sharing economy: Airbnb, etc.
- Associations/ existing networks (Chamber of Tourism, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- Related services: local farmers/ agritourism

Public sector:

- Local, regional and national public authorities and policymakers in tourism management
- Tourist Information offices

Public-Private:

- Local Action Groups (LAGs)
- Destination Management Organizations (DMO) and Destination Management Companies (DMC)

**Cultural and creative industries value chain:** Many of these stakeholders naturally collaborate with Cultural Routes. They are important partners since they make possible the integration of their cultural offer within the theme of the Cultural Route, as well as the co-creation of innovative initiatives in the field of the visual arts, the performing arts, creative crafts, architecture, music, literature or any other form of cultural expression. They also provide the opportunity to reach new target audiences through cultural tourism offer.

These stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Museums, Libraries
- Theatres and Cinema
- Handicrafts/ Artisans
- Protected monuments and architecture
- Festivals and events
- Archaeological sites
- Eco-museums<sup>11</sup>: this mode of cultural heritage management has gained attention lately and has been highlighted by some of the Fab Routes partners during the workshops as an effective way to promote the cultural heritage related to a Cultural Route.
- Natural heritage sites
- Local, regional and national public authorities and policymakers in culture heritage

**Educational institutions:** This includes all institutions related to education, training, research and capacity building activities. They are an important target for Cultural Routes, through the delivery of educational programs for schools, as well as contributing to one of their priority fields of action

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<sup>11</sup> For more information there is an active Erasmus+ project called EcoHeritage <https://ecoheritage.eu/>

“cooperation in research and development” as well as “cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans”.

Research institutions interested in the fields of tourism management, marketing, cultural heritage interpretation and promotion, among others, can assist Cultural Routes members to build their cultural tourism offer, gaining knowledge about the market through research projects, incorporating internship programs with Universities, etc.

These stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Primary and secondary schools
- Universities and research centers carrying out research on relevant topics for the Cultural Route (economics, innovative governance, sustainable planning, cultural and historical studies, arts, social sciences, architecture, marketing and tourism, local development)

**General Public:** These actors are generally going to be informed about the activities of the Cultural Routes and will be able to get involved in organizing activities, as well as benefiting from the cultural offer of the Cultural Routes. In fact, the awareness raising and promotion of the common European heritage, both physical and intangible, as well as the need to protect it and enhance it, is one of the main aims of the Cultural Route program.

These stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Civil society associations (NGOs working in the cultural sector and local development)
- Private investors (i.e. foundations) that could financially support the activities of Cultural Routes members.
- Local communities at large
- Local press and media (newspaper, radio and TV)
- **Other Cultural Routes:** Getting in contact with other Cultural Routes of the CoE can be very beneficial, to engage in common initiatives, share best practices and learn from peer-to-peer exchange.

Besides certified Cultural Routes of the CoE, it can be enriching to establish relationships with other routes and paths in the respective regions and countries, so as to learn from other experiences in culture and tourism management along these paths.

**b) Assessment of stakeholders:** Assess and prioritize stakeholders (according to their importance and influence over the Route).

With the purpose of assisting Cultural Routes members to reflect on the stakeholders to involve for each of the typologies identified, some useful methods are outlined in the box below.

**Useful methods to identify relevant stakeholders include:**

- Brainstorming with other organizations/Cultural Routes that have been involved in similar activities or those working in similar locations.
- Consulting with colleagues to share knowledge about who may have an interest in the Route.
- Developing a 'mind map' that can be used to identify suitable stakeholders; assessing secondary data (e.g. historical records, media articles).
- Initiating self-selection by promoting the engagement process and encouraging individuals with an interest to come forward.
- Using 'snowball sampling' technique, whereby one stakeholder identifies further stakeholders until no additional new stakeholders are identified.
- Utilizing existing lists of organizations in order to identify specific groups, networks and agencies who represent relevant elements of society.
- Consulting with forums used by government and other organizations (e.g. local authorities, town councils, emergency services etc.).

*Source: Adapted from BiodivERsA Handbook of Stakeholder Engagement (p.37)*

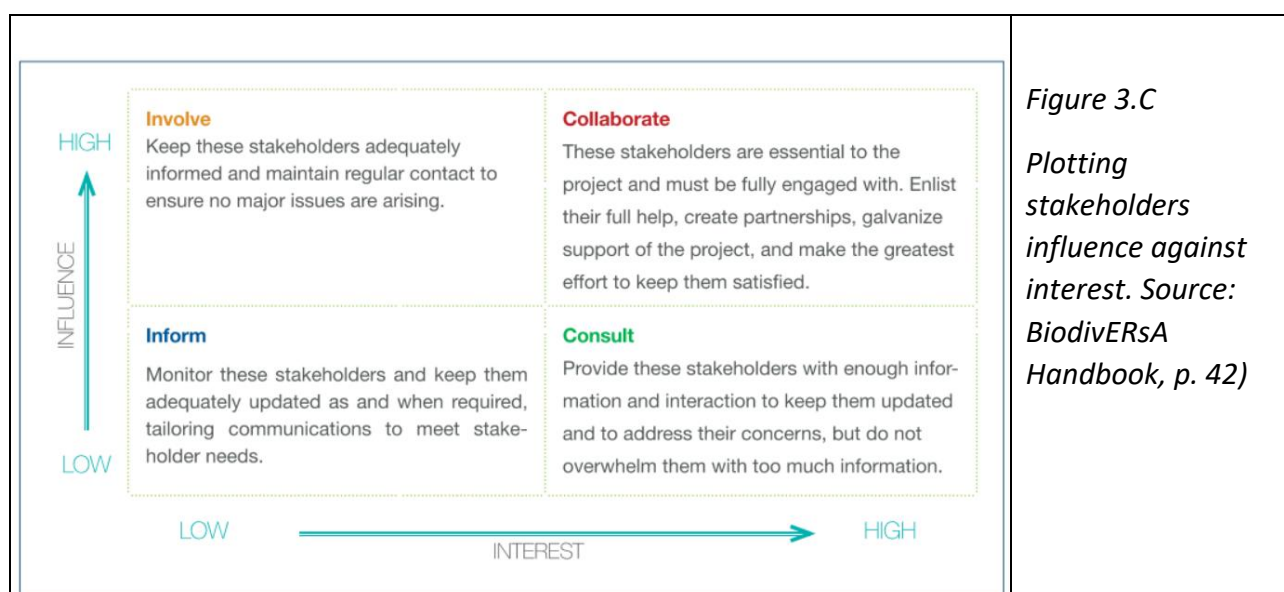
When identifying stakeholders, you can use the template provided in **Table 3.1**, to clearly identify their needs, expectations and how they will benefit from being a partner of the Cultural Route.

This is very important as stakeholders will only show interest if they can see concrete benefits from a potential partnership. The categories of this template have also been included in the Excel sheet database which will be introduced in the next step.

Stakeholder	Category (e.g. NGO, general public, government, etc.)	Reasons to involve the stakeholder(s)	Why the stakeholder may want to be involved (benefits)
Example: Tour Operator	Private sector business	Co-create tourism products related to the theme of the Cultural Route	Opportunity to develop innovative tourism products to attract their current and potential audiences

**Table 3.1 Stakeholder Categorization. Source: BiodivERsA Stakeholder Engagement Handbook**

Consecutively, a series of **leading questions** can help in this task to classify stakeholders into who should be “informed”, “consulted”, “involved”, and who should “collaborate actively” (see Figure 3.C). The matrix allows Cultural Routes to assess the level of interest of the stakeholder in the theme and activities of the route, as well as their level of influence on the topic.



Finally, **Table 3.2** can be used to classify stakeholders according to their level of engagement (Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate). These categories have also been included in the Excel sheet database that will be introduced in the next paragraph.

Stakeholder (by sector)	Contact/position	Roles and interests	Level of Engagement (Collaborate, Involve, Consult, Inform)

**Table 3.2 Further categorization of stakeholders. Source: adapted from BiodivERSA Handbook**

**c) Database of stakeholders:** Once you have identified, assessed and prioritized the type of stakeholders to connect with, you can start the actual process of populating the database where you will collect all the relevant information of each stakeholder.



It is paramount that the **stakeholder mapping process** is done in a structured and systematic way. This database can be a living document, which is constantly updated by the Cultural Route members.

A **database template** including relevant categories of information is included in the Toolkit as a separate Data Sheet (Excel form) with instructions, to be used by Cultural Routes members to identify their stakeholders. Categories of information included in the database have been mainly adapted from the Ruritage project (Deliverable 3.1), BiodivERsA Stakeholder Engagement Handbook and the authors' own experience.

As previously mentioned, the database includes some of the aspects that were addressed in the previous steps (why to involve the stakeholders, what are the benefits for them, which is their level of interest and influence on the Cultural Route, etc.).

When populating the database take into consideration:

- **Research:** Get to know the stakeholders working in the cultural and tourist sectors in your city/ town.
- Map the **most relevant stakeholders** with whom you would like to work using the provided database template.
- Try to **identify local multipliers** and **“local leaders”**: these are stakeholders that have the potential to reach other possible partners. These could be associations with several members, existing networks, etc.

## Stage 2: Connect

This phase involves contacting the previously **identified stakeholders**, to inform them about the route, objectives, activities. The aim is to make them aware about the existence of the route in their city/ region and explore potential synergies to work together to enhance sustainable cultural tourism.

Connecting with stakeholders will be a much simpler process now that you have clearly identified the **benefits** for each party involved. You will spend time more efficiently since you know the partnership could be a good fit for the organization's aims.

Some steps to connect with stakeholders include:

- **Prioritize** contacting those stakeholders that can actively collaborate with your activities. Remember to prioritize those “local multipliers” and “local leaders” since they have the potential to help you reach many more key stakeholders.
- Prepare a short, **2-page document** or presentation about the route, ways of getting involved, benefits for them and expectations from the partnership in the local language. Try to list the potential benefits for each partner (this could include visibility, joint promotion, applying for funding together, prestige, etc.)

- **Reach out to stakeholders through existing actors and channels:** Consider if the stakeholders are already members of the Cultural Route or they are connected with current members, to reach out through them. Knowing your local context, consider if an introductory email with the 2-page document will be the best way to initiate contact, or if a phone call or introduction through a common contact will be more efficient.
- Consider the role of **social media networks** to contact potential partners. If you use LinkedIn with a personal or institutional account, you can build a professional network that could translate in potential partners of the Cultural Route. Other networks such as Facebook specific groups could help you reach stakeholders interested in the theme of the route.
- Make a **proposal for collaboration**, based on the mutually beneficial relationship identified before.

#### **DECRA (Developing European Cultural Routes for All) - Network development**

DECRA is an Erasmus+ project that had long-term development of European networks as one of their key discussion topics.

Working as a network is one of the most complex forms of organization. It is possible to approach them through two concepts: their means and their contents. The means are the implemented channels of transmission, whereas the contents are at the same time the information that circulates, the relationships that are built among stakeholders and users and the resources that are interexchanged. Managing organizational networks is a challenge, but also a unique opportunity to increase the social capital or relational capital as a basis for co-creation within network organization.

As part of the project, managers from 12 Cultural Routes of the CoE shared their experiences and challenges managing different types of networks.

You can learn more by watching the videos available at this link:  
<http://www.decraproject.eu/index.php/network-development>

### **Stage 3: Engage**

Once the prioritized stakeholders have been contacted, it is necessary to **engage** them in the Cultural Route activities, so that a fruitful collaboration can begin.

There are a number of reasons why stakeholders may want to engage in the activities of the Cultural Routes network (see Table 3.3 for some examples).

#### Reasons for stakeholder engagement:

- Raise awareness of the Cultural Route and in general about the charters, conventions and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS
- Provide a clearer understanding of the aims and activities of the Cultural Route
- Form new partnerships at local/ regional level, incorporate new members
- Encourage a sense of “ownership” of the project by those likely to participate in it or benefit from it (local inhabitants)
- Provide members of the Cultural Route with an opportunity for personal and career development through engagement activities with new partners
- Explore issues, share best practices, generate ideas and identify and raise better awareness of emerging issues
- Co-design projects with stakeholders that may assist with producing a clearer definition of desired outcomes
- Gain access to new resources or obtain information data
- Create new (or improved) communication channels, identify effective dissemination and promotion avenues for your initiatives

**Table 3.3 Source: adapted from BiodivERSA Stakeholder Engagement Handbook**

### 3.4.3 Engagement methods

In this section we propose some activities, which can be adapted by members of the Cultural Routes, using all or some of them. The proposed **activities** are based on the ideas and suggestions that were brought forward by the members of the Cultural Routes (partners of Fab Routes) during the workshops, interviews to Managing Body of the Route and best practices shared by each partner.

#### 1. Form a Culture and Tourism Cluster (CTC)

This could be a **working group** working at local level, acting as a kind of “living lab or hub” in which issues and opportunities are regularly discussed, ideas are tested and partnerships are developed.

#### 2. Conduct trainings/ educational events to tourism services and cultural providers

It was highlighted in the Fab Routes workshops that Cultural Route members need to understand the tourism industry mindset and vice versa, therefore **peer learning activities** such as “walkshops”,

seminars, events and working groups could provide this opportunity for mutual understanding and bring both sectors closer.

Different **events** could cater for different targets: tour operators, cultural operators, public authorities, schools and universities, local residents, responding to these group's needs.

The communication codes between tourism and cultural sectors are different, therefore the five **priority fields of action** of Cultural Routes can serve as a means to bridge the two sectors and ensure multiplier effect in terms of cultural, natural and social development, becoming a tool for territorial regeneration.

In the case you have formed a **Culture and Tourism Cluster (CTC)**, you could use it as the physical space where to conduct these events. This could be the office of one of the Route's members.

Make wise use of **social media channels**, your **website** and **newsletters** to raise awareness of these activities and promote these events to different targets. More information on these channels will be provided in the following chapter.

Besides organizing these events, Cultural Routes members can take part in events at local, regional, national and transnational events organized by some of the identified stakeholders, as these are also valuable networking and partnership-building opportunities. As it was mentioned by several Fab Routes partners, participating in **EU funded projects** with transnational partnerships has been a major opportunity to enlarge their network of members and partners.

### 3. Establish attributes, roles and guidelines to work with stakeholders

The need to establish **common quality standards** for Cultural Routes networks has been brought forward by some Fab Routes partners such as the Phoenician's Routes and AEPJ, however this was a contested terrain among partners, such as VIA REGIA, since it is deemed difficult to implement common standards for routes with such different contexts.

Nevertheless, in order to better work with culture and especially tourism stakeholders, certain requirements or **guidelines** could be established, so that Cultural Routes make sure these providers share their values and respect common rules to work with them.

For instance, it was highlighted by the Routes of the Olive Tree that they experienced difficulties working with large **tour operators** that do not share their values, but they have founded more synergies with young tourism entrepreneurs who often are more socially and environmentally conscious.

#### **RUTAS program – Codespa Foundation**

Codespa is a Spanish non-profit organization working in the international cooperation sector, which has developed a methodology to strengthen community-based tourism initiatives in South America. The program is called RUTAS, has involved indigenous communities from Bolivia, Peru

and Ecuador and consisted of 3 components: 1) Tourism competitiveness through establishing quality standards of the tourism offer, 2) Sustainable Commercialization, through capacity building to T.O. and securing partnerships with them, 3) Public-Private-Community partnerships to make sure community-based tourism was integrated with the destination wider development strategy.

By working with several tour operators, from large, established companies to smaller, younger ones, they found that usually those newer companies, with a younger clientele, being professionals, volunteers or students, were the ones keener to try the tourism offer of indigenous communities, than those with an established portfolio of clients.

This serves to reinforce the importance of matching the right product with the right market, as well as considering the quality of the tourism offer. It can be useful for Cultural Routes when looking to generate partnerships with the right travel partners, taking into consideration the aims and values Cultural Routes and tourism providers share.

For more information, please visit <https://www.codespa.org/aprende/publicaciones/>

#### 4. Establish incentives and rewards

As discussed earlier in this chapter, **clear expectations** have to be set for each party. The short and long term value of the partnership has to become evident for both parties and the “why” question should have been answered in Stage 1.

For **tourism providers**, these incentives could include diversifying their tourism offer, reaching new target audiences, promoting shared values on cultural and natural heritage protection, etc.

Another incentive arising from partnering with a Cultural Route could be to apply for **funding** together, through public-private partnerships or being part of the consortium of an EU funded project. Through this type of partnerships, each party gain access to funding to implement common goals, acquire new skills and share resources.

#### Cultural Routes Annual Awards

Awards are important incentives that allow culture and tourism providers to gain visibility by being partners or members of a Cultural Route.

For example, the European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN) organizes every year the ECTN Awards “Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism” with one of the awarded themes being “Transnational Thematic Tourism Products, including European Cultural Routes”. Every year there is an overall theme, and for 2021 it was “Regenerating European Tourism through culture, heritage and creativity”.

Furthermore, Iter Vitis, a certified Cultural Route of the CoE related to the landscape of wine regions, launched in 2018 the Iter Vitis Award to support local initiatives, valorise a territory and

highlight wine heritage in each member country. The contest involved all the countries member of Iter Vitis that were divided into two categories: private and public bodies presenting activities related with wine tourism and wine heritage safeguard and promotion.

For more information, please visit <https://www.culturaltourism-network.eu/> and <https://itervitis.eu/iter-vitis-les-chemins-de-la-vigne/>

## 5. Sign a Partnership Agreement (or establish informal cooperation)

Signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) is the next natural step to develop a formal partnership. In the **agreement**, the main objectives of the partnership are outlined, as well as the commitments, roles and responsibilities of each party involved. The partners can decide for how long the agreement will remain active and any other conditions or obligations of the parties.

While a **formal agreement** might work for some Cultural Route members, for smaller members an informal or “**tacit**” **agreement** might work well, based on mutual knowledge of the parties, with no need to formalize the commitments.

### Examples of Agreements to enhance cooperation

The Phoenicians’ Route has established a number of agreements, being with public actors, (such as municipalities), tourism actors (such as tour operators), cultural actors (such as museums) as well as being involved in a number of international networks (including the International Social Tourism Organization – ISTO). They showcase these agreements on a specific section of their website. For more information, please visit <https://fenici.net/en/>

On the other hand, the Network of European Routes of Emperor Charles V has joined the recently constituted Spanish National Association of Cultural Routes, which brings together Cultural Routes in the country to jointly promote Cultural Routes along these 5 Routes. For more information, please visit <https://www.spainculturalroutes.com/en/>

## 6. Draft a common Action Plan

Following the formal agreement through an MoU or MoA, an **action plan** need to be defined in order to put in practice the commitments outlined in the agreement. Here, the key activities and timeline for action will be arranged, as well the responsibilities and roles.

The specific activities of the action plan will depend on the objectives of the agreement signed, but they could include:

- Co-creation of cultural tourism products
- Definition of new target audiences

- Organization of fam trips to experience the cultural tourism offer for Tour Operators
- Implementation of a mobile application or platform to promote the new tourism products
- Among others

#### **Cult-RinG Project – Development of Action Plans**

The overall objective of the Cult-RinG project was to highlight the value of investments in European Cultural Routes, in terms of their contribution to Growth and Jobs, with capitalization of good practices, policy learning, policy implementation, development of new Cultural Routes, monitoring and capacity building.

Main outputs were action plans on CR development and upgrading, with implementation and monitoring of improved policy instruments in 6 regions, communication and dissemination tools for policy learning and capacity building, contribution to EU policies and EU2020 targets.

The beneficiaries were regional authorities looking for capturing the benefits of CRs, both existing ones with greater visibility and new ones, NGOs, European Networks, EU institutions, international organizations and stakeholders.

For more information and examples of the action plans developed within the project, please visit <https://www.interregeurope.eu/cult-ring/library/>

#### **Explore HANSA Project – Creation of new tourism products**

HANSA (standing for Hanseatic Approach to New Sustainable Alliances), is a Swedish-Estonian-Latvian cooperation project belonging to the Interreg A Central Baltic program, with 11 partners, mostly Hanseatic cities. Partners collaborated to develop new transnational tourism products aimed at enhancing the values of the historical Hanseatic League and making it a leading brand of the Baltic Sea Region.

The project has produced a number of tourism products, from tours (new trekking and biking routes), a culinary guide and label (“Hansa Culinary”), to brochures and promotional actions through a mobile app and participation in fairs and events.

Changes due to the project are envisaged on cross-border tourism packages and the lengthening of the tourism season for Hanseatic destinations.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.hanse.org/en/projects/explore-hansa/hansa-tourism-offers/>

#### **World Heritage Journeys in the European Union**

The platform World Heritage Journeys has been created in partnership between UNESCO and National Geographic to promote tourism routes in world heritage sites. The platform offers



unique and authentic travel experiences, recommended by local experts and curated by National Geographic.

The platform is divided into 4 themes: Ancient Europe, Romantic Europe, Royal Europe and Underground Europe, each one with suggested routes and the possibility of customizing their own itinerary and book it by contacting the right partner.

It is an initiative of the European Union and was made possible by a Preparatory Action grant to UNESCO from the European Commission, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SME (DG GROW).

For more information, please visit <https://visitworldheritage.com/>

### Other examples of Best Practices from Cultural Routes of the CoE

There are many more examples of best practices from certified Cultural Routes which can be found in the Database from the Council of Europe, following this link: <https://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes-and-regional-development/best-practices>.

Moreover, the latest report from the activity of Cultural Routes of the CoE in 2021, prepared by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, includes several examples of best practices on cultural tourism and all five priorities fields of action. More information can be found in this link: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/publications>.

Finally, as part of Fab Routes project, a **repository of best practices** has been created with the initiatives submitted by project partners and can be found as part of this Toolkit.

### Stage 4: Enable

The last of the 4 stages is related to maximizing the **results** of the engagement process with stakeholders through communication and dissemination of the activities carried out.

To this end, the social media and communication channels will play an important role and this will be further expanded in the next chapter, specifically dedicated to communication.

Other activities to communicate and disseminate joint activities could include:

- Carry out ongoing co-marketing activities, promoting what each of the partners are doing through their respective channels
- Dissemination of the results of the partnership and common projects
- Organize joint events or conferences
- Participate in fairs, conferences and events to disseminate results and continue developing new partnerships



## 4. Communication Strategies for European Cultural Routes

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Why is it so important to properly use digital media? Because for cultural institutions it is a great opportunity to reach and engage other people. In this way, the audiences will be able to interact directly with the Cultural Routes teams.

Communication strategies and technologies will help increasing your organization identity and will gradually involve all stakeholders to maximize co-created value: audiences, employees, partners, sponsors, inhabitants, institutions, commercial actors, all will work together to reach the same purposes.

Another interesting point of view is that the complex nature of these institutions makes it hard to collect statistical data about the tourists who choose to follow these paths but, right now, social networks and websites can provide these kinds of information through the “Insights” feature.

Therefore, the objective of this section is to help Cultural Routes design and implement the strategies to improve their communication management.

In this chapter, the CAST’s team will:

- share a methodology to create an **Audience Engagement Strategy**,
- present the results of a **research** which analyses the Cultural Routes communication management,
- give some **guidelines** and recommendations to improve it, learning from each other’s best practices.

### 4.1 Methodology

In this section we suggest the methodology designed by Jasper Visser & Jim Richardson “DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURE, HERITAGE AND THE ARTS” to develop a good **Audience Engagement Strategy**. This model is essential to decide strategies, processes and technologies to engage all stakeholders.

Before starting to design your framework it is very important to collect information and data about your organization’s communication management and tools. Ask the right questions to the right persons to understand:

- **strategies** already put in place by your organization,
- **audiences** which are already interested or potentially interested in your organization activities,
- **channels** that are already used,
- **budget**: does your organization have any budget for the field?

Digital Engagement process is a collaborative work, therefore it is very important to spend time on the foundation of your strategy and be sure that your colleagues and stakeholders are with you in this process. How? Show them the urgency to change, what can be the benefits of this new working methodology. Everyone should feel involved in this strategy to make a common effort and achieve the objectives.

#### 4.1.1 Digital Engagement Framework

If you interviewed your colleagues and collected all the data, you already have the fundamentals to start your Digital Engagement Framework. The model, as you can see from the Figure 4.A below, presents four main building blocks which contain four main topics.

There is not just one way to work on this framework but it is better to start from the top: the organizational basis (Figure 4.A) which is composed of objectives, vision and trends (Figure 4.B).

##### Digital Engagement Framework



Figure 4.A

## Digital Engagement Framework

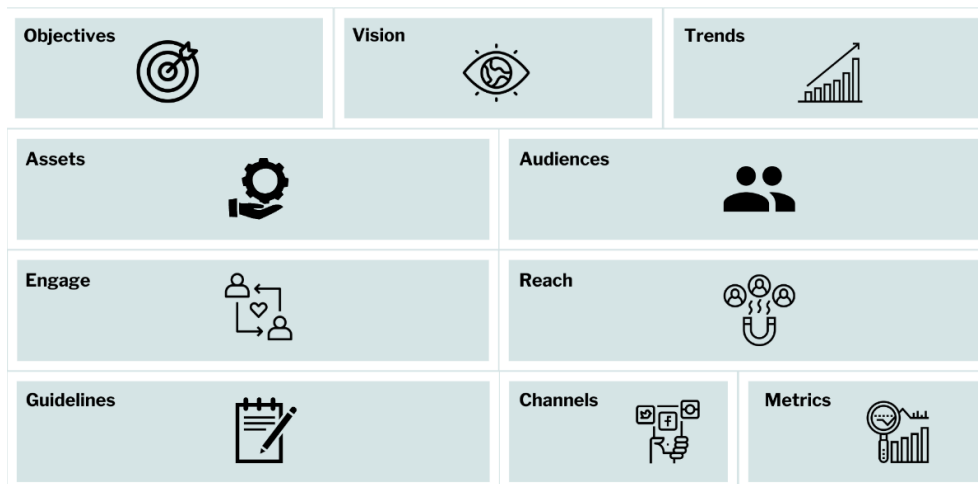


Figure 4.B

### 4.1.2 The organizational basis - Objectives, Vision, Trends

Every good strategy starts from these three elements which form the core: by filling these fields you will already get the direction for the other blocks. Objectives and vision are normally an internal decision of your organization.

A good **vision** for your digital engagement strategy should start from the vision that your organization probably already has, and then should explain what you want to achieve by developing digital strategies in a better future (3-5 years ahead).

While the vision is a bold statement for the far future, the **objectives** should be more specific and related in the short term.

They should be SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Assignable
- Realistic
- Time-related

The SMART acronym tool was designed in 1981 by George T. Doran and it will help you to set objectives in an effective and productive manner.

Good examples of SMART objectives are:

- Open a new website in the next six months,
- Stimulate 20 positive reviews online per month,
- Add 5 new contacts from interested people to the newsletter per month.

The last part of the organizational basis are **trends**: each trend poses either a challenge or an opportunity for your organization, and very often both. If you are facing a challenge, try to find a corresponding opportunity to turn it into something good for your organization<sup>12</sup>.

Trying to keep up with new trends is a full-time job and it requires people who can follow related blogs, attend thematic conferences but also look through competitors' websites and social networks. Luckily, new technologies offer different **tools** to understand trends and even to predict the new ones like:

**Exploding Topics** - English site which allows you to explore different sectors presenting American trends and giving some information about them. In the U.S.A. trends often explode before than the rest of the world and that is why it can be good for your strategy to look at this website.

**Google Trends** – helps you understand what people are looking for when they do a research on Google. If you do a research for keywords, it will show you the amount of people who did this research in a place, in a limited period of time that of course you can decide.

#### 4.1.3 Assets and Audiences

This part of the strategy should be very clear because it defines the identity of your organization. In fact, in this block, you should explain what you can offer (assets) and who are the people who might be interested in it (audiences).

**Assets** are both tangible and intangible, they are the reason why people choose you instead of another organization: quality tourism and cultural services, variety of events, friendly staff, etc.

If you have any doubt about what your assets are, you can ask your audiences to create a survey to spread on social networks. You will be surprised about how much interesting information you can get.

The assets will make the difference on your online communication and most of them can be transformed into **content for your digital media**.

**Audiences** are the reason why you are creating this strategy. You need to divide the people you have already reached through your digital communication and those you have not. After you have made your list, we suggest you try understanding their needs, if they are already part of other online communities and if they have related interests and values.

There are a few tricks to understand your audiences:

- Read your online **reviews** on social networks, check out positive reviews but also complaints.
- Use your **website's statistics**, who are the targets interested in your website?
- Check your **competitors' social networks** and focus on the demographics or their followers who one day might be one of your targets.

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<sup>12</sup> Digital Engagement in Culture, Heritage and the Arts, Jasper Visser & Jim Richardson (p.20)

- Realize a **short questionnaire** to install on your website to ask why people are visiting your website: in this way you can collect their data and answers.
- Use **keywords free tools** to understand how popular you are online, for instance Google Trends, Uber Suggest and Answer the Public.
- There are some **management services** like Kred which helps you to get an insight into your social media status.
- Read your Facebook and Instagram **Audience Insight** through Facebook Business Manager.

#### 4.1.4 Engagement Strategies - Reach and Engage

Reach and engagement describe how your digital engagement strategy connects your assets with your audiences in order to achieve your bold vision of the future <sup>13</sup>. However, while reach works in order to create connections with new audiences, engagement makes stronger existing relationships.

Your first objective in this phase should be to reach your audiences and try to make them interested in your activities. Once you gain their interest it is time to involve and activate them: in this way your audience will be an active part of your strategy to co-create more value (Figure 4.C).

### Conversion

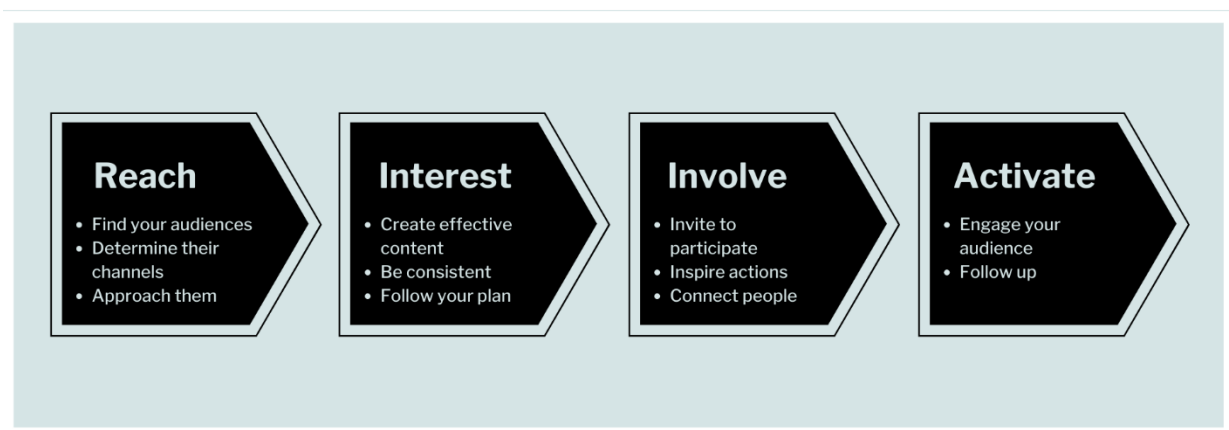


Figure 4.C

**Assets, Audiences and Engagement** have a strong connection: your digital content should be the translation of your assets, they should keep a high quality and be punctual with the publication time. Moreover, your content should aim to connect you with an online community, offering something worthwhile and valuable for them. Something worthwhile means content who helps them achieve a goal, or answers their interests or their problems.

Your audiences should have a reason to visit your digital media regularly and you can do that just with high quality content (texts written in their tone of voice, beautiful pictures and well edited videos).

<sup>13</sup> Digital Engagement in culture, Heritage and the Arts, Jasper Visser & Jim Richardson, p.29

After you have sparked their interest, it is time to invite people to participate, challenging them through provoking content, opening discussions about common topics. Very often it happens that some individuals of your public become enthusiastic fans of your organization and start sharing your content online.

Just building a valuable relationship you can make your audiences active and this means they might buy a ticket, apply to a membership program, make reviews, invite their friends, etc.

#### 4.1.5 Metrics, Guidelines and Channels

This is the last part of your Digital Engagement Framework and explains what you will do through your strategy.

In the field **Guidelines** you need to write simple rules of your organization, regarding your online activities, that your colleagues can easily put in practice.

The guidelines help avoiding mistakes, define who does what, help to choose the right content, establish the tone of voice.

**Metrics** are fundamentals to monitor your progress and to know if your strategy is working or not. The important thing to understand is that you will not need all the metrics but just the ones that:

- are related to your objectives: each objective has at least one metric,
- monitor your audiences' engagement,
- measure the impact of your digital strategy.

There are two kinds of metrics: quantitative and qualitative. We suggest you not to focus on the **quantitative metrics** (numbers of visitors, visits, page views, time per visit, fans, followers, mentions, likes, etc.) because they are easily measurable but they are not indicative of your strategy effectiveness. In fact, for a cultural institution, **qualitative metrics** are much more interesting: conversion rates, click through on newsletters, percentage of people who stayed at least 5 minutes on your website, reviews, audiences' feedback and satisfaction.

What matters is not showing the improvement of your quantitative metrics but the metrics that make sense with respect to the objectives of your digital activities.

#### 4.1.6 Channels and Content

Choosing the right content for the right channel is the last step to do for your digital engagement strategy. **Channels** are all the digital media that you decide to use for your strategy. Be careful, it is extremely important that you have a real reason to open and activate a new channel. If you cannot find any, you shouldn't open it.

Remember that every channel has its own characteristics and takes a good amount of time and resources to keep up. Therefore, we suggest that you have a limited number of channels that are related to what digital media your audiences are using.

Table 4.1 can help you decide which channels to use.

Channels	Objective	Audience	Content
<b>Website   Mobile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People interested in your organization and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations' description</li> <li>News</li> </ul>
<b>Website blog</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present projects, research, articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat visitors</li> <li>People interested in your projects, research, articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articles</li> <li>Research</li> <li>Projects</li> </ul>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform loyal audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loyal audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Events</li> <li>News</li> </ul>
<b>Whatsapp Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform loyal audience and also new audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loyal audience</li> <li>New audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information</li> <li>Events</li> <li>News</li> </ul>
<b>Facebook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share your projects, news, information with creativity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photos - graphics</li> <li>Middle size textes</li> <li>Articles</li> </ul>
<b>Chatbot - Fb Messenger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connected with your FB page, answer at the most common questions of your audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information</li> </ul>
<b>Instagram</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Let young people know what is your organization and what are you doing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photos - graphics</li> <li>Short textes</li> <li>Contests</li> </ul>
<b>You Tube</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share video interviews, webinars, documentaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loyal audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video Interviews</li> <li>Webinars</li> <li>Documentaries</li> </ul>
<b>Twitter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform general audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short textes</li> <li>Links</li> </ul>
<b>Tik Tok</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share tourism and art information in a funny way and meet new generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short Videos</li> </ul>
<b>Linkedin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform professionals about your activities and research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articles</li> <li>Research</li> <li>Projects</li> </ul>
<b>Spotify</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delight and your audience with historical music</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historical music playlist</li> <li>Traditional music playlist</li> </ul>

Table 4.1

Finally, to organize your content you need to create a **content plan**.

The plan should contain:

- content you already have,
- content that can be created from existing content,
- new content.

A good idea is to brainstorm with your team and fill an excel sheet with a “to do list”, planning also who does what.

Now, you have all the elements you need to complete your Digital Engagement Framework (Table 4.2). Good luck!

## Digital Engagement Framework

Objectives	Vision	Trends
Assets	Audiences	
Engage	Reach	
Guidelines	Channels	Metrics

Table 4.2

### 4.2 Our research on the Cultural Routes' communication strategies

This research was developed between December 2020 and January 2021. We wanted to understand how these organizations approached digital challenges, what best practice looks like and the opportunities for the tourism and cultural sector to develop its use of technology in meaningful ways.

In producing this report, we have consulted a wide variety of individuals and experts. We would like to thank the representatives of the Cultural Routes who collaborated with us, for being generous with their time and input.

In particular, the interviews to the **Managing Bodies of the Cultural Routes**, which were carried out between November and December 2020, provided us with a large amount of information which was fundamental to build this chapter. Each interview lasted about 120 minutes and through lead questions we were able to extrapolate targets, budget and the actual use of Cultural Routes' digital media.

Something that seems to be clear after the interviews is that all the Cultural Routes part of Fab Routes project want to increase awareness related to their activities, keeping their own **members and partners** involved with their digital communication. While this is the only conscious audience we have to stimulate, we found two more that are latent audiences and probably will take more assets and energy to get involved.



In fact, some of the routes have different projects in collaboration with schools and universities and they expressed their intention to keep in contact with **students** who participate. The last target which might be interested in their digital content is a general public that likes tourism, history and culture at European level. This is too general to be included in the strategy and it would be better to investigate it before starting to create content for this target.

Another important information we found out through the interviews was that European Cultural Routes generally do not have a regular **budget** for communication, which means it is not possible to pay specialists for this work. For this reason, our research focuses on providing guidelines for the improvement of online communication.

The other important element for our research was the **analysis of Cultural Routes websites and social networks** which was developed between January and February 2021. It was a desk research run through the creation of two types of **evaluation tables**: one for the websites and one for the social networks of each route.

These tables allowed us to build a confrontation between all the routes' communication strategies and technologies to extrapolate a **SWOT analysis** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and the **best practices** among the routes' digital media which we will see in the next section.

Finally, it is worth noting that, since the development of the strategy model, the Managing Bodies of the Cultural Routes have strived to improve the use of social media networks and several of them have already updated their strategies according to the feedback provided.

In what follows, we describe in detail the research, starting with the communication tools.

#### 4.2.1 Communication Tools

Channels	Atrium	The Phoenicians' Route	Via Regia	Charles V	Route of the Olive Tree	Aepj
Website	X	X	X	X	X	X
Website blog				X		
Newsletter		X			X	X
Facebook	X	X	X	X	X	X
Instagram	X	X		X	X	X
You Tube		X		X		
Twitter				X	X	X
Linkedin						X
Pinterest	X					
App				X		

Charles V and AEPJ are the routes that seem to focus more on communication.

There are also routes that do not handle many communication tools but they know how to use them properly, such as The Phoenicians' Route.

Atrium, VIA REGIA and the Route of the Olive Tree seem to use communication tools potential in a limited way, especially social networks.

### a) Atrium

#### Social Network Review

	Facebook	Instagram	Pinterest
Followers	432	160	319
Post frequency	4-5 a month	Inactive since 2017	X
Last post	November - 2020	June - 2017	X
Content language/s	Italian - English	Italian	English
Stories a day	X	X	X
Highlights	X	X	X
Use of hashtag (from 1 to 5)	3	1	X
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	3	2	4
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	1	3	2
Profile picture effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	1	3	X
Profile description effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	3	2	2

#### Facebook

The Facebook page is a little outdated: they use their logo as a profile picture and it does not transmit something about the route. The biography is too detailed: they need to think of something more suitable for a social network. The contacts are easy to find but there is not a link to their Instagram account.

The page has 435 followers.

They do not share posts frequently. They do not describe much the shared content. They seem to lack the understanding of the modern Facebook user (for example, emoticons are not used).

A point to their favor is that they publish posts in English, even though sometimes they share other routes posts that are in other languages.

The page contains few photos which are of low-definition. They do not seem to pay attention to the visual content quality.

## **Instagram**

Their Instagram account has been inactive since 2017. Therefore, they have published just a few posts and they have very few followers. For the same reason they do not share stories and they do not have a highlights' section.

The profile picture is adequate but it would be advisable to use their logo instead (to make themselves easily recognizable). They need to improve the biography as well (more suitable for a social network).

Their use of hashtags is moderate but they are consistent with the shared content.

The posts are visually uneven and they would benefit from setting a long-term communication strategy. For instance, there is some information about a Blog Tour but this project is better explained in their Pinterest account.

The posts are written in Italian.

## **Pinterest**

Their Pinterest account presents Atrium Blog Tour, a project made by the professional photographer Tom Fakler. The account has only information about this project and it is not updated. The profile is in English.

## **Website**

Their website is well managed. It is user-friendly since the navigation menu is well divided in different sections. It is available in English and the "About Us" section is also in all the languages spoken by the route. The mission is clearly described and is not overly long: the division in paragraphs makes it easy to read.

The logo is consistent with the itinerary identity. In the homepage, content are balanced and the body has the right length: it is not too long and it is not too short.

The contacts and the social media icons are located at the end of the homepage and hardly visible.

Website	
Surfing speed (from 1 to 5)	4
Website usability (from 1 to 5)	4
Navigation menu usability (from 1 to 5)	3
Mission clarity (from 1 to 5)	4
Logo effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	3
Contact visibility	3
Graphics quality (from 1 to 5)	3
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	3
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	2
Social icons visibility (from 1 to 5)	2
Content balance in homepage (from 1 to 5)	3
Use of colors (from 1 to 5)	3
Mobile website accessibility (from 1 to 5)	3
Language/s	English
Post frequency	Variable
Last post	November - 2020

It would be advisable to place the social icons at the top of the page, in the menu bar.

The graphics are somehow outdated and the images are of low-quality.

The website does not seem to be frequently updated. The most recent news reported date back to November 2020. During the previous year they did not share many news, probably due to the pandemic situation.

They have a mobile version of the website but it is not user-friendly since the body of the text is too long.

## b) The Phoenicians' Route

### Social Network Review

	Facebook	Instagram	You Tube
Followers	5770	1993	34
Post frequency	1 every two days	Once a day	Variable
Content language/s	Italian - English Spanish - French Greek - Croatian	English	Italian - English - Spanish
Stories a day	4	6	X
Highlights	X	1 section	X
Use of hashtag (from 1 to 5)	5	5	X
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	4	4	3
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	5	5	3
Profile picture effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	3	3	3
Profile description effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	2	3	X

### Facebook

The Facebook page is well organized and it is constantly updated. They frequently publish posts, (less than through Instagram but still very good). Also in their case, the profile picture is their logo but it is more effective than Atrium logo to introduce their profile. The cover image is updated every 15 days.

The page has 5769 followers.

The profile introduction is rather short but contact information is clear. The link to their Instagram profile is missing but there is a link to their website. They share a few stories a day.

The posts are written in English, rarely in Italian and the writing is very appealing, it is not too long and it is not too short. It has the most important information. They use emoticons and hashtags.

They share different types of visual content, even though some are of low-quality because they are directly shared from their Instagram account using the automatic cross-posting system.

### Instagram

Their Instagram account is constantly updated. They share 1 post and 5 to 6 Stories a day. In fact, they have a large number of followers (almost 2000).

The profile picture is their logo and the biography could be improved by adding some information written with a more gripping style and use some emoticons.

They have only one highlight.

The posts are written in English in an engaging manner. They use hashtags perfectly.

The pictures are beautiful (more suitable for Instagram than for Facebook). The content varies and it is clear they have a communication strategy.

### **You Tube**

They do not seem to focus on this communication tool as much as the other social media tools. It has mostly video interviews recorded during past events in which they participated. They could add different kinds of content to make the channel easier to update.

The profile picture is their logo and the cover picture is consistent with the channel identity.

The videos are not of high quality.

### **Website**

When opening the website, one can suddenly see an effective slider: the pictures that are displayed are stunning. The website has a good surfing speed and it is user-friendly.

The mission is well described. The logo is consistent with the route identity but the font they use is serif: if in future the route wants to use the logo on branded gadgets it will be hard to visualize it, for example printing it on dark colors.

The contacts are visible at the end of the homepage and in the navigation menu there is also a dedicated section.

Website	
Surfing speed (from 1 to 5)	5
Website usability (from 1 to 5)	5
Navigation menu usability (from 1 to 5)	5
Mission clarity (from 1 to 5)	4
Logo effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	3
Contact visibility	3
Graphics quality (from 1 to 5)	4
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	4
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	4
Social icons visibility (from 1 to 5)	3
Content balance in homepage (from 1 to 5)	4
Use of colors (from 1 to 5)	4
Mobile website accessibility (from 1 to 5)	4
Language/s	Italian - English - Spanish - French

The body of text is perfect, it is not too long, it contains useful information, the contents are well distributed and balanced.

The website is available in 4 languages.

They have a newsletter, the most recent is on the homepage, the archive of all newsletters in the "resources" section in the menu bar.

Written and visual content are very good. The mobile version of the website is also well performing.

### c) VIA REGIA

#### Social Network Review

##### Facebook

Facebook	
Followers	1081
Post frequency	2-3 a day
Content language/s	0
Stories a day	X
Highlights	German
Use of hashtag (from 1 to 5)	1
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	Variable
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	2
Profile picture effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	2
Profile description effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	3

It is updated every day. They publish posts every day but they do not use stories and hashtags.

The profile picture is their logo; however, it is not very effective. The cover image is the European map that shows the route's itinerary and this is consistent with their profile objective, even though is not appealing.

The biography is written in German and English, which surely helps the understanding.

The page has 1081 followers and their contacts are very visible. There is a link to their website.

The written content is in German, which makes it difficult to understand for not German-speaking users. They use a cold tone of communication and do not make use of emoticons.

The quality of the pictures varies but normally it is acceptable.

##### Website



Website	
Surfing speed (from 1 to 5)	4
Website usability (from 1 to 5)	4
Navigation menu usability (from 1 to 5)	5
Mission clarity (from 1 to 5)	5
Logo effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	2
Contact visibility	1
Graphics quality (from 1 to 5)	1
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	1
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	4
Social icons visibility (from 1 to 5)	1
Content balance in homepage (from 1 to 5)	2
Use of colors (from 1 to 5)	3
Mobile website accessibility (from 1 to 5)	1
Language/s	English - Spanish - French - German - Polish - Ukrainian

It has a good surfing speed and it is easy to use. The mission and written content are very well described.

The logo and all the graphics are very outdated: the elements in the homepage are very compact, everything is in written format and there are very few pictures which do not make the readability of the website easy.

The contacts are neither in the homepage nor in the contacts section (where instead it is possible to fill a form to contact them), but they are in the Imprint section and this makes them basically invisible.

There is no Facebook icon on the website (only in the German version). The website is available in 6 languages.

The website does not have a mobile version.

#### d) Route of the Emperor Charles V

##### Social Network Review

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	You Tube	Blog
Followers	2509	1128	1554	74	1303
Post frequency	3 a day	2-3 a day	4-5 tweet a day	X	Usually once a day
Last post	January - 2021	January - 2021	January - 2021	December - 2020	January - 2021
Content language/s	Spanish - English - French	Spanish - English	Spanish - English - French	Spanish - English	Spanish - English - French
Stories a day	0	0	X	X	X
Highlights	X	2	X	X	X
Use of hashtag (from 1 to 5)	4	4	4	X	X
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	3	4	3	4	5
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	4	3	4	1	5
Profile picture effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	3	3	3	1	X
Profile description effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	2	3	3	1	3

##### Facebook

They are very active; they publish about 3 posts a day but no stories. The page has 2509 followers.

The profile picture is their logo; the cover photo is a picture of a historical re-enactment. The biography is rather long and detailed and it is written in English.

They translate the contents in 3 languages in relation to their target.

They often share articles created on their blog.

Their posts are short but attractive and they know very well how to use emoticons and hashtags. The pictures are not always of high quality though.

##### Instagram

They share about 3 posts a day and the account has 1128 followers.

The profile picture is their logo however it is not cropped for the Instagram profile picture size.

The biography is written in Spanish and it is not very effective.

The pictures have different sizes, styles and quality.

They use both English and Spanish for the written content.

They have just one highlight.

## **Twitter**

They are very active, they share about 4-5 posts a day and the page has 1554 followers.

Profile picture and cover photo are the same as Facebook. The biography is short and it is written in Spanish.

They often share the articles created in their blog.

They translate the tweets in 3 languages.

Their posts are short but very attractive and they know very well how to use emoticons and hashtags.

The quality of visual content is variable.

## **You Tube**

The channel has 74 subscribers.

They seem to publish videos frequently.

It does not contain any description of the channel and also their videos are not described, they only have a title.

The profile picture is their logo; the cover image is a group photo taken during an event. On the cover image it is possible to click the Twitter and Facebook icons.

It has content in English and Spanish.

The quality of the videos is not high but they are very well edited.

## **Blog**

The blog is very effective and well managed. It has 1303 followers and they share frequently news, usually once a day with some interruptions from time to time.

The written and visual content are appealing. They are very active also with the articles' translation: the content is available in 3 languages (Spanish, English and French).

The blog is a really important element for communication: sharing articles help to connect the social networks of the route. It is surely an aspect that other routes should take as an example.

## Website

There is a slider on the top of the homepage and it makes suddenly clear the website content. The pictures are mostly about the historical re-enactments. The colors are the same of the Spanish flag and the background looks like an ancient map yellowed by time.

The font has serifs and it is a bit difficult to read. The written parts are overly punctual and too compact. The body length is right; it is neither too long nor short. In the homepage, the sections are clear and well divided, even though a “news” section is missing.

The website is available in several languages (the languages icons are easily visible in the menu bar on the top of the page). The social icons are visible and the contacts at the end of the page are visible as well. Probably their website and the one of the Phoenicians’ Routes are the best, but the mobile version is not user-friendly. Moreover, they do not have a newsletter.

Website	
Surfing speed (from 1 to 5)	4
Website usability (from 1 to 5)	5
Navigation menù usability (from 1 to 5)	5
Mission clarity (from 1 to 5)	4
Logo effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	3
Contact visibility	4
Graphics quality (from 1 to 5)	3
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	3
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	3
Social icons visibility (from 1 to 5)	4
Content balance in homepage (from 1 to 5)	4
Use of colors (from 1 to 5)	4
Mobile website accessibility (from 1 to 5)	3
Language/s	English - Spanish - French - Italian

Since the development of the strategy model, the Managing Body of the Route has taken steps to improve their communication strategy following the guidelines provided. For instance, they have set up a Linked In page as well as updating their website and creating a newsletter.

## e) Routes of the Olive Tree

### Social Network Review

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Followers	1733	226	108
Post frequency	Usually once a day	Once a week	Inactive since 2019
Last post	January - 2021	December - 2020	February - 2019
Content language/s	English	English	English
Stories a day	0	0	X
Highlights	X	2 sections	X
Use of hashtag (from 1 to 5)	3	4	1
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	4	4	4
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	2	4	3
Profile picture effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	4	4	4
Profile description effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	5	4	4

### Facebook

The page is constantly updated with 1 post a day. Their profile has a suitable biography for a social network account, it is short but clear, it is written in Greek and English therefore it is understandable for most users. The contacts are very visible and the Instagram link as well. The page currently has 2911 followers.

The logo has an attractive graphic and it is consistent with the itinerary identity. They take care of the visual content. They do not use stories.

The posts are mainly written in English; they make reasonable use of hashtags. When they share posts they do not always write something about them, this is an aspect that could be improved.

### Instagram

Their Instagram profile is well managed. A simple and effective biography. They do not have many followers because they are not constant when posting; they only share posts once a week, sometimes once every two weeks.

They did not use stories and had only two highlights, however, they have taken steps to improve their profile thanks to the guidelines provided by the strategy model.

The content descriptions are better than Facebook ones and they are written in English. They could use more emoticons and hashtags (for inspiration they could look at the Instagram profile of the Phoenicians' Route).

The visual content is probably the best we have seen until now, with photos of high quality.

## **Twitter**

It has the same profile picture and biography as their Instagram account.

On this communication tool they have been inactive since 2019. They have shared just 13 tweets. The last tweets have been published in 2019 and they were written in English but older ones were written in Greek and did not contain photos. They have only a few links to their Facebook page and other articles.

Due to this assessment, the Route's Managing Body has decided to replace Twitter with a LinkedIn account, as a more effective tool to reach other professionals and institutions.

## **Website**

The website is simple but effective.

The mission is well explained, it is divided in short paragraphs, there are maps, timeline and photos: they explain step by step the history of the route. The rest of the sections are well written too.

They use nice icons to divide the different sections in the homepage. The social media icons are well placed, the graphics are simple but effective, good use of green colors, everything is consistent and well managed.

The website has a section for contacts and one for the news.

It is available in 3 languages.

They have a user-friendly mobile version of the website.



Website	
Surfing speed (from 1 to 5)	4
Website usability (from 1 to 5)	5
Navigation menu usability (from 1 to 5)	4
Mission clarity (from 1 to 5)	5
Logo effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	5
Contact visibility	4
Graphics quality (from 1 to 5)	4
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	4
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	5
Social icons visibility (from 1 to 5)	3
Content balance in homepage (from 1 to 5)	4
Use of colors (from 1 to 5)	5
Mobile website accessibility (from 1 to 5)	4
Language/s	English - Greek - French
Post frequency	Twice a month
Last post	January - 2021

## f) Aepj – European Routes of Jewish Heritage

### Social Network Review

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	You Tube	Linkedin
Followers	4763	1883	2086	68	133
Post frequency	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
Last post	December - 2020	January - 2021	December - 2020	December - 2020	December - 2020
Content language/s	English	English	English	English	English
Stories a day	0	0	X	X	X
Highlights	X	7 sections	X	X	X
Use of hashtag (from 1 to 5)	1	1	1	1	1
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	4	4	4	4	4
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	3	3	3	3	4
Profile picture effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	3	3	3	3	3
Profile description effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	5	3	3	5	5

## **Facebook**

The logo is consistent with the itinerary identity; however, the cover photo is not very effective.

Great biography, short but very appropriate for a social network as Facebook.

The contact details are easy to find and there is a link to their Instagram account.

The page has 4763 followers.

They frequently share content but in an unevenly and variable manner.

They make a good copywriting work; the posts are written in English but they neither use emoticons nor hashtags.

They publish several videos, mostly video interviews, which is a good approach since video content is more emotional and highly effective.

## **Twitter**

They are very active on Twitter as well. They have written 2194 tweets and the page has 2086 followers.

The profile picture and the cover photo are the same as their Facebook account and the biography is the same as in Instagram. They publish the same content as Facebook with a variable frequency but they are very active.

The posts are written in English; they are very well even if they do not use emoticons or hashtags.

They could take the Routes of the Emperor Charles V's blog as an inspiration for content creation.

## **Instagram**

Their Instagram account has 1833 followers. They share content consistently. The posts have a unitary visual style: it is noticeable that they have a long-term social media strategy.

The biography is short and the profile picture is their logo.

The written content is very good but they neither use emoticons nor hashtags.

High quality of visual content.

They do not share many stories but they managed the highlights section very well.

## **You Tube**

They are very active on You Tube, the channel has 68 followers, 20 videos and one playlist.



It has the same profile picture and cover photo as Facebook. On the cover photo the social network icons of the route can be found.

The videos are of high quality and include descriptions, but they do not use hashtags.

## Linkedin

The profile picture is their logo and also the cover photo is the same as other social media channels, but they have a very well written biography in the homepage and also in the "About us" section. In this section, there is information about the route as well as their contact details.

They share posts with the same frequency as the other social networks.

The copywriting is very good but they do not use hashtags. The posts are written in English.

## Website

Website	
Surfing speed (from 1 to 5)	4
Website usability (from 1 to 5)	5
Navigation menu usability (from 1 to 5)	4
Mission clarity (from 1 to 5)	5
Logo effectiveness (from 1 to 5)	5
Contact visibility	4
Graphics quality (from 1 to 5)	3
Visual content quality (from 1 to 5)	3
Written content quality (from 1 to 5)	4
Social icons visibility (from 1 to 5)	5
Content balance in homepage (from 1 to 5)	2
Use of colors (from 1 to 5)	1
Mobile website accessibility (from 1 to 5)	1
Language/s	English

At the time of the research, the website was under maintenance so this review cannot be objective.

The website is well structured, it is user-friendly and it is clearly divided.

The homepage is not that clear, there are only the latest news and their partners.

The social icons and the newsletter are well visible. The contact details can be found at the top of the page.

The website is available only in English.

The written parts are short but this makes them easy to read.

The icons in the section European Routes of Jewish Heritage are very nice but the graphics could be improved.

#### **4.2.2 Web References**

##### **Atrium**

**Website** – 15.01.2021

<http://www.atriumroute.eu/>

**Social Networks** - 07.01.2021

<https://www.facebook.com/atriumtransnationalroute>

<https://www.instagram.com/atriumroute/?hl=it>

<https://www.pinterest.it/21grammysheep/atrium-blog-tour/>

##### **Phoenicians' Route**

**Website** – 11.01.2021

<https://fenici.net/en/>

**Social Networks** – 22.01.2021

<https://www.facebook.com/larottadeifenici>

<https://www.instagram.com/rottadeifenici/?hl=it>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbDcl9lcpTjiOtegJguuwPQ>

##### **Via Regia**

**Website** – 19.01.2021

<https://www.via-regia.org/eng/>

**Social Networks** – 22.01.2021

<https://www.facebook.com/VIA.REGIA>

<https://www.instagram.com/via.regia/?hl=it>



## **Route of the Emperor Charles V**

**Website** – 07.01.2021

<https://www.via-regia.org/eng/>

**Social Networks** – 22.01.2021

<https://www.facebook.com/RutasdeCarlosV>

<https://www.instagram.com/rutascarlosv/?hl=it>

<https://twitter.com/CAROLUSVEMPEROR>

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2g48cucOZ97tuOZ-R4\\_QVQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2g48cucOZ97tuOZ-R4_QVQ)

**Blog**

<https://redderutascarlosv.wordpress.com/>

## **The Routes of the Olive Tree**

**Website** – 07.01.2021

<https://olivetreeroute.gr/en/>

**Social Networks** – 07.01.2021

<https://www.facebook.com/OliveTreeRoutes>

<https://www.instagram.com/routesolivetree/?hl=it>

## **Aepj – European Routes of Jewish Heritage**

**Social Networks** – 21.01.2021

<https://www.facebook.com/jewishheritage>

<https://www.instagram.com/jewishheritage/?hl=it>

<https://twitter.com/jewishheritage>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/aepj/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX5rKEcGihzR2ndvbJmYDag>

**Website** – 13.01.2021

<https://www.jewishheritage.org/>

## 4.3 Guidelines and recommendations

### 4.3.1 Guidelines

In this section we will discuss the results of our research, sharing a SWOT Analysis, the best practices identified and some recommendations.

### SWOT Analysis

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost all itineraries have started to invest in communication</li> <li>• A few CRs have a good digital engagement strategy, even if they don't have a budget</li> <li>• Phoenicians' Route, Route of the Emperor Charles V and AEPJ are very active</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No budget for communication</li> <li>• No communication specialists</li> <li>• A lot of CRs don't have a digital strategy</li> <li>• Language choice issue</li> <li>• Inactive social accounts</li> <li>• No distinction between B2C and B2B language</li> <li>• No suitable copywriting for social networks and websites</li> <li>• No responsive websites</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To take advantage from other CRs' best practices</li> <li>• Who hired specialists can explain to others how they obtained the funds to do it</li> <li>• The routes that have developed a good digital engagement strategy can share their experience with the others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial and bureaucratic difficulties, All the routes experience a complex situation due to the presence of different countries</li> <li>• For the same reason the language choice for the content can be very difficult</li> </ul>

It is clear that CRs share the same weaknesses but also the same **opportunities** to build on their current use of digital tools to communicate, collaborate and engage. In particular, we would like to underline the importance of the collaboration between the participants to this project in sharing **best practices** but also the issues they face.

In fact, through the interviews we have conducted and thanks to the liability of the representatives of the Cultural Routes, we were able to understand that it is very common not to have neither **budget** nor paid **communication strategists**.

However, all the routes expressed the desire to improve the possibilities in engaging their audiences with digital media, and some of them are really capable of managing all their communication channels without the employment of professionals.

Moreover, one of the most challenging issue for these organizations is the **language** choice for their content: almost all the routes that are part of this project choose to use English language but others did not because the main language among the routes' members is another.

We have also found out that some CRs' websites do not have a **responsive layout** that means their websites do not have a mobile version (for telephone or tablet) or, in some cases, they have a layout responsive but the mobile version is not user-friendly. This is a real issue to face because Google penalizes those websites which are not available for mobile digital media and in 2022 these are going to basically disappear from the SERP (Search engine results page).

Through the best practices we will see how the CRs are facing their issues and what we suggest them to do.

#### 4.3.2 Best Practices

After the analysis of all websites and social networks of Fab Routes participants we can argue that:

- The Phoenicians' Route is the Cultural Route that has the **best social networks management**. They do not have too many communication tools but focusing on the ones they have (Facebook and Instagram) they are able to perform a continuous and structured communication. They describe their contents very well, in English, with an engaging writing. They use emoticons and hashtags properly, as no-one of other routes of this project is able to do.
- It is very important to evaluate the **language** to use when writing posts, we really appreciated the Routes of the Emperor Charles V's effort to translate content in different languages: in this way they make their content accessible to all targets; although an integrated communication in English could be better, as most of the Cultural Routes are actually doing, because this guarantees a unified, cohesive vision, and the accessibility of the content almost for everyone. The routes which feel the necessity to write posts in another language (for example VIA REGIA) should make an effort to publish the posts in two languages to make them more user-friendly and accessible.
- VIA REGIA is the Cultural Route that has the most outdated graphic, but a point to their favor is that it is available in 6 languages, therefore is basically readable from all the countries that are part of the route.
- Atrium and VIA REGIA should work harder on the management of the communication tools.
- AEPJ is the only itinerary that has structured **highlights** on Instagram. The rest of the routes neither use highlights nor **hashtags** properly, except the Phoenicians' Route that uses both very well. Even very active routes such as AEPJ do not use them at all.
- The Routes of the Olive Tree is not very active but during the interview they expressed the will to improve their communication, even though, we find that they have the **best graphics** (logo, website and visual content). We think they have a good basis and that, by making some efforts, they will be able to improve their institutional communication because the start is promising.

- The Routes of the Olive Tree has also the **best biographies** on the website and all the social media networks. On the website, they describe very well the history of the route: they have written it in little paragraphs with a timeline, a lot of related pictures and a map to explain step by step how the itinerary developed during time. The other routes seem to take this for granted but it should be taken into consideration.
- The Routes of the Olive Tree and the Phoenicians' Route have also the **best website mobile version**.
- The Routes of the Emperor Charles V instead has developed the **best integrated digital media management**. In fact, even though it is the route that manages the biggest number of social media networks, they are able to keep them active at the same time and also, as highlighted before, they are able to keep an intense activity of content translation. Although what we appreciated the most of this route is the use of the **blog**: it is the only route that has considered using this very useful communication tool.
- The **blog** has the function to tell the historical research which is underlying the identity of the route itself, therefore it helps to spread culture. In addition, they share several articles, created especially for the blog, on the other communication tools. In this way, the blog acts as a link between the various institutional social media networks and also it helps to move followers from a social network to another. The other CRs should surely take their blog as a best practice example.
- The Routes of the Emperor Charles V and AEPJ – European Routes of Jewish Heritage, are the only ones that can manage properly the **Twitter account**. The other routes that have a Twitter account have abandoned it and, for this reason, we think it is better to have a limited number of social media networks instead of having several communication tools but not being able to manage them properly. It is necessary to keep them active through the preventive planning of the content that will be shared.

### 4.3.3 Recommendations

Finally, in this section we share some recommendations for the CRs, which are summarized in the **Digital Engagement Framework (Table 4.3 and Annex 4.2)**.

## Digital Engagement Framework

<b>Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a digital engagement strategy</li> <li>To reach and keep contacts with new generations, CRs' members and all the people interested in cultural heritage, tourism and history</li> <li>To keep the communication channels active and connected</li> </ul>	<b>Vision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote CRs' history, heritage and activities through the development of a digital engagement strategy</li> </ul>	<b>Trends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools projects focused on CRs' heritage, historical and touristic aspects</li> <li>People interested in tourism, history and culture at european level</li> <li>People who love to travel and discover alternative routes and activities linked to sustainable tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Assets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theme festivals   Historical re-enactments</li> <li>Tourism packages   Sustainable tourism activities</li> <li>Projects with schools</li> <li>Research projects in collaboration with universities</li> <li>Activities in collaboration with museums</li> </ul>	<b>Audiences</b> <div> <b>Likely to reach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CRs' members and partners</li> <li>Students involved in CRs' projects</li> </ul> </div> <div> <b>Hard to reach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public interested in tourism, history and culture at european level</li> </ul> </div>	
<b>Engage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IG contests to involve schools</li> <li>IG-FB social campaigns related to history, cultural heritage, sustainable tourism; trying to establish a contact with the customers</li> <li>Theme Webinars open to everybody, asking to participants to subscribe the Newsletter</li> <li>Share blog articles and webinars on LinkedIn</li> </ul>	<b>Reach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask to members and partners to share posts, events, initiatives</li> <li>Ask to them websites to share historical researches and blog articles</li> <li>Make brand awareness campaigns</li> <li>Make lead generation campaigns: acquire new contacts during the activities</li> </ul>	
<b>Guidelines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep contacts with people who already collaborated with the CRs</li> <li>Improve the communication strategy through the exchange of CRs' best practices</li> <li>Use a B2C language</li> <li>Write posts in English. Where necessary translate the content in different languages</li> <li>Focus on the improvement of the online communication</li> <li>Choose the function of each channel</li> </ul>	<b>Channels</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website   mobile   Blog</li> <li>Newsletter</li> <li>Facebook</li> <li>Instagram</li> <li>LinkedIn</li> </ul>	<b>Metrics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Websited traffic (page views, acquisition channels=)</li> <li>Social networks' insights (audience insights, CTR related to your blog articles, number of interactions, content effectiveness)</li> <li>Newsletter subscriptions</li> </ul>

Table 4.3

We have already talked about Objectives, Vision, Trends and Audiences we found through the interviews to the **Managing Bodies of the Cultural Routes** but we have not spoken yet about the other blocks of the framework. It would be good, for instance, to follow the **guidelines** which are a general statement about how you want your communication. We recommend you to focus on the improvement of the digital media strategy, keeping contacts with people who already collaborate with the CRs but also trying to reach different audiences such as the students who are involved in CRs' activities with schools and universities.

The choice of the right **language** is fundamental in the success of a digital strategy: we suggest you to look through the demographic data of your audience insight where it is possible, to know language and nationality of your targets. This method will guarantee you the right choice for your aware public (people who are already fan of your organization).

Reaching people who do not know your organization is a bit more difficult but we would suggest you to use the **English language** because it is more accessible for all. In general, we think it would be better to not write content in more than two languages (for who has the necessity to do it) because it would make the post too long and the communication fragmented. Never forget for who you are creating your content and adjust to your audience's needs.

Instead, to **reach new audiences** you could ask to members and partners to share your organization posts and activities and to theme websites to share historical researches and blog articles. Organize brand awareness campaigns to let people know what are you doing as an organization. Acquire new contacts collecting their data during events and activities: they are going to be very useful in future for your newsletter and researches.

Try to adopt a **B2C language**, it will let people feel more comfortable. Sometimes we have seen a mix between the use of B2C and B2B language in the same channel and we think it is not good for your digital identity: decide just one tone of voice for all the channels.

Another important point is that a lot of routes have opened a channel they actually do not use. For example, we recognized that a lot of the routes have problems to update their YouTube channel or they have Twitter account but they do not post regularly. Opening a channel is a commitment that require time and assets; if you are not ready to manage them it is better to focus on the improvement of the **channels** you already have and need. Moreover, when you decide the right channels for your digital media strategy, give them a separate purpose and do not share the same content on all of them.

In addition, it could be interesting to install a **chatbot on your Facebook Messenger** to help you out giving some basic information about the route if you think your audience would use it. For instance: what is a Cultural Route recognized by the Council of Europe, a short history of yours, your current activities, etc. There are different free tools but we recommend you **Manychat** to create your chatbot.

A **chatbot** cannot replace the human customer care but if you collect data about what do people ask more or what is important to know for all your targets, then it can be useful. Moreover, it would be better to realize maximum 3 shorts streams of answers and give always maximum two choices to your customer during the chat process. In the end of the stream, provide your contacts to let people write or speak to you directly. This is just an example of which channels you can choose and why (Table 4.4), but now it is your turn to make your choice.



## Channels







 <b>Website / mobile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the website to share important news about the Route (brand awareness)</li> <li>• Be sure that you have a responsive layout</li> <li>• The website and his mobile version should have the exact same content but adapted for a mobile vision</li> </ul>
 <b>Blog</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share news for professionals and spread them on the other digital media</li> </ul>
 <b>Newsletter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep in touch with people who are already enthusiast of your organization but also group your targets and send them content of their interest.</li> </ul>
 <b>Facebook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B2C language, engage CRs' members, partners, students through social campaigns related to history, cultural heritage, sustainable tourism; trying to establish a contact with the customers.</li> </ul>
 <b>Instagram</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B2C language, engage students through brand awareness campaigns, contests, high quality content.</li> </ul>
 <b>Linkedin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B2B language, share blog articles and webinars on LinkedIn trying to involve professionals of the sector.</li> <li>• Collect contact for your newsletter with webinars.</li> </ul>

Table 4.4

## Channels


Table 4.5

After you decided the channels, it is time to design the **editorial plan** that has to be more detailed: it should be comprehensive of the objectives you want to reach for each channel, the rules of each member of the team who has responsibility in the communication, the number of post and content you want to share per week. Moreover, you need to develop the **editorial calendar** to organize the publication of your content in a period of time. This should be more synthetic than the plan but

containing a short description of the content, the time of publication, and the person responsible for it.

No particular tool is required to do the editorial plan or the calendar but we can suggest a simple presentation (Power Point or Canva which you can both create and modify online with your team) to create the plan, and Google Calendar, Trello Board or a simple Excel spreadsheet for the calendar.

Now you are ready to realize your content: create a **Facebook Business** account and then use the **Facebook Creator Studio** to connect your Facebook and Instagram accounts (that has to be a business account as well) to it. Here you can schedule posts and monitor them.

Regarding the **metrics**, not all of them are important for your engagement strategy. It could be interesting to monitor:

- the **website traffic**: page views, time spent on page, bounce rate, acquisition channels, audience insights.
- **social networks insights**: audience insights, click through rates related to your blog articles, engagement (number of interactions).
- **newsletter subscriptions** per month.

The best tool to check your website traffic is **Google Analytics**: you can install **MonsterInsights**, a Wordpress plugin to get Google Analytics functionality. If you have a Wordpress website, you can also install **Facebook Pixel** because it is the only way to monitor the traffic that comes from your Facebook page. Why is important to **monitor the website** visits? Because by collecting data you can discover how many people visit your website, where they come from, where did they discover your website, how long they stay on it. Therefore, you can create more suitable content for your audiences.

Evaluating your social media performance is also essential to obtain your objectives on the platforms. Keep track of your data creating a **periodical report** with a simple Excel spreadsheet. In addition to Facebook Business to monitor your Facebook and Instagram Insights, you can also count on external tools such as **Not-Just-Analytics** which is very good for Instagram.

An interesting aspect about **Twitter Analytics** is that here is also possible to know your audience interest and this is a very useful information to create the best content and pick the right topics for your communication.

If you want to take note about your engagement, look at your interactions: likes, comments, shares. These metrics tell us how people react to your content.

The engagement rate formula is:

**$$\frac{[(\text{Likes} + \text{Comments} + \text{Shares}) / \text{Followers}] \times 100}{}$$**

As we mentioned before, engagement for social media is very important and for Instagram even more than the other social media networks. In fact, the platform enhances the content that have more interactions.

Finally, we suggest you to keep track of these metrics: they are fundamental to understand if your strategy is working and they will give you also some hints to improve it.

We came to the end of this chapter. Do not miss to fill the Model Strategy Template!

## Annexes

Annex 3.1 Template Interview Managing Body of the Route

Annex 3.2 Template for building a repository of best practices

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