



**MED-Routes**

**Interreg  
Euro-MED**



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

# MED-Routes

*"Enhancing MED sustainable cultural tourism*

*through the creation of eco-itineraries inside European Cultural Routes"*

WP1 ASSESSMENT OF OUTPUTS

TRANSFERABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

PATTERNS IN THE CULTURAL TOURISM SECTOR

D.1.4.1 Joint roadmap for Cultural Routes based on  
the adaptation of INCIRCLE replicating package



| Project Information |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Project Acronym     | MED-Routes   |
| Project Full Title  | Enhancing MED sustainable cultural tourism through the creation of eco-itineraries inside European Cultural Routes |
| Project Priority    | Greener Med  |
| Project Mission     | Enhancing Sustainable Tourism  |
| Specific Objective  | RSO2.6: Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy                                      |
| Type of Project     | Transfer project (Thematic Project)  |
| Project ID          | Euro-MED0200798  |
| Start date          | 1 January 2024   |
| Duration            | 27 months  |

| Deliverable Information      |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Deliverable no               | D.1.4.1   |
| Deliverable title            | Joint roadmap for Cultural Routes based on the adaptation of INCIRCLE replicating package |
| Contractual date of delivery | 31/12/2024  |
| Actual date of delivery      | 11/12/2024  |
| Partner responsible          | DUNEA   |
| Partners involved            | URF, CPCC, PRBT, LIU, INSULEUR, DUNEA, CMVFX, BATTI                                       |



## Revision History

| Version | Date       | Author(s)/Contributor(s)   | Notes                          |
|---------|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1.0     | 11/12/2024 | Daniela Angelina Jelinčić,<br>Ph.D.<br>Marko Raič, Mag. Hist. in<br>cooperation with other PPs | Original first draft           |
| 2.0     | 18/12/2024 | Daniela Angelina Jelinčić,<br>Ph.D.  | Revision after PPs<br>comments |

## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 0. INTRODUCTION .....  | 7  |
| I. ROADMAP FOR THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE .....  | 8  |
| I.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE .....  | 8  |
| I.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE ROUTE .....   | 8  |
| I.1.2 STATE-OF-THE-ART REGARDING SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY RELATED TO THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE .....                 | 9  |
| I.2 COMMON VISION FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE .....                | 17 |
| I.3 GOALS OF THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE RELATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY .....                  | 18 |
| I.4 ACTIVITIES TO BE TAKEN FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE .....       | 19 |
| I.5 DIVISION OF TASKS AND TIMELINES IN ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE ..... | 21 |
| II. ROADMAP FOR THE PHOENICIANS' ROUTE .....   | 24 |
| II.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR THE PHOENICIANS' ROUTE .....   | 24 |
| II.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE ROUTE .....  | 24 |
| II.1.2 STATE-OF-THE-ART REGARDING SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY RELATED TO THE PHOENICIANS' ROUTE .....                      | 25 |
| II.2 COMMON VISION FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE PHOENICIANS ROUTE .....                      | 35 |
| II.3 GOALS OF THE PHOENICIANS' CULTURAL ROUTE RELATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY .....              | 35 |
| II.4 ACTIVITIES TO BE TAKEN FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE PHOENICIANS' CULTURAL ROUTE .....   | 36 |
| II.5 DIVISION OF TASKS AND TIMELINES IN ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE PHOENICIANS ROUTES .....      | 40 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| III. ROADMAP FOR THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS.....   | 42 |
| III.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS.....   | 42 |
| III.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE ROUTE .....   | 42 |
| III.1.2 STATE-OF-THE-ART REGARDING SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY RELATED TO THE<br>EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS .....                | 43 |
| III.2 COMMON VISION FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR<br>ECONOMY OF EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS.....                    | 46 |
| III.3 GOALS OF THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS RELATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT<br>OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY .....                 | 47 |
| IV. ROADMAP FOR THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE .....   | 52 |
| IV.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE .....   | 52 |
| IV.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE ROUTE .....  | 52 |
| IV.1.2 STATE-OF-THE-ART REGARDING SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY RELATED TO THE<br>DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE .....                 | 53 |
| IV.2 COMMON VISION FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR<br>ECONOMY OF THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE.....                 | 63 |
| IV.3 GOALS OF THE CULTURAL ROUTE DESTINATION NAPOLEON RELATED TO THE<br>ENHANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY.....          | 63 |
| IV.4 ACTIVITIES TO BE TAKEN FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND<br>CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE .....       | 64 |
| IV.5 DIVISION OF TASKS AND TIMELINES IN ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND<br>CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE ..... | 66 |
| V. SYNTHETIC PRESENTATION OF COMMON ISSUES FOR ALL THE ROUTES AND ISSUES<br>INHERENT TO INDIVIDUAL ROUTES.....                           | 69 |
| VI. ANALYSIS OF CR'S ROADMAP VISIONS AND GOALS.....  | 70 |
| VII. CONCLUSION .....  | 73 |
| LIST OF TABLES .....   | 74 |

## 0. INTRODUCTION

MED-Routes overall objective is to establish and disseminate a local-based, low-impact model of sustainable tourism across Cultural Routes in the MED area, in particular, to establish a specific model of Mediterranean “slow tourism” rooted in the common heritage of four (4) Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe: Phoenicians´ Route, Routes of the Olive Tree, European Route of Ceramics and Destination Napoleon.

Cultural routes entail different tangible and intangible cultural/historic elements unified by a common theme. These elements (usually cultural heritage sites) are, regardless of the type of their position in an area (linear, spotted, dispersed...), interpreted as a whole following the main theme, and may be seen as a destination since it has a network structure consisting of tangible and intangible sites. Thus, the whole route is seen as an itinerary or a series of itineraries.

The detected challenges in cultural tourism of the Mediterranean area are seen (1) in cultural tourism flows directed towards mainstream destinations, attracting large crowds in high season, and (2) in still limited, scattered, poorly disseminated and/or difficult to access eco-itineraries that would cater for environmentally-aware and eco-conscious travellers.

To respond to these challenges, the MED-Routes aims to create sustainable, slow-tourism model through the establishment of small-scale cultural tourism eco-itineraries. This entails specific itineraries within the above mentioned four Council of Europe routes. The main attractions considered are related to cultural heritage, but the eco-itinerary entails all the supporting infrastructure and accompanying offer, which respect the principles of circularity. Namely, these are: reduce, rethink, revalue, regenerate and innovate.

The existing Cultural Routes are already doing a brilliant job in the valorisation of cultural heritage; however, there is still room for strengthening on the matter of sustainability and circular economy. This is why within the MED – Routes project Roadmaps aiming to guide Cultural Routes in pursuing greater sustainability and circular economy patterns in their activities, itineraries and structures have been prepared.

This document focuses on the mentioned four cultural routes: the Routes of the Olive Tree, Phoenicians´ Route, European Route of Ceramics and Destination Napoleon and their roadmaps for further actions related to strengthening its heritage practices on the matter of sustainability and circular economy. All the roadmaps are gathered in this document as a Joint roadmap for Cultural Routes. The document Joint Roadmap for Cultural Routes based on the adaptation of INCIRCLE replicating package (D.1.4.1), therefore integrates individual roadmaps for each of the routes and offers a conclusive synthesis presenting commonalities among the individual roadmaps as well as their differences. Each of the roadmaps provide the current context analysis providing general data on each of the Route as well as analysis related to sustainability and circular economy. Also, it states the vision related to the enhancement of each of the Route’s heritage practices on the matter of



sustainability and circular economy as well as their goals, which guide further actions on each of the Route. Finally, a division of tasks and timelines are put forward in the sense of a plan of further actions.

All the Roadmaps take into account sustainability and circular economy principles not only for the planned small-scale eco-itineraries, but for the Cultural Routes seen as a whole. Thus, the Roadmaps serve Cultural Routes as strategic plans defining a goal or desired outcomes in pursuing greater sustainability and circular economy patterns in their activities, itineraries and structures, including the major steps or milestones needed to reach it. At the same time, they serve as communication tools helping to articulate strategic thinking—the why—behind both the goal and the plan for getting there.

## I. ROADMAP FOR THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE

### I.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE

#### I.1.1 Description of the Route

The Routes of the Olive Tree is one of the 48 European cultural routes recognized by the Council of Europe, certified in 2005. These routes represent the shared history and heritage of European countries. The Routes of the Olive Tree pass through 15 Mediterranean countries (Greece, Italy, Malta, Croatia, Montenegro, Slovenia, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey, Spain). It is not merely a "route" but also a network that spans the Mediterranean, bringing together SMEs, museums, festivals, economic associations, and other private and public organizations. The objectives of the Routes of the Olive Tree are:

- to promote dialogue between olive-growing regions,
- to strengthen thematic olive-related tourism and sustainable development centred around olive cultivation,
- to preserve both the tangible and intangible heritage related to olives,
- to enhance their value and public awareness,
- to educate about the importance of olives, and
- to encourage specialized and multidisciplinary research on the olive tree in a broad sense.

Due to its ancient cultivation tradition and its connections to the social and economic life of Mediterranean societies, the olive tree is an integral part of the Mediterranean identity. The olive tree is also a symbol of peace, wisdom, and glory.

From a gastronomic perspective, the olive is an essential ingredient in the Mediterranean diet. Route visitors have the opportunity to engage with the "olive civilization," explore the distinctive olive landscapes, and experience local traditions. The olive itineraries are characterized by local specificities unique to various regions of the Mediterranean.



Accordingly, the Route features a variety of activities such as exhibitions, concerts, fairs, and more. Olive-related maritime itineraries should also be highlighted, reflecting the sea routes that historically connected Mediterranean ports.<sup>1</sup>

### I.1.2 state-of-the-art regarding sustainability and circular economy related to the routes of the olive tree

Olive cultivation plays a crucial role in the development and preservation of cultural heritage in Mediterranean olive-growing regions. However, social and economic changes are generating negative impacts on both society and the environment, particularly affecting rural olive regions. For instance, small olive farms are being abandoned, biodiversity is disappearing, and soil degradation is increasing. While on one side and in some regions, there are too many olive groves, on the other, there are also abandoned fields.

The challenges faced by The Routes of the Olive Tree, olive farming, and oleotourism in general include seasonality (closure of olive mills outside the olive oil production period), lack of professionalism, costs of opening the mills outside the olive-growing season for visits and guided tours of the site, uncoordinated stakeholder activities, limited public transport, poor digital infrastructure and the mentioned threats to the environment. Additionally, there is a limited offer of complementary tourist activities, beyond visits to olive mills, for example. Low awareness of potential income sources beyond olive oil cultivation is also present.

The challenge of seasonality is evident in the concentration of oleo tourists during holiday periods such as in the summer, for Christmas, Holy Week, and 1<sup>st</sup> of May, which leads to overtourism during these times, while there is an inadequate demand during the rest of the year. This can often create financial dependence on the success of the season and other unforeseen circumstance.<sup>2</sup> Selective forms of tourism, e.g. agrotourism and gastronomic tourism, with the organisation of tasting events of traditional local products and tours of olive mills and olive groves can be organized to address this issue, since they have been proven to attract visitors outside the summer season (October-February). Further on, ecotourism and rural tourism have potential to address seasonality issue well by focusing on stunning natural landscapes with olive groves where activities such as hiking, cycling, contact with nature and acquaintance with authentic traditional products can be developed, providing income for local producers. It is necessary to work with tour operators and to develop tourist packages that include experiences in olive groves and agricultural activities. In sum, integrated tourism experiences can be offered to address the issue of seasonality combining olive oil production with other attractions (e.g. soaps, cosmetics, gastronomy, etc.).

---

<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe, Routes of the Olive Tree (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree>) Council of Europe, Impact of European Cultural Routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness, (2011), 176-198

<sup>2</sup> Millán, M.G.; Pablo-Romero, M.D.P.; Sánchez-Rivas, J. Oleotourism as a Sustainable Product: An Analysis of Its Demand in the South of Spain (Andalusia). *Sustainability* 2018, 10, 101





The lack of professionalism is related to the limited awareness among olive oil tourism service providers of the potential of olive oil and Mediterranean heritage as tourist attractions. The relevant costs of opening the mills outside the olive-growing season for visits and guided tours of the site and insufficient infrastructure for tourist use also pose a challenge.<sup>3</sup> The challenge is also conservation of traditional structures such as pre-industrial mills and adoption of circular economy practices for olive oil production in general.

Limited public transport in rural olive areas prevents potential tourists from visiting. Similar is with the lack of digital infrastructure that limits promotion and reach of oleotourism.

Additionally, olive oil production generates waste and by-products that can be harmful to the environment if waste management is inadequate.<sup>4</sup> This issue can be addressed by using organic waste for composting and fertilizer production or using renewable energy sources. These practices not only reduce the environmental footprint but also offer visitors an experience of sustainable rural life, enhancing the attractiveness of the area. Some regions attract large number of tourists, which creates problems of overtourism in those areas (e.g. Crete, Andalusia, Sicily and Puglia), while smaller olive regions (e.g. Messinia or Laconia in Greece), often remain underserved by tourists. In order to use circular economy principles in boosting tourism activities, local markets or exhibitions may be organized featuring local products created from recycled or reusable materials. Visitors can buy souvenirs with a positive environmental impact, thus strengthening the local economy and promoting sustainability.

When considering the needs and potentials of the Routes of the Olive Tree, the primary focus should be on the opportunity for revenue diversification through different supplementary tourist activities, such as visits to oil mills, tastings, participation in harvests, and other related activities that complete the “olive cycle”. Although such activities are present on the Routes, they are still insufficient. The Routes can attract tourists who are also interested in other cultural activities or nearby archaeological and cultural sites. Prerequisite for that is investing in public low-emission transport service and infrastructure. Moreover, it is essential to harmonize the operations and work of the stakeholders on the route and the presentation of content based on the principles of the circular economy, as well as to ensure the preservation of the environment and the sustainable development of rural areas. While the Routes of the Olive Tree takes up a huge geographical area, it is not easy to harmonize the activities on the whole territory. However, it would benefit from the collaboration between stakeholders (e.g. museums, archaeological sites, tourism businesses and communities) to develop an integrated sustainability strategy.

Key development potentials are in synergy with other forms of tourism, such as cultural and eco-tourism, which can extend tourists' stays in rural olive regions. Increased tourist spending can lead to new income streams and improve the quality of life for the local

---

<sup>3</sup> Hernández-Mogollón, J.M., Di-Clemente, E., Folgado-Fernández, J.A. i Campón-Cerro, A.M. (2019). Olive oil tourism: state of the art. *Tourism and hospitality management*, 25 (1), 199

<sup>4</sup> Donner, M., Erraach, Y., et al. Circular bioeconomy for olive oil waste and by-product valorisation: Actors' strategies and conditions in the Mediterranean area, *Journal of Environmental Management*, 321 (2022), 2



community.<sup>5</sup> For example, the synergy of oleotourism with gastrotourism can be an excellent opportunity for further development and raising the popularity of olive-based cuisine, which can lead to more spending, as well as year-round attractiveness. Also, a potential is to use digital technologies and raise consumer awareness about the origin and quality of olive oil, which contributes to product recognition and revenue growth.

Implementation of circular economy principles will enable rational use of natural resources and energy along the route, better valorisation and utilization of waste and by-products, thereby creating additional outputs.<sup>6</sup> For example, renewable energy sources in the facilities included in the Route can be implemented, alongside savings in water consumption through rainwater harvesting and storing, as well as using efficient drip irrigation systems; it is possible to use natural correctors for the soil without chemicals, to use the new knowledge of biodynamic agriculture and the like. The Routes of the Olive Tree can, through targeted activities raise awareness of the need to implement such practices.

The challenge of less attractive small olive itineraries can be alleviated by promoting and emphasizing their uniqueness. This would also reduce the tourist pressure on large mainstream olive regions. Developing digital and smart tourism platforms can attract more tourists in less visible regions, provide real-time information on attendance and thus facilitate market research.

In terms of sustainability of the Routes, it is crucial to ensure a participatory approach in thinking about the future development of the Route through the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders (SME's, governments, farmers, NGOs, researchers, etc.). Furthermore, to achieve sustainability goals it is crucial to enable education and training for local producers in tourism services and green business practices so as to ensure a more professional offer and high-quality experience for tourists.<sup>7</sup> Tourists seeking this type of tourism are not only looking for tangible and material offerings, but also intangible aspects related to experience, way of living and environmentally friendly behaviour.

There is also a need for marketing initiatives and integrated strategies to promote the Routes of the Olive Tree and oleotourism to increase the recognition of destinations and products. Related to this, there is a need for additional investment in infrastructure (tourist accommodation and service improvements in rural areas). New infrastructure should follow environmentally friendly principles promoting hospitality that follows ecological practices (e.g. eco-friendly materials, water reuse systems, photovoltaic panels) to attract environmentally aware tourists.

---

<sup>5</sup> De la Torre, M.G,M.V, Fernández, E.M., Perez-Naranjo, L.M. (2010). Olive oil tourism as a vehicle for Rural Development in the Province of Cordoba, 747

<sup>6</sup> Donner, M.,Erraach, Y., et al. Circular bioeconomy for olive oil waste and by-product valorisation: Actors' strategies and conditions in the Mediterranean area, *Journal of Environmental Management*, 321 (2022), 8

<sup>7</sup> De la Torre, M.G,M.V, Arjona-Fuentes, J.M, Amador-Hidalgo, L. Olive oil tourism: Promoting rural development in Andalusia (Spain), *Tourism Management Perspectives* 21 (2017), 105



Additionally, collaboration between the agricultural and tourism sectors is necessary to develop sustainable tourist offerings that will not compromise agricultural activities.<sup>8</sup> It is also necessary to change from traditional non-renewable energy sources to sustainable energy sources in olive processing, and in general. There is a significant potential in utilizing biomass energy from by-products, as well as converting olive pomace into biogas. This practice itself can serve as a tourist attraction, with the presentation of sustainable methods offering an educational experience for visitors. For example, workshops on sustainable practices or recycled souvenirs can create new value. Solar energy, which is abundant in the Mediterranean region has a great potential in contributing to sustainability and clean energy. Also, this can attract an increasing number of tourists who prioritize ecological sustainability and a neutral carbon footprint.

Oleotourism is specific to the Mediterranean and, along with wine tourism, is one of the most popular forms of gastronomic tourism, with growing demand. Given this, the combination of olive farming and tourism creates broad opportunities for the sustainable development of olive-growing regions, revitalization of rural areas, and the creation of new consumers and markets. As mentioned, olives represent not only an economic issue but also cultural heritage, lifestyle, and daily habits. The uniqueness of Mediterranean countries lies in the fact that they are almost the sole (and authentic) bearers of this heritage.

There are many examples of comprehensive solutions to the challenges and problems of olive itineraries, as well as the improvement of sustainability. Some practices include educational tours and tastings, promotion of sustainable agriculture, zero-waste principles implementation, organic certification and eco-certified products, and biodiversity and traditional values conservation. Examples of some practices are listed below:

The InCircle Project has successfully implemented the postulates of the circular economy (recycling and utilization of by-products) but there are also numerous other initiatives, e.g.:

- Oleotour Jaén initiative in Spain offers eco-certified olive oil tours and exploration of organic olive farms, participation in olive oil tastings, and learning about sustainable olive cultivation practices.
- Several olive oil estates in Córdoba & Jaén have obtained ecological certification.
- Masseria Brancati in Puglia allows visitors to explore ancient olive trees, some of which are over 2,000 years old. Masseria Il Frantoio in Ostuni, a certified green farm, offers organic meals and educational workshops on sustainable farming and eco-tourism.
- Cretan Olive Oil Farms in Heraklion and Chania emphasize biodynamic farming, utilizing natural cycles and renewable energy sources for olive oil production, thereby reducing environmental impact.
- The Valle del Belice olive region provides eco-certified tours that focus on organic cultivation, demonstrating sustainable farming practices, particularly in water conservation and biodiversity protection.

---

<sup>8</sup> Hernández-Mogollón, J.M., Di-Clemente, E., Folgado-Fernández, J.A. i Campón-Cerro, A.M. (2019). Olive oil tourism: state of the art. *Tourism and hospitality management*, 25 (1), 191



- Mandranova Olive Farm in Agrigento uses biomass energy derived from olive waste to power parts of the estate and has adopted organic cultivation techniques.
- Andalusian olive farms offer wellness tours, highlighting local spas that use olive oil in treatments.
- Farms in Puglia promote community-led tourism, where local guides provide insights into olive cultivation and its cultural significance, creating engaging experiences for visitors while empowering local communities
- Androusa (Kontopoulos mill), Greece addresses well the challenge of seasonality as they make synergies with selective forms of tourist (e.g. gastrotourism) to attract visitors outside of the main season (a visit to the old and the modern olive oil mill allows the visitor to learn about the evolution of olive oil production methods and includes olive oil and Kalamata olive tasting, a traditional meal and a treasure hunt in the village castle with puzzles that lead the visitor to discover the characteristics of Greek olive oil and the history of the region)
- In the region of Messinia some private initiatives have been put forward for the improvement of the management of mill waste, to support sustainable agriculture, such as the adoption of organic farming practices, the use of organic fertilizers and the reuse of by-products of olive oil production (e.g. heartwood)
- In Gerani, Chania (Crete), at the Fisika soap making workshop, visitors can see the soap-making process from organic olive oil or participate in a seminar to learn the basic techniques
- Museum of Industrial Olive Oil Industry of Lesvos (a restored old olive oil mill), housed in the old community olive oil mill of Agia Paraskevi presents the industrial phase of olive oil production in Greece, with machinery that has been restored and is functional
- Markellos mill in Galataki, Corinthia (Greece) offers a virtual reality video showing the processes of olive oil production in a futuristic way (through a VR mask, one gets the sensation of flying over the lush hillsides of the surrounding area, being on a tractor performing agricultural work in the olive grove and following the workers pruning the olive trees).

Table 1: Challenges, needs and potentials regarding sustainability and circular economy of the Routes of the Olive Tree

| Challenges  | Needs   | Potentials   |
|---|---|--|
| Abandonment of small olive farms  | Design and implementation of rural development measures to support small olive farms  | Revitalisation of olive oil-producing areas threatened with desertification  |
| Threats to the environment (e.g. disappearing biodiversity, soil degradation due to environmentally unfriendly practices, use of pesticides, harmful olive cultivation waste and by-products) | Enhanced eco-friendly cultivation systems   | A joint strategy (SME's, governments, farmers etc.) to achieve synergies for better valorisation and utilization of waste and by-products in terms of circular economy |
| Scarce application of environmentally sustainable practices   | Financial incentives to encourage small olive producers to transition to sustainable farming practices, including water conservation, energy efficiency, and waste management | EU and local governments subsidies   |
| Focus on mainstream destinations (lack of cohesion on the Routes and overcrowding)  | Marketing initiatives and integrated promotional strategies to increase the awareness on smaller destinations and products  | Creation of micro-tourism and small-scale itineraries based on the MED-Routes experiences  |
| Seasonality of the activities (overtourism during Christmas, Holy Week, and 1 <sup>st</sup> of May, otherwise undertourism)   | Synergy with other forms of tourism (e.g. cultural and eco-tourism,) which can extend tourists' stays and work with tour operators in developing                              | Benefitting from the trends of slow tourism and more frequent travel habits throughout the year  |



|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | out-of-the-season tourist packages  |  |
| Limited supply of structured eco-itineraries based on small-scale tourism                       | Creation of micro-tourism and small-scale itineraries                                 | Use of knowledge and experiences gained within the MED-Routes  |
| Financial dependence on the success of the season   | Extension of the season and activities  | Revenue diversification through different supplementary tourist activities   |
| Lack of specific knowledge and professionalism  | Training and education of products/service providers                                  | New employment opportunities   |
| Low awareness of potential income sources beyond olive oil cultivation                          | Training and education of products/service providers                                  | New income streams, which can improve the quality of life for the local community                                      |
| High cost of opening the mills outside the olive season for visits and guided tours of the site | Developing synergies to overcome this obstacle  | Joint actions and cost sharing for open and accessible mills and other places of interest also throughout the year     |
| Uncoordinated stakeholder activities  | Collaboration between the agricultural and tourism sectors                            | Development of sustainable tourist offerings that will not compromise agricultural activities                          |
| Limited offering of complementary tourist activities, beyond visits to olive mills              | Education and training for local producers in tourism services and business practices | Creation of high-quality experience for tourists and new activities (e.g. guided tours, olive wellness, olive picking) |
| Insufficient infrastructure for tourist   | Additional infrastructure especially in rural areas out                               | Investment in infrastructure (tourist accommodation and  |



|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | of mainstream destinations  | service improvements in rural areas)   |
| Insufficient awareness by (potential) tourists on destinations and available products            | Increase of the recognition of destinations and products                            | Marketing initiatives and integrated promotional strategies and collaborations with other CRs (e.g. Phoenicians' Route, the Route of Ceramics) |
| Lack of digital infrastructure in rural areas which limits the promotion of eco-tourism          | Introduction of digital infrastructure  | Existing EU funds for digital infrastructure   |
| Limited public transport in olive regions and reliance on private cars which increases emissions | Low-emission public transport and electric vehicles charging infrastructure         | Introduction and easy access of comprehensive and zero-carbon transportation between olive farms and nearby towns, cycle and pedestrian paths  |
| Overdependence on traditional energy sources in olive oil processing                             | Shift to renewable energy sources   | Exploration of olive biomass by-products for energy production and using solar energy to achieve sustainability                                |
| Water scarcity in olive cultivation  | Careful watering as and where needed to protect water resources                     | Collection and storage of rainwater, intelligent control systems and water reuse (e.g. use of drip irrigation)                                 |
| Lack of integrated sustainable practices on the Route  | Collaboration between stakeholders to develop an integrated sustainability strategy | MED-Routes project   |



## 1.2 COMMON VISION FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE

Through the analysis of the current state related to the implementation of sustainable practices on the Olive Route, opportunities for more intensive adaptation of circular economy principles have been identified. Regardless of the length of the route and the different social and economic environment in the countries through which the route passes, there are positive experiences on micro-itineraries that are transferable also through other areas in order to achieve a higher level of sustainability. It is important to map, mark and use these sustainable practices as good practices on the entire route, but also on micro routes, where applicable.

To achieve a higher level of sustainability on the Routes, the common vision for the Routes of the Olive Tree related to sustainability and circular economy practices is put forward. A vision is the overall goal, which expresses the clear intention of all stakeholders for future actions. By investing in green practices and respecting the principles of the circular economy on the route, through the cooperation of people and nature on the basis of existing natural and cultural resources, sustainable development will be achieved, and heritage will be preserved.

### Vision

The Routes of the Olive Tree is an example of people - nature relations in the achievement of sustainable local tourism development through overall implementation of circular economy principles.

Commitment to the implementation of the circular economy principles actually represents a return to the economic model that will surely characterize our society in the years to come. The current model of "industrialization" has somehow slowly moved people away from nature-inspired activities and agriculture as basic economic activities, which are essentially circular, towards industrial production and linear practices based on the use-once-and-throw-away principle. Therefore, returning to nature is at the very essence of sustainable development.

Considering the number of identified needs on the Route, some of the possible goals that would achieve the proposed vision are related to strengthening the cooperation of stakeholders on the Routes of the Olive Tree through the exchange of knowledge and experience, the capitalization and sharing of examples of good practice in the application of the principles of circular economy, the development of micro eco-itineraries that can be replicated in other parts of the Routes of the Olive Tree, or strengthening marketing activities, advertising and sharing experiences using digital technologies.



## 1.3 GOALS OF THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE RELATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

In order to achieve the vision of the Routes of the Olive Tree as an example of sustainability through circular economy practices during 2025, efforts are directed at achieving the three key goals presented below.

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Goal 1 | Development and promotion of micro eco-itineraries in underexplored rural areas, integrating interactive and educational elements |
| Goal 2 | Awareness raising, training and education of stakeholders on sustainability and circular economy                                  |
| Goal 3 | Enhanced marketing initiatives for all-year round oleotourism   |

By achieving the three stated goals, we strive to contribute to the realization of the vision of the future Routes of the Olive Tree, which connects people and nature through the generations who have lived along and of olive trees. These goals, if achieved, would enable positive steps forward in overcoming some of the key challenges on the Routes.

For example, the introduction of micro eco-itineraries in rural areas would contribute to the reduction of trends in the abandonment of small olive groves, often due to economically unsustainable business models, high operating costs and difficulties in securing financing. These examples would include waste reduction (e.g. by using olive pomace for biogas or organic fertilizers), savings and rational use of water and renewable energy and could be piloted and replicated as such in other parts of the route in the future and ensure new partnerships through new sustainable initiatives. Besides the mere development of micro itineraries, it is essential to achieve suitable outreach for the success regarding sustainability.

Awareness raising, trainings and education on the principles of the circular economy would enable progress through the creation of a scientific and professional bases for reducing waste, solving the problem of scarcity of water resources, and the use of renewable energy sources. Local development would also be encouraged by reducing the challenge of disconnection of the heritage on the Routes with the basic tourist offer of individual locations, reducing the seasonality of localities, and it would be possible to find practical solutions for poor traffic connections and difficult accessibility of individual locations. Also, the implementation of online networks and platforms would enable the availability of the offer of the Routes to tourists and the general public.

In addition to these three key goals, the prerequisite for the realization of the vision is the continuation of networking activities and the intensification of the cooperation of all stakeholders from various economic sectors, public administration, civil society and the scientific community on the Routes. It will be necessary to raise awareness and implement existing regional, national and local policies related to the sustainable development of tourism, waste management, water management as well as climate change reduction and renewable energy consumption. It is also important to connect the innovation policy, science and technology to implement smart solutions adapted to local conditions at individual locations on the Routes as much as possible.

Within the framework of the roadmap, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the planned steps should be foreseen, with the aim to ensure that the planned activities and ultimately the set strategic goals and vision are achieved.

## 1.4 ACTIVITIES TO BE TAKEN FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE

The circular economy, as a relatively new holistic model of production and services, has a great potential for the Routes of the Olive Tree. In order to achieve the three anticipated goals - to introduce a micro eco-itinerary along the Olive route, to make strides in the education of stakeholders regarding the implementation of the principles of circular economy, and to ensure marketing activities in order to popularize the changes made and communicate with the tourists, local communities and general public, several activities adapted to the particularities of the route are further proposed. Since these are relatively new concepts, the activities that contribute to sustainable local tourism development, especially waste reduction, water savings, sustainable mobility, mitigation of climate change and use of renewable energy are listed and described below.

Main goals and corresponding projects/activities

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
| Goal 1 | Development and promotion of micro eco-itineraries in underexplored rural areas, integrating interactive and educational elements | To form a participatory working group including farmers, tourism boards, and environmental NGOs to co-develop and review eco-itineraries   |
|        |   | To introduce the model of Circular Economy Route (CER) on certain micro eco-itineraries along the Routes of the Olive Tree through the implementation of waste management, water management and the introduction of renewable energy sources |
|        |   | Standardization of services offered by providers in terms of the circular economy  |

|        |  |   |
|--------|--|---|
|        |  | Creation of tourism packages and cooperation with tour operators  |
| Goal 2 | Awareness raising, training and education of stakeholders on sustainability and circular economy | To develop an educational program and training of relevant stakeholders in waste management, water management, sustainable transport and renewable energy already implemented in similar environments |
|        |  | To develop a digital platform for distance learning and exchange of experience  |
| Goal 3 | Enhanced marketing initiatives for all-year round oleotourism                                    | To ensure marketing of micro-itineraries towards eco-conscious tourists   |
|        |  | To establish digital channels for marketing and promotion of products and services offered on the Routes of the Olive Tree  |
|        |  | To develop and implement a consumer engagement plan   |

In order to create a micro eco-itinerary within the Routes of the Olive Tree, three activities are proposed. Through the structuring of the Circular economy route, the mapping of economic enterprises or agricultures linked to the recycling chain is foreseen and their promotion through proposals for small cultural ecological routes. Based on that analysis, new circular economic principles and new green technologies should be suggested and supported. Structuring the Circular economy route is important because of the need to promote the implementation and management of sustainable alternatives and to stimulate local tourism development.

Sustainable and circular economy practices in rural areas are not many and often random, but are necessary in providing a solid base of the micro-itinerary. Also, those which exist provide different levels of sustainable practices and possible tourist experiences. This is why the number of products/services in terms of the circular economy should be offered and consequently standardized, which is entailed by the second activity.

Once it is done, they can be combined into solid micro-itineraries based on sustainability to provide for tourist packages. Then, tour operators have the basis for creation of tourist packages which can be offered on the market. The third activity, therefore, focuses on the creation of tourism packages and cooperation with tour operators.

Awareness raising and training and of relevant stakeholders in green and circular practices such as solid waste management, water management, sustainable mobility and renewable energy already implemented in similar environment are important for future actions in achieving sustainability on the Routes of the Olive Tree. These educational programs and trainings can be applied to all cultural routes that aim to realize the



principles of sustainable development, regardless of the circular business models that would be applied in practice. It is clear that the sustainable models that can be applied on the Routes of the Olive Tree depend on the specifics of the activities that take place in rural communities and their ability to connect with the tourist offer at the location and in the environment. However, the importance of awareness and involvement of the local community is huge, regardless of the location as no local cultural route can be sustainable if it is not supported by the local community, and if the stakeholders and local residents do not understand the added value it can bring to their region.

Development of a digital platform for distance learning for the stakeholders in rural development is also one of the activities which contributes to meeting the needs for new trades and skills through online networks. Along with acquiring new knowledge, it is also possible to share knowledge through various digital tools. This leads to the exchange of ideas on circular economy practices regarding seasonality, quality of products and services as well as similarities thanks to the geographic location.

Stronger promotion towards eco-conscious tourists can ensure that the developed micro-itineraries are targeted towards appropriate markets, which in turn brings economic value to the stakeholders involved. This activity directly connects products/services with their target markets.

Digital channels convey real time information on supply, prices, demand etc. which enables simpler connection with circular practices. It also links producers with consumers, cuts losses in traditional marketing concepts and contributes to sustainable development.

Consumer engagement represents the will of the citizens and tourists for change in the consumer behaviour. Various actions are proposed to be taken through voluntary actions aimed at different generations, for example, like green-grey movements or children's action groups. Consumer engagement can be through the participation, for example, of children through school programs in activities in the area of the Routes of the Olive Tree, or through the involvement of visitors in olive picking, maintenance, olive oil production, etc. but also recycling, composting, water and energy saving, etc.

## 1.5 DIVISION OF TASKS AND TIMELINES IN ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE

A tabulary presentation of the roadmap in achieving greater sustainability/circular economy along the Routes of the Olive Tree follows. It serves as a guide through the planned activities indicating who does what and when.





|  |   | Institution/organization in charge  | Implementation deadline |
|--|---|---|-------------------------|
| Goal 1:<br>Development and promotion of micro eco-itineraries in underexplored rural areas, integrating interactive and educational elements | To form a participatory working group including farmers, tourism boards, and environmental NGOs to co-develop and review eco-itineraries  | Route managers in cooperation with development agencies and interested tourist agencies   | 2025                    |
|  | To introduce the model of Circular economy route (CER) on parts of the Routes of the Olive Tree   | Route managers in cooperation with development agencies and interested tourist agencies   | 2025                    |
|  | Standardization of services offered by providers in terms of the circular economy   | SMEs and family farms along the route, cultural products/service providers, etc., development agencies  | 2025                    |
|  | Creation of tourism packages and cooperation with tour operators  | Local Tourism Boards, tour operators  | 2026                    |
| Goal 2: Awareness raising, training and education of stakeholders on sustainability and circular economy                                     | To develop an educational program and training of relevant stakeholders in waste management, water management, sustainable transport and renewable energy already implemented in similar environments | Educational institutions, technology-innovation centres, offices for the transfer of technology and innovation, e.g. BATTI or LIBERTAS, local environmental education centres, etc. | 2026                    |



|   |  |  |      |
|---|--|--|------|
|   | To develop a digital platform for distance learning and exchange of experience   | The Routes of the Olive Tree   | 2026 |
| Goal 3: Enhanced marketing initiatives for all-year round oleotourism | To ensure marketing of micro-itineraries towards eco-conscious tourists  | Tourism Boards and destination management companies of the related areas | 2026 |
|   | To establish digital channels for marketing and promotion of products and services offered on the Routes of the Olive Tree | Cultural Foundation "Routes of the Olive Tree"                           | 2026 |
|   | To develop and implement a consumer engagement plan  | Tourism Boards of the related areas, regional development agencies       | 2026 |



## II. ROADMAP FOR THE PHOENICIANS' ROUTE

### II.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR THE PHOENICIANS' ROUTE

#### II.1.1 Description of the Route

The Phoenicians' Route is one of the 48 international Cultural Routes recognised by the Council of Europe. It was listed among Cultural Routes in 2003. The Route's network members are: Albania, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Spain, Tunisia, Slovenia and Ukraine. The Route represents the shared history and heritage of the listed countries, and it consists of 120 Regions/Natural Parks/Archaeological Parks/Municipalities/Museums and Chambers of commerce and industries.

The Phoenicians' Route's primary objectives are:

- to enhance cultural, natural and landscape heritage
- to foster collaboration of cities, enterprises, volunteers and institutions
- to promote an identity integrated and responsible cultural tourism

The primary theme of the Route is the Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean, taking as a reference the ancient Mediterranean civilizations that from the Phoenician era to the Republican age of the Roman Empire contributed to creating a *koine*<sup>9</sup>, a Mediterranean cultural "community", and to lay the foundations for what would later become the contemporary Euro-Mediterranean civilization. The route is therefore the sea: a connection of the major nautical routes that from the 12th century BC were used by the Phoenicians as essential routes for trade and cultural communication in the Mediterranean.

Through these routes, the Phoenicians – ingenious sailors and merchants – gave rise to a great civilization that, despite its historical significance, remains little known. This civilization expanded westward, fostering intense exchanges of artefacts, people, and ideas, and played a crucial role in the dissemination of culture throughout the ancient world. Similarly, other great Mediterranean civilizations, such as the Greeks, Romans, Etruscans, Iberians, Messapians, Picentes, and others, also utilized these paved sea routes. These interconnected networks of trade and cultural exchange became an integral and essential foundation of Mediterranean identity and culture.

Today, the Phoenicians and other ancient civilizations stand as a cross-cultural model of interculturality. They exemplify the spirit of shared history and cooperation among Mediterranean nations, promoting unity and mutual understanding. The Phoenician

---

<sup>9</sup> Term *koine* refers to common Greek spoken in the classical and medieval period. It comes from the Greek and basically means "common" or "shared". <https://www.britannica.com/topic/koine-language>

Route is deeply rooted in the historical, social, and cultural relationships that the Phoenicians forged along their maritime routes, encompassing their landing places, trade hubs, and emporiums scattered across the Mediterranean basin.

The Route aims to celebrate and preserve the cultural, natural, and landscape heritage of these historically significant places. It does so by fostering collaboration among cities, enterprises, volunteers, and institutions committed to contributing to the development of a renewed relationship between people and their cultural heritage. This includes exploring innovative educational methods and tourism models that meet the needs of contemporary cultural exchange.

These ancient sites, rich in history and tradition, become milestones of a journey across the Mediterranean. They offer visitors a unique opportunity to engage in the exchange of objects, knowledge, and experiences, much like the ancient civilizations once did. By retracing these historic pathways, the Phoenician Route not only brings the past to life but also encourages a deeper understanding of the shared heritage that unites Mediterranean nations today.

### II.1.2 state-of-the-art regarding sustainability and circular economy related to the Phoenicians' Route

Having previously mentioned the 120 partners of the Phoenicians' Route stretching geographically across the Mediterranean Sea, the first gap to highlight is the significant geographical distance between members, which, in most cases, does not allow for the use of sustainable mobility. Even within the territories of the Phoenicians' Route partners, although with some variations, there are still limitations to sustainable urban and interurban mobility.

The challenges faced by the Routes in general include seasonality, lack of professionalism, uncoordinated stakeholder activities, insufficient communication and coordination, limited infrastructure, reluctance to adopt new approaches, government bureaucracy, limited public transport, high energy demand, and waste and water management issues from May to October (the high tourism season). Additionally, there is a lack of digital infrastructure.

There is also a limited offering of integrated tourist activities connected to the Route, which is founded on the principles of historical, social, and cultural relationships established by the Phoenicians along these maritime routes and their emporiums in the Mediterranean basin.

The challenge of seasonality is particularly evident in Cyprus and the Mediterranean, where the peak tourist season typically lasts from May to October. The summer months of June, July, August, and September are the busiest, with Cyprus attracting an influx of visitors primarily from Europe, drawn by its Mediterranean climate, beaches, and cultural heritage.







However, during the rest of the year, there is inadequate demand, which often leads to revenue fluctuations and job insecurity.

During the peak season, issues with mobility, energy consumption, waste, and water management become more pronounced. Circular economy principles, ecotourism, and slow tourism hold significant potential to address the issue of seasonality by focusing on sustainable solutions such as:

- Improved communication: Creating a digital platform shared by municipalities and local operators to centralize information on events, itineraries, and tourist promotions, ensuring unified and accessible information.
- Coordination: Increasing opportunities for meetings, information exchange, and stakeholder involvement in administrative decision-making.
- Multilingual materials: Translating tourism information and guides into multiple languages to attract international tourists and enhance accessibility.
- Training for local operators: Offering courses on eco-sustainable practices and digital marketing to improve operator skills, enabling them to promote the region sustainably and engage eco-conscious visitors.
- Development of sustainable tourism experiences: Designing new tourism packages that blend natural and cultural experiences, appealing to visitors seeking diverse and sustainable travel options.
- Targeted slow tourism marketing: Promoting sustainable itineraries that feature gastronomic experiences and outdoor activities, targeting specific groups such as families, cyclists, and nature enthusiasts.
- Collaboration with digital platforms: Launching marketing campaigns on digital platforms to attract eco-conscious travellers, providing easy access to information and itineraries via mobile devices.
- Community involvement: Engaging local communities and stakeholders in tourism initiatives to ensure the development reflects local values, benefits residents, and enhances the visitor experience.
- Fostering collaboration: Working in synergy with local administrations and businesses to engage a larger number of stakeholders and create a more inclusive tourism network. Activities such as hiking, cycling, exploring nature, and discovering authentic traditional products can generate additional income for local stakeholders.

By offering integrated tourism experiences and implementing circular economy principles, the rational use of natural resources and energy along the Route can be achieved. Additionally, better utilization of waste and by-products can create added value and new opportunities for sustainable development.

For example, the Route can implement actions such as:

- Encouraging Soft Mobility: Promoting the use of bicycles among citizens and travelers through a social credit system that offers economic incentives for adopting eco-friendly transport.





- **Electric Bike Charging Stations:** Installing charging stations along popular cycling routes, especially in rest areas and near key attractions, to encourage the use of e-bikes and reduce reliance on traditional vehicles.
- **Promotion of Renewable Energy:** Encouraging local accommodations and dining establishments to install solar panels and adopt energy-saving systems. Partnering with green energy suppliers can help ensure that participating operators utilize renewable energy sources.
- **Carbon Footprint Reduction:** Monitoring transport emissions along tourism itineraries and promoting low-impact transport options, such as electric shuttles or car-sharing services, to minimize the carbon footprint while connecting major points of interest.
- **Public Water Refill Stations:** Establishing water refill stations along key routes and in rest areas to reduce reliance on single-use plastic bottles. These refill points could be highlighted on maps to encourage sustainable hydration for visitors.
- **Water Conservation Practices for Agrotourism:** Educating operators and visitors on water-saving techniques, such as installing water-efficient faucets and advanced irrigation systems, particularly in agrotourism facilities along the routes.
- **Reuse of Treated Wastewater for Irrigation:** Implementing treated wastewater systems in appropriate areas to irrigate green spaces, botanical gardens, and parks within the eco-itineraries, promoting sustainable water use.
- **Compostable Materials for Tastings and Events:** Using compostable utensils and packaging during tastings and culinary events along the routes to reduce non-recyclable waste and support a low-impact tourism experience.
- **Doggy Bags for Food Waste Reduction:** Encouraging visitors to use doggy bags at participating restaurants and agrotourism locations, allowing them to take leftovers and help minimize food waste.
- **Resource-Sharing App:** Developing a digital app for local operators to share unused resources, such as food or materials, to support a circular economy and reduce waste. The app could also include options for composting and recycling.

In terms of the sustainability of the Route, it is crucial to adopt a participatory approach in planning the future development of the Route by including all relevant stakeholders (SMEs, governments, farmers, NGOs, researchers, etc.). Furthermore, achieving sustainability goals requires education and training for local producers in tourism services and green business practices, ensuring a more professional offering and a high-quality experience for tourists.

Visitors seeking this type of tourism are not only looking for tangible and material offerings but also intangible aspects, such as unique experiences, ways of living, and environmentally friendly behaviors.





There is also a need for marketing initiatives and integrated strategies to promote the Phoenicians' Route, increasing recognition of the destinations and their products. Additionally, investment in infrastructure is needed, particularly in tourist accommodations and service improvements in rural areas. New infrastructure should follow environmentally friendly principles, promoting hospitality practices such as the use of eco-friendly materials, water reuse systems, and photovoltaic panels to attract environmentally conscious tourists.

Table 2: Challenges, needs and potentials regarding sustainability and circular economy of the Phoenicians' Route

| Challenges   | Needs  | Potentials   |
|--|--|--|
| Seasonality: peak tourism concentrated from May to October                       | Development of integrated, year-round tourism activities and experiences                 | Promotion of slow tourism and ecotourism to distribute tourist visits throughout the year                        |
| Lack of professionalism and limited skills and knowledge among stakeholders      | Training programs for local operators on eco-sustainable practices and digital marketing | Professional development to enhance service quality and attract eco-conscious visitors                           |
| Uncoordinated stakeholder activities   | Improved communication channels and regular stakeholder meetings                         | Development of a centralized digital platform to share events, itineraries, and promotions                       |
| Limited public transport, high energy demand, and lack of digital infrastructure | Investment in public transport, renewable energy systems, and digital infrastructure     | Implementation of electric bike charging stations, solar panels, and digital apps to support eco-friendly travel |
| Resistance to sustainability innovations and modern tourism practices            | Awareness-raising campaigns and community involvement initiatives.                       | Engaging local communities to ensure tourism reflects local values and benefits residents                        |
| Administrative delays and inefficiencies   | Better coordination with stakeholders.   | Collaborative frameworks between local administrations and businesses to simplify tourism development.           |
| limited public transport options during peak season                              | Promotion of soft mobility options and infrastructure for sustainable transport.         | bicycles and electric shuttles to reduce carbon emissions  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Insufficient online presence and digital services for tourists | Investment in digital platforms, apps, and multilingual content. | Digital platforms for itineraries  |
| Inefficient use of energy in tourism facilities                | Adoption of renewable energy sources and energy-saving systems   | Promotion of energy-efficient accommodations, and green energy                                 |
| Low recognition of the Route and its offerings                 | Strategic marketing and promotional campaigns for eco-tourism    | Targeted marketing to specific tourist groups and use of digital campaigns to boost visibility |

There are examples of good practices regarding the Phoenicians' Route such as "Operational guidelines for the creation of Smart Ways and Interpretation Centres of the Phoenicians' Route".

The Phoenicians' Route innovation strategy is based on the development of "Smart Ways"—paths of excellence created in seven countries along the Route, reflecting the latest and most innovative methodologies and applications in the field.

A "Smart Way" is understood as a "PathWay" that brings together heritage, communities, and individual services to create a high-quality regional offering. It enhances service standards for companies and the territories involved, fosters cooperation among different segments of the supply chain, and promotes new activities that support the enjoyment of local attractions. The Smart Way also identifies resources with "Sustainable Tourism" potential in participating areas and enhances existing offerings through networking and a sustainable, integrated tourism. The main stakeholders include tourism and cultural operators, local authorities, professional schools, associations, local communities, and managers of cultural sites and museums. The goal is to create a territorial network that integrates the "territory" and its "attractions." These attractions include not only elements of "high" culture but also landscape values, local community traditions, crafts, folklore, gastronomy, and atmosphere. The concept of the route is understood as a journey broken into stages, each with unique and original characteristics. It represents a new model for slow, sustainable, creative, experiential, social, accessible, and responsible tourism. This approach aims to increase visits to sites and areas with traditionally lower visitor numbers.

The Way is called "Smart" because it applies the most innovative tourism methodologies. The route can vary in length (typically between 100 and 400 km), but the concept is based more on the quality of the offer and the relationships among the involved operators than



on its physical length. Leading areas will benefit from new tourism and development approaches grounded in creativity, heritage interpretation, and the active participation of local communities and stakeholders. The project will act as a facilitator of territorial dynamics for sustainable development through a creative approach and destination management.

The creation of a Smart Way is based on a series of activities developed by the Phoenicians' Route and its local partners. Specifically, these phases include:

- **Short Cognitive Analysis of Territorial Resources:** Conducted by the local territorial partner in collaboration with Phoenicians' Route experts, this analysis aims to identify unique qualities, specific features, and material and immaterial heritage excellence. These elements form the basis for creating Smart Ways. The process involves actively engaging local stakeholders, raising their awareness of their new role in the "Route System," and unlocking potential growth to meet and overcome emerging challenges.
- **Idea and Design of the Smart Ways:** Experts from the Phoenicians' Route and the local territorial partner collaborate to develop a shared proposal. This proposal will be presented to selected stakeholders, chosen by the local territorial partner during the capacity building workshop. Stakeholders may include: cultural and tourism operators, representatives of associations, institutional representatives, companies, municipalities, representatives from hotel schools; the local partner sends invitations to these stakeholders to attend the meeting, which is designed to raise awareness and facilitate the creation of the Smart Way through a participatory process, according to organizational needs.
- **Post-Meeting Actions:** Following the workshop, the Phoenicians' Route experts and local territorial partner will draft the initial Smart Way proposal for each territory, officially initiating the creation phase. During this stage, the local territorial partner will aid and support to both previously involved stakeholders and any new participants, with ongoing support from the Phoenicians' Route experts.

To make capacity building even more effective, the reference context must be clearly defined. Since one of the objectives of capacity building is also the identification and territorial definition of the Smart Way, it is essential that the project's local territorial partner and the expert team of the Phoenicians' Route share a common starting point for the technical reflections to be presented to selected stakeholders and guests.

Accordingly, a brief joint survey is planned to identify the most significant elements that will serve as starting points for the stakeholder meeting. This analysis may be developed after an exchange of ideas between the Phoenicians' Route experts and local territorial partners (including through remote communication tools) and will take the form of a meeting held prior to the capacity building workshop with stakeholders.

This brief analysis can be summarized in the following points:





- Analysis of Local Resources: Map the area's tourist resources and assess their attractiveness according to criteria such as uniqueness, alignment with tourism demand, and development potential.
- Analysis of Services and Operators (Stakeholders): Identify the services and operators that form part of the (extended) tourism chain. Evaluate their structure, the availability of information, commercial accessibility, and the overall visitor experience.
- Analysis of Tourist Flows: Assess market interest in the destination and compare it to similar territories to understand the level and nature of visitor demand.
- Competitor Analysis: Determine the Smart Way's positioning in national and international markets. Conduct an in-depth benchmarking exercise to compare the tourism products offered.
- Market and Target Analysis: Examine market trends, including changes in travel behaviour, visitor characteristics, motivations, and habits. This is necessary to determine how well the current offer aligns with market demands.
- Analysis of Market Trends: Investigate economic, social, and technological macro-trends to understand the evolution of the tourism market and identify factors that most significantly impact a destination's competitiveness.

## DESIGN OF A HERITAGE INTERPRETATION CENTRE

Once the contents of a Smart Way has been developed, a critical step is the creation of one or more Heritage Interpretation Centers along the route. The operational approach involves identifying suitable locations owned by potential partners by activating local partnership mechanisms. These centers should be strategically located based on logistics, accessibility, and internal mobility considerations.

Within these spaces, chosen for their strategic value, visitors will be introduced to the key themes of the Smart Way, the local partnerships, the stakeholders involved, and the services offered. Interpretative communication methods will be used to combine the presentation of local resources with the experiential elements of the Smart Way. As a result, each center becomes not only a hub for discovering what to do along the Smart Way but also a place for developing products and new projects, forming new partnerships, and enhancing technical knowledge. It is here that know-how can be shared, and young people interested in becoming involved in the Smart Way can receive training. For these reasons, the creation of a Heritage Interpretation Centre is considered a dynamic process.

Once established, the Interpretation Centre could serve as a meeting place where service providers (such as guides and facilitators) can interact with visitors, presenting the full range of services offered by the Smart Way and its partners (DMC, business networks, product clubs, etc.). As a strategic hub of the Smart Way, the Heritage Interpretation Centre plays a fundamental role and can also function as a local reception area where visitors can obtain information and directly purchase services such as tours, accommodations, meals, guided activities, transport, crafts, and more.

## SUMMARIZING THE MACRO-ACTIVITIES

Herewith, the key macro-activities that need to be carried out are summarized.

Drawing on principles endorsed by organizations like ICOM (International Council of Museums), these Interpretation Centers will function as information hubs for local tourism products and experiences. Visitors can listen to or read folk tales, enjoy local music, watch videos, and gather information on lesser-known sites ideal for understanding the region's identity, history, traditions, artisanal know-how, and culinary heritage. All of this is done within a creative and sustainable framework.

Most importantly, the Interpretation Centers will serve as platforms for developing tourism skills and incubators of new ideas, thus fostering innovation and growth in local tourism sectors.

| Activity  | Description   | Outcomes   | Stakeholders Involved  |
|---|---|--|--|
| 1. Territorial Resources Analysis   | Examination of territorial characteristics of each destination to identify specifics for the Smart Way model. Analysis is conducted by each partner's manager using a provided standardized form.   | Identification of unique elements and requirements for implementing the Smart Way model in each territory.                     | Partner's managers, local territorial partners                                 |
| 2. Involvement of Local Communities & Development of Experiential and Creative Tourism Offers | Engagement with local communities through associations and NGOs in cultural and social inclusion sectors. Training locals on opportunities offered by sustainable and innovative tourism. Phoenicians' Route experts act as animators and facilitators in local workshops (inspired by Faro Convention Forums) to create a new experiential and creative tourism offer. | Empowered local communities, enhanced sustainable and creative tourism offers, strengthened cultural identity and inclusivity. | Local communities, associations, NGOs, Phoenicians' Route experts              |
| 3. Capacity Building Local Workshops  | Selection of 20 key local stakeholders (public/private tourism and cultural operators, associations, NGOs) in target areas to participate in a workshop. The workshop raises awareness of new tourism models and encourages a participatory approach in designing Smart Ways.   | Increased stakeholder capacity, participatory design of Smart Ways, heightened awareness of innovative tourism models.         | Local stakeholders (operators, associations, NGOs), Phoenicians' Route experts |



|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 4. Designing the Smart Ways with Local Private and Public Entities  | Creation of itineraries as models of creative and experiential tourism. Collaboration between private and public local bodies.  | Exemplary creative and experiential tourism itineraries, stronger partnerships between public and private sectors.  | Private sector operators, public authorities, local bodies               |
| 5. Creation of Interpretation Centers as Main Hubs Along the Routes | Identification of suitable spaces for Interpretation Centers through public/private partnerships. Centers provide information (panels, brochures, possibly interactive screens) on routes, local offers, creative tourism, and related themes. Guided by ICOM principles, centers serve as info hubs, offering cultural content, training, and idea incubation. | Centralized information hubs for visitors, platforms for skill development, innovation incubators, enhanced visitor experience and understanding of local heritage. | Public/private partners, cultural operators, local communities, visitors |

## Defining Strategies and Tools for Marketing Promotion

Another fundamental pillar of the Capacity Building Workshop's output is the creation of a specific branding and marketing strategy. Integrated within the context of the entire project and the Phoenicians' Route, this strategy should highlight the unique qualities and identity of each individual Smart Way.

Marketing promotion provides destinations with the means to structure their product offerings in a way that allows tourists to easily book them. However, promotion and communication alone are not sufficient to make a destination's tourism offer competitive. Promotion involves a set of marketing tools used to position and increase appreciation for a service, product, or destination in the marketplace.

Today's promotional activities must be innovative and break away from outdated models. The keywords now are "sensitivity" and "marketing" as tools to place a destination's offerings on the market, making them readily available for purchase by consumers. Sales can be handled directly by hoteliers or service providers, or indirectly through travel agencies, tour operators, and OTAs.

In this new approach, the general concept of the destination is no longer the central focus of promotion. Instead, it is replaced by the tangible, bookable offerings presented by individual operators.

## II.2 COMMON VISION FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE PHOENICIANS ROUTE

The Phoenicians’ Cultural Route would be a unique blend of cultural heritage, modern technology, and sustainable practices. It would invite visitors not only to explore the past, but also to engage with it responsibly and in an eco-friendly manner, while supporting local economies and fostering cooperation. By creating a sustainable, smart, and green cultural route, this initiative could serve as a model for how tourism, technology, and conservation can work together to protect and promote our shared cultural heritage for future generations.

| Vision  |
|---|
| <p>The Phoenicians’ Cultural Route represents a dynamic connection between people, history, and environmental responsibility, fostering sustainable tourism development through the integration of circular economy principles. This initiative intertwines the rich historical legacy of the Phoenician civilization with modern values of technological innovation, cultural preservation, and eco-conscious practices. By offering sustainable, smart, and green regional itineraries, the Route promotes its member areas, regions, and countries as part of a broader Mediterranean network of maritime, trade, and cultural exchange.</p> |

## II.3 GOALS OF THE PHOENICIANS’ CULTURAL ROUTE RELATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

In order to achieve the Phoenicians’ Cultural Route as a model of sustainability through the implementation of circular economy practices by 2025, efforts are focused on achieving the three key goals outlined below.

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Goal 1 | Introduction of small-scale sustainable micro eco-itineraries in rural, less-visited areas and a transformative approach to tourism and cultural heritage management. By focusing on less-explored destinations, these itineraries can alleviate the pressure on popular tourist hotspots, encourage more sustainable forms of tourism, and create new opportunities for local communities. This initiative will also contribute to the more efficient management of cultural heritage and its surrounding environments. |
| Goal 2 | Stakeholders training, collaboration and cross-sector involvement in order to formed sustainability and circular economy   |



## Goal 3

## Marketing and promotion initiatives for all-year round tourism

By achieving these goals, the aim is to advance the vision of the Phoenicians' Cultural Route, which seeks to enhance the cultural, natural, and landscape heritage of the relevant areas. This will be accomplished through collaboration among cities, enterprises, volunteers, and institutions that are committed to redefining the relationship between people and their cultural surroundings. Additionally, the Route aspires to develop new educational and tourism models that meet the contemporary needs of cultural exchange. In this manner, ancient sites become stages along a Mediterranean journey, facilitating the exchange of artifacts, knowledge, and experiences.

If these objectives are achieved, it will represent a significant progress in addressing some of the key challenges currently faced by the Routes.

## II.4 ACTIVITIES TO BE TAKEN FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE PHOENICIANS' CULTURAL ROUTE

Introducing small-scale sustainable micro eco-itineraries in rural and less-visited areas presents a promising solution to many challenges currently facing the tourism industry. By focusing on responsible, environmentally conscious travel, these itineraries help preserve cultural and natural heritage while empowering local communities, creating economic opportunities, and fostering a deeper understanding of regional traditions and landscapes. When thoughtfully managed, such itineraries can become a vital tool for promoting sustainable tourism that benefits both the environment and local economies.

Examples of Positive Impacts:

### 1. Encouraging Sustainable and Responsible Tourism

- **Low-Impact Travel:** Micro eco-itineraries promote small, self-guided or small-group tours that minimize environmental impact. They emphasize slow travel methods such as walking, cycling, or using low-carbon transport options, allowing visitors to a meaningful connection with the landscape and local culture while preserving the environment.
- **Preserving Natural Resources:** By highlighting rural and lesser-known areas, tourism can help protect fragile ecosystems away from urban centers. This may involve promoting eco-friendly accommodations, zero-waste practices, and resource conservation practices.
- **Off-Season and Dispersed Travel:** Strategically designing micro eco-itineraries for off season period helps spread visitor flow throughout the year, preventing overtourism.





This approach eases pressure on heavily frequented sites and ensures a steady, year-round economic benefit for local communities.

## 2. Empowering Local Communities

- **Community-Based Tourism:** Involving local communities in designing and operating these itineraries ensures direct benefits from tourism. Visitors can experience authentic local handicrafts, traditional cuisine, and other services, supporting genuine cultural exchange.
- **Job Creation and Economic Benefits:** Developing small-scale itineraries can create new employment opportunities in rural areas, including roles for tour guides, accommodation providers, artisans, and food producers. Supporting local businesses ensures that a greater share of tourism revenue remains within the community.
- **Cultural Revitalization:** Many rural areas possess unique cultural heritage at risk of being forgotten. By attracting visitors to these regions, micro eco-itineraries help revitalize local traditions, crafts, festivals, and languages, preserving them for future generations.

## 3. Efficient Cultural Heritage Management

- **Sustainable Heritage Practices:** Eco-itineraries encourage the responsible management of cultural and natural heritage. This may involve restoring and maintaining heritage sites using local materials and sustainable methods.
- **Monitoring and Preservation:** Smaller, well-managed groups allow more efficient monitoring of visitor impact on cultural sites. Technologies like smart sensors or digital platforms can track visitor numbers, environmental factors, and conservation needs, enabling proactive preservation efforts.
- **Interpretation and Education:** These itineraries provide opportunities for deeper engagement with cultural heritage through storytelling, guided tours, and educational programs. By informing visitors about the significance of the sites they encounter, eco-itineraries foster respect for local culture and the environment.

## 4. Environmental and Economic Impact

- **Eco-Friendly Transportation:** Integrating alternative transportation options such as electric bikes or, when possible, electric vehicles reduces the travel-related carbon footprint, promoting environmental stewardship and aligning with sustainable tourism principles.
- **Local Economic Diversification:** Distributing tourism across rural areas helps reduce reliance on a single industry (e.g., agriculture or crafts), providing economic diversification. This approach makes local economies more resilient to seasonal fluctuations and global market changes.





- **Circular Economy Principles:** Micro eco-itineraries can support a circular economy by encouraging the reuse of resources, reducing waste, managing water responsibly, and promoting locally sourced food and products. For example, food tours might highlight seasonal, local ingredients and offer hands-on activities like traditional food production, linking tourism directly to sustainable local practices.

## 5. Positive Environmental Outcomes

- **Protecting Landscapes and Biodiversity:** Careful itinerary design ensures that tourism does not disrupt sensitive ecosystems. Trails through forests, hills, wetlands, or coastal areas foster appreciation for local flora and fauna and encourage conservation efforts.
- **Sustainable Resource Management:** Eco-itineraries encourage energy-efficient accommodations, water conservation, waste reduction, and eco-friendly construction practices, ultimately promoting sustainable resource use.

**6. Training, Collaboration, and Cross-Sector Involvement** Providing training and education to itinerary stakeholders and businesses on circular economy principles enables progress through scientific and professional guidance. This reduces waste, addresses water scarcity, and supports the use of renewable energy sources. The success of micro eco-itineraries depends on the joint efforts of multiple stakeholders—businesses, local governments, heritage managers, and communities—working in harmony to achieve shared sustainability goals.

**7. Promoting Eco-Tourism in Rural and Less-Visited Areas** Enhancing year-round promotional initiatives for eco-itineraries requires targeted marketing, highlighting unique local experiences, and fostering partnerships that emphasize ecological, cultural, and social aspects of the destination. **Strategic Marketing and Promotion Approaches:**

- **Year-Round Digital Marketing Strategy:** Utilize seasonal campaigns, search engine optimization (SEO), and dynamic online content (websites, social media) to engage potential visitors throughout the year.
- **Engaging Content Creation:** Use multimedia storytelling, interactive maps, and guides. Collaborate with eco-friendly travel influencers or bloggers to reach a broader audience.
- **Cultural Integration:** Offer experiences connecting travelers to local heritage, such as traditional crafts workshops or cooking classes using indigenous ingredients.
- **Eco-Friendly Infrastructure:** Provide low-carbon transportation solutions (electric vehicles, bicycles, hiking tours), conduct awareness campaigns, and leverage local festivals and events to attract visitors.
- **Partnerships and Networking:** Collaborate with tour operators, join international eco-tourism networks, and encourage visitor feedback to continually improve the offer and build a strong reputation.





## Main goals and corresponding projects/activities:

|        |   |   |
|--------|---|---|
| Goal 1 | Introduction of small-scale sustainable micro eco-itineraries in rural, less-visited areas and a transformative approach to tourism and cultural heritage management. | To introduce the model of Circular Economy Route (CER) on specific micro eco-itineraries along the Phoenicians' Route, incorporating waste management, water conservation, and renewable energy solutions |
|        |   | To encourage sustainable and responsible tourism practices that empower local communities   |
|        |   | To implement efficient cultural heritage management strategies that deliver positive environmental and economic impacts   |
| Goal 2 | Stakeholders training, collaboration and cross-sector involvement in order to formed sustainability and circular economy  | To provide training and education for itinerary stakeholders and businesses on circular economy principles, focusing on reducing waste, addressing water scarcity, and adopting renewable energy sources  |
|        |   | To foster collaboration and joint efforts among stakeholders, including businesses, local governments, heritage managers, and local communities   |
| Goal 3 | Marketing and promotion initiatives for all-year round  | To leverage targeted marketing strategies that highlight unique experiences and emphasize the ecological, cultural, and social aspects of the destination   |
|        |   | To develop a year-round digital marketing strategy, including seasonal campaigns, SEO, website optimization, social media engagement, multimedia storytelling, and interactive maps and guides            |
|        |   | To collaborate with eco-friendly travel influencers or bloggers to create seasonal content that showcases the destination's unique features throughout the year   |
|        |   | To integrate cultural experiences that connect travelers with local heritage, such as traditional crafts, cooking classes with indigenous ingredients, and wellness-focused eco-itineraries               |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | To promote eco-friendly accommodations and low-carbon transportation options like electric vehicles, bicycles, and walking or hiking tours, supported by awareness campaigns |
|--|--|--|

## II.5 DIVISION OF TASKS AND TIMELINES IN ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE PHOENICIANS ROUTES

A tabular presentation of the roadmap in achieving greater sustainability/circular economy along the Phoenicians' Route follows. It serves as a guide through the planned activities indicating who does what and when.

|  |   | Institution/organization in charge  | Implementation deadline |
|--|---|---|-------------------------|
| Goal 1:<br>Introduction of micro eco-itineraries in rural less visited areas | Activity 1: To introduce the model of Circular Economy Route (CER) on specific micro eco-itineraries along the Phoenicians' Route, incorporating waste management, water conservation, and renewable energy solutions | Route managers in cooperation with development agencies and interested tourist agencies | 2025                    |
|  | Activity 2: To encourage sustainable and responsible tourism practices that empower local communities   | SMEs along the route, Local Tourism Boards and agencies                                 | 2025                    |
|  | Activity 3: To implement efficient cultural heritage management strategies that deliver positive environmental and economic impacts   | Local Tourism Boards, tour operators  | 2026                    |
| Goal 2:  | Activity 1: To provide training and education for itinerary stakeholders and businesses on  | Educational institutions, technology-innovation   | 2026                    |



|  |  |   |      |
|--|--|---|------|
| Stakeholders training, collaboration and cross-sector involvement in order to formed sustainability and circular economy | circular economy principles, focusing on reducing waste, addressing water scarcity, and adopting renewable energy sources  | centres, Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy                              |      |
|  | Activity 2: To foster collaboration and joint efforts among stakeholders, including businesses, local governments, heritage managers, and local communities  | The Phoenicians Route   | 2026 |
| Goal 3:<br>Marketing and promotion initiatives for all-year round  | Activity 1: To leverage targeted marketing strategies that highlight unique experiences and emphasize the ecological, cultural, and social aspects of the destination                                      | Tourism Boards and destination management stakeholders                                    | 2026 |
|  | Activity 2: To develop a year-round digital marketing strategy, including seasonal campaigns, SEO, website optimization, social media engagement, multimedia storytelling, and interactive maps and guides | Tourism Boards and destination management stakeholders and companies of the related areas | 2026 |
|  | Activity 3: To collaborate with eco-friendly travel influencers or bloggers to create seasonal content that showcases the destination's unique features throughout the year                                | Cultural Foundation "The Phoenicians' Route"  | 2026 |
|  | Activity 4: To integrate cultural experiences that connect travelers with local heritage, such as traditional crafts, cooking classes with indigenous ingredients, and wellness-focused eco-itineraries    | Tourism Boards of the related areas, regional development agencies                        | 2026 |





|  |  |  |      |
|--|--|--|------|
|  | Activity 5: To promote eco-friendly accommodations and low-carbon transportation options like electric vehicles, bicycles, and walking or hiking tours, supported by awareness campaigns | Pafos Regional Board of Tourism, Deputy Ministry of Tourism, Bicycle Association, Local Travel Agents, Local Hiking Agents | 2026 |
|--|--|--|------|

### III. ROADMAP FOR THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS

#### III.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS

##### III.1.1 Description of the Route

The European Route of Ceramics is a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, certified since 2012, with the aim of promoting and enhancing the cultural heritage associated with ceramic production and its traditions. Its mission is to promote the valorisation of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to ceramics and its traditions including artistic productions, collections, ceramic handicrafts, contemporary ceramic art, design, and industrial production, all by creating a sustainable and competitive tourist offering. This offering is based not only on artistic productions and cultural collections (preserved in museums and workshops) but also on the broader cultural and social growth that the destinations involved have experienced over the years.<sup>10</sup>

The European Route of Ceramics strives to establish a strong network centred around ceramics. Through collaboration between partners and the implementation of EU and local projects, the European Route of Ceramics actively pursues key priorities such as local development, the promotion of sustainable tourism linked to ceramic heritage, capacity building for local operators and authorities, the digitisation of cultural heritage, and the transfer of ceramic craftsmanship and traditional knowledge to new generations.

Among its activities, the European Route of Ceramics organises artistic residencies for ceramic artists, with a particular focus on involving young students and artists. This strengthens its commitment to fostering cultural and educational exchanges for young people across the territories of the Route. One of its key priorities is the promotion and

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.europeanrouteofceramics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Statuto\\_EN\\_20220901-1.pdf](https://www.europeanrouteofceramics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Statuto_EN_20220901-1.pdf)



valorisation of Europe's diversity in the field of ceramic art, as well as the unique local contexts of its destinations. Visitors to the Route's locations have the opportunity to experience both traditional cultural practices and contemporary innovations. This includes engaging with ceramic artists and craftsmen in their workshops, exploring museums with permanent or temporary collections of ancient and modern ceramics, and participating in artist residencies, local educational initiatives, and ceramic research and development projects.

The European Route of Ceramics currently includes 27 partners representing 16 countries, with the number constantly growing. The founding partners are Faenza (Italy), Limoges (France), Höhr-Grenzhausen (Germany), the Porzellanikon Museum (Germany), and the Prinsenhof Museum in Delft (The Netherlands). Since Faenza assumed the leadership of the Route, the following partners have joined (listed in order of entry): Aveiro (Portugal), the Iznik Foundation (Turkey), Bolesławiec (Poland), Castelló de la Plana (Spain), Gmunden (Austria), Manises (Spain), Talavera de la Reina (Spain), the State Agency for Tourism/Sheki (Azerbaijan), the Telemark Museum (Norway), the National Museum of Hutsulshchyna and Pokuttia Folk Art Y. Kobrynskyi in Kosiv (Ukraine), Modra (Slovakia), Petrinja (Croatia), Deruta (Italy), Avanos (Turkey), the Malta Crafts Foundation (Malta), the Princessehof Museum in Leeuwarden (The Netherlands), Onda (Spain), Sifnos (Greece), the Educational Development Company 'Ploigos' in Crete (Greece), the Centre for the Study of Modern Ceramics - G. Psaropoulos Family Foundation in Athens (Greece), Kütahya (Turkey), and finally, Aubagne (France).

### III.1.2 State-of-the-art regarding sustainability and circular economy related to the European Route of Ceramics

Having previously listed the partners of the European Route of Ceramics and their geographical locations, the first gap to be highlighted is the significant geographical distance between members. In most cases, this distance does not allow for the use of sustainable mobility. Even within the territories of the European Route of Ceramics' partners, although with some variations, limitations to sustainable urban and extra-urban mobility persist.

For this reason, the Route has begun to reflect on the creation and promotion of micro-routes, designed to strengthen the tourist and cultural appeal of each territory while also expanding the existing tourist demand.

The goal of improving sustainability has led the European Route of Ceramics to participate as an associated partner in the project Med-Routes: Enhancing MED Sustainable Cultural Tourism through the Creation of Micro-Itineraries Inside European Cultural Routes, funded



by the European Union under the Interreg-Euro Med programme. Two of its members are partners in the project: the Municipality of Faenza, as part of the Unione della Romagna Faentina, and the Municipality of Castelló.

The overall objective of Med-Routes is to establish and disseminate a locally based, low-impact tourism model across Cultural Routes in the Mediterranean (MED) areas, aiming to create sustainable and alternative tourist itineraries.

Additionally, it is essential to consider the diverse types of partners involved in the Route, not only in terms of partner organizations (such as municipalities, museums, associations, and tourist agencies) but also regarding the different territorial and anthropological characteristics. These differences stem from the geographical diversity of the partners—some are located on the coast, others inland, some in small towns, and others in larger urban centers. In this context, promoting experiential cultural tourism linked to ceramic heritage serves as a strategic tool for the cultural, economic, and social development of these areas. This is particularly relevant for regions distant from mass tourism destinations, as it fosters a more sustainable and slow tourism approach.

The European Route of Ceramics foresees a model of cultural tourism that incorporates sustainable practices, supporting year-round visitor engagement, distributing economic benefits, and minimizing environmental impact. The shared objective is to diversify tourist flows by encouraging visitors to explore the richness of ceramics throughout the year. This includes offering low-impact activities such as guided tours, workshops, and eco-friendly excursions. Additionally, an important goal is to promote sustainable infrastructure (e.g., public transport and cycling paths) and energy-saving practices in the Route's territories, further reinforcing the European Route of Ceramics' identity as a sustainable cultural route. The European Route of Ceramics has been actively working in this field over the past few years. In 2020, it organized a series of webinars focused on sustainable cultural tourism, presenting case studies on tourism products to representatives of partner organizations, local operators, and students in the fields of tourism and historical, artistic, and cultural heritage. These webinars were among the first initiatives aimed at providing practical examples and strategic tools for creating a more sustainable tourism offering. They also highlighted the importance of digital technologies as inclusive tools for promoting destinations and the tourism experiences they offer.

To achieve this, the European Route of Ceramics aims to conduct a detailed analysis of good practices in circular economy adopted by tourism and cultural operators. The goal is to promote these practices at the Route level and raise awareness among partners, visitors, residents, and local stakeholders about the importance of sustainability and the principles of circular economy. This analysis could also extend to good practices implemented by municipal administrations, not just private operators.

In this context, the recycling and reuse of waste materials represent a versatile and impactful approach worth exploring. Ceramic studios should evaluate their environmental footprint by assessing their production processes, materials usage, and other relevant aspects to identify new eco-friendly opportunities.

The European Route of Ceramics is currently working on several local and European projects aimed at creating educational opportunities and artistic residencies. These initiatives focus on analyzing the potential for reusing naturally existing clays to avoid generating further environmental impacts. By collaborating with key players in the ceramic industry across various European destinations, the aim is to further disseminate these good practices.

Table 3: Challenges, needs and potentials regarding sustainability and circular economy of the European Route of Ceramics

| Challenges   | Needs  | Potentials   |
|--|--|--|
| Lack of unified sustainability framework           | Design sustainability framework for the Route, including guidelines for energy efficiency, resource use, waste management, and sustainable tourism practices | With its connection to traditional craftsmanship, the Route can explore innovative uses for waste materials, such as recycling fired ceramics into new products or using ceramic waste in construction |
| Insufficient digital and technological integration | Integration of digital tools such as AR and virtual tours to improve accessibility and minimize environmental impact   | Utilising digital tools like virtual itineraries and AR could make the Route more accessible   |
| Limited awareness and engagement in sustainability | Training sessions and workshops for members on circular economy practices, sustainable production, and innovative marketing strategies                       |  |
| Visibility and awareness                           | Comprehensive tourism packages that align with   |  |



|                                      |   |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
|                                      | sustainability principles, incorporating local crafts, eco-friendly practices, and immersive cultural experiences   |  |
| Geographical and logistical barriers |   |  |
| Seasonality of the activities        | Year-round activities, such as off-season workshops, exhibitions, and virtual tours that include eco-conscious accommodations, local artisan experiences, and guided tours to mitigate the effects of seasonality |  |
| Waste Reduction                      | Waste recycling and recovery technique and sustainable design principles  |  |

11

### III.2 COMMON VISION FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS

The European Route of Ceramics, as a Cultural Route, serves as a strategic tool to promote tourism in the territories it encompasses. By its very nature, it fosters the development of tourism linked to ceramic cultural heritage, a symbol of the identity and history of these regions and their people. At the same time, it is crucial to broaden this perspective by embracing a forward-looking vision that prioritizes environmental sustainability.

Now, more than ever, we need to reflect on the exploitation of natural resources and emphasize the importance of adopting practices that do not harm the environment. This is the only viable path to ensure the long-term sustainability of tourism. Additionally,

<sup>11</sup> A portion of the challenges/needs/potentials is articulated in the evaluation report: <https://rm.coe.int/report-european-route-of-ceramics-en/1680a6f91d>

investing in sustainability enhances the attractiveness of the European Route of Ceramics by offering diverse and enriching experiences to its visitors.

Vision

The European Route of Ceramics is a catalyst for positive change, promoting tourism system which combines the valorisation of ceramics cultural heritage with sustainable management of natural resources.

III.3 GOALS OF THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS RELATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

In order to achieve the vision of the Ceramic Route as an example of sustainability through circular economy practices during 2025, efforts are directed at achieving the two key goals presented below.

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Goal 1 | Implementation of a sustainable tourism model within the European Route of Ceramics, pairing ceramics heritage valorization with environmental sustainability |
| Goal 2 | Creation of small-scale sustainable itineraries to improve the management of ceramics heritage, benefiting the local environment and economy                  |

The starting point for achieving the goals outlined in the vision is to ensure that the European Route of Ceramics possesses the necessary knowledge to develop actions in the fields of sustainable tourism and circular economy. Consequently, the first objective is to educate the members of the European Route of Ceramics on the principles and importance of sustainable tourism.

On one hand, the aim is to cultivate an understanding of why it is crucial to develop a new form of tourism that integrates a focus on local cultural heritage with a commitment to sustainability. By doing so, members can engage relevant tourism and cultural stakeholders in their areas and secure the support of local communities.

On the other hand, it is essential to provide technical expertise on how to translate these objectives into actionable strategies. The *Med-Routes* project, in which the European Route of Ceramics participates as an associated partner, includes among its objectives capacity building to promote the dissemination of its sustainable micro-itinerary model.

To this end, the Municipality of Faenza (as part of the *Unione della Romagna Faentina*) and Castelló de la Plana, two members of the European Route of Ceramics that are also partners in the *Med-Routes* project, will take responsibility for transferring the skills and knowledge acquired during the project to the other members. This includes sharing tools developed within the project, which are designed to create micro tourist itineraries that enhance cultural heritage while prioritizing sustainability.

The goal is to trigger positive change by encouraging members of the European Route of Ceramics to replicate the micro-itinerary model developed through the *Med-Routes* project.

As part of the *Med-Routes* project, two small-scale sustainable itineraries will be created within the European Route of Ceramics: one in the territory of the *Unione della Romagna Faentina* and another in Castelló. Since the other members of the European Route of Ceramics will be provided with all the know-how gained during the project, they will be able to effectively apply these acquired competencies and develop new small-scale eco-itineraries.

If small-scale sustainable itineraries are widely implemented across the European Route of Ceramics, they could become a distinctive feature of the Route, generating positive outcomes in two key ways. First, tourists initially attracted to the European Route of Ceramics would discover the added value of micro-itineraries. Second, eco-tourism enthusiasts would be introduced to the European Route of Ceramics through their exploration of these itineraries.

### III.4 ACTIVITIES TO BE TAKEN FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS

In order to achieve the goals, the following activities are further proposed:

|        |   |   |
|--------|---|---|
| Goal 1 | Implementation of a sustainable tourism model within the European Route of Ceramics, pairing ceramics | To distribute all relevant Med-Routes project materials (toolkits, catalogues, guidelines) and resources from the Euro-Med Community of |
|--------|---|---|

|        |  |   |
|--------|--|---|
|        | heritage valorization with environmental sustainability.   | Practice to the members of the European Route of Ceramics   |
|        |  | To organize webinars or in-person training sessions to present Med-Routes materials and provide guidance on developing environmentally sustainable tourism          |
|        |  | To host an event within the Med-Routes project to inform members about sustainable micro-itineraries and best practices for promoting eco-tourism                   |
| Goal 2 | Creation of small-scale sustainable itineraries to improve the management of ceramics heritage, benefiting the local environment and economy | To launch a call for proposals by the European Route of Ceramics to fund the development of small-scale sustainable itineraries aligned with Med-Routes methodology |
|        |  | To support funded members in creating small-scale eco-itineraries with assistance from the European Route of Ceramics' secretariat                                  |
|        |  | To facilitate the dissemination of successful funded initiatives and best practices among all members of the European Route of Ceramics                             |

The activities outlined are designed to support members of the European Route of Ceramics in adopting sustainable tourism practices and enhancing the management of ceramics heritage. To achieve this, all relevant materials produced in the Med-Routes project—including toolkits, catalogues, and guidelines—along with resources from the Euro-Med Community of Practice, will be distributed to the members. To ensure effective use of these resources, webinars or in-person training sessions will be organized, offering practical guidance on implementing environmentally sustainable tourism practices. Additionally, an event within the Med-Routes project will be held to educate members on developing and promoting sustainable micro-itineraries and eco-tourism in general.

To further encourage sustainable development, a call for proposals will be launched by the European Route of Ceramics, offering funding to selected members for the creation of small-scale sustainable itineraries aligned with the Med-Routes methodology. The funded members will receive support from the European Route of Ceramics' secretariat throughout the development process. As these itineraries are completed the funded





members will share their experiences and outcomes with the rest of the network thus promoting best practices and inspiring further initiatives.

### III.5 DIVISION OF TASKS AND TIMELINES IN ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS

A tabulary presentation of the roadmap in achieving greater sustainability/circular economy along the European Ceramic Route. It serves as a guide through the planned activities indicating who does what and when.

|   |  | Institution/organization in charge | Implementation deadline                      |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Goal 1: Implementation of a sustainable tourism model within the European Route of Ceramics, pairing ceramics heritage valorization with environmental sustainability | Activity 1 To distribute all relevant Med-Routes project materials (toolkits, catalogues, guidelines) and resources from the Euro-Med Community of Practice to the members of the European Route of Ceramics | URF                                | The whole duration of the Med-Routes project |
|   | Activity 2 To organize webinars or in-person training sessions to present Med-Routes materials and provide guidance on developing environmentally sustainable tourism  | URF                                | First half of 2025                           |
|   | Activity 3 To host an event within the Med-Routes project to inform members about sustainable micro-itineraries and best practices for promoting eco-tourism   | URF                                | Second half of 2025                          |
| Goal 2: Creation of small-scale sustainable itineraries to improve the  | Activity 1 To launch a call for proposals by the European Route of Ceramics to fund the development of small-scale sustainable itineraries aligned with Med-Routes methodology                               | URF                                | Second half of 2025                          |



|   |  |     |      |
|---|--|-----|------|
| management of ceramics heritage, benefiting the local environment and economy | Activity 2 To support funded members in creating small-scale eco-itineraries with assistance from the European Route of Ceramics' secretariat      | URF | 2026 |
|   | Activity 2 To facilitate the dissemination of successful funded initiatives and best practices among all members of the European Route of Ceramics | URF | 2026 |



## IV. ROADMAP FOR THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE

### IV.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE

#### IV.1.1 Description of the Route

Destination Napoleon is a cultural route managed by the European Federation of Napoleonic Cities (FECN) and certified as a “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” in 2015. Founded in 2004 by Charles Bonaparte, the FECN brings together more than 50 European cities in 11 countries (Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom) whose histories have been influenced by Napoleon.

The FECN, an association governed by French law (1901 act), is the result of a collective effort by municipalities to give their Napoleonic heritage a European dimension. By examining particularly significant and contrasting periods in the histories of European countries, the FECN aims to make a major contribution to the shared culture of Europe’s peoples and the definition of a common heritage. In 2015, the European dimension of its work was recognized through the certification of Destination Napoleon as an initiative promoting and connecting Napoleonic heritage.

Destination Napoleon enables visitors to discover, through a European and multi-faceted narrative, the contribution of Napoleon and his era to the creation of modern Europe. Through this route, the FECN is committed to promoting the fundamental values upheld by the Council of Europe, such as participatory democracy, the rule of law, the importance of intercultural dialogue, the right to heritage, and the ideals of European citizenship.

##### Local Context: Historical Route of the Lines of Torres Vedras

The Historical Route of the Lines of Torres Vedras is an inter-municipal project involving eight municipalities, dedicated to safeguarding, restoring, and enhancing a significant number of forts associated with the Lines of Torres Vedras. This initiative is supported by an inter-municipal network of interpretation centers.

More than 200 years ago, the Torres Vedras region played a crucial role in defending Lisbon against the advancing Napoleonic troops en route to the capital of the Portuguese kingdom.

Today, the Historical Route of the Lines of Torres Vedras is a cultural and tourism offering that invites visitors to discover this unique European heritage through six distinct trails or circuits, spanning a territory between the Tagus River and the Atlantic Ocean.





These routes can be explored by car or on foot. In addition to fortifications, they feature various points of interest - military, religious, natural, archaeological, and cultural - such as windmills once used as advanced lookout posts.

#### IV.1.2 state-of-the-art regarding sustainability and circular economy related to the Destination Napoleon Route

In recent years, integrating sustainability and circular economy principles into tourism and cultural routes has become increasingly important. Sustainable tourism aims to minimize negative environmental impacts, conserve natural and cultural heritage, and ensure long-term benefits for local communities and businesses. Meanwhile, circular economy principles focus on reducing waste, optimizing resource use, and promoting the reuse and recycling of materials, thus creating a more sustainable and regenerative system.

As part of the broader network of cultural routes, the Torres Vedras Historic Route is uniquely positioned to adopt these principles, drawing on best practices developed through initiatives like the MED-Routes project.

The sustainability and circular economy practices within the Destinations of Napoleon cultural route were recently updated following an activity carried out as part of the MED-Routes project. During this activity, we were able to gather a sample of data and ask questions directly related to the practices and vision of the route's operators on these issues.

On October 29th, during a Participatory Lab for the project, a questionnaire for 27 stakeholders developed. These stakeholders included representatives from local administration; a historical recreation association; visitors/tourists; tour operators in local accommodation, wine tourism, and rural tourism; a biological products shop; central and regional administrations; the UNESCO World West Geopark; a recreational club; university faculty; local businesses; and citizens. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gain insights into the operators' perceptions of the current state of sustainability along the Route, as well as to identify gaps in areas such as mobility, energy, waste, and water management.

##### Analysis of the territory

The Route of Napoleon, as part of a broader cultural and environmental landscape, presents both challenges and opportunities for integrating sustainability and circular economy principles. While some progress has been made, significant improvements are still needed across key sustainability pillars: waste management, water efficiency, energy efficiency, and mobility.





- **Waste Management:** The Route demonstrates moderate sustainability in waste management. Existing infrastructure includes recycling systems and limited initiatives promoting reusable materials. However, sustainable waste practices remain underutilized. Greater implementation of composting systems and the promotion of upcycling initiatives would increase resource optimization and minimize environmental impacts.
- **Mobility:** Mobility infrastructure along the Route requires substantial development. Current conditions include limited public transport options, insufficient cycling paths, and minimal integration of electric or low-emission vehicles. These deficiencies restrict accessibility and contribute to a higher environmental footprint. Investing in sustainable transport solutions—such as bicycle rental systems, electric shuttles, and expanded walking routes—is essential to foster environmentally responsible travel.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Energy efficiency measures are sporadic, with some reliance on renewable energy sources and efficient lighting systems. To enhance the Route’s sustainability profile, efforts should expand to include solar panel installations, smart energy monitoring, and the adoption of energy-efficient technologies across all facilities.
- **Water Conservation:** The Route shows a moderate commitment to water conservation. Strengthening efforts in this area could involve adopting advanced water-saving technologies and launching public awareness campaigns. Such measures would help conserve water resources and reduce overall consumption.

By acknowledging these territorial characteristics, we gain a clear understanding of the current sustainability status along the Route. Although certain sustainable practices are in place, there is considerable scope for improvement across multiple areas.

This information underscores the need for targeted actions to address existing gaps. While initial steps towards sustainability have been taken, a more cohesive and integrated approach is required to elevate the Route’s environmental performance. Improving these aspects will be crucial for transforming the Route into a more environmentally resilient and attractive destination for both visitors and local stakeholders.

## Seasonality Pressure

Seasonal pressure poses a significant challenge for the Napoleonic Route due to its direct impact on environmental sustainability, visitor experience, and the management of local resources and tourism sectors. Effective seasonality management helps balance





environmental impacts throughout the year, avoiding usage spikes that could compromise the Route's long-term sustainability, ecosystems, and tourism activities.

While certain periods maintain steady activity year-round, others experience peaks during specific seasons, holidays, or events, leading to fluctuating tourism flows. This variation in visitor behavior underscores the need for strategies to effectively address seasonal fluctuations. Concentrated tourism during peak seasons can strain resources and diminish visitor experience, while lower activity during off-peak periods can leave the Route's potential underutilized.

To mitigate these challenges, encouraging year-round visitation is essential. Initiatives such as promoting off-season attractions, organizing events during quieter periods, and diversifying tourism offerings can help maintain balanced visitor numbers. These efforts will enhance the Route's sustainability by reducing seasonal pressures, supporting local resilience, and ensuring a consistently high-quality experience for all visitors.

### Existing Actions, Activities, and Services in the Territory

To explore the Historical Route of the Lines of Torres Vedras, visitors can choose from six carefully designed themed routes: (1) Torres Vedras on the First Line, (2) Wellington, (3) The Defense of the Tagus, (4) The Great Cannons, (5) The Node of the Lines, and (6) From the Palace to the Atlantic. These routes encompass several restored military structures and are supported by a network of interpretation centers and exceptional landscape observatories.

The Historical Route of the Lines of Torres Vedras has received prestigious recognition, including the Europa Nostra Award for Best European Conservation Project and the Turismo de Portugal Award for Best Public Requalification Project. In addition, in 2019, the 1st and 2nd Lines of Torres Vedras were officially classified as a National Monument by the Portuguese State, underscoring the importance and historical value of this unique heritage.

### Existing Micro-itinerary components

This section provides a comprehensive overview of essential elements in sustainable tourism development within the MED-Routes project. These include economic operators, thematic highlights, points of interest, technological tools, and social services. Collectively, they strengthen the infrastructure, cultural value, visitor engagement, and overall safety in the targeted regions.

**Economic Operators:** The region's economic operators cover a wide range of services and facilities. Transportation hubs such as Lisbon Airport, Torres Vedras Airfield, and Alverca Airfield, as well as the EuroVelo Atlantic Coast Route, support international and regional





connectivity. Various accommodation options—hotels, apartments, camping sites, agritourism lodgings, hostels, and youth hotels—ensure a comfortable stay for all visitors. Local culinary experiences can be enjoyed at restaurants, coffee shops, and traditional taverns, offering authentic regional flavors.

For transportation within the area, tourists can choose from public trains and buses, taxis, private cars, bicycles, and electric scooters. The region's trade opportunities include wine farms, vineyards, olive oil mills, and a range of shopping options from local stores to major shopping centers. Sports and outdoor activities, including horse riding, swimming, football, padel, surfing, canoeing, and hiking, cater to adventure enthusiasts. Wellness and relaxation services—beauty salons, thermal baths, and spas—further enhance the visitor experience.

**Thematic Highlights:** Cultural and heritage events play a significant role in enriching the visitor experience. Gastronomic celebrations, fairs, festivals, folklore performances, wine fests, and gallery exhibitions highlight local traditions. Visitors can also partake in crafts workshops, explore interpretation centers, and engage with artisans to discover historical practices and traditional crafts.

The region's tangible and intangible heritage is showcased through traditional fairs, cultural reenactments, and folklore traditions such as bullfighting and the pilgrimage to Senhor da Boa Morte e Senhora de Alcamé. Archaeological sites feature ancient fortified settlements, Iron Age forts, Roman and medieval remnants, and Neolithic structures, while myths and legends—tales of holy healers and local superstitions—offer insights into the area's unique cultural narrative.

Monuments like the “Cruzeiro da Serra do Picoto” and cultural routes including the Mosaic Route, the Napoleonic Route, and Local City Center Routes guide visitors through historical landmarks. The natural landscapes—municipal forests, mountains, riversides, and beaches—alongside agricultural lands, orchards, and the Tagus estuary, provide an authentic look into rural life and connect visitors with long-standing agricultural practices. The Torres Vedras Wine Route and various farm-based wine tastings combine history, culture, and natural beauty into immersive experiences.

**Points of Interest:** Museums such as the Municipal Museums, the Batalha da Roliça Museum Centre, the Varino Boat Museum, and the Interpretation Center at the Dinosaur Park preserve local heritage and enrich the visitor's understanding of the region. Religious sites—sanctuaries, churches, and convents—offer spiritual insight and historical significance, while the Castle of Torres Vedras and the fortresses of the Lines of Torres Vedras reveal the region's military past.

Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy natural parks, geological formations, and bird-watching areas, as well as Blue Flag beaches and picnic sites ideal for family recreation.



**Technology Tools:** Technological integration enhances visitor engagement. Mobile applications like the Linha de Torres app, augmented reality at key historical sites, and QR codes at primary points of interest make the exploration more interactive. Digital kiosks and information centers, located in historic areas, provide easily accessible insights, while multilingual audio guides deliver informative content along thematic routes and at cultural sites.

**Social Services:** To ensure a positive visitor experience, tourism information offices are located in each city, offering educational and cultural support. Emergency services—including police stations, fire stations, hospitals, and municipal forestry and civil protection services—provide safety and peace of mind, ensuring a secure environment for all travelers.

## Challenges, Needs, and Potentials Related to Implementing Sustainability in Existing Cultural Heritage Practices

Implementing sustainable and circular economy principles within existing cultural heritage practices requires careful planning and coordination.

**Digital Solutions:** Digital solutions play an integral role in enhancing sustainability by offering educational programs, promoting local products, and improving accessibility for individuals with mobility limitations. Interactive digital panels, websites, and social media platforms make cultural and historical content more engaging and accessible, aligning with environmental sustainability and inclusivity goals. However, ensuring user-friendliness and accessibility for people with disabilities remains a continual challenge.

**Safety Standards:** Safety is also a priority in tourism activities and cultural site management. Portuguese law mandates that all services and operators meet minimum health, hygiene, and safety standards, including disaster preparedness measures. Although sites such as the Vila Franca de Xira Tourism Office, the Interpretation Center of the Lines of Torres in Torres Vedras, and the Wine Museum exemplify these standards, ensuring their consistent implementation and maintenance across diverse operators and locations remains a challenge.

**Waste Reduction and Circular Economy Practices:** The efforts on the Route toward waste reduction and circular economy principles demonstrate a commitment to more sustainable operations. These include promoting waste reduction, banning single-use plastics (as required by Portuguese law), and encouraging the use of digital initiatives (e.g., online reservations) to reduce resource consumption.

While these measures address immediate environmental impacts, developing long-term community support for sustainable practices is essential. Waste management efforts in



dining establishments, for example, could be expanded to all sectors, including event planning and on-site visitor activities.

**Local Products and Ecosystem Conservation:** Circular economy principles also extend to promoting local products and services, recycling, and composting, as well as supporting natural ecosystems. Sites like Companhia das Lezírias/EVOA actively engage in habitat restoration, wildlife conservation, and riverfront ecological enhancements, serving as models for integrating environmental restoration into visitor activities. Additionally, forest maintenance and wetland preservation initiatives along the route showcase potential pathways for linking environmental sustainability with cultural heritage. However, these efforts require consistent financial and community support, as they often exceed the scope of standard tourism practices.

**Overall Potentials:** The route presents significant potential to advance sustainable tourism by promoting local products, conserving cultural heritage, and offering educational programs that raise awareness of cultural and environmental aspects of the region. By continuing to support inclusive practices—such as enhancing accessibility and ensuring the equitable distribution of benefits—the cultural route can strengthen its position as a model for sustainable cultural heritage management.

**Key Challenges Identified:** Upon examining barriers to implementing sustainable practices along the Torres Vedras Historic Route, several challenges emerge. The most significant issue is the need for greater organizational and social responsibility, reflecting that true sustainability requires more than regulatory compliance; it demands a cultural shift. Additionally, there is growing pressure to meet visitor demand for sustainable tourism activities and to improve the reputation and image of involved organizations.

Financial concerns also influence the adoption of sustainable practices, as some local businesses perceive long-term financial benefits as a major challenge. Ultimately, the primary obstacles to achieving sustainability involve internal organizational commitment, financial considerations, and the need to engage visitors in sustainable behaviours. Overcoming these hurdles will require fostering a strong sense of responsibility within organizations, aligning efforts with market demands, and identifying innovative financial solutions to support long-term sustainability goals.

Table 4: Challenges, needs and potentials regarding sustainability and circular economy of the Destination Napoleon Route

| Challenges            | Needs   | Potentials  |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Digital accessibility | Development of inclusive and user-friendly digital tools for education, | Enhanced engagement through interactive digital panels, websites, and social media, improving |



|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | promotion, and accessibility  | inclusivity and sustainability   |
| Safety standards inconsistency   | Regular monitoring, training, and maintenance to uphold safety standards                      | improved visitor safety, trust, and experience across cultural sites   |
| Limited waste reduction practices  | Greater adoption of composting systems, upcycling initiatives, and waste reduction strategies | Reduction in single-use plastics and resource consumption through digital initiatives and sustainable practice |
| Limited long-term community engagement in sustainable practices                        | Programs to build community support and participation in sustainability efforts               | Stronger local commitment to eco-friendly practices  |
| Financial challenges in adopting sustainable practices                                 | Innovative financial solutions and incentives to support sustainability investments           | Long-term financial benefits and improved reputation for businesses adopting eco-friendly practices            |
| Heritage restoration and ecosystem conservation require consistent funding and support | Financial and community support for conservation initiatives and ecosystem preservation       | Integration of environmental restoration with cultural heritage tourism  |
| Difficulty in encouraging visitors to adopt sustainable behaviors                      | Educational programs and awareness campaigns for visitors                                     | Increased visitor participation in eco-friendly activities and behaviors                                       |
| Pressure to meet growing demand for sustainable tourism experiences                    | Development of sustainable tourism offerings and experiences                                  | MED-Routes project initiatives   |
| Insufficient integration of local products and services into tourism experience        | Support for local businesses  | Promotion of local products and services,  |



|                                   |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
|                                   |  | fostering economic growth and sustainability                               |
| Stakeholders do not work together | Build connections between stakeholders and promote a common vision for the activities in the Route | Share of common vision and success of the Route with benefits for everyone |

Stakeholder Input on Good Practices: During a recent participatory laboratory with 27 stakeholders, participants were asked to identify and prioritize up to three good practices for enhancing sustainability. The list below compiles all the practices mentioned, presented in descending order according to the number of votes they received. Not all mentioned practices may be new; some may already be implemented in the route's territory. However, their inclusion by stakeholders highlights a recognition of the need to strengthen sustainability principles and encourage eco-circularity along the route.

| Name and location of the practice  | Sustainability & circular economy criteria applied | Fully (F) / partially (P) |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Promoting local products (16 votes)  | Local Sourcing & Local Artisan Support             | P                         |
| Creating an integrated communication plan for the local branding, which includes topics of public sensibilization for the sustainability of the route (15 votes) | Green Events and Initiatives                       | P                         |
| Training tour guides on local fauna and flora (8 votes)  | Environmental Education Programs                   | P                         |
| Improving the public transportation offer between the main heritage sites in the route (5 votes)   | Sustainable Mobility and Transportation            | P                         |



|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Waste management and heritage preservation sensibilization campaigns targeting the local population (5 votes) | Environmental Education Programs                  | P |
| Creating enology tours (4 votes)  | Inclusive Tourism / Cultural Sensitivity Training | P |
| Promoting reforestation with local species (4 votes)  | Local Ecosystem Restoration & Conservation        | P |
| Show cooking 19th century (3 votes)   | Local Sourcing & Local Artisan Support            | P |
| Creating partnerships to coordinate the implementation of sustainable solutions (3 votes)                     | Eco Partnerships                                  | P |
| Advertisement campaigns targeting international public (3 votes)  | Local Sourcing & Local Artisan Support            | P |
| Promoting local artisans and artists (2 votes)  | Local Sourcing & Local Artisan Support            | P |
| Creating olfactory tours (2 votes)  | Inclusive Tourism / Cultural Sensitivity Training | P |
| Installing hot water recirculation system in tourism accommodation facilities (1 vote)                        | Water Conservation                                | P |
| Regular public consultation through the organization of yearly workshops (1 vote)                             | Community Engagement & Community-Based Tourism    | P |
| Promoting the use of composting products as a fertilizer in agriculture (1 vote)                              | Waste Reduction & Circular Economy Practices      | P |
| Creating partnerships for waste collection and management (1 vote)  | Eco Partnerships                                  | P |



|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Creating a Soldier Kit with local merchandising (1 vote)   | Local Sourcing & Local Artisan Support             | P |
| Reduction of tourism activities during seasonal periods of climate risk (1 vote)                                   | Climate Resilience & Natural Disaster Preparedness | P |
| Installing solar panels (1 vote)   | Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Sources       | P |
| Partnerships with energy companies to use green energy (1 vote)  | Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Sources       | P |
| Improving energy efficiency in buildings (1 vote)  | Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Sources       | P |
| Reducing the use of chemicals in food production (1 vote)  | Local Ecosystem Restoration & Conservation         | P |
| Creating an electric bus tour for the route (1 vote)   | Sustainable Mobility and Transportation            | P |
| Increasing information on the offer of public transportation between the main heritage sites in the route (1 vote) | Sustainable Mobility and Transportation            | P |
| Creating electric bike rentals in the main heritage sites in the route (1 vote)                                    | Sustainable Mobility and Transportation            | P |
| Promote the use of personal recipients for water (1 vote)  | Waste Reduction & Circular Economy Practices       | P |
| Providing water fountains and information about their location to tourists (1 vote)                                | Waste Reduction & Circular Economy Practices       | P |
| Increasing number of garbage disposal units and signage (1 vote)   | Waste Reduction & Circular Economy Practices       | P |



|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Reutilization of cooking oils (1 vote)                              | Waste Reduction & Circular Economy Practices | P |
| Promoting the use of manure as a fertilizer in agriculture (1 vote) | Waste Reduction & Circular Economy Practices | P |
| Creating cisterns for irrigation systems (1 vote)                   | Water Conservation                           | P |

## IV.2 COMMON VISION FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE

| Vision   |
|--|
| <p>The Destination Napoleon Route represents a model of collaborative partnership among public, private, and third-sector agents, dedicated to fostering sustainable local tourism development through the cohesive implementation of a unified brand, communication strategy, and educational initiatives. By prioritizing the conservation of cultural monuments and the protection of local ecosystems, the Route integrates circular economy principles, promoting waste reduction, efficient water management, sustainable mobility, and the adoption of renewable energy sources to support the local economy and ensure long-term sustainability.</p> |

## IV.3 GOALS OF THE CULTURAL ROUTE DESTINATION NAPOLEON RELATED TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The goals of the Destination Napoleon Route focus on integrating sustainability, increase visibility and promote collaboration. This road incorporates sustainable circular economy principles. The goal is to reduce environmental impact through efficient waste management. Using renewable energy and environmentally friendly transportation

options, such as electric bicycle charging stations. digital marketing social media Comprehensive communication strategy Including cooperation with the tourism board. The route helps to attract a wider audience and raise awareness of its cultural and historical significance. In addition, it develops strong partnerships between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, local communities. and civil society organizations Help ensure the successful implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives to promote and contribute to Be responsible and valuable visitor experience.

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Goal 1 | Improvement of eco-circularity and sustainability within the Route |
| Goal 2 | Promotion of the Route and communication fostering                 |
| Goal 3 | Development of a broad partnership among stakeholders              |

#### IV.4 ACTIVITIES TO BE TAKEN FOR ACHIEVING A GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE

The activities outlined below aim to achieve the three objectives defined in Section III. They will be developed in close collaboration with various stakeholders along the route, at different levels, to address the specific nature of each objective.

The first goal - improving eco-circularity and sustainability within the Route - is largely associated with changes in the behavior of the Route’s economic agents, and this project will seek to work closely with them to facilitate the necessary transformation. For the second goal - promotion and communication - while brand definition results from a collective process, the development of related activities will require more direct involvement from the decision-makers responsible for the Route. Finally, the third goal - developing partnerships -depends heavily on creating links between local agents. In this context, decision-makers must act as mediators, fostering interaction among all public and private stakeholders.

|        |  |  |
|--------|--|--|
| Goal 1 | Improvement of eco-circularity and sustainability within the Route | Promote local products, artisans and artists related to the Route          |
|        |  | Install hot water recirculation system in tourism accommodation facilities |

|        |   |  |
|--------|---|--|
|        |   | Promote the use of composting products as a fertilizer in agriculture  |
|        |   | Improve energy efficiency in buildings   |
|        |   | Create an electric bus tour for the route  |
|        |   | Create electric bike rentals in the main heritage sites in the route   |
|        |   | Reutilization of cooking oils  |
|        |   | Promote the use of manure as a fertilizer in agriculture   |
| Goal 2 | Promotion of the Route and communication fostering    | To create an integrated communication plan for the local branding, which includes topics of public sensibilization for the sustainability of the route |
|        |   | Develop advertising campaigns targeting international public   |
|        |   | Increase information on the offer of public transportation between the main heritage sites in the route  |
|        |   | Provide water fountains and information about their location to tourists   |
| Goal 3 | Development of a broad partnership among stakeholders | Create partnerships between the Route's agents   |
|        |   | Develop regular public consultation through the organization of yearly workshops   |
|        |   | Develop partnerships with energy companies to use green energy   |
|        |   | Develop partnerships for waste collection and social media campaigns management  |

The Destination Napoleon Route aims to enhance eco-circularity and sustainability by integrating responsible practices that benefit both the environment and local communities. To achieve this, the Route will promote local products, artisans, and artists, supporting the regional economy and cultural heritage. Tourist accommodations will be equipped with hot water recirculation systems to improve water efficiency. In agriculture,



composting products and manure will be encouraged as fertilizers to enhance soil quality naturally. Additionally, energy efficiency in buildings will be improved through upgrades and sustainable technologies. To reduce carbon emissions, an electric bus tour will be introduced, and electric bike rentals will be established at major heritage sites along the Route, offering visitors eco-friendly mobility options. Efforts to reuse cooking oils will further contribute to reducing waste and promoting circular economy practices.

The Route recognizes the importance of effective communication to raise awareness and attract visitors. An integrated communication plan will be developed for the local brand, including public awareness initiatives focused on the sustainability efforts of the Route. Advertising campaigns will be launched to target international audiences and highlight the Route's unique cultural and environmental offerings. To support sustainable transport, more information about public transportation opportunities will be made available to visitors. Additionally, water refuel fountains will be installed at key points along the Route, with clear information provided on their locations to encourage the use of refillable bottles and reduce plastic waste.

Collaboration with various stakeholders is crucial so partnerships will be established to coordinate the implementation of sustainable solutions to ensure continuous progress. Annual workshops will be held to conduct regular public consultations, giving communities a voice in decision-making processes. Collaborations with energy companies will be pursued to promote the use of green energy along the Route. Additionally, partnerships will be formed for efficient waste collection and management, supporting circular waste systems. To enhance outreach, social media campaigns will be developed, ensuring consistent communication and engagement with a global audience.

## IV.5 DIVISION OF TASKS AND TIMELINES IN ACHIEVING GREATER SUSTAINABILITY AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF THE DESTINATION NAPOLEON ROUTE

|                                     |   | Institution/organization in charge | Implementation deadline |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Goal 1: Improve eco-circularity and | Activity 1: Promote local products, artisans, and artists | RHLT/FECN                          | 2026-2030               |



|  |   |           |           |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|
| sustainability<br>within the Route     | Activity 2: Install hot water recirculation system in tourism accommodation facilities  | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|  | Activity 3: Promote the use of composting products as a fertilizer in agriculture   | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|  | Activity 4: Improve energy efficiency in buildings  | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|  | Activity 5: Create an electric bus tour for the route   | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|  | Activity 6: Create electric bike rentals in the main heritage sites in the route  | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|  | Activity 7: Reutilization of cooking oils   | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|  | Activity 8: Promote the use of manure as a fertilizer in agriculture  | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
| Goal 2:<br>Promotion and communication | Activity 9: Create an integrated communication plan for the local branding, which includes topics of public sensibilization for the sustainability of the route | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|  | Activity 10: Develop advertising campaigns targeting international public   | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|  | Activity 11: Increase information on the offer of public transportation between the main heritage sites in the route  | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |



|                                    |   |           |           |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|
|                                    | Activity 12: Provide water fountains and information about their location to tourists         | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
| Goal 3:<br>Develop<br>partnerships | Activity 13: Create partnerships to coordinate the implementation of sustainable solutions    | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|                                    | Activity 14: Develop regular public consultation through the organization of yearly workshops | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|                                    | Activity 15: Develop partnerships with energy companies to use green energy                   | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |
|                                    | Activity 16: Create partnerships for waste collection and social media campaigns management   | RHLT/FECN | 2026-2030 |



## V. SYNTHETIC PRESENTATION OF COMMON ISSUES FOR ALL THE ROUTES AND ISSUES INHERENT TO INDIVIDUAL ROUTES

All cultural routes covered in this document share a considerable number of common problems and challenges. In this sense, sustainability, cultural heritage preservation, and the application of circular economy principles are common features for all routes. All routes strive to establish sustainable tourism practices that include waste and water management, resource conservation, promoting renewable energy sources, and reducing the carbon footprint. Each route aims to preserve and valorize cultural monuments, historical sites, and traditions. Through infrastructure restoration, thematic itineraries, and interactive museum exhibits, these routes seek to preserve authenticity and convey historical narratives to future generations. The seasonal concentration of tourists poses a challenge for all routes. From May to October, tourist activity peaks, causing resources overload, while demand is low during the off-season. The routes aim to achieve year-round tourism by creating diverse tourism offerings that attract visitors throughout the year.

Locals and stakeholders are recognized as crucial for the successful implementation of sustainable practices. Education, empowerment of local economies, and promotion of products and services are common goals of all routes. Collaboration between the public sector, private entrepreneurs, and civil society contributes to the sustainability of the routes.

All routes face challenges related to sustainable mobility and infrastructure. The lack of public transportation, cycling paths, and electric vehicles limits opportunities for environmentally friendly travel. The routes aim to improve these aspects through the implementation of electric bicycles, charging stations, walking paths, and sustainable public transportation. Digital solutions play a key role in improving accessibility and promotion of cultural content.

The routes can be divided into those that are exclusively Mediterranean, such as the Phoenicians' Route and the Olive Tree Route. The Olive Tree Route is based upon agricultural olive heritage, emphasizes preserving olive-growing traditions, olive oil tastings, workshops on sustainable agriculture, and promoting olive-based gastronomy. Phoenicians' Route links ancient sea trade routes, focuses on archaeological discoveries, education about maritime trade, cultural exchanges, and the promotion of Phoenician traditions. Also, the Mediterranean area is severely affected by climate change, so this is another common characteristic of these two routes.

Other routes, like the Destination Napoleon Route and the European Route of Ceramics, span around the rest of Europe, predominantly in Western and Central European countries. The European Route of Ceramics connects regions known for their ceramic traditions and includes educational workshops, ceramic exhibitions, and opportunities for



visitors to engage in ceramic-making processes and thematic museums. Goals are promoting ceramic craftsmanship, preserving traditional techniques, and fostering artistic expression through sustainable practices. The European Route of Ceramics, among its activities, includes a call for proposals to fund the development of small-scale sustainable itineraries. The Destination Napoleon Route focuses on historical reenactments, educational content, themed tours, and digital interpretations of historical events and aims to develop sustainable tourism by restoring historical sites and implementing eco-friendly solutions.

## VI. ANALYSIS OF CR'S ROADMAP VISIONS AND GOALS

The vision for each route is centered on preserving authenticity, fostering local development, and creating tourist experiences that educate, inspire, and responsibly utilize resources. The visions presented in all four CR's Roadmaps are herewith jointly presented:

- The Routes of the Olive Tree is an example of people - nature relations in the achievement of sustainable local tourism development through overall implementation of circular economy principles.
- The Phoenicians' Cultural Route represents a dynamic connection between people, history, and environmental responsibility, fostering sustainable tourism development through the integration of circular economy principles. This initiative intertwines the rich historical legacy of the Phoenician civilization with modern values of technological innovation, cultural preservation, and eco-conscious practices. By offering sustainable, smart, and green regional itineraries, the Route promotes its member areas, regions, and countries as part of a broader Mediterranean network of maritime, trade, and cultural exchange.
- The European Route of Ceramics is a catalyst for positive change, promoting tourism system which combines the valorisation of ceramics cultural heritage with sustainable management of natural resources.
- The Destination Napoleon Route represents a model of collaborative partnership among public, private, and third-sector agents, dedicated to fostering sustainable local tourism development through the cohesive implementation of a unified brand, communication strategy, and educational initiatives. By prioritizing the conservation of cultural monuments and the protection of local ecosystems, the Route integrates circular economy principles, promoting waste reduction, efficient water management, sustainable mobility, and the adoption of renewable energy sources to support the local economy and ensure long-term sustainability.



It is evident that all CR's Roadmaps express a common interest towards circular economy and sustainable tourism in their visions, while being loyal to the main topic around which the CR is established (olives, Phoenicians, ceramics, Napoleon).

Through strengthened collaboration, effective promotion, and the implementation of sustainable solutions, these routes can serve as models of how cultural tourism can contribute to a sustainable future.

The common presentation of goals set in the CR's Roadmaps follow:

#### Goals of the Routes of the Olive Tree

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Goal 1 | Development and promotion of micro eco-itineraries in underexplored rural areas, integrating interactive and educational elements |
| Goal 2 | Awareness raising, training and education of stakeholders on sustainability and circular economy                                  |
| Goal 3 | Enhanced marketing initiatives for all-year round oleotourism   |

#### Goals of the Phoenicians' Cultural Route

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Goal 1 | Introduction of small-scale sustainable micro eco-itineraries in rural, less-visited areas and a transformative approach to tourism and cultural heritage management. By focusing on less-explored destinations, these itineraries can alleviate the pressure on popular tourist hotspots, encourage more sustainable forms of tourism, and create new opportunities for local communities. This initiative will also contribute to the more efficient management of cultural heritage and its surrounding environments. |
| Goal 2 | Stakeholders training, collaboration and cross-sector involvement in order to formed sustainability and circular economy   |
| Goal 3 | Marketing and promotion initiatives for all-year round tourism   |

#### Goals of the European Route of Ceramics

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Goal 1 | Implementation of a sustainable tourism model within the European Route of Ceramics, pairing ceramics heritage valorization with environmental sustainability |
|--------|---|



|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Goal 2 | Creation of small-scale sustainable itineraries to improve the management of ceramics heritage, benefiting the local environment and economy |
|--------|--|

### Goals of the Destination Napoleon Route

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Goal 1 | Improvement of eco-circularity and sustainability within the Route |
| Goal 2 | Promotion of the Route and communication fostering                 |
| Goal 3 | Development of a broad partnership among stakeholders              |

The goals are generally focused on six themes:

1. Introduction of small-scale sustainable micro eco-itineraries along the Route
2. Awareness raising, training and education of stakeholders on sustainability and circular economy
3. Marketing and promotion initiatives
4. Fostering partnerships
5. Implementation of a sustainable tourism model
6. Improvement of eco-circularity and sustainability within the Route in general.

The European Route of Ceramics set 2 main goals, while all the other Routes decided for 3 goals but similarity of the set goals is evident: they are all focused on increasing sustainability and circularity along the Routes but with slightly different activities. 3 of the Routes (The Routes of the Olive Tree, the Phoenicians' Cultural Route, and the European Route of Ceramics) aim at implementing small-scale sustainable micro eco-itineraries with the aim of the enhancement of sustainable practices along the Routes and 3 of them (The Routes of the Olive Tree, the Phoenicians' Cultural Route, and the Destination Napoleon Route) plan to do so by different marketing activities. Also, partnerships are fostered with the same goal, and a sustainable tourism model pairing heritage valorization with environmental sustainability is planned.





## VII. CONCLUSION

Despite differences in the topics promoted by the CR's, all of them share a common vision aimed at enhancing sustainability and circular economy practices along the Routes for sustainable and slow tourism development. While somewhat different goals were set to achieve this vision, they essentially follow a very similar path. In this way, the CR's Roadmaps are in line with the topic and aim of the MED-Routes project, which makes a solid grounding for their future Action plans. The activities selected for the achievement of the set goals along with the intended timelines are in line with possibilities allowed within the MED-Routes project. They are not overly ambitious due to the constraints of the project itself, but provide a very solid ground for the establishment of knowledge (stakeholders' training and awareness raising), networking (stronger partnerships along the Routes), promotion (marketing activities related to the newly established micro-itineraries and concrete products/services related to sustainability and circular economy) for the establishment of new sustainable slow tourism models.





## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Challenges, needs and potentials regarding sustainability and circular economy of the Routes of the Olive Tree

Table 2: Challenges, needs and potentials regarding sustainability and circular economy of the Phoenicians' Route

Table 3: Challenges, needs and potentials regarding sustainability and circular economy of the European Route of Ceramics

Table 4: Challenges, needs and potentials regarding sustainability and circular economy of the Destination Napoleon Route