



MED-Routes

Interreg
Euro-MED



Co-funded by
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ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

MED-Routes Newsletter

Editorial

Welcome message from the Lead Partner / URF

The latest trends tell us that 83% of tourists believe that traveling sustainably is important, 67% feel inspired to live more sustainably after seeing it in action while traveling and 43% feel guilty when making less sustainable choices (Source: Sustainable TravelReport 2024 -Booking.com)

Thus, we believe that now it is the right time to build a kind of tourism that ensures local growth respecting the environment. The MED-Routes project was born from a simple yet powerful idea, to establish and disseminate a local-based, low-impact model of sustainable tourism across Cultural Routes in the Mediterranean area and, in particular, to establish a specific model of Mediterranean “slow tourism” rooted in the common heritage of four Cultural Routes.

In two years the project delivered significant and tangible results. The MED-Routes methodology that we built provides a replicable model for designing and promoting eco-itineraries through participatory and sustainable approaches. It integrates research, stakeholder engagement, and co-design into a step-by-step process that supports local authorities and operators in building tourism experiences aligned with the principles of circular economy, environmental responsibility and community value.

Our goal was to build a replicable model, that can be adopted by other Cultural Routes or by local entities such as Municipalities, Tourism Offices, or other territorial actors, to build eco-itineraries in their own specific territories and promote shared destinations using the same methodological structure.

At the local level, the project proved highly effective, as local communities are actively involved in the eco-itineraries and genuinely feel part of them. At the international level, the results are equally strong: we established a network of eco-itineraries spanning eight countries, laying a solid foundation for long-term promotional impact.

We invite anyone interested in learning more about the project and the opportunities to develop eco-itineraries to get in touch with us and join us in building a sustainable tourism offer!



Benedetta Diamanti
Romagna Faentina Union
Lead Partner

MED-Routes *at a glance*

The numbers *tell our story*

8

eco-itineraries

20+

events

1000

participants

7

countries

27

months

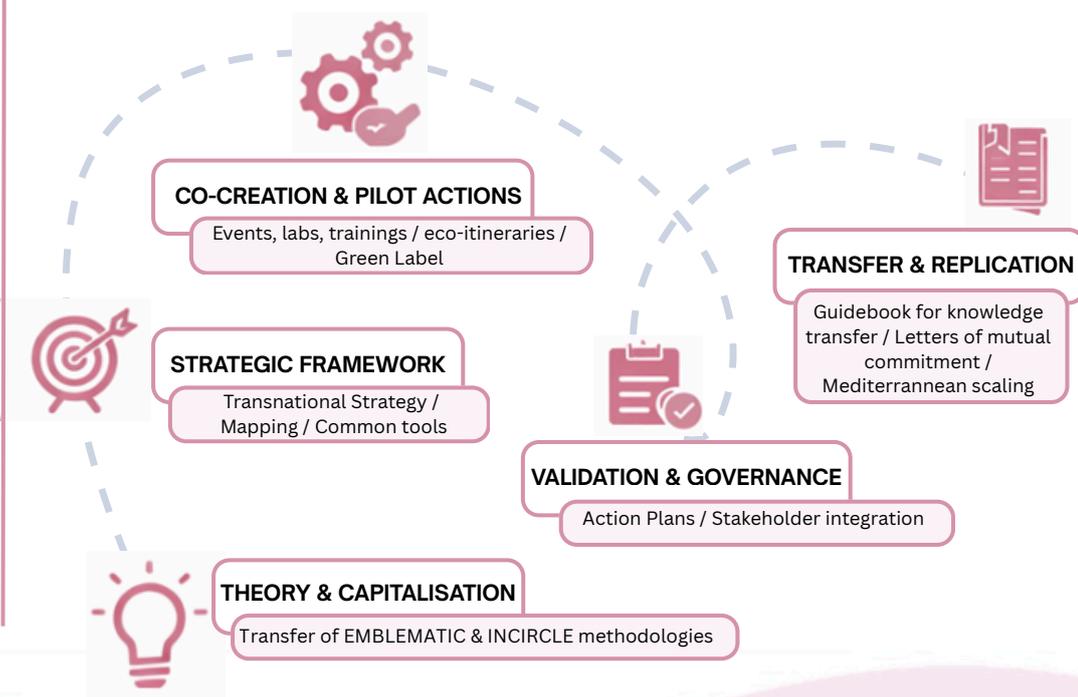
After 27 months of implementation, MED-Routes has brought together 8 partners from across the Mediterranean to promote sustainable cultural tourism through the co-creation of eco-itineraries embedded in 4 European Cultural Routes.

The project has combined territorial pilots, capacity building, policy dialogue and transnational cooperation to support destinations in transitioning towards more inclusive, circular and environmentally responsible tourism models.

THE PARTNERSHIP



Our Journey *from Capitalisation to Mediterranean Impact*



Eco-itineraries: *Co-creation Stories* Across 4 Cultural Routes

At the heart of MED-Routes are **8 eco-itineraries**, co-created with local stakeholders across Mediterranean regions and embedded within four European Cultural Routes. Each itinerary showcases how cultural heritage, local identity and sustainability can be combined into meaningful visitor experiences.



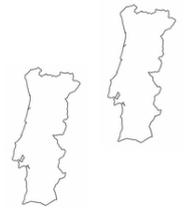
Explore the dedicated **videos** and **maps** of each eco-itinerary by clicking on them and experience how this shared vision has materialised on the ground. From coastal landscapes to inland heritage sites, each route reflects the unique identity of its territory while applying common sustainability principles.

Take a closer look and discover how sustainable tourism came to life along the MED-Routes network.



DESTINATION NAPOLEON

THE MAPS



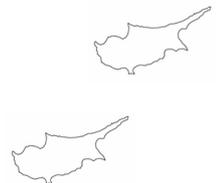
ROUTES OF THE OLIVE TREE

THE MAPS



THE PHOENICIAN'S ROUTE

THE MAPS



EUROPEAN ROUTE OF CERAMICS

THE MAPS



Events, Exchanges & Outreach: *Building a Mediterranean Community*

Over the course of the project, **21 events** - including co-creation labs, technical trainings, peer-learning workshops and international fora - brought together close to **1,000 participants** from across the Mediterranean. These gatherings created a dynamic space for exchange among public authorities, Cultural Route managers, tourism operators, SMEs, researchers and civil society actors, turning MED-Routes into a living platform for dialogue and collaboration.

Beyond dissemination, these events played a strategic role in transferring the methodologies of MED-Routes into practice. By fostering cross-border exchanges, showcasing pilot eco-itineraries and promoting the MED-Routes Green Label, they strengthened a growing Mediterranean community committed to circular economy principles, sustainable tourism governance and long-term resilience of cultural destinations.

[READ MORE](#)

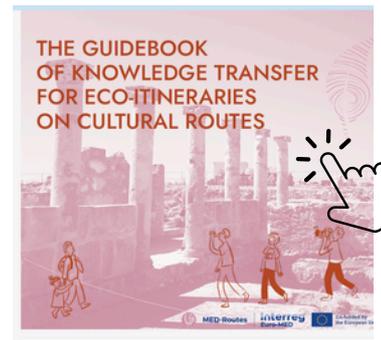
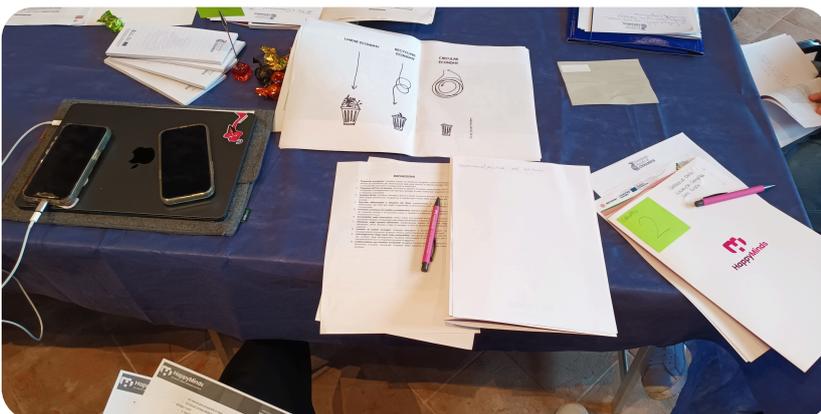




MED-Routes Learning Pathways: *Replicating Transformation*

MED-Routes developed a set of learning and capacity-building tools, including training packages, methodological guidelines and the MED-Routes Package, designed to support replication beyond pilot territories.

These resources address eco-itinerary design, stakeholder engagement, circular economy principles and sustainable tourism governance, and are available to destinations, Cultural Routes and policy actors.



It introduces key methodologies for:

- Designing eco-itineraries
- Engaging communities in tourism planning
- Embedding circular economy principles in tourism offers
- Evaluating environmental and socioeconomic impacts



COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PACKAGE

It presents an in-depth understanding of the design, and implementation of eco-itineraries within the Mediterranean Cultural Routes.

MED-ROUTES ACTION PLANS

Available in 4 languages
(EN, FR, EL, IT)

EU GREEN LABEL OF CULTURAL ECO-ITINERARIES BRANDBOOK

An action-oriented template guiding the implementation of the Green Label across EU Cultural Routes

ALL PROJECT'S RESSOURCES



Looking back to move forward

As MED-Routes comes to its conclusion, it leaves behind more than strategies, pilot eco-itineraries and technical outputs. It leaves a tested pathway for turning sustainable tourism principles into operational practice across Mediterranean Cultural Routes.



The challenges

One of the project's core challenges was **bridging the gap between theory and implementation**. Although INCIRCLE and EMBLEMATIC had produced valuable methodologies, adapting them to different governance systems, territorial realities and stakeholder capacities across seven Mediterranean countries required flexibility and coordination. As public authorities, Cultural Route managers and private operators operate under different constraints and timelines.

This was addressed through **structured co-creation**: 21 events, technical workshops and peer exchanges created space for dialogue, shared ownership and local adaptation. Rather than imposing a rigid model, MED-Routes built a common framework that could be tailored to each context. Partner Action Plans ensured institutional anchoring, while the Green Label translated sustainability principles into clear, measurable criteria.

A further challenge was **preventing sustainability from remaining merely declarative**. By embedding circular economy principles into eco-itinerary design and linking strategy to pilot testing, the project moved **from intention to validation**. The iterative process - test, refine, align - ultimately strengthened governance structures and stakeholder engagement.

... and the lessons learned

Sustainable tourism transformation requires:

- **Capitalisation, not duplication** - building on existing knowledge accelerates impact.
- **Governance integration** - strategies must be linked to institutional planning tools.
- **Stakeholder co-ownership** - public and private actors must design solutions together.

- **Operational tools** - labels, guidebooks and action plans turn vision into practice.
- **Replication mechanisms** - transferability must be planned from the outset.

These lessons extend beyond Cultural Routes and are relevant to any Mediterranean destination seeking to balance heritage valorisation, climate resilience and local economic development.



Beyond 2026: *Sustaining and Scaling the Impact*

The **Guidebook for Knowledge Transfer** provides a structured pathway for new territories to replicate the model. The **Green Label** offers a long-term reference framework that can continue to certify eco-itineraries. Partner institutions remain committed to embedding the **Transnational Strategy** into regional planning and tourism governance structures.

Our vision is clear: to see Mediterranean Cultural Routes evolve into permanent laboratories of sustainable tourism innovation - where circular economy principles guide destination management, where cooperation replaces fragmentation, and where eco-itineraries become a standard rather than an exception.

Looking back confirms the value of collaboration.

Moving forward means ensuring that the tools, partnerships and lessons of MED-Routes continue to inspire and shape sustainable tourism policies across the Mediterranean.



MED-Routes does not end in 2026 - it transitions.

Keep engaged with
MED-Routes



<https://med-routes.interreg-euro-med.eu/>



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Contact the Project Partners

