



MED-Routes

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MED-Routes

"Enhancing MED sustainable cultural tourism

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

Report of Joint Transnational Workshop in Pafos





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	
Deliverable title	Report of Joint Transnational Workshop in Pafos
Contractual date of delivery	31/12/2024
Actual date of delivery	18/12/2024
Partner responsible	Pafos Regional Board of Tourism
Partners involved	Pafos Regional Board of Tourism

Revision History



Version	Date	Author(s)/Contributor(s)	Notes
1.0	13/12/2024	Loukas Nikiforou	First draft
2.0	16/12/2024	URF	Comments on first draft
3.0	20/12/2024	Loukas Nikiforou	Second draft
4.0			
5.0			

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1. INTRODUCTION

The **MED-Routes Project** is an innovative initiative aimed at promoting sustainable tourism and enhancing local economies across the Mediterranean region. By emphasizing the importance of eco-itineraries, the project seeks to create a comprehensive network of sustainable travel routes that not only showcase the rich cultural and natural heritage of participating regions but also foster environmental conservation and community engagement. This approach encourages tourists to engage with local communities, supports traditional practices, and safeguards the unique landscapes that define the Mediterranean.

The significance of eco-itineraries lies in their ability to offer travellers authentic experiences that prioritize environmental stewardship and cultural appreciation. Such itineraries not only provide tangible benefits to local economies by encouraging longer stays and diverse activities but also raise awareness about sustainability issues among tourists. By adopting a holistic approach to tourism, the MED-Routes Project aims to minimize negative impacts on the environment while maximizing the social and economic benefits for local communities.

In the context of the **Pafos workshop**, the objectives are clear and multifaceted. By bringing together stakeholders, including local authorities, tourism operators, and community members, the workshop aims to share best practices, develop strategies for implementing eco-itineraries, and demonstrate the value of sustainable tourism for Pafos and the broader Mediterranean region. Participants will engage in collaborative discussions to identify local resources and unique cultural assets that can be integrated into eco-itineraries, leading to enhanced visitor experiences and stronger community relations. Through these collective efforts, the workshop aspires to lay the groundwork for a sustainable future in tourism that is both economically viable and environmentally responsible.

2. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

2.1 Sustainable Practices and Green Labels



Development of a Complete toolkit for the launch of the Green Label for cultural eco-itineraries: introduction to the Green Label concept, brand portfolio, key branding elements, visual identity, promotion strategy.

2.2 Circular Practices and Criteria

PPs work in close cooperation with the involved CRs to analyse a set of sustainable and circularity oriented practices from multiple perspectives (minimised impact of transport, enhancement of virtuous services in hospitality/catering/leisure, promotion of circular practices and the re-use of resources)

PPs meet in a Transnational Workshop in Pafos to design 2 small-scale eco-itineraries per each CR in the project. It sets shared criteria for the selection of circular practices to be included in the Eco itineraries. Methodologically, eco-itineraries are elaborated by further developing transfer outputs:

>For the geo-strategic dimension linked to regional identity: EMBLEMATIC guidelines are capitalized and expanded through a tailored analysis on the territories addressed by each CR; >For the core technical aspects in the assessment of identified practices' sustainability & circularity: INCIRCLE replicating package is used again as reference methodology, to be now integrated with CRs' shared approach to expanding the sustainable tourism offer under the 4 macro-pillars (waste management, water management, sustainable mobility, renewable energy sources)

2.3 Stakeholder Engagement and Local Involvement

The production of MED-Routes Action Plans represents a transfer process of INCIRCLE Regional and Local Action Plans focused on the main actions for a transition towards circular tourism in terms of stakeholder involvement, implementation plans and strategic measures. MED-Routes Action Plans will also incorporate the inputs from training & capacity building activities 3 in terms of key targets' activation and concrete involvement.

2.4 Methodology for Designing Eco-Itineraries

Concerning the methodological approach for the design of eco-itineraries, 4 pillars are set:

- QUALITY BRAND: Strengthening interaction among MED itineraries
- SLOW TOURISM MARKETING: Increasing the economic aspects linked to eco-sustainable tourism
- ECO-ITINERARIES' TRANSFERABILITY to encourage their incorporation into local development agendas;
- MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS MAPPING, ACTIVATION & CAPACITY-BUILDING.



Other key elements are also meant to sustain the diffusion of new eco-itineraries:

- CRs' individual strategies for the promotion of the eco-itineraries
- Transnational Strategy for sustainable tourism & eco-itineraries in the MED area
- Green Label of Mediterranean CRs for the certification of eco-itineraries
- MED-Routes Action Plans outlining key actions to apply the Transn. Strategy into CRs' agenda.

PPs organize local participatory labs for the collection of key inputs for the ideation of ecoitineraries under A2.2. Involved actors are expected to provide feedback on WP1 research analysis and to bring their technical expertise as consultants (and co-beneficiaries) in the definition of eco-itineraries in their territories of operation.

2.5 Challenges in Implementation

The transition to a sustainable, circular model of “slow tourism” is an ambitious goal that must involve a plurality of actors in a coordinated way. In particular, the strategy of MED-Routes of pursuing such goal through the design & promotion of 50 eco-itineraries is faced with 2 main challenges that can be overcome only through a transnational approach:

1) The transition to a circular model of cultural tourism is hard to tackle in an effective way for SMEs and operators individually at the micro-scale local level:

The key existing challenge for tourism operators in cultural tourism is to provide memorable experiences to their target users, whilst drastically reducing the overall environmental impact of their daily practices. At the same time, it would be necessary to keep innovating available services and products in order to create additional customer value and stand out in the aggregate market.

Circular economy represents of course a valuable path to combine these two aspects, but for SMEs and small operators in the local tourism sector it can be actually extremely difficult to address innovative actions individually, especially in lack of networking possibilities and without the guidance of more institutional and/or technical actors.

2) Cultural Routes themselves were not originally designed with a dedicated focus and expertise on sustainable economy.

Circular economy in particular was not so present in the public debate until the mid '2000s, and its specific benefits of application to cultural tourism have started to be explored only very recently.

CRs alone therefore sometimes struggle to identify the most profitable and viable ways to incorporate sustainable economic practices into their own role and daily work for cultural promotion. Greater networking, Exchange of views, discussion, and mutual support would be needed to set shared references among CRs to define a common approach to the theme.

2.6 Creating a Comprehensive Approach to Sustainable Tourism

PPs cooperate with their affiliated Cultural Routes for the drafting of 4 MED-Routes (1 per CR). The Action Plans are based on D2.5.1 Transnational Strategy in terms of approach to the promotion of sustainable cultural tourism within Mediterranean



economies. To match its content with the individual needs and of each CR, the Action Plans define and develop individual strategic goals in a step-by-step approach in order to translate MED policy orientation into concrete action for each CR. The production of MED-Routes Action Plans represents a transfer process of INCIRCLE Regional and Local Action Plans focused on the main actions for a transition towards circular tourism in terms of stakeholder involvement, implementation plans and strategic measures.

MED-Routes Action Plans will also incorporate the inputs from training & capacity building activities of WP3 in terms of key targets' activation and concrete involvement.

2.7 Finalizing the Methodology and Criteria

To finalize the Methodology and criteria, enhance the effectiveness of our communication and meetings throughout the program, we need to focus on the following key components:

Quality Brand Development: Enhance collaboration among Mediterranean itineraries to strengthen our brand.

Promotion of Slow Tourism: Boost economic growth through eco-sustainable tourism initiatives.

Transferability of Eco-Itineraries: Encourage the integration of eco-itineraries into local development strategies.

Mapping and Engaging Multiple Stakeholders: Activate and build the capacity of various stakeholders to ensure comprehensive participation.

These components will guide our efforts in promoting sustainable tourism and fostering regional collaboration.

2.8 Conclusion and Suggested Improvements

At the end of the project, a Final Evaluation Report will be drafted, including conclusions about the quality of the project implementation, management and coordination, quality of realized outputs and compliance with expectations and initially set objectives and results, quality of dissemination and sustainability.

3. Methodology of the Workshop

The workshop utilized a participatory approach to foster collaboration and engage stakeholders effectively. The following processes were employed throughout the sessions:

1. Brainstorming Sessions:



- Participants were encouraged to share ideas and insights regarding sustainable tourism practices. This open forum allowed for the generation of diverse perspectives, helping to identify key topics and challenges in the field.
- 2. **Stakeholder Mapping Analysis:**
 - A structured analysis of stakeholder mapping was conducted to identify the various players involved in sustainable tourism. Participants collaborated to outline the roles, responsibilities, and interests of different stakeholders, which facilitated a better understanding of the network and relationships necessary for successful implementation.
- 3. **Shared Analysis of Common Methodologies:**
 - Participants were divided into small groups to analyze potential common methodologies for developing sustainable practices and itineraries. Each group presented its findings, and the collective input led to a cohesive understanding of best practices and innovative solutions.
- 4. **Expert Interventions:**
 - Throughout the workshop, experts in sustainable tourism provided valuable insights and guidance. Their interventions helped frame discussions, clarify concepts, and introduce industry-standard practices that could be adopted by participants.
- 5. **Moderation Role of Pafos:**
 - The moderators from Pafos played a crucial role in steering conversations, ensuring that all stakeholder voices were heard, and facilitating the smooth flow of discussions. Their expertise in managing group dynamics helped maintain a productive environment conducive to collaborative problem-solving.
- 6. **Interactive Feedback Mechanisms:**
 - Various interactive tools were employed to gather feedback and gauge participant sentiment on proposed ideas and strategies. This included live polls and facilitated discussions, ensuring that all voices were considered in the decision-making process.
- 7. **Documentation and Action Planning:**
 - The workshop emphasized the importance of documenting discussions and decisions made. A dedicated team compiled notes and summaries of each session, which served as a foundation for action planning. Participants collaboratively outlined next steps and responsibilities to advance the initiatives discussed.

By employing these methodologies, the workshop fostered an inclusive atmosphere that encouraged engagement and collective ownership of the outcomes. This structured approach aimed to ensure that the strategies developed were not only practical but also reflective of the shared insights and expertise of all participants.



4. Key Discussions

The workshop on sustainable tourism provided a collaborative platform for stakeholders to engage in meaningful discussions about eco-itineraries and sustainable practices. Key outputs and decisions from the sessions include:

1. Key Workshop Outputs:

- A comprehensive list of criteria for sustainable practices and green labels was drafted, emphasizing energy efficiency, water conservation, and circular economy principles.
- Participants successfully mapped out stakeholders involved in sustainable tourism, identifying roles and areas of collaboration to enhance engagement.
- Common methodologies for developing eco-itineraries were developed, incorporating the best practices shared by experts and participants.

Meeting notes:

- Gabriela Dimova initiated the discussion on implementing green labels focused on sustainable practices like energy efficiency and water conservation.
- Nicolas Tsifoutis emphasized the existence of circular practices and the necessity for clear definitions.
- There was agreement on the importance of assessing sustainability at locations to establish criteria for these green labels.
- Benedetta Diamanti proposed developing a document outlining suggested criteria and labels.
- Evangelos Kyriakou highlighted the mission of engaging sustainable tourism.
- Evangelos Kyriakou addressed the complexities in defining circular economy criteria and the necessity for clear guidelines.
- Nicolas Tsifoutis and Gabriela Dimova reiterated the need for precise specifications and proof of implemented practices.
- The importance of expert input and a structured methodology for defining criteria was highlighted by Benedetta Diamanti.
- Evangelos Kyriakou discussed the critical role of local stakeholders in sustainable tourism projects, highlighting the need for structured engagement.



- Nicolas Tsifoutis and Gabriela Dimova pointed out the challenges of seasonality in tourism, stressing the importance of year-round sustainable practices.
- Convincing local authorities of the benefits of sustainable tourism was emphasized as essential.
- Silvia Medri suggested creating a questionnaire to gather stakeholder input for defining criteria for sustainable itineraries.
- Mirela Basic raised concerns regarding accessibility and the necessity for sustainable mobility solutions.
- The need for a clear methodology and structured approach in creating sustainable itineraries was reiterated by Benedetta Diamanti and Irene Mikelis.
- Gabriela Dimova discussed the challenges of implementing sustainable practices across different regions, advocating for a tailored approach.
- The significance of local knowledge and the involvement of stakeholders in overcoming challenges was emphasized by Evangelos Kyriakou.
- Pedro Guimaraes presented the idea of creating a comprehensive framework that involves all stakeholders.
- The importance of a methodological framework for facilitating engagement with local stakeholders was echoed throughout the discussions.
- The finalization of the methodology and criteria for sustainable itineraries was underscored by Benedetta Diamanti, while Irene Mikelis discussed the importance of digital networking.
- There was a unanimous call for a structured approach that incorporates all stakeholders to support sustainable tourism initiatives.

The summaries presented above reflect key discussions, emphasizing the need for clear organization to avoid redundancy and enhance readability. Consolidating repetitive points under specific headings will provide clarity and facilitate understanding. This approach will strengthen the logical flow during discussions, making it easier to identify distinct themes, such as Sustainable Practices and Green Labels, Circular Practices and Criteria, Stakeholder Engagement and Local Involvement, Methodology for Designing Eco-Itineraries, and Challenges in Implementation.



2. Key Decisions Made:

- A commitment was made to develop a structured framework for implementing green labels, with clear definitions and assessment criteria.
- The necessity of engaging local stakeholders in the process was reinforced, ensuring their insights, knowledge, and concerns are integrated into future initiatives.
- Consensus was reached on utilizing a participatory approach to design eco-itineraries, combining recreation and education in the offerings.

3. Roadmap for Upcoming Activities:

Expected Milestones:

- Draft criteria for green labels and share them with workshop participants for feedback by [insert date].
- Conduct follow-up meetings focused on refining the stakeholder mapping and identifying champions for sustainable tourism initiatives by [insert date].
- Host a collaborative session to develop the first drafts of eco-itineraries by [insert date], leveraging insights drawn from the workshop discussions.
- **Follow-up Meetings:**
 - Regular follow-up meetings will be scheduled every quarter to review progress, address challenges, and share updates on the development of eco-itineraries.
 - An online platform will be established to facilitate ongoing collaboration and documentation among stakeholders, enabling real-time sharing of resources and best practices.

This workshop marks a significant step towards creating a sustainable tourism framework that prioritizes ecological integrity and community involvement. By fostering collaboration among stakeholders and developing actionable strategies, the vision of responsible and sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean can be realized.

5.Integration of Methodologies from EMBLEMATIC and INCIRCLE

The workshop successfully leveraged the methodologies and guidelines established by the EMBLEMATIC and INCIRCLE projects, enhancing the discussions and outcomes related to sustainable tourism and eco-itinerary development.

1. Application of EMBLEMATIC Guidelines:

- EMBLEMATIC's guidelines for sustainable tourism practices provided a foundational framework for assessing and implementing eco-friendly initiatives. Participants referenced these guidelines during brainstorming sessions, which informed the drafting of criteria for green labels and sustainable practices.
- Specific principles from EMBLEMATIC were employed to evaluate current tourism practices and their alignment with sustainability goals, ensuring that proposed eco-itineraries resonate with the best practices recognized in the EMBLEMATIC framework.



2. Use of INCIRCLE Replicating Package:

- The INCIRCLE replicating package was instrumental in guiding participants on how to adapt successful methodologies and practices to their local contexts. This package served as a reference point for designing eco-itineraries, providing examples of effective stakeholder engagement strategies and methodologies.
- Workshop discussions frequently highlighted the replicability of INCIRCLE's successful case studies, encouraging participants to consider how similar approaches could be adapted for their specific cultural and environmental landscapes.

3. Integration of the Four Macro-Pillars:

- The four macro-pillars—waste management, water management, sustainable mobility, and renewable energy sources—were integral to the design of eco-itineraries. Each pillar was discussed in relation to its role in enhancing sustainability:
 - **Waste Management:** Strategies for minimizing waste and promoting recycling were incorporated into itinerary planning, encouraging local businesses to adopt best practices.
 - **Water Management:** Participants explored sustainable water use practices that can be highlighted along the itineraries, promoting awareness and responsible consumption among tourists.
 - **Sustainable Mobility:** The importance of integrating eco-friendly transportation options into the itineraries was emphasized, such as cycling routes and public transport, to minimize carbon footprints.
 - **Renewable Energy Sources:** Incorporating sites that utilize renewable energy within the itineraries not only showcases innovation but also educates tourists about sustainable energy practices.

4. Interconnection of Targeted Cultural Routes:

- The workshop facilitated discussions on how targeted cultural routes are interconnected. For example, participants identified how local heritage sites, natural parks, and community centers could be linked through thematic storytelling in the itineraries.
- These interconnections will be reflected in the eco-itineraries by creating themed routes that not only highlight individual sites but also illustrate their relationships to cultural narratives, promoting a comprehensive understanding of the region's heritage.

By incorporating the methodologies and guidelines from EMBLEMATIC and INCIRCLE, the workshop enhanced the development of practical, sustainable tourism



strategies. The integration of the four macro-pillars and the emphasis on interconnected cultural routes will serve as crucial elements in crafting eco-itineraries that promote sustainable practices while enriching the visitor experience.

6.Challenges and Lessons Learned

As the workshop unfolds, several challenges and lessons learned may arise, including:

1. **Diverse Stakeholder Interests:** Participants may have differing priorities and interests, highlighting the importance of effective communication and compromise to achieve common goals.
2. **Resource Limitations:** Constraints related to funding, human resources, and infrastructure can pose challenges to implementing eco-itineraries, underscoring the need for innovative solutions and partnerships.
3. **Capacity Gaps:** Participants may realize that some stakeholders lack the necessary knowledge or skills to implement sustainable practices effectively, highlighting the importance of ongoing training and education.
4. **Data Availability:** Access to reliable data on tourism patterns and environmental impacts may be limited, necessitating the establishment of better data collection methods and collaborative research efforts.
5. **Iterative Process:** The value of flexibility and adaptability in the planning process will be a key lesson, as feedback and reflections from participants can lead to refinements and improvements in eco-itinerary design.

7.Conclusion and Next Steps

In conclusion, the Pafos workshop within the MED-Routes Project represents a vital step toward fostering sustainable tourism in the region through the development of eco-itineraries. By engaging local stakeholders, sharing knowledge, and collaboratively designing actionable plans, the workshop aims to create a sustainable framework that benefits both tourists and local communities.

Next steps will include finalizing the collaborative action plan, identifying key stakeholders responsible for implementation, and establishing timelines for achieving targeted goals. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled to monitor progress, address challenges, and celebrate successes. Furthermore, ongoing communication and capacity-building efforts will be crucial to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the eco-itineraries developed, ultimately contributing to the long-term success and resilience of Pafos as a premier sustainable tourism destination.



8.ANNEXES

- Irene Mikelis discusses the need for a structured approach that includes all stakeholders and the importance of digital networking.

2. Focus on Social Media

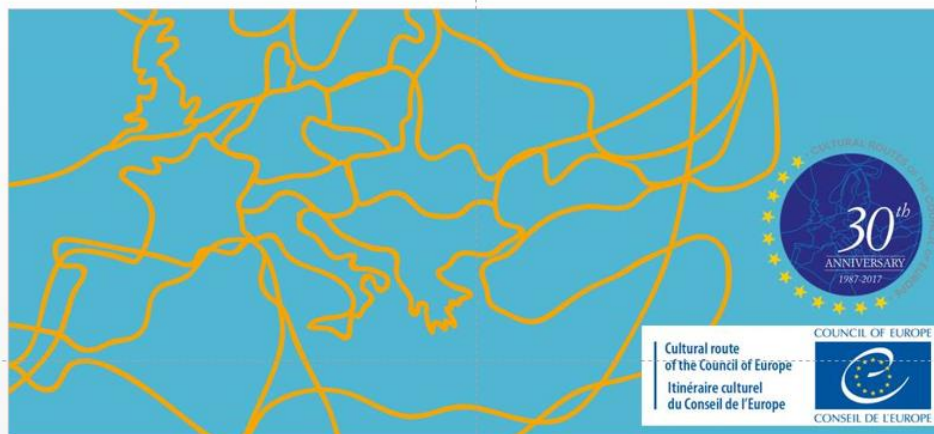


Checklist

1. Invite widely to follow our facebook page and react to our posts whenever possible. Visits and followers are part of our KPIs : followers: 100 by M12 (targeting a 50% increase by M27), posts 200, Average Engagement rate 30%
2. Mark your calendars with the due dates of your upcoming posts (Wednesday of each week). In December, the new social media calendar 2025 will be shared with you.
3. For the organisation of our project events, templates will be found for the registration form and satisfaction survey directly in the backend of our project website. For reporting purposes of the Programme, the projects MUST exclusively use these forms (and not other forms from external platforms). Those data will also feed our project communication report at the end of the year.



- Antonio Barone presented cultural routes as a model for the enhancement of widespread heritage



Cultural Route: **a cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project** aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values.

Resolution CM/Res(2013)66

- Pedro Guimaraes presented the steps for creating Eco-Itineraries and support documents



Step 1

Identification of the nodes:

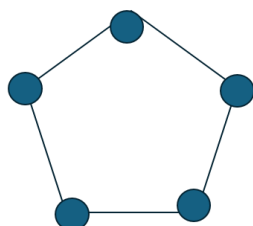
- Local heritage / territory (socio - environmental - cultural landscape)
- Micro- routes (existents)
- Local stakeholders / actors
- Open calls
- Laboratory
- Identification of good practices (4 pillars + ...)



Rota Histórica das Linhas de Torres

TORRES VEDRAS NA PRIMEIRA LINHA
WELLINGTON
A DEFESA DO TEJO
GRANDES DESFILADEIROS
O NÓ DAS LINHAS
DO PALÁCIO AO ATLÂNTICO

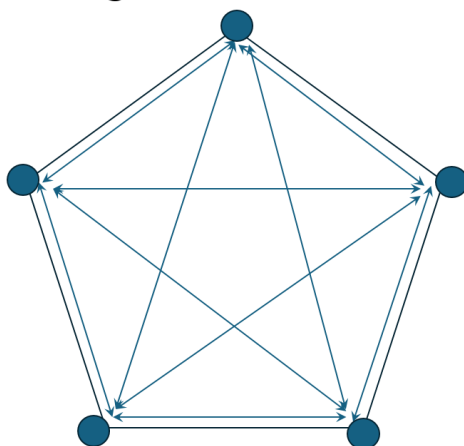
Step 2



Creation of eco-itineraries:

- Laboratory / workshop
 - Sensibilization / capacitation for sustainability and eco-circularity
 - Co-creation output
- Promotion and dissemination

Step 3



Creation of eco- circularity

- Dialogues with local stakeholders
- Non-static!