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Financial Team
& Unit E2: Tourism & Cultural Instruments

EUHeritage TOUR

Executive Strategic Criteria — Pt. #1
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[1] **X23 Ltd**. developed a lot of projects dealing with openness and social inclusion related to the Knowl- edge Science and to the Cultural Policies in the very last years. Basing on the research and development of original ecosystems called "Filamento®" and "ThePrimate®", which were included in at least 6 European projects during 2012-2013 time lapse [EUHeritage, Culture Vivarium, Culture+, Prometheus, Heureka], X23 Ltd introduced new projects designing and models in partnership with local and interna- tional partners such as the National Research Council of Italy [CNR], the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, NTUA - the National Technical University of Athens (GR), the Technical University of Buda- pest (HU), the Hogeschool van Amsterdam (NL), IIP/Create Amsterdam (NL), RIN (UK), the British Library (UK), the Royal Holloway University of London (UK), the University of Cambridge (UK), Aal- borg University (DK), CapDigital (F), Université Paris-Sorbonne (F), Université Paris Descartes (F), the Europeana Foundation, Fashion, Newspaper e Judaica (EU), Creative Commons (US), the Prince- ton University (US), the Singularity University (US), etx. — contributing to spread out social participa- tory values and p2p practices in the dissemination, use, re-use, critical review, and sharing of scientific and cultural assets/values, thus spreading out folksonomy and e-participation as well as enhancing the comparison between the official encyclopedic taxonomy and the adaptive and folksonomic ones. This contributed to determine the different impact degree on the different territories and learning environ- ments, disseminating new genetic development methods and a brand new quantum biology within struc- tured systems. Centre Network, Belgium; EURADA, European Association of Development Agencies, Belgium; dMedia Network LTD, UK.

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1. Introduction

This document represents a first *syllabus*, to be later on the intrinsic part of the forthcoming **transnational strategy.** The aim is to analyse each national conditions on cultural heritage and related tourism based on actual national studies, determining a strategic overview as to cover in a single line, executable and efficient, all the diversities of each national situation, including a SWAT analysis.

The strategy of EUHeritage Tour focuses on a few core key-words:

1. **Sustainable tourism**
2. **Competitiveness**
3. **Youth**
4. **Upskill.**

The approach is a territorial one though comprised in a transnational vision.
The project will cover at first an area of **5 countries**:

Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Italy, Portugal — *all EU Member States.*

Considering the aims of the project, and in particular the creation of a transnational tourism product on the UNESCO cultural heritage sites, the geographical coverage is particularly relevant. So at least 5 added countries are to be considered strategic in ensuring a coherent itinerary:

Spain, France, The Netherlands, Germany, and Greece

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1. 1. Assumption data.

The GDP/capita values of the 5 main countries show a certain balance between the members of Southern Europe, as well as between the ones from Central Europe, and an overall range from 0,2% up to 16,5% of the EU average (**Italy**: 25,7; 16,5% of share in the EU total; **Belgium**: 34; 4% of share in the EU total ; **Austria**: 36,4; 3,2% of share in the EU total; **Portugal**: 15,6; 1,7% of share in the EU total; **Cyprus**: 20,5; 0,2% of share in the EU total).

Starting from the consideration that **tourism represents 9% of world GDP**; in Europe, **international tourist arrivals rose by 3% in 2012** on top of a strong 2011 (+6%), a remarkable result in view of the lingering economic difficulties. **Europe reached 534 million tourist arrivals** in 2012 (52% of all international arrivals worldwide), 18 million more than in 2011. As regard destinations, the growth was led by those located in Central and Eastern Europe (7% more international arrivals in 2012); Western Europe posted a 3% increase in arrivals with the best results for Germany (+7%) and **Austria** (5%). Destinations in Southern Mediterranean Europe (+2%) consolidated their excellent performance of 2011 (+8%) and returned in 2012 to their normal modest growth rates. Of the larger destinations, Croatia (+4%), **Portugal (+4%),**

Spain (+3%) and Turkey (+3%) recorded growth in arrivals above the average for the subregion.

Anyway, **it is within the regions that international travel takes place**, with about four out of five worldwide arrivals originating from the same region.

Top spenders are Chineese travellers, followed by Germans, Americans, British, while the Russian Federation is considered as the most interesting emerging economy.

As regard the thematic topic EUHeritage Tour is built on, ie **UNESCO cultural heritage sites in Europe**, these **are rarely marked as "touristic products"**. That is why EUHeritage Tour will also develop an e-learning course to improve the skills of stakeholders in charge of the management and the promotion of the UNESCO sites in Europe, enhancing their touristic potentials on a "glocal" level.

On the other hand, **UNESCO world heritage is perceived as a common identity by Europeans**, tracing a historical path among the different populations, so it has a **very strong common potential to be exploited.** Their trans-boundary linkages have to be made more visible, enhanced, in particular in relation to the relevance they represent for the **identity** of each region involved and as part of the route.

Moreover, only a few transnational tourism products on this theme are existing at present time (eg. the Baltic Sea Region); in developing a strategy for the creation of a transnational tourism product based on UNESCO cultural heritage sites, **the crossing of national borders should be carefully considered** as a key-point to achieve a broader view of themes to be connected as a **thematic logic**, linking together historic sites and landscapes and traditions with their specific ecosystems.

Tourism is conceived in a very **multilevel structure** in the project, comprising a multiple activities aiming to professional up-skill, local and cross-border policies creations and improvements, boosting economic growth, fostering competitiveness among SMEs, facilitating PPP, serving for recreation, leisure, **cultural enrichment**, cultural heritage preservation and enhancement.

Target groups of the project strategy are twofold:

i.   **stakeholders in charge of UNESCO cultural heritage sites in EU** (authorities, institutions, organizations, individuals); the target group includes the segment of young worker and women in the field of cultural heritage; innovative SMEs active in the field of culture and cultural heritage aggregated services;

ii. **local, regional and national stakeholders** (authorities, development agencies, businesses, SMEs, entrepreneurs, civil organizations, associations) who are **playing a determinant role in the promotion of tourism in their area and in the provision of touristic services.**

The final **beneficiaries of EUHeritage Tour tourism product** are young tourists and citizens under 35 years who are interested in visiting UNESCO cultural heritage sites in EU and could benefit from the attractions and services the area can offer.

1.2. Vision, expectations from the EUHeritage Tour project.

Cultural heritage is widely recognized as a vehicle for cultural identity.
Basing on this key-point, EUHeritage Tour project aims to create a **transnational route** to **UNESCO** cultural heritage sites in Europe as a thematic logic, contributing to the **differentiation of the European tourism** as well as to the **promotion of shared cultural heritage**, thus stimulating **a greater sense of European identity.**

The project, basing on the **collection and analysis of local/international good practices on cultural/sustainable tourism** and the resulting improvement of the local tourist stakeholders' **management skills**, will develop and offer a transnational tourism product at first liking together **several regions and countries, strengthening cross-border cooperation**; then involving added partners from nearby countries during the life time of the project, ensuring a **multiplier effect**.

As a result of the **shared heritage capitalization**, a tourist route will be created: **attractive to young tourists**, based on the principles of **sustainable tourism** and **competitiveness** in times of the economic crisis.

The **direct impact** is to provide **added value to the single heritage sites** of the newborn network, exploiting them from a touristic point of view, with **positive indirect effect** on the community in terms of **social and economic growth.**

Main project's objectives and activities are the following:

- **to strengthen the management skills of public and private stakeholders** in charge of the promotion and conservation of European UNESCO cultural world heritage sites through an e-learning course and resulting in the exchange of **good practices (transnational approach; cross-border cooperation; creation of a network of skilled tourism stakeholders);**

- to increase the **competitiveness of SMEs active in the tourism and cultural sector** by including them in the definition, promotion and offer of the tourism product (**positive indirect impact on the community: jobs creation, increase in employability rates, innovative services provided by startups, etc.);**

- **to facilitate and enhance public-private partnerships (PPP)** by fostering and preparing the transfer of good practices locally and providing a discussion forum on the digital platform focused on the management, conservation and promotion of cultural heritage sites (**sharing of knowledge and improving competences);**

- **to involve additional Associated Partners** to create a coherent and continuous route (**multiplier effect, bridging the gap in the geographical coverage, scaling up);**

- **to promote the transnational tourism** through a virtual map, an application for mobile devices, digital touristic guide, communication materials (**in target dissemination activities);**

- **to involve private sponsors** to support the project activities as well as to financially sustain the project after the funded period.

There are two main activity streams within the Work Plan:

A. Benchmarking, good practices and up skills:

      A.1. to **collect good practices** in the management of UNESCO heritage sites across Europe **as ground base for the development of the e-learning course contents**

      A.2. to deliver the e-learning course

      A.3. to define the EUHeritage Tour (transnational product)

      Core target for the activity line:

    (i) <u>local, regional and national public/private bodies in charge of tourism and culture</u> (eg, authorities, ministries for tourism and culture, tourism organisations, bodies in charge of managing world heritage sites, etc.)

    (ii) <u>young workers and women</u> skilled in cultural heritage seeking for a job in the area of the management and promotion of UNESCO cultural heritage sites

    (iii) <u>other cultural or tourism related stakeholders</u> (associations, institutions, networks or working groups)

B. Creation and enrichment of the transnational product; promotion and dissemination of the route:

      B.1. to create the EUHeritage Tour touristic product (route)

      B.2. to involve local stakeholders providing added products and services along the route

      B.3. to promote the transnational route by mobile apps and cutting edge technologies

      Core target for the activity line:

    (i) <u>SMEs/startups active in the tourism or cultural sector </u>(travel agencies and tour operators, tourism related transport, tourism accommodation, leisure, promotion, cultural event organisers, ect))

    (ii) <u>Young European tourists and citizens under 35 years.</u>

1.3. EU relevant tourism policies

The EUHeritage Tour strategy aligns with the [UNESCO decision 34COM5F.2](#), underlining the need of adequate promotional strategies, sustainable frameworks and specific management skills to successfully promote cultural world heritage sites in Europe under the paradigm of sustainability. Moreover, considering that the tourism sector involves both public and private stakeholders, EUHeritage Tour's strategy also takes in strong consideration the EC's 2010 Communication on Tourism [(COM (2010)352 final)](#), its rolling implementation plan and the Agenda for sustainable and competitive European tourism ([COM(2007)621 final](#)): this very last underlines the need for national, regional, local public authorities as well as public and private tourism stakeholders to be strongly involved as the essential condition for the creation of a successful sustainability tourism framework.

1.3.1. How EUHeritage Tour aligns to the EU tourism policies as well as UNESCO recommendations

Such a framework is therefore especially needed for the tourism management of European UNESCO cultural world heritage sties. In this respect, a few progressive strategies, initiatives and policies are existent in Europe, but **this existing knowledge is not being capitalized** to its full potential due to a **lack of discussion and exchange platforms that involve both public and private tourism stakeholders,** thus facilitating the exchange of knowledge.

In order for European tourism to be both competitive and sustainable, the management skills of both public and private tourism stakeholders have to be improved to successfully meet **high quality standards** responding to the **new tourism demand in times of present economic crisis.** Furthermore, limited time and language skills are possible constraints. EUHeritageTOUR will tackle this obstacle by developing an innovative an e-learning course based on existing good practices on strategic topics, free and available in each of the project partner's languages.

Often, cultural heritage sites are promoted with a rather local or regional focus without taking into account the positive impact on the competitiveness of cultural heritage sites that a transnational cultural route could offer. Both public and private stakeholders have to be sensitized on the added value that a transnational product can offer and cooperation between these stakeholders has to be enhanced.
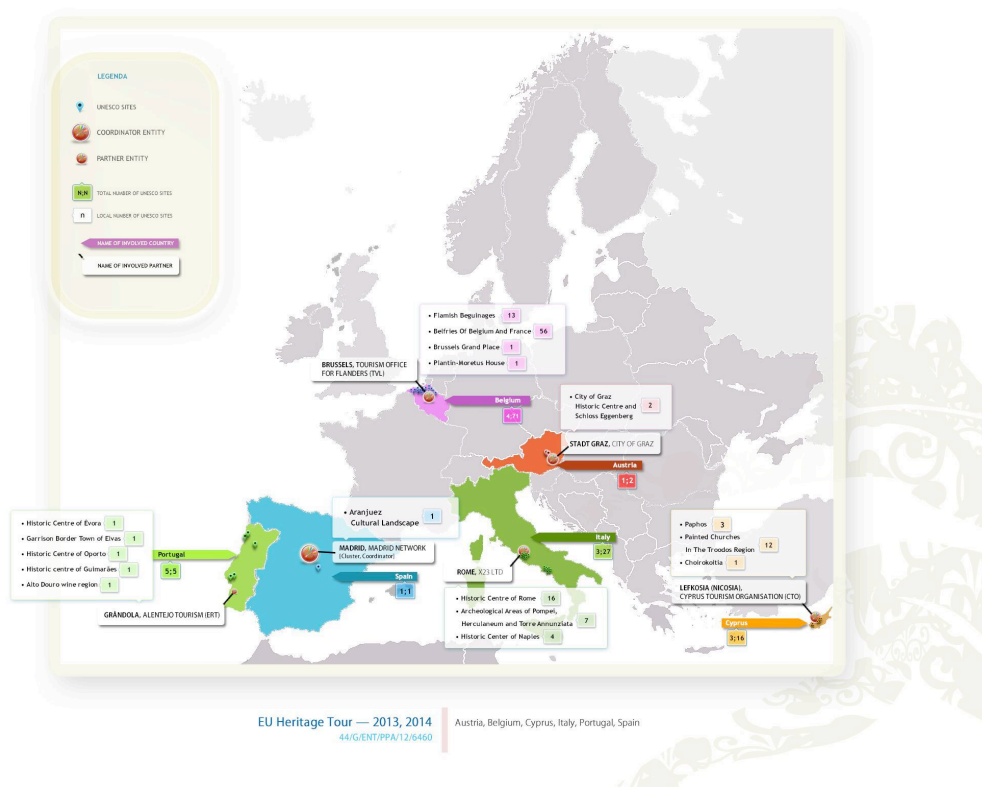
The tourism sector offers great potential for economic growth. **UNESCO cultural world heritage sites are a niche for promoting a shared cultural heritage** that has not been exploited to its full extent and therefore offers employment opportunities. Especially in **tourism regions in crisis or conversion,** this sector offers an opportunity. However, cultural heritage workers have to acquire the particular skills in order to increase their employability and take advantage of this opportunity.

2. Background

2.1. Position of the EUHeritage Tour area

The EUHeritage Tour area covers at first 5 main countries: Italy, Portugal, Belgium, Austria, Cyprus. Considering the need to offer to the beneficiaries a coherent and fluid path along the route, the goal is to include also a few strategic countries in-progress, such as Spain, France, Germany, The Netherlands and Greece.
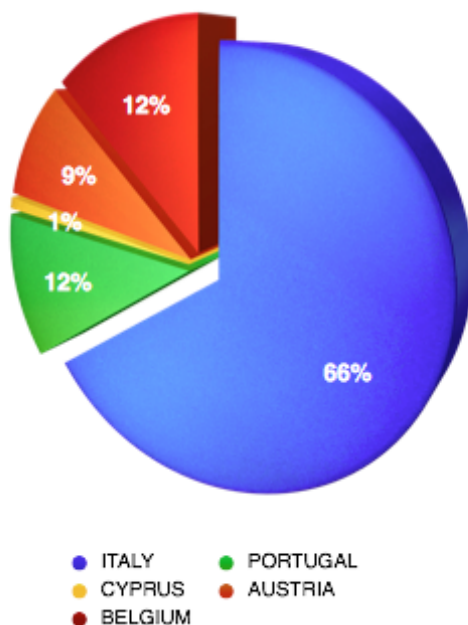
It is actually a broad area, rich in diverse architectural and archeological sites and monuments as well as in traditions, culture, historical backgrounds, identities.

EU Heritage Tour — 2013, 2014   Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Spain
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2.2. Area of coverage and demographic elements

The entire area covered by the EUHeritage Tour project is about 516.435 km² (the first 5 countries; considering the added ones is about 2.098.829 km²), while the total inhabitants are about 89.905.845 (299.717.428 including the added countries), scoring an average density of 174 people/km².

Share of population between the EUHeritage Tour project

Legend:
- ITALY
- CYPRUS
- BELGIUM
- PORTUGAL
- AUSTRIA

The EUHeritage Tour area and related potential route comprises 2 national capitals (Rome, Brussels), one large city (Oporto); a broad natural landscape (the Alto Douro Wine Region) showing both natural and cultural features; a collection of small historical cities (Graz - Austria; Alcobaca, Guimaraes, Evora, Elvas - Portugal; Cerveteri, Tarquinia, Syracuse and Ortigia, Matera - Italy; Bruges, Louvain to mention just a few comprised in the Flemish Béguinages and the Belfries of Belgium and France); a mountain region (Troodos Mountain Region, Cyprus).

The overall area shows a high concentration of rural density population in Italy (19.140.429; in particular in the Lazio, Basilicata and Sicily regions), in Portugal (4.044.654); Austria (2.718.070, in particular in the mountain regions); in Cyprus (330.725, in particular in the Troodos Mountains) and Belgium (276.905). As regard the urban density population, 68% of the Italian population is classified as urban (2.641.930 inhabitants in the city of Rome); about 98% of the Belgian population lives in urban areas (1.006.749 inhabitants in the city of Brussels); 68% ot the Austrian population is classified as urban (265.778 inhabitants in the city of Graz); about 60% of Portuguese people live in urban areas (the Porto Metropolitan Agglomeration counts 1.679.854); approx 70% of the Cypriots live in urban areas.

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2.3. UNESCO built heritage density

Considering the first 5 countries involved in the development of the trasnational tourism product, there is a strong concentration of UNESCO cultural heritage sites on local level.

Italy counts the highest number of UNESCO heritage sites: 49 sites well distributed across the national territory (45 classified as cultural; 4 classified as natural).

Portugal can count on 15 UNESCO heritage sites: 14 cultural heritage sites and 1 classified as natural.
Belgium counts 11 UNESCO heritage sites, all classified as cultural.
Austria comprise 9 UNESCO heritage sites, all classified as cultural.
Cyprus includes 3 UNESCO heritage sites in its territory, all classified as cultural.

If we broad the EUHeritage Tour area by adding the 5 strategic countries, the resulting UNESCO heritage sites density is the following:

Spain: 44 UNESCO heritage sites in total (39 classified as cultural; 3 as natural; 2 as mixed)
Germany: 38 UNESCO heritage sites (35 classified as cultural; 3 as natural)
France: 38 UNESCO heritage sites (34 classified as cultural; 3 as natural; 1 as mixed)
Greece: 17 UNESCO heritage sites (15 classified as cultural: 2 as mixed)
The Netherlands: 9 UNESCO heritage sites (8 classified as cultural; 1 as natural)
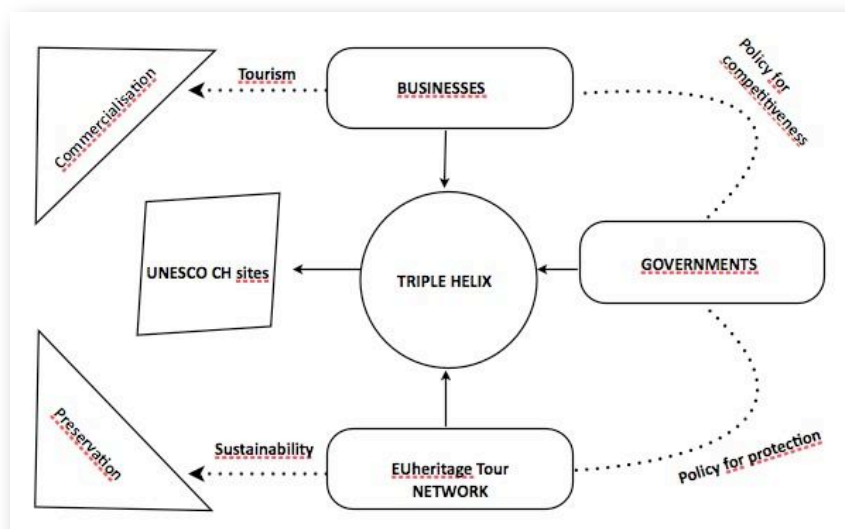
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3. Conceptual Framework

3.1. Approach

The project based on a strong relationship and a mutual cooperation among three key-players: governments, the EUHeritage Tour network and the businesses.

In this sense, the approach adopted by the EUHeritage Tour project is funded on the so-called "Triple-Helix" model, going beyond the limits represented by the traditional "dual cooperation" between governments and businesses. In fact, the model facilitate the establishment of multiple relationships among the different players, bringing high value to the growth of the network, who will then provide policies and guidelines to facilitate the knowledge capitalisation process, the capacity building and the tourism product definition and creation.

It is just through these multiple relationships and interlinked cooperation that:
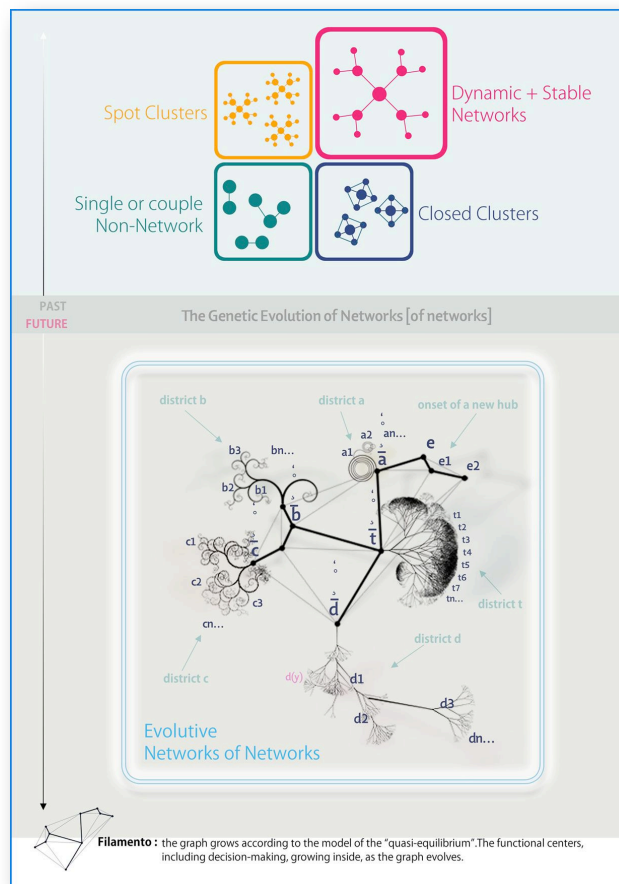
- stakeholders (governments authorities) are detected and knowledge is shared and capitalised;
- stakeholders (governments authorities) are involved in the transfer of the knowledge so that the capacity building process could start, in particular related to the management and promotion of the UNESCO cultural heritage sites (improvement of management and promotion skills);
- stakeholders (private entities, ie businesses) are involved in the proactive creation of the EUHeritage Tour project by providing innovative services and improving the existing one, thus generating an induced impact on the local community;
- the EUHeritage Tour network can establish profitable relationships and cooperation with all the stakeholders (in particular the governments) in order to promote at best the brand of the EUHeritage Tour resulting tourism product.

By adopting the "Triple Helix" model it is possible to achieve a critical mass of relationships and actions, ensuring a multiplier effect. Furthermore, the ideal harmony between sustainability, preservation and commercialisation of the UNESCO cultural heritage sites can be reached within the EUHeritage Tour product.

3.2. Mechanism

The mechanism of EUHeritage Tour is based on the "Network of Networks" mechanism, which stands as the ideal solution for stimulating cross-border cooperation and for fostering transnational relationships. In fact, it can ensure the meeting of transnational objectives by facilitating and improving local, regional and national processes. The thematic logic linking together the multiple UNESCO cultural heritage sites across Europe and within the participating countries finds its best application in the framework of the "Network of Networks": UNESCO cultural heritage sites are a narrative strand underlining a great sense of European identity but also representing a strong bound to the local, regional, national history of each country, as well as to the distinctiveness of the territory. So, while building a network by linking together the multiple and different European UNESCO sites, creating a unique itinerary as well as contributing to the differentiation of the European tourism, the model replicates itself in each single participant country, bringing added value to the single cultural heritage sites within a region and connecting them to other disseminated on the national territory. As a result, each local, regional, national network stimulates the knowledge capitalisation process, improves its own economic growth by the involvement of the nearby businesses, fosters competitiveness to create new good practices in the field of heritage tourism; but at the same time the local network is an active and a vibrant node of the EUHeritage Tour network, contributing in actions and results to the overall strategy of the EUHeritage Tour project.

There are a few crucial key-elements within the Network of Networks mechanism:

a. the ability to enhance the **distinctiveness** of a place/destination within its territory and inside the transnational network;

b. the **clustering capacity**, aggregating destinations as well as related services to create a critical mass of appealing destinations and to attract a critical mass of tourists;

c. the ability of **maximise PPP** to improve high quality standards;

d. the **capacity of preserving** the natural and cultural sites, creating a route under the paradigm of **sustainability**;

e. the ability to ensure a high level of **accessibility** to tourists, in particular the youth, by boosting the capitalization of the travel experience (*learning by doing*);

f. the capacity of **branding and networking**, by creating an appealing identity not only to the transnational route, but also providing added value to the single networks identity within the network according to an interlinked loop.

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4. Elaboration of strategic priorities

4.1. EUHeritage Tour Mission and overall strategy

The mission of the EUHeritage Tour project is *to increase the competitiveness of European tourism under the paradigm of sustainability, capitalizing the shared value of European UNESCO cultural heritage sites in a transnational innovative tourism product.*

The overall strategy of the project can be divided into **three main Strategic Objectives:**

a. **Strategic Objective 1:** *Contributing to differentiate the European tourism offer by capitalising on and giving value to the shared cultural heritage;*
b. **Strategic Objective 2:** *Contributing to economic regeneration and job creation in declining (post) industrial regions through inter-regional and trans-national cooperation projects in the field of tourism;*
c. **Strategic Objective 3:** *Providing innovative and attractive tourism product, competitive in time of crisis.*

Linked to the 3 Strategic Objectives, **5 main priorities** can be detected:

* Capacity Building
* Improvement of the social-economic condition of the area
* Improvement of the competitiveness of the businesses
* Innovative tourism product offer and related services development
* Enhancement of the European Identity

4.2. Strategic Objective 1:
Contributing to differentiate the European tourism offer by capitalizing on and giving value to the shared cultural heritage.

Justification for the Objective 1:
UNESCO cultural heritage sites provide an important narrative for historical development in Europe and they can serve as foundations for a contemporary European identity. Nevertheless **UNESCO cultural heritage sites in Europe are rarely marked as "touristic products"** *while they are* **perceived as a common identity by Europeans.** *This represents a* **very strong common potential to be exploited and to be achieved by the creation of a tourism product,** *enhancing both the single attractive value of each UNESCO site located in each country and the overall historical identity value represented on a European level.*
Often the sites are promoted with a rather local or regional focus without taking into account the positive impact on the competitiveness of cultural heritage sites brought by a transnational action, underpinning strong cooperation, knowledge capitalisation and mutual benefits. In order to stay the world's number one tourist destination, the ability to provide the audience an innovative tourism product is strongly encouraged; **the differentiation of the European tourism could be successfully achieved by exploiting the potential of niche market**

sector, in this case represented by the UNESCO cultural heritage sites.

As a result, tourism stakeholder have to strengthen their skills, combine their efforts and work within a political framework coherent with local, regional and national strategies and policies, taking into account the priorities set by the Europe Strategy 2020.

*Furthermore, areas of competence in the tourism sector are often decentralized, so it is vital to the project to **involve public governmental authorities in charge of tourism and culture**, both at national, regional and local level not only to analyse and discuss about those good practices in the tourism field already existing, but above all to transfer them and, hopefully, to create new ones.*

*At the same time, the differentiation of the European tourism drawn inspiration also from the many successful cases already existing in managing and promoting UNESCO cultural heritage sites (eg. UNESCO/UNITWIN network conclusions from the 2nd meeting recommending the creation of public-private partnerships as a successful model²). As a result, **private bodies and entities and other cultural tourism stakeholders are relevant for the project success.***

4.2.1. *Priorities for the Objective 1:*

(A) Capacity Building
(B) Improvement of the social-economic condition of the area by increasing the employability rate in particular in the convergence regions

> *Justification for both Priorities:*
> *Domestic and international visits to the UNESCO cultural heritage sites have grown rapidly over the past years representing a challenge as well as an opportunity. These developments require adequate sustainable frameworks and in particular specific management skills to promote the UNESCO cultural heritage sites under the paradigm of **sustainability**. The priority **1 Capacity Building** of EUHeritage Tour strategy aims to improve and strengthen the management skills as well as the promotion ability of the stakeholders in the field of culture and tourism in order to allow them to meet high quality standards demanded by the tourists.*
> *Moreover, the UNESCO cultural heritage sites are a niche with a strong potential, offering employment opportunities. To meet the priority **2 Improvement of the social-economic condition of the area by increasing the employability rate in particular in the convergence regions**, EUHeritage Tour offers the chance to the young workers to acquire specific skills, thus resulting in a improvement of the employability rate, in particular in the convergence regions suffering from an economic crisis.*

² http://en.unesco.org/unitwin-unesco-chairs-programme

4.2.2. Target audience

- <u>Local, regional and national public authorities in charge of tourism and culture</u> (eg, ministries for tourism and culture, tourism organizations, authorities/bodies in charge of managing cultural world heritage sites, etc.): their contribution is relevant to the detection of good practices to be analysed and adopt for the development of the e-learning contents. They could also represent the beneficiaries of the e-learning course, so it becomes relevant that these entities should have the competences to transfer/implement a good practice in their territory after the e-learning course.

- <u>Young workers and women</u> skilled in cultural heritage already active in the field or seeking for a job in the area of the management and promotion of UNESCO cultural heritage sites. They could be comprised as working staff within the local, regional and national public authorities mentioned above and in the current need of upgrading or improving their skills and expertise. They could be graduated or in the process of graduating in the mentioned field.

- <u>Private bodies and entities and other cultural tourism stakeholders</u> (eg, associations, institutions, networks or working groups, umbrella organizations) who could provide success stories and contribute to the definition of high quality standards differentiating European tourism.

4.2.3. Indicators

- 160 stakeholders identified
- 24 good practices identified
- 120 private and public stakeholders with improved skilles (20 workers among them)

4.2.4. Expected Results

- Solid capitalisation of knowledge of potential stakeholders
- Fixed high quality standard for the differentiation of the EU tourism
- Improved knowledge of existing Good Practices in Europe
- Improved skills of public and private stakeholders as well as increased employability

4.3. Strategic Objective 2:

Contributing to economic regeneration and job creation in declining (post) industrial regions through inter-regional and trans-national cooperation projects in the field of tourism

Justification for Objetive 2:

The tourism related to UNESCO cultural heritage sites has a great potential to boost the local economy and employment. Especially in tourism regions in crisis or conversion, this sector offers a remarkable opportunity not only in terms of employability growth, but also of the strong impact on the small and medium enterprises active on local, regional and national level. These are in fact key players in charge of providing services, facilities, accommodations in the selected UNESCO sites area, contributing to generate economic growth, to enrich the attractiveness of the territory nearby the sites, to provide innovative solutions, resulting in a on-going stimulus for the overall competitiveness of the area.

The creation of a touristic route based on the UNESCO cultural heritage sites can ensure positive impacts on the social-economic condition of the area, in particular for the community. The importance of involving SMEs is justified by the conclusion of the study "Impact of European cultural routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness"[3] jointly undertaken by the Commission and the Council of Europe, and endorsed by the conclusion of the Council of Europe Union (competitiveness council) in relation to the Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European Tourism (2007).

The strategy of EUHeritage Tour project is to actively involve SMEs, in particular startups and young entrepreneurs, who could provide the adequate aggregated services and facilities customized on the beneficiaries of the touristic product (young tourists and citizens under 35ys). These very last have been chosen starting from the point and the premise that the European youth represents the future of Europe: by rising the awareness among young citizens regarding their own cultural heritage, by fostering an intercultural exchange and promoting shared values of this heritage under the concept of sustainability will contribute most effectively to stimulate a greater sense of European identity.

4.3.1. *Priorities for the Objective 2:*

(C) Improvement of the social-economic condition of the area
(D) Improvement of the competitiveness of the businesses
(E) Enhancement of the European Identity

Justification for all three Priorities:

The exchange and the preparation of the transfer of good practices among public and private entities in charge of tourism/culture is strongly interdependent to the results fixed by the Strategic Objective 1 Priorities. These very last will produce a concrete improvement of the skills of the target groups identified in the Strategic Objective 1 as regard the management and promotion of the UNESCO cultural heritage sites.

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[3] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/routes/StudyCR_en.pdf

*The overall strategy aims, in fact, to produce a multiplier effect: by facilitating the exchange and the transfer of good practices, a network of well-known prepared and skilled tourism stakeholders will rise (**Priority 1 Capacity Building**), resulting in a positive impact on the social economic condition on a glocal level (**Priority 2 Improvement of the social-economic condition of the area**); the improved skills will increase the workforce's employability (**Priority 2 Improvement of the social-economic condition of the area**); the creation of a touristic product will stimulate the participation of the businesses in providing their services and facilities, enriching the quality of the offer to be spread out, and creating a critical mass bringing to the heritage sites an added value while contributing to an improved touristic exploitation of their potentials, according to a trans-national approach (**Priority 3 Improvement of the competitiveness of the businesses**).*
*European identity will broadly benefit from the action, as by learning about and appreciating their own culture and those of the other Member States, young European citizens will gain an effective awareness of their own identity as Europeans, a fact particularly relevant to youth in times of globalization (**Priority 5 Enhancement of the European Identity**).*

4.3.2. Target audience

- <u>SMEs, startups, young entrepreneurs, innovators </u>(eg., travel agencies and tour operators, tourism related transport, tourism accomodation, recreational and cultural organizations, promotion entities, cultural event organizers, etc.) active in the tourism or cultural sector and particularly close to sustainability concept.

- <u>Young workers and women</u> seeking for a job in the field of culture and tourism who could benefit from the boost in the market provided by the new route.

- <u>Private bodies and entities and other cultural tourism stakeholders </u>(eg, associations, institutions, networks or working groups, umbrella organizations) who could spread out the project and contribute to the brand awareness of the new route.

- <u>Young European tourists and citizens under 35ys </u>as direct beneficiaries of the new route as well as of the action aiming to rise awareness on their own heritage as a relevant component of their national identity as well as of the European one, at present time not so well perceived. Furthermore, UNESCO cultural heritage tourism is a market sector considered as one with the highest potentials among young people, though at present time still too high spending. This target group needs adequate tourism products privileging the key-concept of affordability and sustainability.

4.3.3. Indicators

- 120 public and private stakeholders involved in the definition of the EUHeritage Tour product
- 8 good practices prepared for transfer, 8 online assessments
- 25 SMEs (including startups, young entrepreneurs, etc.) participating to the definition of the tourism product
- 1 brand identity enhancing the value of the European identity

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4.3.4. Expected Results

- Intensified cooperation between public and private stakeholders for sustainable tourism development
- Increased quality of European tourism destinations related to UNESCO cultural heritage sites
- Increased involvement of SMEs in the development and promotion of the EUHeritage Tour tourism product
- Improved European identity disseminated by the network and perceived by the target groups as well as by the beneficiaries of the actions

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4.4. Strategic Objective 3:

Providing innovative and attractive tourism product, competitive in time of crisis

Justification for Objective 3:

Starting from the point that UNESCO cultural heritage sites are rarely marked as "touristic products" but have a great potentials to be exploited, their distinctiveness as well as their common historical path could represent a strong element to base on for the creation of an innovative and unique tourism product.

In Europe, there are 342 classified UNESCO cultural world heritage sites in 34 EU Members/candidate/potential candidates, representing the single identity of a population but at the same time the same historical path of the humanity and its splendor. According to a transnational approach, each UNESCO site located in the EUHeritage Tour area represents a vital hub for its own territory, but an extraordinary attractive node within a network able to capitalize the shared knowledge as well as the heritage. And yet, UNESCO cultural heritage tourism has a great potentials to be exploited, in particular considering the youth target group who is interested in traveling, in intercultural exchange under the paradigm of sustainability.

Barriers here could be represented by the actual time crisis, the usual high-spending related to UNESCO cultural heritage tourism and the need for youth to benefit from easy-to-go solutions as regard transports, affordable accommodations and appealing related services or events.

4.4.1. *Priorities for the Objective* **3:**

(F) Improvement of the competitiveness of the businesses
(G) Innovative tourism product offer and related services development
(H) Enhancement of the European Identity

> *Justification for all three Priorities:*
> *The involvement of SMEs, and in particular of startups and young entrepreneurs, will allow EUHeritage Tour to aggregate innovative services customized for the needs of the target group, who pay attention in particular to sustainability criteria in traveling (e.g. 0 emission transport), comfortable but affordable accommodations (e.g. new generation of hostels, providing advance services if compared to the traditional ones); leisure activities in the nearby (festivals, creative and cultural events); cutting edge technologies to be informed in real-time about crucial information while traveling (closing time of the sites or museums; public transport; affordable but cool restaurants, etc.). Unconventional marketing is a crucial key in disseminating the route: social media activities represent the favorite media to youth to share experience as well positive (but also negative) feedback on site.*
> *A strong brand identity is a relevant milestone in the creation of the EUHeritage Tour route enhancing the value of intercultural exchange as well as the European identity.*

4.4.2. Target audience

- SMEs, startups, young entrepreneurs, innovators (eg., travel agencies and tour operators, tourism related transport, tourism accomodation, recreational and cultural organizations, promotion entities, cultural event organizers, etc.) providing innovative services to the beneficiaries.

- Private bodies and entities and other cultural tourism stakeholders (eg, associations, institutions, networks or working groups, umbrella organizations) who could spread out the project and contribute to the brand awareness of the new route.

- Young European tourists and citizens under 35ys as direct beneficiaries of the new route as well as of the action aiming to rise awareness on their own heritage as a relevant component of their national identity as well as of the European one, at present time not so well perceived. Furthermore, UNESCO cultural heritage tourism is a market sector considered as one with the highest potentials among young people, though at present time still too high spending. This target group needs adequate tourism products privileging the key-concept of affordability and sustainability.

4.4.3. Indicators

- at least 16 SMEs participating to the affiliation programme, providing services and facilities along the route
- 200 participants in the local dissemination events (insiders as well as general public)
- 1 brand identity of EUHeritage Tour route

4.4.4. Expected Results

- Positive effect of the transnational cultural route on SMEs and the social-economic condition of the area
- Improved exploitation of the shared heritage through the creation of a trans-national tourism product
- improved differentiation of the tourism offer through the creation of an original and innovative transnational route
- Increased European identity awareness perceived by the beneficiaries of the tourism product
- Increased awareness of the own and shared cultural heritage

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