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Deliverable 5.2.3 – Transferring final report

WP5 Transferring

Activity 5.2. Transferring knowledge / know-how / expertise

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Introduction

BEST MED project is being implemented in eight Mediterranean countries (Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Greece and Montenegro) with the general objective of enhancing Mediterranean Governance, being the main challenges to fight against seasonality and lack of effective cooperation among main tourism actors, including the citizen active participation on the policies design. It aims to have a new integrated and sustainable touristic planning aiming at the mitigation of seasonality in the MED area.

The aim of Transferring final report is to provide an account on the activities that took place to produce a working framework that can support the development of sustainable cultural paths in Europe and other regions by replicating the experience of BEST MED. In doing so, this document provides an account of the stages involved in producing this framework (developing training material and implementing trainings) to then discuss these. The final goal of this report is to set up the transference recommendations of knowhow and expertise required to implement further initiatives of sustainable and cultural tourism in other regions.

Therefore, the first section of the report provides the concluding remarks of the training seminars content produced by the Ministry of Tourism of Greece and the Training Sessions organized by each partner in their piloting area. Additionally, this section discusses the outcomes of the training material and analyzes the conclusions achieved by each of the seminars. In doing so, this report unpacks the main themes that emerged from the training sessions.

The following section of the report presents the methodological note and the outlook of the overall implementation. Then, the section introduces the achieved results in relation to the targets established at the outset of the BEST MED Project and the training seminars produced. The remainder of the report sets out the recommendations that emerged from both activities in order for this to shed some light on the future replication of this framework.

1. General conclusions of the training courses

The Greek Ministry of Tourism produced the training material consisting of a set of five teaching modules, which included an e-book, lecture notes, self-assessment quizzes for trainees, a syllabus, a teacher's guide, and bibliography containing additional sources of information. The training material also included presentations from each module to support the content delivery, which as per the teacher's guide, was to be based upon active learning teaching methods in order to foster the audience's engagement.

Further, each of the partners in BEST MED, implemented the training using this material, translating it and adapting the training modules to their context by relating the content to the local initiatives or already existing success cases in their territory and accordingly, by delivering it aided by experts on the topics.

The overall aim of this action was to develop awareness on the target population with regards to sustainable tourism and cultural paths by introducing the basic tenets on these topics and by looking to engage with the local stakeholders on the use their acquire knowledge to develop initiatives that contribute to address the current challenges in the tourism sector.

Thus, the training courses conclusions are presented in two parts, the first part concerns the training material, hence, engages with each one of the modules in order to discuss the content and highlight the main



Figure 1. BEST MED Training course e-book

aspects of the content that are relevant for further transfer efforts. Then, the second part introduces the main themes identified across the training sessions once each partner implemented the training actions.

1.1 Training modules

The training material consisted on 5 modules, each of which aimed at developing particular capacities of the audience. These modules are:

1. Sustainable development of culture and tourism
2. The concept of cultural routes as innovative tourism products (main characteristics, offered opportunities)
3. Services associated with the cultural routes and the role of local communities
4. Types of tourists and tourist flow management
5. Economic sustainability of the cultural routes through the enhancement of the route visibility, the promotion of local products, etc.

Each module was expected to last for about 3 hours and contained particular learning outcomes related to the content. These ranged from understanding the foundations of sustainable development to how tourism is segmented and impacts the territory, to then work with the trainees to develop networking strategies and engage with different tools for strategic planning and management in tourism and engage in the use of new technologies and marketing strategies. The content of these modules is discussed in the reminder of this section.

Module 1. Sustainable development of culture and tourism

The first module seeks to provide a brief but comprehensive understanding of sustainability in tourism and culture. In doing so, it recovers the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) conceptualization of sustainable tourism, the Worldwide Fund for Nature WWF decalogue of sustainable tourism, and defines the multidimensional model of sustainable tourism which provides the three dimensions affecting tourism: social, economic, and environmental.

After reviewing each dimension, this module also introduces the characteristics of sustainable tourism to define the main forms of sustainable tourism: Ecological tourism (ecotourism), soft tourism, rural tourism, community tourism, equitable tourism, and solidarity and responsible tourism.

In addition, this module also relates tourism with the sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given the economic and environmental relevance of tourism globally, the

module provides a background from the SDGs and also presents the three targets that relate to tourism: Target 8.9 of SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth; Target 12.b of SDG 12: responsible consumption and production; and Target 14.7 of SDG 14: Life below Water. The relevance of the SDGs is also highlighted by the increasing concerns and interest of stakeholders globally and also within the Mediterranean, especially on improving tourism planning and addressing the impacts of mainstream tourism and seasonality.

The module also introduces the relevance of indicators for sustainable tourism development. In order to measure the advance on sustainability, it is required to develop measurement frameworks that respond accurately to each context where sustainable initiatives are planned.

Similarly, this module provides an overview of the environmental impact of tourism, explaining how depletion, pollution and physical impacts take place once the creation of infrastructure and touristic areas are planned for usufruct. Yet, tourism can also contribute to reverse such effects by contributing financially and by implementing environmental management and planning; by creating environmental awareness, fostering protection and preservation; and by also helping to develop new regulatory measures or frameworks. Along these lines while the importance of economic growth as a consequence of tourism is highlighted the module also stresses sustainability across this equation.

The second part of this module introduces cultural sustainability, giving historic notions of the conceptual evolution of this term and how it then relates to sustainable development. By illustrating how cultural heritage can become an important touristic driver the module also stresses the need to match this with the sustainability framework proposed.

Module 2. The concept of cultural routes as innovative tourism products

The second module is aimed at explaining and providing the fundamental concepts to understand how cultural routes are defined. This includes providing the notions of the historical and conceptual development of the cultural routes from the 1990s until nowadays. The notions of cultural routes are important in order to categorize what sort of framework is applicable to any given trail that is expected to become a cultural one.

This module also explores the type of cultural routes that are defined by the Council of Europe and how are these assessed with regards to the traits and characteristics these must hold within their path in order to become a certified route. In this sense, one of the core recognized elements is the management mechanisms of the route,

this has to be democratic and set the basis for a Destination Management Organization.

Similarly, this module introduces the MED Sustainable & Cultural Path Model espoused by the consortium. This model consists on “integrated planning and management of cultural routes and other physical or thematic paths in Mediterranean destinations, by following sustainability principles” (Ordoñez *et al.*, 2021). Along these lines, the Med Sustainable & Cultural Path Model provides a series of criteria that define sustainability within this framework these are: Sustainable Management, Economic, Socio-cultural and Environmental Sustainability.

This module also sets out the model’s implementation framework which is further divided in two parts. These are the: selection of the model, and the tool box definition. Additionally, the module provides the five subsequent operation steps in order to implement the model in the selected pilot areas. Finally, it establishes the guidelines to select the pilot area and the actions to foster the dissemination of the MED Sustainable & Cultural Path Model across each pilot area.

Module 3. Services associated with the cultural routes and the role of local communities

The third module seeks to inform the services associated with cultural routes and how service providers and the community are to engage with the promotion of cultural routes. The module offers a description of the core services that a cultural route should offer. Starting with the Tour guide, and the many forms this figure has, the relevance for both the tourist and the community, these traits are highlighted together with those of the tour operator, while distinguishing whether the latter operate from inside the territory, outside, and whether this offer services outside or within the territory. Another service that has gained additional traction are car rental services, also because this type of service allows the tourist to reach even farther destinations hence, offers additional advantages. Finally, theme parks are also important across a cultural path given as catalyzers of history, nature and culture, these also provide experiences which are key to the development of experiential products.

The module also provides an overview of routes’ certifications, the degrees and scope for these, and briefly discusses the advantages of having a certified cultural path.

The second half of this module is devoted to introduce the relevance of the community in sustainable and cultural tourism. By providing the elements that make the community a fundamental element towards the acceptance and development of a project, the module sets a roadmap to involve the community and

engage with it in order to successfully implement an initiative. This section also provides a few community engagement techniques like: information, consultation and active participation. Finally, the section closes by providing a few examples of already well-developed cultural paths: Via Francigena, Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Urban Managements, and The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns.

Module 4. Types of tourists and tourist flow management

The fourth module is devoted to introduce the different types of tourist and how the number of tourists can be managed. Hence, the first section is devoted to introduce the differences between tourist and traveler to then proceed with introducing the concept of visitor and the characteristics of this. Further, it also provides a categorization of visitors dividing into: international, and domestic and also providing the relevance of this distinctions for example in terms of measuring and counting the types of visit and the influxes. This section also expands on the characteristics of tourist, excursionist, and transit visitor but also elaborating on the role tourists have according to their activity. This section also provides a few tourist typologies based on the work of some scholars like Smith (1989), Cohen (1972), and Plog (1974) which are then used to help draw the profile of tourists and provide a better understanding of the services required, the length of stays and the types of activities tourists seek. This provides a good basis to start exploring data and building surveys that help to better manage tourism.

The second section of this module is focused on tourism flows and starts by providing the definitions of overtourism phenomena, and the disruption this causes locally as the excess of tourism in one location by confronting visitors with the local inhabitants. The development of tourism industry has eased access to low cost flights, cruises, travelling digital platforms and social media, and population and urbanization expansion. On the other way around, these developments have simultaneously taken place with the housing market speculation, an increase of host population and commuting, online shipping impact on local business, and a change of economic and general lifestyle patterns.

This section goes on to addressing overtourism as a response to the call from many cities demanding solutions for this phenomenon. Thus, based on stakeholder's theory, cooperation among actors involved in tourism becomes of essence to provide feasible solutions to overtourism. In addition, the module introduces the concept of carrying capacity, which represents the threshold that cities have to withstand the influx of tourism in a city and the use of resources from this. The concept of carrying capacity is also extended towards other notions such as ecologic, environmental,

economic, social, physical, and psychological aiming to provide a multidimensional landscape to measure the peaks and limits of tourism influx.

Understanding how tourism flows then provides alternatives to overtourism. This section also reviews seasonality whilst at the same time discussing tourism supply and demand aspects of tourism products. Aspects such as traveling constraints or holiday seasons provide input to develop off season products catered for particular market niches and then expanding from there to other niches. This type of responses contributes to attract tourism to cultural routes. Yet competitive factors are also important, packaging solutions for off season holidays are an option while providing competitive pricing at the same time. However, product innovation here plays an important role but it is also crucial to match the demand with a quality supply side.

Another important aspect discussed in this section is the role of national tourism institutions on producing policy incentives towards reducing seasonality. This can be translated into supporting alternative holiday periods and fostering different types of mobility so these can provide also relief to already congested destinations. These are strategies - differential pricing, market diversification and state facilitation, that can mitigate the impact of seasonality once these are combined with carrying capacity measurements in order to improve tourism management and sustainability.

Module 5. Economic sustainability of the cultural routes through the enhancement of the route visibility, the promotion of local products, etc.

The fifth and last module focuses on how to foster the economic sustainability of cultural routes using different strategies. The first section introduces the concept of sustainability and its three pillars: social, environmental, and economic. Focusing on the latter, it is also noted that economic models of sustainability in the past did not consider the environment as part of the equation, yet nowadays it turns out fundamental to take into consideration how economic activities affect and rely on environmental resources. In addition, the concept of sustainable development is reintroduced to emphasize how economic capacities are key to advance social development. Being tourism one of the most important economic activities becomes an important driver for European economy given it attracts 50% of the global tourism and it's the third largest economic sector. The European Commission therefore, has developed a policy framework to support sustainable tourism.

The second section of this module introduces the contribution of emerging technologies to tourism by illustrating how digital tools can represent an opportunity for increasing the visibility of heritage sites. 3D imaging and scanning also play an important part in restoration and preservation of the cultural and historic heritage in

Europe. Similarly, smart heritage is a concept that is introduced to explain the convergence of smart cities with cultural heritage. With smart heritage technology, mediated experiences combine the virtual world with the real one and offer different experiences. Exploring museums and 3D representations, (here/now), using augmented reality to explore layers and changes in paintings or cities (here/before), to explore lost art through immersion in the history (there/before), or to connect people in virtual visit from distant locations (there/now).

The third section of this module is devoted to brand image and marketing strategies and starts by providing the historical evolution of marketing. Then it continues by providing a context for marketing within cultural routes, and develop some areas of market specialization that regard heritage marketing, art marketing, destination marketing, tourism marketing, destination marketing and services marketing.

Further, the module presents the branding concept which is used to label and identify a product and goes on to unpack the role of branding, and the branding strategy to then define the brand elements: visual identity, awareness, image, and costumer based brand equity which then set the basis to create the brand meaning. The module then proceeds providing the steps required to develop a strong brand identity for a cultural route in order to create visibility. The last part of this section is devoted to the marketing plan and provides also useful guidelines to develop one.

1.2 Main themes identified

With regards to the training course “Towards a model for sustainable cultural routes in the Mediterranean” this was held by BEST MED partners between November 25, 2021 and June 17, 2022. The training sessions took place at each of the partner’s locations (Croatia, Greece Italy, Montenegro, Portugal; Slovenia and Spain), in face-to-face, online and in hybrid modes and sessions were split or replicated when needed in order to guarantee the attendance of stakeholders and community (see Figure 2.).

Training modules were facilitated using active learning pedagogies in order to ease attendee’s participation whilst at the same time reflecting on their own contexts. The discussions held during the trainings were registered accordingly by each partner and transmitted to the leading partner in order to explore the outcomes of each one of them. This section aims at unpacking the main issues discussed and reported during the trainings.

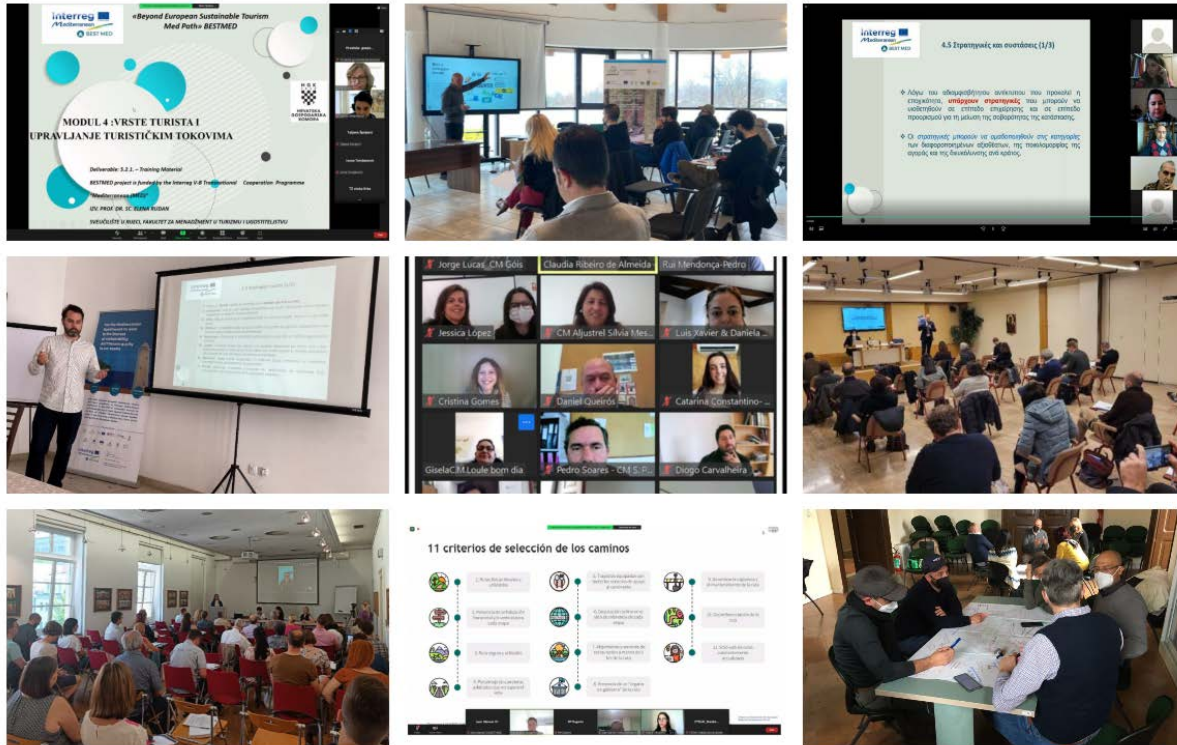


Figure 2. Training sessions across the consortium

Conducting thematic analysis (Kiger and Varpio, 2020) across the training reports allowed to uncover the main areas or topics discussed at the trainings which can be clustered into the following:

1. Capacity building
 - 1.1. Marketing and product development
 - 1.2. Management and planning
2. Infrastructure investment and innovation
3. Research and data analysis
4. Sustainability

Following, each of these themes will be discussed accordingly.

1.2.1 Capacity building

This theme was often reported as the need for further training with in relation to how to understand and make sense of cultural paths. It was also reflected as the need to create awareness of cultural paths across communities and stakeholders, to share the know-how and best practices across the EU certified paths. Similarly, stakeholders reported the necessity to build integration schemes and cooperation across regions in order to expand experiences and create associations with common aims.

Marketing and product development became were mentioned as some of the shortcomings to address. Along these lines, stakeholders noted the need towards building a common image across the path, establishing a brand and improving communication, or diversifying the channels of dissemination, at the local, national and global levels in order to project their products elsewhere.

Another important aspect that was highlighted by the discussions was the need to improve tourism management and innovate by using mixed schemes of governance: multilevel, public and private, with more horizontal and participative decision-making processes, and using management tools such as strategic planning supported by digital tools. Participative approaches indeed support sustainability in all of its dimensions, given actions emerged from the context reflect the actual requirements and needs of service providers and other stakeholders involved. In this sense, the reach of negotiated and agreed actions tend to have a transversal impact across the paths.

1.2.2. Infrastructure investment and innovation

A recurrent theme registered was the necessity to improve infrastructure to provide better services. Further improvement of roads and access to different mobility alternatives are required to potentiate cultural paths. Improving road signs and service infrastructure like bike racks or charging stations and disabled accesses are also important investments that need careful planning and allocation of resources across the routes.

Investment is also required with regards to improving digital infrastructures, facilities with internet access and cell phone signal coverage that further allow the scaffolding and integration of different tourism products are important towards fostering innovation. For example, developing experiential products that rely also on digital technologies to explore heritage sites allocated along paths, requires specific infrastructure and competences to operate the product.

1.2.3. Research and data analysis

Stakeholders concurred that the better they know their products and their costumers the more they can improve their services and plan ahead. This theme evidenced the need to develop further knowledge and improve the data that is generated, for example, by establishing collection stations or information markers that generate tourist's behavior patterns at particular times or milestones across the cultural paths. Using information in the form of data can

also help tourist managers and other stakeholders to improve decision making and reroute tourism to areas with less visits as opposed to overcrowded traits of the paths or even plan the service demand ahead. Statistical data and databases that allow stakeholders to increase the reach of services are also important to innovation and product development.

1.2.4. Sustainability

Finally, sustainability turned out to be the theme that is already gaining traction among the involved stakeholders at the training sessions. Either because they are now engaged with sustainability in policy related activities or because they are aware this is a turn in tourism trends, stakeholders manifested there is a need to deepen the understanding of how sustainability can be better approached and incorporated into their activities. Along these lines, stakeholders noted the need to increase environmental regulation and compliance across cultural paths to bolster protection and increase awareness among the tourism value chains. Similarly, reducing environmental degradation contributes to increase economic contributions as the demand for sustainable tourism products gradually becomes more common. This also requires environmentally friendly management systems, coordinated across all levels and all through the entire paths. Similarly, stakeholders also acknowledged the value of the MED Sustainable & Cultural Path Model as a tool that can promote and increase sustainability whilst being able to introduce concrete criteria for measuring sustainability.

2. Achieved results training courses

This section introduces the results achieved with the training courses. In doing so, the first part introduces the methodological aspects that were in place while implementing the training courses. The second part then addresses to the achieved results with regards to the target established by the project.

2.1 Methodological aspects

The material prepared by the Ministry of Tourism of Greece was handed over to the partnership so that this could translate the content from English to their own languages if required, and adapt it to their context. Then, the implementation of the seminar ran asynchronously from November 25, 2021 until June 17, 2022. This means each partner implemented the training according to their own working calendars and making an emphasis on their own initiatives i.e. Calabria's seminar content was related to their pilot area, the Calabrian Parks Cycle Route; Montenegro's to the Illyricum Route.

With regards to the implementation of the seminar, each partner was in charge of delivering it, and selected accordingly the trainer in line with the trainer's specialization on the context and knowhow on the topic. The seminar which ran in three different modes, online, hybrid and in presence, was taught in a participative fashion divided in two segments. The first segment was devoted to present and introduce the content to the audience. The second segment of the training consisted in engaging with the audience into discuss the content of the seminar and using this for a practical purpose, i.e. to define a dummy roadmap towards developing a cultural and sustainable path in their territory or perhaps to identify the necessary competences or advantages each stakeholder had for the purpose of their path or route.

The following table provides a recap on how the training content and sessions actions were implemented:

Partner	Mode	Duration	Total Attendees	Number of sessions
University of Maribor (Slovenia)	Presence	6h	40	1
National Organization of Tourism of Montenegro (Montenegro)	Presence	15h	19	2
Ministry of Tourism of Greece (Greece)	Online	14.5h	44	2
Croatian Chamber of Commerce (Croatia)	Online	11.5	13	2
University of the Algarve (Portugal)	Online	14h	80	4
Lazio Region (Italy)	Hybrid	16 h	74	2
Regional Ministry of Tourism, of Andalusia (Spain)	Online	3h	12	1
Calabria Region (Italy)	Presence	8h	52	1*

* The same session was repeated four times due to geographical complexities of the region

Table 1 Training Details

2.2 Training results

The achieved results of the training courses during the 12 training sessions that took place among the partnership exceeded the expected target of 48 organizations by reaching a total of 325 organizations engaged in the training sessions.

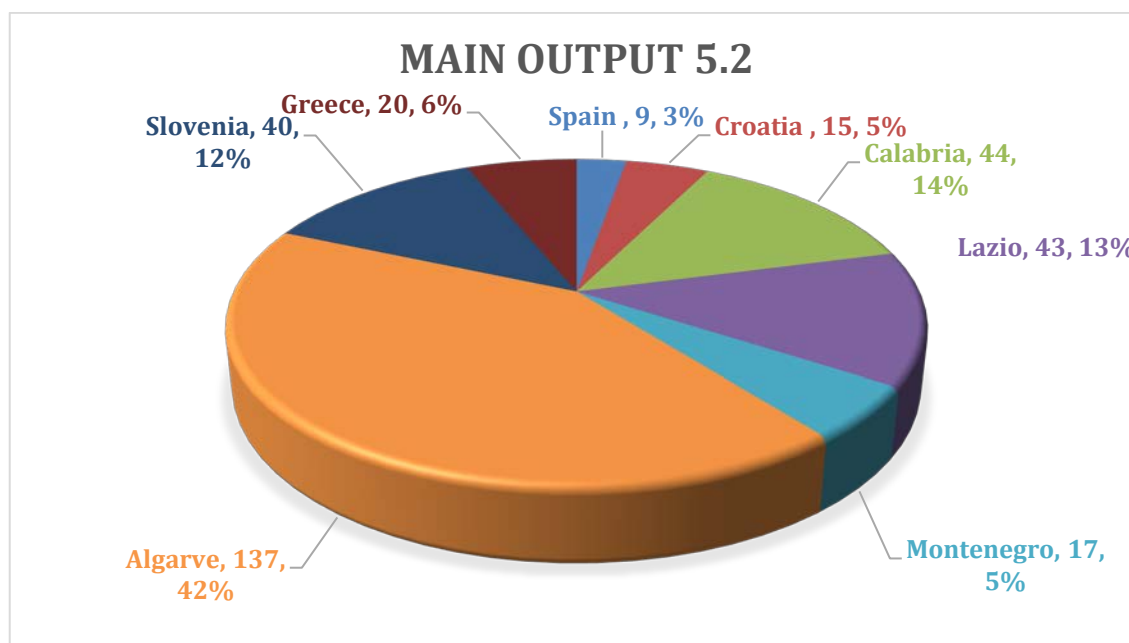


Figure 3. Organizations participating at the seminars

The composition of these varied and ranged from policy-making stakeholders, public administration, local SMEs like tour operators and hospitality, local associations, NGOs, and interest groups. The chart above (Figure 3.) provides a graphic description of the distribution from partnership's participating organizations.

It is worth noting that trainings ran in hybrid, online and face-to-face modes taking into consideration several aspects such as pandemic restrictions, regional distances, and also aiming at making this training available to the maximum number of stakeholders engaged in the cultural paths involved in the project.

Similarly, and although out of the scope of this report, it is worth mentioning that the Joint Transferring Seminars organized managed to engage 52 organizations, also exceeding the 10-target set by the project initially.

As mentioned earlier in this section, each partner adapted the training seminar according to each of their context. While for some partners was necessarily make an emphasis on a particular topic like sustainable development or best practices for example, for another partner was better to focus on marketing skill or developing awareness within the territory. That being said, the core topics and training material were introduced and delivered within training sessions across the eight settings evenly.

Another important outcome produced within the training seminars was the assessment questionnaire. This assessment tool was developed as part of the training feedback and aimed at providing a sense of the level of agreement (Vagias, 2006), about how the stakeholders were perceiving the adequacy and pertinence of the training as well as to evaluate future areas of opportunity for further developing training material and contribute to capacity building.

These questionnaires were also carefully translated and meticulously adapted if required (e.g. nuances in language, and focus of the training) by each of the partners. When adaptations were produced, the tool was calibrated accordingly and respecting the five core areas that it was designed to asses in order to produce a measurable output in each theme. These areas are: Content of the training; Trainer's expertise and performances; Training materials; Organization of the training; and Expectations.

The questionnaire was administered at the end of the training sessions and contained 13 questions where scores were reported using a 5-point Likert scale. Further, partners reported the data on each question within their training reports. This data also allowed to segment the scores into the five areas covered by the questionnaire. The following table summarizes the score for the five areas assessed

at the end of the training session, for each of the partners¹.

Partner	Content of the Training	Trainer's expertise and performance	Training Materials	Organization of the Training	Expectations	Average score
Regional Ministry of Tourism, of Andalusia (Spain)	4.83	4.67	4.83	4.83	4.40	4.71
Croatian Chamber of Commerce (Croatia)	4.75	4.83	4.63	4.55	4.83	4.72
University of the Algarve (Portugal)	4.25	4.39	4.36	4.44	4.27	4.34
Calabria Region (Italy)	4.35	4.43	4.23	4.17	4.19	4.27
Ministry of Tourism of Greece (Greece)	4.31	4.19	4.10	4.37	3.95	4.18
Lazio Region (Italy)	4.28	4.04	4.15	4.22	4.16	4.17
National Organization of Tourism of Montenegro (Montenegro)	4.86	4.62	4.73	4.83	4.37	4.68
University of Maribor (Slovenia)	4.05	3.5	3.90	4.2	4.23	3.98

Table 2. Evaluation Questionnaire scores per theme

Note: The Likert interval scales are: from 3.41 until 4.20 (agree), and from 4.21 until 5.00 (strongly agree).

It can be appreciated from the results presented in this table (Table 2.) that the overall score of the seminar ranged from an overall acceptance to the maximum level of acceptance², which means the seminar training was highly regarded by the stakeholders attending, finding it relevant and useful. The scores presented in this table also allow to identify the nuances of each setting while implementing the training. For example, while in some settings training material was highly appreciated in others received a slightly lower mark. While the explanations for these

¹ For the purpose of this report, the eight partners submitted the results of their questions and the author organized and harmonized the data according to the questionnaire themes in order to produce the scores using the following method: the preferred analysis was conducted using the weighted mean ($X = \frac{\sum wx}{\sum w}$) from each question. Then to calculate the outcome of each of the questionnaire's themes. Then, an arithmetic mean was used to produce a score. The Likert interval scales are: from 3.41 until 4.20 (agree), and from 4.21 until 5.00 (strongly agree).

² Where the Likert interval scales are: from 3.41 until 4.20 (agree), and from 4.21 until 5.00 (strongly agree).

can be hypothetical at this stage, these are indeed as an additional area of development for the training. Investigating whether this is the case that the training material was innovative, relevant, brand new; or whether stakeholders were already aware of some of the material presented; or whether this is the case of improving the delivery of the seminar, are precisely the follow-up questions that the questionnaire tool present to contribute towards improving the MED Sustainable & Cultural Path Model on further transferring opportunities.

It is also important to note that the evaluation ratio form the seminar –this is from those who attended how many completed the evaluation, is in all the cases from 50% above, and in some cases even more than 80% higher, which is statistically considered as an excellent response rate and enough to validate the scores obtained as representative from the stakeholders (Table 3.).

Partner	Total Participants	Total Questionnaires	Response Ratio
Regional Ministry of Tourism, of Andalusia (Spain)	12	6	50%
Croatian Chamber of Commerce (Croatia)	13	10	77%
University of the Algarve (Portugal)	82	71	87%
Calabria Region (Italy)	52	43	83%
Ministry of Tourism of Greece (Greece)	44	26	59%
Lazio Region (Italy) ONLINE	25	19	76%
National Organization of Tourism of Montenegro (Montenegro)	19	15	79%
University of Maribor (Slovenia)	40	23	58%
Total	287	213	74%

Table 3. Rate of response

The total rate of response from the overall questionnaire exercise is also excellent reaching a 74% response rate from the total attendees to the training seminars in together in all the eight settings.

Overall the questionnaire provided a useful tool to shed some light with regards to how sustainable development and new trends in tourism as well as the necessity to understand and capture this new tourism market, are perceived by the stakeholders. Given the content material was found relevant it is possible to infer that training sessions provided an important contribution towards improving cooperation among the stakeholders and build a common approach to sustainable tourism.

3. General recommendations with the results of these actions

The joint effort of producing a training material and deliver a training series on Sustainable Management on Cultural Routes has been consistent with the program objectives. On the one hand the training material provides a comprehensive and consistent basis to introduce stakeholders to the core topics: sustainability and management of touristic resources, whilst at the same time giving them the elements to expand the potential of cultural routes through active participation and engaging with sustainability from different angles and engage with digital technologies to develop new products that respond to the current challenges.

On the other hand, the carefully curated training content in combination with trainings adapted to each of the partners context proved to be a successful mix in order to develop additional interest on the current EU initiatives and to expand this knowledge by looking at exchanging experiences and figuring out new tourism models towards the 2030 Agenda. Training sessions in fact are a good incentive for stakeholders to start configuring and profiling new business models and new products that can create further added value along cultural paths. By immersing stakeholders together in the trainings, they have further acknowledged the potential of shared coordination and the importance of improving governance models towards those that favor collaborative and negotiated actions in benefit of the cultural paths value chains.

The potential for this combined effort to be transferred is considerable given the relevance of the topic in the current global and European context. By the same token, global warming, the Covid-19 pandemic and the energy crisis caused by the Ukrainian war, added to the younger generation shifting tourism outlooks, exert all of them pressure towards moving in the direction of a more sustainable way of travelling and doing tourism, more responsible with the environment and more in contact with the local communities and its resources.

Therefore, both the training design, and the implementation confer BEST MED methodology the necessary framework to replicate the model. Transferability of the training course contents is feasible within the Mediterranean and other European regions aiming to develop or further develop cultural and sustainable paths. Given the relevance for the European Green Deal, issues such as innovative and sustainable economy, the protection and valorization of natural and cultural heritage and sustainable tourism represent a great opportunity for transferring further this initiative within the new programming period.

Thus, to enhance transferability successfully a set of recommendations are proposed:

1. **Education and training can effectively support new sustainable tourism models**
 - Most of the time, the potential of local resources is underestimated by local stakeholders, due to the lack of awareness and training.
 - Training seminars represent an outstanding opportunity to help stakeholders understand their market and explore new products and contribute to capacity building.
 - Training material and content must be carefully looked at before organizing sessions in order to guarantee that topics are covered in consonance with the context.

2. **Engage and act together, act locally. Sharing a common aim eases milestone achievement.**
 - The new challenges of the tourism sector require joint efforts and sharing actions and activities transversally.
 - Training seminars must seek to involve the maximum possible number of stakeholders in the cultural and sustainable initiative.
 - Make sure to provide alternative ways to engage with training and provide access to educational material and the seminars in case this is required (i.e. special needs, pandemic mitigation, geographical conditions, etc.).

3. **Become a catalyzer: support and contribute to maintain the momentum, training seminars can cement initiatives that have taken off organically and where there is already awareness raised.**
 - Training sessions contribute substantially towards providing additional tools and help maintain continued effort across the cultural and sustainable path.
 - Training provides additionally a systematized and fresh outlook of new trends and tools that can be used to adopt new approaches to tourism initiatives
 - Training sessions also bridge different stakeholders needs and helps to provide a more balanced perspective vis-à-vis completing the development of a sustainable tourism initiative.

4. **Moving towards innovative management models requires a participatory decision-making effort that depends on the stakeholders' engagement.**
 - Participatory management models stimulate and improve cooperation among stakeholders and increases accountability through all the initiative.
 - MED Sustainable & Cultural Path Model incorporates such planning approaches that require integration for negotiated decision making.
 - Innovation also depends on new management approaches that are inclusive and consider different perspectives.

5. **Avoid fragmentation: acting together does not mean creating more competing networks across the path.**
 - A sustainable and cultural path network should be inclusive and representative, so that all economic activities find support and the required channels to foster their economic activity
 - Tourism value chains should converge to the initiative's network in order to prevent additional layers across the routes.
 - Cooperation is inside the path's initiative, competition is outside

6. **Thinking digital is part of the equation: it requires time and invest in training**
 - The digital transformation can produce really positive outcomes within cultural paths so it is essential to present this element to initiatives with existing potential.
 - Innovation means also research, which requires data, measuring and creating indicators that can contribute towards developing new products for the tourism market.
 - The digital element increases the reach and scope of our model and eases some of the tasks among them.

These recommendations also go along with the principles set by the Granada Charter which espouse a more socially and economically responsible development that accounts also for the environmental impact of Anthropocene. Similarly, these back the calls for strengthening cooperation and participation to engage stakeholders and support innovation across governance models from cultural and sustainable paths governance whilst establishing links with other similar sustainable initiatives.

4. References

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Annex 1 Compilation of training material 5.2.1. (Greece / Andalusia)

Please follow this link to access the compilation of the training material produced by the Ministry of Tourism of Greece.

Annex 2 Compilation of the reports of the training courses carried out by the partners. 5.2.2.

Please follow this link to access the compilation of the training material produced by the Ministry of Tourism of Greece.