Deliverable 3.4.1: Designing "MED S&C Path Model" - Fine-tuning study for launching pilot activities

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WP3 STUDYING

Activity 3.4

Designing a new sustainable MED Sustainable Path and Cultural Routes Model (MED S&C Path) with interested stakeholders

Requested by:

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1 Introduction

1.1 BEST MED - (Beyond European Sustainable Tourism MED Path)

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 tackle seasonality and the 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 tourism planning approach, to contribute to the mitigation of seasonality in the MED area, through the connection between coastal and inland regions, such as a path-route method. A testing phase will allow to build a joint model that will be transferred and capitalised, as well as a toolkit and updates set of data indicators.

BEST MED will follow a strategy of previous approaches and outputs, testing an updated toolkit of data and indicators, contributing to the design of a new Green model (MED S&C Path- Sustainable Path & Cultural Routes Model), focusing on integration of tourism planning into wider development strategies, together with mobilizing key players both at local and specifically at transnational level, creating synergies across MED countries and promoting the awareness of the MED area.

More information about the project here.

1.2 Working Package 3 "Studying phase"

The objective of the Working Package 3 is to develop a framework of knowledge about main project goals through:

- Base information for a network of tourism observatories
- Information needed to develop a MED Sustainable Path and Cultural Routes Model (MED S&C Path) on the example of the Mitomed+ project "Green Beach Model", and of other MED projects.

The study will examine existing methodological approaches on tourism data and tourism observatories and analyse previous experiences on tourism data knowledge, finding gaps and needs in data collection management and pinpointing the main results and suggestions from the previous MED projects, to develop adequate policies.

Within WP3, Activity 3.3 *"Identifying and discussing key areas for development and improvements of tourism competitiveness in MED area in the target area"* aims to develop the theoretical "MED Sustainable Path and Cultural Routes Model (MED S&C Path)" and its implementation framework, as well as organizing a technical workshop followed by the definition of a Road Map of the activities that will lead to the "MED S&C Path".

To this end, **Deliverable 3.4.1** presents the fine-tuning of the Benchmarking Toolbox that will allow route managers and regional policymakers, among other key stakeholders, to implement the model.

2 Benchmarking Toolbox

2.1 How to implement the MED S&C Path Model

This toolbox is a guide to implement the MED S&C Path model, including the step-by-step methodology as well as the instruments to successfully apply the model to a cultural route or path.

Firstly, we will explain the criteria that BEST MED partners have taken into consideration when selecting their pilot areas to test the model, and these areas will be briefly presented.

After this, the steps to implement the MED S&C Path model will be described, as well as the set of criteria to evaluate the sustainability of cultural routes and paths. Finally, several tools are included in the toolbox, in order to assist users to comply with the criteria. These tools include:

- The self-assessment audit sheet with the criteria for self-evaluation
- A set of Core and Optional indicators as a benchmarking method
- Guidance to use the BEST MED platform as a tool to measure performance (further guidance provided in D.3.2.3)
- Guidance for a set of 4 questionnaires:
    o Route's managers
    o Visitors
    o Local businesses
    o Residents
- The format for the Policy Learning Seminars

2.2 Criteria for pilot area selection

The criteria that BEST MED partners have taken into consideration to select their pilot area include:

- Preferably a Council of Europe certified cultural route.
- Preferably with an international dimension.
- Preferably a physical path, but it can also be a thematic route, as long as the stretch where the model will be tested is linear.
- Interesting for the kind of stakeholders intended to involve.
- As structured as possible (governance board, website, accommodation and other services, with good, structured information). This is important at the organization in charge of managing the route/ path is one of the key stakeholders to implement the model.
- Preferably hinterland areas linked or linkable to a coastal destination.

2.2.1 Pilot areas

	Partner Country	Partner	Name of Route	Website	Type of Itinerary
1	Croatia	Croatian Chamber of Commerce	Iter Vitis	https://itervitis.eu/	Territorial (Involving territories that present one common theme or character)
2	Spain	Andalusian Public foundation El legado andalusí	La Ruta de las Alpujarras	www.legadoandalusi.es/las-rutas/ruta-de-las-alpujarras/	Cultural Route of the CoE Territorial (Involving territories that present one common theme or character)
3	Portugal	University of Algarve, School of Management, Hospitality and Tourism	Umayyad Route	http://www.umayyad.eu/	Cultural Route of the CoE Network (with geographically separated elements)
4	Slovenia	University of Maribor, Faculty of Tourism	Iter Vitis TBC	https://itervitis.eu/wine-gastronomy-heritage-tour-of-slovenia/	Cultural Route of the CoE Territorial (Involving territories that present one common theme or character)

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5	Italy (Calabria)	Calabria Region	Cycle Route of the Parks	www.cicloviaparchicalabria.it	Regional path, not certified
6	Italy (Lazio)	Lazio Region	Via Francigena del Sud	https://www.viefrancigenedelsud.it/it/	Cultural Route of the CoE Linear path
7	Greece	Ministry of Tourism, Greece	The Routes of the Olive Tree	https://olivetreeroute.gr/en/	Cultural Route of the CoE Territorial (Involving territories that present one common theme or character)
8	Montene gro	National Tourism Organisation of Montenegro	The Illyricum Trail of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route	www.romanemperorsroute.org	Cultural Route of the CoE Territorial (Involving territories that present one common theme or character)

2.3 Step by step implementation framework

Together with the definition of the model, a toolbox is provided, including a step-by-step guide, to allow stakeholders to properly implement the system. An implementation framework is an integral part of any model, to ensure the results stemming from monitoring sustainability are in fact used to improve tourism management. (Miller and Twining-Ward, 2005, p.165).

The implementation guide includes the following five steps:

Step 1 — Establish a working group
Step 2 — Understand current sustainability level
Step 3 — Analyse the data
Step 4 — Address the gaps
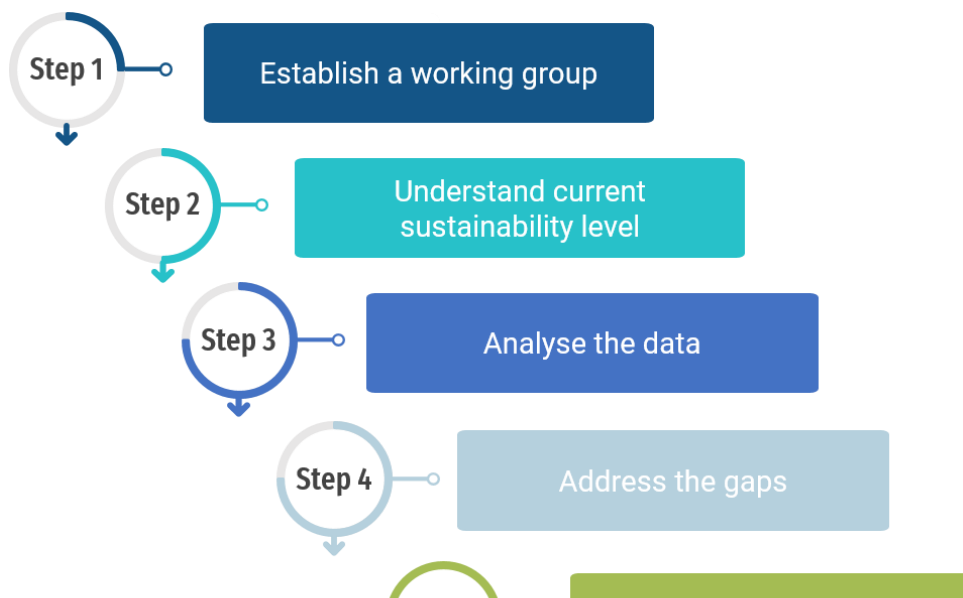
Figure 1 Steps to implement the model

Step 1: Establish a working group

The working group should be formed by regional policy makers, route's managing body (at local level) and other key stakeholders connected to the route. The group will be in charge of implementing the model, working together to measure the sustainability of the route and take action based on the results.

The key stakeholders to be involved in the working group include:

- **The local managers of the Cultural Route/ Path** (from the area where the model is being implemented). They should be the coordinators of the working group.

- **Regional policy makers** (as the path involves more than one destination). They are an important actor to support the CR/path managers for those issues where they do not have competences.

Each area interested in implementing the model can decide who are other key stakeholders to be invited, besides the cultural routes managers and the regional policy makers. For instance, relevant stakeholders might include institutions and associations that are part of the route's network, such as: local municipalities, local DMOs (Destination Management Organizations), civil society organizations involved in cultural, social and environmental areas, tourism stakeholders (hotels, restaurants, T.O., etc.), protected area managers, academic institutions. National level policy makers could be consulted, especially in those countries with strong central government structure.

The European Institute of Cultural Routes includes in its website a database of the national stakeholders that are part of the different certified route's network. This can be a useful place to search for relevant stakeholders that are members of the cultural route[1].

The importance of setting a multi-stakeholder working group is given by the possibility to establish relationships between the several actors working in the destination, to align objectives, resources and work towards common goals. Since the concept of sustainable development and sustainable tourism in particular is often perceived as "too abstract", the process of discussing its meaning and the implications for the destination helps understanding the concept and making it a more tangible one. This is known as the "conceptual role" of indicators and it is related to the social learning process that results from bringing a broad range of stakeholders together and facilitating conversations among larger communities (Bell et al., 2011; Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004; Hezri & Dovers, 2006; Lehtonen, Sébastien, & Bauler,

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[1] https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/cultural-routes-database-main-page

2016). Besides, sharing the responsibility for data collection provides a sense of ownership and commitment to the process (European Commission, 2013; European Commission, 2016).

Step 2: Understand the current sustainability level of the route/path

This will be possible by performing a Self-Assessment using the provided Audit Sheet. The Audit sheet is an excel sheet with a set of criteria (yes/no statements) that allows stakeholders to assess the current level of sustainability and use it as a baseline from where to start.

The responsibility for filling out the SA Audit Sheet should be taken by the CR/path management structure, as the coordinators of the working group, and then shared with the stakeholders from the working group to validate the information.

A first meeting with the stakeholders working group can be coordinated to go through the Audit Sheet and fill it out, according to the situation in the route/ path and in the destinations involved. The Self-Assessment Audit sheet allows a qualitative evaluation, providing a percentage of compliance with the criteria. This is a preliminary but important result, allowing the manager of the route and regional policy makers to evaluate at which stage actually is with respect to the goal of becoming a sustainable route.

Since cultural routes/ paths involve several destinations, it is necessary to define the borders of the area for monitoring purposes. It is possible to implement the model in a short stretch of the cultural route/ path or along the entire length of the route. The difference will be in the number of stakeholders to involve and the overall complexity of the process if it involves different regions/ countries where the route passes. Therefore, it is important the presence of regional authorities to represent the shared interest among several destinations so that administrative borders do not become barriers for cooperation.

Step 3: Address the gaps by using the provided tools

According to the gap identified in the second step, between the current situation and the compliance with all criteria, a participatory process of data collection and analysis can be organized.

A second meeting can be held with the working group, to discuss the criteria and suggested indicators, and collectively agree on a work plan for data collection, dividing the responsibilities since certain stakeholders would naturally have easier access to certain information depending on their positions. At this stage, stakeholders' part of the working group should raise awareness about the decision to implement the model and keep the level of attention and interest high during all the stages of implementation, so that citizens in general are informed and can as well get involved in the process if they wish to.

The tools provided in this toolbox assist the working group in collecting the needed information to comply with the criteria and improve their level of sustainability, as well as the management of the route. Apart from the SA Audit Sheet with the criteria, the toolbox includes a number of core and suggested indicators, the instructions on how to use the Best Med Online Platform, and 2 sets of questionnaires for route's managers and visitors. Each of these tools are explained in detail in the following sections.

These questionnaires have been adapted from existing initiatives such as the European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS), the report on the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism flows in Italian paths (Università degli Studi di Perugia, 2018) and the Green Pilgrimage project report (Norfolk County Council & University of East Anglia, 2019). The questionnaires can be used as they are or be adapted to suit the particular needs of the route. For those destinations who wish to conduct further research, guidelines are provided in the toolkit for residents and local businesses surveys.

The information can be sourced as much as possible, from sources already available, such as statistical data at regional/ local level, surveys already performed, etc., to reduce the amount of time and resources dedicated to data collection. However, the lack of available data should not be a reason to disregard certain indicators, as one of the advantages of developing indicators is precisely to start collecting valuable data that was previously not being collected. Prioritizing available data will generally mean focusing on economic data, which is generally collected, and the aim of the model is to have an overall assessment of all three aspects of sustainability.

Step 4: Data analysis

Once the SA Audit Sheet and indicators are completed by using the several tools provided, the working group can analyse the results and see the percentage of compliance with the criteria, as well as the results from the indicators. It is not necessary to complete all indicators, stakeholders can start with those that are able to source first and slowly add more over time.

The tools provided (SA Audit Sheet and Online Platform) will enable a clear visualization and interpretation of the results to help make sense of the data and the implications for the destination.

According to the results, the working group should discuss main issues and collectively establish priorities, defining goals for the sustainable development of tourism along the stretch of the path and creating an action plan. The responsible for following up the implementation of the action plan should be the CR/path manager.

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Step 5: Regularly monitor and evaluate

The working group, under the lead of the CR/path coordinator, commits to periodically monitor sustainability using the toolbox and the information stemming from the model to make informed decisions and policy developments.

How often this monitoring should be performed (monthly, quarterly, annually, biannually) will be at the consideration of each destination according to their needs and resources.

2.4 Criteria to evaluate a cultural route/itinerary as Med S&C Path

Thanks to the Literature Review of international initiatives for sustainable tourism and cultural routes management performed in Deliverable 3.3.1, we have selected a common set of criteria useful to evaluate the sustainability of a cultural route or path.

We intend criteria as equivalent to benchmark, this is using criteria to describe the desirable situation that routes should comply with. The criteria serve as a benchmark to compare actual performance and the gap between that performance and the criteria.

When selecting the framework to organize the criteria, we have taken a similar approach to that of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), identifying main dimensions, categories and criteria for each category, as well as suggesting specific indicators.

Each category contains several criteria to comply with. The indicators suggested are intended only to provide guidance to destinations and they are neither exhaustive nor mandatory, so users of the model are encouraged to use other relevant indicators or focus on the ones they consider relevant for their context. The criteria are divided in four main dimensions, following the pillars of sustainability:

- Sustainable Management (related to the Cultural Route/ Path management)
- Economic Sustainability
- Socio-Cultural Sustainability
- Environmental Sustainability

Each dimension is composed of categories with a total of 13 categories and 37 criteria. These criteria has been discussed with the project partners first and it will be further discussed with the stakeholders involved in the testing phase, to evaluate its importance and feasibility and eventually remove the ones considered not necessary or add new ones.
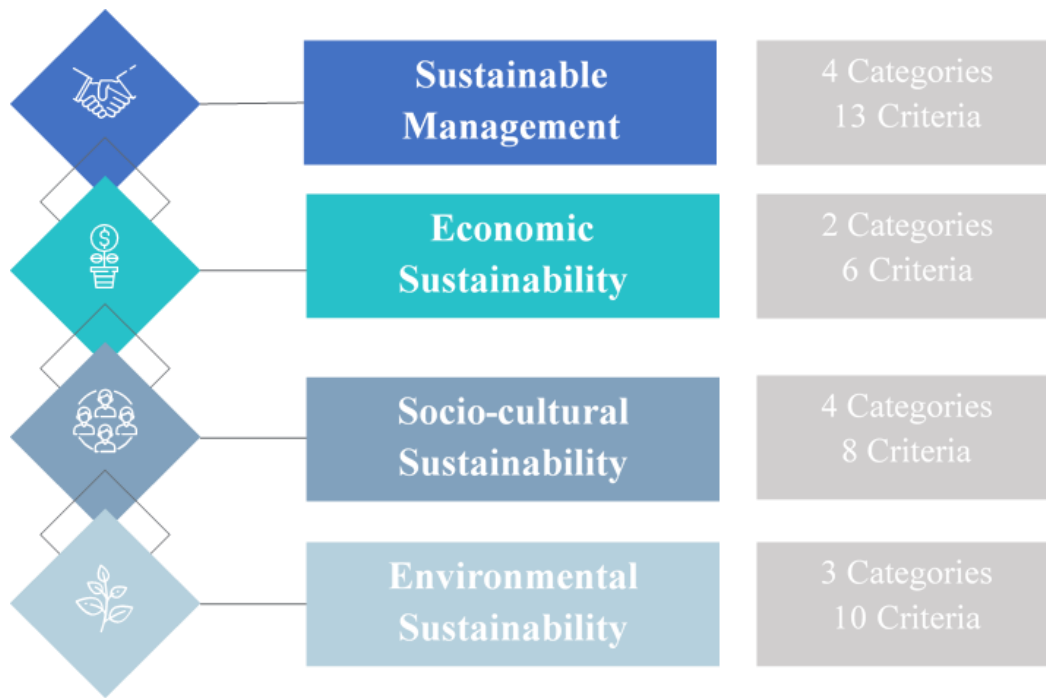
Figure 2 Criteria to evaluate sustainability of route

2.4.1 MED S&C Path Model - Set of Criteria

	Criteria	Yes/No
1. Sustainable Management		
1.1 Cultural Route/Path Planning & Management		
1.1.1 **Management structure**	The route has a legal entity, group or committee responsible for managing the route.	
1.1.2 **Stakeholders involvement**	The management structure involves stakeholders from the public and private sector and civil society, enabling participation in the planning and management of the route, as well as in the promotion of the route.	
1.1.3 **Funding**	The management structure is appropriately funded to carry out its duties, including the staff needed to run its activities.	
1.1.4 **Trained staff**	The staff working in the management structure is adequately trained in: - Sustainability. - Tourism. - Cultural Heritage.	

1.1.5	Route's strategic plan	The route/ path has a strategic, multi-stakeholder, up to date plan in place to manage all aspects of the route, including tourism and sustainability, with performance indicators to monitor implementation results.	
1.1.6	Region's sustainable tourism strategy	The region where the stretch of the route is located has a sustainable tourism strategy and the cultural route/path operation is compatible with it	
1.1.7	Visitors management	Tools are implemented along the route to count the number of visitors on territories crossed.	
		Tools are implemented to measure carrying capacity along the stretch (i.e., Limits of acceptable change, Visitor Impact Management (VIM), etc.).	
		Visitors' satisfaction with the quality and sustainability of the route is regularly monitored.	
1.2 Quality of Infrastructure			
1.2.1	Infrastructure condition	The infrastructure along the route is well maintained, is not invasive, with preference for natural construction materials, and provides all the services visitors might need, comprising:	
		The physical paths/treks	
		Viewpoints	
		Rest areas	
		Litter bins	

		Water fountains	
		Toilets	
		Information boards	
		Sheds or other type of shelter	
		Bicycle racks	
		Vehicle parking bays	
		Internet access	
		Signposting system	
1.3 Health & Safety			
1.3.1	**Safety information**	A safe use of the route is guaranteed by safety information: the provision of permanent, all-weather, environment-friendly, clear signposting and other markings associated to a trail are available wherever necessary	
1.3.2	**Emergency protocols**	Emergency protocols are established to respond to natural or man-made disasters as well as health issues from visitors	

1.4 Information & Promotion			
1.4.1	**Visitor Information**	There are Information Centres along the route to provide guidance and information to visitors, making use of modern technologies (QR codes, etc.).	
		Promotion and visitor information material about the route is accurate with regard to its products, services, and sustainability claims.	
		Responsible tourist behaviour is encouraged through awareness raising campaigns	
1.4.2	**Interpretative material**	Accurate interpretative material is provided which informs visitors of the significance of the cultural and natural aspects of the sites they visit.	
		The information provided is culturally appropriate, developed with host community collaboration, and clearly communicated in languages and formats pertinent to visitors and residents.	
1.4.3	**Website and Social Media**	The route/path has an updated website and social media profiles where to provide information and promote the activities along the route including its tourism offer. The route is promoted through local/ national/ transnational media.	
		The website and social media profiles are periodically monitored using available technologies to check their effectiveness and visitors satisfaction.	
2. Economic Sustainability			

2.1 Economic contribution to local economy			
2.1.1	**Tourism flows (volume and value)**	The direct and indirect economic contribution of tourism to the destination's economy is monitored and publicly reported. Appropriate metrics include levels of visitor volume, visitor expenditure, employment and investment	
2.1.2	**Supporting local entrepreneurs**	Local businesses, especially small and medium sized enterprises are supported through funding, training, etc. to benefit from the route.	
2.1.3	**Joint promotion**	SMEs along the route/ path highlight the theme of the route/path in their promotional activities and benefit from its visibility.	
2.1.4	**Local products and services**	The retention of tourism spending at local level is encouraged through the promotion of local sustainable products based on fair trade principles and that reflect the area's nature and culture. These include food and beverages, crafts, performance arts, agricultural products, etc.	
2.1.5	**Employment and career opportunities**	The route/ path stimulates the creation of employment opportunities or retention of existing jobs for local inhabitants	
		Training opportunities and business advice are available to improve the skills of staff directly or indirectly related to the route/ path and to increase employment opportunities related to sustainable tourism.	
2.2 Seasonality			

2.2.1	Tackling seasonality	Options to tackle seasonality are investigated and implemented, including a mechanism to identify year-round tourism opportunities, where appropriate—and direct tourism flows from coastal to hinterland areas.	
3. Socio-Cultural Sustainability			
3.1 Preservation of Cultural Heritage			
3.1.1	Protection of cultural heritage	The route management structure together with public authorities supports the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage along the route.	
3.1.2	Promotion of cultural assets	Thematic events and festivals are celebrated to promote the traditional / local culture and heritage.	
3.1.3	Respect of cultural heritage	Guidelines (Code of Conduct) for visitor behaviour at sensitive sites and cultural events are made available to visitors, tour operators and guides before and at the time of the visit	
3.2 Accessibility			
3.2.1	Accessible facilities	Where practical, sites, facilities and services, including those of natural and cultural importance, are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements or other special needs.	
3.2.2	Accessibility Information	Information is made available on the accessibility of sites, facilities and services.	
3.3 Residents engagement & feedback			

3.3.1	**Residents consultation**	Residents in the destinations along the routes are regularly consulted about their level of satisfaction with tourism along the route. Residents are aware of the existence of the cultural route.	
3.3.2	**Strengthening social identity and cohesion**	The route has strengthened the spirit of social cohesion among community members, their local identity and the opportunities for exchange and learning related to the encounter between residents and visitors.	
3.4 Gender equality			
3.4.1	**Gender equality**	Gender equality in formal tourism employment is encouraged.	
4. Environmental Sustainability			
4.1 Resource Management			
4.1.1	**Solid Waste management**	The route/ path and destinations along the route have a waste management system to treat and dispose of waste safely.	
		There are facilities along the trail and in destinations to separate waste and recycle it.	

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		The management structure of the route and the public authorities encourage enterprises along the route to reduce waste production, especially plastic waste.	
4.1.2	**Sewage treatment (wastewater management)**	The route / path and destinations along the route have a wastewater management system to treat and dispose sewage safely	
4.1.3	**Water management**	The quality of drinkable water along the route is regularly monitored.	
		The management structure of the route and the public authorities encourage enterprises along the route to reduce water consumption, incorporating new technologies and awareness raising activities.	
4.1.4	**Energy consumption**	Facilities using renewable sources of energy are incorporated along the route, such as solar panels, etc.	
		The management structure of the route has created synergies with enterprises sensitive about sustainability who are taking steps to reduce their greenhouse gases emissions and incorporate renewable sources of energy.	
		The public authorities provide financial incentives to local enterprises working together with Cultural Routes, to encourage the purchase of renewable energy technologies and increase energy efficiency.	
4.1.5	**Sustainability certifications**	Businesses along the route and destinations are encouraged to adopt voluntary certifications/ labelling for environmental sustainability as concrete efforts to reduce negative impacts.	

4.2 Sustainable mobility			
4.2.1	**Soft mobility strategy**	The route has a soft mobility strategy with concrete targets to reduce transport emissions from travel within the route and its destinations.	
4.2.2	**Low impact transportation**	Soft mobility options are encouraged to travel to and along the route (walking and cycling)	
		Public transport is available to reach destinations and attractions along the route.	
4.3 Landscape & Biodiversity protection			
4.3.1	**Protected areas**	Natural sites and biodiversity are protected along the route thanks to national and regional laws and designated protected areas.	
4.3.2	**Landscape & Scenery**	Natural and rural scenic views along the route and destinations visited are protected and the sense of place is maintained.	
4.3.3	**Wildlife**	Activities and services provided along the route do not disturb wildlife, or come into contact with endangered, threatened species.	

2.5 Self-Assessment Audit Sheet

The SA audit sheet allows us to measure compliance with the criteria. This audit sheet is filled out by the route's manager and the regional policy maker part of the working group.

In the testing phase of BEST MED, the project partners together with the local stakeholders will be acting as "auditors", evaluating the sustainability level of the chosen itineraries and filling out the audit sheet. However, once the model is tested, there won't be the need for an external auditor. The model will be a voluntary tool to improve the management of the route and the self-assessment will be complemented by other tools in the toolbox (online platform and questionnaires).

The Self-Assessment Audit Sheet is included in the toolbox as a separate file (excel sheet) and in the future it will be available in the Best MED online platform.

2.6 Set of Indicators

In order to measure the level of compliance with each criterion, a number of indicators can be used. To evaluate the choice of indicators, UNWTO and several scholars propose a number of criteria, which we will take into consideration when selecting the key indicators for our model.

Based on the criteria from UNWTO (2004), we evaluate indicators based on:

1) **Relevance:** Does the indicator respond to the specific issue and provide information that will aid in its management?
2) **Feasibility:** How can the information be obtained and analysed?
3) **Credibility:** Is the information coming from reliable sources to be believed by users?
4) **Clarity:** Will users be able to understand the information and act on it?
5) **Comparability:** Can the indicator be used to establish comparisons over time and across jurisdictions or regions?

These criteria are generally shared by scholars (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017; Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012; Tanguay et al., 2013). In this sense, Tanguay et al. (2013) propose 7 selection criteria for sustainable tourism indicators that are scientifically valid, but policy relevant. The criteria are classified into Primary and Secondary criteria:

Primary criteria: General sustainable development dimensions

1. **Classification** (environmental, social and economic components of sustainable development)
2. **Frequency of use** (the most frequently used indicators from among the several initiatives analysed)

3. **Coverage of the main issues in tourism sustainability** (according to the 20 main issues of sustainable development in tourism defined by UNWTO)
4. **Measurability over time** (dynamic indicators)

Secondary criteria: site-specific, to ensure policy relevance.

5. **Availability of data:** link with statistics or data already available at regional/ local level
6. **Compatibility with the destination tourism policy**: if there is one, compare indicators to see if they match the principles of the tourism policy of the region, but always covering the 4 main criteria. When the data are unavailable, it is always possible to choose substitute indicators as long as coverage of the sustainable development dimensions is maintained.
7. **Validation of indicators by the decision makers** through participatory processes (which is our objective during the Policy Learning Seminars).

Following these several criteria from the scientific literature, together with the practical experience of past initiatives such as ETIS indicators, EU funded projects (Coccossis & Koutsopoulou, 2020; Niavis, et al., 2019) and those initiatives analysed for Deliverable 3.3.1, we were able to identify an initial, long list of possible indicators that have demonstrated effectiveness to measure the intended phenomenon.

Moreover, these indicators have been further classified into Core Indicators and Optional indicators. Core indicators are generally those common to all kinds of destinations and those which represent the main dimensions of sustainable development. Selecting a set of core indicators can facilitate comparisons against different destinations (Coccossis & Koutsopoulou, 2020). Instead, optional/ additional indicators can be those site-specific ones, related to the tourism policy and particular issues/ priorities of the destination.

Since there is no agreed number of indicators to use, researchers and practitioners have to apply their own subjective criteria in order to define a number which allows to cover the main sustainability dimensions but that is relevant and feasible for the site-specific context (Torres-Delgado & López Palomeque, 2014), which is very much in agreement with the proposal of Tanguay et al. (2013). In this context, validating indicators through participatory processes involving different stakeholders is desirable and this is precisely our intention during the Testing Phase of Best MED.

Clearly, implementing indicators is not free of challenges. As asserted by Agyeiwaah et al., 2017, "*the combination of funding constraints, lack of commitment and support, lack of proper implementation and action framework, unclear goals and outcomes, unclear definition of stakeholder roles, and little development of systematic measures of assessment for enterprises is a recipe for failure" (p.27).* These are some of the issues we intend to tackle with the model and the tools to implement it provided here.

Figure 3 summarises the process we have followed to select relevant indicators. The list of Core and Optional indicators can be found as an Annex of this deliverable.
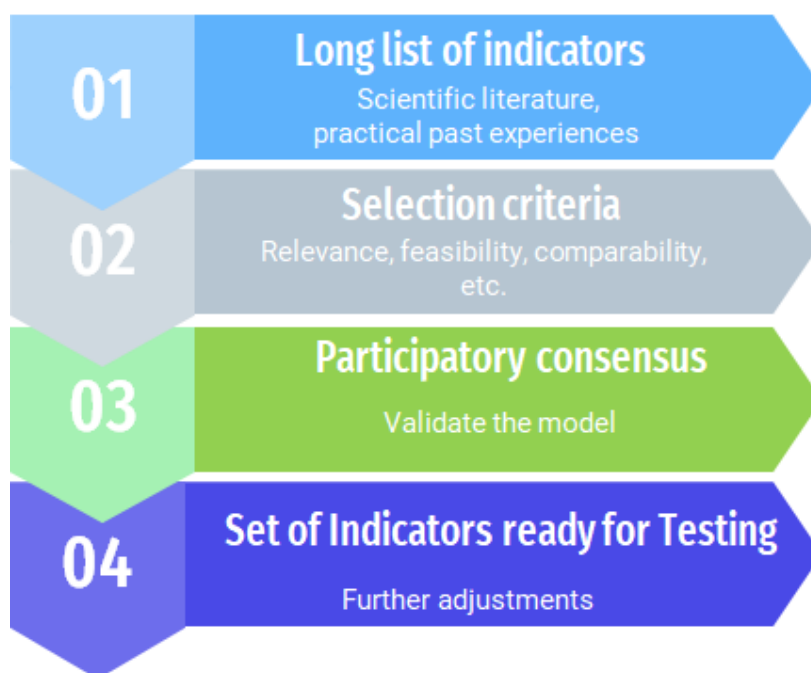
Figure 3 Indicators selection process

2.6.1 Guidelines for the use of Best Med Core indicators

In this section we provide guidelines to use the core indicators included in the Med S&C Path model. The indicators are divided in the 4 corresponding dimensions of the model.

2.6.1.1 Sustainable Management Indicators

Indicator 1	Percentage of stakeholders' representation from each community/sector in the route's management structure
Reason for measuring	This indicator can be used as a measure of the potential cooperation between the communities/sectors involved in the management of the cultural route. It aims to measure the extent to which the management structure allows for the participation of the public, private and civil society sectors in the planning and management of the route.
Data requirements	List of partners/members of the route's management structure, list of local key stakeholders related to the route.
Units of measurement	% of stakeholders
Data collection instructions	Data should be collected and analysed on a sector-by-sector basis (public, private, and civil society sectors). The data required to calculate this indicator can be obtained directly from the route's management structure.

Method of calculation	$$\frac{Number\ of\ stakeholders\ from\ the\ \textbf{public\ sector}}{Total\ number\ of\ stakeholders} * 100$$ $$\frac{Number\ of\ stakeholders\ from\ the\ \textbf{private\ sector}}{Total\ number\ of\ stakeholders} * 100$$ $$\frac{Number\ of\ stakeholders\ from\ the\ \textbf{civil\ society}}{Total\ number\ of\ stakeholders} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Annual
Reporting format	Pie chart
Benchmarking	Comparisons should be made with other destinations that are successfully promoting/managing cultural routes
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers
Notes	This indicator can provide an assessment of the degree of support for the route, as well as the need to secure additional funds or to involve more local actors.
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 2	**Percentage of staff adequately trained in tourism, heritage and sustainability**
Reason for measuring	The percentage of employees who have been adequately trained and certified can be considered as a proxy for the staff's skills and expertise, as well as of the general level of training carried out by the management structure of the route.
Data requirements	List of employees adequately trained in tourism, heritage and sustainability.
Units of measurement	% of staff
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure; industry databases of certified, licensed and trained professionals; trade unions; and/or industry associations. If none are available, a sample of employees in the route's management structure will need to be surveyed.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Number\ of\ adequately\ trained\ employees}{Total\ number\ of\ employees} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Annual
Reporting format	Pie chart
Benchmarking	When available, benchmarks can be found in national industry statistics. Targets for the appropriate number of skilled employees in particular jobs for which there is a formal qualification or certification programme can be established.

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Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers
Notes	-
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 3	**Percentage environmental, social, cultural actions recommended in plan which have been implemented**
Reason for measuring	Evaluation of the route's planning process is a key piece of information for tourism stakeholders to justify government funding and demonstrate concrete results.
Data requirements	A strategic, multi-stakeholder, up to date plan should be already in place to manage all aspects of the route, including tourism and sustainability.
Units of measurement	% of actions
Data collection instructions	Data can be collected during the planning and monitoring processes, or else by analysing the route's latest strategic plan/operating records.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Number\ of\ actions\ which\ have\ been\ implemented}{Total\ number\ of\ actions\ reccomended\ in\ the\ route's\ plan} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Annual
Reporting format	Pie chart
Benchmarking	The most relevant benchmark for this indicator will be the internal records of the route's management structure, or the data collected during the first year of the application of the MED S&C Path Model. If several routes are planned under the same legislative framework, a cross-comparison between them may be possible.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	-
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 4	**Percentage of the destination with a sustainable tourism strategy/plan with agreed monitoring, development control and evaluation arrangement**
Reason for measuring	This indicator serves to provide information to policymakers to assess the process and content of the planning process, and to monitor the policy environment surrounding its implementation.

Data requirements	List of sustainable tourism strategies/plans relevant to the route
Units of measurement	% of the destination
Data collection instructions	Data should be collected by analysing each tourism strategic plan that is relevant to the route, including international, national, and local plans. In case there are different plans affecting the same area, the concerned area will only be included once in the calculation. The "destination" in this case refers to the particular segment or stretch of the route being evaluated.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Area\ (km^2)\ of\ the\ destination\ included\ in\ a\ strategic\ plan}{Total\ area\ (km^2)\ of\ the\ destination} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Annual
Reporting format	Pie chart
Benchmarking	Following MITOMED+ recommendations, a threshold can be defined as follows: • **Poor**: From 0% to 33,99%. • **Good**: From 34,00% to 66,99%. • **Very good**: From 67,00% to 100%.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	This indicator's ideal value should be 100%, indicating that the whole destination is part of a long-term sustainable tourism strategy/plan. Therefore, a result of less than 100% indicates the potential for adding further actions or measures to the plan in order to increase its efficiency and impact.
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. Interreg Mediterranean & Universitat de Girona. (2019). D.3.1.2 b – Indicators guidelines (WP3 Testing and Evaluation). MITOMED +.

Indicator 5	**Number of tourists on a trail, at one time, in a given time period or season, per year**
Reason for measuring	The number of tourists on a trail is a key indicator of the route's tourism volume. The aim is to measure the number of tourists in relation to desired levels of use.
Data requirements	Number of tourists on a trail per month, season, or year
Units of measurement	Number of tourists
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, or tourism statistics offices.

Method of calculation	• **Monthly**: Number of tourists on a trail per month. • **Seasonal**: Sum of the monthly number of tourists on a trail per month. • **Annual**: Sum of the monthly number of tourists on a trail per month.
Frequency of data collection	Monthly, seasonally, or annually
Reporting format	Bar chart
Benchmarking	Following MITOMED+ recommendations, a threshold can be defined in relation to the average number of tourists on a trail per month/season/year obtained from the routes to be compared: • **Good**: More than 11.00% above the average. • **Regular**: 10.99% above or below the average. • **Not good**: More than 11.00% Below average.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	-
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 6	**Level of satisfaction by tourists, including perception of cleanliness**
Reason for measuring	Tourist satisfaction is critical for visitors to return, recommend the destination to others, or warn others to avoid the destination. As a result, it is a leading indicator of a destination's long-term sustainability and the potential benefits of tourism.
Data requirements	Results of route visitor's survey
Units of measurement	% of satisfaction
Data collection instructions	Visitor's survey included in the toolkit
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Number\ of\ visitors\ responding\ as\ satisfied\ with\ the\ route}{Total\ number\ of\ visitors\ surveyed} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Monthly, seasonally, or annually
Reporting format	Bar graph
Benchmarking	Following MITOMED+ recommendations, a threshold can be defined as follows:

	• **Low**: From 0% to 33,99%. • **Regular**: From 34,00% to 66,99%. • **High**: From 67,00% to 100%.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers
Notes	This indicator is best presented as a percentage to monitor changes over time. It is also useful to subdivide the data by different tourism segments (e.g., domestic visitors, international visitors, independent travellers, package tourists, pilgrims, etc.).
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. Interreg Mediterranean & Universitat de Girona. (2019). D.3.1.2 b – Indicators guidelines (WP3 Testing and Evaluation). MITOMED +. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 7	**Number of new infrastructure facilities developed related to the management of the Cultural Route**
Reason for measuring	The development of new infrastructure as a result of the management of the cultural route provides a measure of the impact of public spending and public-private partnerships. This indicator also serves as a proxy for the quality of the infrastructure along the route, and the services it offers to visitors.
Data requirements	Number of new infrastructure facilities developed in relation to the management of the cultural route.
Units of measurement	Number of new infrastructures
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, national and regional authorities, or statistics offices.
Method of calculation	Number of new infrastructure facilities per year
Frequency of data collection	Annual
Reporting format	Bar graph
Benchmarking	N/A
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	-
Source	Council of Europe. (2020). Policies for the Danube Region: Transnational cultural policies for the Danube Region (EUSDR). ROUTES4U. Council of Europe.

Indicator 8	Number of tourist information offices per tourist
Reason for measuring	This indicator assesses the degree to which tourists have access to information about the route. It measures whether there are enough information centres along the route to provide guidance and information to visitors.
Data requirements	Number of tourist information offices and number of tourists
Units of measurement	Number of tourist information offices
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, national and regional authorities, or tourism statistics offices.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Number\ of\ tourist\ information\ offices}{Total\ number\ of\ visitors}$$
Frequency of data collection	Annual
Reporting format	Bar graph
Benchmarking	N/A
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	-
Source	Lozano-Oyola, M., Blancas, F. J., González, M., & Caballero, R. (2012). Sustainable tourism indicators as planning tools in cultural destinations. Ecological Indicators, 18, 659–675. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2012.01.014

Indicator 9	Number of public organisations dedicated to tourism which have included the route in their promotional material
Reason for measuring	This indicator aims to measure whether the promotion of the route and the visitor information material is accurate with regard to its products, services, and sustainability claims.
Data requirements	List of relevant public organisations dedicated to tourism, list of organisations which have included the route in their promotional material
Units of measurement	Number of public organisations
Data collection instructions	Official data should be available if the route has been certified by the CoE. Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, national and regional authorities, tourism offices, or by reviewing the promotional material available at each stakeholder's website.
Method of calculation	Number of public tourism organisations including the route in their promotional material per year
Frequency of data collection	Annual

Reporting format	Bar graph
Benchmarking	The benchmarks selected will depend on the promotional/marketing goals and objectives of the route's management structure or DMO. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes or with complementary routes/destinations.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, DMOs
Notes	-
Source	Council of Europe. (2020). Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe: Certification Cycle 2020-2021. Council of Europe.

2.6.1.1 Economic Sustainability Indicators

Indicator 10	Number of tourists nights per month
Reason for measuring	This is a key indicator for any destination/route. The number of overnight stays are essential for calculating tourism impact, as well as for the derivation of many other important indicators. Tourism levels and flows are directly related to the intensity of use of attractions and, in some cases, help predict the stresses on ecological and cultural assets, infrastructure, levels of management, and various aspects of long-term sustainability.
Data requirements	Number of tourists nights per month (occupancy rate)
Units of measurement	Number of tourists nights per month (occupancy rate)
Data collection instructions	Occupancy data should be readily available from the route's management structure, national and regional authorities, or tourism statistics offices. In the event that occupancy data are not available, data obtained from the Visitor Survey should be used as a basis.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Total\ number\ of\ tourist\ nights\ annually}{12}$$
Frequency of data collection	Monthly
Reporting format	Bar chart by month
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Compare also with growth rates of other routes in the country or region.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, SMEs
Notes	Keep track of annual trends to see how the route's tourism levels have changed over time. Although monitoring the number of tourists and day-trippers would be ideal for a cultural route, this can be a time-consuming and costly procedure. Therefore, the number of tourist nights can be used as a proxy if the cultural route or destination does not monitor the number of visitors.

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Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 11	Daily spending per overnight visitor (accommodation, food and drinks, other services)
Reason for measuring	This indicator serves as a basis for monitoring the increase or decrease of tourism expenditure in the destination/route.
Data requirements	Results of the visitor survey
Units of measurement	EUR (€)
Data collection instructions	Visitor's survey included in the toolkit
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Daily\ spending\ per\ tourist\ respondents}{Total\ number\ of\ respondents}$$
Frequency of data collection	Monthly, seasonally, or annually
Reporting format	Bar chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes or with complementary routes/destinations.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	-
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 12	Average length of stay of tourists (nights)
Reason for measuring	The average length of stay is a key indicator to estimate the economic impact of tourism and the intensity of use of the destination/route.
Data requirements	Results of the visitor survey

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Units of measurement	Number of nights
Data collection instructions	Visitor's survey included in the toolkit
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Total\ tourist\ nights\ per\ respondent}{Total\ number\ of\ respondents}$$
Frequency of data collection	Monthly, seasonally, or annually
Reporting format	Bar chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes or with complementary routes/destinations.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, SMEs
Notes	Keep track of annual trends to see how the destination's average length of stay has changed over time.
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 13	Number of SMEs in the tourism, culture and creative industries sector
Reason for measuring	To assess the impact on small and medium-sized enterprises that support the development of the route.
Data requirements	List of all registered SMEs in the tourism, culture and creative industries sector
Units of measurement	Number of SMEs
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, national and regional authorities, or tourism statistics offices.
Method of calculation	Number of SMEs in the tourism, culture and creative industries sector
Frequency of data collection	Annually
Reporting format	Bar chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes or with complementary routes/destinations.

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Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, SMEs
Notes	-
Source	Council of Europe. (2020). Policies for the Danube Region: Transnational cultural policies for the Danube Region (EUSDR). ROUTES4U. Council of Europe. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 14	Direct tourism employment as percentage of total employment in the destination
Reason for measuring	Employment-related data are essential factors in many tourism support and investment decisions. The percentage of direct tourism employment is a key indicator in assessing the benefits of tourism for a community or destination, and it also provides a comparison of tourism employment in relation to other industries.
Data requirements	Tourism employment reports and data
Units of measurement	% of direct tourism employment
Data collection instructions	Employment/unemployment statistics from national and regional authorities, or tourism statistics offices.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Total\ number\ of\ residents\ directly\ employed\ by\ tourism}{Total\ size\ of\ destination\ labour\ force} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Annually
Reporting format	Pie chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Other possible benchmark comparisons could be with other economic sectors to assess the community's dependence on the route.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	-
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

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Indicator 15	Percentage of all occupancy in peak quarter or month
Reason for measuring	This indicator directly measures seasonality and its economic impact on key tourism sectors. The occupancy rate was selected as accommodation data is the easiest to obtain in most destinations.
Data requirements	List of licensed official accommodation, occupancy rates
Units of measurement	% of occupancy
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, national and regional authorities, or tourism statistics offices.
Method of calculation	The monthly distribution of the occupancy rate is necessary to identify the peak, low, or high periods, this can be easily visualised through a line graph of monthly occupancy rate per year.
Frequency of data collection	Quarterly or monthly
Reporting format	Bar o line graph
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Other possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes, complementary routes/destinations, or similar types of accommodation.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	-
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

2.6.1.2 Socio-Cultural Sustainability Indicators

Indicator 16	Number of policies, strategies, action plans and tools in place to protect cultural heritage
Reason for measuring	This indicator serves as a measure of the level of engagement of the route's management structure and public authorities in relation to the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage along the route. Policies, strategies, plans, and tools act as a foundation for public authorities and tourism officials to ensure that there is an official approach for the protection of cultural heritage.
Data requirements	Policies, strategies, action plans, and tools relevant to the protection of the route's cultural heritage
Units of measurement	Number of policies, strategies, action plans, and tools
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, national or regional authorities.
Method of calculation	Tally the number of policies, strategies, action plans, and tools relevant to the protection of the route's cultural heritage.
Frequency of data collection	Annually

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Reporting format	Bar chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes or with complementary routes/destinations.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	
Source	Council of Europe. (2020). Policies for the Danube Region: Transnational cultural policies for the Danube Region (EUSDR). ROUTES4U. Council of Europe. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 17	**Percentage of attractions offering alternative access for those with mobility concerns**
Reason for measuring	Access to destinations and attractions for people with reduced mobility is a key issue in tourism planning, as the demand for accessible destinations, even to places that have historically been categorised as difficult to climb or traverse, is increasing.
Data requirements	List of total attractions along the route, list of attractions along the route offering alternative access
Units of measurement	% of attractions
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, or regional authorities.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Number\ of\ attractions\ offering\ alternative\ access}{Total\ number\ of\ attractions\ along\ the\ route} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Monthly, seasonally, or annually
Reporting format	Bar o line graph
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. The benchmarks selected will depend on the accessibility goals and objectives of the route, for example, many destinations have set a 100% accessibility goal to their most popular attraction sites. Other possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes or with complementary routes/destinations
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers
Notes	-
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO,

	Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 18	Percentage of residents satisfied with tourism
Reason for measuring	Changes in resident satisfaction are an early warning indicator of possible issues with local tourism growth since it is the most straightforward approach of assessing local opinions on tourism and its impacts. This indicator aims to assess the level of intervention of the route management structure and public authorities in terms of collecting, monitoring, recording and publicly reporting data on residents' concerns and satisfaction with tourism.
Data requirements	Residents' consultation/Results from residents' surveys.
Units of measurement	% of residents
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, local or regional authorities. But in the event that resident satisfaction data are not available, it will be necessary to conduct a community questionnaire.
Method of calculation	Overall satisfaction (for instance, 75% of residents believe that tourism has a positive impact on the community) and variations from recent years (the number of residents who believe that tourism has a positive impact on the community has fallen by 20% in the past year) are both helpful metrics. If conducting a community survey, then the following formula can be applied: $$\frac{Number\ of\ residents\ satisfied\ with\ tourism}{Total\ number\ of\ residents\ surveyed} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Annually
Reporting format	Bar o line graph
Benchmarking	Benchmarking at the local level is recommended by comparing two or more similar communities along the route, measuring trends over time in overall satisfaction levels, or analysing specific issues.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, community organisations
Notes	-
Source	Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). (2021). GSTC Destination Criteria. Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/gstc-destination-criteria/ World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 19	Women/men as a percentage of all formal tourism employment
Reason for measuring	Depending on the destination, responsibilities and incentives in the tourism industry can vary widely depending on the gender of the employee. Seniority, relative wages, benefit packages, representation as entrepreneurs and business owners, and training opportunities may not be equally distributed among genders. In fact, gender discrimination of employees affects the workplace and overall wellbeing, and therefore has a direct effect on the socio-cultural sustainability of the destination. This indicator aims to support efforts to create an inclusive and diverse local tourism industry, while identifying whether there is an over- or under-representation in the workforce.
Data requirements	Tourism employment data
Units of measurement	% of employees of one gender
Data collection instructions	Labour statistics or employee surveys
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Number\ of\ employees\ of\ one\ gender}{Total\ number\ of\ employees} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Seasonally or annually
Reporting format	Pie, bar o line graph
Benchmarking	Official national and regional data can serve as a benchmark, it can also be possible to compare with other years for the same route using the same data source, or with other economic sectors.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, SMEs
Notes	-
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

2.6.1.3 Environmental Sustainability Indicators

Indicator 20	Percentage of destination area covered by solid waste collection services
Reason for measuring	Due to the increasing pollution problems related to tourism development and the potential detrimental effects on both the environment and, in some cases, the image of the destination, it is becoming increasingly important for destinations to measure waste production and control waste disposal. This indicator aims to measure the level of adequacy of solid waste collection services in the destination.
Data requirements	Waste and recycling reports, landfill statistics
Units of measurement	% of destination

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Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, local or regional authorities.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Area\ covered\ by\ solid\ waste\ collection\ services}{Total\ destination\ area} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Annually
Reporting format	Pie chart or map
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. The benchmarks selected will depend on the waste collection goals and objectives of the relevant authorities. However, ideally 100% of the destination area should be covered by solid waste collection services. Other possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes or with complementary routes/destinations
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, SMEs, waste management agencies
Notes	-
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 21	**Percentage of sewage from the destination treated to at least secondary level prior to discharge**
Reason for measuring	Inadequate sewage discharges from the tourism sector, as well as other sectors of the economy, have the potential of damaging key tourism attractions. The environmental consequences, as well as the implications for communities, the tourism industry, and the overall economy, can be significant. Therefore, the purpose of this indicator is to assess the efficacy of the sewage treatment process at the destination.
Data requirements	Sewage treatment and discharge data
Units of measurement	% of sewage
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, local or regional authorities.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Sewage\ treated\ at\ secondary\ level\ prior\ to\ discharge}{Total\ amount\ of\ sewage} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Every three years
Reporting format	Pie chart or map
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Additionally, regional, national, and international standards related to wastewater management can be used.

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Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, SMEs, waste management agencies
Notes	-
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 22	Water use: (total volume consumed and litres per tourist per day)
Reason for measuring	In general, tourists' per capita water consumption is often double or triple that of local residents. For this reason, the tourism sector is heavily reliant on water supply, which can lead to shortage concerns within the local communities. This indicator intends to measure the management of supply and demand of water in the destination.
Data requirements	Water use records and data
Units of measurement	Litres per tourist per day
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from local or regional authorities. In many cases, water use records already separate tourist consumption from other domestic uses. But in the case where water use records are not detailed enough to separate by type of consumer or sector, an alternative approach would be to measure the changes in overall consumption by month or season.
Method of calculation	$$\dfrac{\left(\dfrac{Water\ consumption\ related\ to\ tourism\ (L)}{Total\ number\ of\ tourists}\right)}{Total\ number\ of\ days}$$
Frequency of data collection	Monthly, seasonally, or annually
Reporting format	Bar o line graph
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes, complementary routes/destinations, against average water consumption levels in the destination, or domestic water use.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, SMEs
Notes	-
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 23	Percentage of businesses participating in energy conservation programs, or applying energy saving policy and techniques
Reason for measuring	Monitoring the participation of tourism businesses in energy savings through different programs, policy, and techniques helps to measure the success of energy saving programmes and incentives from public authorities. The use of this indicator aims to minimise overall energy consumption and encourage greater use of renewable energy sources. This indicator is useful for displaying energy consumption patterns and allowing the destination to track efficiency and quantify any changes in energy consumption levels.
Data requirements	Energy consumption reports, plans, and policies
Units of measurement	% of businesses
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, local or regional authorities.
Method of calculation	$$\frac{Tourism\ businesses\ with\ energy\ conservation\ initiatives}{Total\ number\ of\ tourism\ businesess} * 100$$
Frequency of data collection	Annually
Reporting format	Bar chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source, with specific standards from certification systems.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, SMEs
Notes	-
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 24	Percentage of tourism enterprises using a voluntary certification/label for environmental/quality/sustainability or Corporate social Responsibility along the route
Reason for measuring	Tourism sustainability certifications imply that a third party has reviewed and certified the company's performance or operations. Certification will also increase brand awareness by demonstrating transparency, and thus have an immediate and important effect on tourist choices.
Data requirements	List of certified enterprises, list of all registered tourism enterprises

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Units of measurement	% of tourism enterprises
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, local or regional authorities.
Method of calculation	$\dfrac{Tourism\ enterprises\ using\ a\ voluntary\ certification}{Total\ number\ of\ tourism\ enterprises} * 100$
Frequency of data collection	Annually
Reporting format	Pie chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes, complementary routes/destinations, or against the average % of certified tourism enterprises in the region/country/continent.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, SMEs
Notes	
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union. World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

Indicator 25	**Percentage of tourists and same-day visitors using soft mobility/public transport services to arrive to and get around the destination**
Reason for measuring	To reduce potential environmental impacts in the destination, environmentally friendly modes of transport can be promoted. This means shifting away from the use of private cars and planes, and promoting the use of cycling, public transport, rail transport, shared mobility, etc. This indicator serves as a measure of the availability of low impact transportation within the destination.
Data requirements	Transportation reports and data
Units of measurement	% of tourists and same-day visitors
Data collection instructions	Transport data should be readily available from the route's management structure, national and regional authorities, or tourism statistics offices. In the event that transport data are not available, data obtained from the Visitor Survey should be used as a basis.
Method of calculation	$\dfrac{Number\ of\ tourists\ and\ visitors\ using\ soft\ mobility}{Total\ number\ of\ tourists\ and\ visitors} * 100$
Frequency of data	Annually

collection	
Reporting format	Pie chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes, or complementary routes/destinations.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, SMEs, transportation authorities
Notes	-
Source	European Commission. (2016). The European Tourism Indicator System: ETIS Toolkit for Sustainable Destination Management. Publications Office of the European Union.

Indicator 26	Number of rules regulating activities such as hunting, fishing, etc.
Reason for measuring	This indicator is a determinant of the levels of conservation of key species in the case of vulnerable areas or known important ecosystems. Based on local, national, or international laws, different degrees of protection exist, ranging from absolute prohibition of certain practices (hunting, fishing, etc.) to various means of restricted access. The idea is to assess the extent to which activities and services provided along the route do not disturb wildlife or come into contact with threatened and endangered species.
Data requirements	List of initiatives aimed at regulating activities such as hunting, fishing, etc., and/or protecting certain species.
Units of measurement	Number of rules
Data collection instructions	Data should be obtained directly from the route's management structure, local or regional authorities, or protected area managers.
Method of calculation	Tally the number of policies, strategies, action plans, and tools relevant to the protection of wildlife, such as the regulation of activities such as hunting, fishing, etc.
Frequency of data collection	Annual
Reporting format	Bar chart
Benchmarking	Compare with other years for the same route using the same data source. Possible benchmark comparisons could be with other competing cultural routes or with complementary routes/destinations.
Key stakeholders/users	Cultural routes managers, destination managers, policymakers, environmental agencies
Notes	-
Source	World Tourism Organization. (2004). Indicators of sustainable development for tourism destinations: A Guidebook, UNWTO, Madrid. https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284407262

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2.7 Benchmarking Method

As previously explained, the Self-Assessment Audit sheet allows a qualitative evaluation, providing a percentage of compliance with the criteria. This is a preliminary but important result, allowing policy makers and managers of the route to evaluate at which stage actually is with respect to the goal of becoming a sustainable route.

As a second step, once a set of indicators is selected to measure the exact level of compliance with each criterion, the benchmarking is possible, both with respect to the baseline results of the same route, and with respect to other cultural routes/ paths implementing the model.

Benchmarking can be defined as "a continuous and systematic process that comprises the identification, learning and implementation of the most effective practices and capacities from other destinations, in order to improve the performance of the destination that introduces these practices" (Luque-Martínez & Muñoz-Leiva, 2005 in Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012, p. 667). According to Lozano-Oyola et al. (2012) the idea is to first select the "best performing destination" which will be the destination obtaining the best results for the indicators measured, and secondly, to compare other destinations against the reference destination, to measure the performance gap between the current results and the desirable goal. This allows managers to define the necessary steps to achieve the performance level of the reference destination (Blancas et al., 2011).

It is important to note that the benchmarking should be a learning exercise (Blancas et al., 2011; Lozano-Oyola et al., 2012) enabling other destinations to improve their level of sustainability, and not be perceived as a competitive process.

The benchmarking analysis will be possible once the indicators have been integrated in the Best Med online platform and partners have collected the data to populate these indicators during the Testing phase (WP4).

2.8 Best Med Online Platform

This is another useful tool provided by Best MED to measure compliance with the criteria of the model and allow benchmarking among destinations.

The online platform consists of a map with destinations that are part of cultural routes. Each destination is presented with representation of Mitomed Plus and Eurostat data on the regional or country level. Core indicators were chosen from available Eurostat data to provide evidence-based context to the cultural routes operations. Each indicator is presented as a visual representation (e. g. in the form of graph). Eurostat data serves as quantitative data for the

objective benchmarking between the destinations. Important benefit of this representation is that there is no need for an external auditor and the data can be automatically updated when Eurostat updates the existing databases.

Eurostat databases were chosen in accordance with categories of sustainability. Most indicators fit in the category of economic sustainability (arrivals, same-day visits, occupancy rate, employment rate). Tourist arrivals will be presented annually and monthly as the annual data serves for growth evaluation while the monthly data informs about seasonality issues. For detailed information about core indicators see Table 1.

For more information, see corresponding deliverable 3.2.3.

Besides data from Eurostat and Mitomed Plus, the 26 core indicators previously explained will be integrated into the platform, as well as the Self-Assessment Audit sheet, in order to perform the benchmarking.

Table 1 Core indicators imported from Eurostat

Category	Indicator	Database	Statistical Unit	Time Frequency
Economic Sustainability	Arrivals at tourist destination – annually	Arrivals at tourist accommodation establishments by NUTS 2 regions	Geographical region	Annually
Economic Sustainability	Same-day visits at tourist destination	Same-day visits - annual data	Country	Annually
Economic Sustainability	Number of tourist establishments in coastal/no-coastal area	Annual data on number of establishments, bedrooms and bed places at NUTS 2 level, by degree of urbanisation and by coastal/non-coastal area	Geographical region	Annually
Economic Sustainability	Occupancy rate of tourist accommodation establishments	Annual occupancy (arrivals and nights spent by residents and non-residents) of tourist accommodation establishments at NUTS 2 level, by degree of urbanisation and by coastal/non-coastal area	Geographical region	Annually
Economic Sustainability	Arrivals at tourist destination – monthly	Arrivals at tourist accommodation establishments - monthly data	Country	Monthly
Economic Sustainability	Employed people in Air transport; Accommodation and food service activities; Accommodation, Travel agencies, tour operators and other reservation service and related activities	Employed persons and employees by sex and full-time/part-time activity and NACE Rev. 2 activity	Country	Annually

Environmental Sustainability	Generation of waste by service industry	Generation of waste by economic activity	Country	Annually
Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Population of active enterprises: Libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural activities	Business demography by size class (from 2004 onwards, NACE Rev. 2)	Country	Annually
Socio-Cultural Sustainability	People employed in the population of active enterprises: Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities.	Business demography by size class (from 2004 onwards, NACE Rev. 2)	Country	Annually

2.9 Questionnaires

In this section, we provide a brief description of the type of information that could be collected through different surveys to the four types of key stakeholders in the territory. The type of information is in line with other initiatives previously analysed (ETIS surveys, Green Pilgrimage surveys and the "Atlas of Paths" Report).

Two questionnaires have been designed following these guidelines (Visitors Survey and Routes/Paths Managers) and are included as annexes. However, if the use of questionnaires for local businesses and residents is considered necessary, we have included guidelines for their design as well.

2.9.1 Guidance Questionnaire for cultural routes/path managers

Category	Type of information to collect
General information	− Name of the cultural route/path. − Name and role of the contact person. − Type of cultural route/path. − Length of the cultural route/path (in kilometres). − Location. − Private stakeholders involved. − Public stakeholders involved.
Visitors	− Types of services offered to visitors: Tourist guide, camping, food and beverages, transportation, accessibility, etc. − Visitors profile: Domestic, international, families, couples, groups, etc. − Communication with the visitors before and after visiting the cultural route/path.
Sustainability practices	− Number of people visiting the cultural route/path per year (specify the source of information). − Measurement of visitor satisfaction. − Types of measurements or estimates of the impact of tourism on the cultural route/path. − Measurement of the environmental impact on the cultural route/path (pollution, waste, etc.). − Measurement of the social or cultural benefits related to the cultural route/path (transfer of local traditions and culture, strengthened territorial image, education, etc.). − Sustainable practices implemented on the cultural route/path.

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Governance model and cooperation	− Organisational structure: Stakeholders responsible for the cultural route/path, roles, responsibilities, participatory practices. − Type of cooperation between the members of the cultural route/path: Occasional, periodic, collaborative, competitive, formal, informal. − Partnerships with tourism-related stakeholders. − Process of planning activities related to the development, maintenance, or promotion of the cultural route/path. − Networking with bordering regions or other regions regarding cultural routes/ paths − Relationship with other regional stakeholders (challenges, success factors, etc.) − Main competitors.

2.9.2 Guidance Questionnaire for tourists

This questionnaire is useful for two purposes: to profile the type of visitors interested in cultural routes/ paths (to direct the promotional activities to those tourists), and to gather their feedback about the sustainability level of the route.

Category	Type of information to collect
Profile of visitors	− Demographics: age, nationality, employment status, socioeconomic status, type of visitor. − Type of transportation used to get to the cultural route/path. − Length of journey to get to the cultural route/path. − Times that the cultural route/path has been visited.
Type of activities	− Type of visit: short, part-day, full-day, multi-day. − Sites or attractions visited / planned to visit. − Planned activities: sightseeing, photography, shopping, eating, outdoor recreation, spiritual or religious activities, visiting cultural or heritage sites. − Reasons for visiting the cultural route/path.
Level of satisfaction	− Importance of the characteristics of the cultural route/path: natural environment, benches, places to sit, rubbish or recycling disposal points, signage, width of the road. − Level of satisfaction with the characteristics of the cultural route/path. − Level of overall satisfaction with the cultural route/path.
Level of expenditure	− Estimation of average daily spend per person.

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	− Estimated expenditure per activity.

2.9.3 Guidance Questionnaire for residents

Category	Type of information to collect
Resident characteristics	− Demographics: age, nationality, employment status, socioeconomic status.
Level of satisfaction	− Level of overall satisfaction with the cultural route/path. − Perceived benefits of the cultural route/path. − Perceived negative impacts of the cultural route/path. − Participation in the planning and development process of the cultural route/path. − Effects of the cultural route/path on the local identity and cultural heritage. − Effects of the cultural route/path on the quality of life.

2.9.4 Guidance Questionnaire for businesses

Category	Type of information to collect
Enterprise characteristics	− Type of business: accommodation, catering, recreation, transport, other. − Type of employees: full-time employees, part-time employees, seasonal employees, trainees/interns. − Gender equality: proportion of workers by gender, proportion of management positions held by women. − Accessibility initiatives or certifications.
Environment	− Environmental or CSR certifications. − Locally sourced products. − Participation in climate change mitigation schemes. − Climate change adaptation actions. − Actions to reduce energy consumption. − Renewable sources. − Waste sorting. − Water consumption reduction. − Actions to support biodiversity, environmental protection or conservation.

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Level of satisfaction	− Level of overall satisfaction with the cultural route/path. − Perceived benefits of the cultural route/path. − Perceived negative impacts of the cultural route/path. − Participation in the planning and development process of the cultural route/path. − Effects of the cultural route/path on business activities.

2.10 Format of Policy Learning Seminar

The Policy Learning Seminars that were conducted for Deliverable 3.4.2 led to the presentation at the local level of the "MED S&C Path Model", its indicators and evaluation tools (Audit Sheet and Questionnaire).

As part of the Benchmarking Toolbox, we include here the methodology to perform the Policy Learning Seminars, through a co-creative, bottom-up brainstorming approach.

2 seminars were held at each pilot area between March and April 2021

Location: 8 pilot areas

Format: Online

Duration of each: 2-3 hours

Expected outcomes: Model and criteria validated and enriched with suggestions, based on the priority issues of the pilot areas, to have the model ready for the Testing Phase in each pilot area.

Stakeholders participation: select the stakeholders to take part in the seminars (small, multi-disciplinary group). Number of participants: 8-15

Participants may include: local policy makers, regional policy makers, representatives from local NGOs, Cultural route manager, local DMO's, academia, municipalities (tourism/economy/environmental sectors, etc.).

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<u>**1st Seminar:**</u>

Brief introduction about BEST MED project, the S&C Path Model and the tools (a presentation of the Model should be sent to participants in advanced for them to be aware of the model and ready for the discussion) **20 – 30 minutes.**

<u>**1st activity:**</u>

Objective:
- Present the Med S&C Path model to local stakeholders.
- Involve local stakeholders in the need assessment of the pilot area.

Expected Outcome:
- List of prioritized positive and negative impacts of tourism development at the pilot area.
- Comparison between needs assessment results and Med S&C Path Model criteria.

To do so it is suggested to use the **Nominal Group Technique** session (1,5 hours needed) in two rounds assessing the perceptions of stakeholders of the current situation on the destination and their expectations for the future. They will be asked through a controlled focus group management tool, to list current positive and negative tourism related characteristics and to prioritise the whole set of items resulting from the collective brainstorming.

For this activity, [Zoom has the polling feature](#) and participants can vote the different options and the reports can be downloaded after. Other useful tools for brainstorming include online whiteboards such as Mural or Miro.

<u>**2nd Seminar:**</u>

Objective:
- Present the needs assessment results from the previous seminar.
- Present the gap analysis between the results of the needs assessment and the criteria of the MED S&C Path model.
- Validate the step-by-step implementation methodology.

Expected Outcome:

- Fine tuning of the MED S&C Path model criteria.
- Evaluation of the step-by-step implementation methodology with suggestions from the local stakeholders.

Recommended tools from the facilitators: Besides knowledge facilitating participatory processes, make sure they have IT knowledge/ running online events and experience with

online tools to brainstorm, such as online whiteboards (Miro, Mural, etc) preferably integrated with the Meeting platform. For example, Mural is integrated with Zoom and Teams.

2.11 Fine tuning Med S&C Path Model according to the results of the Policy Learning Seminars

2.11.1 Methodology to analyse results

The main objective of the policy learning seminars was to present the Med S&C Path model to relevant local stakeholders. Notably, the primary purpose was to compare the most critical needs of each pilot area with the model's criteria and validate the step-by-step implementation methodology.

All project partners were free to choose how to organise their respective seminars and what methodology to use. Still, they followed specific guidelines according to the previously defined policy learning seminar format. Specifically, the seminars were to be carried out through participatory techniques to assess the needs and perceptions of stakeholders concerning the pilot areas.

Considering the differences between the pilot areas and the flexibility of the organisation of the seminars, a set of evaluation templates were designed in advance so that the partners could present their individual outcomes in a standard form.

In this regard, the evaluation template for the 1st policy learning seminar (Annex C - 1st Policy Learning Seminar Outcome Template) consisted of two sections:

- An assessment of the prioritised positive and negative characteristics, implications, and influences of tourism in the pilot area.
- A gap analysis of the needs of the pilot area included in the MED S&C Path model, divided in "covered", "partially covered", and "not covered" by the model criteria, and classified by sustainability dimension.

A thorough evaluation of the gap analysis results reported by each of the project partners was carried out to improve the model. The process employed is as follows:

Once all project partners had concluded their respective seminars, they submitted the filled-in templates accompanied by a report summarising their primary outcomes. First, the data from these templates were extracted into a single spreadsheet to facilitate their comparison and analysis. Second, the project partners' reports were examined in-depth to comprehend the current context of each pilot area. Then, each of the needs reported as "covered" and "partially covered" by the project partners were matched to their respective MED S&C Path model criteria.

For instance, a specific need reported as "Landscape and biodiversity protection" would be linked to the "4.3.2 Landscape & Scenery" criteria of the environmental sustainability dimension of the model. While "Seasonality and tourism diversification" would be matched to the "2.2.1 Tackling seasonality" criteria of the economic sustainability dimension.

Because these are categorical data, a simple descriptive analysis was carried out first by constructing contingency tables of the results reported by each partner. Each criterion's frequency and percent frequency were assessed by sustainability dimension and by pilot area, as observed in Tables 2-9. The most frequent criteria and the issues not mentioned during the policy learning seminars were also calculated. The aim was to examine the most pressing issues and inspect the discrepancies between theoretical and actual contexts.

A similar descriptive analysis was also performed regarding the needs reported as "not covered" by the project partners. However, it was first necessary to further clean the data by cautiously examining each of the reported needs to ensure that they were, in fact, not covered by the model. With this in mind, each reported need was subsequently classified as "already present in the model", "implicit in the model", or "not present in the model".

Specifically, as observed in Figure 4Figure 4 Comparison of needs reported as "not covered" and model criteria, out of the total needs that the partners reported as "not covered", 64.4% were already present in the model; 22.2% were implicit in the model, either in the criteria or in the other resources included in the toolbox; and 13.3% were not covered by any of the criteria. From these two latter categories, a descriptive analysis was conducted to assess the actual limitations of the model.
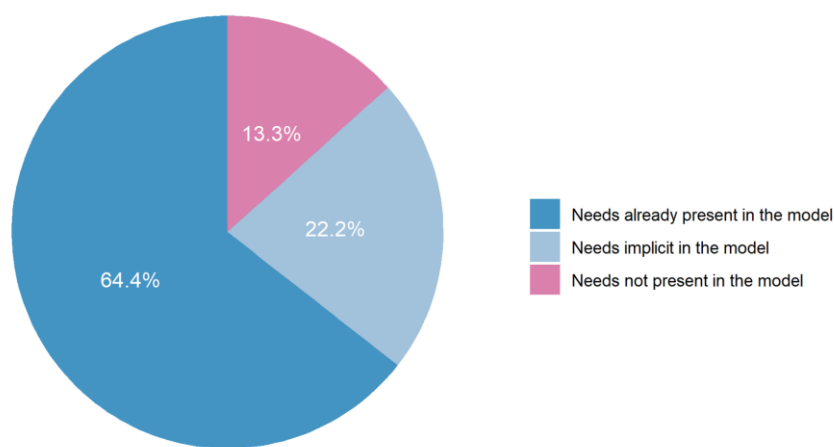
Figure 4 Comparison of needs reported as "not covered" and model criteria

Furthermore, for the 2nd seminar, a similar template was distributed to each project partner to report their outcomes (Annex D – 2nd Policy Learning Seminar Outcome Template). In this case, however, the template consisted of mostly open questions regarding the step-by-step methodology to obtain suggestions from the local stakeholders on improving and implementing the model.

Since most of the questions were open-ended, the results were analysed on a case-by-case basis and complemented with the reports submitted by the partners. However, a descriptive analysis

was also performed concerning the multiple-choice questions included in the templates, and their respective percentage frequencies were calculated for issues such as: "1. Who should be part of the Working Group?", "2. Who should lead the process of contacting and forming this group?", "7. Who should fund the data collection process?", "8. Who should have the responsibility for following up the implementation of an action plan?", "10. Who should be responsible for monitoring and evaluating?" and "11. Which could be good incentives for stakeholders to implement a model like Med S&C Path?".

As a final point, it is necessary to add that the data presented here refer to the responses reported by each project partner and could therefore be interpreted as a first appraisal of the model and its criteria at the level of the pilot area and its local stakeholders, but not as an exhaustive evaluation of the model. In fact, a consequent assessment of the model on a more detailed level will be carried out in the following focus groups to be held in each pilot area.

2.11.2 Results from the gap analysis

In this section the results from the gap analysis between the criteria included in the model and the needs manifested by participants in the Policy Learning Seminars are explained, highlighting the implications for the fine tuning of the model.

2.11.2.1   Needs covered by the model

Table 2 Frequency of needs reported as covered by the model

Partner	Dimension				
	Sustainable Management	Economic Sustainability	Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Environmental Sustainability	Total
Calabria	3 (20.00%)	5 (33.33%)	3 (20.00%)	4 (26.67%)	15 (100%)
Greece	5 (23.81%)	4 (19.05%)	5 (23.81%)	7 (33.33%)	21 (100%)
Lazio	5 (33.33%)	5 (33.33%)	2 (13.33%)	3 (20.00%)	15 (100%)
Montenegro	4 (25.00%)	4 (25.00%)	3 (18.75%)	5 (31.25%)	16 (100%)
Portugal	1 (14.29%)	3 (42.86%)	3 (42.86%)	0 (0.00%)	7 (100%)
Slovenia	2 (25.00%)	2 (25.00%)	3 (37.50%)	1 (12.50%)	8 (100%)
Spain	2 (20.00%)	5 (50.00%)	2 (20.00%)	1 (10.00%)	10 (100%)
Total	**22 (23.91%)**	**28 (30.43%)**	**21 (22.83%)**	**21 (22.83%)**	**92 (100%)**

In Table 2, we can see which are the needs that emerged from the Policy Learning Seminars by local stakeholders in the different pilot areas which are covered by the Med S&C Path model criteria. As we can see, the interests that have arisen in the seminars are related to those which destinations deem more pressing.

Overall, the dimension that has emerged the most during the Policy Learning Seminars is that of Economic Sustainability (30%), usually considered a pre-condition to achieve environmental and socio-cultural sustainability. The other dimensions are given similar importance, with a slightly higher importance given to the sustainable management dimension

(24%).

These percentages changes in each pilot area, as some areas show a stronger focus on the economic dimensions (Andalusia 50%, Algarve 43%, Lazio and Calabria 33% each), while the socio-cultural dimension is given stronger importance in the Slovenia pilot area (37%), where this is considered the main role of cultural routes and paths. In Greece and Montenegro's pilot areas, the environmental dimension achieves the highest importance (33% and 31% respectively).

It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list of needs and issues in the pilot areas, but only those that have emerged during the seminars and that have been considered in the Med S&C Path model criteria and indicators. The objective of this exercise was to see if those needs deemed more pressing at pilot area level were being considered in our theoretical model, without forgetting that this is a general framework model that should be adapted to the particular needs of each pilot area.
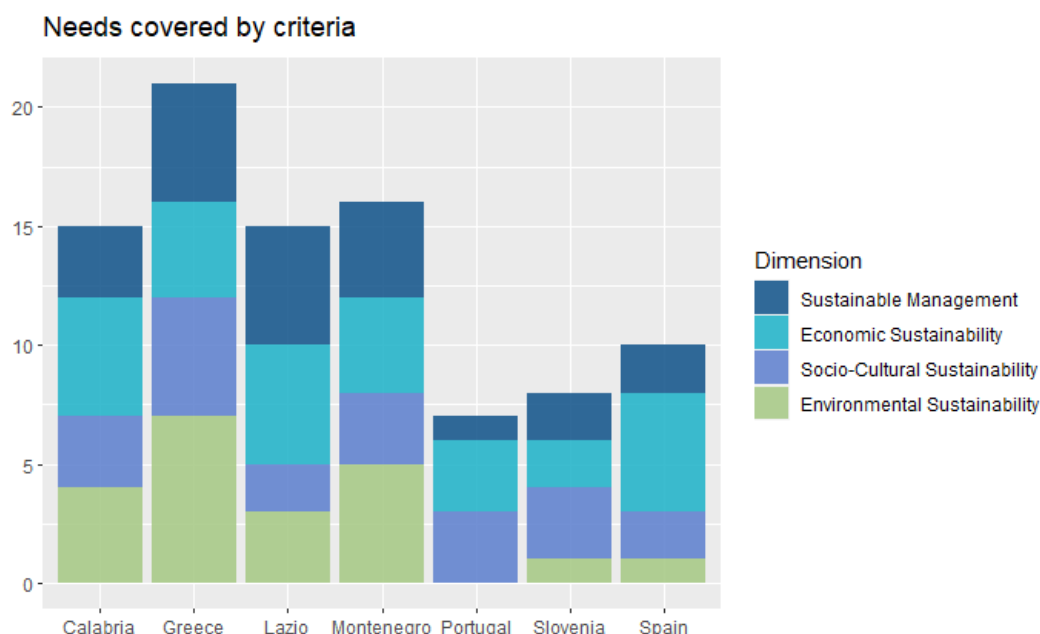
Figure 4. Frequency of needs reported as covered by pilot area

The following tables provide more details into the needs and issues that emerged in the seminars.

Table 3 Most frequent criteria reported as covered

Criteria	Frequency
2.1.2 Supporting local entrepreneurs	6
1.1.2 Stakeholders involvement	5
2.1.4 Local products and services	5
2.1.5 Employment and career opportunities	5
2.2.1 Tackling seasonality	5

3.1.1 Protection of cultural heritage	5
3.1.2 Promotion of cultural assets	5
2.1.3 Joint promotion	4
3.3.2 Strengthening social identity and cohesion	4

As we can see in Table 3, the Economic dimension prevails, followed by the socio-cultural dimension.

It is interesting to see that some aspects that were considered relevant when designing the model were not raised during the seminars, such as the gender equality issue, which in any case will be kept in the model as an important criterion.

Table 4 Comparison of needs and model criteria

Dimension	Needs covered by criteria	Total model criteria	Percentage
Sustainable Management	10	13	77%
Economic Sustainability	6	6	100%
Socio-Cultural Sustainability	7	8	88%
Environmental Sustainability	9	10	90%

As one can see from Table 4, 100% of the economic sustainability criteria included in the model were issues considered important by stakeholders in all pilot areas. Overall, most topics included in the other three dimensions were raised as important issues during the seminars, with the exception of some that we have seen in table 4.

Therefore, it is possible to say that the model is accurately covering most of the monitoring needs of the pilot areas. That being said, the testing phase will reveal the feasibility of complying with these criteria by using the indicators and tools provided. As adequately said by participants from the Montenegro seminar *"the tools are good because they are adapted to the cultural routes on which they are applied. Surveys and online platforms are a very useful market research tool. However, practice will show whether an issue still needs to be added or omitted, depending on the needs and priorities of management at the time"*.

2.11.2.2 Needs partially covered by the model

Table 5 Frequency of needs reported as partially covered by the model

	Dimension				
Partner	Sustainable Management	Economic Sustainability	Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Environmental Sustainability	Total
Calabria	1 (50.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (50.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (100%)
Greece	3 (42.86%)	2 (28.57%)	2 (28.57%)	0 (0.00%)	7 (100%)
Lazio	4 (50.00%)	3 (37.50%)	1 (12.50%)	0 (0.00%)	8 (100%)
Montenegro	3 (27.27%)	3 (27.27%)	4 (36.36%)	1 (9.09%)	11 (100%)
Portugal	1 (100.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (100%)
Slovenia	1 (50.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (50.00%)	2 (100%)
Spain	3 (27.27%)	2 (18.18%)	3 (27.27%)	3 (27.27%)	11 (100%)
Total	**16 (38.10%)**	**10 (23.81%)**	**11 (26.19%)**	**5 (11.90%)**	**42 (100%)**
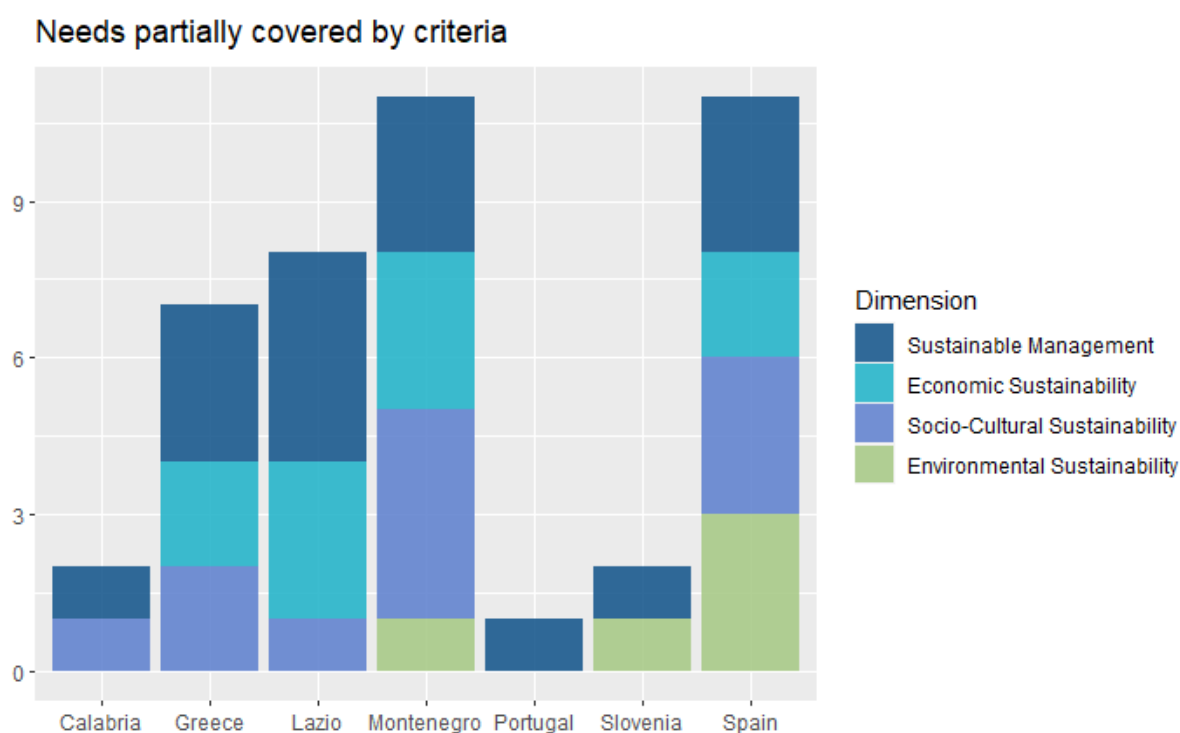
Figure 5 Frequency of needs reported as partially covered by pilot area

With respect to those needs and issues partially covered by the Med S&C Path Model, we can
see on Table 5 and

Figure 5 that they mainly belong to the Sustainable Management dimension (38%), followed
by the Socio-cultural (26%) and Economic dimension (24%). This means that we need to revise

mainly the sustainable management dimension, to see which are the gaps we might need to address.

Table 6 Most frequent criteria reported as partially covered

Criteria	Frequency
1.2.1 Infrastructure condition	3
2.1.2 Supporting local entrepreneurs	3
3.1.2 Promotion of cultural assets	3
1.1.3 Funding	2
1.1.4 Trained staff	2
1.3.1 Safety information	2
1.4.1 Visitor information	2
1.4.3 Website and Social Media	2
2.1.5 Employment and career opportunities	2

Consequently, all of the above-mentioned criteria have been revised and when needed, complemented in order to address the feedback received.

2.11.2.3 Needs not covered by the model

When analysing the results from those needs considered not covered by the criteria, a closer look revealed that several of these aspects were covered or partially covered by the model. Therefore, it was decided to filter those results in order to accurately present those needs that have not been covered. The results can be seen in the following tables and figures.

Table 7 Frequency of needs reported as not covered by the model

	Dimension				
Partner	Sustainable Management	Economic Sustainability	Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Environmental Sustainability	Total
Calabria	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (100.0%)	1 (100%)
Greece	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (100.0%)	1 (100%)
Lazio	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Montenegro	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	5 (100%)
Portugal	1 (50.0%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (50.0%)	2 (100%)
Slovenia	0 (0.00%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	7 (100%)
Spain	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (100%)
Total	**4 (23.25%)**	**3 (17.6%)**	**4 (23.5%)**	**6 (35.3%)**	**17 (100%)**

Needs not covered by criteria
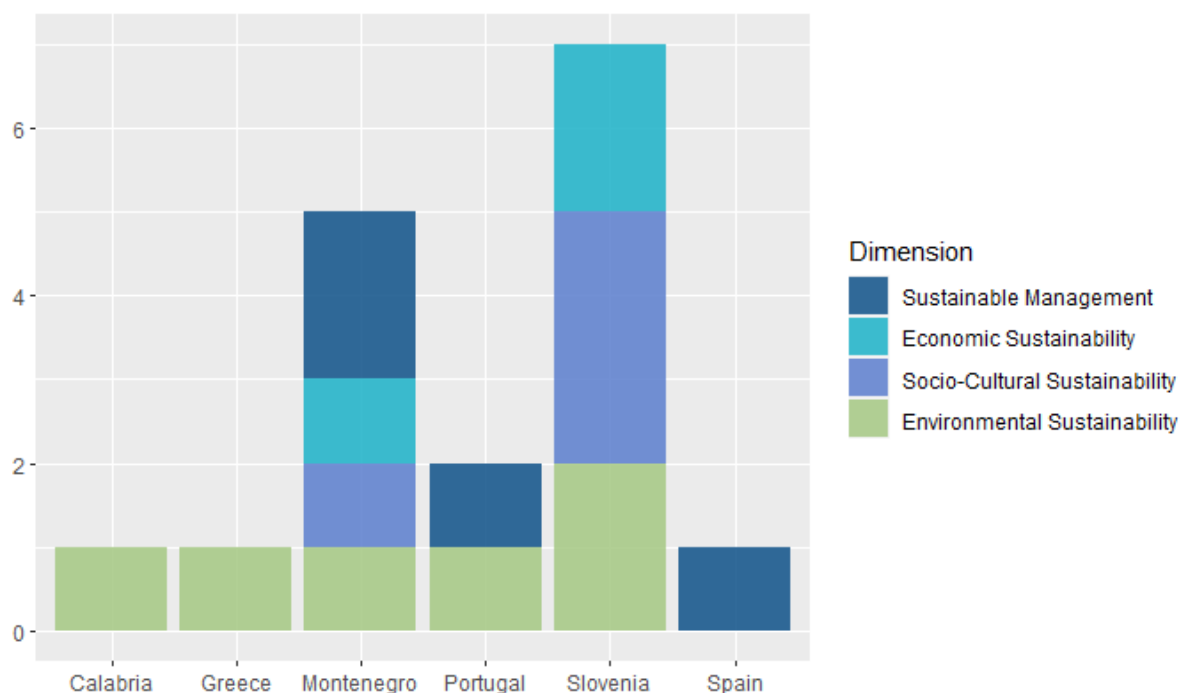
Figure 6 Frequency of needs reported as not covered by pilot area

Regarding the sustainable management dimension, aspects such as the existence of a strategic plan for tourism, cooperation between private and public stakeholders, limitations regarding fragmentation into several sections of the route, are all considered in different criteria. In fact, one of the key aspects the Med S&C Path model strives to achieve is greater levels of cooperation between public and private stakeholders. This can be achieved not only by complying with the proposed criteria, but also by following the step-by-step implementation methodology, which suggests the creation of a working group to divide duties and responsibilities.

The need for funding to decrease problems related to depopulation in certain areas is an issue that is transversal to several management, economic and socio-cultural criteria.

Moreover, there are aspects which are addressed with other tools proposed by the model. For instance, the visitor profile, slow tourism, gastronomic preferences are an information that can be obtained using the provided visitors' questionnaires.

The aspects that are partially covered or implicit in the model's criteria were revised and have been completed in the fine tuning of the model.

Table 8 explains these aspects.

Table 8 Needs that are implicit in the model

Needs	Dimension	Comments
Better information services about the destination with the application of modern technologies	Sustainable Management	Added in 1.4.1 and 1.4.3
Lack of education of the local population for certain topics and services related to the destination	Sustainable Management Socio-cultural Sustainability	Implicit in 1.4.1, 1.4.3, and 3.1.2
Economic costs of servicing a larger tourist volume (e.g. negative impacts on the cleanliness of the destination)	Economic Sustainability Environmental Sustainability	Partially covered in 4.1.1
Excessive concentration of tourists in a certain location (e.g., in old towns)	Sustainable Management Economic Sustainability	Implicit in 1.1.7 and 2.2.1
Equipment for persons with disabilities (hearing or visual impairments)	Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Partially covered in 3.2.1 and 3.3.2
Insufficient human resources	Sustainable Management Economic Sustainability	Implicit in 1.1.3 and 2.1.5
Too much work on volunteer basis	Sustainable Management Economic Sustainability	Implicit in 1.1.3 and 2.1.5
Connection between cultural route and quality of life of visitors and local community (e.g., sports activities)	Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Implicit in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2
Promotion to the different audiences of the local community (seniors, pupils, etc.)	Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Added in 3.3.1
Promotion of the route in local media	Sustainable Management	Added in 1.4.3

The needs that were not covered in the model's criteria are summarised in Table 9 below.

Table 9 Needs not covered by the model

Needs	Dimension	Comments
Lighting (natural light and lamps)	Environmental Sustainability	Included in recommendations
Activities with NGOs and the local community to raise awareness of resource and environmental protection	Environmental Sustainability	Included in recommendations
Carrying capacity of the pilot area	Environmental Sustainability Sustainable Management Economic Sustainability Socio-Cultural Sustainability	Further specified in 1.1.7 and transversal in several criteria
Too many information tables to visitors (visual pollution)	Environmental Sustainability	Added in 1.2.1

Internet access in all the municipalities in the routes	Sustainable Management	Added in 1.2.1
Low environmental impact of infrastructure	Environmental Sustainability	Added in 1.2.1

We have responded to some of these and the corresponding criteria has been updated, while others we have included as recommendations.

Most notably, the calculation of the carrying capacity has been mentioned in some of the pilot areas as an important measure that was missing from the model, to manage sustainable tourism along the routes. However, measuring carry capacity is a complex issue, as it is influenced by several socio-economic and environmental factors (ecological capacity, cultural capacity, social or psychological capacity, infrastructural capacity and management capacity) (UNWTO, 2004). Moreover, it is related to the perceptions and expectations of host communities and tourists about how much is too many.

Although the model does not have a single indicator named "Carrying capacity", the issue has been addressed transversally through a number of indicators. For instance, under the Sustainable Management dimension, the number of tourists on the routes and paths at any given time has been included (criteria 1.1.7 Visitor Management). Under Environmental dimensions, the criteria related to the use of water, energy, amount of solid waste and available sewage system, can all provide information on the pressure of tourism on the natural resources. Moreover, the criterion referring to protected areas can have implicit certain limits to visitation imposed by those protected areas.

As UNWTO accurately points out, *"it is suggested that managers consider more than a simple single limit and make use of a range of indicators to provide the best information possible on the implications of different levels and types of use for the destination and for the specific sites within it" (2004, p.312).* Therefore, it is advisable that the establishment of a threshold should be left by each destination or in this case, stretch of the route interested in measuring the acceptable levels of visitation and tourism development.

2.11.3 Evaluation of the Step-by- Step Methodology

The main purpose of the second Policy Learning Seminar was to validate the step-by-step methodology proposed to implement the model and incorporate suggestions from the local stakeholders in order to make it feasible. It is important to remember that the model provides a general framework that can be adapted to fit the specific needs of each pilot area. Therefore, when integrating the feedback provided by local stakeholders, we have focused on incorporating those that have been identified by the majority of pilot areas, leaving specific issues to be adapted at the local level.

In what follows, we discuss the main results from the seminars and the implications for the model.

Step 1: Establish a working group

Most pilot areas agree that the working group should be formed by cultural routes managers, their network of local actors and regional policy makers. This is in line with the proposal of the Med S&C Path model, where regional policy makers are involved together with local actors since cultural routes or paths involve more than one municipality. Besides, in several countries, regions have specific responsibilities assigned regarding the management of routes, such as the Lazio region in Italy.

Who should be part of the Working Group?
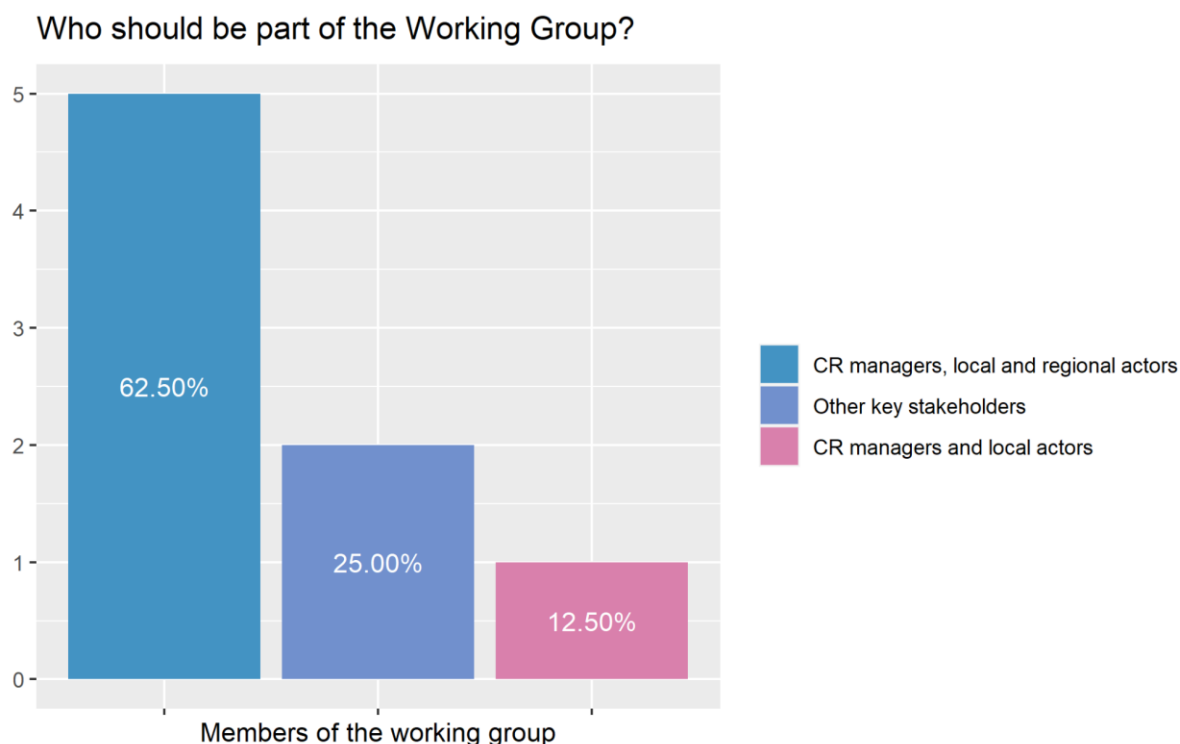
Figure 7 Working group results

As for who should lead the process of contacting and forming this group, 4 of the 7 pilot areas suggest the cultural route or path manager should take this responsibility. However, the Italian pilot areas (Lazio and Calabria regions) suggest instead the regional policy maker as the leader, which might be related to the competences the regional level has in Italy with regards to routes and paths. However, the regional public sector is sometimes regarded as too far away from the routes or paths, therefore stakeholders in Greece and Andalusia express preference for the route manager to be in charge of leading the group, since they are the nexus between the local and regional stakeholders related to the route.

Step 2: Understand the current sustainability level of the route/path

The questions to assess this step were mainly related to see whether it was feasible for the entire working group to collaboratively fill out the Self-Assessment Audit Sheet to understand the current sustainability level of the route.

The general feeling was that the cultural route/ path manager as the leader of the working group

should take this responsibility. In fact, the Legado Andalusí Foundation from the Andalusia region, filled the Self-Assessment Audit sheet, taking the opportunity during the Policy Learning seminars to validate the information with local actors, policy makers and regional public sector. Some pilot areas suggested forming a smaller sub-group, with a few key parties, that could collect the data from the rest of the working group and put it together in the SA Audit sheet.

Step 3: Address the gaps by using the provided tools

This step involves starting the actual data collection process, in order to address the gaps in monitoring detected in the previous step. When asking stakeholders at pilot area level whether the responsibilities for data collection should be shared across the working group, the vast majority agrees on this, although several areas specify once again the coordinating role of the CR/path manager. Some like Algarve and Slovenia suggested that the CR/path managers should be responsible for analysing the data as well, while Montenegro added that data collection and analysis is something that a professional should do, therefore cultural routes managers should receive assistance of an expert in order to obtain quality data and adequate interpretations. Furthermore, Greece stakeholders suggested a further option, involving 3 stakeholders' groups in the data collection phase: 1) the local municipality/authorities, 2) local tourism and culture related stakeholders (private sector) and 3) representatives from the Ministries of Culture and Tourism, coordinated by the CR/path managers.

It becomes evident that the division of responsibilities for data collection is a contested terrain, since of course it is a time and resource-consuming activity. The aim of the Med S&C Path model, in line with other European initiatives such as ETIS (European Tourism Indicator System) was to share this responsibility, so that it does not become a burden for one stakeholder group, while giving ownership for tourism management to several stakeholders, in line with the conceptual role of indicators (Gasparini, 2018).

With respect to the tools provided in the toolbox for data collection (the set of indicators, the questionnaires, online platform) all pilot areas agree they are useful to measure sustainability along the cultural route's stretch. Nevertheless, Montenegro adds that they need to be tested, in order to see if they are feasible, and an expert stakeholder from the Andalusia pilot area adds that the information provided by indicators helps to have an adequate diagnosis of the situation to establish goals and measure progress.

Participants to the policy learning seminars were asked for suggestions on other useful tools to measure the impacts of cultural routes. The suggestions included sensors to count the number of visitors, the use of big data and digital technologies, the access to information gathered for other certification schemes (for example Slovenia Green scheme) and carrying capacity. Interestingly, Calabria region participants considered it rather unnecessary to measure the environmental sustainability of routes/ paths, assuming that they are sustainable "by default", which is often the case, but not always. For them, it should be enough to monitor socio-economic issues along the stretch.

Finally, participants expressed their thoughts with regards to the responsibility for funding a sustainability monitoring system. The majority agrees this should be funded by the regional government, with some suggesting the national or regional tourism board. In order to reduce the data collection costs, Greece participants suggested establishing partnerships with universities, as a win-win situation.

Who should fund the data collection process?
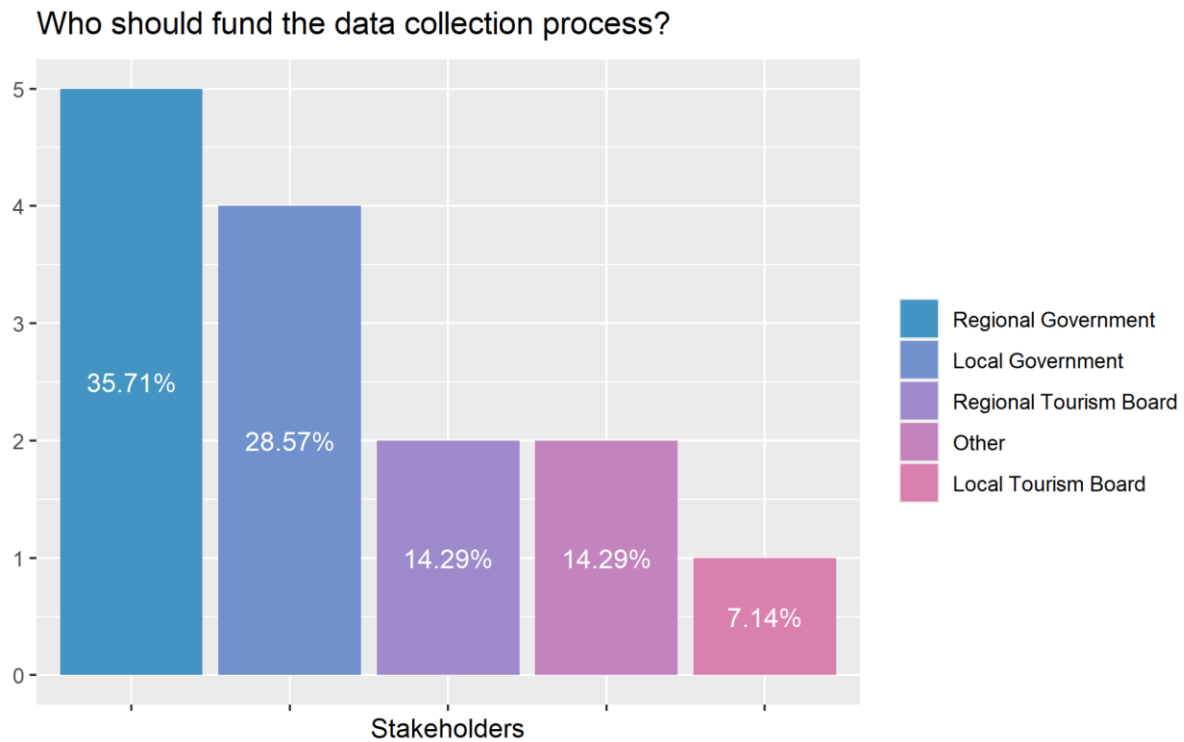
Figure 8 Funding results

Step 4: Data analysis

After collecting the data, the working group should analyse it and define an action plan to be implemented to address the priorities. As for who should be responsible for following up the implementation of an action plan to address the identified issues, 5 out of 7 pilot areas considered the CR/path manager to be responsible for this task, however decisions on the priorities should be made by the entire working group. Two pilot areas (Greece and Calabria region) selected the regional policy makers in the area of tourism and culture to have this responsibility, while Lazio region agrees with a shared responsibility between the CR/path manager and the regional policy makers.

The clear implications are that decisions on the priorities and issues should be made collectively by the working group, but the CR/path manager should take the coordinating role as the nexus between the different stakeholders.

Step 5: Regularly monitor and evaluate

The final step is related to periodically monitoring sustainability using the tools provided by the model. With regards to how often this monitoring should be performed, the pilot areas provided a variety of suggestions, from annually (Greece, Montenegro and Andalusia), twice a year (Algarve and Calabria), monthly (Lazio) and every three years (Slovenia).
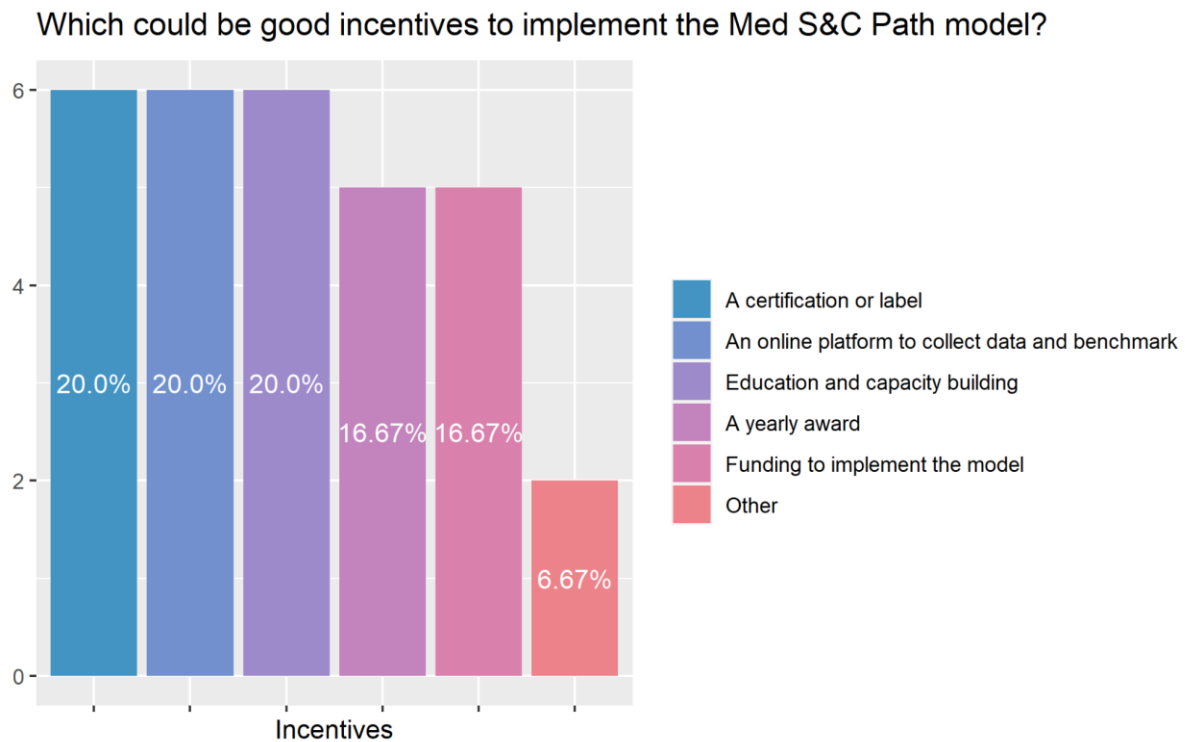
Figure 9 Incentives results

As for who should be responsible for following up this monitoring activity, 5 out 7 pilot areas suggested once again the CR/path manager, with Andalusia also proposing the collaboration of local stakeholders and regional policy makers, and Greece suggesting that it should be the local municipalities' responsibility, with the support of the working group.

Finally, as for possible incentives to encourage stakeholders to implement the model, a certification or label, an online platform to benchmark results with other destinations and capacity building to understand the importance of monitoring sustainability are all appreciated by pilot areas. Funding as well is highly appreciated to use in the implementation of the model.

2.11.4 Conclusions

In general, the criteria, the tools and the step-by-step implementation process proposed by the Med S&C Path model seems suitable to measure sustainability along the routes and improve their governance. Participants in the Policy Learning Seminars considered the model clear and practical to be implemented. However, they recognised the need of testing these tools and procedures in the field, in order to see whether they are actually useful, which will be performed during the Testing Phase of Best Med. The word cloud below (Figure 10), built from all the reports submitted by the project partners, acts as a summary of the terms mainly brought forward during the seminars' discussions.

Figure 10 Word cloud built from project partners' reports

A key issue that emerged across the pilot areas was related to the management of cultural routes and paths. A multi-level governance capable of uniting requests and efforts between local and regional levels and between public and private sectors needs to be improved. For instance, participants in Lazio, Calabria and Montenegro seminars highlighted aspects such as uncoordinated interventions between local public administrations, poor coordination between tourism operators and lack of consultation and effective involvement of all relevant actors.

In this context, the role that cultural routes/paths managers should play in the process of monitoring sustainability is a contested terrain, since for most participants they should have a protagonist role as coordinators of the working group to implement the model, but on the other hand it is recognised that in general they do not have the resources (human, financial, technical) to perform sustainability monitoring alone. In fact, most of the people working in cultural

routes are part of non-profit associations, many are volunteers and do not have neither the expertise to perform these tasks, nor the legal competences with regards the management of the territories the routes cross by. As Slovenia participants pointed out, *"Monitoring and improving indicators requires legal and managerial options for monitoring and promotion. As route managers, many cannot do anything other than suggest."*

Precisely the intention of implementing the Med S&C Path model in a coordinated way forming a working group is to divide the responsibilities for data collection and analysis, so that it does not become a burden for one single actor, while at the same time contributes to improve dialogue and collaboration between public and private sector along the stretch of the route, supporting CR/path managers to have decision-making power and incidence on the management and impact of these paths.

The Med S&C Path model provided in this toolkit has been fine-tuned thanks to the feedback provided by participants in the Policy Learning Seminars across the 8 Best Med pilot areas, without forgetting that this is a general framework model that should be adapted to the particular needs of each pilot area. Therefore, when integrating the feedback provided by local stakeholders, we have focused on incorporating those that have been identified by the majority of pilot areas, leaving specific issues to be adapted at each pilot area level.

In the following section, recommendations are provided for the further improvement of the model after the Testing Phase (WP4) and, in general, for an effective implementation of sustainability monitoring systems in cultural routes and paths.

2.11.5 Recommendations for future improvement and implementation of the Med S&C Path model

In light of the above results and in line with the feedback received in the Policy Learning Seminars, we recommend performing the following actions during the Testing Phase (WP4):

- **Better assess the role of cultural route/ path managers**, in order to verify if it is feasible that they perform the protagonist role suggested for them.
- **Each pilot area should assess and define who should be part of their working group** and define the responsibilities for data collection. Our suggestion is that responsibilities are shared between a working group that includes the CR/path managers, the regional policy makers and other key stakeholders at local level (which could be local authorities and the cultural and tourism private sector).
- **Calculate the data for the criteria and indicators in the pilot area** in order to test the feasibility of the model. If the Self-Assessment Audit Sheet and the 26 core indicators are integrated in the Best Med online platform, they could be tested directly there. Otherwise, the Audit Sheet and the Indicators in their current Excel format are suitable to be used during the testing phase.
- **Evaluate the feasibility of including newly suggested criteria**, such as "Lighting pollution" and "Activities with NGOs and the local community to raise awareness of resource and environmental protection".
- **Each pilot area should strive to identify thresholds** for the indicators in order to be able to perform a benchmarking against other pilot areas. In the current toolkit, we provide benchmarking suggestions as part of the guidelines for the use of BEST Med core indicators.
- As suggested by Montenegro's partners, **a more specific questionnaire could be created** by Best Med partners together with relevant actors, related to the characteristics of each pilot area, in order to obtain the data needed for further decision making.

After the Testing Phase, besides incorporating the feedback that will be provided by each pilot area, further improvement for the final version of the Med S&C Path model (WP6) could include:

- Under the suggestion from Algarve stakeholders, **consider merging the Sustainable Management and Economic Sustainability dimensions**, since participants pointed out the two were closely interrelated.
- **Evaluate the possibility of including new questionnaires in the toolkit**, directed to local businesses and residents. In the current toolkit, we are providing guidance to prepare these questionnaires, but each pilot area could prepare their own to tackle specific issues. Encourage partners to design their own questionnaires with their local stakeholders, following the guidelines but adapting them to their local needs.
- **Provide examples of best practices** to implement sustainability in the route/ path, coming from the input received from the stakeholders involved in the pilot process.

Best practices can also link to results from other projects involving cultural and pilgrimage routes.

- **Incorporate methods to collect big data**, in accordance with the recommendations provided in Deliverable 3.2.1 (Proposal for a standard system of Big Data sets available at Med level).
- **Find synergies with existing monitoring systems and certifications**, such as the Slovenia Green scheme, as the data already collected by these other systems could be integrated in Best Med platform for those destinations part of the pilot areas.
- **Disseminate the data in a simple and straightforward manner** so that end users are able to understand the information. Data should be presented in a way that is understandable to end users and partners who will be using the model and its tools.
- **Secure the commitment of relevant public and private stakeholders** at local and regional level in the fields of culture and tourism to implement the model, setting short, medium- and long-term objectives and responsibilities, so that the model has continuity in time. This could be achieved through the Granada Charter planned for the Capitalization phase of Best Med (WP6) and could provide opportunities to access new funding sources to continue the monitoring activities.
- **Secure support from the European Institute of Cultural Routes** (EICR) to certified European cultural routes interested in applying the model. Being EICR an associated partner of Best Med, the Med S&C Path model could be recommended or supported by them as an instrument for cultural routes to comply with their 3-year evaluation. Especially since the lack of monitoring tools is recognised in several reports, as we have highlighted in Deliverable 3.3.1 (MED S&C Path Model Benchmarking Method).

Finally, further recommendations for the effective implementation of sustainability monitoring systems in cultural routes and paths include:

- **Use pre-existent data as much as possible** (official statistics, big data, etc.) to make the monitoring process cost-efficient.
- **Provide incentives:** All participants in the Policy Learning seminars agreed that incentives are essential for the implementation of the model. These incentives could be in the form of certifications/labels, a yearly award, education and capacity building and funding to implement the model.
- **Perform training and capacity building for cultural routes/paths staff:** training in the fields of sustainability monitoring, as well as in new participatory and cooperative approaches and integrated cultural heritage management are crucial, in order to increase cultural routes socio-economic impact in the territories they cross by. Partnerships with universities are suggested as win-win opportunities for this purpose, as well as the culture and tourism sectors.
- **Make clear the business case for monitoring sustainability**: relating it with an increased level of competitiveness of the cultural route/path.

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Annexes

Annex A - Visitors Questionnaire

VISITOR SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to help us improve your experience at our route.
Thank you for your cooperation.

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Date	Day	Month	Year
Location			

1. Which best describes your visit to this cultural route?

○ On a short visit (<1 hour)   ○ On a part-day visit (1-5 hours)   ○ On a full-day visit   ○ On a multi-day visit N° of days:

2. If on a multi-day visit, what kind of accommodation are you staying in?

☐ Hotel   ☐ Rented room/house   ☐ Hostel   ☐ Own accommodation

☐ Bed & Breakfast   ☐ Family/friend's house   ☐ Other:

3. What is the main purpose of your visit to this cultural route?

☐ Religion/pilgrimage   ☐ Nature and scenery   ☐ Education and training

☐ Culture and history   ☐ Leisure and recreation   ☐ Other:

4. Which sites or attractions along this route have you visited or plan to visit?

5. What type of activities will you carry out during your visit to this cultural route?

☐ Sightseeing   ☐ Visiting cultural sites   ☐ Shopping/Eating   ☐ Outdoor recreation

☐ Photography   ☐ Religious activities   ☐ Other:

6. What was the main method of transport you used to travel to this cultural route?

☐ Train   ☐ Airplane   ☐ Bus   ☐ Car   ☐ Motorcycle

☐ Walking   ☐ Ship/Ferry   ☐ Other:

7. How long did it take you to arrive to this cultural route?

☐ 1-15 minutes   ☐ 16-30 minutes   ☐ 31-60 minutes   ☐ 60-90 minutes   ☐ >90 minutes

8. What method of transport did you use/are you planning to use during your visit?

☐ Bicycle   ☐ Walking   ☐ Bus   ☐ Other:

9. Was this your first visit to this cultural route?

○ Yes   ○ No

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BEST MED

10. If *No*, how many times have you visited this cultural route in the last five years?

11. How often do you visit this cultural route?

○ Less than once a year   ○ Once a year   ○ More than once a year

12. In the last five years, have you visited any other cultural routes?

○ Yes   ○ No

13. If *Yes*, which other cultural routes have you visited in the last five years?

14. Please rate the importance of the following characteristics of this cultural route:

1 = Not important, 5 = Extremely important	1	2	3	4	5
Natural environment	○	○	○	○	○
Benches/places to sit	○	○	○	○	○
Rubbish or recycling points	○	○	○	○	○
Signage	○	○	○	○	○
Width of the road	○	○	○	○	○
Guided tours	○	○	○	○	○
Accommodation	○	○	○	○	○
Restaurants	○	○	○	○	○

15. What is your level of overall satisfaction with this cultural route?

○ Not at all satisfied   ○ Partly satisfied   ○ Satisfied   ○ More than satisfied   ○ Very satisfied

16. Considering your level of overall satisfaction, how likely are you to return to this cultural route?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not likely at all	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely likely

17. How likely are you to reccommend this cultural route to your family and/or friends?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not likely at all	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely likely

18. How many people, including yourself, are in your group?

19. During your visit, how much do you expect you and your dependents will spend on:

Accommodation: Other activities/expenses:

Food and drink: Estimated total expenditure:

Local transport:

Recreation:

20. What is your nationality?

21. What is your usual place of residence? (City, Country)

22. What is your age?   O 18-24   O 25-34   O 18-24   O 25-34   O 18-24   O Prefer not to answer

23. What gender do you identify as?

O Female   O Male   O Non-binary   O Other   O Prefer not to answer

24. What is your highest level of education?

☐ No formal education   ☐ Secondary school   ☐ Secondary school   ☐ Bachelor's degree

☐ Master's degree   ☐ Doctorate degree   ☐ Other:

25. What is your current employment status?

☐ Employed full-time   ☐ Employed part-time   ☐ Freelance   ☐ Student

☐ Unemployed   ☐ Retired   ☐ Other:

Annex B - Cultural Route/path managers Questionnaire

ROUTE MANAGERS SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to help us improve the quality of our route.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Date   Day   Month   Year

Name of the respondent

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name of the cultural route:

2. Location of the cultural route:

3. Name of the cultural route's management structure:

4. Name and role of the contact person:

5. What is the length (in km) of the cultural route?

6. What type of stakeholders are involved in the cultural route?

☐ Public sector   ☐ Private sector   ☐ Academic sector

☐ Associations   ☐ Partnerships   ☐ Other:

7. Please list the names of all stakeholders currently involved in the itinerary and specify their role:

Name	Role	Type of stakeholder

VISITORS

8. What types of services are offered to visitors?

☐ Tourist guides   ☐ Camping sites   ☐ Food and drinks   ☐ Transportation

☐ Accessibility   ☐ Recreation   ☐ Other:

9. What kind of tourists visit the route?

☐ Domestic tourists   ☐ International tourists ☐ Families   ☐ Couples

☐ Groups   ☐ Individual travelers   ☐ Other:

10. What kind of communication is established with the tourists before and/or after their visit?

☐ Social media/Website ☐ Email   ☐ Newsletters   ☐ Phone calls

☐ Texting/Messaging   ☐ Dedicated apps   ☐ Other:

SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

11. Number of people visiting the cultural route per year:

12. How do you measure tourist satisfaction with the cultural route?

13. Does the cultural route have a sustainable tourism strategy with an agreed monitoring process?

○ Yes   ○ No

14. Do you measure any of the following environmental impacts on the cultural route?

☐ Pollution   ☐ Waste management   ☐ Energy consumption   ☐ Water management

☐ Protected areas   ☐ Endangered species   ☐ Other:

15. Do you measure any of the following social benefits of the cultural route?

☐ Transfer of local traditions and culture   ☐ Strengthened territorial image

☐ Education   ☐ Other:

16. Which sustainable practices are applied in the cultural route?

GOVERNANCE MODEL AND COOPERATION

17. What type of cooperation exists between the members of the cultural route?

☐ Occasional   ☐ Periodic   ☐ Collaborative   ☐ Competitive

☐ Formal   ☐ Informal   ☐ Other:

18. What is the planning process for activities related to the development, maintenance and/or promotion of the cultural route?

19. What kind of relationship exists with other regional stakeholders? (Challenges, success factors, etc.)

20. Which regional networks does the cultural route belong to?

21. Which are the main competitors of the cultural route?

Annex C - 1ˢᵗ Policy Learning Seminar Outcome Template

1ˢᵗ POLICY LEARNING OUTCOME

This template allows to collect the outcome of the 1st Policy Learning Seminar. For the objectives and expected outcomes of the seminar, please refer to the workshop presentation from CAST in the shared Google Drive folder.

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Date   Day   Month   Year
Name of the partner

1. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

List here the prioritized positive and negative characteristics, implications and influences of tourism in the pilot area that emerged during the first Policy Learning Seminar.

Divide them by the dimension to which the aspect belongs (sustainable management, economic, socio-cultural or environmental sustainability). These are the 4 dimensions that we consider in the Med S&C Path Model.

It's important that partners conducting the Seminar are familiar with the criteria contained in the Self-Assessment Audit Sheet, to stimulate discussion covering all 4 dimensions of sustainability, so that later on you can perform the comparison of the answers with the model (gap analysis).

Dimension	Positive Characteristics	Negative Characteristics
Sustainable Management e.g. Monitoring tourism impact, infrastructure, promotion and information.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Economic Sustainability e.g. Economic contribution of tourism, support to SMEs, employment, seasonality.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Socio-Cultural Sustainability e.g. Protection of heritage, tourist behaviour, resident's satisfaction with tourism.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Environmental Sustainability e.g. Energy consumption, water consumption, impact to wildlife and landscapes.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

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2. GAP ANALYSIS

The aim of the gap analysis is to verify whether the needs of the pilot area (namely the positive and negative issues related to tourism development previously identified) are covered by the criteria listed in the Med S&C Path Model Self-Assessment sheet.

Please insert in the table below the positive and negative impacts, placing them in the correspondent column, depending on whether the issue is covered by the model, partially covered or not covered at all.

To perform this analysis you will need to compare the list of needs that emerged during the seminar (the table above) with the topics covered in the Self Assessment Audit Sheet.

Dimension	Needs covered by the criteria	Needs partially covered by the criteria	Needs not covered by the criteria
Sustainable Management			
Economic Sustainability			
Socio-Cultural Sustainability			
Environmental Sustainability			

Annex D – 2nd Policy Learning Seminar Outcome Template

2nd POLICY LEARNING OUTCOME

The purpose of this evaluation is to describe the feedback received from participants on the feasibility to implement the Med S&C Path Model, following the 5-step methodology proposed in Deliverable 3.3.2 (Toolkit). For the objectives and expected outcomes of the seminar, please refer to the workshop presentation from CAST in the shared Drive folder.

Please use this form to provide the main outcomes of the discussion of each step to implement the model, answering the questions below. Some of these questions can be used as a guide to conduct the discussion during the seminar.

Date   Day   Month   Year

Name of the partner

STEP 1: ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP

1. Who should be part of the Working Group?

☐ CR managers and their network of local actors. *Please specify the ammount of participants that preferred this option, and any other relevant details:*

☐ CR managers, their network of local actors and regional policy makers. *Please specify the ammount of participants that preferred this option, and any other relevant details:*

☐ Other key stakeholders. *Please specify:*

2. Who should lead the process of contacting and forming this group?

☐ The regional public sector. *Why? Please provide details:*

☐ The cultural route / path manager. *Why? Please provide details:*

☐ Other. *Please specify:*

STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT SUSTAINABILITY LEVEL

3. Is it feasible for the working group to share the responsibility for filling out the Self-Assessment Audit sheet? Or should it be filled out only by the cultural route / path manager? *Please summarise the main comments:*

STEP 3: ADDRESS THE GAPS BY USING THE PROVIDED TOOLS

4. Do you find useful to share the responsibilities for data collection and analysis with other relevant stakeholders? Or should the data collection be performed only by the Cultural Route / Path manager?

5. Are the list of indicators and the visitor questionnaire useful tools to evaluate sustainability of cultural routes / paths?

6. What other tools could be useful to assess the impacts (economic, socio-cultural, environmental) of cultural routes / paths?

7. Who should fund the data collection process?

☐ Regional Government   ☐ Local Government   ☐ Regional Tourism Board

☐ Local Tourism Board   ☐ Private sector   ☐ Other. *Please specify:*

Please specify below the amount of participants that preferred each option, and note any other relevant details:

STEP 4: ANALYSE THE DATA

8. Who should have the responsibility for following up the implementation of an action plan to address the issues identified through the indicators?

☐ Cultural route / path manager

☐ Regional policy maker

☐ Shared between the working group

☐ Other. *Please specify:*

Please specify below the amount of participants that preferred each option, and note any other relevant details:

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STEP 5: REGULARLY MONITOR AND EVALUATE

9. How often should be performed?

10. Who should be responsible?

11. Which could be good incentives for stakeholders to implement a model like Med S&C Path?

- ☐ A certification or label
- ☐ A yearly award
- ☐ An online platform to collect data and benchmark
- ☐ Education and capacity building
- ☐ Funding to implement the model
- ☐ Other. *Please specify:*

12. Additional comments, suggestions, and additions to the step-by-step methodology proposed by participants: