

CAPITALIZATION REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Capitalization Report is an important ECRR project deliverable that provides a genuine framework containing relevant information and key insights on European Cultural Routes and facilitating its passing on to significant audience (stakeholders, authorities, etc.), especially to those involved in conceiving and establishing the cultural route of reformation.

It is noteworthy to underline that in this project capitalization of experiences is twofold. On the one hand, experiences collected by already certified Cultural Routes are used as main inputs to soundly design and consolidate the European Cultural Route of Reformation; and on the other, regional and local stakeholders in all involved territories will be approached and their insights gathered. Both complement each other and enable the compilation of worthy inputs that may serve as a ground for the development of the Route and its program.

This capitalization report presents the inputs from already certified European Cultural Routes. In a first step, pre-selected Routes were contacted and requested to fill in an online survey². This step provided interesting and abundant information that was collected in a Good Practices Catalogue (D.T2.1.1). However, some key issues were insufficiently covered. Consequently, a second step was made and both, routes' members as well as routes' managers, were again contacted to carry out personal interviews³. This capitalization report contains the main insights of these two steps and tries to present them in a way that makes them useful and easily applicable for the establishment of the reformation cultural route.

I. SCOPE

This report consists of six chapters. The first chapter contains an overview table with the European Cultural Routes analyzed as good practices. The second chapter focuses on the management structures of the Routes (Legal form of the managing authority, Ownership, Voluntary actors, Decision-making process, Type and source of financing, Cooperation and networks). Chapter three sums up the innovations of the Routes and highlights issues like offers, marketing strategies, certifications and accessibility. While chapter four contains identified success factors of the Routes, chapter five depicts their main identified challenges. Finally, chapter six concludes with the information that might be most relevant for ECRR.

II. OBJECTIVES

The collection of insights, experiences and knowledge from established, solid certified European Cultural Routes contributes to approach several objectives with relevance for a satisfactory and full implementation of a cultural route project like ECRR. Some of these as listed below:

- To gain insights that would improve practices and measures within the ECRR project area based on analyses of current experience and practices, as well as on constructive critical assessments of issues that are of significance for cross-border and regional cultural heritage management.
- To collect knowledge on potential challenges at different levels in managing and capitalizing cultural heritage and to ensure the same level of knowledge on these issues in very diverse regions. This would facilitate addressing eventual problems at transnational, national, regional and local levels.
- To collect information and insights that can be integrated and considered in the development of ECRR's deliverables and activities if applicable.

As previously mentioned, ECRR capitalizes and builds upon different insights and sources of information. This means that the activities to collect them take place at different levels, involving different stakeholders and other relevant actors, in some occasions, in different temporal scopes and generating multiple "outcomes". However, all of them will contribute to a common pool of valuable information for developing and consolidating the cultural route of reformation and to the sustainability of ECRR and its achievements.

1. Overview of the analysed best practice European Cultural Routes

The following table summarizes the European Cultural Routes that responded and filled in the online survey² in the first research step. The information collected through this survey² compiled and presented in the project's deliverable D.T2.1.1, Good Practice Catalogue.

Name of the Route	Acronym	Year of CoE certification
The Way of Saint James	JAMES	1987
VIA REGIA	REGIA	2005
Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route	WINE	2015
TRANSROMANICA - The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage	TROMAN	2007
ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX th Century in Europe's Urban Memory	ATRIUM	2014
European Routes of Emperor Charles V	CHARLES	2015
Via Sancti Martini. Saint Martin European Cultural Route	MARTIN	2005
European Route of Jewish Heritage	JEWISH	2004
FORTE CULTURA® - European Culture Route of Fortified Heritage	FORTE	2016
European Historic Thermal Towns Association	THERM	2010
Via Francigena	FRANC	1994
The Hansa	HANSA	1991
The Huguenot and Waldensian Trail	HUGU	2013

2. Management structures of the Routes

After the first information collection and development of the catalogue, the same Routes were more deeply assessed through interviews³ from Project Partners with managing bodies and routes' members in the corresponding countries. The main topics and areas in which information that was further collected that is presented in the following paragraphs and in Section 3.

1. Legal form of the managing authority

Based on the answers from the questionnaire and some interviews³, the examined cultural routes have similar legal forms. Most of them are registered associations, some are federations (with territorial branches), and the applicable legal frame depends on the country they are registered in (since there is no a non-governmental European Association). However, some differences have been detected in terms of who the members the management authorities are. For example, Hansa and Thermal Towns are pure city associations, while Via Regia's, TRANSROMANICA and Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route's members, for instance, range from private companies, NGOs to public entities.

It seems that the most suitable way of building the legal management body of a route is to establish an association. There are little financial means required and the board usually includes the most important stakeholders, which is essential for the identity (building) with the concerned route project.



II. Ownership

Material cultural heritage on the Routes is mostly in the communal ownership of the cities and municipalities. Sights and points of interest with a religious past are in the property of church organizations (TROMAN, THERM). Points of interest like museums, etc. present diverse ownership schemes (foundations, associations, private, public).

The owners of the sites and objects, as well as the actors and entities protecting and making immaterial heritage accessible, are usually in charge of their restoration and preservation. However, the routes themselves are non-profit organisations and contribute indirectly to fulfil these tasks by raising awareness about the related cultural heritage, attracting more visitors, encouraging investments, etc.

III. Voluntary actors

Assessing the good practices was possible to realize how important voluntary work is for the sustainment and running of cultural routes. This voluntary basis applies both to the management bodies (very often with hardly any funds for paid personnel) and to the actors onsite, throughout the participating territories.

Most of the cooperation in the associations takes place thanks to volunteering of its members and, if applicable, to the staff coordinating and carrying out daily operative tasks involved in the Route's management (in some cases, there are finances for a part-time positions but most often not even that). Without the resources of volunteers, neither every-day-work, nor the conception, development, and implementation of projects are established. Therefore, it seems to be crucial to involve and engage active citizens from the very beginning of a project. The involvement of population is fundamental for guaranteeing the sustainability and authenticity of the Cultural Route.

The form in which voluntary commitment manifests varies and involves not just preservation, restoring activities, but also promotion and service provision for visitors - like guided tours, performances, among many others.

As some interviewees³ underline, volunteering has also some limitations. That may challenge the professionalization of the Cultural Routes and its management and may create strong person-dependencies. Because of their importance, and related limitations, volunteers have to be taken care of and valued, as well as provided with offers and possibilities for education, networking and personal development.

IV. Decision-making process

Still, usual hierarchical structures are dominating the necessary decision-making process in the associations. To make decisions about the future development of the Routes, as well as their financing, program and activities the associations have to consider multifarious opinions.

Therefore, usually the statutes of the registered associations define among others rules for decision-making procedures. Cultural Route managers typically conduct

regular meetings with the board and the members, often involving network partners, to determine the further development steps.

A fostering issue often mentioned is the instalment of a scientific advisory board or a similar committee. This helps to focus on the high quality level regarding the contents of the project.

V. Type and source of financing

Membership fees are considered a financial fundament for the Route associations work par excellence. The amount of dues is in some occasions diverse and specified according to different defined criteria. These may vary and depend on e.g.

- whether the person is a natural or legal person,
- the municipality's size,
- how long a membership is registered,
- how many vote rights are obtained,
- types of members (e.g. private company, municipality, foundation, etc.)

Considering the willingness to pay of the members, it is important to bear in mind, that it is among others closely linked the degree of identification and engagement of stakeholders regarding the cultural route. This sense of belonging and identity may, at least partially, depend on the geographic distance between the members and the POIs of cultural heritage and the physical path itself (if applicable). The closer they are located, the more emotional their relationship with the Route will be. To secure that the fees are fair, bearable and the members convinced and satisfied it is important to consider their willingness to pay and burdens, as well as to foster and cultivate their sense of belonging.

In addition, large-scale periodic events have proved to be both a very effective and well-tried source for financing (e.g. FRANC festival). The organisation and realization of these festivals require considerable personnel resources; however, established associations manage to organize and hire them without big difficulties. On the other hand, these events offer a massive marketing impulse and a noticeable impact on the long-term promotion and the popularity of the Routes.

Different forms of entry fees at the respective POIs provide a stable year-round income source for the sites themselves. In this context, networking with tourism associations in the regions is an essential precondition. Collaboration with those associations raises the public awareness of the site and the chance to attract more visitors and subsequently the income gained.

For some Cultural Routes (CHARLES / WINE / HUGU / REGIA / JEWISH / FRANC) private supporters and various donors, from non-members, contribute significantly to the financing budget.

Furthermore, public subsidies by municipalities are the basic funding for many Routes. Few routes have a long-term financing from the respective provincial

government, for example via subsidized programs, and some apply to international funding opportunities on project-base for additional resources.

The endorsement and support of the municipal council and main authorities at local and regional level are essential factors in order to achieve high degree of seriousness and reliability. This is noticeable by additional supports from the economy and business sector; once the municipalities are committed to the project, more supporters can be won much more easily.

VI. Cooperation and networks

The assessed routes are thematically transnationally oriented and therefore require intensive cooperation to achieve broader effects and, at the same time, maintain their cohesion. For cross border projects it is particularly important and necessary to develop and ensure an appropriate quality management/ assurance system as well as coordinated marketing strategies for common goals. Networking among the Route members should be fostered and encouraged by the “coordinating” entity of the Route. Additionally, cooperation with research and educational institutions is one of the requisites for the certification of the routes, thus all the routes have to conduct it intensively.

In addition to direct networking among Routes’ members, activities to engage and involve the stakeholders within their own structures and territories are required. Stakeholders can contribute to the success of the Cultural Routes primarily by contributing with their scientific, touristic or economic competences and services, as well as giving more authenticity to the Route.

Based on the collected information, networking among European Cultural Routes takes mostly place within meetings (events, trainings) organised by the CoE and the European Institute for Cultural Routes.

3. Innovations of the Routes

During the analysis of the routes, several fields of action in which innovations flourish have been identified. Some of the most relevant are:

- I. Sustainability and environmental protection
- II. Fund raising and marketing
- III. Social innovation through networks
- IV. Product innovation - offers on the site
- V. Accessibility

Some exemplary good practices in these fields are shown in the table below.



Route	Innovative elements
JAMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar panels, special sanitary installations (compost/dry toilets)
REGIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the spirituality of arts and culture for attracting people who have affinity to themes around the sense of life is a unconventional marketing strategy. A network of “Bed & Breakfast” places which provide space for pilgrims and hikers all along the route.
TROMAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term substantial networking across Europe is supported, to secure that all involved actors can look beyond one’s own nose and the transnational connections are long lasting. International, stable networking enables the generation of innovative ideas, through the collection of new inputs, learned lessons and experiences abroad. Supports contacts beyond borders to expand the horizon of the members and foster innovative ideas. Implementation of, e.g. blogging trips, which are co-financed by the EU - to achieve better marketing opportunities at European level

I. Sustainability and environmental protection

On the one hand, its state of the art to e.g. care for energy efficiency in buildings or transport systems; on the other hand, however, we can still observe that the realisation of concepts of sustainability its often neglected. From the market’s point of view, this could be a proper field of innovation because a growing number of people with awareness towards sustainability search for such touristic and leisure time offers matching these values and principles.

II. Fundraising and marketing

A clear strategy for marketing (including visions and core elements to communicate) is crucial but still not given in all of the routes. The more innovative elements are included the higher the degree of obtained attention can be.

Some Routes do not have physically cohesive trails. This requires additional and different measures, means and efforts to inform the visitors about the existing sights, legends, folklore and traditions and to publicize the links, commonalities and cohesion of the route.

Own websites now belong to the “basic facilities” and convey the most important information about the Routes. In addition, specially programmed information points with QR code offered at the POIs, where the linked background information is easily reached using smartphones and tablets are increasingly

being used. However in many cases printed material remain central communication and marketing mean for Cultural Routes.

Using new media and communication trends (e.g. blogging) for promotion is also being exploited by some of the Cultural Routes (see chart above - TROMAN). In the specific case of TROMAN, co-financing/ sponsoring was available. Thus searching and applying for funding programs with a thematic focus or project-base may help Cultural Routes to carry out innovative ideas in their diverse fields of action and work, including public relations and marketing.

III. Social innovation through networks

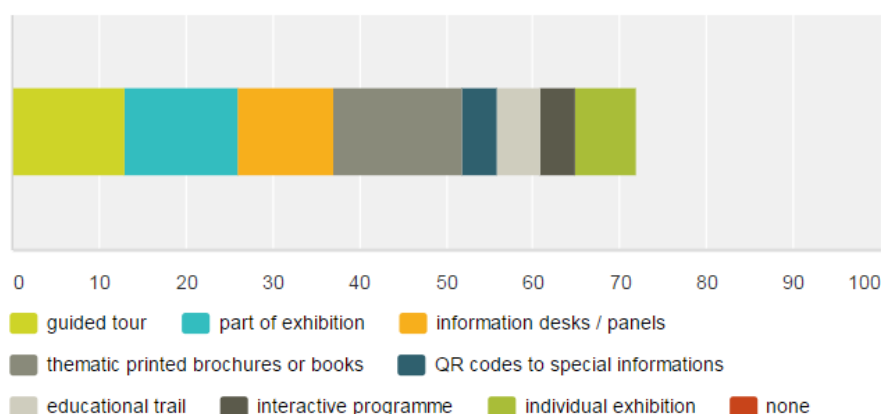
Networking is helpful for creating new ideas by input from „outsiders“, who will support the responsible actors in reaching goals that cannot be achieved alone (e.g. the mentioned Bed & Breakfast” network). Long-term networking platform and opportunities for and of the members, with thematic foci or common denominators, could be a good strategy for creating and encouraging innovation (“to look beyond one´s own nose”).

IV. Product innovations - offers on site

Two thirds of all assessed routes offer guided tours, exhibitions or thematic print brochures/books. Two Routes provide audio programmes for tourists in foreign languages (WINE, CHARLES). Only one Route (JEWISH) tries an interactive programme approach. They offer digital stations operated by the visitors as well as interactive maps.

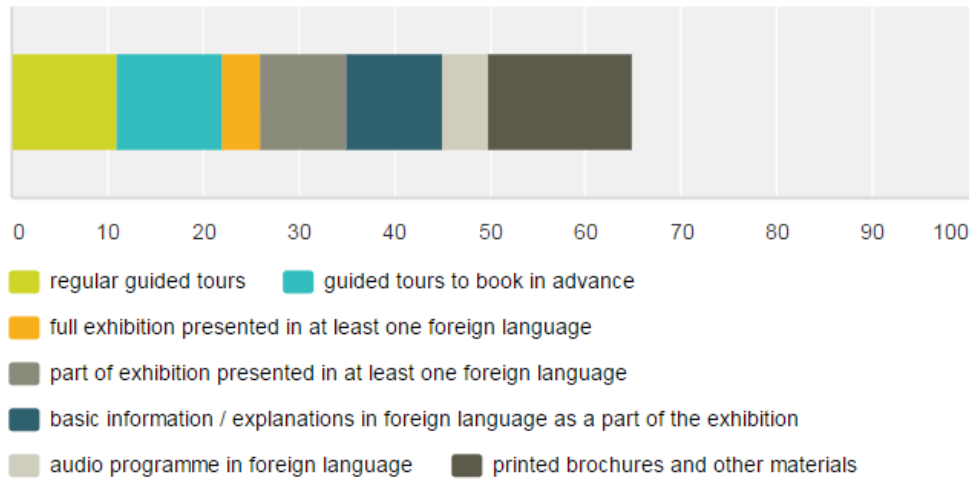
Which cultural and/or educational offers are available along the route?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



Which services are available for foreign visitors at the points of interest?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



V. Accessibility

Implemented accessibility is only partially available among the examined Cultural Routes. However, new routes should consider from the outset how the sights and attractions could be designed and integrated for the future use of handicapped visitors and visitors with special needs.

These aspects are being partly observed by the assessed routes. These offer audio guides and customized information services for hearing or visually impaired people. On longer Routes such as JAMES it is possible to find individual trail sections for wheelchair use and for example, few parts and stations of the Via Regia are testing and supposed to execute some innovative initiatives and ideas on these issues.

4. Success factors of the Routes

During the analysis, the following “success recipes” have been collected.

1. Attractive on-site promotion

Visitors should experience a kind of “Wow!”-effect which keeps the site and the point of interest in remembrance for longer time. This can also support “recommendation marketing” (in the sense of “Have you seen this yet? You´ll have to go there!”), word-of-mouth propaganda and cross marketing.

2. Win-Win-Collaborations with SMEs in tourism (and other branches)

SMEs have to be well prepared for the offers and chances of the routes, SMEs should be engaged in the design and conception of new ideas and products and encouraged to develop their own initiatives. They are a very important node for customer satisfaction, innovation and marketing measures.

3. Stakeholder and public involvement

As mentioned above this is crucial for identity building as well as the realization and service of route-projects.

4. High quality in producing relevant contents

Telling flat stories about the site will be too little effort in order to attract culture-interested tourists. The historical data should be presented professionally, relations from past to present and to future could make the visit fascinating and exciting. It is important to encourage and use the potential of user generated content for communication and promotion.

5. Events as main attractors and effective marketing instruments

Sometimes routes are known more for their great and successful events than for the route itself. Therefore, they can be an important and effective vehicle for raising the popularity and awareness level about the route and its points of interests, as well as to underline the connection and unity of its content and members.

6. Quality guarantee strategies and certifications

Counting with sites, which are recognized as UNESCO heritage may be a strong supporting element in terms of communication and marketing. However, it is not enough to focus on the “highlights” of a route to guarantee its success. It should be harmonious and authentic as a whole.

5. Main challenges experienced by the Routes

During the analysis, the following main challenges experienced by the Routes were identified.

1. Elaborating and expanding of routes

This is kind of pioneer-work and always needs financial resources, (more) manpower and raises complexity within the organisation.

2. Fostering organisational and management development

Problems can be the servicing of too many fields of activities as well as the definition and acceptance of members' responsibilities, lack of (quality in) internal communication and the internationality, which means long distances within boards and amongst the members.

3. Overcoming bad conditioned infrastructure

In relation to the condition of the existing infrastructure, a kind of vicious circle is identified. Run down infrastructure leads to less visitor's frequency, and this in turn leads to less income, which would be needed for restoring or building new infrastructure... Financing is the main challenge to cope with these dynamics.

4. Establishing cooperation on different levels

Many associations show complex member structures and composition, including, among others, politicians, administrative entities, entrepreneurs, educational institutions, foundations and people with different nationalities. This diversity may lead to a certain gap and divergence of interests that must be addressed by the management of the Route, so that they do not become an obstacle. That requires excellent skills in running an organisation, needs highly qualified and engaged people, as well as a sense of belonging and cohesion among the members.

5. Overcoming financial shortage

A shortage of existing funds is sometimes a problem. This is why new ideas are needed, beyond the usual possibilities of procurement and fund-raising. Additional, more innovative, sources of financing and of income should be explored.

In this regard it should be considered how the broad population could be won for the cultural route, so that they perceive it as "theirs", in order to possibly participate and get engaged in form of a cooperative, or through sponsoring, donations, etc. Considering and exploring several options is required to build a sound financing basis.

6. Achieving disposability of data, information and know-how

Good quality data (historical, social etc.) and professional knowledge about how to design and tell stories about a route seems to be a challenge at least for some routes. In order to work out the stories of a route in a good and interesting way, guaranteeing scientific quality and accessibility to relevant Know-How is crucial. ECRR could, as one result, provide simpler access to helpful knowledge and information about how to present a route and/or its point of interest in an attractive way to all its members.

7. Establishing professional marketing

Many routes struggle with setting and launching professional marketing and communication strategies and campaigns. This is again mostly a matter of resources (financial, highly qualified staff, know how). ECRR could lead to a more intense exchange of experience about how to market routes effectively with a small budget.

6. Conclusions

Legal form of the managing authority

- Both most common legal form of Routes' management, registered association or federation (association of territorially based associations), could be suitable for ECRR too. Both formats have advantages and disadvantages that should be considered and extensively discussed among founding members.

To choose the most suitable organization form for the reformation cultural route it is necessary to bear in mind the expected size of the cultural route and the diversity of its members and territories.

Volunteering importance and stakeholder involvement

- The voluntary work is highly important for Routes and constitutes a main factor for success.
- Local citizens should be involved from the outset. It is fundamental to have the population and multipliers on the Route's side.
- According to valuable insights of CERTESS¹ project guidance, four actor types are identified as decisive for a successful network:
 - Interested institutions
 - Research
 - Associations, Federations, Clubs
 - Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

As described in CERTESS¹, it is necessary to find the right balance among these four different types of organizations and to bring all of them together.

- Cooperation with public entities presents some additional challenges, since the establishment of collaboration requires a lot of time (communication between the partners is an essential component), whereas policy usually functions on short-term goals and outcomes.
- Local authorities are usually interested in participating in initiatives around cultural routes for several reasons, e.g.:
 - regional administrative funds are available;
 - visitors are potential customers for regional businesses;
 - the cultural route offers them new possibilities for finding service providers.

Every region that participates in the network makes the experience of being "stronger together than alone". Members can, for example, appear together at international

exhibitions and thus establish communication channels throughout Europe. A network, in which all parties sign an agreement, is highly recommended.

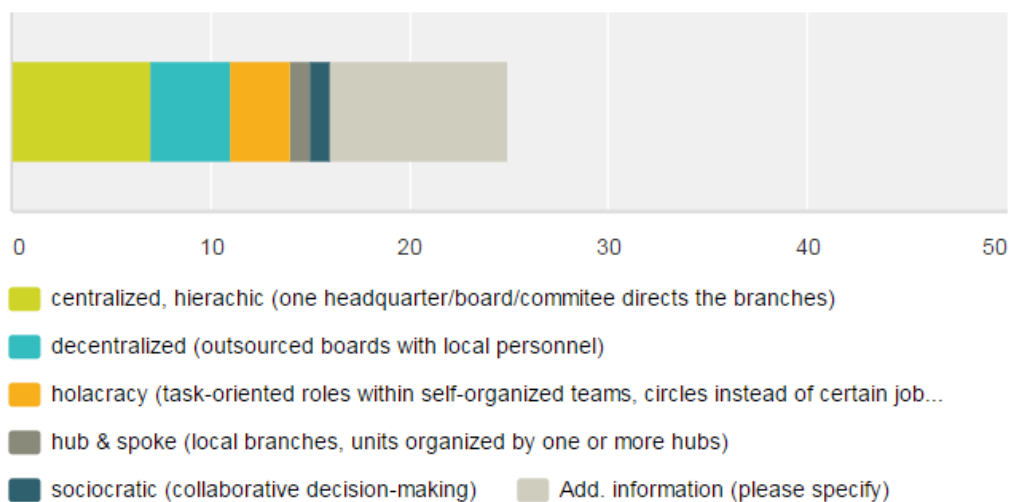
- Stakeholder involvement and management is crucial for the success and sustainability of the cultural route. However, it seems to be pretty challenging to consistently handle and manage it. As a consequence, and due to the detected needs on this regard, stakeholder involvement and innovative ways to approach it will occupy a central place in the capacity building activities, trainings organized in the frame of ECRR in the member regions.

Decision making processes

- Most cultural routes apply quite conventional and rather hierarchical organisation structures and decision-making procedures (see following figure).

Form of organization and its decision-making process

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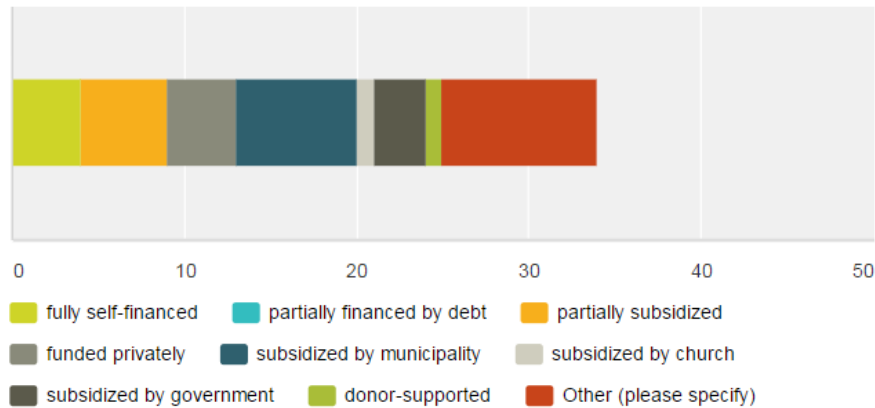
Based on these insights, it is worth considering alternative approaches for the European Cultural Route of Reformation. Especially approaches that more easily combined with significant stakeholder involvement and could foster a self-responsibility feeling and engagement among the members (making them feel part of an entity).

Financing

- As previously stated and shown in the figures below, most cultural routes finance themselves, in addition to membership fees, through project-based funding and local subsidies.

How is the organization financed?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



- To have stable financing, a mix of regular income sources should be achieved: private donators, membership dues, public subsidies (municipalities, provincial government).
- Alternative financing sources for the Route as a whole and the singular members should be explored and strategically sought (e.g. foundations, cooperation with companies, cooperative structures, etc.). Some of these options and impulses on this topic will be part of the training on preservation of cultural heritage.

Marketing / promotion

- The assessment has corroborated that one of the main motivations to become a member of Cultural Routes is generally the brand, image and marketing/promotion possibilities.
- It is important to stress out these aspects to reach and convince potential members of the Route. Communicate locally but always considering the individual, single part of the Route as part of a broader, larger construction. For this is very important to have a shared narrative, to which the members can relate to, and shared communication, marketing strategies and tools.
- A combination of different marketing and promotion strategies designed considering the characteristics of target audience and groups should be strived.

Accessibility

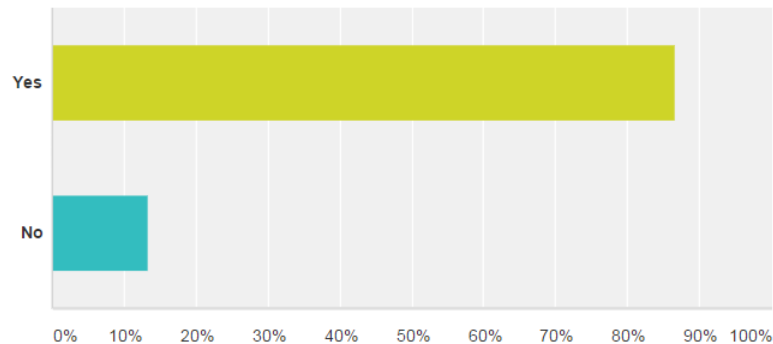
- To be sustainable and differentiate the Reformation Cultural Route from many others, an inclusive design and conception of the route should be central from the outset on. The benefits for handicapped visitors should stand in focus for upcoming routes and POIs.
- For existing routes it should be a goal to stepwise adapt the route and its sites to needs of people with impairments.

Innovation

- The assessed certified European Cultural Routes asserted that innovative and sustainable tourism offers and products have been developed within and by the Route.

Could you develop innovative and sustainable tourism offers / products during or after the implementation of the route?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0





- When assessing the engines of (most of) these innovations, SMEs members were identified. As a consequence the Reformation Cultural Route of reformation should be integrated, motivated and encouraged right from the start (conception and establishment of the Route and its structures). In this way, they will feel the initiative as its own, will develop own interests in its success and will more likely take action along the Route and during the whole time.
- To be able to encourage SME’s involvement and foster their creativity, strategies to approach and sustainably engaging them in the Reformation Cultural Route will be included in trainings on stakeholder-alignment and on promotion for stakeholders in the member regions.

Quality management and certifications

- Additional certifications, regional or local quality labels become more and more interesting because of their impact to targeted visitors and tourism, both from abroad as well as from the home country. Striving some high quality labels like e.g. in Austria the AMA-Gütesiegel, Klima-Aktiv, Genussregion, etc. representing some sort of “unique selling proposition” and special feature to customers, might be strongly recommendable to exploit the opportunity of using it as an advantage against competitors in the regions.

7. References

- Some helpful insights and data used from the  CERTESS¹ project by the INTERREG IVC programme: Project reference 1191RA. (Duration: 12.2011 - 11.2014) <http://certess.culture-routes.lu/contact>
- Our research based on our online questionnaire that is offered by  SurveyMonkey^{® 2} via <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/>
- The diagrams included in this report are the extracts from the responses to our ECRR questionnaire online through SurveyMonkey[®]
- The abovementioned results were collected with the support from our Lead + Project Partners (LP + PP), who conducted personal interviews³ with actors involved in and responsible for the certified Routes.