Good Practice Guide

CULTURAL ROUTES

Engaging Culture and Heritage for Sustainable Tourism Development

Consell de Mallorca
Dep. de Medi Ambient

June, 2014
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June, 2014
INTERREG IVC programme

INTERREG IVC provides funding for interregional cooperation across Europe. It is implemented under the European Community’s territorial co-operation objective and financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The overall objective of the INTERREG IVC Programme is to **improve the effectiveness of regional policies and instruments**. A project builds on the exchange of experiences among partners who are ideally responsible for the development of their local and regional policies. The areas of support are **innovation and the knowledge economy, environment and risk prevention**. The programme aims to contribute to the economic modernisation and competitiveness of Europe. INTERREG IVC is linked to the objectives of Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas.

CHARTS project

Project Mission is to enrich **regional policies** with culture and heritage as added value for **tourism sustainability**, by **exchange experience** amongst the partners in established Good Practices on the sustainable management of **culture, heritage** and **landscape** through **communication** and **collaboration**, keeping in mind the effects of **innovation** and creating a base of **knowledge** that can span well beyond the project’s end.

Good Practices

1. Climate Change
2. Accessibility to Heritage
3. Effective Partnerships
4. Host Communities and Responsible Tourism
5. Quality Criteria
6. Visitor Information
7. Place Marketing
8. **Cultural Routes**
9. Railway Heritage
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# CHARTS project Partnership

14 partners from 11 countries and 10 regions across Europe

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FOREWORDS

Catalina Soler Torres
Consellera of Environment Department of Consell de Mallorca

“For many years ago, Consell de Mallorca works in the management and promotion of cultural routes and on the recovering of ethnological heritage, in order to boost sustainable development in Mallorca.

The exchange of experiences within the frame of CHARTS project has permitted to enhance our products and at the same time, offer these tools to management authorities and stakeholders to improve the implementation of cultural routes at European level.”
Acknowledgements

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

The Consell de Mallorca (Mallorca Council) is a supramunicipal public body with administrative functions, and one of the areas of competence of its Department of the Environment is the support of activities related to sustainable development and environmental conservation. One of these projects is the creation of hiking routes aimed at increasing appreciation of the island’s natural and cultural heritage.

Two long-distance walking routes are being promoted as part of the project: the Dry Stone Trail (Ruta de Pedra en Sec), which is 301 kilometres (187 miles) long and connects 15 municipalities along the length of the Tramuntana mountain range, which has been declared a World Heritage site; and the Artà – Lluc Trail, which is 134 kilometres (83 miles) long and crosses across eight municipalities as it joins the island’s east coast up with the Tramuntana mountain range.

These projects are designed to promote sustainable development and “alternative”, high-quality tourism based on interest in culture and the landscape, areas that to date have not formed part of the economic development associated with mass tourism.

In November 2013 a workshop on Cultural Routes was organized in Mallorca within the frame of CHARTS project (Cultural and Heritage Added value to Regional policies for Tourism & Sustainability) – INTERREG IVC. All partners participated in the workshop sharing its experiences in the field. From this exchange arose this guide for the implementation of Cultural Route in other European Regions.

1.1. **Objectives**

The main aim of this document is to define a methodology for the creation and implementation of a cultural hiking route that enables the promotion of sustainable development through tourism based on cultural heritage as its key feature.

1.2. **Target groups**

Public and private entities with management capacity in this field or the ability to promote synergies among local actors.
2. CULTURAL ROUTES: Background to the Issues

2.1. Introduction

Perception and appreciation of cultural heritage changed significantly during the 20th century, from a vision limited to monuments and art to a wider and more diverse focus. Apart from aesthetic values it also takes into account the context of features of historical heritage, recognising their ethnological and anthropological interest.

In this context the ‘Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage’ adopted by UNESCO’s General Conference in 1972 included their definition of cultural heritage:

- Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.
- Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.
- Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view.

More recently, at the 2005 Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, the European Council understood cultural heritage to be “a set of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions that are continually evolving. This includes all aspects of the landscape resulting from the interaction between people and places over time”.

The convention arose from the aim to define a framework as a reference for the political aspects of cultural heritage. These were presented as a useful resource to enhance cultural diversity and social and economic development, following the principles for a sustainable use of resources.

Indeed, one of the most important challenges facing present European society is the preservation of character and identity that cultural heritage can confer, among other things. The importance of this fact was also mentioned in UNESCO’s Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which stated that protection,
conservation and appreciation of cultural and natural heritage are among the fundamental aspects of environmental management and planning at a national, regional and local level. At the same time another challenge is to boost the economy and create jobs and income at a local level. Nowadays, cultural heritage is really an important factor not only for local socio-economic development but also to boost tourism, by means of the creation of cultural routes and other activities.

2.2. Cultural Routes

In recent years a vision of cultural routes has been consolidated so as to reflect the evolution of the concept of such heritage and its projection in society. Primarily these routes are seen as a tool to highlight the value of cultural identity and to make it better known. Walking the route is more than a simple geographical displacement, it is a journey connecting nature to the past and the present, with the various elements that make up the route linking and interpreting it. These may be related to tangential issues, such as health or adventure, when it comes to routes that can be undertaken on foot, while providing creative leisure time pursuits that call for participation.

At the same time, these routes are seen as a product aimed at a tourist market that can be used to build up a sustainable economy in the region. The economic value of this product will depend on how appealing it proves to be to potential users, i.e., the number of visitors it attracts, but also on the region’s capacity to develop economic activity around the routes.

In other words, adequate planning of the routes can help revitalise areas with limited development, especially if it is possible to achieve synergies between different areas and integrate them in regional planning managed at a supramunicipal level.

Another characteristic typical of cultural routes is the intangible value of the product. Paths, scenery, natural spaces and a region’s cultural heritage are part of its collective richness. It is difficult to determine and quantify their value, but such things are definitely the heart of the route.
On the other hand, reusing the historical heritage in order to reactivate the local economy greatly influences the perception that local population could have about the project, which is a key factor in the promotion of its recovery and maintenance.

In resolution CM/Res (2010) adopted on the December 8th, 2010 the European Council defined a cultural route as a “a cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values.”

According to the members of the Scientific Committee on European Cultural Routes (CIIC), the purpose is to promote an awareness of cultural heritage and European identity through long-term, culturally based cross-border projects. In this way, these converge with the challenges faced by European cultural identity and become elements of social cohesion as well as products bringing cultural tourism to a wider audience.

In this sense, European Cultural Routes have a transnational component, and they highlight the notion of cultural exchange between nations, regions and communities.

Currently, the European Council has 29 cultural routes approved, with a variety of themes, including pilgrimage routes, maritime routes and itineraries based on landscapes without borders or personalities who have contributed to the creation of a European identity.

Some of them, such as Camino de Santiago (St. James’ Way) – recognised as World Heritage by UNESCO in 1993 – are very much consolidated.

Hiking has acquired a special prominence in the context of cultural routes. It began as an activity related to mountaineering with a small number of participants, but it has grown and evolved into one of the most sought-after activities for cultural, sport and nature tourism.

It is an activity that can be carried out in rural and mountainous areas where the main incentives are contact with nature, the scenery and its heritage. It is also seen as a relaxed way to get to know a place and enjoy local culture, and becomes a full tourist experience where physical outdoor activity turns into a privileged way of relating to nature and human culture.
Visitors keen on hiking have a varied socio-demographic profile with diverse interests and expectations. They cover a broad spectrum, ranging from people who select a destination based on the hiking available and spend most of their holiday walking the routes, to tourists who see the activity as something extra on offer during their stay.

Many hiking routes based around a cultural theme have emerged all over Europe, such as the Dry Stone Trail and the Artà - Lluc Trail, which are both in this category.

**2.3. Tourism**

Tourism has experienced continued growth for decades and is nowadays considered the most important industry worldwide. It has become a key driver for socio-economic progress in many regions.

The second half of the 20th century saw a development and growth of conventional tourism based on sun and beach destinations, characterised by a massive influx of people, whose behaviour at their destination was passive.

Nowadays, motivations are different - they have diversified - and since the 90s we have witnessed the growth of tourism of cultural inspiration. The importance of this is clear on the European continent, which is the main destination in the world for people who prefer this type of tourism. It is estimated that cultural motivation represents 40% of total tourism in the European Union and strong growth is forecast.

This evolution is also conditioned by an increase in the value people place on related aspects such as health, nature and cultural heritage together with an aim to disconnect from an urban environment.

Such tendencies, together with the fact that people from a wide range of sectors of the population have discovered the pleasure of walking and enjoying nature and rural life, help to stimulate new forms of tourism with visitors who prefer to participate actively in everything that a place can offer rather than act as mere observers. This means more tourists are on the lookout for authentic, meaningful and dynamic experiences.
2.4. Cultural Routes Impacts on Tourism

The existence of cultural routes, together with their associated services and facilities, helps to heighten the appeal a region holds for tourists. Their impact is even higher when they are integrated into a larger network, thereby increasing the number of possibilities on offer for visitors.

The development model promoting these routes is one of quality tourism, based on respect for the environment and a positive view of things related to local identity. Such tourism helps to stimulate regions that are less developed, facilitates the diversification of the local economy, and also enables the creation of small and medium-sized businesses and job opportunities within the service sector (accommodation, building restoration, complementary activities, local products, support, guided visits and so on).

An appropriate strategy also enables a better distribution of the flow of visitors and favours less seasonal tourism, making it possible to maintain the availability of adequate services for tourists and a continuous economic activity.

In this context, the chance to take part in a highly attractive activity that does not require special physical exertion, such as walking, can positively influence in the choice of a destination on the part of the tourist.

2.5. Contribution of Tourism to Cultural Routes

The host community can benefit from the resources generated by tourism and the needs created by a cultural route. Together with an improvement in perception of the community’s heritage, these will also have a positive influence on:

- Conservation, restoration, appreciation and reutilisation of heritage sites associated with the routes and their surroundings, which in many cases would have been abandoned and destined to disappear.
- Recovery of traditional arts and crafts necessary to maintain and restore heritage sites.
- Preservation of ethnographic and intangible heritage such as food, crafts, festivals or religious acts.
3. **KEY KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO CULTURAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS**

The availability of services, their quality and their ability to entice potential visitors determines the competitiveness of tourist destinations linked to cultural routes.

The trend to diversification shows the need to identify resources that could be transformed into a tourism-related product to give the local image a distinctive stamp. Yet, one should remember that not all cultural resources or destinations are easily transformed into successful cultural tourist destinations: cultural heritage cannot be created and it is not possible to have what cannot be provided.

The product of cultural tourism must possess characteristics that make it unique, such as the quality of the route and the services available.

How to attract visitors depends on their prior motivation, and the qualities of uniqueness and authenticity they experience during their visit. Creative experiences can play an important role here. To this end, the involvement of the local population is fundamental, a factor already mentioned in the International Cultural Tourism Charter adopted in 1999 by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites).

Proper project implementation must strive to avoid the possible negative aspects of any tourism project, ensuring that it is sustainable and respects the region’s balance and character.

4. **CULTURAL ROUTES. TRANSFER PROCESS**

The model for the implementation of cultural hiking routes established in Mallorca can be used for other European regions following a methodology structured as below:

1. Defining the purpose and scope of the project
2. Analysis
3. Design and planning
4. Execution
5. Management and maintenance
6. Dissemination and promotion
1. **Defining the purpose and scope of the project**

Right project implementation will require the promoting entity or organisation to define the goals it wishes to achieve and identify what regional element will provide the project’s backbone. Goals and elements are set based on a main theme that will define the route, based on existing culture and heritage, key elements when determining the identity and authenticity of the product.

The cultural route must enable people to get close to the environment that facilitates understanding of its reality. It must also offer them diverse experiences in order to reach as broad an audience as possible, which will help to make it profitable.

2. **Analysis**

An evaluation of the social and environmental situation as well as the financial starting point will determine whether there is potential for tourism. This will enable the identification of the elements and resources suitable to participate in the project, and which stakeholders (public, private, associations etc.) might be able to play a role. Possible obstacles and weaknesses are identified at the same time when analysing available financial resources, projects for restoration and the enhancement of existing heritage places, the current use of the region’s cultural, financial and social values, the involvement of the local community in the management and evaluation of their local heritage, the motivation of the local authorities and the availability of professionals qualified to manage the different aspects of the project.

An inventory of resources that are of interest should include roads that are likely to be included in the layout and form the backbone of the route, connecting heritage assets with the services required by visitors.

Human activities, their products, and natural features with the potential to encourage an influx of tourism are to be identified. The basic motivation will be curiosity and the chance to carry out some physical activity.

This entails quantifying existing resources and determining their suitability and usefulness for the development of the project.

2.1 **Definition of stakeholder**

Identification of the authorities involved, in particular bodies responsible for management, organisation and promotion of tourism and economic development in the region. The creation of an inventory of professional associations, companies, cultural organisations or other groups that might have a direct involvement in the project.
2.2 Cataloguing the road network

Recognising and identifying a road network that could usefully be integrated into the hiking network. An analysis of physical characteristics and other aspects such as:

- Name
- Municipalities
- Starting and finishing points
- Type of road
- Type of surface
- Minimum and maximum width
- Condition of road
- Length
- Present use
- Connections with other paths or roads
- Documentary and cartographic references
- Existing signs and type of signposting
- Lateral boundary
- Limitations of access
- Stops for water or refreshments
- Legal status of areas the route runs through
- Nearby services of interest

2.3 Cataloguing cultural resources

Identification of cultural heritage sites: ethnological, historical/artistic, archaeological, agricultural, agrarian landscapes, unique surroundings, traditional architecture, historical centres etc.
The material collected should include:
- Name
- Type
- Municipality
- Property data
- Dating
- Geographic coordinates
- Legal status
- Owner contact details
- Level of protection
- Degree of conservation
- Accessibility
- Need for restoration
- Possible uses
- Documentation
- Action plan

Identification of intangible cultural heritage: festivals, traditions, legends, gastronomy, handicrafts etc., in accordance with the points below:

- Name
- Type
- Municipality
- Dating
- Date
- Description
- Level of protection
- Documentation

2.4 Cataloguing natural resources

Identification of natural heritage (flora, fauna, geology, geomorphology, water resources...) and the characteristics that make them worthy of inclusion as points of interest along the route. This will also reveal their fragility and the need for corrective measures.

The following information should be included:
- Name
- Type
- Municipality
- Geographic coordinates
- Legal status
- Contact information
- Level of protection
- Degree of conservation
- Accessibility
- Potential uses
- Action plan

2.5 Analysis of host capacity

Identification of present demand, potential for tourism and available resources along the route: existing tourist facilities (accommodation, restaurants, complementary activities, transport...), information services (tourist information centres, visitor or interpretation centres ...), human
resources and competences, tourism-related projects already in place or planned.

An analysis of connectivity with potential target markets and ways to improve this.

2.6 Analysis of regional strategies

A study of regional or local policies that may facilitate or hinder the establishment of a cultural route.

3. Design and planning

Factors such as safety of the route and its suitability together with the above listed items are to be taken into account when defining a cultural product involving hiking.

3.1 Choosing the route

When identifying paths that are suitable for hiking, the following is to be taken into account:

- They shall be suitable for the largest possible number of users.
- They shall guarantee the safety of users at all times and avoid black spots, such as road crossings or roads with high traffic density.
- They shall preferably be ancient or historical routes that will add value to the itinerary.
- They shall be public roadways or paths with a public right of way whenever possible.
- They shall take in places and paths in an environment that is rich in ethnological, historic, architectural, landscape or environmental heritage.
- They shall avoid surfaced or tarmac stretches.
- They shall enable connections with services or centres of population.

3.2 Selection of points of interest

Natural or cultural elements that help to increase interest in the route – especially elements that are related to the central theme – shall be included.

At the same time the role played by cultural events and products offered
by local artists and artisans in the revitalisation of the region and the value placed on its heritage has to be taken in account.

Special care is to be taken to alternate elements that are inevitable because of their fame with elements that are relatively unknown or unusual and present them all in an even-handed way along the route.

3.3 Sustainability

Any activities undertaken when implementing and maintaining the route must respect the environment and cultural identity, as well as enabling social and economic development without wasting existing resources.

3.4 Adaptation to user needs

User characteristics make it possible to foresee what services will be necessary to meet their basic needs and ensure minimum levels of quality and comfort, such as refreshment stops and other such facilities, so as to foster a positive perception of the route.

3.5 Accessibility

All action necessary to ensure universal access is to be taken at points where the physical characteristics of the route make this possible. This will also be a priority when designing signposts, information material, equipment or services.

3.6 Identification of action to be taken

Provision shall be made for the adaptation and signposting of the route, in addition to any other action needed, such as the rehabilitation and restoration of heritage features and their associated services. This will reinforce the naturalness and authenticity of the route; care needs to be taken to ensure the work carried out is integrated into the landscape and that traditional material and techniques are used.

- Restoration and adaptation of the surfaces of the paths, with special focus on improving safety features.
- Recovery of both publicly and privately owned heritage sites, via agreements with owners if necessary.
- Adaptation or construction of infrastructure necessary for the creation of the route or that will improve the services available, such as parking areas, interpretation centres, refuges …
In areas with little or no accommodation available, the creation of refuges or hostels at strategic points shall be brought about, so that rest stops and overnight accommodation are provided for hikers, preferably in traditional buildings.

- The signposting shall be clearly identifiable and shall provide users with correct information and orientation. There shall also be notices designed to interpret and inform. The idea is to create a unique, appealing image that is easy to remember, which will also make it easier for visitors to identify the signs. When selecting the type of signs to be used, the existing standards for signposting, both on a national and on a European level, should be taken into account.

### 3.7 Identification of training needs

The staff involved in the implementation of the project, and in the restoration of heritage places, signposting and customer service need to be qualified.

### 3.8 Management mechanisms

Definition of roles and functions for all the sectors involved. The creation of a body where the different authorities, users and other communities involved are all represented.

### 3.9 Work plan and budget

The main work to be carried out shall be detailed with deadlines for its completion, together with the budget as forecast and the people in charge.

### 4. Execution

In accordance with the above, work to adapt the route and signposting will be performed and action taken to improve the quality of the route. The latter involves restoration and preservation of cultural heritage elements that are important to the route, as well as restoring natural surroundings that have suffered deterioration.
5. Management / Maintenance

Maintenance works shall ensure that services, infrastructure and heritage sites are well maintained and in general terms shall include the following:

- Creation of a citizen participation structure that will enable incidents on the route to be reported, as well as suggestions for improvement.
- Creation of visitor communication channels through which users can indicate how satisfied they were with their experience. This will enable the identification of possible steps to be taken to continue the development and improvement of the project.
- Systematic and periodic review of elements that make up the route, in particular those related to signposting and safety equipment, with the aid of checklists.

Such reviews shall consider the paths themselves and related elements, the heritage sites, the environment and the signposting.

- Identification of the element
- Location
- Incident
- Proposed action
- Photo documentation
- Map documentation

6. Dissemination and Promotion

Proper marketing for cultural hiking routes as a tourist product requires a specific marketing strategy, to include matters such as:

- Differentiation with respect to other destinations by means of a strategy based on its unique qualities, in particular those of its cultural heritage, the landscape and its environmental values.
- Specialisation of the route by positioning it as a cultural product, for active tourism, nature and hiking.
- Orientation of the marketing efforts in accordance with different segments of potential customers, for those who prefer a more generalised type of tourism as well as for those who are interested in specialised tourism.
- Heightening the awareness of the local population through a strategy promoting environmental consciousness and their ownership of the project.
The marketing strategy could involve the following actions:

- Coordination of the public and private sectors in order to strengthen the product’s brand image.
- Development and implementation of a system of tourism intelligence for the destination so as to measure and research the demand, in order to optimise services and adapt them to the needs of various user profiles.
- Creation of a logo and initiate trademark registration.
- Homogenisation of information at the destination, achieved by training customer-service staff.
- Publication of marketing material – in hard copy as well as digitally.
- Creation of an interpretation centre, linked to the route’s topic.
- Development of the use of new technology to promote the route and provide information about it and its services online.
- Positioning in traditional channels to reach different market segments.
- Loyalty programme for visitors, by creating spaces on the website where experiences can be shared, a certificate for those who have completed the route, merchandising...
- Organisation of events

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SOURCES

- European Institute of Cultural Routes: [http://www.culture-routes.lu](http://www.culture-routes.lu)
- Federación Española de Deportes de Montaña y Escalada: [http://www.fedme.es](http://www.fedme.es)
- Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico: [http://www.iaph.es](http://www.iaph.es)
- REVPAR-MEDOCC project, INTERREG IIIB: [http://www.reseau-revpar.org/present.html](http://www.reseau-revpar.org/present.html)
6. REFERENCES


Engaging Culture and Heritage for Sustainable Tourism Development

based on capitalizing results from previous projects
Cultural Routes are seen as a product aimed at a tourism market that can be used to build up a sustainable economy in the region.

Adequate planning of the routes can help revitalise areas with limited development.

The Interregional Cooperation Programme INTERREG IVC, financed by the European Union’s Regional Development Fund, helps Regions of Europe work together to share experience and good practice in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention.

EUR 302 million is available for project funding, but more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy-makers.

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