

# First Routes4U meeting for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

“Strengthening regional development through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe”

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## Workshop 3: Marketing strategies for the promotion and visibility of cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea Region

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### INTRODUCTION

#### Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea Region

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe contribute to the promotion and protection of the tangible and intangible aspects of natural and cultural heritage. Several significant characteristics and issues related to cultural heritage and heritage management in the Baltic Sea Region may be suggested:

- **Intimate connection with nature:** Natural and cultural heritage are tightly entwined, this influences the character of heritage, visitors' experience in heritage sites and the ways of communicating it. Northern countries in particular are less urbanized and consequently heritage is mainly to be found in the natural environment. Understanding of both the cultural and natural conditions is essential for fully understanding and appreciating heritage.
- **Relative importance of intangible heritage:** Due to historical circumstances a significant amount of tangible heritage in the Baltic Sea Region has been lost over time. Intangible heritage is relatively more important, especially in the north of the Baltic Sea, where built heritage was mainly made of wood and large scale structures are relatively few. Local communities and societies reproduce intangible heritage by communicating and re-enacting. Living intangible heritage lends itself to be promoted for attracting visitors and to be disseminated to wider audiences.
- **Accessibility:** Geographically, cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea Region may be dispersed and attractions face issues of accessibility when trying to attract visitors.
- **Developed societies:** the Baltic Sea Region has a high level of education and technological development. This provides fertile ground for innovation in heritage management and marketing.

#### Routes4U Project

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## **“End of marketing” and the significance and visibility of cultural heritage**

The preservation of cultural heritage, its management, marketing and promotion relate to identity and to the processes of keeping, regenerating, communicating and transferring heritage values over generations and time. Events, cultural festivals, historical re-enactment, production of digital content and marketing of cultural and natural attractions are means for reproducing and keeping alive heritage values.

Tourism destination marketing seems the obvious context for promotional activities.

In this respect, however, key undergoing changes should be acknowledged: the so-called “end of marketing” and “tourism moving out of tourism” as the two main phenomena. In other words, we are witnessing, as proclaimed by the latest tourism strategy of Copenhagen, **“the end of tourism as we know it”**. This reflection points to the fact that the traditional means of advertisement and promotion have lost their power to influence people, who are increasingly looking for experiences and personal “attachment” through identification, instead of consumable commodities. The pointed-out “new tourism” is based on authenticity, sharing economy, relationships, sense of belonging and genuine local hospitality. Hospitality and openness of the local community with respect to participation and involvement of visitors are the keys to success in cultural tourism and sustainable development. Natural and cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea Region is inherently rich in content and authenticity and provides opportunities for developing participatory experiences for visitors. Participatory and sustainable tourism and visitors’ management on heritage sites, ideally involves the local community as significant or even primary manager and eventually, beneficiary of the increased economic activity.

The policy objectives of the Cultural Routes aim to strengthen regional development, social inclusion and cultural cooperation. However, the desire to increase revenues always entails some sort of commercialization. This in turn might raise the question of cultural appropriation. When we move on to discussing cultural heritage beyond the on-site host-guest relationships, it is important to realize that we are moving into an area where it is necessary to **balance globalization and commercialization on one hand and empowering the local community on the other hand**. With few exceptions, setting economic goals and orienting consumers’ demand for services and products in heritage sites is mainly acceptable in the Baltic Sea Region.

## **Cultural heritage in the content-driven world of the user**

Consumers’ decisions concerning leisure and tourism are increasingly experience and content-driven. When looking for meaningful and authentic experiences, people are creating, searching and sharing content, corresponding to their interests and values, in the social media. This is highly relevant especially in the context of heritage promotion and awareness-raising. Heritage is by its nature rich in meaningful content that has intrinsic and spontaneous demand because it forms the building blocks of

our identity. **Heritage sites already have a prominent role when it comes to the digital content produced by individual users in the social media and often are attractive sites for media and cultural production.** Sharing, crowdsourcing, participation and digital media production are contexts where it is possible to find innovative ways of promoting and forming public-private partnerships which help in reaching new audiences with content related to cultural heritage. Enlarged audiences, and new distribution channels, will also open up to new sources of revenue.

Through “special-purpose” distribution channels heritage sites can share content and reach special interest groups. However, competition for attracting users’ attention and engagement is becoming very intensive in all channels. Targeting messages to specific users is essential and saves resources. The act of targeting involves the tasks of **profiling users**, tailoring the message for specific user profiles and identifying relevant contexts and channels of communication, which enable reaching the targeted users. User profiling is a methodology widely employed in service design. Through user profiles, it is possible to create relevant and meaningful content and messages to targeted users and design services that correspond to their expectation and needs.

The potential benefits of enlarging, building and managing audiences for cultural heritage include the diversification of revenue sources and eventually the increase in the number of visitors’ number, through **awareness-raising**. In addition to the economic benefits, enhancing awareness might help in transferring to the public the value of heritage and its connection to regional development and thus serve to strengthen cultural heritage policies.

International cultural heritage initiatives have already been very successful in placing local cultural and natural heritage in wider contexts and in building awareness. In this respect, the following question arises: could we further enlarge the size of audiences and commitment of users through wider outreach? Some experiences of user profiling, in the cultural tourism field, proved that the target segment tends to be quite narrow, involving exclusively potential users with higher education and income levels. Would it be worthwhile to engage jointly in systematic user/visitor profiling and to expand the scope of awareness-raising beyond the “traditional” target segments of cultural tourism?

**Heritage interpretation is communication** about the nature, origin and purpose of historical, natural or cultural resources, objects, sites and phenomena using direct personal communication (e.g. through guides) or non-personal methods (such as guidebooks or technical devices). Methodologies to create and distribute authentic and engaging content, heritage interpretation are being re-modeled for the digital world. For the Cultural Routes as a widely dispersed entity, it is neither efficient nor effective to reach wider audiences through traditional means. In this respect, **comprehensive heritage interpretation content on online communication platforms and specialized distribution channels could significantly improve access to heritage information.**

In addition to improving visibility on the internet, reaching out to new audiences involves selecting most relevant contexts for communication. Tourism promotion is not the only one. Especially children and youth could be reached through participatory content enabling collaboration and sharing experiences in the digital environment. Engaging and immersive digital content in the form of photography, documentaries, movies, virtual and augmented reality stand for enriching experiences which improve the accessibility to cultural and natural heritage.

Through the Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea Region, it is possible to pool resources and, compared to local and national measures, build larger audiences to increase awareness and promote cultural heritage. The stakeholder networks interested in contributing are quite heterogeneous. In order to fully exploit the creative potential of the stakeholders on the different levels, continued stress should be put on **solutions to encourage wide participation and collaboration of stakeholders** and inspire contributions for joint actions. Increased collaboration would encourage **local stakeholders to adopt common set of methodologies and guidelines** in local communication and strategic plans that would in turn support joint goals. The **Cultural Routes have the potential to further develop as an integrative platform enabling the formulation of joint content strategies and solutions concerning distribution channels in the Baltic Sea Region.**

## **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

Taking a holistic and innovative view of cultural heritage management and promotion, the objective of the workshop is to generate recommendations for increasing awareness and visibility of natural and cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea Region through the Cultural Routes as a joint 'platform' for promotion of cultural heritage.

### **O1. Identify most relevant contexts for the promotion and awareness raising of cultural heritage:**

- identify the most significant **trends and innovation potential.**
- draw conclusions about the evolution of communication and distribution channels related to different contexts of heritage promotion.
- relate to **the most relevant operational contexts for promotion.** (e.g. education, media, tourism), which form different (and overlapping) networks and communities employing specific channels of communion.

## **O2. Identify challenges and propose good promotional practices in relevant contexts of promotion:**

- Describe the current state of transnational cooperation in relation to promotional activities and expectations.
- Identify the main challenges of heritage promotion in different types of organizations.
- Gather insight into "successful stories" and good practices related to promotional activities.

## **O3. Generate recommendations for common strategic goals and joint action for the promotion of the Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea Region:**

- Generate recommendations for coordination by multiple stakeholders engaged in the promotion of cultural heritage at local, national and regional level that will most efficiently promote cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea region, through the Cultural Routes. The purpose is to identify recommendations for joint actions in the Baltic Sea Region. The participants are asked to give proposals for trans-national joint action that would be necessary to remove bottlenecks.

## **KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED**

### **Q1. The user experience**

- a. What is the meaning of content-driven marketing and awareness-raising for cultural heritage promotion?
- b. What kind of content should be developed to engage users along the Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea Region?
- c. What would be the best ways for cultural heritage sites and for the Cultural Routes to offer meaningful experiences for users in the contemporary environment?
- d. How can heritage attractions create participatory, engaging experiences that will be shared by users and increase visibility?
- e. What is role and significance of participatory experiences in relationship to the set goals of Routes4U Project (regional development and social inclusion through cultural heritage and tourism)?
- f. Which good practices can be identified and shared in the Baltic Sea Region?

## **Q2. Communication platforms and “audience-building”**

- a. What are the target groups for heritage promotion, geographically, considering the heritage sites and the Baltic Sea Region as a whole?
- b. Would methods of service-design such as user profiling be of assistance for increasing awareness and enlarging audiences?
- c. What are the most relevant contexts and communication channels/platforms for gaining visibility for cultural heritage?
- d. Which good practices ought to be shared in the Baltic Sea Region?

## **Q3. Synergies through collaboration in the Baltic Sea region**

- a. Which steps beyond information sharing and marketing networks should be taken; in what areas is there innovation potential and where can benefits be expected from joint operations?
- b. Would there be benefits and synergies in joint development of user/visitor experience?
- c. How to best promote online visibility?
- d. Could cultural cooperation support and be integrated in the awareness-raising of cultural heritage

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