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Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the
Council of Europe
Certification cycle 2023-2024

Regular evaluation:

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA PILGRIM ROUTES

Independent expert report

Cultural route
of the Council of Europe
Itinéraire culturel
du Conseil de l'Europe



Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Evaluation Cycle 2023-2024

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Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes

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**The opinions expressed in this independent expert report are those of the author, and do not engage the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.*

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1. Executive Summary

Saint James Way (SJW) is a historically important pilgrimage route with global visibility and increasing pilgrim and tourist numbers. It continues to develop via many sub-routes across member countries of the European Federation of the Saint James Way and across non-network members in Europe and beyond. Growth in demand and in the quality and quantity of facilities reflect increasing levels of investment by many stakeholders providing the Route with secure foundations. However, its specific identity as a Council of Europe’s designated Cultural Route, along with the values that represents, needs to be strengthened by more proactivity from a strong and sustainable European Federation. The previous evaluation highlighted several areas where action was needed, but progress on many has been slow, though the impacts of COVID and the administrative transition have not helped. Now, under a new Presidency and proactive Federation, there is an important opportunity to provide strong leadership and network action, reflecting the responsible position of SJW as the elder statesman of the CoE’s Cultural Routes Programme.

The certification of Saint James Way as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe should be renewed. But, in the wake of the evaluation, the following actions are deemed necessary (further recommendations / suggestions are embedded throughout this report):

- The European Federation – focusing on the ‘cultural routeness’ of SJW, needs to better reflect its extensive trans-nationality and a wider range of public and private stakeholders within its membership – this will assist in its financial sustainability / diversity of revenue, and enable new developments, more activity in project applications etc.;
- The membership ‘offer’ needs to be further developed, clearly articulated and strategically implemented and mesh with a five-year budget plan;
- The European Federation can address route management and development in areas where UNESCO and individual states cannot, but this needs to be articulated in its mission – setting standards, promoting internationalisation, delivering on the fields of action, sustainable rural development and, being able to focus on the lesser-known parts of the route, their communities and heritage;
- The Federation needs to better promote its work as the guardian of the Council of Europe Cultural Route label, so giving further visibility to the value of this brand in all parts of SJW as a truly international Route.

Expert summary conclusions		
	Yes	No
The theme complies with criteria listed in Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, I. List of eligibility criteria for themes.	X	
The Cultural Route complies with the criteria for actions listed in Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, II. List of priority fields of action.	X	
The Cultural Route complies with the criteria for networks listed in Resolution CM/Res (2013)67, III. List of criteria for networks.	X	
The Cultural Route implements the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”	X	

2. Introduction

As of 2023, there are eight accredited Council of Europe Cultural Routes based upon the traditions of religious pilgrimage. Saint James Way (STW) was the first such route designated in 1987, and it remains the best-known pilgrimage route within the Cultural Routes Programme. Its high profile is, in part, due to its long history, which, while being far from consistently prominent since its origins in the 9th century, has nonetheless survived and established a global profile as the best-known route of Christian pilgrimage. Since 1987, STW has witnessed a staggering 200,000% increase in pilgrim use. The well-established and widely recognised French Way has been supplemented by a further nine routes in the key territories of Spain, France and Portugal. But while the final destination of STW clearly remains as the City of Santiago de Compostela, and specifically the Cathedral of St James, over the years the starting points for this pilgrimage route have multiplied and given rise to extended routes in other European states and beyond.

The main aims of the Route have deviated little since by the Declaration of Santiago (23.10.87): To identify roads to Compostela; To establish a system of signposting for principal points along the itineraries; To restore and rehabilitate the architectural and natural heritage along the Routes; To conduct cultural programmes relating to the historical, literary, musical and artistic heritage of the pilgrimage route; To promote on-going exchanges between the towns and regions situated along these routes; To foster contemporary artistic and cultural expression in order to renew the tradition of pilgrimage and uphold the values of Europe's cultural identity. Importantly, STW has become a positive force for the social and economic revitalisation of the (mainly) rural communities it passes through.

The organisation responsible for the management of the Cultural Route is the European Federation of Saint James Way (EFSJW), established 2011 under the auspices of Puy-en-Velay Municipality in France, the Xunta de Galicia in Spain and Comissao de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte in Portugal. The Federation is now under the Presidency of the Xunta de Galicia based in Santiago de Compostela, with a Secretariat being provided by the Municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar in Portugal. The EFSJW provides the legal and financial structure for the Cultural Route enshrined in its Statutes. It is a paying membership organisation that at the time of evaluation represented the following financially contributing countries: Spain, France, Portugal, Poland, Italy, Lithuania, Belgium and The Netherlands (the latter two states are not members of the Enlarged Partial Agreement). The member organisations are predominantly public sector, either local and regional authorities or cultural institutions. There are eleven paying members (including 'in-kind' payment of the Secretariat) of the Federation. Plans are to have members also from Romania and Croatia. Ukraine (is a recent member to be exempt from payment until the war ends).

The Federation provides political and institutional support through an open, democratic structure so as to create partnership across the territories crossed by the cultural route and to uphold the aims articulated in the founding declaration of the cultural route. Importantly, the Federation is the body that is the effective 'guardian' of the Cultural Route label ensuring that its award and use is aligned with the defining principles, rules and practices of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Programme as set out in Resolution CM/Res (2013) 67. Informally, due to its history, status and success, St James Way is widely perceived amongst extant and prospective cultural routes (both inside and outside the Council of Europe framework) as an example of success on many levels.

3. Main Body Evaluation

3.1 Cultural Route theme, its historical and cultural context and the values of the Council of Europe represented.

The Cultural Route of St James Way has its foundations in the Christian tradition of pilgrimage to venerate the relics of the Apostle St James, believed to be interred in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. Pilgrimage, both religious and secular, is a common trope for cultural routes and SJW is one of the global archetypes of the devotional practice of journeying to a shrine or sacred place. The pilgrimage theme and the centuries of history it encompasses are clearly understood, and existed, and still exists, beyond the categorisation of being a Cultural Route within the Council of Europe's framework. However, it is important to note several factors that characterise the importance of SJW and which closely mesh with the values and ethos of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme:

1) Though rooted in Christian history and theology, the Route transcends its religious genesis. Its appeal to Christian pilgrims is central but the Route has both spiritual and cultural meaning beyond Christianity. Route users now come from many different religions, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds. As a physical network of routes, SJW is a cosmopolitan, accessible space of practice that recognises, and is tolerant of, diversity and difference.

2) Linked to the above, as a manifestly physical cultural route, the journeying (by foot, horse or cycling) allows for slow reflection and engendering friendship and intercultural dialogue between users. Common words reflected in the many thousands of TripAdvisor accounts relating to the Route are those of 'peaceful' and 'tranquil'. Given the variety of cultures reflected amongst route users, SJW can be said to be the embodied practice of tolerance, peaceful engagement and friendship. The walking that is so central to the Route, forms the basis for 'slow tourism'.

3) The slow pace of the journeys of SJW also allows for more meaningful engagement with, and a deeper understanding of, the natural and cultural landscapes through which it passes. Echoing the 2000 Council of Europe Landscape Convention, it provides an important opportunity for promoting the message of sustainability in an ecological, recreational and economic sense.

4) Though the routes of SJW end in Santiago de Compostela, importantly they can begin in almost any country. Within public understanding of the theme, the pilgrimage dimension and the destination is clear, but the wider, transnational expanse of the Route – actual and potential – is less well understood. The membership of the Route network has grown to include eight countries but there is tremendous potential to include, more including those beyond Europe – Friends of the Way of St James Associations already exist in 40 countries. The Route is effectively a common link across cultures and a valuable instrument in communicating diversity and respect.

5) The extant Routes that constitute SJW are punctuated by a rich cultural heritage in tangible and intangible forms. The 1993 World Heritage listed 'French Way', along with sixteen built heritage sites along the 2015 UNESCO serial extension that includes the four routes traversing Northern Spain (the Primitive Route, Coastal Route, the Interior of the Basque Country-La Rioja Route and the Liébana Route), fall within the protection that World Heritage status accords. However, there remains significant tangible heritage relating to the SJW outside of its UNESCO designation in Spain, in Portugal and along the established and developing routes in other countries. Moreover, there is a wealth of intangible heritage that is not linked with the World Heritage label. The value of being a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe is particularly important for the St James routes that are not inscribed as World Heritage as it

offers a means of maintaining the coherence and wider protection of **all** heritage - intangible included – along all sections of the routes in line with the principles of the Faro Convention.

Geographically SJW is focused upon Spain, France and Portugal and particularly the destination of Santiago de Compostela. However, as mentioned above, the starting points for the Route are many and this provides excellent potential for development with other European states and internationally, particularly in lesser developed, less-visited rural areas. Importantly, the Route has expanded in the Ukraine through the research and development of the Camino Podolico route extending from Vinnytsia to Kamianets-Podilskyi. The development project ('The Way Must Go On') funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and, though it has not been able to progress due to the war waged by Russia, it is recognised as an important extension to SJW and has been effective in unifying communities in this area of Ukraine. In post-war reconstruction, the route will play a valuable role in the conservation of heritage, and the rebuilding of local economies through sustainable tourism, particularly that which focuses on gastronomy.

The Cultural Route is natural anchor point for all Christian pilgrimage routes, with links having been forged with the Via Francigena and discussions have taken place with the Route of St Olav Ways. Through the EFSJW, the Route has already begun to extend into new territories, and this is important for several reasons: 1) It is a highly valuable vehicle for communicating European values and culture to a genuinely global audience; 2) It provides a narrative structure for the wider history and development of Europe; 3) It proffers an important shop window for all forms of cultural heritage associated with the theme of the Route and its geographies; 4) It clearly provides a basis for youth, cultural and educational exchange and innovation, and the development of sustainable cultural tourism; 5) On a practical level, it provides a vital mechanism for the financial sustainability of the Cultural Route and its on-going management.

St James Way and the mosaic of settlements, heritage sites, natural features and cultural landscapes it connects, highlight both common and contested moments in European history. The Route allows its users to connect with aspects defining different cultural routes, such as for instance, Via Regia, Iter Vitis and the Routes of the Olive Tree. As a surviving tradition of Christian pilgrimage and as a widely spread ensemble of places and heritage sites, SJW embodies many aspects of collective European memory. Importantly however, in terms of memory, the Route since its renaissance post-1987 has fuelled the memory of the countless numbers of pilgrims that traversed it. These memories are frequently recalled and shared in social media, are expressed in the formation of the Associations of Friends of St James Way and are re-lived in the return visits of pilgrims and tourists.

3.2 Fields of Action

3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development

As expected for a Cultural Route with a tradition of over 1,000 years, the first to be designated and as a major attraction for users in all the countries it covers, SJW is well researched. Formally, it functions through an active International Committee of Experts who meet at least twice a year and minutes are taken. Under the current Chair, the Committee has continued to evolve and update to become more inclusive and aware of global interest. The Committee does include an economist, a geographer and a media specialist, though as one would expect the Committee is heavily represented by historians and art historians. Though growing any Committee can cause problems, consideration should be given to continuing to widen disciplinary representation from applied fields such as heritage, tourism, planning, ecology etc. An effective way to do this is through targeted working groups, convened to address knowledge gaps and investigate problems.

While there is much evidence of sustained scholarly research, there appears to be relatively limited activity in the realm of collaborative, trans-national grant applications, particularly directed to EU Horizon opportunities. The Committee of Experts should provide an ideal 'ready-made' network for responding to calls that could significantly fund trans-national research into different dimensions of SJW. Regular consideration of appropriate EU programme calls would be useful at Committee meetings, if not already done. There is interest amongst funders in the role that pilgrimage plays in the contemporary world and partnering with Scientific Committees from other pilgrimage routes of the Council of Europe would be valuable.

In 2017, Galicia created the Chair of Santiago de Compostela, based at the University of Santiago de Compostela. The holder of the Chair is a specialist in Art History but the remit of the Chair is to encourage the spread of values associated St James Way and its pilgrims. The innovation of creating a Chair specifically linked to the Route is valuable and having a trans-national remit is critical.

The academic outputs of the International Committee of Experts and its members are impressive and numerous. The Committee has organised several international conferences with a number of proceedings available as part of an online 'Jacobean Bibliography'. The latter continues to expand and is directed mainly to the academic community. The refereed Journal 'Ad Limina', now in its 14th Volume and with good impact, is testimony to the scholarly interest in SJW. The Journal publishes texts in the main languages of the European Union, but in practice is dominated by contributions in Spanish. The Journal recognises the need to encourage submissions from a wide range of disciplines and new research perspectives. However, and somewhat understandably, it remains dominated by outputs relating to history, art and theology. A recent (2020) initiative to broaden its scope and encourage submissions from wider fields of research by using guest editors of monographic issues and sections is to be welcomed. The Journal has the potential to be leading light on the wider issues of pilgrimage which would enhance its trans-national appeal and reflect the multi-disciplinary prisms through which pilgrimage is viewed.

The on-line encyclopaedia 'Xacopedia' is a growing interactive resource of text and visual contributions about SJW, that aspires to reach to many regions and nations. This is an impressive resource which provides information on the different routes of SJW and is able to allow users to follow a virtual pilgrimage. The Xacopedia could not be translated into other languages at the time of access. The ambition of this virtual tool is to be applauded, but it will require managing and updating with on-going resource commitments. It also needs to be better publicised so that prospective and active Route users and EFSJW members know about this.

An important research resource for the Route is the Compostela Group of Universities, established in 1994 and now with a membership of sixty-seven universities from twenty-four countries. This network is founded on the spirit of cooperation embraced by SJW and seeks to foster collaboration and promote dialogue in all fields related to higher education. The Compostela Group has a wide remit in promoting quality and innovation, but it does have as one of its aims to 'promote and organise activities intended to protect and preserve the cultural heritage connected to the Camino de Santiago and to other routes of culture and knowledge.' Within this frame, the Compostela Group has undertaken several projects including 'linking university knowledge on the Camino' with three partners (Universities of Santiago de Compostela, A Coruña and Vigo) working with local town councils along the routes in Galicia. The Federation signed a framework agreement with the Compostela Group in 2018 shaping future collaboration and common programmes. As SJW continues to develop as an international Cultural Route, closer liaison with the network of the Compostela Group will be much needed.

In addition to the research conducted within the context of SJW as a Cultural Route, there is a plethora of research conducted on various aspects of the Camino by international scholars. A cursory review of anglophone entries in Google Scholar (2018-2023) relating to the Camino de Santiago shows more than 220 journal articles and book chapters in the fields of heritage and tourism alone. This is indicative of the high level of scholarly interest in Route.

3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage

The tangible heritage of SJW is rich and varied, covering many centuries, much of which is intimately linked with the practices of pilgrimage. The various routes of SJW are flanked by numerous UNESCO World Heritage properties which have high levels of protection and are subject to management plans. This is particularly the case with regard to Spain, France and Portugal. Generally, the links between these sites, their history and relevance to SJW are made explicit in the interpretation provided. However, there are many heritage sites of local, regional and national significance are part of the different routes, including those that are within the countries of Poland, Belgium, Lithuania etc., where it has been impossible to assess their state of conservation. In the future it will become important that the same standards of documentation, protection, preservation, management and interpretation of tangible heritage, as evident in Galicia, other parts of Spain, France and Portugal are shared by any country joining SJW. This is not only important for strengthening the narrative of the Route and conveying the importance of maintaining and sustainably managing the heritage but is also important as these sites form a patchwork of heritage attractions that add to the pilgrim experience and the development of cultural tourism, particularly in lesser-known sections. There are some excellent examples of the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings functioning as visitor information / interpretation centres and albergues. There are notable examples including re-purposed old village schools in the rural municipalities of Santa Marta de Penaguião and Lamego transformed into pilgrim hostels along the Inland Way in Portugal, and the current adaptation of the upper floor of the village market in Praia de Anjeiras also into a hostel near the Coastal Way in Portugal.

While the full extent of heritage conservation is not known in all countries involved in the Cultural Route, these indicative initiatives represent considerable public and private investment in the tangible heritage of SJW in line with the values and of the Council of Europe and as expressed in the Faro Convention. It is important that such examples of re-use and conservation are communicated to all the countries and municipalities through which the Route passes. However, challenges in conservation and in heritage interpretation remain. Observation at selected sites indicate a need for more inclusive and internationally engaging interpretation. The EFSJW can play a leading role in developing route-wide conservation standards and the up-grading of consistent interpretation at sites. It can also assist in raising the profile of lesser-known heritage sites, along the lesser used routes. This could also be assisted through the European Days of Saint James Way held in October as part of the Council of Europe's Heritage Open Days programme. This is already underway, organised by five network members (the Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Spain and France), and links to the messages of heritage protection and conservation.

The intangible cultural heritage of St James Way is substantive and varies with the local, regional and national territories through which the routes passes. As is enshrined in national guidelines relating to the 2003 UNESCO Convention concerning the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, praxis and promotion are effective means of transmission for local communities, pilgrims and tourists alike.

3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans

As a well-established Cultural Route, SJW with network members in several European countries and a route of pilgrimage well known across the world, there are many opportunities for educational and cultural exchanges amongst young people. In an informal and spontaneous way, the experience of journeying along St James Way provides the ideal opportunity for young Europeans to experience the importance of tangible and intangible heritage and to interact with pilgrims from many different cultures. It is important for the Route to continue to attract young pilgrims and to create spaces for their interaction and learning. This is clearly taking place with Federation members promoting the Route to the younger generations and according to records from the Pilgrim's Office in Santiago, some 31% of pilgrims are under 30 years old.

Structured learning opportunities are being provided through various events organised by network members. In 2022, Polish partners held a relay race for young athletes from Brodnica (a town along the Camino Polaco in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region) to Santiago de Compostela in support of a disability charity. This followed on from an established annual Young Ambassadors relay race that takes place along the route in Lithuania which in 2022 was held in solidarity with Ukraine and to mark the Holy Year of St James.

The involvement of many Universities associated with the Route, and particularly via the Compostela Group, provide great opportunities for youth exchange and internships, and the hosting of volunteers. In 2023, the Secretariat of the Federation hosted a three-month internship – a student from Bologna University - as part of the Erasmus Mobility Programme. Individual universities are also engaged in hosting programmes. For instance, the University of Navarra runs a three-week summer programme for high school students (including non-Spanish speakers) focusing on the culture and Catholic intellectual traditions of SJW including the opportunity to walk the Way from Roncesvalles to Logroño in La Rioja and being hosted by local families.

The extensive prospects for cultural and youth exchange are both European and global. While it is clear that such activities are taking place successfully through network members and via other organisations involved with SJW, there appears to be little coordination / point of information regarding what opportunities are available relating to different age and interest groups. Creating opportunities for youth and cultural exchange is an investment in the Cultural Route, particularly through project-focused volunteering and 'ambassador' programmes. While the Federation can, and has, participated in EU funded schemes, it has limits to how much it can engage directly – exchange schemes involve time and staff resources. However, it can be a better focus for signposting exchange opportunities within its network and beyond. At present it appears that the Federation website does not highlight the benefits of youth exchange and volunteering, nor link to any schemes or organisations that can assist. While some programmes, rightly, can be publicly funded, others can and do work on a commercial basis. Being a first 'port of call' for the Cultural Route of SJW, the Federation, can better strategize programmes for interns and volunteers and work closer with Universities that are already running exchange schemes and reflect this on its website. This can also involve ensuring that opportunities are signposted for non-European students. In this the Compostela Group can be a vital ally. It is also worth considering selective partnering with a tour operator which is already equipped to working with youth markets for SJW. The travel agency and tour operator, Santiago Ways, strongly targets young pilgrims and working with an organisation like this would enable the Federation to help shape content and direction of youth experience of the Camino and also ensure there is representation of all social and economic backgrounds and regions.

3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice

On the surface, this field of action does not seem to be so well developed by the Cultural Route of Saint James. It should be born in mind that the period of this evaluation includes the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic which had a dramatic impact on many aspects relating to SJW, but none more so that in the field of cultural events. Across individual countries and regions, and despite the disruption of the pandemic, many cultural and artistic events and activities have been taking place relating to SJW. This follows a history of actions in this field over recent decades documented in previous evaluations. In the main, many of these events are traditional religious festivals or music performances relating to the Church, such as the St James Music Festival in Lithuania which celebrates sacred choral music. However, the Camino also provides the framework for more contemporary music events such as the 'O Son do Camiño' multi-genre music festival, that takes at Monte de Gozo in Santiago de Compostela and the similar three day 'Nights of St James Festival' held in Le Puy-en-Velay in France. These popular events are a good way of engaging with the younger audiences.

In terms of contemporary artistic representations of SJW and pilgrimage generally, it seems, there is potential for further engagement with the creative and artistic sectors. Not surprisingly, the artistic production projected by the Route is dominated by that from the great artistic traditions. This is exemplified, for instance, by a cursory examination of the Google Arts and Culture webpages representing the Camino. This is not to say that contemporary artistic expressions are missing. There are numerous examples of contemporary public art works along various routes with potential for more and their effective promotion. Well placed sculptures along the Way add to the experience of the pilgrims and have the power to attract new audiences. In various cultural and visitor information centres, along with souvenir shops, there are local contemporary arts and crafts on display linking also to traditional intangible heritage practices and inspired by SJW. Maintaining crafts of the highest quality and the utilisation of contemporary art works is not easy to monitor across the various routes, especially when in a number of different countries. The EFSJW may wish to consider better profiling that which does exist, highlighting best practice and establishing some type of framework for encouraging young creative artists to work with the many inspirational dimensions of the Route. It is important that the trans-national aspect of this is considered – at present creative practices and artistic projects tend to be nationally and regionally based and not easily promoted outside of their geographic boundaries. There is strong potential for a more coordinated approach to generating new cultural and artistic expressions via multi-state applications to the Creative Europe Funding Programme and also to encourage international creatives to bring new reflections to St James Way.

3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.

The relationships between pilgrimage and tourism are long and intimate with the former rightly cited as the forerunner of the latter. The debates regarding the boundaries between pilgrim, traveller, tourist and visitor are myriad, but are superseded by human subjectivities. Despite, the UNWTO definition of a tourist as anyone “traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment”, any analysis of both pre and post experiences of people undertaking the SJW, reveals that people tend to self-define as being a pilgrim, whatever their religious convictions. However, people do change their identification in theory and in practice. So, for instance, people undertaking the Way as pilgrims, often reveal that will return at a later date as tourists. The notion of the pilgrim undertaking a journey that is meaningful, not only as defined by the destination and any 'spiritual calling', but also as defined by the experience of the journey itself. There is no doubt that the phenomenal success of SJW lies with its historical roots, traditions and infrastructure of pilgrimage and that of genuine hospitality.

Notwithstanding this, the Routes that comprise SJW, are tourist destinations, along with the rural and urban sites and settlements that are connected and need to be managed as such. Irrespective of the labels of UNESCO, or the Council of Europe, SJW is so well established as to act as a major attraction. This is particularly the case in France, Spain and Portugal but is rapidly becoming the case amongst other network members that have developed or are developing, their own routes – Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine – along with non-network members such as Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Switzerland etc. The sheer extent of pilgrim paths relating to St James (in Germany there at least 30 Ways of St James crossing almost the entire country) ensure they are a resource for domestic tourists. Increasingly the ways are profiled to attract international visitors and thus are widely promoted by national, regional and local public tourism authorities.

International tourist attention concentrates on the ways that cut across France, Spain and Portugal, though it should be mentioned that there are considerable variations in local use and development amongst these. Along some routes and within some destinations – the city of Santiago de Compostela being the obvious one – the issue is how best to manage over-tourism, particularly in the peak season. However, it appears that even with a heavily used route, such as the French Way, there still remains capacity for further pilgrims at present. A key element of sustainable tourism development is to achieve equitable distribution of visitors across territories so as to avoid over-tourism – actual and perceived – and to ensure that all communities can benefit from the social and economic benefits that tourism can bring.

Considering the full extent of SJW, both within its core territories and across Europe and beyond, it is impossible to go into details regarding actions relating to all elements of sustainable tourism. However, the following points can be made:

- 1) From first hand observation of paths in Galicia and Northern Portugal, the physical state of the route is very well-maintained for walking, cycling and riding with good signposting. It is assumed that such standards are comparable in other parts of the various routes.
- 2) As research shows, and as is reflected in the testimonies of pilgrims, cross-cultural dialogue and an inclusive approach to all cultures is embedded in the tourist experience of SJW.
- 3) It is clear from research sources that the economic and social benefits from the pilgrims of the route are substantive and increasing. Excellent research has been undertaken by a member of the International Research Committee and though limited to the impacts along the French Way in Galicia, shows that while the economic effects of Route are quantitatively modest, they are qualitatively highly significant and manifest themselves greatly at the local level in terms of income and employment.
- 4) Public authorities continue to invest in the pilgrim and tourist / tourism infrastructure on the basis that this will returns.
- 5) Given that the vast part of SJW cuts through rural areas suffering from agricultural decline, outward migration and ageing populations it is particularly important to continue to support route development in such a context.
- 6) Protecting heritage in small settlements, and in urban areas where real estate prices are high and can put pressure on heritage buildings, is a fundamental aspect of sustainable tourism development. There are excellent examples of adaptive re-use in place on SJW. The owners of heritage properties need to share the vision of the Cultural Route.
- 7) Strategic, creative and sensitive marketing can be better employed so as to ensure pilgrims are encouraged to discover the 'hidden gems' of the Route.
- 8) St James Way has developed high quality standards regarding tourism infrastructure. As the route continues to develop it is important that quality standards are set, exported and maintained as part of the requirements of being a part of SJW as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

While much investment is being undertaken by public authorities to develop and maintain the Route, there are a myriad of private sector tourism operators and travel agents from inside and outside of Europe, actively selling vacations based on sections of SJW. A cursory review of a small sample of a very large number of anglophone tour operators, reveals both specialist SJW and more generic tours as part of a wider category of walking / recreational holidays. Their ability to organise and package the Camino experience, from one week to several, undoubtedly provides a service for the pilgrim and benefits the selected destinations and local suppliers. Generally, they mobilise the pilgrim label and highlight the values of the route's history and heritage, and its tranquillity as an attractive recreational landscape (especially for walking and cycling). Prices range from just over £600 per person week, to vacations costing upto £500 per person per day. There are many permutations, but a majority of operators lead with the French Way and the Northern Way. Out of the sample, only the routes of France, Spain and Portugal were featured, leaving the prospective pilgrim unaware of the true extent of the Route. A few operators noted the UNESCO designation and none mentioned the Council of Europe Cultural Route label.

It is suggested that it is in the strategic interests of the EFSJW to build partnerships with selected tour operators in order to be able to shape their products and principles. For instance, to promote lesser-known routes, to communicate the full extent of SJW in Europe and beyond, to better communicate the wider values of the Route, to ensure standards of sustainable tourism, to add value to the operators' products – particularly through the Cultural Route label – and to secure financial benefit that can be re-invested in the Route. As the Route continues to attract pilgrims and visitors alike, it becomes ever more important that the Federation is seen to recognise the importance of sustainable tourism principles and priorities especially for marginal rural communities.

3.3 Cultural Route Network

3.3.1 Overview of institutional / legal structure of the network

The European Federation of St James Way was founded and legally registered in 2011 in the Local Authority of Le Puy-en-Velay, France as the governing body of the Cultural Route in line with requirements of the Council of Europe. Its role, as per its Statutes, is to represent through partnership the network of communities crossed by the Route and provide the necessary operational mechanisms so that the Route is properly managed and promoted.

In 2022, the Presidency of the Federation passed from Puy-en-Velay to the Region of Xunta de Galicia. It would be fair to say that at the time of evaluation, the Federation is at a time of transition. While the Presidency is now anchored in Santiago de Compostella, the Secretariat and Route Manager of SJW is provided by the Municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar, in Northern Portugal. The representation of France is now through the over-arching Agence Française des Chemins de Compostelle. In accordance with Federation Statutes the bank account of the EFSJW will be located under the territory of the Presidency and managed by both President and Treasurer. The task of transition has been acknowledged and was captured at the latest (October 2023) General Assembly of the Federation held in Torún, Poland.

Notwithstanding the tasks of transition, it is clear that the foundational institutional and legal framework for governance of the Federation is in place, along with a willingness to adapt in order to grow and strengthen the network.

3.3.2 Overview of the financial situation of the network

The Federation produces an Annual Budget and Financial Report and demonstrates transparency in its operations. Several observations are made regarding the financial situation of the network:

1) The budget information and financial reporting over recent years could be far better. Understandably, the impact of COVID and the transition of the Presidency have made things difficult, but greater consistency, better detail regarding accounting for in-kind costs (it is important not to underestimate these) and a clear rationale for expenditure would be helpful for management decision-making.

2) The Route is solvent with no debt and over the past three years generally shows prudence in expenditure. It is important to acknowledge that the funding - both capital and revenue - for the day-to-day management and operations of the physical Route and the associated pilgrim / visitor experience, particularly in Spain France and Portugal, does not come from the Federation but from a large group of stakeholders that includes central regional and local governments, the European Union, the church, various associations and communities etc. For instance, there is strong and continuous public financing of the physical repair of the Route, provision of information and interpretation centres, and in the building and upgrading of pilgrim hostels. This on-going investment continues separate from the work of the Federation and income generated through pilgrim spending goes back direct to the local communities and public authorities.

3) Following on from above, the EFSJW relies almost 100% on income derived from its membership. Though several members of the Federation have received project income over recent years, including some major capital spending from the EU, this has been largely orchestrated unilaterally, accessing national funding or co-financed European funds. While this funding has undoubtedly improved Route infrastructure and its promotion, it has not been channelled through the Federation. The exception is a COSME Project which appeared to terminate in 2020 and allowed the development of interactive maps and digital developments.

4) Expenditure for the Federation does not appear to be excessive in itself. Despite its solvency, a drop in the number of members prior 2020-2022 did reduce the operating budget of the Federation to 22,500 Euros. The margins between income and expenditure are fine and the finances of the Federation are precarious, though more recent members joining will help the situation. Lack of long-term financial security will prevent the Federation from being more proactive in terms of achieving its aims.

5) There is a serious need to think about diversifying income sources in addition to planning for increasing membership (see following sections). The Federation can benefit by more proactivity in coordinating and applying for project funding so that this income contributes to its long term development and security. However, it is recognised that this function will itself require 'up-front' resources and some capacity building / professional development in terms of assembling funding bids. Having a clear focus regarding the long-term vision of the Federation and the roles it needs to fulfil will help in targeting spending and driving income.

Instinctively, for such a well-established, highly popular Cultural Route with a global profile, one would expect the EFSJW to be financially secure after existing for 12 years. Having a range of sustainable funding streams will ensure that it is able to innovate and take the lead in the management and operations of this important Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. Financial sustainability is the key to the on-going development of the Federation.

3.3.3 Current composition of the network by country and type of member

The current composition of the network represents the countries of Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Poland, Lithuania and the Netherlands. At present in a state of flux, it is also likely to include Croatia and also now includes the Ukraine. The number of organisations as members has fluctuated, with some leaving the network in recent years while others have joined. In the submitted self-evaluation report 12 organisations constitute the network. Ukraine is not contributing financially until the war ends and Vila Pouca de Aguiar contributes 'in-kind' through providing the secretariat and manager.

In terms of countries represented, four observations can be made: 1) Given the pre-eminence of the well-established routes of SJW in Spain, France and Portugal it is important that the management of the Route is not seen to be overly dominated in these countries. The EFSJW has a critical role to play in ensuring that the Route is seen in the most holistic way possible. As communicated to the expert, members in the North of Europe understand the dominance of the Route in Southern Europe but wish it to be better known in the North. There is also a feeling that members of the Federation are not acting in as coherent and collaborative way as they could be. 2) Even within the key countries of Spain, France and Portugal, representation is geographically concentrated around the more popular routes. The argument that SJW can bring benefits that extend beyond, for instance, the North of Spain or Portugal, needs to be made. The Route brings in international visitors into these countries who then go onto other areas of the country. Having a meta-representative members such as the Agence française des chemins de Compostelle, helps to overcome this, but this will not always exist in other countries. 3) The great benefit of SJW is that it can begin in many countries and what is noticeable is the absence of key European countries where St James routes are already long established. Of particular note is Germany where there are at least thirty Ways of James well used by pilgrims and tourists. Switzerland, Denmark, Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic are countries with well-established Ways of St James and yet they are still not members of the network (all are EPA member states). The EFSJW recognises this. 4) Related to the above, SJW has operational routes in many countries outside of Europe and this offers the Federation tremendous possibilities for truly global network membership. As such the Route is an important vehicle for the Council of Europe to share its values, as enshrined in the Cultural Routes idea, across the world.

In terms of the type of members within the network, this is dominated by the public sector, mainly local and regional authorities. This is in line with many cultural routes of the Council of Europe. More thought needs to be given to how to engage those municipalities outside of Spain, France and Portugal in places such as Germany and the Czech Republic. Routes of St James operate in such countries without using the label of the Council of Europe and largely without knowledge that they could benefit from this branding through being part of the Federation.

The private sector is under-represented in the membership of the EFSJW. In actuality, private sector businesses, whether in hospitality, tourism or retail do benefit from public sector engagement with, and support of, the Route. However, an important entry point for pilgrims is via the myriad of tour operators and travel agencies that facilitate their pilgrimage, either as a discrete product, or as part of a wider / longer vacation. This sector benefits immensely from the public purse infrastructure investment and from the generous hospitality shown to the pilgrim. Bringing in the private sector – selectively - more formally into the network, can facilitate financial sustainability, allow for creative partnerships and facilitate effective models of sustainable tourism practice.

Within the network it is also important to include advisory bodies. This would include the Scientific Committee and the European Federation of Associations of Friends of St James. Given the importance of the UNESCO World Heritage label to some sections of Route, closer links with the Council of St James, who are responsible for the management of the World Heritage element, would be valuable.

3.3.4 Network extension since last evaluation

Since the last evaluation of St James Way, the extension of network has progressed slowly, though again the impact of COVID should be noted, along with the recent shift to a new presidency. Out of the targeted countries of Germany, Luxembourg, Latvia, Slovakia, Austria and the Ukraine, only the latter has formally joined the network, although discussions have continued with some of the other countries.

3.3.9 Strategy for the network extension in the three years to come

In the light of slow progress since the previous evaluation, and in respect of the need to secure financial sustainability and strategic development, there needs to be a robust plan to extend the network which in turn needs to align with budget planning. Some progress has recently been made with regard to members from Croatia, and possibly from Romania. However, the proposals for extending the network as set out in the Route's own evaluation document are passive, inadequate and far from strategic. In the context of the success of SJW, there is considerable potential to extend to other European member states and also to countries further afield where interest in the Route is growing.

For the EFSJW to be able to carry out its ambitions, a more proactive and far-reaching strategy needs to be worked on. Central to this is that the criteria for membership of the Federation needs further work; criteria that emphasises the value of being part of the Federation and of having the label of an accredited Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. This links to the Federation being able to better express its mission, its role as the guardian of the 'Cultural Routines' of SJW, and the benefits the network can bring to its members. Key benefits must lie in the Council of Route branding, internationalisation, activities relating directly to the required fields of action, opportunities for collaborative funding, standard setting and on-going professionalisation. Expressing the economic and social benefits that the Cultural Route can bring – as exemplified in the research carried out on some sections of the Route – is important for engaging with municipalities, public organisations and the private sector.

3.4 Communication tools

3.4.1 Current state of communication tools developed by the network (graphic charter, communication materials, logo, communication channels, signposting, maps, etc.)

As the European Federation of St James Way, there are a number of communication tools in operation. However, it should be born in mind that SJW is extensive and cuts through territories across wider Europe and increasingly other parts of the World. The Route comes under several jurisdictions, including sections that outside the membership of the Federation. Accurate assessment of how the tools of communication are being used is difficult. Given the Route was accredited many years ago and has evolved considerably, with many different stakeholders and senses of ownership, and the more recent change in Presidency and management, achieving comprehensiveness and brand coherence through communication is difficult to achieve.

Website

The website of the EFSJW remains as a legacy from the former Presidency of Puy-en-Valey. The current management of the Cultural Route are aware that basic information changes need to be made. It is vitally important that the website clearly expresses the work and mission of the Federation as the organisation responsible for **SJW as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe**. Any visitor googling SJW will be met with an avalanche of websites providing information on the Way but from many different perspectives, and largely reflecting the territories it passes through. So, for instance, the Xunta de Galicia has a comprehensive website for discovering the Way of St James focusing on the region of Galicia and is directed to prospective pilgrims. There is no link to the website of the EFSJW at the time of assessment. The 'official' website of Chemins de Saint Jacques, is funded by Puy-en-Velay and its region (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes), is directed to pilgrims and again largely reflects its own territory, with no links to the Federation or other regions of SJW. There are no references to SJW as being a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe!

There is little scope here to offer a full critique of the extant, 'live' website of the Federation. It does have a section on the Cultural Routes Programme and includes a brief video, but this still does not articulate what it really **means** to have the Council of Europe Cultural Route label. The website is in English, Spanish and French and it does highlight the routes that pass through its member territories but does not link with other sites that are geared up more for prospective pilgrims and tourists. There are countless websites full of information about SJW directed to pilgrims, some from public sector tourism / local government bodies, many from the tourism sector and importantly those from the many Associations of Friends of St James Way. Some of these sites do mention – though without detail - the UNESCO designation of The Way, but none of the sample looked at, mention it as the first Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

The new Presidency and management of the Route recognise the need to address the website and this should provide a valuable opportunity to communicate SJW in the framework of a cultural route, to emphasise its importance holistically across Europe and beyond, to highlight the work being done across the required field of action and to promote its mission as the necessary guardian of the Route through its sustainable development and management. The website is also an important 'shop window' for future members and for building support for the Federation – for instance by advertising internships.

Websites are critical for every Cultural Route and all the characteristics that define a route should be present and easily accessible. The criteria for the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe provides a simple structure for a website - clearly identified theme, historical content, values, activities relating to each field of action, focus on members etc. etc. It is the strongest possible recommendation that an effective website is developed to become the primary showcase for Federation as the gateway to and guardian of, SJW as the most extensive and best-known route. It appears that the web architecture is in place, but relevant, user-friendly and inclusive narrative content is essential. Though always time intensive, the website will need to continue with as fuller representation of the Federation's membership and their activities as possible.

Map

St James Way is well served by the latest interactive maps, largely thanks to the EU COSME project. On the website of the Federation are downloadable maps for member states replete with 360-degree annotated guides to sites of interest, aerial views, and virtual tours. These are of great assistance both to prospective pilgrims and those 'on-the-move'. There are also

augmented audio-guides for mobile phone use along with a travel app and digital credential that can be downloaded. This facility is a membership benefit. Numerous other websites carry maps of St James Way, some interactive, but the Federation is well-placed to have the definitive one that shows the full extent of the routes of St James across Europe and at some point, across the world.

Social Media

The EFSJW has an active and updated Facebook site, with a hyperlink to the main website. At present it only has 365 followers, which partly reflects the low profile of the Federation. Private Facebook pages featuring the SJW can have several thousand followers. A valuable project will be to work on more effective marketing to give strong Facebook presence. Again, this should be a member benefit. The website is also linked to the EFSJW Instagram account (229 followers), which is also kept up to date. In both Facebook and Instagram cases, content is more focused on organisational matters, but both mediums can be valuable for raising the profile of the Federation and the 'Cultural Routeness' of SJW more widely amongst other stakeholders and civil society.

Other social media could be useful to engage new audience, Tik-Tok being an obvious example to reach younger people. There is a private YouTube St James Way Channel – used to promote private accommodation. Consideration could be given to a Federation-run Channel to promote its work and best practice via longer videos.

Published Materials – Brochures, Travel Guides etc.

There is a huge amount of published matter regarding various aspects of SJW – heritage, gastronomy, nature etc. Some of this is published by member organisations and again usually fits to specific sections, territories and languages of the Route. On top of this is also a vast number of published guides and brochures published by non-members and the private sector. The vast majority of publications surveyed did not bear the logo of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Programme. Publications of the loci Jacobi project do bear the logo and some promotional materials used by the Federation for exhibitions etc. also carry the logo. Notwithstanding the decline in usage of hard copy, there is an opportunity for the EFSJW to publish more on various aspects of the route **as a whole**, involving all of its members and covering Europe and the rest of the world. The Federation is well placed for undertaking an inclusive, far-reaching publication that focuses upon the Cultural Route; the process of publication is often a good way of bringing members closer together with a common purpose.

3.4.2 Compliance with the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe”

Overall, there is further work to be done in implementing a far more comprehensive approach regarding the visibility of the Council of Europe logo. The Federation is the gatekeeper for the Cultural Route and needs to use the logo as a brand, representing quality amongst its members. It is able to 'award' the logo to potential members and to ensure it is visible at existing members' sites, locations and published materials. There are many opportunities for 'branding' and for explaining the meaning of the Cultural Route and indeed, the work of the EFSJW at various locations along the routes for which members have some responsibility. An action plan that focuses on well-positioned branding and interpretative interventions will enhance the value of the Cultural Route and the Federation's work.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

St James Way is a very well-established route with great symbolic value and increasing global presence. In terms of user / pilgrim experience, associated economic and social benefits for the communities it traverses, the Route is extremely successful. It also involves a vast number of stakeholders to which the Route means different things to each. To ensure further successful and sustainable development of SJW, while maintaining and enhancing its meaning as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, requires the EFSJW to play a leading role in setting standards, managing its internationalisation, ensure local communities in all sections of the Route benefit, while maintaining its core values. Arguably, as the organisation governing the 'grandfather' of the Cultural Routes family, the Federation carries a lot of responsibility and many other certified and non-certified routes and pilgrimage trails around the world look to it for inspiration.

Following a detailed review of the evaluation dossier, its appendices, supporting files, further requested information, an intense site visit to two countries, online discussions and email correspondence with Federation members, associated stakeholders, and a structured inspection of related websites and published materials, it is concluded that SJW does comply, in significant measure, with the criteria used in the periodic evaluation of a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. However, there are some core issues that require addressing as the Route moves forward to ensure its sustainability in a period of continued growth.

Eligibility Criteria for the Theme

There is no doubting the eligibility of SJW as a Cultural Route in terms of its theme. Pilgrimage, as both a spiritual journey and the genesis of tourism as a practice of inter-cultural encounter and dialogue, is at the very foundation of the Cultural Routes Programme. Though the final destination is the cathedral city of Santiago de Compostella, the network of ancient pathways have multiple starting points across Europe and thus the Route has the potential to 'belong' to many countries. And while the Route as pilgrimage remains an important Christian tradition, it transcends its religious meaning and has wide appeal in terms of showcasing local cultural identities, a wealth of tangible and intangible heritage and as a valuable and inspirational recreational resource. Under its new Presidency, there is an ideal opportunity for the EFSJW to re-affirm the importance of St James Way to its many audiences as the premier Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. Communicating the values of the Route is more important than ever. As part of this re-affirmation, it is suggested that the EFSJW articulates a clear vision and mission that emphasises the role that SJW can play in contemporary society and sets out the ambitions for its sustainable development, internationalisation, and enhancing the lives of local communities – particularly in rural areas. A re-invigorated mission will help to attract further members into the network.

Priority Fields of Action

Despite the circumstances of the COVID pandemic, there has been activity across the priority fields of action. The Route has very well-established and extensive structures and resources for research and development, including an active International Expert Committee. This appears to be evolving well with new disciplines and countries being represented. It is important that this evolution continues, as membership and profile expands so research can underpin development and serve developments in other countries. The quality of academic research is high but is overly focused on traditional disciplines. There are great opportunities for further collaborative, transnational, applied research projects in fields that can serve the needs of the Federation and underpin key contemporary and future developments in the SJW Cultural Route. Closer working with the Compostella Group of Universities and targeting collaborative

EU Horizon funding is important. Demonstrating impacts, examining experiences and developing new products will considerably benefit the Route. Research needs to be better disseminated to the wider public and stakeholder groups to demonstrate impact and to reflect the multiple, international audiences for SJW.

In terms of the Route's role in enhancing European heritage, the Federation has a vital role to play, particularly in protecting, preserving and promoting this across the routes that are not covered through the UNESCO World Heritage designation and in more rural areas. This should include increased showcasing of the 'hidden gems' along the lesser used routes and across all members. There are some outstanding examples of adaptive re-use of old buildings and these should serve as examples to prospective members of the Federation regarding what can be achieved. This falls within the remit of the EFSJW in setting and communicating quality standards.

Cultural and educational youth exchanges are vital for the Route. These take place in rather an ad-hoc way through various stakeholders, such as the universities and will continue. The EFSJW should take a more strategic view as to it can benefit from exchanges – for internships, volunteer programmes and knowledge exchange amongst its members and internationally. Though there are always issues of capacity and initial resource constraints, such is the high profile of the Route, a smart educational exchange programme focused on the work of the Federation would have wide appeal to young people and would serve members well.

St James Way and its members engage in a wide variety of successful contemporary cultural and artistic projects and events. The potential to develop these further, particularly amongst new network members, is immense, given the multi-layered meanings of the Route. It is not the role of the Federation to instigate all projects but through its membership it can be a conduit for collaborative funding applications, for highlighting best practice across the network and to ensure that SJW can be celebrated in art and wider cultural expressions as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

St James Way is a major tourist draw, particularly in Spain, France and Portugal. Numbers of pilgrims can be fairly accurately assessed via the issues of credentials and usage of public hostels, though numbers may be more difficult to assess in other member countries. There is need for the EFSJW, supported by its Expert Committee, to take a strategic look at generational changes in pilgrims and tourists, emphasising the need to promote lesser-known routes, those sections of St James Way that are best able to deal with larger visitor numbers and to ensure that local communities, particularly in rural areas, can maximise social and economic benefits. There is clearly room for greater numbers along some parts of the Route if planned and managed strategically. The Federation is best placed to take a lead here, again setting standards and implementing best practice, across the whole of the Cultural Route. Proactive and selective engagement with the tourism sector is important here. Tour operators can benefit from the CoE Cultural Routes label and in return can assist in wider operations. There appears little doubt that St James Way will increase its international / outside of Europe visitors. One element that would assist in this is better interpretation at some key sites, which in some cases is too technical and parochial. It is not the function of the EFSJW to carry out specific work relating to the continued development of sustainable cultural tourism, but rather to provide the arguments to various stakeholders of how this benefits everyone, assist in building evidence and best practice through research, ensuring that developments are in keeping with the identity and meaning of the whole of the Route, and oversee professional development in tourism management and related heritage interpretation.

The Network

While SJW is well known from its history, its UNESCO status and its wide promotion through the tourism sector and its global network of Association of Friends groups, it is lesser known as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. The label is important to differentiate it from its other identities, but also to complement its growing popularity. It is the rapid development of the Route with its many challenges and also its many opportunities, which gives the European Federation of St James Way such critical importance at this moment. Within the framework of its new Presidency and secretariat, and underpinned by its existing support, the EFSJW is in a position to develop its geographic membership significantly to include those countries with SJW and to diversify its members (including the private sector) to gain further support, but also to ensure its long-term financial sustainability that will allow it to achieve its goals. Projected income is not particularly ambitious and needs to be underpinned by a clearer strategy. A five-year strategy for building membership, based on a re-invigorated mission, a strong articulation of member benefits (reasons to be part of the Cultural Route of St James Way), and effective communication, is the starting point. Despite being established since 2011, it appears that the Federation needs to better promote its role and its importance as the guardian of the Cultural Route with the power to award the accredited label. Coupled with this is a need to better promote the CoE logo via members to raise its profile amongst civil society and pilgrims / tourists alike. The brand is a benefit of Federation membership. The necessary up-dating of the present website will provide an opportunity to put some of these things into practice. It is important that SJW is seen to 'belong' to as many relevant European countries as possible. A strong Federation with diverse membership will facilitate opportunities for project applications.

CRITERIA		Recommendations previous evaluation 2019-2020	Has the route addressed the recommendation since the last evaluation?		Recommendations current evaluation 2023-2024	
			YES	NO		
I. Cultural route theme			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
II. Priority fields of action	Cooperation in research and development	Strengthen cooperation with Universities	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strengthen further particularly with new network members; widen thematic areas; work closer with Compostela Group	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Cultural and educational exchanges for		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

	young Europeans				
	Contemporary cultural and artistic practice		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural development		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
III. Cultural Route Network	strengthen exchanges with societies of friends of Santiago de Compostela in Europe		X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partial – better promotion of Federation its work and the label of the Cultural Route required – reach out to Associations beyond Europe too
	Continue to strengthen Federations' governance at the national level		X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partial – maintain increase members in number and variety. Secure financial sustainability via above. Ensure a clear mission and role is articulated and promoted, amongst all stakeholders and civil society; develop a membership development strategy inline with budget plan
	Develop a quality charter for the accession of new members		<input type="checkbox"/>	X	Develop and widely communicate member benefits and align with recruitment strategy
Communication Tools	Develop social networks and new digital tools		X	<input type="checkbox"/>	On-going – ensure wide representation of all members and extensive visibility of the CoE CR logo
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5 List of references

Submitted by Network – 31.7.2023

Application for Certification – St James Way - Cycle 2023/24
Expert Report – Saint James Way – Evaluation Cycle 2019-2020
European Federation of St James Way Statutes
Minutes of Annual General Assemblies 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023
Member List
Activity Reports: 2019-2022
Financial Reports 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022
2023-2025 Plan of Activities
Selection of Member Publications
Schematic Map

Additional Documents Requested

Minutes of the General Meeting Torún (Poland), October 12th and 13th 2023
Approved Minutes of the International Committee of Experts of the Saint James Way –
26.07.22, 30.11.22 and 22.02.23
Three-year budget forecast 2024-2026
Re-draft of Statutes

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<https://www.instagram.com/efsaintjamesway/>

Other websites reviewed

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<https://www.csj.org.uk/chemin-de-tours>
<https://portugueseway.com/>
<https://www.unav.edu/web/facultad-de-filosofia-y-letras/find-your-way-walk-the-camino>
<https://britishpilgrimage.org/camino-ingles-start-your-camino-in-britain/>
<https://tubuencamino.com/conocenos/quienes-somos/>
<https://www.pilgrim.es/en/routes/>
<https://viajecaminodesantiago.com/en/news/pilgrim-associations/>
<https://web.qcompostela.org/>
<https://xacobeo2021.caminodesantiago.gal/en/home>
<https://galiwonders.com/en/blog/jeju-olle-trail-a-korean-camino-de-santiago/>
<https://doaj.org/toc/2659-5885> (Ad Limina)
<https://www.aej.pt/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AEJ.Jacobeus>

<https://www.instagram.com/aejacobeus/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9Dz2jFWLM0&t=8s>

<https://tubuencamino.com/conocenos/quienes-somos/>

6 Annex 1: Expert field visit and interviews with the network management and members

In person and / or online meetings and / or correspondence with:

Ildefonso de la Campa, Director of Xacobeo (Galician Government) and President of the EFSJW

Francisco Singul, member of the International Committee of Experts of SJW

Ana Rita Dias, Vice-President of the Municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar (Caminho Interior) and President of the Portuguese Federation of the Saint James Way

Catarina Chaves, Route Manager, Municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar and the Portuguese Federation of the Saint James Way

Manuel Antonio Castiñeiras Gonzalez, Chairman of the International Committee of Experts of SJW

Melchor Fernández, Professor of the Faculty of Economics, University of Santiago (USC), Coumba Sylla, Service des Musées et Patrimoine culturel - Secteur du Patrimoine Culturel Administrative Provinciale, Namur, Belgium

Paulos Silva, Secretary of the Board, Associação Espaço Jacobeus, Braga, Portugal

Manon Luijten, Manager Marketing, Zuid Limburg, The Netherlands

Dainius Varnas, Director, Saint James Ways Lithuanian Association of Municipalities.

Confidential email responses received from: 7 international Associations of Friends of the Way; 6 international specialist pilgrimage tour operators.

Further interviewee / names are given within the field trip schedule below.

Prof. Mike Robinson. Field Visit Programme and Interviewees / Discussants, St. James Way, Galicia and North Portugal – 19-23. Nov.2023

Monday 20.12

Visit to Monte do Gozo and interview with director of private pilgrims hostel (“Benvido”) Antonio Valeiro, Director of Marketing, “Benvido Monte do Gozo”

Visit to International Center of Pilgrimage, Santiago de Compostela. Interview with Father Daniel Lorenzo, Canon of the Cathedral of Santiago, Director of Cathedral of Santiago Foundation and Director of International Centre of Pilgrimage.

Visit to Camino Norte, UNESCO World Heritage – section between San Xusto de Cabarcos and the regional highway at Lourenzá

Visit old city of Mondoñedo, Camino Interpretation Centre, Cathedral and pilgrim hostel. Interviews along the Camino with Manuel Otero, Mayor of the City of Mondoñedo, councillor of the Way of St. James, city council of Mondoñedo, and Mr. Luis F. Ansedes, president of the Association of Friends of the North Way (“Abrindo Camiño”) Luis Gestal, Director of Conservation and Repair work in the Camino, Turismo de Galicia and Xosé María Palmeiro, President of the Association of Journalists and Scholars of St. James Way (APECSA).

Visit to Sobrado dos Monxes, North Way section between Anunqueira & the regional road. Meeting with Ildefonso de la Campa, Director of Xacobeo (Galician Government) and President of the EFSJW, Francisco Singul, member of the International Committee of Experts of SJW, Xosé Manuel Merelles, Director of Tourism de Galicia (Galicia Government), Carmen Martínez Insua, Director of Historical and Cultural Heritage (Galicia Government), Dolores Riveiro, Professor of the Faculty of Economics, University of Santiago (USC), co-director of economic study of the Camino (French Way) in Galicia, Melchor Fernández, Professor of the Faculty of Economics, University of Santiago (USC), co-director of economic study of the Camino (French Way) in Galicia, and member of the International Committee of Experts of SJW, Marcelino Agís, Professor of Philosophy, University of Santiago (USC), and Vice-

President of Jacobean Academy, Jesús Palmou, President of the Jacobean Academy, Miguel Taín, Director of the Chair of the St. James Way, University of Santiago (USC) and member of the International Committee of Experts of SJW.

Tuesday 21.12

Soutomerille, Camino Primitivo, UNESCO World Heritage and visit **section of the Camino in Soutomerille and village ruins and church** and interview along the Camino with Mr. Ángel Trabada, president of the Association of Friends of the Camino in Lugo province.

Visit to Lugo city and public pilgrim hostel, urban section of the Camino, Primitive Way Lugo Interpretation Centre, and interviews with the hostelkeeper of the Pilgrim hostel and the director of Tourism Information Office. Meeting with Ángel Trabada, President of the Association of Friends of the Primitive St. James Way, Javier Arias Fouz, Territorial Delegate of the Xunta de Galicia in Lugo, Jesús Ángel Picallo, Vice-President of Cluster Tourism of Galicia and President of the Professional Association of Businessmen on the St. James Way from Santiago to Fisterra and Muxía (Galicia Land's End).

Visit to S. Román da Retorta and its church of S. Román da Retorta, then Guntín pilgrim hostel, a section of the Primitive Way and interviews with the hostelkeeper of the Pilgrim hostel and the Mayor of Guntín, Mrs. María José Gómez.

Departure for **Vila Pouca de Aguiar** and meeting with Ana Rita Dias, Vice-President of the Municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar (Caminho Interior) and President of the Portuguese Federation of the Saint James Way, Catarina Chaves, Tourism Technician from the Municipality of Vila Pouca de Aguiar (Caminho Interior) and the Portuguese Federation of the Saint James Way and Daniel Afonso, Interpreter Guide.

Wednesday 22.12

Visit to Lamego city, cathedral, public hostel, then to Santa Marta public hostel. Meetings with Carla Botelho, Head of the Culture, Sports and Youth Division of the Municipality of Lamego (Caminho Interior and Caminho de Torres), Sílvia Silva, Vice-President of the Municipal Council of Santa Marta de Penaguião (Caminho Interior), Fernando Gonçalves, Councillor of the Municipal Council of Santa Marta de Penaguião (Caminho Interior), Afonso Gonçalves, Tourism Technician at Santa Marta de Penaguião City Council (Caminho Interior), Cátia Guedes, Tourism Technician at Santa Marta de Penaguião City Council (Caminho Interior) and Gina Martinho, Tourism Technician at Santa Marta de Penaguião City Council (Caminho Interior).

Discussion and presentations at Vila Pouca de Aguiar including Board of Directors of the Portuguese Federation, Daniela Capelo, Vice-President of the Municipal Council of Pinhel (Caminho de Torres), Maria da Graça Sanches da Gama, President of the Porto Jacobeus Studies Center Association, Manuel Lourenço, Chief of Staff at Alvaiázere City Council (Caminho Central), Pedro Pontes, Councilor for Tourism at Castro Daire City Council (Caminho Interior), Carlos Madaleno, Coordinator of the Municipal Museums of the Covilhã City Council (Caminho Via Nascente), Delfim Bismarck, Vice-President of the Municipal Council of Albergaria-a-Velha (Caminho Central) and Ana Soares, Head of Tourism and Culture Division, Tomar City Council (Caminho Central).

Visit to Albergue de Vairão, Vila do Conde and meetings with Carla Silva, President of the Villa Valeriani Association and host at Albergue de Vairão, Vila do Conde (Caminho Central), Vítor Pereira, Volunteer at the Vairão Hostel (Caminho Central), António Deveza, President of the Espaços Jacobeus Association, Patrícia Pinho, Vila do Conde Delegation of the Espaços Jacobeus Association.

Thursday 23.12

Visits to Porto, Matosinhos Tourist Information Centre, Municipal market, sections of coastal way of SJW, renovations of public hostels at Praia do Marreco and Surf House

at Mercado de Angeiras and meetings with Marta Pontes, Councilor for Tourism at Matosinhos City Council (Caminho da Costa), Pedro Morais, Head of Tourism Division at Matosinhos City Council (Caminho da Costa), João Costa, Tourism Technician at Matosinhos City Council (Caminho da Costa), Cristina Canossa, responsible for the Tourism Office/Pilgrim Support Point project at Praia do Marreco, Architects Maria da Conceição Castro and Adriana Miranda, responsible for the design of the Albergue/ Surf House at Mercado de Angeiras, António Deveza, President of the Espaços Jacobeus Association, technical support staff of Sofia Vasco and Ana Araújo.

7 Annex 2: Expert assessment checklist

EXPERT ASSESSMENT CHECK-LIST						
QUESTIONS			Yes	No	Comments (if any)	
3.1 THEME	1	Does the theme of the Route represent a common value (historical, cultural, or heritage) to several European countries?	1		And beyond Europe	
	2	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for youth cultural and educational exchanges?	1			
	3	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for innovative activities?	1			
	4	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for cultural tourism products development?	1			
	5	Has the theme been researched/developed by academics/experts from different regions of Europe?	1			
3.2 FIELDS OF ACTION	3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development	6	Does the Route offer a platform for co-operation in research and development of European cultural themes/values?	1		
		7	Does the Route play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together?	1		This could be expressed more strongly
		8	Does the Route show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European countries?	1		This could be expressed more strongly
		9	Does the Route illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe?	1		Yes, but could better expressed in the mission
		10	Does the Route have a network of universities and research center working on its theme at the European level?	1		Yes and beyond via the Compostela Group of Universities
		11	Does the Route have a multidisciplinary Scientific Committee?	1		Yes, but room for more applied disciplines
		12	Does the Scientific Committee work on its theme at the European level?	1		Yes, but will need to be extended with the growth of members

3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage	13	Does the Scientific Committee carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on the theoretical level?	1	
	14	Does the Scientific Committee carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on the practical level?	1	Yes, but more would be valuable and encourage access to EU Horizon Programme funding
	15	Do the Route activities take into account and explain the historical significance of tangible and intangible European heritage ?	1	To an extent but not in a position to assess how this works in other member countries – Heritage interpretation for a trans-national audience needs is very limited
	16	Do the Route activities promote the values of the Council of Europe?	1	To an extent but this needs to be more visible and explicit
	17	Do the Route activities promote the brand of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe?	1	Selectively to an extent – this certainly needs to be a member benefit for the Federation
	18	Does the route work in conformity with international charters and conventions on cultural heritage preservation?	1	
	19	Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in rural destinations?	1	Examples witnessed where this has happened
	20	Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring?	1	No real evidence seen
	21	Do the Route activities valorize the heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe?	1	Not evidenced but possibilities
	22	Do the Route activities contribute to a better understanding of the concept of cultural heritage, the importance of its preservation and sustainable development?	1	Hard to evidence but likely – greater effort required to develop this and give it more visibility
	23	Do the Route activities enhance physical and intangible heritage, explain its historical significance and highlight its similarities in the different regions of Europe?	1	The intangible heritage is recognised, profiled and a key element, but no real attempt to overcome territorialism was identified

		24	Do the Route activities take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning (European Cultural Convention, Faro convention, European Landscape Convention, World Heritage Convention, ...)?	1		Yes but this needs to be made more explicit
	3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans	25	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to develop a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship?		1	No evidence
		26	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to emphasize the value of new personal experience through visiting diverse places?	1		
		27	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to encourage social integration and exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe?	1		And the world – par excellence
		28	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to offer collaborative opportunities for educational institutions at various levels?	1		
		29	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts?	1		
		30	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to set up pilot schemes with several participating countries?	1		
		31	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels?	1		
		3.2.4 Contemporary	32	Do the Route's cultural activities promote intercultural dialogue and multidisciplinary exchange between various artistic expressions in European countries?	1	
	33		Do the Route's cultural activities encourage artistic projects that establish links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture?	1		Links could be made more explicit

3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development	34	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage innovative cultural and contemporary art practices* connecting them with the history of skills development?	1		
	35	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?*		1	No evidence for this
	36	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage debate and exchange - in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective - between various cultural and artistic expressions in different countries of Europe?	1		Yes probably in some circles
	37	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture?	1		
	38	Do the Route's cultural activities highlight the most innovative and creative practices?	1		
	39	Do the Route's cultural activities link these innovative and creative practices with the history of skills development?***	1		
	40	Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development) assist in local, regional, national and/ or European identity formation?	1		Mainly at regional and national level
	41	Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development) actively involve 3 major means to raise awareness of their cultural projects: print, broadcast and social media?	1		
	42	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between urban and rural communities and cultures?		1	This needs greater development
	43	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between developed and disadvantaged regions?		1	This needs greater development
	44	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between different regions (south, north, east, west) of Europe?	1		To an extent
	45	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between majority and minority (or native and immigrant) cultures?	1		Very limited and more work to be done
	46	Do the Route's activities open possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents?	1		Without doubt

		47	Do the Route's activities draw decision makers' attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of the sustainable development of the territory?	1		More can be done
		48	Do the Route's activities aim to diversify cultural product, service and activities offers?	1		
		49	Do the Route's activities develop and offer quality cultural tourism products, services or activities transnationally?	1		Limited – more to be done to break down territorialisms
		50	Do the Route's activities develop partnerships with public and private organisations active in the field of tourism?	1		Limited private sector partnerships
		51	Did the network prepare and use tools along the route to raise the number of visitors and the economic impacts of the route on the territories crossed?	1		Ridiculous question
3.3 NETWORK		52	Does the Route represent a network involving at least three Council of Europe's member states?	1		
		53	Was the theme of the route chosen and accepted by the network members?	1		
		54	Was the conceptual framework of the route founded on a scientific basis?	1		
		55	Does the network involve several Council of Europe member states in all or part of its projects?	1		
		56	Is the network financially sustainable?	1		Yes, but fragile – needs diversifying and more paying members
		57	Does the network have a legal status (association, federation of associations, EEIG,...)?	1		
		58	Does the network operate democratically?	1		
		59	Does the network specify its objectives and working methods?	1		
		60	Does the network specify the regions concerned by the project?	1		
		61	Does the network specify its partners and participating countries?	1		
		62	Does the network specify the fields of action involved?	1		These need to highlighted as a defining aspect of the Cultural Route
		63	Does the network specify its overall strategy in the short and long term?		1	Not really but is being developed
		64	Does the network identify potential participants and partners in Council of Europe member states and/or other world countries?	1		To an extent – more work required

	65	Does the network provide details of its financing (financial reports and/or activity budgets)?	1		Yes, but these could be better presented with more detail	
	66	Does the network provide details of its operational plan?	1		Yes but this is limited at the moment	
	67	Does the network append the basic text(s) confirming its legal status?	1			
3.4 COMMUNICATION TOOLS	68	Does the Route have its own logo?	1			
	69	Do all partners of the network use the logo on their communication tools?		1	Not all	
	70	Does the Route have its own dedicated website ?	1		It has many!!	
	71	Is it the website available in English and French?	1			
	72	Is it the website available in other languages?	1		Spanish - members hav their own languages	
	73	Does the network use effectively social networks and web 2.0?	1		It uses facebook and Instagram and can expand	
	74	Does the network publish brochures on the Route?	1			
	75	If yes, are the brochures available in English?	1			
	76	If yes, are the brochures available in French?	1			
	For certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe	77	Is the title of "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" present on all communication materials (including press releases, webpages, publications, etc.)?		1	
		78	Is the certification logo present on all communication materials?		1	
		79	Is the certification logo used in accordance to the guidelines for its use (size and position,...)?	1		Where used
		80	Are the logos (Cultural Route + certification logo) provided to all the members of the Route?	1		This is an assumption
81		Does the Council of Europe certification logo appear on road signs/ boards indicating the cultural route?		1		
SCORE			70	11		

8. Annex 3: Images

Pilgrim signage. The two stone posts feature the UNESCO logo signifying their status



Urban Signing,
Primitive Way, Galicia



Coastal Signing,
Coastal Way
Northern Portugal



Rural Signing, Northern
Way, Galicia





St James Way Interpretation Centre in re-used church, Mondoñedo, Northern Way, Galicia



Tourist Information Centre and Pilgrim Credential Stop, Coastal Way, Matosinhos

Interpretation Centres, Tourist Information Centres, along with public and private hostels, are perfect locations to communicate the full extent of SJW and the story of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.



Visit to public hostel in re-purposed school on the Central Way, near Lamego, Portugal



Discussion with Board Directors of Portuguese Federation



Discussing repair issues on Northern Way, Galicia