

2024/25 ENG

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Certification cycle 2024-2025

Regular Evaluation: **ALVAR AALTO ROUTE- 20th CENTURY ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN** 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 2024-2025

Independent expert report

Alvar Aalto Route – 20th Century Architecture and Design

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ALVAR AALTO ROUTE
20th Century Architecture and Design

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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

The Alvar Aalto Route – 20th Century Architecture and Design (hereafter Alvar Aalto Route) is a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe (hereafter CoE) that connects destinations linked to the architectural and design legacy of Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) is renowned for his human-centric design, which harmonized functionalism with natural and cultural sensitivity. His works represent iconic contributions to modernist architecture and Scandinavian design. Officially certified in 2021, the route is managed by the Cultural Route on Aalto's Architecture and Design Heritage Association based in Helsinki, Finland. It is the first CoE Cultural Route managed by a Finnish organization, reflecting the route's central role in preserving and promoting Nordic modernist architecture and design.

In the CoE certification evaluation report of 2021 (at the time of the Route's inception) several shortcomings were pointed out, namely limited European membership and network scope, with insufficient involvement from other European countries, lack of joint activities or significant inputs from other European stakeholders; underdeveloped Scientific Committee; weak communication tools and insufficient utilization of the CoE Cultural Routes logo; lack of strategic planning, and underexplored educational and youth programs. Based on the received recommendations, most of these shortcomings have been overcome to a large extent and further improvements are on their way.

Thus, the route currently includes 33 members across Finland, Germany, France, Italy, and Estonia, showcasing over 2000 buildings and design artifacts tied to Aalto's legacy. Membership spans diverse entities, including municipalities, NGOs, universities, and cultural organizations, ensuring broad representation and expertise. Since certification, the route has added over 10 new members and expanded to two additional countries. Negotiations with other potential international members in Switzerland, Iceland, Germany and Sweden are ongoing. Collaborative efforts among the current members have resulted in significant progress in tourism development, cultural preservation, and sustainable practices. The route promotes education through partnerships with schools and universities, offering programs and materials focused on Aalto's philosophy and design principles (with the main focus still being on Finland, however). Digital innovations, such as augmented reality experiences, enhance accessibility and engagement with Aalto's work.

Over these three years the Alvar Aalto Route is becoming a more visible tourism brand, offering curated travel packages, and being represented at tourism and cultural events, and exhibitions. Sustainability is kept as a key focus, with initiatives promoting eco-friendly travel and mentorship in sustainable practices among members. Active participation in international travel fairs and the publication of a travel catalogue have increased international awareness. The route leverages updated communication tools, including a comprehensive website and active social media presence. The Route's strategic objectives include expanding membership to include additional countries, particularly outside Finland, strengthening partnerships with other cultural routes and tourism networks, developing joint project applications to national and international funds, enhancing sustainability, and broadening educational outreach and digital engagement to connect with younger audiences.

Overall, the Alvar Aalto Route has made significant progress since the last evaluation and successfully integrates cultural heritage, sustainable tourism, and modern innovation, ensuring that Aalto's legacy remains a vibrant and influential force in contemporary architecture and design. Through collaboration, expansion, and education, the route exemplifies the values of the Council of Europe and contributes meaningfully to European cultural heritage.

Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Satisfactory	Poor	Unsatisfactory	Assessment
Compliance with the eligibility criteria for themes listed in Resolution CM/Res(2023)2, I. List of eligibility criteria for themes.		X				Very Good
Compliance with the eligibility criteria for actions listed in Resolution CM/Res(2023)2, II. List of priority fields of action.		X				Very Good
Compliance with the eligibility criteria for networks listed in Resolution CM/Res(2023)2, III. List of criteria for networks.		X				Very Good
The Cultural Route implements the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”			X			Satisfactory

2. Introduction

The *Alvar Aalto Route – 20th Century Architecture and Design* (hereafter Alvar Aalto Route) connects destinations linked to the architectural heritage of Alvar Aalto. Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) was a Finnish architect, designer, and a central figure in modernist architecture, renowned for his unique approach that combined functionalism with humanism, comfort with a deep sensitivity to the natural environment and human experience.

Together with his first wife Aino Aalto, and later second wife Elissa Aalto, who both were his active collaborative partners, Alvar Aalto left a legacy on modern architecture and design. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Aalto focused on creating warm, inviting spaces that responded to human needs. Many of the buildings authored by Aalto have obtained an iconic status, becoming part of the global treasury of the modern architecture monuments, which are, for example, Paimio Sanatorium, Villa Mairea, Maison Louis Carré, Viipuri Library, Finlandia Hall, to name a few.



Figure 1 Alvar Aalto Route sites

Source: <https://visit.alvaraalto.fi>

Much of Aalto's work is an example of *Gesamtkunstwerk* – 'total work of art' principle, where not only the building but also the minute details of interior design would be implemented by Aalto and his studio. Aalto has also made significant contributions to the design of interiors, furniture and everyday objects, creating such iconic pieces as the *Aalto stool*, *Paimio chair* or *Savoy vase*. His works were innovative in their use of materials (e.g. bent plywood) and pioneered Scandinavian modern design, which emphasized the principles of modernity, simplicity and functionality (later inter alia widely popularized by IKEA). Overall, Aalto's influence has been immense and is still visible in today's architecture and design, standing the test of time.

Alvar Aalto Route aims to promote awareness of this modern cultural heritage across Europe, and make it attractive and accessible to tourists. The route is quite new as it received its official status of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 2021. Alvar Aalto Route is managed by Cultural Route on Aalto's Architecture and Design Heritage Association (founded in 2020) with the headquarters in Helsinki, Finland. This is also the first Cultural Route of the CoE that is managed by a Finnish organization. Significant interest towards the work of Aalto exists outside CoE countries, specifically Japan and the USA.

Alvar Aalto Route currently includes 33 members in Finland, Germany, France, Italy, and Estonia. Since its certification, the route has grown to include over ten new members and has extended into two additional countries (France and Italy). The route aims to grow further, uniting Aalto-related sites and organizations across the continent. Potential future members, who have already been approached, include representatives from Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and Switzerland. Overall, since its inception and the last certification period the Route has demonstrated a significant progress along all the CoE criteria.

3. Main Body Evaluation

3.1 Cultural Route Theme

3.1.1 Definition of the theme of the route

The theme of Alvar Aalto Route is defined by the relevance of the sites to the heritage of Alvar Aalto. The route includes not only specific architectural sites designed by Aalto and his team but also any kind of public and private entities contributing to preservation and popularization of Aalto's heritage. The members of the Alvar Aalto Route are quite diverse and include municipalities, associations, foundations, universities, destination management organizations (DMOs) and tour operators. Being an extraordinarily prolific and successful architect and designer, whose career spanned over half a century, Aalto and his Atelier left a tremendous heritage, exceeding 2000 buildings in Europe and beyond.

3.1.2 Historical and cultural context

Finnish architect and designer Hugo Alvar Henrik Aalto (1898-1976), known as Alvar Aalto, is often referred to as one of the founding fathers of modern Nordic architecture and design. Throughout his remarkably prolific career, Aalto's creative endeavors encompassed diverse aspects of the built environment, including industrial design, residential and public buildings, civic centers, and urban planning (Pallasmaa, 1998). While his architecture evolved through various stylistic phases, he established some core philosophical principles early in his career that he carried throughout his lifetime. With his work Aalto aimed at reconciling the opposites, such as nature and culture, tradition and innovation, individual and social, rational and intuitive – sometimes referred to as 'synthetic functionalism', a theme that is visible throughout his whole career (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2011; Pallasmaa, 1998). Aalto believed that architecture should serve people and be in harmony with nature, which is reflected in his buildings' organic forms and thoughtful spatial planning.

Aalto's long life and career are inseparable from Finnish and European history. Being born in what was then Russian Empire, Aalto witnessed the independence of Finland in 1917 and the following civil war, the WWII and Winter War with Soviet Union, economic recovery and the birth of the Nordic welfare state. The 1920s, in the beginning of Aalto's career, were marked by appealing to Nordic classicism, characterized by typical neoclassical details (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2011). The 1930s, driven by the flourishing paper industry, signalled economic recovery. For Aalto, this was pivotal as he gained international recognition through his modernist buildings, such as the *Turun Sanomat Building* in Turku, Finland and the *Paimio Tuberculosis Sanatorium* in Paimio, Finland, as well as his wooden furniture designs. His pavilions for the Paris International Exhibition (1936–37) and the New York World Fair (1939) put Finland on the international map of architecture and design (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2011). Aalto's architectural evolution during this decade saw a transition from Nordic classicism to functionalism and, later, a more organic, human-centered approach.

In the 1940s, the start of World War II in 1939 and onwards (known as the Winter War and Continuation War) brought immense hardships to Finland. These led to a widespread destruction, and the resettlement of over 400,000 refugees from the ceded territories, in an urgent demand for affordable housing. During this period, Aalto played a pivotal role in Finland's reconstruction efforts. He initiated and organized the Reconstruction Office of the Finnish Association of Architects and gave lectures abroad, including in Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States, where he held a professorship at MIT from 1940 (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2011). Aalto's work in the 1940s included industrial buildings, reconstruction projects, and regional planning. He continued to emphasize standardized housing while advocating for a more humane approach to design (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2011).

Starting from the 1950s, Finland began building a welfare state amid postwar reconstruction and optimism, symbolized by the 1952 Olympics held in Helsinki. Industrial growth, urbanization, and increased demand for educational and administrative buildings marked the country's modernization. During this period Aalto transitioned from industrial projects to significant public commissions, such as the *Helsinki House of Culture* (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2011). In the 1960s, Finland's industrialization and urbanization accelerated, rural depopulation increased, living standards rose. Prefabrication and standardization became central to construction. For Aalto, this decade brought major public projects like *Finlandia Hall* in Helsinki, and administrative and cultural centers in Jyväskylä and Seinäjoki, as well as international commissions. While admired for his legacy and status in the Finnish Academy, Aalto also started to face criticism from younger architects, viewing his designs as overly dominant, individualistic and elitist (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2011). His work grew more monumental, often incorporating luxurious materials such as marble (e.g. in *Finlandia Hall*). By then, Aalto primarily acted as the studio maestro, leaving detailed work to his team (Jetsonen & Jetsonen, 2011). The residential houses built in the last decades of his career were commissioned by friends and fine-tuned to their preferences.

During his fruitful career Aalto has designed a number of buildings that have by now received an iconic status in the treasury of modern architecture and have thus become 'pilgrimage' destinations for architecture aficionados. These are, for example, *Villa Mairea* (villamairea.fi/en), which stands as the crowning achievement among Aalto's residential designs. Created for Harry and Maire Gullichsen—close friends, patrons, and collaborators of the architect—the project integrates elements of continental modernism, traditional Finnish and Japanese aesthetics, weaving them into a richly layered work of residential architecture (Pallasmaa, 2011). *House Maison Louis Carré* (maisonlouiscarre.fr/mlc/en/), built a French art dealer Louis Carré in Bazoches-sur-Guyonne outside Paris, is another such example. Built two decades later, this house returns to many of the themes that Aalto had developed in the *Villa Mairea* earlier (Pallasmaa, 2011). Both Aalto's studio and his house in Helsinki receive around 20 000 tourists per year, of which significant share is comprised of Japanese tourists.

An interesting facet of Aalto's architecture is bringing together Nordic and Mediterranean architecture, by which he was deeply inspired. In the fall of 1924, Aalto travelled to Italy for the first time on his honeymoon with his wife and architectural partner Aino Aalto (nee Marsio), which gave them many ideas. Aalto's design for the Jyväskylä Workers' Club built right after drew inspiration from both Venice's Doge's Palace and Stockholm City Hall (Treib, 1998). In fact, in 2024 Aalto's influential honeymoon itinerary has been turned into a cultural tourism product, where tourists following the footsteps of the architects are exposed to Aalto-themed sites, guided tours and lectures (alvaraalto.fi/en/news/in-the-footsteps-of-aino-and-alvar-aalto-in-italy). The tour is organized by the Aalto Foundation together with many Italian institutions. Based on the initial success and shown demand, the aim is to make this tour recurrent. Throughout his life Aalto visited Italy dozens of times, and his love for Italy was mutual – Parish Church of Santa Maria Assunta in Riola di Vergato, Bologna and the Finland Pavilion at the Venice Biennial are examples of his projects in Italy. Aalto's heritage continues to generate great interest among Italian architects and his ideas remain of high relevance (archinfo.fi/en/articles/aalto-loved-italy-and-italians-love-aalto).

Aalto's influential heritage holds not only insights into the architectural past but also shows paths into the future. As argued by Cody & Amoia (2022) Aalto combined research on planning and materials with experimentation, offering forward-thinking ideas through his writings and speeches. Aalto and his Atelier developed a design philosophy that integrated art and technology with flexibility and empathy, emphasizing environmental awareness and social equity. By evaluating architecture based on its impact rather than its appearance, Aalto's approach continues to offer valuable insights and critical relevance today; as put by Cody &

Amoia (2022, p.2) 'We study the work of Aalto to look to the future, not because his work is intellectually superior or more historically significant, but because his concepts are comprehensive—a body of form and material, made with flexible standards and a sensitive attitude towards people and their environment'.

3.1.3 Council of Europe values represented by the theme

Alvar Aalto's architecture features core values in line with those of the Council of Europe. First of all, in relation to *humans rights*, Aalto's architecture is widely known for its humanism. As Aalto himself famously proclaimed in one of his essays, 'True architecture exists only where man stands in the center' (Reed, 1998, p. 11). In his design Aalto was committed to creating spaces that prioritize human experience, comfort, and interaction with the environment. A prime example of this is Paimio Tuberculosis Sanatorium (1932), where for the first time the perspective and needs of the patients were strongly prioritized, reflected not only in spatial planning, but also minute details such as position of lights, level of noise produced by washing sinks in the rooms, dust-preventing design etc. Similarly, Aalto's industrial architecture demonstrates concern for workers' labour conditions, comfort and well-being, e.g. Sunila industrial district in Kotka, Finland. In his human-centric design Aalto focused on spaces that cater to the physical and psychological well-being of their users, blending modern technology with a sensitive approach to human perspective.

Further, Aalto's architecture represents strong adherence to the values of *democracy* and *rule of law*. Aalto's aspirations towards the ideals of equality and democracy permeates all his works (Pallasmaa, 2011). Aalto's deep concerns about the issues of equality, which is expressed in his social housing projects. In his article published in 1930 titled 'Dwelling as a Problem' Aalto argued that architecture should move towards design of housing for a 'classless society', where all members have access to dwelling, corresponding to good quality of life (Koho, 1995). Furthermore, in his planning already then, he envisaged modern families where both parents would go to work, have disposable income and rewarding leisure time (Koho, 1995). Concerned with the conditions of the working class, Aalto aspired to create a different kind of a factory community. In Sunila industrial district, for example, one can observe some radical ideas for its time (1930s), not only expressed by the high quality of housing and facilities accessible for the workers, but also in that all social groups were housed in the same area, as one social class (Koho, 1995).

Aalto had active engagement in planning civic buildings, such as town halls, universities and libraries. For example, in planning town halls it was important for Aalto that the values of democracy are embedded in the very design of the spaces, which is why he always included large public spaces, along with sections dedicated to public meetings as in the Săynätsalo Town Hall. Similarly, the Viipuri Library (1935) exemplifies this ethos with its carefully designed reading rooms and acoustic considerations, ensuring a welcoming environment for all. Aalto's designs often included flexible spaces that could adapt to the changing needs of society. Aalto adhered to democratic principle of open, shared, multipurpose public spaces which serve multiple functions, hosting cultural, political, and social events as e.g. Finlandia Hall in Helsinki. Overall, Aalto's architecture remains timeless symbols of integrating principles of humanism, equality, and democracy into physical reality of material objects and spaces.

3.2 Fields of Action

3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development

The Alvar Aalto Foundation, which initiated the Alvar Aalto Route, and remains its close partner and member, preserves and manages the original Alvar Aalto Archives, which houses hundreds of thousands of original drawings, images, design objects, letters and documents. For more than 50 years, researchers from around the globe have studied these archives, resulting in over 150 publications, and new research continues to be published annually. The Foundation facilitates collaboration on modern architecture research among diverse partners, including universities, vocational institutions, public organizations, educational bodies, and commercial entities. Operating under the foundation, the Alvar Aalto Academy offers continuing education programs and regularly hosts international, multidisciplinary seminars, lectures, and workshops focused on the conservation and study of Alvar Aalto's work and modern architecture. Alvar Aalto's architecture and design are integral to graduate and postgraduate curricula at dozens of universities worldwide, there is a collaboration with multiple major universities in Europe and beyond.

The Alvar Aalto Route has Scientific Committee comprising of experts in architecture, art history, and tourism. The Committee includes representatives from the Alvar Aalto Foundation, University of Tampere, University of Jyväskylä, University of Cambridge, Visit Sejnäjoki DMO and Alvar Aalto Route. This committee enhances the route's operations by offering scientific insights and strategic guidance for future initiatives. The Scientific Committee actively participates in various Aalto related events, of which there is no shortage. There are three triennial alternating events organized by The Alvar Aalto Foundation which are: the Alvar Aalto Symposiums, Alvar Aalto Design Seminars the Alvar Aalto Meetings on Modern Architecture. In 2023, the Scientific Committee participated in the international Alvar Aalto Researchers' Seminar in Jyväskylä, where it chaired a panel discussion on the theme: "*Cultural Tourism: Elitism, Popular Education, or Democratization of the Arts?*". In August 2024 Alvar Aalto Route was present at the Alvar Aalto Symposium. The Scientific Committee also works on proposals and seminar papers, including submitting them to the Academic Workshop for the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. The route is much linked to the research and development expertise found at the Foundation. In the period of 2021-2024 around ten scientific publications have been produced by the Aalto Route members in the relation to the Aalto heritage.

The Alvar Aalto Route aims to collaborate with other routes both nationally and internationally. The Route aims to find synergies with Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, particularly those with a focus on architecture, such as *Le Corbusier Destinations: Architectural Promenades* and *Réseau Art Nouveau Network*. In fact, in 2024 this tripartite collaboration already got a tangible shape, as a joint project application has been submitted to Creative Europe programme by the initiative of Alvar Aalto Route. Managers of Alvar Aalto Route and Le Corbusier Destinations have started regular 'morning coffee' meetings to share further ideas. Efforts have also been initiated to collaborate with other tourist routes, especially those intersecting the Alvar Aalto Route. Partnership with *EuroVelo* (a network of 17 long-distance cycling routes criss-crossing Europe) will be strengthened as part of the *Strength from Sustainability on Alvar Aalto Route* project. On national level, in Finland, there is collaboration through the Cultural Routes Forum, organized by the Finnish Heritage Agency and the Ministry of Education and Culture, which provides a valuable platform for route development. In France, the route participates in initiatives led by the French Federation of European Cultural Routes.

Overall, significant progress has been achieved in attracting and collaborating with new partners, even though there still much room to develop international cooperation in the frames of the Route. The Route aims to continue expanding its collaborative efforts and reaching new audiences, especially in tourism development and raising awareness of Aalto's sustainable architecture philosophy.

3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage

Aalto's work is inseparable from the history of European architecture. As discussed earlier, Aalto played a key role in advancing modernism, but with a distinct humanist approach that set him apart. As discussed in Section 3.1.3, Aalto's human-centric architecture aligns with the core values of European humanism, emphasizing the dignity, comfort, and well-being of individuals within the built environment. His designs prioritized community and public engagement, echoing the social philosophies that have shaped European history ranging from Antiquity to the Nordic welfare states. While embracing the functionalist principles Aalto softened their rigid aesthetics infusing his designs with organic forms and a focus on human experience (Reed, 1998).

Aalto's legacy is undoubtedly immense in and is influenced by Finland; it was noticed that Aalto brings Finland with him in his every project (Reed, 1998). As argued by Frampton (1998) virtually every notable Finnish architect of the second half of the twentieth century has been deeply influenced by his legacy. As discussed in Section 3.1.2 the history of 20th century Finland and much of Europe can be traced throughout Aalto's architecture. However, he celebrated local Finnish traditions without parochial inwardness but rather by engaging with broader European movements. His use of natural materials like wood, brick, and stone reflects Nordic craftsmanship and ties to the natural environment, a hallmark of European vernacular architecture. Aalto merged local identity with modernist ideals, thus bridging regional traditions and pan-European architectural trends.

Aalto's many architectural projects and inspirations are strongly inspired by other European architectural traditions, especially Italian. Aalto's popularity in Italy is explained by him incorporating themes deeply familiar to Italians but infusing them with his unique perspective (archinfo.fi). Bringing Mediterranean architecture to the rural Finland was one of the recurrent motives of Aalto's work. Even if Jyväskylä might not have become the 'northern Florence' (Pallasmaa, 1995, p.22), these fusion aspirations have resulted Aalto's distinct style and innovative solutions. Aalto is credited for sparking enduring international interest towards Finnish architecture and design in Europe and beyond. His collaboration with key international actors like CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) positioned him as a leading voice in shaping modern European architecture.

Overall, Aalto's architecture is deeply tied to European heritage and history through its integration of regional traditions, modernist innovation, and humanistic principles that resonate with European cultural values. His work reflects a synthesis of historical influences and progressivist ideals, making it a significant part of Europe's architectural legacy. Aalto's work continues to inspire architects and designers in Europe and beyond, blending modernist innovation with a deep respect for cultural and natural heritage (Cody & Amoia, 2022). His philosophy of integrating buildings with their surroundings resonates with contemporary concerns for sustainability and environmental responsibility, connecting past European traditions with the present and future (Cody & Amoia, 2022). Furthermore, an application to recognize 15 Aalto sites as UNESCO World Heritage sites is currently being prepared, which signifies not only European but also global importance of Alvar Aalto's heritage.

3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans

There are a few youth-aimed activities within the Alvar Aalto Route, which are primarily linked to the activities of the Alvar Aalto Foundation, and as of now, bounded only to Finland. This is first and foremost, the Alvar Aalto School Network. The schools are located in the Alvar Aalto

cities – a network of its own right, which brings together municipalities that have significant Aalto heritage. The collaboration with Alvar Aalto schools began in spring 2019 and currently includes 17 schools across 12 Aalto cities, all in Finland. The network's primary goal is to promote architecture and design education for children and youth, drawing inspiration from Aalto's works. These schools integrate architecture and design education into their curricula, organize excursions to Aalto sites and receive education materials from the Foundation.

Alvar Aalto School Network convenes annually for joint training sessions and meetings to co-develop educational materials, set annual themes, and share best practices. This collaboration allows schools to brand themselves as leaders in architecture and design education both nationally and internationally. The network aims to expand internationally to include schools outside Finland in future. Additionally, many Route members regularly host event and activities for children and youth, e.g. Alvar Aalto Museum or Paimio Sanatorium.

In general Aalto's heritage is well-known to the younger generation in Finland, and visiting Aalto sites as part of school excursions is a staple in educational programmes. Naturally, there is a lot of attention to Aalto sites among students specializing in architecture and design, both nationally and internationally. Many international groups of students focusing on architecture and design visit, for example, the house of the Aaltos, their atelier, Villa Mairea and many other sites part of the Aalto Cultural Route. In Espoo, Finland there is also a university titled Aalto University (www.aalto.fi), focusing on architecture, design, sciences and engineering, signifying wide recognition and power of the Aalto brand. However, even though there are multiple activities involving Finnish youngsters, more could be done in terms of involving schools and universities across Europe and promoting youth exchanges that focus on architectural and design education, leveraging Aalto's legacy as a platform for intercultural dialogue.

3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice

Aalto's heritage and influence is very much alive and visible in the modern cultural and artistic practice, and there is no shortage of cultural events associated with Aalto. In the period of 2021-2024 there have been more than a dozen major events featuring Aalto's heritage, among which there are recurrent as well as one-time events. For example, Paimio Sanatorium offered summer residency for 20 architects, designers, illustrators and musicians in the frames of *Spirit of Paimio Summer Residency* event (2024) as well as *Paimio Sanatorium 90th Anniversary Poster Competition* with *Human Perspective* exhibition (2023). Alvar Aalto Foundation, for example, was responsible for organizing such events as *The Dream of a Museum. Alvar Aalto's Museum Designs* (2021); *Diverse Design – 30 Years of Passionate Collecting* (2021); *Lehti, Pisa and Venezia: Aino, Elissa and Alvar Aalto's Painted Fabrics* (2022); *Elissa Aalto 100* (2023); *The Pool* exhibition series, bringing together Aalto's heritage, hip-hop, rap and skateboarding culture (2024).

Aiming to reach younger generations, in 2024 Alvar Aalto Foundation collaborated with Makia Clothing Finnish streetwear brand (makia.com), where the latter visited the Aalto archives and develop a clothing line titled *Harmony, function and form - Makia x Alvar Aalto*, which proved to be a success (Fig. 2). As stated by the CEO of Alvar Aalto Foundation Tommi Lindh, "*It's exhilarating to see young people today interested in Makia's clothing and in Aalto's architecture and design. But now we get a chance to test how well they work together.*" (<https://makia.com/blogs/journal/harmony-function-and-form-makia-x-alvar-aalto>)



Figure 2 *Harmony, function and form - Makia x Alvar Aalto - streetwear in collaboration with Makia clothing brand*
 Source: <https://makia.com/blogs/journal/harmony-function-and-form-makia-x-alvar-aalto>

The city of Jyväskylä, being 'the Aalto capital' (nicknamed so due to the largest concentration of Aalto buildings), regularly hosts numerous Aalto-themed events, such as exhibitions (e.g. *Elina Brotherus – Space, New Standards*, and *Human Traces – World Heritage* – all organized at The Aalto2 Museum Center in 2024; *AALTO- Work and Life* in 2023; *Interior architect Maija Heikinheimo – Anchored in Artek*, in 2022; *Timeless Aalto – The DNA of Building Culture*, in 2021); seminars, conferences and workshops, many of which are recurrent events. The events are attended by thousands of visitors. As mentioned above, there are also three triennial alternating events organized by The Alvar Aalto Foundation which are: the Alvar Aalto Symposiums, Alvar Aalto Design Seminars the Alvar Aalto Meetings on Modern Architecture.

It has to be mentioned that there are also multiple Aalto-related cultural events outside of Finland, organized by the members of the Aalto Cultural Route and beyond. For example, '*The Extra Step*' [*La marche supplémentaire*] exhibition of contemporary artists, photographers and sculpturers was organized in Maison Louis Carré in France in the summer of 2024. Aalto themed workshops and seminars are e.g. regularly organized by Alvar Aalto Gesellschaft in Germany or Italian Landscape Association in Italy.

There are also initiatives to make sure that Aalto heritage and its communication remain modern and benefit from digital technologies. Through the Aalto Cultural Tourism Ecosystem project, the Alvar Aalto Route created 3D models of Aalto's unrealized or demolished architectural sites, utilizing augmented reality (AR) technology to bring them to life, allowing visitors to see them in their mobile devices. Three sites have been chosen as AR destinations: the Jyväskylä Council Chamber, the Varkaus Sawmill, and the Seinäjoki Lakeuden Risti Church (<https://visit.alvaraalto.fi>). In other words, the Alvar Aalto Route has received its AR extension.

3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.

Cultural tourism development is one of the key focal points of the Alvar Aalto Route, and one would argue its *raison d'être*. In a way, Alvar Aalto Route has relieved the Alvar Aalto Foundation from tourism development responsibilities, becoming its informal tourism development department. The Alvar Aalto Route was created to not only showcase various Alvar Aalto sites but also to provide curated experiences under an official Aalto tourism brand. Over the last three years there has been a lot of effort put in tourism development, as is discussed below. Furthermore, as discussed above, an application to recognize 15 Aalto sites as UNESCO World Heritage sites is currently being prepared, which will provide additional tourism boost to the Aalto sites.

The Aalto tourism brand was developed collaboratively through a series of workshops involving the Alvar Aalto Foundation, regional DMOs, service providers, and tour operators, in Finland,

France, and Germany. Tourism service providers with cultural tourism potential were identified, and meetings were held to design and price new tour packages with tour operators. Some products were also tested with potential customers. The Alvar Aalto Foundation reviewed and approved all tourism content, product names, and visual elements. Input from national tourism organizations, such as Visit Finland, was also included. This approach was aimed to ensure that the Alvar Aalto Route delivered high-quality services under a cohesive brand.

As part of the *Aalto Cultural Tourism Ecosystem* project, a consultant was hired to facilitate tourism development workshops. These workshops identified target groups to better align with visitor needs and utilized storytelling to highlight the unique characteristics of each site along the Route. The project was funded by *Next Generation EU*, with grants provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland. This funding aimed to support tourism recovery after COVID19 and to promote international tourism to Finland. Developed tourism packages (only in Finland) were compiled into the first *Alvar Aalto Route Catalogue*. The catalogue, available both in print and online, serves as a key promotional tool for international audiences. Plans are underway to produce a second edition, expanding the catalogue to include tourism packages across Europe.

All curated tourism products are featured on the Alvar Aalto Route online platform (www.visit.alvaraalto.fi), which was revamped in 2024 as part of the *Aalto Cultural Tourism Ecosystem* project. The updated website serves as an informational and inspirational hub, showcasing the destinations and directing visitors to member websites for detailed information and booking. The website features an impressive number (more than 30) of Aalto-themed tourism products along the route. In 2023 Summer Spurt social media campaign was organized for members who wished to enhance their Instagram and Facebook visibility of their cultural heritage sites. Furthermore, as discussed in 3.1.2, in 2024 the Alvar Aalto Foundation together with many Italian institutions organized a tour package following Aalto's influential honeymoon itinerary, where tourists following the footsteps of the architects are exposed to Aalto-themed sites, guided tours and lectures (alvaraalto.fi/en/news/in-the-footsteps-of-aino-and-alvar-aalto-in-italy). Based on the initial success, the aim is to make this tour a recurrent event.

The Alvar Aalto Route has actively participated in travel fairs to promote its activities and destinations. These include *2023 Matka Nordic Travel Fair* in Helsinki, the route was featured in two public presentations. In 2024, the Alvar Aalto Route had its own stand at the Helsinki Fair, supported by funding from the Finnish Heritage Agency. In March 2024, the Alvar Aalto Route joined the *ITB Berlin 2024* travel fair as part of the Visit Finland stand. Additionally, a familiarization trip was organized, offering international travel agents the opportunity to experience Alvar Aalto destinations firsthand.

The Route members are generally positive regarding the role of the Route for tourism development. In 2023 the Route director has sent out a survey among its members to better understand the perceived benefits of being part of the Route (Oinonen, 2024). The results reflected the impact and strategic advantages of attaining route status, particularly within the context of tourism and cultural route development. Overall, the members collectively emphasized the multifaceted benefits of attaining route status. These include enhanced cooperation, visibility, and credibility, potential for tourism growth and long-term economic gains. For example, Paimio Sanatorium is currently reinventing itself as a hotel, and a health and wellness center, aimed at domestic and international tourists, and plans to actively develop a wide range of services and events. By aligning with a larger cultural and tourism framework, such destinations can capitalize on shared recognition, resources, and networks, ultimately strengthening their position in the global tourism landscape. These results were also corroborated by the interviews among the selected members.

When it comes to sustainability efforts, in response to the priorities expressed by its member organizations, significant efforts in recent years have focused on promoting sustainability in cultural tourism. Members of the Alvar Aalto Route network are strongly committed to advancing sustainable practices. Given Aalto's attention to the environment and natural materials, the theme of sustainability is frequent at Aalto events (e.g. Alvar Aalto Design Seminar – BIOSYMBIOSIS in 2021, or Alvar Aalto Nature Seminar – Green Paradises in 2021). Initiatives to enhance sustainable travel along the route began with the *More International and Sustainable Alvar Aalto Route* project (2023–2024) and will continue through the *Strength from Sustainability on Alvar Aalto Route* project (2024–2025). As part of the latter project, the network will introduce a mentorship model in which experienced members in sustainable practices guide and support those with less experience, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing within the network.

In 2024 the Route director also sent out a sustainability survey among its members, aiming to map out the existing sustainable travel practices and certificates along the route (Oinonen, 2024). The results suggested that there is a common will to promote sustainability, enhance sustainability communication, encourage low-carbon travel to and from Aalto destinations, promotion of cycle tourism as well as development Alvar Aalto Route Sustainability Strategy. Members also demonstrated various engagement with sustainability. Several destinations along the route already have various sustainability certifications and labels, e.g. *Sustainable Travel Finland*, *Green Key*, *Glasgow Declaration for Climate Action*, *Biosphere Community*, *We Speak Gay*, *Autism Friendly*, and *Welcome Cyclist*.

In 2024, the Alvar Aalto Route initiated collective sustainability efforts by hosting a sustainability seminar and workshop where member organizations exchanged best practices and experiences on various sustainability certifications and labels, including presentations from Visit Finland and the Finnish Center for Cycling Tourism. The Alvar Aalto Route continues sustainability efforts by developing a comprehensive sustainability strategy, promoting eco-friendly travel options like cycling, and supporting destinations in obtaining sustainability certifications. Overall, all Route members agree that sustainable tourism development is a priority and is one of the main motivations and benefits of being part of the Route.

3.3 Cultural Route Network

3.3.1 Overview of institutional /legal structure of the network

Cultural Route on Aalto's Architecture and Design Heritage Association was established in 2020, registered in Finland as an association, with headquarters in Helsinki, which is also the headquarters of Alvar Aalto Foundation. The Association has a Chairperson and a Board with six members. The Board meets once a month. The Association has a Charter.

3.3.2 Overview of the financial situation of the network

In their application, candidate members must outline their reasons for joining, provide details about their activities, and disclose their financial status. The association's board reviews the application. There is a two-tier system of membership fees based on the candidate's operational budget. As of 2024, the fee is €160 for small organizations with an operational budget under €200,000 and €1,260 for large organizations with a budget exceeding €200,000. According to the Action Plan, there will be a reform of the membership fee structure in 2025, increasing the number of fee categories from the current two to four.

In 2024 the Association budget comprised EUR75360 of which 43% was generated from membership fees, 46% from state funding, 4% from sponsorship and 7% from other sources. This budget is mainly used for the salaries of one full-time (Route manager) and one part-time (website and social media manager) employees. In 2022 the Route received EUR195,000 from Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland. In 2024, the Finnish Heritage Agency granted the route association EUR60,300 to promote sustainable cultural tourism along the Route. The Route aims to continue efforts to secure external funding, and several project applications have been submitted to various national and EU funds.

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

Alvar Aalto Route currently includes 33 members in Finland (26), Germany (3), France (1), Italy (1), and Estonia (1). Since its certification, the route has grown to include over ten new members and has extended into two additional countries (France and Italy).

In terms of its member types, there is quite broad representation of a variety of stakeholders — local authorities (18), NGOs (8), heritage sites (5), tourism entities (5), and academic institutions (2) — creating a well-rounded network (Figure 3). This typology is not strict as there is some overlap, e.g. some heritage sites are also NGOs, and some local authorities also include heritage sites, etc. Overall, strong administrative representation can provide stability, while a balanced presence of cultural and academic institutions, NGOs, and heritage sites reinforces the cultural and historical relevance of the network.

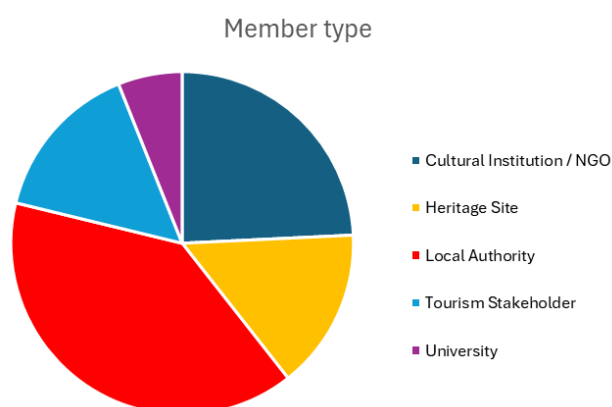


Figure 3 Type of network members

It has to be added that one of the most iconic Alvar Aalto buildings – Viipuri Library – is located in the modern-day Vyborg, Russia. However, Russia has never been an official member of the Alvar Aalto Route, and all communication between this library and the Alvar Aalto Foundation has been cut off (on the Russian initiative) due to the current political situation.

3.3.4 Network extension since last evaluation

In the past two years, supported by a full-time employee the Alvar Aalto Route network has extended from around 20 members to 33, with the addition of two new member countries – France and Italy. Continuous efforts are being made to expand the network both nationally and internationally. There is a consensus among the Route members that specific attention should be paid to attracting international members and collaborating more internationally in the future.

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

Alvar Aalto Route aims to continue actively recruiting new members both in Finland and abroad, which is also reflected in its Action Plan. Given its overwhelmingly Finnish focus, the Association currently pays specific attention to expanding its network among international members. Contacts have already been made and negotiations have started with some potential members. Efforts to expand the network have focused on international sites, with successful negotiations involving Nordic House (Iceland), Finnish Pavilion in Venice (Italy), Kunsten Museum (Denmark), Neue Vahr Highrise Apartment in Bremen (Germany), Schönbühl Apartment House in Luzern (Switzerland), as well as the City of Oulu, City of Imatra and City of Järvenpää (all in Finland).

The association uses various platforms to raise awareness about the route and motivate new members to join. As discussed above, there are numerous Aalto-related events such as conferences, symposia and workshops where the Route representative participates. Marketing through the route's website and the social media is also actively used as a way to raise awareness of the shared benefits of being part of the route. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe events have also been instrumental for networking and expanding the route. Travel fairs have also raised awareness of the Cultural Routes programme and attracted new partners.

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.)

Alvar Aalto Route uses both printed and digital media as its main communication channels. The website is www.visit.alvaraalto.fi and has been recently updated through the *Aalto Cultural Travel Ecosystem* project (2022-24). In the frames of this project, a travel catalogue titled *Redesign Your Mindset in Finland. Explore Alvar Aalto Architecture and Change How You See the World* featuring 10 Aalto Route destinations in Finland was published, which also features the Aalto Route CoE logo. The Route actively uses three social media platforms – Facebook (Visit Alvar Aalto, 980 followers), Instagram (@visit.alvaraalto 7,087 followers) and LinkedIn (Alvar Aalto Route – 20th Century Architecture and Design, 200 followers). The website and the travel catalogue include Route maps. Through synergies with Alvar Aalto Foundation and various route members, there is abundance of printed media focusing on Aalto's heritage, available for sale in many Aalto sites. The Route also uses multiple Aalto events and travel fairs to promote the route and raise awareness about its activities. CoE logo can be found in the visited Aalto sites which are part of the Aalto Route, but verification of all the sites was not possible. Nevertheless, all the interviewed members are convinced that the use of logo positively affects the image and status of the site, as well as increases its tourist attractiveness.

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

The logo of Alvar Aalto Route is developed and used in compliance with the 2024 Guidelines for the Use of The Logo ‘Cultural Route of The Council of Europe’ (Figure 4).

ALVAR AALTO ROUTE

20th Century Architecture and Design

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



Figure 4 Alvar Aalto Route logo (Source: www.visit.alvaraalto.fi)

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Alvar Aalto Route – 20th Century Architecture and Design, a recognized Cultural Route of the CoE, successfully represents a cohesive cultural and historical theme, centered around the legacy of the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Aalto is celebrated for his human-centered approach, seamlessly blending functionalism with natural and cultural elements, and much of his works stands as iconic examples of modernist architecture and Nordic design. Officially certified in 2021, the route is managed by the Cultural Route on Aalto's Architecture and Design Heritage Association, headquartered in Helsinki – the first CoE Cultural Route overseen by a Finnish organization. The **Cultural route theme** aligns with the CoE values such as humanism, democracy, and sustainable cultural development, and highlights the value of modern architectural heritage. The Route connects diverse heritage sites and organizations but requires further transnational collaboration to enhance its European identity. It is recommended to e.g. better showcase Aalto's influence on modern architecture beyond Finland.

Alvar Aalto Route complies with all the key requirements of the **Priority fields of action**, which will be discussed below in further detail. First, Alvar Aalto Route has a solid scientific foundation for **Cooperation in research and development**, while maintaining historical accuracy and authenticity. Benefitting from the resources of the Alvar Aalto Foundation, the Route gets support in education through the Alvar Aalto Academy, which hosts international seminars, workshops, and education programs. The Route's Scientific Committee, comprising experts from various fields, provides strategic guidance, ensures quality, participates in academic events, and contributes to ongoing research. Efforts to establish European-level partnerships are ongoing but require strengthening. It is recommended to continue looking for cooperation with international partners (similar to initiatives already ongoing with *Le Corbusier Destinations* and *Réseau Art Nouveau Network*), develop joint project applications, as well as look for more synergies among activities already undertaken by the Route members. Given significant interest, there is potential to expand collaboration beyond the EU, e.g. with Japan, the USA or Argentina. It is also recommended to extend the Scientific Committee with more international members, and foster collaborations with non-Finnish universities and research institutions.

The Route effectively showcases Aalto's contribution to modernist architecture contributing to the **Enhancement of memory, history, and European heritage**. Aalto's work is a cornerstone of modern European architecture, blending modernism with humanistic principles that emphasize human dignity, comfort, and community. Aalto's use of natural materials bridges local identity with pan-European architectural trends. Inspired by other European traditions, Aalto infused Mediterranean influences into Finnish contexts, creating a distinct style. Aalto's legacy continues to inspire architects and designers, connecting historical influences with contemporary concerns for sustainability. Efforts are underway to designate 15 Aalto sites as UNESCO World Heritage, further underscoring the global significance of his architectural heritage. It is therefore recommended to enhance the representation of the international influence of Aalto, e.g. by highlighting Aalto's role in connecting Nordic and

Mediterranean architectural traditions to strengthen the Route's European narrative and underscore its wider importance as a world heritage site.

When it comes to the **Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans** Alvar Aalto Route has a solid national foundation to develop this field of action further internationally. The Alvar Aalto School Network, established in 2019, includes schools across 12 cities from the Aalto Cities Network, promoting architecture and design education. These schools integrate Aalto-themed curricula, organize site excursions, and collaborate annually to develop materials and share best practices. Plans are underway to expand the network internationally. While the Route engages Finnish youth extensively, there is significant potential to expand outreach to European schools and universities, fostering youth exchanges and leveraging Aalto's legacy for intercultural dialogue. It is recommended to engage more with international partners, work with international universities and e.g. attract interns or thesis-writing students to engage with Aalto Route. More social media activities aiming at and involving youth could also contribute to developing this field further.

The Route members have hosted numerous cultural events and initiatives in since the last certification period, linking Aalto's heritage with **Contemporary cultural and artistic practice**. Summer residency for artists, exhibitions of design, architecture, photography and other arts, joint initiatives featuring skateboarding and hip-hop subcultures, collaboration with streetwear producing company are some of the examples of linking Aalto's heritage to contemporary culture. Internationally, cultural events are organized by route members, such as workshops and exhibitions in Germany, France and Italy. Digitalization efforts include creating 3D augmented reality models of Aalto's demolished or unrealized projects, enabling visitors to explore these sites digitally. It is recommended to keep better track of the cultural activities and practices related to Aalto's heritage both nationally and internationally, given the large number of various associations, interest groups and subnetworks around this theme.

Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural development are the focal points of Alvar Aalto Route. Tourism development is also one of the key motivations of the members to be part of the route. Over the past three years, the Route has introduced curated tourist experiences, supported by workshops with stakeholders from Finland and beyond, and created a travel catalogue. Plans are underway to expand this to a European scope. An application for UNESCO World Heritage status for Aalto sites is also in progress, which would most likely further enhance international tourism. Members report significant benefits from route status, including increased visibility, collaboration, and potential for economic growth. Sustainability is also a key focus, and workshops, mentorships initiatives have been organized, also encouraging eco-friendly travel and eco-certifications. A comprehensive sustainability strategy is being developed, aligning with Aalto's environmental principles and ensuring the Route's long-term viability as a model for sustainable cultural tourism. The route management already conducted two surveys among its members focusing on perceived tourism benefits and engagement with sustainability. It is recommended to continue this data collection to monitor progress over time. Especially, it would be useful to encourage Route members to keep track of tourism numbers and also measure the impact of the Cultural Route brand on the tourist arrivals. Continuing initiatives to encourage sustainable travel is also crucial.

The **Cultural route network** has extended significantly since its certification. The network currently includes more members from five European countries. Members consist of local authorities, NGOs, heritage sites, tourism entities, and academic institutions, creating a balanced and diverse network. Since its certification, the Route has expanded from 20 to 33 members, adding France and Italy as new countries. Efforts to broaden the network focus on attracting international members and fostering collaboration. The Route plans to recruit additional members in Finland and internationally. It is recommended to continue these efforts,

capitalizing on the benefits that being part of the network brings. Awareness campaigns through events, workshops, and social media, along with participation in Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe initiatives and travel fairs, will continue to drive the expansion.

Alvar Aalto Route has significantly improved its **Communication tools** since its certification. The official website has undergone a major upgrade and provides richness of information regarding all route members and Aalto sites. There also three social media communication channels (Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn) managed by a part-time employee. The channels have acquired significant numbers of followers. The Route also produces printed media and participate in tourism fairs to distribute hands-on information to potential tourists and partners. It is recommended to continue working with the social media presence, to raise awareness of the stakeholders and target groups on Aalto-related activities. Further, it is recommended to further investigate the usage of logo by the members as well as better understand the visibility, impact and attitudes towards the logo (and the Aalto brand in general) among the tourists, partners and local communities in general. It is also recommended to develop and regularly update the full visibility package of the Route and distribute it among all the members.

In conclusion, Alvar Aalto Route has demonstrated significant progress since its inception in 2021 as a Cultural Route of the CoE. It has successfully leveraged the architectural and design legacy of Alvar Aalto to create a cohesive network that spans multiple countries. By integrating diverse members, including municipalities, heritage sites, academic institutions, and tourism organizations, the Route has effectively fostered cultural collaboration and innovation. While significant efforts have been made, some challenges remain, including the need for broader European membership, expanded educational programs, and enhanced international youth engagement. Addressing these gaps will strengthen the Route's alignment with Council of Europe values and ensure its long-term sustainability as a model for cultural heritage preservation and promotion in Europe.

CRITERIA		Recommendations previous evaluation 2020-2021	Has the route addressed the recommendation since the last evaluation ?		Recommendations current evaluation 2024-2025
			YES	NO	
I. Cultural route theme		The theme has promising potential, the shared approach should be jointly agreed at international level.	☒	☐	Better showcase Aalto's influence on modern architecture and design beyond Finland; link to the narrative of European heritage
II. Priority fields of action	Cooperation in research and development	Notable professional resources and research networks could be linked with the Aalto Route initiative. The shared approach should be jointly agreed at international level.	☒	☐	Continue finding synergies with all the research related activities happening in the Alvar Aalto Foundation and other members, as well as other CoE routes; include more international members in the Scientific Committee; given the interest cooperation with non-EU members can also be considered
	Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage	The shared approach should be jointly and agreed at international level.	☒	☐	Better showcase Aalto's influence on modern architecture and design beyond Finland; link to the narrative of European heritage
	Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans	Youth exchanges (cultural and educational) are to be considered and planned on European level jointly by the Route association.	☐	☒	Expand Aalto School Network to international schools; encourage international youth exchanges and initiatives; cooperate with international university students, e.g. through offering internships; engage more with social media aimed at youth
	Contemporary cultural and artistic practice	The shared approach should be jointly agreed at international level	☒	☐	Continue engaging architects, designers and artists as well as reimagining the Aalto heritage through innovative approaches; keep better track of all the events that happen in the network
	Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural development	The shared approach should be jointly agreed at international level	☒	☐	Conducting a survey to map out members' interests in tourism and sustainability has been a great initiative and it is recommended to continue systematic data collection and reporting in this and other fields; given the interest among

					Japanese tourists consider working with this market more strategically
III. Cultural Route Network	The Alvar Aalto Route association should discuss at European level the membership profile in terms of multidiscipline expertise and interests, as well as the role of stakeholders and other actors. Based on this strategic approach, the Route association should trace and attract active Route members in at least three countries.	☒	☐	Continue already ongoing efforts regarding recruitment of international members Given the diversity of the network members make sure that the common vision and common interests remain, and no specific group steers the agenda	
	The Alvar Aalto Route association should jointly conduct strategic and financial planning. European level methods of cooperation need to be developed, taking into consideration all priority fields of activities, and linking of necessary actors and expertise.	☒	☐		
Communication Tools	Benchmarking of already certified cultural routes could be useful	☒	☐	Continue working with the social media presence, to raise awareness of the stakeholders and target various groups on the Route's activities. Further investigate the usage of logo by the members as well as better understand the visibility, impact and attitudes towards the logo (and the Aalto brand in general) among the tourists and local communities in general.	

5. List of references

All documents required for the evaluation had been duly submitted, namely:

- 1_CERTIFICATION_FORM AlvarAaltoRoute_2024-2025
- Annexes to the Certification Form Document 1
- 2_STATUTES
- 3_MEMBERS
- 4_GENERAL ASSEMBLIES
- 5_FINANCIAL INFORMATION
- 6_ACTIVITIES

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- Cultural Route on Aalto's Architecture and Design Heritage Association Action Plan for 2025.

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

Interviews

Name	Role, Organization	Country	Email	Date
Tiina Rajala	Guest relations manager, Ahlström Noormarkku	Finland	tiina.rajala@aahlstrom.com	22.11.24
Asdis Olafsdottir	Manager, Maison Louis Carré	France	asdis@maisonlouiscarre.fr	26.11.24
Tommi Lindh	CEO, Alvar Aalto Foundation	Finland	tommi.lindh@alvaraalto.fi	26.11.24
Sofia Singler	Chair of the Scientific Committee, Cambridge University	Finland, UK	sofia.singler@gmail.com	26.11.24
Heli Leinonkoski	Board member, City of Jyväskylä	Finland	Heli.Leinonkoski@jyvaskyla.fi	27.11.24
Jennifer Dahlbäck	Executive Director, Villa Skeppet	Finland	jennifer@villaskeppet.fi	27.11.24
Maria Rasmussen	Board member, City of Pori	Finland	maria.rasmussen@pori.fi	29.11.24
Susanne Rasmus	Director of Destination Management Organization, City of Jyväskylä	Finland	susanne.rasmus@jyvaskyla.fi	12.12.24

Field visit

Location	Country	Activities	Date
Helsinki	Finland	Official meeting with Alvar Aalto Route representatives: • Maija Oinonen, Executive Director of the Alvar Aalto Route; • Heli Leinonkoski, Jyväskylä City Administrative Director, Board member of the Route • Johanna Rintamäki, Seinäjoki City, Chair of the Association, City Specialist in Tourism and Sustainability • Mari Forsberg, Collaboration Manager at Alvar Aalto Foundation	10.12.24

		Visit to Studio Aalto together with Route representatives www.alvaraalto.fi/en/location/studio-aalto Guided tour at the Aalto House www.alvaraalto.fi/en/location/the-aalto-house Guided tour at Finlandia Hall together with Alvar Aalto Foundation www.alvaraalto.fi/en/architecture/finlandia-hall Dinner at Toppa together with Route representatives in the Enso-Gutzeit Headquarters, planned and designed by Aalto https://toppa.fi	
Paimio	Finland	Trip to and four-hour guided tour at Paimio Sanatorium in Western Finland https://paimiosanatorium.com Together with • Lotta Mujo, Head of Stakeholders and Fundraising at Paimio Sanatorium • Tommi Lindh, CEO of Alvar Aalto Foundation • Maija Oinonen, Executive Director of the Alvar Aalto Route	11.12.24

7. Annex 2: Expert assessment checklist

EXPERT ASSESSMENT CHECK-LIST			
		QUESTIONS	Yes No
3.1 THEME		1 Does the theme of the Route represent a common value (historical, cultural, or heritage) to several European countries?	1
		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
		8 Does the Route show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European countries?	1
		9 Does the Route illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe?	1
		10 Does the Route have a network of universities and research center working on its theme at the European level?	1
	3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage	11 Does the Route have a multidisciplinary Scientific Committee?	1
		12 Does the Scientific Committee work on its theme at the European level?	1
		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
		15 Do the Route activities take into account and explain the historical significance of tangible and intangible European heritage	1
		16 Do the Route activities promote the values of the Council of Europe?	1
		17 Do the Route activities promote the brand of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe?	1
		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
		20 Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring?	1
		21 Do the Route activities valorize the heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe?	0
	3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans	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
		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
		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
		25 Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to develop a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship?	0
		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?	0
		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 cultural and artistic practice	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
		34 Do the Route's cultural activities encourage innovative cultural and contemporary art practices* connecting them with the history of skills development?	0
		35 Do the Route's cultural activities encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?*	0
		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
		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?***	0
	3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development	40 Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development) assist in local, regional, national and/or European identity formation?	1
		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?	0
		43 Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between developed and disadvantaged regions?	0
		44 Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between different regions (south, north, east, west) of Europe?	1
		45 Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between majority and minority (or native and immigrant) cultures?	0
		46 Do the Route's activities open possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents?	1
		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
		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
		50 Do the Route's activities develop partnerships with public and private organisations active in the field of tourism?	1
		51 Did the network prepare and use tools along the route to raise the number of visitors and the economic impacts of the route	0

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?		0
	56	Is the network financially sustainable?	1	
	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	
	63	Does the network specify its overall strategy in the short and long term?	1	
	64	Does the network identify potential participants and partners in Council of Europe member states and/or other world countries?	1	
	65	Does the network provide details of its financing (financial reports and/or activity budgets)?	1	
	66	Does the network provide details of its operational plan?	1	
	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?		0
	70	Does the Route have its own dedicated website?	1	
	71	Is it the website available in English and French?		0
	72	Is it the website available in other languages?	1	
	73	Does the network use effectively social networks and web 2.0?	1	
	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?		0
	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	
	80	Are the logos (Cultural Route + certification logo) provided to all the members of the Route?	1	
	81	Does the Council of Europe certification logo appear on road signs/ boards indicating the cultural route?		0
SCORE			66	0

8. Annex 3: List of acronyms, figures and tables

List of figures

Figure 1. Alvar Aalto Route sites

Figure 2. Harmony, function and form - Makia x Alvar Aalto - streetwear in collaboration with Makia clothing brand

Figure 3. Type of network members

Figure 4. Alvar Aalto Route logo

List of acronyms

CoE – Council of Europe

EU – European Union

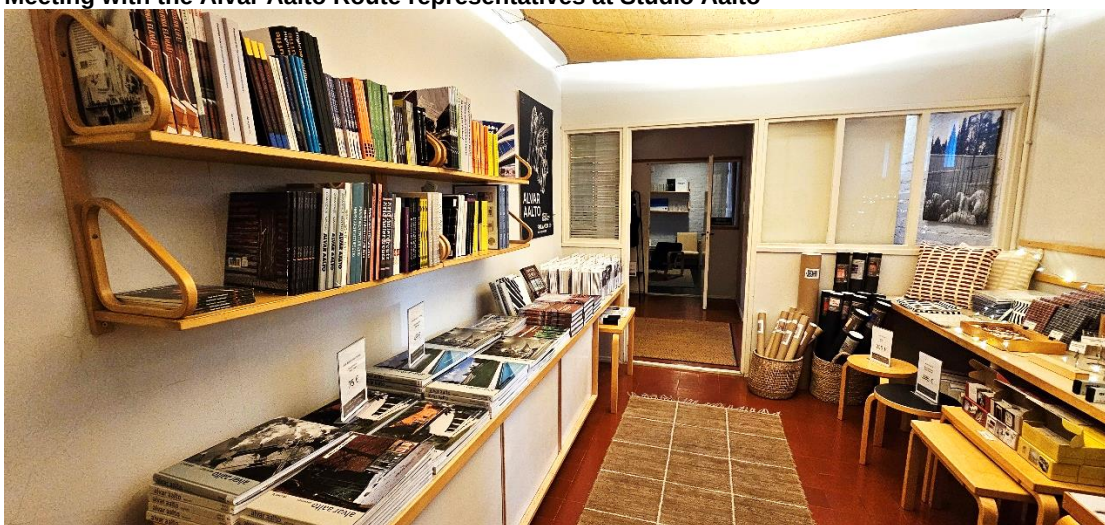
SITE 1 STUDIO AALTO



Interiors of Studio Aalto



Meeting with the Alvar Aalto Route representatives at Studio Aalto



Museum shop featuring Aalto-related books and souvenirs

SITE 2 THE AALTO HOUSE



Tourists waiting for the guided tour outside the Aalto House



Guided tour inside the Aalto House featuring personal items of the Aalto family



Museum shop featuring Alvar Aalto Route logo

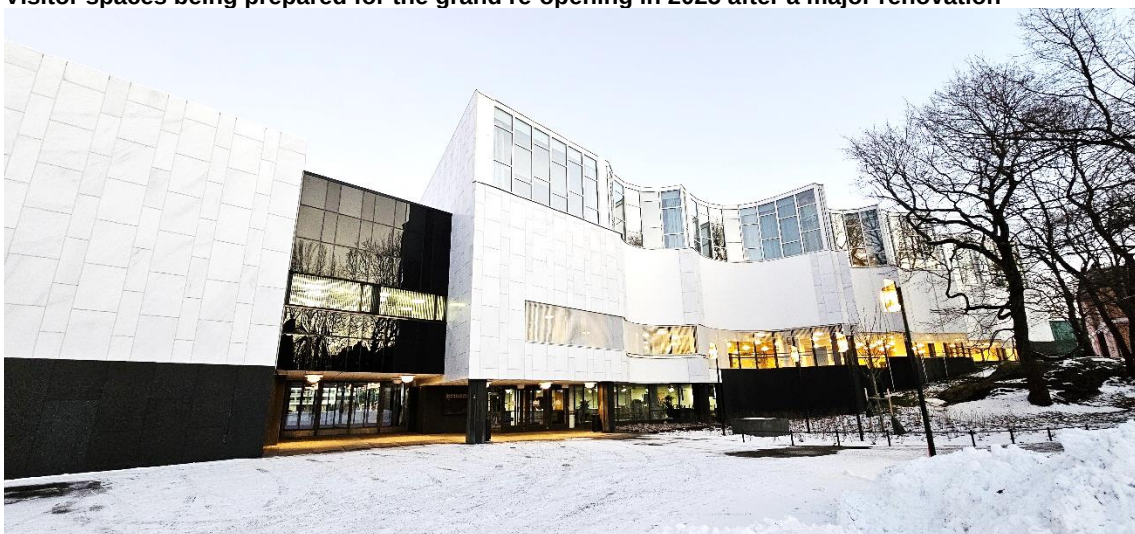
SITE 3 FINLANDIA HALL



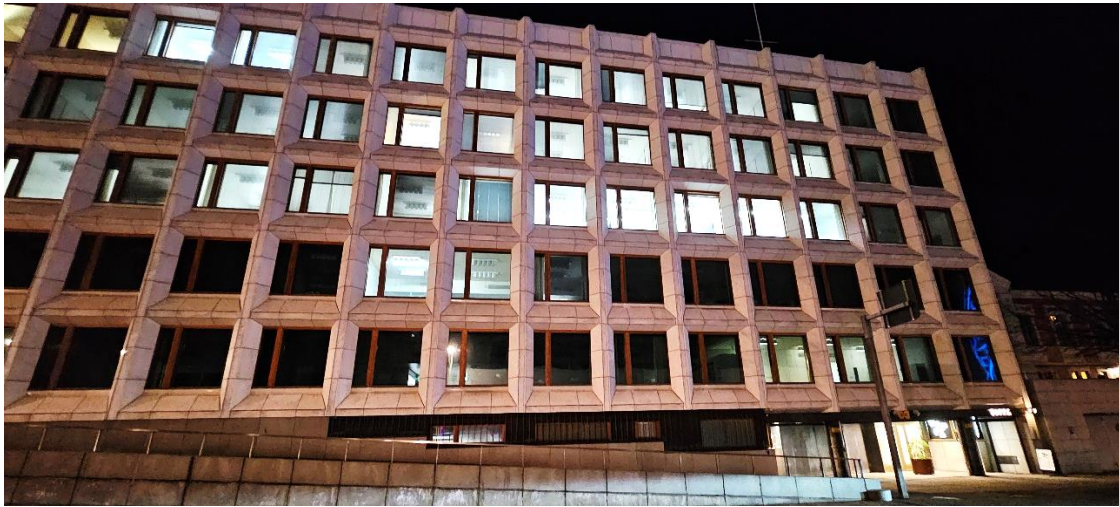
One angle of the enormous Finlandia Hall



Visitor spaces being prepared for the grand re-opening in 2025 after a major renovation



Signature Aalto shapes of the Finlandia Hall
SITE 4. TOPPA RESTAURANT



Enso-Gutzeit company headquarters



Interiors of the Toppa restaurant



Signature lamps and zebra prints of the Aalto design

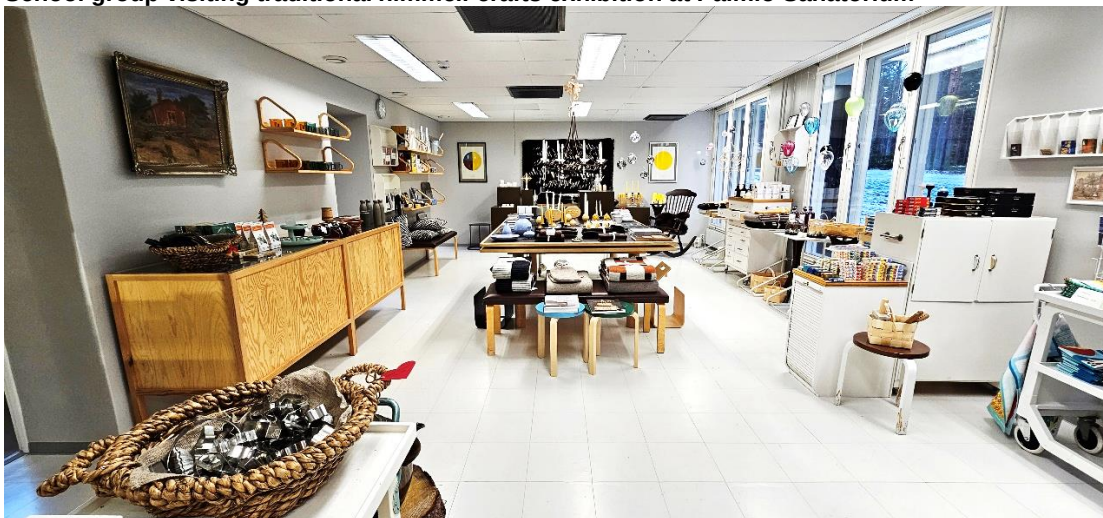
SITE 5 PAIMIO SANATORIUM



View of Paimio Sanatorium



School group visiting traditional *himmeli* crafts exhibition at Paimio Sanatorium



Christmas shopping at Paimio Sanatorium visitor area