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INnovative **CULT**ural **ToUR**is**M** in European peripheries

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Training material on innovative INCULTUM Participatory Framework for Pilot Actions

based on
INCULTUM D4.1 Report on participatory models

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Introduction

Participatory approaches and models in tourism are widely accepted as a criterion for sustainable tourism, as it helps decision makers maintain traditional lifestyles and respect community values. In addition, participatory models are useful in developing the image and brand of the tourism destination and increasing its competition by providing better customer services or generating innovation or innovative tools in tourism. Participatory models tend to move away from top-down one-way decision-making in order to balance the power between all parties to promote a win-win situation in tourism development (see, e.g., Ozcevik et al., 2010; Wang, Fesenmaier, 2007; Cater, 1994; Wild, 1994; Murphy 1985; Arnstein, 1969). The participatory approach and its models are helpful in implementing Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals, namely Goals 8, 11, 12, and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable cities and communities, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable use of oceans and marine resources.

Robson and Robson (1996) asserted that “the participation of stakeholders in tourism has the potential to provide a framework within which sustainable tourism development can be achieved” by striking a balance between those who have the traditional power (those who possess money, knowledge and control, such as governments, investors, and outside experts) and those who have to live with the outcome of the development project (the host community) (Vijayanand 2013). Once the power relation is balanced and each stakeholder has the opportunity to express opinions in decision making, tourism development will be more fully developed, fair, and ultimately sustainable.

The INCULTUM project is based on a participatory approach where local communities and stakeholders play a direct and important role in the implementation of pilot actions. The ratio behind their involvement is to promote a positive impact of participatory models and avoiding negative effects of tourism for social relationships, local cultural heritage, or landscape preservation.

Culture, tourism and sustainable development

The relationship between culture and tourism has undergone evolution over the past century due to its complex relationship (Matteucci, Von Zumbusch, 2020). Sustainable tourism development is an approach that aims at reducing the tensions and frictions created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, tourists, the environment and the host communities in order to maintain long-term capacity and quality of human and natural resources (Bramwell, Lane, 1993). Sustainable tourism development has the ability to orchestrate the overall development of tourist destinations by an increase in employment, local or regional economics, and well-being (Gajdošík et al. 2017). If tourism is to contribute to sustainable development, it must be economically viable, environmentally sensitive, and culturally appropriate.

Within the tourism sector, the pursuit of sustainability has led to attempts to create alternative forms of tourism that have fewer impacts on the environment and communities (Smith et al., 1992). The effort of reducing the negative effects of tourism activities has become almost universally accepted as a desirable and politically appropriate approach to tourism development (Sharpley, 2003). Based on the definition of culture and its interconnection with tourism, culture can be perceived as an enhancer for the development of different types of tourism, such as cultural tourism, creative tourism or rural tourism.

Two main principles common to cultural, creative and rural tourism, which are a path towards their sustainability and participation, see their interaction in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Connecting common principles of cultural, creative and rural tourism

Sustainable development and participation are the principles that tie together the ten pilots of INCULTUM. In fact, the INCULTUM project and its ten pilot actions are designed to meet the challenges and opportunities of cultural tourism with the aim of furthering sustainable social, cultural, and economic development of the territories. It explores the full potential of marginal and peripheral areas when managed by local communities and stakeholders. Innovative participatory approaches are adopted, transforming locals into protagonists, able to reduce negative impacts, learning from and improving good practices to be replicated and translated into strategies and policies.

The sustainable development of a tourism destination relies on the adoption of an effective destination governance. This consists of the management and development of limited resources by implementing principles, guidelines and a targeted stimulation of cooperation among the variety of destination’s stakeholders (each of them with different interests), with the goal of pursuing common goals (Calvi, Moretti, 2020; Thees et al. 2020). Several authors have recently pointed out the importance and benefit of involving the local community in destination governance, through specific actions/plans of participatory governance (Bramwell 2010; Reid, Mair, & George 2004; Shakeela & Weaver 2018). Participatory governance models are based on participation, active involvement of civil society, and local communities in decision making as a crucial element to ensure a fair and effective management of cultural resources of a tourism destination (Calvi, Moretti, 2020; Cortés-Vázquez et al., 2017).

Digitalisation and sustainable cultural tourism

Digital transformation is a new phenomenon evident in all sectors. According to Sonkoly and Vahtikari, digitalisation of cultural heritage “seems to be the most obvious instrument of democratisation of cultural heritage” (Sonkoly, Vahtikari 2018, p. 38). It can be defined as a change in the scope and direction of governance supported by technologies and electronic

processes to ensure better value creation for the benefit of customers and companies (Mergel et al., 2019; Margiono, 2020). Vial (2019) adds that important elements to achieve this change are information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies. Relationships between digital technology, culture, and tourism have been studied by several authors (see, e.g. Cameron, Kenderdine 2007; Cipolla et al., 2011; Kalay et al., 2008; Labadi, Long, 2010; Logan et al., 2015; Long, Morpeth 2016; Rusalic, 2009; Stanco et al., 2011). According to EU (2019), digitalisation relates to economic, social, cultural, and organisational transformations, which are the result of digital technologies. The term digital participation refers to active involvement in digital society through the use of modern information and communication technology (ICT), such as the Internet. This participation includes access not only the Internet but also to various online services and content (Seifert, Rossel, 2019).

Culture, tourism, and ICT and their mutual interactions and applications offer a tremendous potential for the digitization of cultural heritage, thus largely affecting the way cultural products are produced, assessed, consumed, managed, and promoted for tourists (Stratigea et al. 2008). Creation and proper management of cultural content, but also further developments in the field of digital technologies targeting the modelling, analysis, understanding, and preservation of cultural heritage are nowadays at the forefront of technological research and innovation endeavours. Developments in the field are expected to widely affect the marketing potential of cultural destinations and their ability to strengthen their attractiveness, based on a well-planned strategy and the use of ICT for its implementation (Panagiotopoulou et al., 2019). As pointed out by EC, cultural tourism, should maximize the impact of the heritage digitization investment (cf. European Commission, Directorate-General Information Society 2002, p. 72) as it can help to increase cultural tourism experience (e.g., Buhalis and Amaranggana 2014; Neuhofer et al. 2015). Different ICT tools, such as travel applications, can be used in various functional categories, such as information and context awareness (see, e.g. Dickinson et al., 2014) or tourists may use internet in a creative way for trip planning and to find more authentic experiences (Xiang et al., 2015). Digital supplementary tools, combining various forms, such as text, sound, video, graphics, or georeferenced, contribute to improve users' perception of their surroundings (Economou, 2015, p. 218) and awareness of local identity (Roque, Forte, 2017). Additionally, the use of modern ICT in post pandemic era has been recognized to promote cultural opportunities (Garau, 2015; Marzo-Navarro et al., 2017) as technology can be an alternative to physical tourism experiences (Sharma et al., 2021; Stankov et al., 2020). The adoption of digital technologies derives from the desire to attract more visitors, reduce costs, improve the visitor experience, and adapt to competitors. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies (Raimo et al., 2021).

The European Commission highlights that the momentum is now to preserve our culture and cultural heritage and bring it to this digital decade. European Commission published Recommendation 2021/1970 on a common European data space for cultural heritage. This Recommendation encourages Member States to put in place appropriate frameworks to enhance the recovery and transformation of the cultural heritage sector and to support cultural heritage institutions in becoming more empowered and more resilient in the future. This will lead to higher quality digitisation, reuse and digital preservation across the EU, and have spillover effects in other key sectors of the European economy, such as tourism, research, and other cultural and creative sectors (for more information see (Commission Recommendation 2021/1970).

European Commission in its publication *Sustainable Cultural Tourism* (2019) also provides five ways in which digital technology can support digital participation in sustainable cultural tourism, namely sustainable access (including preservation); documentation and storytelling; communication and marketing; business intelligence (indicators); innovation.

The output of the digital transformation is usually innovations in the delivery mode of services, forms of direct interactions with customers, as well as the proliferation of smart products that enable real-time monitoring and updating, and services that transform production processes and customer relationship (Mergel et al., 2019). Innovations, including digital transformation in the preservation of cultural heritage, are crucial to the development of the tourism sector and to ensure competitiveness in tourist destinations (Gajdošík et al., 2017). In a globally competitive market, businesses and destinations need to offer experiences in the form of very high quality products and services. This demands a high level of innovative capacity, ensuring the sustainable development of businesses, products, services, and processes without depleting cultural resources and assets (EC, 2019). In the cultural sectors, the impacts of digital transformation are reflected in facilitating imaginative engagement with spaces and objects, in affording innovative forms of participation, and in drawing new kinds of value from otherwise inaccessible archives. (Arrigoni et al., 2020). The new technologies innovated cultural services by 'challenging / overcoming shared cultural codes of the product category, and proposing cultural meanings not previously exploited by incumbents that resonate with final customers' (Pedeliento et al. 2018, p.432). In the cultural sector, innovation can be characterized as a soft innovation in goods and services that primarily affects sensory perception, aesthetic appeal, or intellectual appeal rather than functional performance (Subottina, 2015). Nesta (2009) differentiates the innovations in products that are aesthetic or intellectual in nature (music, books, film, fashion, art) and the aesthetic innovations in goods and services that are primarily functional in nature, which can be found in other industries where products may also have many non-functional characteristics (sight and touch of a new car, for example, sound of its engine, etc.).

Although technological product and process innovations are widespread within the cultural sector, an important part of innovative activities here is based on novelty instead of functionality and involves a change that is more aesthetic or intellectual in nature (Subottina, 2015; Vitálišová et al., 2018).

The impacts of digital transformation in cultural institutions are reflected not only in empowering the customer; enabling staff to think 'beyond my service', encouraging staff to explore new and more efficient ways of working or empowering and supporting staff to continuously improve, encouraging customer-focused thinking and focusing on developing organizational culture (Curtis, 2018), but can also bring new stimuli for city development, for example, increased demand for additional services for tourists. Innovations in cultural and creative industries can arise into new ideas, mobilizes the creative potential of places in the form of new products, services, information, technological innovations, non-technological processes, and outputs that generate creative capital that is increasingly important for the growth of cities and regions (Batabyal and Nijkamp 2016, Borseková et al. 2021, Florida 2003, Vitálišová et al., 2022). Innovations can also bring about the new way of utilization the historical and cultural heritage in other economic activities (e. g., old abandoned historic buildings rebuilt to hotels, restaurants, business offices in a form of co-working space or incubators, etc.). However, all implemented innovations, especially in cultural and cultural industries, should be carefully prepared with respect to local identity, acceptable by the local community and its shared values (Martinat et al. 2016, Vitálišová et al. 2022). Therefore, the

participation of local communities plays a crucial role. The optimal model for the development of sustainable cultural tourism is presented in the following figure.



Figure 2 Sustainable cultural tourism based on interaction between participation, innovation and digitalisation

To meet this optimal scenario, the next section is devoted to the proposal of innovative INCULTUM Participatory Framework for Pilot Actions.

Proposal of innovative INCULTUM Participatory Framework for Pilot Actions

INCULTUM innovation is experimented in a broad range of pilot cases across Europe with different geographical locations and a diversity of socio-economic contexts and cultural-natural heritage, with relevant cross-border significance. Pilot cases of the INCULTUM project are the places to develop innovative strategies for a sustainable tourism development, together with stakeholders, local administrations, and policy makers; to foster bottom-up approaches for sustainable cultural tourism, focusing on hidden and undervalued potentialities usually not taken into account, and on the experience, learning, and participation of visitors; to promote cultural tourism based on living territories and communities, avoiding negative impacts of touristification by specific training and reinforcing local identities and social ties; to evaluate the impact of the interventions on the social cohesion, local identity, and various measures of life satisfaction in the local communities. For this purpose, we are introducing here the proposal of innovative INCULTUM participatory framework as an umbrella approach for pilot actions implemented in INCULTUM project.

The proposed INCULTUM Participatory Framework is organized as multilevel methodological approach, see its overview at Figure 3.

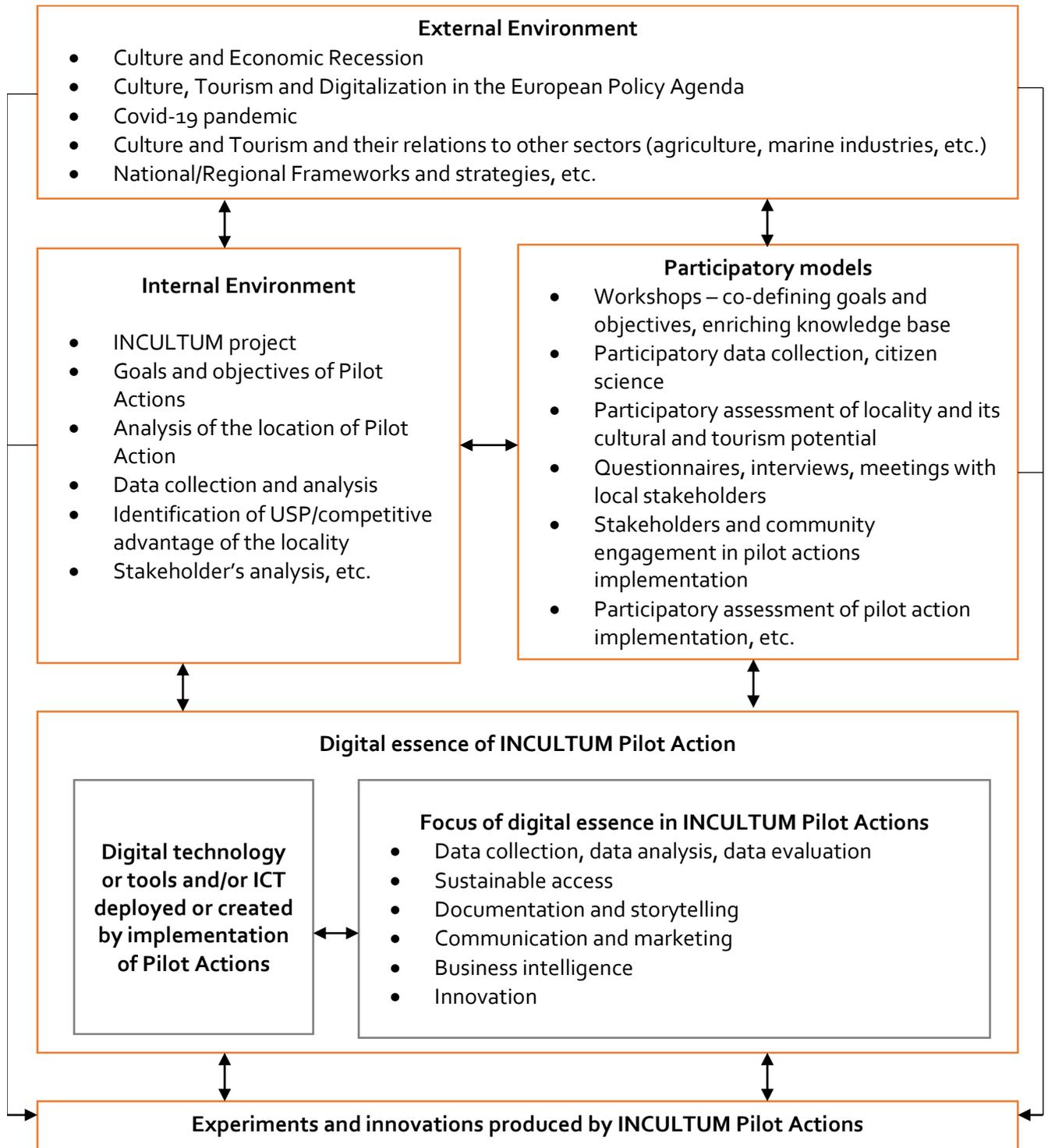


Figure 3 Proposal of INCULTUM Participatory Framework for Pilot Actions, inspired by INCULTUM project, Panagiotopoulou et al., 2017, 2019

At first, the focus is oriented toward the analysis and exploration of the external environment. It can be very useful to identify dominant trends and interdependencies, which can guide decision-making regarding cultural resource management in each pilot action region concerned. Generally, this could start with analysis of the position of the cultural sector in the European and national policy agenda and other related policy frameworks (e.g., on tourism, digitalization, etc.), steering sustainable cultural tourism development paths.

Opportunities related to potential calls for projects or actions or changes in tourism development paths toward more sustainable tourism, but especially threats such as climate change, culture and economic recession, the Covid-19 pandemic, and other potential threats need to be considered from the very beginning. This can help to understand the role of this sector in an economic recession era and climate change era and to outline the new opportunities that this brings to the forefront when exploring alternative culture-led future development options. Finally, the exploration of potential cultural linkages with other sectors e.g. agriculture, marine industries, or traditional crafts, and the way such linkages can be used to strengthen the identity and extraversion, through, for example, gastronomic tourism.

Next comes the analysis of the region where INCULTUM Pilot Action is located and its anchoring in INCULTUM project. This means an in-depth analysis of the internal environment, which includes: setting of the goals and objectives of Pilot Action; data collection and exploration of the current state of the area under study (social attributes, local economic structure, infrastructures, natural characteristics, problems, etc.) and its participatory collection (data) or assessment through chosen participatory approaches or models; identification of competitive advantage or unique selling point/ proposition (USP) and participatory assessment of related local cultural and natural resources; stakeholders analysis and searching for influence-dependence relationships between stakeholders, as well as their position regarding the goal and objectives.

The internal environment and other stages of INCULTUM pilot actions should be supported by participatory models and approaches at least at one stage of their implementation. This includes participatory data collection and analysis; participatory workshops with local stakeholders and communities; participatory assessment of locality and its cultural and tourism potential, including discussion on desired paths of development. Questionnaires, surveys, interviews, citizen science, meetings, and workshops are possible tools for participation of local communities and relevant stakeholders. Besides, it is useful if stakeholders and/or communities are involved the implementation of in pilot actions and assessment of their implementation or results.

INCULTUM Pilot Actions might include digital essence, for example, to deploy digital technology or tools and/or different types of ICTs or to create new digital platforms, tools or innovation. In addition, INCULTUM pilot actions can benefit from using digital tools and technologies to increase the participation of local communities and stakeholders in the implementation of the pilot action. The digital essence in INCULTUM pilot actions should be focused on one of the following (or their combinations): data collection, data analysis, data evaluation; improving sustainable access to culture and cultural heritage; increasing attractiveness of cultural tourism through documentation and storytelling; exploitation of digital communication and digital marketing tools; using business intelligence; and creation of innovation in cultural tourism.

The realization of pilot actions through the innovative INCULTUM participatory framework contributes to original experiments and the emergence of innovation in cultural tourism.

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