

TAKING
COOPERATION
FORWARD



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„Community Engagement in Cultural Routes“

SiTI - Higher Institute on Territorial Systems for Innovation

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European Cultural Route of Reformation (ECRR)

Main features of
Cultural Routes

Community
Engagement

Tools for local
Community
Engagement in
Cultural Routes

Key Informants
Interview

Future vision on
ECRR



MAIN FEATURES OF CULTURAL ROUTES

Cultural Routes take into consideration different Touristic aspects, such as Information, Accessibility, Hospitality and Local Engagement.

- Roads signalisation and infrastructure
- Private Sector and Public Sector
- Cultural, Social, Environmental sustainability
- Digital accessibility
- Relationships between local communities and Tourism
- Local economic activities



What is a local community in this particular context? the set of people who can affect or be affected by the building up of a Cultural Route.

Local engagement plays a key role in the development of Cultural Routes, which are strictly linked to Sustainability.

- One of the goals of the Cultural Routes program by the Council of Europe implies a wide involvement of different stakeholder, such as private, public, NGOs, association, local and transnational, Private-Public Partnerships etc)
- This concept derives from the inclusive philosophies instead of using exclusive decisional processes.
- The inclusive process among communities living along Cultural Routes is particularly challenging, due to the complex array of functional, spatial, political and socio-cultural constraints and characteristics impinging on local communities.
- The inclusive process could avoid the "zoo syndrome", where every single community plays in its background.
- The ECRR project, deals with either Cultural Heritage linked to historical and religious concepts. Therefore, it is important to select stakeholders taking into consideration this particular aspect.



How to successful engage local communities

Each phase of engagement is:

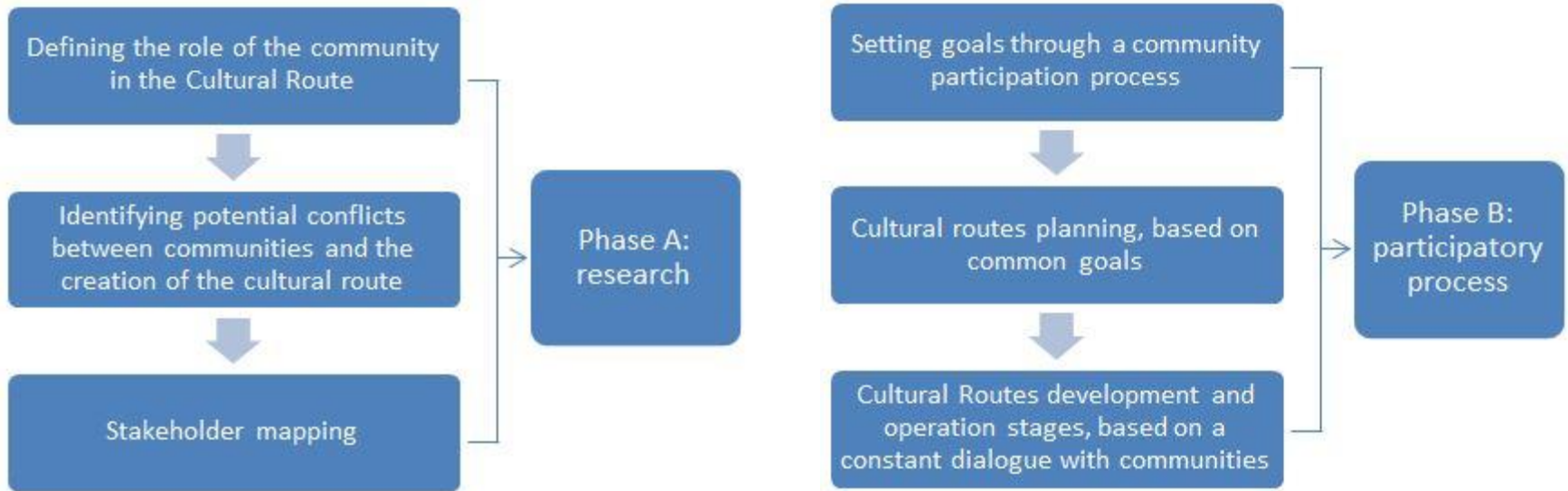
1. Built during the process;
 2. Tailor-made to each community, type of stakeholders and local features.
1. Defining the role of the community

The role of each stakeholder will depend on:

- Each stakeholder peculiarity and their role in local Cultural Heritage in its different perspectives and values (social, cultural, religious etc.)
- If/How much they are exposed to tourism.



TOOLS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL ROUTES



Identifying potential conflicts

- Communities along the route may have different perception and attachment to the selected theme of the route and different attitudes towards the acceptable level of tourism in their place; even within the community, different groups may have different goals and opinions;
- Tourists travelling along the route tend to give more importance to the common aspects characterizing the route rather than the differences between countries and communities;
- Planners and promoters of the Cultural Route pack together many attractions under the same theme and promote it as a unique tourism product, while communities along the route may perceive this as culturally imposing.



TOOLS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL ROUTES

Stakeholders mapping



TOOLS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL ROUTES

Setting the goals

The most common community goals

Economic

- improving the standard of living
- creating new business opportunities

Socio-cultural

- increasing awareness about the importance of cultural heritage
- stimulating cultural preservation and share values

Environmental

- raising awareness about environment protection
- using tourism profits for the environmental sustainability

Quality of services

- accessibility of local communities to services and cultural events
- mobility in order to avoid congestion and pollution problems

These common goals need to be verified and detailed through a **participatory process**



Methods for community engagement

- The decision of the most appropriate engagement methods in any phase of the project mainly depends on the objectives, the relevant stakeholders and the available resources.

Engagement methods can be divided in three categories:



TOOLS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL ROUTES

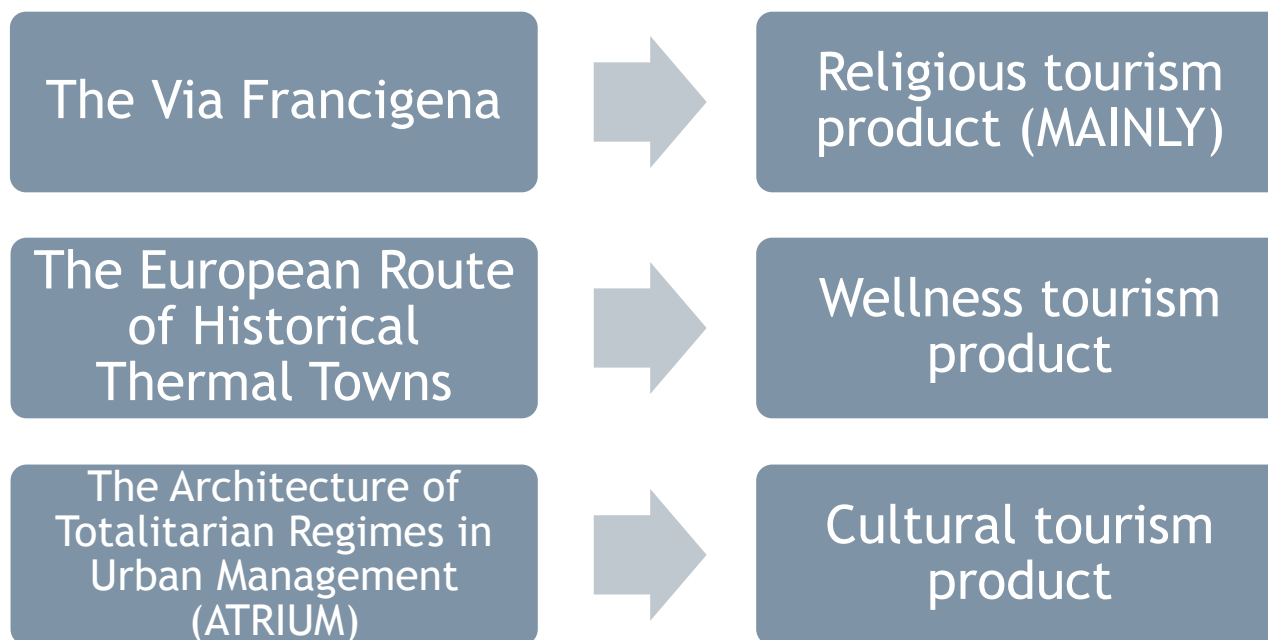
Cultural Routes planning and development

- Once the community has **expressed its needs and expectations**, the planning for the implementation of the Cultural Route can be formulated and implemented.
- During this operational phase, a constant **dialogue and cooperation** with the stakeholders affected by each action can facilitate the work and guarantee long-term results.
- Finally, **dissemination and promotion** of the route will be necessary for the involvement of the whole community.



The application to some existing Cultural Routes

The existing Cultural Routes, selected as examples from the engagement of local communities, correspond to three different types of Tourism Products:



TOOLS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL ROUTES

How community engagement has been applied to some existing Cultural Routes

The Via Francigena

The European Route of
Historical Thermal Towns

The Architecture of
Totalitarian Regimes in
Urban Management



KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWS

“Local partners of the project play a fundamental role, as they are the point of reference for the whole local community. They often start taking the initiative and organise local meetings in addition to the ones organised by the official network”

“The Via Francigena is strictly linked with spirituality and, partially, with religious aspects. Certainly, this aspect is quite sensitive and thus it is necessary to pay attention when commercializing the route, in order to preserve its spiritual aspect”

“The involvement of local stakeholders in Cultural Routes really makes the difference, as nobody better than people living along the route can transmit the authenticity that a pilgrim is usually looking for”

“Seeing people from all over the world coming to visit the place you born is usually a great source of proud”

“The typical tourist of Cultural Routes is usually young, educated, not necessary low-income, with a strong attention to sustainability and authenticity”



Q&As

- What are the local communities to be involved in each region?
- Who is the main representative of these communities?
- To what extent/to what scale do we want to achieve in the engagement?
- Which is the role of researchers? (e.g. Facilitators, trainers, marketing, something else?)
- Could the perception of local communities be a criteria when selecting cultural heritage elements?
- Dissemination of the projects/impact elements of ECRR to establish the official Route.
- How do local communities perceive the cultural heritage linked to the reformation?
- The ECRR project started with a mainly top-down approach



THANK YOU!



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