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Cultural thematic routes as key driver of innovative and digital creative tourism

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The Embedding of Cultural Thematic Routes in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 and Recovery and Resilience Facility – Efforts of the Ministry of Culture on Program Level

Priority measures prioritized by the Ministry of Culture:

- **The culture and sustainable tourism** and
- **The digitalization of culture.**

Both priority measures, with proper policy-mix and interaction are recognized as **the key measures within the concept of smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformations.** By designing the proposal of measures, the Ministry of Culture focuses on idea **that innovations can be strongly related to the digital transformation, particularly through introducing new products and services and new ways of providing them to the target group.**

Sustainable Cultural Tourism as a Response to Covid 19 Crisis According to the draft of National Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP)

Reinforcing a commitment to twin transitions – **the green and the digital:**

- **A digital transformation of culture** (as a response to the *Digital transformation of the public sector and public administration* reform) – **of creativity** (platform e-Kultura), **of cultural heritage** (system e-Dediščina) and **archives** (system e-ARH); and

- **A sustainable renovation and revitalization of cultural heritage and public infrastructure by integration of cultural content in Slovenian tourism** (as a response to the reform *Sustainable development of tourism, including cultural heritage*).

Cultural Thematic Routes as Part of Sustainable Tourism Concept in European Cohesion Policy

Measures to support the **culture and sustainable tourism** and the **digitalization of culture:**

PO1 "A **smarter** Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation":

- **Development of the Cultural Creative Sector** and

- **Digital Innovation with the aim to create a supporting environment for the Cultural Sector.**

PO4 "A more **social** Europe by implementing the European pillar of social rights ":

- **The revitalization and restoration of cultural heritage and public infrastructure & digital innovation of culture and cultural heritage.**

○ **as part of Smart Specialization Strategy**

Basis for the the measures to support the **culture and sustainable tourism** and the **digitalization of culture,** provided in the Policy Objective 1 of the draft operational programs is in the draft of **Slovenia's updated Smart Specialization Strategy (S4)** for the upcoming programming period 2021-2027:

- **Digital** pillar: Strategic Research Innovation Partnership Smart Cities and ICT & ICT Horizontal Network

- **Circular** pillar: Strategic Research Innovation Partnership Sustainable tourism

4. Areas of joint development: **Cultural heritage and tourism**

The objective is to further link tourism and culture in order to provide more added value especially by using virtual and augmented reality with the entertainment-based elements to co-create and, above all, to enrich the user experience.

- **as part of European territorial cooperation and macroregional cooperation projects**

By designing proposal of **smart (innovative & digital), green, circular, and social** sustainable tourism as part of territorial cooperation, the Ministry of Culture adheres to the following **the key focuses of Sustainable tourism concept:**

1. Diversified tourism offers (products and services)

by full use of unexploited innovative potential of the region linking tourism and culture further to provide more added value by:

- **Using virtual and augmented reality (AR) with entertainment-based elements to co-create and, above all, to enrich the user experience** and

- **Introducing various concepts of cultural thematic routes** oriented towards less travelled landscapes as a verified approach of interdisciplinary cooperation on local, regional and transnational levels.

Objectives:

- to improve and diversify products and services;

- to combat seasonality and

- to create new business opportunities, more jobs and even new job profiles (not only in the tourism sector, but also in the fields of creative and cultural industry, especially in more remote or less developed regions).

2. Sustainable and responsible tourism management

has the aim to involve all potentially interested stakeholders and establish common standards and rules by:

- **Creating platforms to ensure sustainable heritage use;**

- **Establishing educational and training centers for interpreting tangible and intangible heritage,**

- **Guiding activities by local people etc. on local level** (bottom up approach) and

- **Ensuring sound organizational framework at the national level**) (top down approach)

Impact:

- reduction of the impact of mass tourism;

- increase of interest in special interest tourism: cultural, MICE, rural, alternative tourism, etc. and

- promotion of innovation, entrepreneurship and employability, especially of young population.

One of the Challenges for the future

How to integrate the new EC Initiatives to ECP programmes and project implementation?

- by one-stop shop for project promotors searching for EU funding (EuroAccess)
- by incorporation in the selection criteria (positive advantage in form of extra points) in public calls
- by creating special bonus fund or
- as horizontal issue assesing the instruments on transnational and MRS platforms.