Deliverable 4.1
Possible Mechanisms

Index

1. Introduction

The objective of D4.1 is to present the possible mechanisms for the long-term sustainability, with a list of detailed identified options, and with a SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

2. Sustainability mechanisms in other routes

2.1. Curioseaty

Curioseaty was a discovery route through Europe´s nautical and sub-aquatic cultural heritage. Its subtitle was "Exploring Europe's Maritime Heritage through Nautical Sports". This project was selected in the framework of the 2013 call for proposals "Cooperation projects to support transnational tourism based on European cultural and industrial heritage" - 69/G/ENT/PPA/13/411. The project was running up to January 31st, 2016.

The Curioseaty project aimed to connect the great market potential of water sports to the inimitable European maritime heritage, appealing to the passion of nautical practitioners for the Sea. The Route's objective was to unveil such heritage and make it visible and accessible to nautical practitioners, signaling Europe as the best destination for the practice of water sports - not only for its existing, state-of-the-art nautical infrastructure - but also for offering to experience a world of maritime history and culture that is unique and can only be found in the Old Continent. The Route wanted to flow at its inception along the coasts of Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Croatia, and the project then seek to engage other European coastal destinations in the future. Through the Project, European nautical destinations and tourism SMEs will be given tools and means to collectively improve their competitiveness through cooperation, "in the framework of an ambitious, European public-private partnership emerging under the leadership of the European Federation of Nautical Tourism Destinations (FEDETON)".

One objective of the project was to work on the future Business & Management Plan and on the Marketing Strategy of the Route.

Despite extensive search on the Internet, we could not identify in 2019 any activity or current existence of the Curioseaty route. The website curioseaty.eu is not anymore running and we have not found any deliverable or conclusions/recommendations. We have found a website of the above-mentioned FEDETON federation (http://www.nautical-tourism.eu) with a reference to Curioseaty, but the relation is not clear to us. This website points out a General Assembly in April 2018 but nothing in 2019, and it also mentions two other European projects.

A conclusion of our search is that in all cases, we must put in place a transferability kit that should remain on line for at least 5 years after the end of the project, and if possible for at

least 10 years, in order to allow all European efforts on nautical routes to benefit from our experience and from our conclusions.

2.2. L'AQUA

The route project L'AQUA "Legends and myths on water for European tourist routes", Agreement was also from the 2013 call "Cooperation projects to support transnational tourism based on European cultural and industrial heritage" - 69/G/ENT/PPA/13/41. It started on 1ˢᵗ August 2014 and ended on 31ˢᵗ January 2016.

L'AQUA focused on the tourism potential of intangible heritage in relation to water, establishing a transnational product and route, with its regional sectors, covering in total 8 areas/countries where water and related activities play an important role in their geography and/or history. The objective of the new product was in particular to take into account sagas, myths, legends and traditions associated to water.

The website laquaroutes.com is also not anymore available, and the only information that we could find is on the websites of two partners:

https://www.aebr.eu/fr/activites/projects_programmes_detail.php?project_id=22

http://partenalia.eu/article/laqua-project-15626493

The Facebook page is still available but we could not find information related to the sustainability mechanisms.

Despite extensive search on the Internet, we could not identify in 2019 any activity or current existence of the L'AQUA route, and we could not find any element related to its sustainability. We have the same conclusion than for your search for Curioseaty.

2.3. SurfingEurope

The project was selected from call COS-WP2014-3-15-03 "Diversifying the EU Tourism Offer and Products - Sustainable Transnational Tourism Products 2014". The project started on 1ˢᵗ June 2015 for 18 months.

The main objective of SurfingEurope was to define and promote a sustainable transnational surf tourism product called SURFINGEUROPE, providing a wide visibility of the product itself and its market uptake.

The website surfingeurope.com is not anymore available. We could find information on the website of one partner of the project:

http://www.fomentosansebastian.eus/en/today/news/1564-surfing-europe-closing-event-takes-place-in-donostia-san-sebastian

We could not find any specific information about the sustainability and no information of current existence of the product – except that at the closing of the project the partners stated: "Given the partners' interest and other cities' eagerness to join in, it is highly likely that Surfing Europe will be continued". We can guess that sometimes the sustainability can be also achieved in some cases with a different name and/or framework than initially planned, but in all cases it would be good to keep track of this information.

2.4. Other routes from previous calls – all domains

In addition to the three above routes that we had identified at the time of the project proposal preparation, we have searched for more routes in all domains and we have identified other routes firstly through the following SlideShare (see slide 7):

https://fr.slideshare.net/UmbertoPernice/eu-projects-and-grants-on-cultural-heritage-and-tourism-20152016

The route projects listed here are: SurfingEurope, HOST, SilViAlp, SeaEurope, Greenways Outdoor, Curioseaty, Extra_Expo, Grail, L'Aqua, Roman Spas, and Linking the Lines.

Then in this SlideShare we also found a link to a list of Sustainable transnational tourism products awarded from 2011 to 2015 on the website of the European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/transnational-products/

The route projects listed here are: PITCH VGE, DIVERTIMENTO, FishTrail, EV5-VRF, EERA, GENIUS LOCI, Hiking Europe, TastyCheeseTOUR, Well-O-live, SUNRISE, SurfingEurope, HOST, SilViAlp, WILDSEA, Greenways Outdoor, EcoDots, Eurovelo 8, EuroVelo 13, ProWell, RER DWR II, Tastes of Trappists, CERA-DEST, Results EUquus, Greenways Product, Loci Iacobi, Secret Wine Tours, VERO TOUR, WBAADT, DanubeHIKE, Greenways4Tour, Limes Tourism Connection, EuroVelo.com, PER VIAM Pilgrims' Routes in Action.

Among them, we have noted the following interesting results related to sustainability:

- **PER VIAM Pilgrim's Routes in Action: among the results the project set up the "European Committee for Technical Interregional Coordination for The Via Francigena" through a MoU and this network is still active in 2019.** They also launched a "Network of European Universities for The Via Francigena and the European pilgrimage routes" but that is not anymore active. Same for a "platform of exchange among the European pilgrimage routes certified by the Council of Europe" that is not running anymore.
- **The several projects about EuroVelo contributed to consolidate the EuroVelo.com website – together with several Interreg projects - an initiative from the European Cyclists' Federation** to make the entire European Cycle Route Network a reality by 2020, **and also to set up cycle routes.**

- **Greenways4tour main outcome was the creation of the European Greenways Observatory and the set up of the related website** for the European Greenways Association (EGWA) www.greenwayseurope.org. It is still active.
- **CERA CERA-DEST - Ceramic destinations for sustainable tourism did a "lessons learnt" document that should be very interesting but the website is down so the link does not work anymore.**
- **The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route has been certified with the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR)** which is a non-profit association based in Luxembourg whose aim is to help the Council of Europe, as a technical body, in the establishment of European Cultural Routes.
- **EcoDots main outcome was a commercial website (http://ecobnb.com) to book eco-friendly facilities (kind of "green Airbnb"), that is still running.**
- **Wildsea Europe built Wildsea.eu, a website to book activities** related to marine and outdoors ecotourism in Europe from a network of ecotourism operators and destinations.
- **SilViAlp did a great final document about lessons learnt** in the development and promotion of a sustainable transnational tourism product consisting in a hiking experience on the long distance trail Via Alpina Yellow Trail™, tailored on the needs of the segment 55+ in terms of travel comfort, safety, security and lifestyle, resulting in the Via Transalpina. The document, "Route development: Experience design on the move - Final report of the project SilViAlp", is available here: https://via-transalpina.eu/161201_Report.pdf.
  One interesting conclusion of the project is that **"Route management is a complex task. Not only because long routes cover a variety of territories with different cultures, languages and organizational settings, but also because the challenge of keeping these complex networks alive is based on collective will, on effective governance systems, and on transnational funding capacity"**.
  One key element seems to be the support of the larger Via Alpina International Secretariat.
- **European Equestrian Route d'Artagnan, which ran from 1st May 2016 to 31th October 2017, leaded by the French riding federation, has set up an association to support the sustainability of the route (AERA, the European Association of the d'Artagnan route) to gather public and private partners from Europe. The association is still running and has plans for the future including to build synergies with other European routes as EUROVELO or EUQUUS, and to apply for the label "European Cultural Route".**

We also found projects from the call of 2015 "Theme routes for the underwater cultural patrimony" (EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.8), with notably the projects UCRCA, NIRD, ATAS:

- URCRA – Dive in History: **the project leaded to new scuba diving touristic packages that were then included in the catalogue of one of the partners who is a tour operator.**

2.5. Other routes from the call "Nautical Routes for Europe" (EASME/EMFF/2016/1.2.1.12)

The other projects which were selected within the same call for proposal than our project are: MELTEMI, MAGNA (Sail In History), TunaRoute, and WAOH Route. We could not find yet much information about sustainability as the projects are running, but it shall be noted that:

- **The fact that two of them are about sailing (MELTEMI and MAGNA), can give the idea of joining forces at some point.**
- **TunaRoute already states that it will rely on potential contributions from public tourism promotion mechanisms and private sponsors**, and that for functionality and sustainability, including management and maintenance of the Route itself and of the shared tools, and depending on the conclusions in the "Long term Sustainability Plan" to be defined by the Tuna Route project partners, **it may be necessary to secure economic viability by establishing membership fees and/or persale commissions**. If this is the case It would be duly communicated to any Tuna Route Member who could decide if they leave the route with no cost or keep on being engaged at the agreed fee.
- **WAOH Route is a project from WILDSEA Europe, which was a project from a previous call in 2015. WILDSEA is now a network of 9 ecotourism operators and destinations with a membership fee. So they received a new funding for a new route.**

2.6. Cultural Routes analysis from UWTO

We also searched for examples and recommendations in the document "World Tourism Organization UWTO - Global Report on Cultural Routes and Itineraries – volume 12, 2015" where we found the following information:

- *"Creating a cohesive small business involvement strategy for the cultural routes and establishing strong partnerships with different authorities as well as stakeholders is vital to ensure more sustainable long-term economic and cultural benefits."*
  - This recommendation shows us that we should **enlarge the basis of our project to more organizations than the current partners** who are mainly related to sailing related activities. We understand that we should search for a large scope of actors including authorities.
- *"According to the conclusions of the conference, and in order to effectively promote and safeguard the very heritage cultural tourism relies on, a sustainable, multi-stakeholder approach is crucial."*
  - It is the same conclusion for us that we should **seek for a multi-stakeholder approach**.
- *"Projects can underpin sustainability by recognizing and using sustainable tourism best practice and existing schemes (e.g., the Travelife certification and training)".*

- o *A way to reach sustainability can be indeed to **use best practices and join existing schemes**. We will have to look for these opportunities.*
- *"Catering for a range of market interests helps to maximise opportunity and minimise risk."*
  - o This advice is **in line with our current proposal with several activities, and it can also actually meet our strategy of developing the touristic route on the side of our main activity** of shipping by sail propulsion. But we can **still take this advice to increase the range of market interests to ease the sustainability**.
- This document also shows a strong support from the public sector with funding earmarked for those routes by several countries and institutions.
  - o We should definitely **explore possible funding from regions/countries and institutions**.

3. Possible involvement of stakeholders

The stakeholders have been involved in the reflections, firstly to understand their possible actions to contribute to the conception and development of the route, but also to understand their possible contributions in the long-term sustainability.

The idea that we had at the beginning of the project was to study the opportunity to set up a local label to be deployed, on the basis of a logo around this nautical route.

We have developed the logo that is now slightly different than at the beginning and we use it as much as possible. But this is just a first part of the possible involvement of the stakeholders.

The possibilities that we have identified during our interactions with the stakeholders meet some of the solutions for sustainability that we have found in our study about the other nautical routes and projects notably: **use of the logo and communication tools (including a dedicated web site) to promote the route, financial contributions (fees) to join the initiative, and set up an association with public and private actors to push forward the initiative**.

4. Identification of sustainability options

At the project start we had in mind that the project should target to sustain itself economically as soon as possible after it has been launched, but that we would need to study different scenarios and to set up bootstraps to secure the long-term sustainability. The initial draft of possible mechanisms list was: consortium creation, contracts and/or conventions, label development, public-private partnership, and/or application to funding mechanisms.

After having performed the tasks T41. "Study of other nautical routes", T4.2 "Involvement of stakeholders", and T4.3 "Identification of possible mechanisms", we have now reached the following list.

Sustainability options	Comments
Consortium creation / MoU	The consortium structure is well suited for the project duration but it seems that an association can be more relevant after the end of the project, at least to be manageable for a SME like us.
Contracts/conventions	We can set up contracts and conventions to formalize one to one relationships within the project, but it does not provide a full framework.
Label development (and communication)	We have already developed the logo and communication, we will continue, but it is only a part of the work for sustainability. Regarding the website, we think that it is better for the visibility to have a part dedicated to the route on our own website than to have a dedicated website, as we think that it is better to join forces.
Public-private partnership	Public-private partnership (PPP) seems too complex for a SME like us, but an association could more easily bring together private and public actors, as we have seen in several other routes.
Application to funding mechanisms	We have seen that a project has received two grants for two different projects within the same context. It is of course a possibility to be studied. We have also noted that some projects also receive funding through Interreg projects, which we should study.
Set up an association	From what we have seen in other projects and from what we see within our project, this could be a good option to set up a framework for the sustainability. The example of the d'Artagnan Route is inspiring for us.
Financial contributions to join (fees)	Some routes are doing this, but we understand that it is more to be part of a network that will promote them so they are ready to pay, which is not exactly our context.

Transferability tool kit and plan	We had planned it at the beginning, and we have seen that it is a pity that no information is available for a lot of projects/initiatives about the lessons learnt and about what they have tried for sustainability.
Join forces with other routes	Joining forces with other routes in the same domain (or in other domains) can be very relevant as a difficulty of any product / brand development is to reach a critical size.
Join/set up a larger initiative	Being part of a larger initiative (on the same idea of joining forces) is a very interesting possibility for us. If we take the example of EuroVelo, it could be to broaden the scope of our mission like developing shipping by sail propulsion and sail tourism in Europe.
Add a Tour Operator to sell the product	This is definitely an option to facilitate the commercialization of the new product. However, we have a limited capacity and we can change the dates so it is not as easy as it seems but it should be studied.
Apply for a label	This is also linked to "join a larger initiative" in a way. We have noted the label from the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR) linked to the Council of Europe, for European Cultural Routes. We will seek advice from our Project Officer.
Multi-stakeholders approach	We are interested in the multi-stakeholders approach and to enlarge the scope including authorities; also because we do lobbying around sailing activities so all types of stakeholders are included. Setting up an association could allow doing this.
Increase the range of market interests	The project is already targeting a range of market interests, but we could further explore this and to think about how to mix the shipping by sail propulsion activity and the touristic nautical route activity.
Explore public funding	This point is linked to public funding mechanisms but different because here it is not the type of call for proposals that we know but other funding from regional, national and European institutions. It is a possibility to explore.

5. SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis of our nautical route is presented below. SWOT is a technique to reveal the Strengths and Weaknesses of a product and to understand the Opportunities and the Threats.

5.1.　Strengths

- Ecotourism and CO_2 emission reduction are two domains, which are on a positive trend to face climate change.
- TOWT is already strongly involved in providing an alternative solution to maritime shipping in order to address climate change and energy challenges
- The new route product is innovative, and it involves partners who are deeply involved in sailing activities and promotion.
- The new product offers a mix of activity notably sailing, tasting food products, and discovering history and museums.
- The nautical route can be done also out of the usual seasonally touristic activities of the region.

5.2.　Weaknesses

- Tourism activities are not the core activity of TOWT so it is a new product category, and TOWT is a SME so with limited resources.
- The partners are not used to European projects requirements and formalism.
- The capacity to attract tourists is directly linked to the shipping activity (as the cruises are done at the same time than shipping): the volume can be not enough to attract large stakeholders.
- Involving stakeholders and developing synergies requires a lot of efforts and time.
- Managing the project partners also requires efforts and time.
- Sustainability of the product has to be found and there is no obvious solution.

5.3.　Opportunities

- The new product can bring new turnover to all partners and can increase the attractiveness of the region and create jobs.
- The framework of a European project can help us to better define the product and to attract stakeholders.
- This current study about sustainability gives us good examples to follow from other routes and ideas to develop.
- The new nautical route allows us to explore beyond our core business activity, which can lead to other activities and development, and which can help us to innovate.
- The future Smart Sailing Cargo Ship (1000 tons capacity) that TOWT is developing will change all the specifications of the current activities of TOWT, and it includes possibilities to host tourists onboard so it can open new opportunities.

5.4.   Threats

- The Brexit is a high risk in our context, but we are managing the project to avoid it, with the help of the European Commission.
- If we cannot find sustainability mechanisms for the route, then it could be a very interesting experience but without long-term impact. It seems from our search that a lot of projects cannot reach sustainability.
- As stated by another project: Route management is a complex task.
- The future Smart Sailing Cargo Ship (1000 tons capacity) that TOWT is developing will change all the specifications of the current activities of TOWT, and TOWT will have to focus on its core activity so it is not yet known how much and how the nautical route can be included at the beginning of this new important step.

6. Conclusion and recommendation for next steps

Taking into account the possible mechanisms that we have identified, the results of the project up to now, and the SWOT analysis, we have defined a strategy for the sustainability or our nautical route:

1. Prepare, as planned, a transferability toolkit and plan (D4.2), for other nautical routes projects and initiatives to use the results and know-how of the project for other coastal regions (and for us and our partners for future developments). From what we have found from other project, it is a very valuable effort whatever the results are.

2. Study the possibility to set up an association to gather a multi-stakeholders approach (with a large basis, including authorities) that would fit with the fact that we are a SME with limited resources. We currently lead the French association "Les routes maritimes à la voile" (sailing nautical routes). We will study the possibility to extend the scope at the European level and to extend to all sailing activities to join forces, or to create a new association, or to join such an association.

3. We will include in our studies related to our project Smart Sailing Cargo Ship (1000 tons capacity) a dedicated task to study how to include or not (and/or at the beginning or later) the possibility to have tourists on board and to set up nautical routes on the new settings (without any guarantee as we must focus on our core business and on the strategic priorities of our shareholders).

4. We will consider the following actions: apply for a label, find public funding opportunities (other call for proposals, also Interreg opportunities, and other funding from regional/national/European authorities for cultural routes), contact a tour operator that could sell our offer, and seek synergies with other European routes (in our domain but also in other domains).

5. The long-term sustainability strategy will be put in place before the end of the project and will be described, as planned, in the deliverable D4.3.