

CROCUS Cross-Border Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas



„Cross-Border Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas - CROCUS)“ funded under Horizon Europe programme: Culture, creativity and inclusive society (HORIZON-CL2-2023-HERITAGE-01).

Rural and remote areas (RRA) are rich in cultural heritage, but many also suffer from socio-economic problems such as an ageing population, out-migration, and low incomes. Cultural and creative tourism (CCT) could help address these problems by creating sustainable jobs and investment, but three key challenges and associated knowledge gaps must be overcome: (1) place-specific business models that suit different types of cultural heritage and community needs must be created; (2) tourism development must be balanced and sustainable; (3) policies at different scales should support cooperation between RRA. CROCUS addresses these key challenges by: (a) generating knowledge about which CCT business models are most appropriate for different types of heritage and rural areas; (b) creating eight cross-border living labs in which sustainable CCT business models will be prototyped (16 in total); (c) developing macro regional and cross-border policy scenarios for each of the four EU macro-regions (Baltic Sea, Adriatic and Ionian, Alpine, and Danube); and (d) synthesising knowledge and experience from the project to create tools and resources that RRA across Europe and beyond can use to develop sustainable and inclusive CCT in the future. CROCUS will achieve this through its ambitious multi-scalar research design, innovative cross-border living labs, and participatory processes of sustainable business model prototyping. The consortium brings together leading scholars and practitioners that have extensive experience with cross-border tourism development projects, stakeholder engagement, and policy analysis. It will be the first systematic study of different types of cross-border CCT cooperation in RRA. The impact of CROCUS will be to increase sustainable and inclusive CCT and cross-border cooperation in RRA across Europe, thus unleashing the potential of cultural heritage as a driver of sustainable innovation.

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Project duration: 36 months

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Project partners: **AALBORG UNIVERSITET** (Lead partner, Denmark), **ASSOCIATION FOR TOURISM AND LEISURE EDUCATION**, Netherlands, **UNIVERZA V MARIBORU**, Slovenia, **OULUN YLIOPISTO**, Finland, **UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI BERGAMO**, Italy, **IZSLEDOVATELSKI INSTITUT V ZANGADOR (ZRI)**, Bulgaria, **Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality Management (FTHM)**, HR and **TALLINN UNIVERSITY (TLU)**, Estonia

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