Workshop model for developing Cultural Routes

Finnish Heritage Agency

WHAT IS IT?

- A practical workshop model for building new Cultural Routes and developing operations of an existing, already certified Cultural Routes within the framework of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme.

- Provides step-by-step guidance to support planning and development of Cultural Routes.
- Helps generate ideas for an action plan for both new initiatives and established route networks.

WHO IS IT FOR?

- New Cultural Route initiatives

- Cultural routes already certified or in operation

HOW TO USE IT?

- Use the model to develop route operations, plan activities, and create content for an action plan.
- The model consists of 10 sections, each representing a step in the Cultural Route development process, offering a flexible framework for planning and development.
  - Steps 1–4 and 6 are primarily designed for new routes, while the remaining steps apply to both new and existing routes.

- Steps includes questions, tips, and points to consider for guiding planning.
- All steps require long-term workshopping. Alternatively:
  - Select specific steps to focus on.
  - Edit freely: add or remove questions and comments as needed.
- The template is provided in editable PPT format for easy customisation.

1. Introduction

Understanding the strarting point for building a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

The start of building a Cultural Route is typically based on a situation where some kind of formal or informal cooperation / connection between some organisations already exists. The background may be, for example:

→ EU project implemented on a specific cultural heritage theme.

→ Cooperation within some other cultural heritage initiative (for example EHL, UNESCO World Heritage, UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage).

→ Strategy that addresses development in certain Cultural Heritage theme.

→ Someone needs to be the initiator who brings parties together.

QUESTIONS:

WHO is the initiator?

WHO is leading the development work?

Photo: Michel Johansson , St Olavs ways, Sweden

2. Purpose and goals

QUESTIONS:

WHAT is the motivator to start building a Cultural Route?

HOW the framework that Cultural Route program provides can support the goals of the new Cultural Route network? Check the certification criteria.

HOW the goals of the route network support the basic goals of the organisations involved?

TIPS:

When the goals of the route network serve the fundamental goals of the participating organisations, membership in the network is beneficial and it is easier to engage members to a new route network or already certified network.

Setting goals is a process that goes hand in hand with growing your network. Goals become more specific and evolve over time. However, it is important **to clearly define the basic goals and motivation** of the network so that they can be clearly communicated to new members.

3. Defining the theme

QUESTIONS:

WHAT kind of message do you want to carry with the theme?

What are the values behind the theme?
Reflect the theme to the values of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme.

WHAT is the story about European culture heritage you wish to share and how can that be summarised as a single theme?

TIPS:

Clarify the theme so that it is understandable for people who are unfamiliar with the topic.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

Consider how broad or narrow the theme should be.

Reflect the theme to membership: What kind of organisations can be included to the network?
(check the step 4 and 5)

4. Map the heritage

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

There must be members in at least three European countries.

Photo: Topi Leikas, Finnish Heritage Agency

5. Map the partners

QUESTIONS:

WHICH organisations could be involved in the network?

WHO can become a member?

WHAT types of organisations could benefit from being part of the Cultural Route network?

WHAT kind of expertise does the network need from its members?

TIPS:

The network can define the types of member organisations it wants to target: Only certain types of organisations may be accepted into the route network (exclusive), or it may be open to different types of organisations related to the theme (inclusive). Examples of exclusive network: European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, that only accepts municipalities as a member / European Route of Industrial Heritage, that have many kinds of organisations as a member.

Summarise the benefits clearly - this will help communication with potential new members.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

Cultural routes must have a scientific basis.

When a Cultural Route is developing sustainable tourism, it is beneficial to establish connections with the tourism industry.

The network must include organisations that manage sites that can be visited.

6. Organisation model

QUESTIONS:

HOW should the membership categories be defined?

HOW should the membership fees be set for each category?

WHAT kind of responsibilities (other than membership fee) can be set for members in each membership categories?

TIPS: The organisational model can support the division of responsibilities within the route network. When defining responsibilities for members (In kind contributions), ensure that fulfilling these responsibilities brings concrete benefits to the organisation responsible. Responsibilities should serve the fundamental objectives of member organisations as effectively as possible.

Consider management structure. Do you need national contact points? Do you need to set up working groups to work with different priority fields of action? (see step 7)

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

An association or consortium of associations must be established to manage the Cultural Route. The association must be established two years before applying for the certification, so in the early stages of the development work, it must be decided in which country the association will be established and who shall be responsible for its operations. The association must be established in a **member states of the Council of Europe**.

Route networks must have a scientific council, which is in practice a network of scientists and researchers that are working with the theme from different perspectives. Scientific councils support the route network and provide the scientific base.

7. Plan activities in five priority fields of action

QUESTIONS:

WHAT network members are already doing in relation to the priority fields of action? Could existing activities be scaled up?

Consider whether it is necessary to focus on one priority fields of action slightly more than another? Where do you want to allocate resources at this stage? Can you identify a priority field of action that has received less attention but could bring benefits to the network if given more focus?

Brainstorm ideas for joint activities in different fields of action for the route network.

CONSIDER:

→ What is the schedule for the activities to be carried out?

→ What are the practical measures to be implemented?

→ What resources are required to implement the activities (financial and in-kind)?

→ Share responsibilities clearly.

TIPS:

Consider integrating existing activities into the Cultural route network's activities by communicating about them through the network's communication channels.

Note that activities can be carried out on a small or large scale - the scale is determined by the resources available within the network.

Plan activities so that they support the activities of member organisations - members should be involved in planning activities!

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

Cultural routes are expected to implement common activities in five priority fields of action:

1   Co-operation in research and development
2   Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage
3   Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans
4   Contemporary cultural and artistic practice
5   Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

Learn from other routes: **Best Practices of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe - Cultural Routes**

Consider whether the network should seek project funding to carry out activities.

8. Plan route network communication

QUESTIONS:

Make a communication plan for the route network, consider:

WHAT do you want to achieve with your communication actions? (for example: more visitors to the sites, more new members for the network, raising awareness of the culture heritage theme represented by the route etc)

WHAT are the most important target groups for communication actions?

WHAT are the key messages to the different target groups?

WHICH communication channels are used?

WHAT are the concrete communication actions and schedule? (for example: How often to post on social media channels, how often to produce newsletters, etc.)

Consider resources: both financial and in kind.

TIPS:

Consider whether the route network can promise members a certain level of visibility. For example, a certain number of posts on the route network's social media, etc.

Also consider whether members could be given responsibilities in communication actions (for example reposting social media posts of the route network).

Note that the route offers plenty of cross-marketing opportunities: encourage network members to communicate about the route sites and activities!

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

Note that certification requires that the network has a website and social media communication channels. The program also sets requirements for the creation of a logo and graphic charter.

Note that the destinations visited along the route, how to get there, and any related tourism products and sales channels must be clearly communicated to visitors.

9. Risks and how we prepare for them

QUESTIONS:

WHAT risks are involved in developing/ maintaining the Cultural Route? (For example, risks related to financing, organisation, resources etc)

HOW could risks be reduced?

HOW can you respond to the situation if the risk materialises?

Consider alternative courses of action in case the risks materialise.

Photo: Topi Leikas, Finnish Heritage Agency

10. Monitoring and regular route meeting

QUESTIONS:

WHAT metrics can you use to measure the achievement of goals set together?

HOW do you develop a metric that captures the desired impact rather than just the number of activities carried out?

TIPS:

Include an assessment of the achievement of objectives in the agenda of the association's annual meeting each year.

Photo: Jouni Lappi, St. Olav Waterway

11. Action plan template for collecting ideas from workshop discussions

You can use the action plan template below to compile the ideas and observations gathered during the workshop.

1 Theme of the Cultural Route, summary and definition of the theme

2 The objectives of the Cultural Route network

3 Stakeholder list, possible expansion of the network

4 Practical measures, including implementation of the priority fields of action

5 Milestones & timeline (For what period is the action plan drawn up?)

6 Resource allocation

7 Budget overview

8 Risk assessment and mitigation & contingency plans

9 Communication plan

10 Monitoring success

Photo: Topi Leikas, Finnish Heritage Agency.

Photo: Julia Kivelä,
Visit Finland,
The Alström Ironworks

NORDISK KULTURFOND

Cultural Routes
of the Council of Europe
Itinéraires culturels
du Conseil de l'Europe

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Department of
Cultural Heritage
of Lithuania

REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

National Heritage
Board of Latvia

SWEDISH NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD
RIKSANTIKVARIEÄMBETET

Arts and Culture Norway

Finnish Heritage Agency