



European Collaboration for Smart and Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destinations

in partnership with:



NECSTour
European Regions for
Competitive and Sustainable Tourism

supported by:



in the framework of:



About the Awards

Cultural tourism is the fastest growing sector of European tourism and can contribute both to the sustainability and competitiveness of tourism in the European Union and beyond, as well as to the sustainable future of cultural assets, heritage sites and local communities.

Cultural Tourism products and services are important factors in sustainable development, contributing to the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, the extension of the tourism period, as well as increasing culture and heritage awareness among tourists and host communities, regional GDP and its multiplier effects.

These Awards enhance the visibility of European cultural tourism destinations, create a platform for sharing experience and knowledge and promotes networking between destinations. The Awards Contest is open to tourist destinations across Europe, to showcase their results and outputs in sustainable cultural tourism under several selected categories each year.

The Awards have been organised since 2014 by ECTN around annual themes, for the benefit of destinations, communities, associations, businesses, citizens and visitors.

The 2024 edition of the Awards for 'Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism' is organised by ECTN in partnership with Europa Nostra, the European Travel Commission and NECSTouR, in the framework of European Capital of Smart Tourism Dublin 2024. It follows on from the 2018 edition of the Awards which was held as a contribution to the 'European Year of Cultural Heritage' (EYCH2018) and the 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 editions, by a similar partnership that aims to contribute towards the legacy of EYCH2018 through relevant EU initiatives.

Call for Entries

The Awards 11th edition overall theme for 2024 is:

European Collaboration for Smart and Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destinations

The Awards will be given for achievements by cultural tourist destinations which have produced **significant results related to enhancing visitor experience while respecting traditions and involving local host communities.**

The **2024 Awards** address the following **tangible and intangible heritage-related** aspects of **smart and sustainable cultural tourism** development and promotion:

1. **Accessibility to Heritage**, both physical and intellectual, as a component of Smart Tourism and Smart Destinations, at museums, cultural and heritage sites; Accessible Cultural Tourism (in partnership with ENAT - European Network for Accessible Tourism).
2. **Intangible Heritage, including Festivals**, performing arts, music, dance, theatre, opera, visual arts, handicrafts, traditional trades, for Sustainable Cultural Tourism.
3. **Digitalisation advances and digital transition in Smart and Sustainable Cultural Tourism**, Smart Tourism and Smart Destinations initiatives closely involving culture and heritage, including AI, VR/AR, big data, gamification, metaverse.
4. **Transnational Thematic Tourism Products, on culture and heritage**, including those related to European Cultural Routes, European Heritage Label networks and/or cross-border cultural tourism initiatives (involving at least two European countries, not necessarily neighbouring).
5. **Coastal and Maritime Heritage for Sustainable Cultural Tourism**, including underwater heritage, maritime museums, historic ships, shipwrecks, old ports, equipment, lighthouses, traditional boat and repair yards, as well as maritime cultural landscapes.

The applicants must address one of the above themes and present projects or initiatives that have been completed during the past 3 years. Award winners will be recognised as outstanding **examples of excellence**, inspiring other tourist destinations and stimulating further development of **smart and sustainable cultural tourism** actions and initiatives.

Award winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony to be held during the **17th International Conference for Cultural Tourism** on the theme of '**European Collaboration for Smart and Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destinations**', organised by ECTN on **23-26 October 2024 in Dublin European Capital of Smart Tourism 2024**, Republic of Ireland.

The selected finalists will be invited to the ECTN Conference 2024 and to the Awards Ceremony (to be held on 24 October). The organiser and partners will not reimburse any costs for attending the Awards Ceremony, but the conference fee will be waived for up to two persons per finalist.

Who can apply?

The Joint Awards are open to all tourist destinations across Europe, national, regional and local authorities, tourism boards and associations, destination management organisations, museums, interpretation centres, cultural routes, festivals and cultural NGOs.

Application procedure, Declaration & deadline

Applications must be submitted online through the dedicated AwardStage platform:

<https://culturaltourism.awardstage.com/>

Applicants must firstly register and then create an entry. All sections of the online application form must be filled-in in English (applications in other languages will not be considered). Applicants must download the Declaration form, fill-in, sign, scan, then and upload it on the platform.

No paper version of the application is needed – electronic submission only!

Application forms without the accompanying signed Declaration or with any incomplete fields will not be eligible.

Applications must be submitted by 1 June 2024 – 23:59 CET (Central European Time) at the latest.

By submitting the application, applicants authorise the publishing of their data on the organiser and partners' websites:

www.culturaltourism-network.eu

www.europanostra.org

www.etc-corporate.org

www.necstour.eu

www.smarttourismcapital.eu

www.accessibletourism.org

Material submitted may be published by the organisers, with due acknowledgement to the applicant.

Awards Jury

The Awards Jury will be composed of experts from several European countries, appointed by ECTN, Europa Nostra, the European Travel Commission, NECSTouR, as well as European Capital of Smart Tourism Dublin 2024 and European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT, for Category 1).

The Jury's decision shall be final. The Jury will not accept requests for additional information or justification of their decision once the awardees have been selected.

Awards Criteria

The Awards Jury will assess the applications according to the following 6 criteria of equal importance:

1. **Relevance** to the selected category and content **quality**.
2. Evidence of success – Results achieved (measurable outputs, e.g. number of visitors increase in the off-peak and shoulder seasons, visitors' satisfaction, increase in the average spend of visitors, benefits for the local economy, contribution to employment generation, capacity building, outstanding publicity).
3. **Tourism Sustainability** – Sustainable Development of Tourism: Economic, Social, Environmental, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the EU Transition Pathway for Tourism, including any synergies with the EU Green Deal and Climate Action (SDG 13).
4. **Ability to attract visitors** (including from outside Europe) to lesser-known destinations.
5. **Innovative character**, techniques or tools created and/or applied.
6. **Involvement of the local host community**.

Candidates should specify how their application meets the above criteria.

Concluding Remarks

This is a non-profit initiative. Therefore, the Awards do not consist of any type of monetary prize and does not aim to give any type of economic advantage to the applicants and winners. No financial or contractual obligations will arise neither for ECTN, nor for the partner organisations (Europa Nostra, the European Travel Commission and NECSTouR), nor the supporting organisations (European Capital of Smart Tourism Dublin 2024 & ENAT).

The Awards organiser, partners and supporters or their members and employees or contractors shall not be responsible nor liable in negligence or otherwise howsoever in respect of any inaccuracy or omission in the Awards procedure. They shall not be liable for any direct or indirect or consequential loss or damage caused by or arising from any information or inaccuracy or omission herein. They also shall not be liable for any use of the information concerning the Awards.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR APPLICATION!



The 'Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism Awards have been initiated by [CHARTS project](#), co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and made possible by the EU INTERREG IVC programme in 2014, continued with support by Interreg Europe projects [CHRISTA \(2016-2020 & 2021-2023\)](#), [Cult-RinG \(2017-2021\)](#), [Cult-CreatE \(2018-2022\)](#) and [ReInHerit Horizon2020 CSA \(2021-2024\)](#)
www.interregueurope.eu/christa www.interregueurope.eu/cult-ring www.interregueurope.eu/cult-create www.reinherit.eu

2018 Awards as a contribution to:



2017 Awards in the framework of:



2019 Awards in the framework of EU co-funded projects:



2021 Awards in the framework of:



and European Year of Railways



2022 Awards in the framework of: European Year of Youth

and Horizon2020 ReInHerit CSA



2023 Awards in the framework of European Year of Skills

Horizon 2020 ReInHerit CSA



and Pafos 2023 European Capital of Smart Tourism