

Call for applicants for *Cooprout* (The European Route of Cooperative Culture)

EU project co-financed by the European Commission under the call for Proposal
“Cooperation projects to create transnational tourism products based on cultural and industrial heritage”

About *Cooprout*

The project is about the design of an innovative transnational product in the field of cultural and industrial tourism, namely the creation and development of a European Route of Cooperative Culture, a virtual Route going through various European countries. The European Commission, which co-finances *Cooprout*, has decided to focus the call on those transnational thematic tourism products that give value and promote the richness of European cultural and industrial heritage.

This route will be composed by two main types of site which are deeply rooted in the local community:

- activities run by cooperatives that contribute through their economic activities to preserve and develop 1) **tangible cultural and industrial heritage** (i.e. local products, artworks, crafts, buildings, monuments historic places, natural sites, etc.)¹ and/or 2) **intangible cultural and industrial heritage** (i.e. local traditions, festive events, practices and industrial skills);
- other sites and destinations run by entities such as associations or foundations that best illustrate the culture and values of the cooperative movement will be part of the itinerary².

¹ Such as artisan cooperatives producing traditional crafts (textiles, ceramics etc.) interested in receiving tourists and making their experience attractive from a tourism point of view. By way of example, the French worker cooperative Ardelaine was established in order to create employment in a depopulated rural area reviving and promoting the use of local wool. Over the years, it developed cultural tourism services such as an itinerary including a visit to the museum on the history of the methods used to work with wool. More information can be found [here](#).

² The Rochdale Pioneers Museum in the UK is a prime example. The Rochdale Pioneers Museum exists to preserve the original store of the Rochdale Pioneers (which is considered to be the birthplace of the modern cooperative movement) and to generate an understanding of the ideals and principles of the co-operative movement. More information can be found [here](#).



In both cases, sites will be characterized by tourism attractiveness.

Partners defined a number of identification criteria for the cooperative experiences that will be part of the Route. A clearly identifiable brand and communication strategy will be chosen and a dedicated website will be launched.

Main objectives and actions:

- contributing to diversify the offer of tourism products and services in Europe by benefitting from and giving value to a shared cultural heritage, namely the European Cooperative Culture by identifying, promoting and developing good experiences and practices within the European cooperative movement, creating a critical and coherent mass of destinations, and strengthening the touristic potential of these experiences, with a strong emphasis on territorial heritage and identity;
- contributing to economic regeneration and job creation in declining (post) industrial regions through an inter-regional and transnational cooperation initiative in the field of tourism, by promoting the cooperative enterprise model and culture, as well as locally-rooted economic activities run by cooperatives, especially those of young people (the main target group).

Partners: AGCI (Italy); Aveiro City Council (Portugal); CCU (Bulgaria); CG Scop (France); COCETA (Spain); Confcooperative (Italy); CoopCat (Spain); Co-operative Heritage Trust (United Kingdom); CSS Limited (Ireland); EST COOP (Estonia); Government of Catalonia (Spain); Kooperationen (Denmark); Koperattivi Malta (Malta); Legacoop (Italy); NUWPC (Bulgaria); Regione Emilia Romagna (Italy); Zdk/ Kaufmann-Stiftung (Germany).

Cooprout has the ambition to be recognized as a European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe.

Why should I apply for Cooprout?

- To be part of a European Route of the Cooperative Culture;
- To strengthen and develop tourism potential and attractiveness;
- To learn from other European experiences and exchange good practices;
- To gain visibility at the European level.



Can I apply for Cooproute?

Applications must be submitted by legal persons and not by individuals. Applicants should correspond to one of the following profiles:

- Cooperatives based in Europe that contribute to preserve and value the local industrial, cultural and natural heritage;
- Other entities (e.g. foundation, association, etc.) based in Europe aimed at promoting and disseminating the history, culture and values of cooperatives.

Applicants should have tourism potential and be interested in strengthening it through transnational cooperation and cross-border exchange of experiences. Applicants should be interested in receiving tourists and developing activities and facilities in this purpose.

This identification process is also aimed to make an assessment of sites that could be part of this itinerary, in order to identify Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOT analysis). Sites that will not fully comply with the defined identification criteria at the moment of the application will be encouraged to satisfy them during the implementation of the project.

Cooproute should include both trans-national and more closely located itineraries, allowing visitors to travel either from one country to another, or just in one country, region or locality, according to the sites of interest.

How can I apply for Cooproute?

Please complete the following application form providing as much detail as possible and the documentation requested and return it to elisa.terrasi@cecop.coop before the **30th of April 2014**.

For any further question please contact elisa.terrasi@cecop.coop and/or elisarota@lafucina.org

Join us to be part of the European Route of the Cooperative Culture!

