DECODE
UPSKILLING RURAL CULTURAL TOURISM OPERATORS

Infusion of the DECODE Blueprint Package in the labour market

- Policy recommendations

Content

1. Introduction

1.1.   About the project

The Decode project is dedicated to addressing the challenges faced by cultural tourism operators, professionals, and volunteers in rural and economically disadvantaged areas of Europe. As cultural tourism gains traction in the EU, rural businesses encounter obstacles related to collaboration and workforce skills. Our project aims to cater specifically to these locals, offering essential skills training, incorporating digital technology, and establishing an online resource platform. Through an open-badge system, we seek to recognize and validate the acquired expertise of participants.

1.2.   About this report

This report serves the primary purpose of formulating policy recommendations in cultural tourism education derived from the comprehensive questionnaire prepared by SYNTHESIS. The questionnaires were disseminated by all project partners among the target groups:

- Cultural tourism experts in rural and/or deprived areas
- Cultural tourism operators, professionals, and volunteers
- Public and private entities within the tourism sector
- Related cultural tourism businesses
- Local stakeholders
- Cultural tourism students
- Individuals interested in the tourism industry

The questionnaire, comprising eleven key questions, delved into critical aspects of cultural tourism education and its impact:

1. *What is your job position?*
2. *In what line of business is your position?*
3. *In your opinion, is there a gap in cultural tourism education provided to operators?*
4. *If yes, what role do the policy makers involved need to take to tackle this gap within cultural tourism education?*
5. *Please name 5 specific qualities/learnings that in your opinion are lacking in cultural tourism education?*
6. *Are you aware of any existing good practices, or support mechanisms in your country for cultural tourism education that could benefit cultural tourism operators?*
7. *With what means do you think policymakers can incentivize cultural tourism operators to take on digital education related to the cultural tourism field?*
8. *What do you believe will be the impact of cultural tourism education in the cultural tourism of rural areas?*
9. *Are there any legal or regulatory barriers that need to be addressed in the promotion of digital cultural tourism education?*

10. *How can policymakers ensure that digital education (in the sphere of Digital Social Innovation) is implemented for cultural tourism operators in the long term?*
11. *What partnerships can be formed between stakeholders to achieve engagement of cultural tourism operators in the field of digital cultural tourism education?*
12. *Can policymakers address and eventually eliminate obstacles/barriers by making available support mechanisms/systems for cultural tourism operators and their education needs in the field?*
13. *What do you believe will be the cost benefits for cultural tourism operators in the long term?*

The responses obtained offer valuable insights into identifying gaps, recognizing essential qualities, and recognising support mechanisms required in this domain. By engaging with diverse stakeholders, we aim to develop tailored policy recommendations that address the multifaceted challenges and opportunities within the cultural tourism landscape.

2. Findings

The results obtained from the questionnaires distributed by all project partners have been condensed and categorized by country.

2.1. Greece

Engaging with stakeholders in the Greek cultural tourism sector, partner AKADIMOS gained insights from diverse professionals contributing to various facets of the industry. Their roles encompassed an executive chef, managers, owners, retail sellers, sales managers, and a former tourist guide.

Perceptions on Cultural Tourism Education Gap:
Responses to the existence of a gap in cultural tourism education in Greece varied among the stakeholders. While some acknowledged challenges specific to their roles like the culinary sector or the hospitality industry, others expressed optimism about potential resolutions through research and efforts. The diverse viewpoints reflect the complexity of the issue, considering economic impact, individual responsibilities, and collaborative solutions.

Policymaker's Role in Addressing the Gap:
Insights from stakeholders shed light on the roles policymakers should play in addressing the identified gap. Recommendations include:
● curriculum design that includes cultural sensitivity training, collaborating with experts and encourage business to invest in cultural tourism education
● establishment of dedicated cultural tourism training centres
● creation of region-specific programs
● government support for guidance in cultural tourism-oriented educational programs and funding for advanced initiatives

- integration of technology

The multifaceted approach underscores the need for comprehensive strategies.

Qualities/Learnings Lacking in cultural tourism education:
Stakeholders collectively identified several qualities and learnings lacking in cultural tourism education. Participants highlighted the following:
- Cultural sensitivity and local knowledge
- Language proficiency
- Digital skills
- Business acumen and management proficiency
- Sustainable policies and practices
- Financial knowledge
- Social media competence
- Marketing
- Sales skills
- Soft skills such as communication skills and time management

The comprehensive list emphasizes the diverse skill set needed for effective cultural tourism operations.

Existing good practices or support mechanisms:
Participants acknowledged some good practices and support mechanisms, including the Hellenic Tourism Organization, SETE (Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises), and initiatives promoting cultural experiences at a young age. Collaboration between stakeholders, educational institutions, and government bodies emerged as crucial for advancing cultural tourism education in Greece.

Incentivizing Digital Education:
In encouraging cultural tourism operators to adopt digital education, a collective approach emerges from insights provided by six participants. The suggested strategies include fostering industry networking through events in rural areas and providing financial support, such as subsidies or grants, to incentivize investments in digital cultural tourism education. Additionally, participants propose the reallocation of state funds for the establishment of specialized training centres, emphasizing accessibility and tailored education for tourism operators. Government intervention is seen as crucial, with suggestions ranging from the creation of a dedicated state agency to coordinating and developing specialized courses. Individualized approaches, recognizing the unique capacities of operators, are highlighted. Finally, a comprehensive strategy is emphasized, involving financial support, subsidies, and modern education programs, with an emphasis on presenting compelling benefits. This collective framework integrates financial incentives, active government involvement, industry collaboration, and specialized education programs to effectively motivate cultural tourism operators towards embracing digital education.

Impact of Cultural Tourism Education in Rural Areas:

Cultural tourism education in Greece's rural areas is seen as a catalyst for multifaceted positive impacts, as envisioned by participants. These potential benefits include the preservation of local heritage, stimulation of economic growth through informed tourism, empowerment of communities for sustainable development, and an enriched visitor experience. Anticipated outcomes involve increased visitation to rural areas, upgraded tourist operators promoting regions effectively, and a positive impact on areas with limited educational opportunities, such as Veria. The transformative potential of cultural tourism education extends to skill development among operators, contributing to community empowerment and offering valuable opportunities for skill upgrades in otherwise challenging circumstances.

Legal/Regulatory Barriers for the promotion of digital cultural tourism education:
Participants highlighted legal barriers, including compliance with data protection laws, safeguarding intellectual property, and ensuring accessibility standards. Strengthening existing regulations to protect monuments and areas facing threats also emerged as key considerations.

Long-Term Implementation of Digital Education:
Ensuring the enduring implementation of digital education in the realm of Digital Social Innovation for cultural tourism operators involves a comprehensive strategy, as outlined by five participants. Key components include government support to facilitate implementation through supportive measures, consultation with local agencies for tailored courses catering to regional characteristics, policymakers advocating specific training programs and promoting digital innovations, establishment of strategic goals for sustained implementation, and engagement with sectors of the Greek government dedicated to digital education promotion. Collectively, these insights emphasize the need for collaboration, a supportive framework, regional customization, targeted training initiatives, strategic planning, and effective communication to achieve lasting success in implementing digital education for cultural tourism operators.

Partnerships for Engagement of cultural tourism operators:
To boost engagement in digital cultural tourism education, the insights from six participants converge on the necessity of strategic partnerships. They emphasize the pivotal role of policymakers in providing consistent funding, fostering industry collaboration, and incentivizing technological advancements. Collaborative efforts between government bodies, particularly the Ministry, local tourism boards, educational institutions, and businesses are highlighted as crucial for enhancing digital skills among cultural tourism operators. Direct consultation and contact between stakeholders, including community organizations, government agencies, and technology providers, are seen as essential in rural areas. The importance of partnerships with universities and educational institutes is emphasized.

Eliminating Obstacles/Barriers by making available support mechanisms/systems:
Participants unanimously assert that policymakers are essential in overcoming obstacles faced by cultural tourism operators. They emphasize the pivotal role of government support in addressing challenges, showcasing policymakers as key drivers of transformative change. One participant highlights a proactive collaboration example between the Tourism Department

of the Municipality of Veria and local learning centres. This case illustrates the potential for mobilizing updated skills in the tourism sector.

Cost Benefits for Cultural Tourism Operators:
Participants envision a variety of long-term benefits for cultural tourism operators resulting from the implementation of digital education in Greece. These include addressing staffing challenges in tourist-heavy areas, fostering a more substantial and updated workforce for increased visibility domestically and internationally, positively impacting revenue and visitor numbers, improving financial standing and industry recognition, enhancing competitiveness and innovation, and creating novel job opportunities and economic benefits.

2.2. Cyprus

Collaborating with respondents from the cultural tourism sector in Cyprus, SYNTHESIS engaged with a range of professionals representing distinct roles within the industry. This diverse group included individuals specializing in agrotourism, tourism officer positions, adult vocational education and training (VET) trainers, tour facilitators in green tourism, cultural tourism providers, and tourist agents serving as tour guides.

Perceptions on Cultural Tourism Education Gap:
Participants universally acknowledge the existence of a gap in cultural tourism education for operators, reflecting a unanimous consensus on this matter. The responses convey a shared sentiment, with every participant affirming the presence of a discernible gap in the current educational landscape for cultural tourism professionals. A participant adds depth to this acknowledgment by not only recognizing the gap but also highlighting its persistent nature, suggesting an inherent challenge in fully meeting the educational needs of the cultural tourism sector. The reference to Erasmus efforts, led by Synthesis and supported by the Ministry of Tourism, is noted as a positive step toward mitigating this gap.

Policymaker's Role in Addressing the Gap:
Participants emphasize the need for an inclusive and sustainable approach to cultural tourism education, advocating for increased engagement in relevant programs. They highlight the role of policymakers in providing accessible and comprehensive training, suggesting measures such as free seminars, extensive training, and awareness raising. There is a collective call for formal recognition through training and certification processes, underscoring the importance of professional development within the sector. Additionally, participants stress the collaborative aspect, urging policymakers to co-create training initiatives with a focus on upskilling and sustainable development. The consensus is that policymakers should take a leading role by organizing events, workshops, and funding training, showcasing the pivotal role policymakers play in shaping the educational landscape for cultural tourism operators.

Qualities/Learnings Lacking in cultural tourism education:
In collective responses regarding desired qualities and learnings in cultural tourism education, participants underscore the importance of a multifaceted skill set. The emphasis is on digital proficiency for effective agrotouristic unit promotion, aligning with the global trend of increasing

attractiveness in rural tourism. Collaboration is deemed essential, with a call for bringing individuals involved in cultural tourism closer for a necessary exchange of ideas.

Marketing emerges as a critical component, reflecting the recognition of its pivotal role in promoting cultural tourism offerings. Moreover, there is a consensus on the significance of multiculturalism, digital skills, historical knowledge presented without bias, language proficiency, and familiarity with new technologies.

The responses collectively advocate for a comprehensive educational approach that encompasses historical and environmental awareness, digital and artificial intelligence skills, and language proficiency.

Existing good practices or support mechanisms:

Responses regarding existing support mechanisms for cultural tourism education present a diverse landscape. One participant emphasizes innovative practices like organizing operator teams to experience traditional workshops. While this experiential approach stands out positively, others express a lack of awareness or perceive deficiencies in available support measures. The mention of funding schemes for building upgrades is a positive note, suggesting financial assistance recognition. Additionally, participants note the existence of initiatives from the Cyprus Tourism Board, indicating governmental efforts to support cultural tourism education.

Incentivizing Digital Education:

Participants offer a range of suggestions on how policymakers can incentivize cultural tourism operators to embrace digital education. A call for the organization of relevant courses stands out as a proactive approach. Financial incentives are highlighted as a key motivator, with suggestions including subsidies, free trainings, and flexible, rural-distributed programs. The notion of providing certification, bonuses, and subsidies emerges as a comprehensive strategy to encourage operators to engage in digital education. Overall, these responses underscore the importance of combining financial support with accessible, relevant educational offerings to drive digital education adoption in the cultural tourism sector.

Impact of Cultural Tourism Education in Rural Areas:

The participants foresee a multitude of positive impacts resulting from cultural tourism education in rural areas. The anticipated improvements include an increase in the quality of tourism experiences, fostering cultural osmosis, and a deeper understanding of authentic country life and traditions. Additionally, there is an expectation of positive outcomes for cultural operators, communities, and local residents, signifying a holistic and inclusive impact. The term "beneficial" encapsulates the overall positive projections, emphasizing the potential for enhanced quality in various aspects of rural cultural tourism. Moreover, the participants envision tangible economic benefits, with expectations of maximizing return on investment, boosting agrotourism, attracting quality visitors, and stimulating the emergence of new local businesses.

Legal/Regulatory Barriers for the promotion of digital cultural tourism education:

A significant portion of respondents expressed a lack of awareness or clarity regarding specific legal or regulatory barriers in the context of digital cultural tourism education. This suggests a potential area for further exploration and assessment, as participants may not have a comprehensive understanding of existing or potential challenges within the regulatory

landscape. Nonetheless, a participant stressed the importance of improving internet accessibility in rural areas and recommended the creation of a government-supported platform, similar to mainstream travel services like Airbnb, Booking.com, and TripAdvisor. The primary goal is to alleviate the high commissions associated with these widely-used platforms. Another perspective underscored the existing technology gap among cultural operators, emphasizing the necessity for interventions to bridge this digital divide within the cultural tourism sector.

Long-Term Implementation of Digital Education:
Participants shared diverse perspectives on strategies for the long-term implementation of digital education for cultural tourism operators. While some foresaw increased cultural tourism in rural areas with the emergence of more festivals and activities, others expressed uncertainty about specific measures. A key consensus revolved around the necessity for enduring incentives and continuous training to support operators in adapting to evolving needs. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of dedicated, transferable resources grounded in real-life scenarios and regional history for effective and sustainable digital education programs. This multifaceted approach aims to ensure the relevance and adaptability of training initiatives over the long term.

Partnerships for Engagement of cultural tourism operators:
The participants offered insightful perspectives on the potential partnerships that could enhance engagement among cultural tourism operators in the realm of digital cultural tourism education. Common themes included the creation of a shared platform where operators could participate in forums, fostering a collaborative environment for knowledge exchange and advancement in cultural tourism. Emphasis was placed on synergies between various entities, such as local governments, operators, universities, and community members. The notion of industry-wide partnerships and strategic collaborations involving local authorities, tourism boards, municipalities, cultural institutions, schools, and tourism operators emerged as pivotal strategies to foster comprehensive engagement in digital cultural tourism education initiatives. These suggested partnerships aim to create a networked and supportive ecosystem conducive to the educational needs of cultural tourism operators.

Eliminating Obstacles/Barriers by making available support mechanisms/systems:
Participants conveyed a collective optimism regarding policymakers' ability to address and eventually eliminate obstacles and barriers faced by cultural tourism operators through the provision of supportive mechanisms and systems. The consensus was that operators should feel a sense of belonging, akin to being members of a family, fostering an environment of shared experiences and collaborative problem-solving. The affirmative responses underscored a belief in the efficacy of such support systems. While acknowledging the potential challenges, there was an overall agreement that with concerted effort and effective communication among colleagues, policymakers could pave the way for mitigating barriers and facilitating a conducive environment for the education needs of cultural tourism operators.

Anticipated Cost Benefits for Operators in the Long Term:
Participants expressed an optimistic outlook on the anticipated long-term cost benefits for cultural tourism operators. Foreseen advantages included a significant increase in people engaging in the field, thereby contributing to the overall economic growth of the country.

Additionally, there was an emphasis on the promotion of operators' products and services, leading to an expected increase in income. The responses collectively conveyed a predominantly positive sentiment regarding the overall impact of digital education on cultural tourism operators. The long-term benefits were envisioned to encompass new courses, certifications, and qualifications, alongside a renewed approach to marketing strategies and the development of sustainable digital competencies. The suggestion of dedicated courses, accreditation, and incubation hubs further underscored the potential for substantial positive transformations within the cultural tourism sector.

2.3. Norway

Gathering perspectives from partners DALPRO and VEKSTTORGET, our survey engaged 24 local participants representing diverse roles within the cultural tourism sector. Ranging from CEOs to professionals in local food and drink businesses, vegetable production, fishing tourism, rental houses, self-employed individuals, and members of the chamber of commerce, these responses highlighted crucial facets of cultural tourism education in Norway.

Perceptions on Cultural Tourism Education Gap:
Participants overwhelmingly concurred on the existence of a significant gap in cultural tourism education. DALPRO reported unanimous acknowledgment, while VEKSTTORGET, with one exception, echoed this consensus.

Policymaker's Role in Addressing the Gap:
DALPRO recommended a nuanced approach for policymakers, urging attention to digital infrastructure, course offerings, and collaborative networks. VEKSTTORGET proposed targeted funding for localised initiatives and shorter educational programs, with a specific focus on addressing fundamental digital skills.

Qualities/Learnings Lacking in cultural tourism education:
DALPRO's insights revealed a comprehensive list of lacking qualities, encompassing marketing competence, collaboration skills, language training, digital proficiency, and more. In alignment, VEKSTTORGET outlined gaps in computer skills, networking, encouragement for authentic experiences, and knowledge spanning digital marketing, pricing, and AI utilisation.

Existing good practices or support mechanisms:
DALPRO underscored the presence of supportive mechanisms such as Skills Norway, initiatives like "Smaker fra Øyriket," and the role played by Innovation Norway. VEKSTTORGET acknowledged good practices in locations like Lofoten, Sunnmøre, and initiatives like "Get Inspired," emphasizing community-led tours.

Incentivizing Digital Education:
DALPRO's insights urged policymakers to incentivize digital education through subsidies, friendly competitions, and strategic collaboration with local networks. VEKSTTORGET recommended certifications, a blend of physical and digital learning, and collaboration with municipalities and local networks.

Impact of Cultural Tourism Education in Rural Areas:
DALPRO anticipated substantial impacts, including enhanced profitability, increased professionalism, and a fortified cultural tourism industry. In tandem, VEKSTTORGET viewed cultural tourism education as a catalyst for fostering more small businesses, preserving local history, and enhancing the attractiveness of rural areas to visitors.

Legal/Regulatory Barriers for the promotion of digital cultural tourism education:
DALPRO identified potential barriers linked to financial investment, lower education levels, and compliance with alcohol legislation. VEKSTTORGET participants, however, generally expressed a lack of awareness concerning legal or regulatory obstacles.

Long-Term Implementation of Digital Education:
DALPRO advised policymakers to address ongoing concerns and integrate digital skills consistently into future educational endeavours. VEKSTTORGET suggested the integration of digital education into the school system, collaboration with local authorities, and possibly implementing a certification process to ensure sustained engagement.

Partnerships for Engagement of cultural tourism operators:
DALPRO underscored the critical role of strategic partnerships, emphasising collaborative efforts for learning and marketing, cross-country engagement, and networks like "Smaker fra Øyriket." In alignment, VEKSTTORGET recommended partnerships between local authorities, businesses, governments, volunteer groups, and local councils.

Eliminating Obstacles/Barriers by making available support mechanisms/systems:
DALPRO recognized the pivotal role of local networks and funding in eliminating barriers, urging policymakers to tailor support mechanisms accordingly. VEKSTTORGET highlighted policymakers as vital in removing barriers through grants, mentorship programs, and financial support.

Anticipated Cost Benefits for Operators in the Long Term:
Both perspectives anticipated long-term benefits, including increased tourism, job creation, and the preservation of cultural heritage. VEKSTTORGET further stressed the potential for enhanced tourism, job creation, and the overall development of rural areas as enduring benefits.

2.4. Austria

Embarking on an exploration of cultural tourism education in Austria, insights from six diverse participants, including individuals with backgrounds in tourism studies, environmental engineering, sales, research, and social development, shed light on the current landscape and potential areas of improvement. Two respondents chose to remain anonymous.

Perceptions on Cultural Tourism Education Gap:
The majority concurred that while cultural tourism education is pivotal, existing programs may lean towards practical aspects, neglecting a deeper understanding of diverse cultures, heritage preservation, and community engagement. One respondent highlighted exclusivity concerns in Austria's tourism industry, emphasizing the need for qualification and bureaucratic processes.

Policymaker's Role in Addressing the Gap:
Policymakers are deemed crucial in bridging educational gaps, with recommendations encompassing the implementation of comprehensive programs, incentives like grants, networking opportunities, and partnerships. Collaborations with educational institutions and updates to curricula are emphasised, along with addressing knowledge limitations in rural areas.

Qualities/Learnings Lacking in cultural tourism education:
Identified gaps include sustainable tourism practices, digital marketing skills, digital literacy, heritage conservation, and community engagement. Additional mentions encompass cultural sensitivity training, entrepreneurial skills, cross-cultural communication, resilience, crisis management, and archiving.

Existing good practices or support mechanisms:
While participants highlighted limited awareness, good practices were mentioned. Examples include:
- Verbände or Tourismusmarketing-Verbände
- Wolfgangsee Tourismus GesmbH:
- The campaign promoted by the region of Upper Austria, Oberösterreich, to promote cultural tourism
- Community-led tours in cities like Salzburg and Vienna were acknowledged for engaging locals in cultural tourism
- The Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism, a sustainable practices certification which includes the preservation of cultural heritage

Participants also mentioned the government's financial support to educational institutions providing cultural tourism programs.

Incentivizing Digital Education:
The responses to this question underscore the significance of integrating both digital and face-to-face education, emphasizing the value of personal interaction even in post-digital programs. Participants collectively advocate for policymakers to provide financial incentives, tax benefits, and subsidies for digital education, recognizing its pivotal role. Collaboration with technology companies to offer discounted or free digital training resources is also recommended.

Tax credits or deductions for cultural tourism businesses investing in digital education are seen as impactful motivators, encouraging the allocation of resources to online learning platforms and digital skill development. Policymakers can further incentivize operators through financial incentives, grants, or awards, and the establishment of a regulatory framework that recognizes and rewards digital proficiency.

The proposal includes creating a national program or platform for operators, individuals, and volunteers to connect and exchange ideas. Incentivizing cultural tourism operators through collaborative training programs, public-private partnerships, and subsidies for digital tools is deemed essential for enhancing their digitalization skills.

Impact of Cultural Tourism Education in Rural Areas:
According to a participant's perspective, in Austria, particularly in regions already facing issues of overtourism, a shift toward cultural tourism could offer more sustainable and ecologically friendly tourism formats, mitigating the impact on natural mountain ecosystems associated with skiing hotspots.

Moreover, cultural tourism education is seen as a powerful tool for empowering local communities, enhancing the authenticity of experiences, and fostering sustainable development in rural areas. The participant suggests that such education has the potential to attract more visitors, create economic opportunities, and safeguard cultural heritage. On one hand, it can enhance the allure of rural areas, contribute to heritage preservation, and raise awareness, while on the other hand, it can generate jobs and economic prospects for communities.

The respondents emphasize that cultural tourism education, especially in rural areas, prioritizes sustainable practices, aiming to promote responsible tourism. This approach ensures the preservation of cultural attractions and natural resources for present and future generations. Additionally, it allows local communities to derive economic benefits from tourism while maintaining sustainable practices distinct from those in urban settings.

Legal/Regulatory Barriers for the promotion of digital cultural tourism education:
Participants largely lacked insights into legal barriers. Suggestions included establishing standards for digital cultural tourism education programs, ensuring the quality of the courses to maintain educational standards, revision of outdated rules and data safety.

Long-Term Implementation of Digital Education:
The responses underscore the need for accessibility in local dialects (Austrian dialects) and on-site workshops in rural areas to promote cultural tourism education.

For effective integration of digital education into cultural tourism, policymakers should establish enduring partnerships with educational institutions and industry stakeholders. This involves incorporating digital education into national strategies and implementing ongoing capacity-building programs tailored for cultural tourism operators, covering areas such as digital marketing, heritage preservation, and community engagement through digital platforms.

Additionally, policymakers are encouraged to create networks or platforms facilitating knowledge sharing among operators, allowing them to learn from each other's experiences with digital social innovation (DSI) in cultural tourism. Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is crucial to assess the effectiveness of digital education initiatives. Regular reviews, feedback collection, and necessary adjustments should be made to enhance long-term success.

Participants recommend the establishment of a continuous training program for cultural operators, enabling them to obtain certifications in emerging areas of interest. Forming partnerships with various educational institutions contributes to creating an adaptable framework, necessitating ongoing monitoring and policy updates for sustained relevance.

Partnerships for Engagement of cultural tourism operators:
The responses underscore the pivotal role of partnerships in facilitating the development and delivery of effective digital education programs for cultural tourism operators. Collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, private sector businesses, and technology companies is deemed crucial for the success of these initiatives. To ensure sustainability and relevance, fostering collaborations between government bodies, educational institutions, digital innovation hubs, and private sector stakeholders is recommended, leveraging diverse expertise and resources.

Engaging cultural tourism operators in digital education is envisioned through partnerships between various stakeholders, including public and private sectors, educational institutions, industry associations, technology providers, cultural institutions, local communities, nonprofit organizations, marketing agencies, international networks, digital skills training providers, and business associations. This comprehensive approach ensures robust support for digital education initiatives.

Finally, collaborative projects are highlighted as key drivers for innovation and continuous evolution within the cultural tourism sector. Overall, partnerships are seen as fundamental for fostering innovation, providing resources, and ensuring the success of digital education programs for cultural tourism operators.

Eliminating Obstacles/Barriers by making available support mechanisms/systems:
Policymakers can eliminate barriers through support mechanisms such as grants, mentorship programs, and resource centres. Education programs, financial support, digital resources, and networking opportunities contribute to overcoming obstacles.

Cost Benefits for Cultural Tourism Operators in the Long Term:
The long-term benefits include increased competitiveness, improved visitor satisfaction, enhanced community relationships, and sustainable growth. Education contributes to destination development, economic growth, enhanced marketing, adaptability to market trends, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

3. Policy recommendations

Based on the insights gathered from various stakeholders in the cultural tourism sector of Greece, Cyprus, Norway, and Austria, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

3.1. Addressing the cultural tourism education gap

Cultural tourism is a dynamic and diverse sector that requires a well-rounded and adaptive educational framework. The insights gathered from stakeholders underscore the existence of a significant gap in cultural tourism education. To address this gap and foster a more inclusive, comprehensive, and relevant educational landscape, policymakers are recommended to consider the following overarching strategies:

1. **Collaborative Curriculum Design:** Encourage collaboration between policymakers, industry experts, and educational institutions to design curricula that incorporate cultural sensitivity training. This collaborative approach ensures that the educational content aligns with the practical needs and challenges faced by professionals in the cultural tourism sector.

2. **Establishment of Dedicated Training Centres:** Advocate for the creation of specialized cultural tourism training centres. These centres can serve as focal points for immersive and targeted training programs, fostering a conducive environment for skill development and knowledge enhancement.

3. **Region-Specific Educational Programs:** Emphasize the development of region-specific educational initiatives. Tailoring programs to the unique characteristics and cultural nuances of each region ensures that cultural tourism education is contextually relevant and resonates with local stakeholders.

4. **Government Support and Funding:** Policymakers should play an active role in guiding cultural tourism-oriented educational programs. Provide financial support, grants, and incentives for businesses investing in advanced initiatives. This support creates a collaborative ecosystem between the government and the cultural tourism industry.

5. **Integration of Technology:** Promote the integration of technology into cultural tourism education. Policymakers should support the adoption of digital tools, online modules, and virtual experiences to enhance the learning experience and ensure that professionals are equipped with essential digital skills.

6. **Collaborative Networks and Partnerships:** Recognize the importance of collaborative networks and partnerships. Policymakers should foster alliances between educational institutions, businesses, and communities to create a more inclusive and accessible cultural tourism education landscape.

7. **Continuous Curriculum Updates:** Establish mechanisms for continuous curriculum updates. Policymakers should proactively engage with stakeholders to ensure that cultural tourism education remains dynamic, relevant, and responsive to emerging industry trends and challenges.

3.2.   Improving qualities and learnings

Cultural tourism, with its multifaceted demands, requires a diverse skill set for effective operation. Stakeholders have collectively identified several qualities and learnings lacking in current cultural tourism education programs. To bridge these gaps and elevate the quality of education, policymakers are urged to consider the following overarching recommendations:

1. **Comprehensive Skill Development Programs:** Advocate for the inclusion of comprehensive skill development programs that address a wide range of competencies. This includes cultural sensitivity and local knowledge, language proficiency, digital skills, business acumen, sustainable practices, financial literacy, social media competence, marketing, sales skills, and soft skills like communication and time management.
2. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Encourage an interdisciplinary approach to cultural tourism education. Policymakers should promote programs that integrate various disciplines, fostering a holistic understanding of the industry and equipping professionals with a well-rounded skill set.
3. **Specialized Training Modules**: Support the development of specialized training modules focusing on identified gaps. Policymakers should collaborate with industry experts to design targeted modules that specifically address areas such as sustainable tourism practices, digital marketing, heritage conservation, and cross-cultural communication.
4. **Integration of Technology and Digital Literacy:** Emphasize the integration of technology and digital literacy into cultural tourism education, including the use of Artificial Intelligence. Policymakers should promote programs that enhance digital proficiency, ensuring that professionals can navigate the evolving technological landscape of the tourism industry.
5. **Entrepreneurial Skills Development**: Recognize the importance of entrepreneurial skills. Policymakers should support initiatives that foster an entrepreneurial mindset, equipping professionals with the ability to innovate, adapt, and create value within the cultural tourism sector.
6. **Incentivize Continuous Learning**: Incentivize continuous learning through lifelong education programs. Policymakers should explore mechanisms such as tax incentives, grants, and awards to motivate professionals to engage in ongoing education and skill development.
7. **Collaboration with Industry Experts**: Facilitate collaboration between educational institutions and industry experts. Policymakers should create frameworks that encourage partnerships, ensuring that educational programs remain closely aligned with the practical needs and challenges faced by cultural tourism professionals.

8. **Promote Soft Skills Development**: Acknowledge the importance of soft skills in cultural tourism operations. Policymakers should encourage programs that focus on developing communication skills, time management, and other interpersonal skills that contribute to effective service delivery.

3.3. Strengthening existing support mechanisms

Recognizing and enhancing existing good practices and support mechanisms is crucial for fostering a robust cultural tourism education ecosystem. Stakeholders have highlighted successful initiatives and support structures. To build on these foundations, policymakers are encouraged to consider the following overarching recommendations:

1. **Knowledge Sharing Platforms**: Establish national or regional knowledge-sharing platforms that bring together stakeholders, industry experts, and policymakers. These platforms can facilitate the exchange of successful practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches in cultural tourism education.
2. **Promotion of Collaborative Initiatives:** Encourage collaborative initiatives between government bodies, educational institutions, industry associations, and cultural tourism operators. Policymakers should actively support programs that promote collaboration, ensuring a collective effort to advance cultural tourism education.
3. **Recognition and Certification Programs**: Introduce recognition and certification programs to identify and acknowledge exemplary cultural tourism education practices. Policymakers can create frameworks that incentivize institutions and operators to strive for excellence, contributing to the overall improvement of educational offerings.
4. **Sustainable Practices Certification**: Leverage existing sustainable practices certification models, such as the Austrian Ecolabel for Tourism, as inspiration for broader adoption. Policymakers should encourage cultural tourism operators to integrate sustainability into their practices through certification programs that encompass both environmental and cultural considerations.
5. **Financial Support for Educational Institutions**: Prioritize financial support for educational institutions providing cultural tourism programs. Policymakers should allocate funds to institutions that demonstrate a commitment to delivering high-quality education, ensuring the sustainability and growth of impactful programs.
6. **Community Engagement Initiatives**: Support community-led initiatives that engage locals in cultural tourism. Policymakers can incentivize programs that empower communities to actively participate in showcasing and preserving their cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and ownership.
7. **Campaigns to Raise Awareness**: Initiate awareness campaigns to highlight successful cultural tourism education initiatives. Policymakers should invest in promotional efforts to showcase best practices, creating a positive narrative around the impact of cultural tourism education on local communities and the industry.
8. **Regular Evaluation and Enhancement**: Establish mechanisms for the regular evaluation and enhancement of support programs. Policymakers should institute review processes that assess the effectiveness of existing support mechanisms, allowing for necessary adjustments to meet evolving industry needs.

3.4. Incentivizing digital education

The insights from Greece, Cyprus, Norway, and Austria underscore the critical role of policymakers in incentivizing cultural tourism operators to embrace digital education. A comprehensive strategy is necessary to address the diverse needs and capacities of operators across the cultural tourism sector. The following policy recommendations aim to provide a cohesive framework for policymakers seeking to promote digital education in the industry:

1. **Establishment of Financial Incentives**: Policymakers should introduce financial incentives, such as subsidies, grants, and tax benefits, to encourage cultural tourism operators to invest in digital education. These incentives can offset the costs associated with adopting digital learning platforms, making the transition more accessible and appealing.
2. **Dedicated State Agency for Digital Education**: Create a dedicated state agency or department focused on digital education for cultural tourism. This agency can serve as a centralized resource, offering guidance, coordinating initiatives, and providing financial support to operators seeking to enhance their digital skills.
3. **Funding for specialized Training Centres**: Allocate state funds for the establishment of specialized training centres dedicated to digital cultural tourism education. These centres can offer tailored programs, workshops, and resources, ensuring that operators receive relevant and high-quality training to meet industry demands.
4. **Industry Networking Events**: Foster industry networking through events, particularly in rural areas. Policymakers can support and organize gatherings that bring together cultural tourism operators, technology experts, and educators, providing a platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration.
5. **Individualized Approaches**: Recognize the unique capacities of cultural tourism operators and adopt individualized approaches to digital education incentives. Policymakers should consider flexible funding mechanisms that cater to the specific needs and circumstances of different operators, fostering inclusivity.
6. **National Program for Knowledge Exchange**: Establish a national program or platform that facilitates knowledge exchange among operators, individuals, and volunteers. This program can serve as a hub for sharing ideas, best practices, and success stories, creating a supportive community within the cultural tourism sector.
7. **Collaboration with Technology Companies:** Encourage collaboration with technology companies to provide discounted or free digital training resources. Policymakers should facilitate partnerships between cultural tourism operators and technology firms, ensuring access to cutting-edge tools and resources.
8. **Tax Credits for Digital Education Investments**: Introduce tax credits or deductions for cultural tourism businesses that invest in digital education. Policymakers can use fiscal incentives as powerful motivators, encouraging operators to allocate resources to online learning platforms and the development of digital skills.
9. **Regulatory Framework for Digital Proficiency**: Establish a regulatory framework that recognizes and rewards digital proficiency in the cultural tourism sector. Policymakers should create standards and certifications that validate digital skills, providing operators with tangible recognition for their efforts in embracing digital education.

3.5. Promoting cultural tourism education in rural areas

Cultural tourism education in rural areas holds significant potential for fostering sustainable development, preserving local heritage, and empowering communities. To maximize the positive impacts and address the unique challenges in rural settings, policymakers should consider the following recommendations:

1. **Establishment of Rural-Focused Cultural Tourism Training Centres**: Develop dedicated training centres in rural areas that focus specifically on cultural tourism education. These centres should provide tailored programs addressing the unique needs and opportunities of rural operators, fostering skills in heritage preservation, sustainable practices, and community engagement.

2. **Financial Support for Rural Initiatives**: Allocate financial resources to support cultural tourism initiatives in rural areas. This can include grants, subsidies, and incentives aimed at encouraging operators to engage in cultural tourism education. Financial support should be designed to enhance the economic viability of rural tourism while promoting responsible practices.

3. **Collaboration with Local Stakeholders**: Facilitate collaboration between cultural tourism operators, local communities, and relevant stakeholders in rural areas. Policymakers should encourage partnerships that enhance the authenticity of cultural experiences, ensuring that the benefits of tourism directly contribute to the well-being of the local population.

4. **Integration of Sustainable Practices**: Prioritize sustainable practices in cultural tourism education initiatives for rural areas. Policymakers should emphasize the importance of responsible tourism, promoting practices that preserve cultural attractions and natural resources. This includes training on minimizing environmental impact and respecting local ecosystems.

5. **Promotion of Rural Cultural Experiences**: Develop and implement marketing strategies that highlight the unique cultural experiences offered in rural areas. Policymakers should work alongside tourism boards and operators to create compelling narratives that attract visitors while respecting and preserving the authenticity of rural heritage.

6. **Inclusive Skill Development Programs**: Design skill development programs that are inclusive and accessible to individuals in rural communities. Policymakers should ensure that educational opportunities reach even those in remote areas, providing avenues for skill upgrades and economic empowerment.

7. **Community Empowerment through Education**: Empower local communities by integrating them into the cultural tourism education process. Policymakers should support initiatives that involve community members in decision-making, ensuring that their perspectives and cultural knowledge contribute to the overall educational framework.

8. **Heritage Safeguarding Initiatives**: Implement initiatives that specifically focus on safeguarding and promoting local heritage. Policymakers should collaborate with cultural institutions and experts to develop programs that preserve traditional practices, languages, and historical sites integral to rural identity.

9. **Government Support for Technology Integration**: Provide support for integrating technology into cultural tourism education in rural areas. This includes digital platforms

for marketing, online training resources, and tools that enhance the visibility of rural cultural attractions in the digital space.

3.6. Addressing legal/regulatory barriers

The successful promotion of digital cultural tourism education requires the identification and resolution of legal and regulatory barriers. To facilitate the seamless integration of these educational initiatives, policymakers are advised to consider the following recommendations:

1. **Standardization of Digital Education Programs**: Establish clear and comprehensive standards for digital cultural tourism education programs. This involves defining quality benchmarks, ensuring compliance with data protection laws, and setting accessibility standards. Standardization promotes the development of high-quality, legally compliant courses.

2. **Regular Review and Update of Regulations**: Institute a systematic process for the regular review and update of regulations pertaining to digital cultural tourism education. This ensures that policies remain relevant, keeping pace with technological advancements and addressing emerging challenges in the digital education landscape.

3. **Public Awareness and Education on Regulations**: Launch awareness campaigns to educate cultural tourism operators, educational institutions, and other stakeholders about existing regulations. This proactive approach fosters a culture of compliance, reducing inadvertent violations and promoting a legal and ethical digital education environment.

4. **Specialized Legal Support Services**: Establish specialized legal support services to assist cultural tourism operators and educational institutions in navigating complex legal frameworks. These services can provide guidance on compliance with data protection laws, intellectual property rights, and other relevant regulations specific to digital education.

5. **Promotion of Best Practices for Data Protection**: Collaborate with relevant agencies to promote best practices for data protection in digital cultural tourism education. Policymakers should encourage the adoption of secure and ethical data handling practices to build trust among participants and stakeholders.

6. **Incentivizing Compliance Through Funding**: Tie financial incentives, grants, or subsidies to compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. This approach encourages operators and institutions to invest in digital education programs while adhering to established legal standards, fostering a culture of responsible innovation.

7. **Flexibility in Regulatory Frameworks**: Design regulatory frameworks that are flexible enough to accommodate the dynamic nature of digital cultural tourism education. Policymakers should ensure that regulations strike a balance between fostering innovation and safeguarding the interests of participants and stakeholders.

8. **Cross-Border Collaboration on Regulations**: Facilitate cross-border collaboration to harmonize regulations related to digital cultural tourism education. This international cooperation streamlines legal processes for operators working across borders, fostering a global community of practice in cultural tourism education.

9. **Enhanced Intellectual Property Protection**: Strengthen intellectual property protection measures to safeguard the creations and innovations emerging from digital

cultural tourism education. Policymakers should consider updates to regulations that reflect the unique aspects of digital content creation and distribution.

10. **Regular Consultations with Stakeholders**: Conduct regular consultations with cultural tourism operators, educational institutions, legal experts, and technology providers. These consultations ensure that regulations are reflective of the evolving needs and challenges faced by the stakeholders involved in digital cultural tourism education.

3.7. Ensuring long-term implementation of digital education

As nations embark on the journey of integrating digital education into cultural tourism, policymakers should consider comprehensive strategies that ensure enduring success. The following policy recommendations draw from insights provided by stakeholders:

1. **National Framework for Digital Education**: Develop a national framework that outlines the integration of digital education into cultural tourism. This framework should articulate the government's commitment, strategies, and specific goals for sustained implementation, providing a cohesive vision for the digitalization of cultural tourism education.

2. **Tailored Regional Courses**: Encourage collaboration between policymakers and local agencies to tailor digital education courses according to regional characteristics. Recognizing the diversity of cultural tourism offerings, customized programs will be more effective in addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by operators in different regions.

3. **Government Advocacy for Training Programs**: Advocate for specific training programs within the cultural tourism sector. Policymakers should actively engage with industry stakeholders to understand evolving skill requirements and promote training initiatives that align with digital innovations, ensuring cultural tourism operators stay abreast of technological advancements.

4. **Strategic Planning for Digital Innovation**: Integrate digital innovation into strategic planning for cultural tourism. Policymakers should work collaboratively with industry experts and technological innovators to identify areas where digital technologies can enhance visitor experiences, marketing efforts, and sustainable practices within cultural tourism.

5. **Engagement with Digital Education Promotion Agencies**: Foster collaboration with existing government agencies dedicated to digital education promotion. By leveraging the expertise and resources of these agencies, policymakers can streamline efforts and promote synergy between general digital education initiatives and those specific to the cultural tourism sector.

6. **Accessibility in Local Dialects and On-Site Workshops**: Address linguistic diversity by ensuring accessibility in local dialects, particularly in regions with distinct linguistic variations. Support on-site workshops in rural areas to provide hands-on training, acknowledging that practical, localized education is essential for long-term comprehension and adoption.

7. **Partnerships with Educational Institutions**: Facilitate enduring partnerships between policymakers, cultural tourism operators, and educational institutions. These

collaborations should extend beyond one-time initiatives, emphasizing continuous engagement to foster a culture of ongoing learning and skill development.

8. **Robust Monitoring and Evaluation System**: Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system for digital education initiatives in cultural tourism. Regular reviews, feedback collection, and adjustments based on evolving needs ensure that programs remain effective, relevant, and aligned with the rapidly changing landscape of digital innovation.

9. **Continuous Training Programs with Certification:** Create a structured and continuous training program for cultural tourism operators, allowing them to obtain certifications in emerging areas of interest. This initiative not only encourages ongoing education but also provides tangible recognition for operators who invest in their digital skills.

10. **Knowledge Sharing Platforms**: Support the creation of networks or platforms that facilitate knowledge sharing among cultural tourism operators. Policymakers can play a role in establishing and endorsing these platforms, encouraging operators to share experiences, best practices, and insights related to digital social innovation in cultural tourism.

3.8. Partnerships for engagement

1. **Cross-Sectoral Partnerships**: Facilitate cross-sectoral partnerships by connecting cultural tourism operators with local tourism boards, educational institutions, government agencies, and technology companies. Policymakers can play a role in organizing forums and initiatives that promote dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders from diverse sectors.

2. **Enhanced Rural Engagement:** Recognize the unique challenges in rural areas and facilitate direct consultation and collaboration between cultural tourism operators, community organizations, government agencies, and technology providers. Policymakers should prioritize initiatives that bridge the digital divide in rural regions, ensuring equitable access to educational resources.

3. **Local Authorities and Volunteer Groups**: Promote partnerships between cultural tourism operators, local authorities, and volunteer groups. Policymakers should recognize the role of local communities in supporting digital education initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration at the grassroots level.

4. **Digital Innovation Hubs**: Establish and support digital innovation hubs that act as focal points for collaboration. Policymakers can create platforms where cultural tourism operators, technology companies, and educational institutions converge to exchange ideas, share resources, and collectively drive digital innovation within the sector.

5. **International Collaboration**: Encourage international collaboration by fostering partnerships with global networks, organizations, and cultural institutions. Policymakers should facilitate participation in international forums, allowing cultural tourism operators to benefit from global insights, best practices, and collaborative initiatives.

3.9. Eliminating obstacles/barriers

In addressing the obstacles faced by cultural tourism operators, policymakers play a pivotal role in driving transformative change and ensuring the sector's sustainable growth. Drawing insights from Greece, Norway, and Austria, the following policy recommendations offer a cohesive approach to eliminate barriers and establish robust support mechanisms:

1. **Proactive Collaboration Initiatives**: Encourage proactive collaboration between government entities, local learning centres, and cultural tourism operators. Policymakers should facilitate partnerships that promote the exchange of updated skills, knowledge, and best practices, creating a dynamic ecosystem for continuous learning.
2. **Grants for Innovation**: Introduce grant programs specifically aimed at fostering innovation within the cultural tourism sector. Policymakers should allocate funds to support operators in implementing innovative projects, embracing digital technologies, and adapting to changing market dynamics.
3. **Mentorship Programs**: Implement mentorship programs where experienced individuals from the cultural tourism industry guide newcomers. Policymakers can facilitate the creation of mentorship networks, providing valuable insights, networking opportunities, and practical guidance to operators.
4. **Resource Centres for Skill Development**: Establish resource centres focused on skill development in collaboration with educational institutions and industry experts. Policymakers should ensure the availability of digital resources, training materials, and workshops to enhance the capabilities of cultural tourism operators.
5. **Digital Resources and Networking Opportunities**: Provide cultural tourism operators with access to digital resources and networking opportunities. Policymakers should support the creation of online platforms, forums, and databases that facilitate knowledge sharing, collaboration, and networking within the industry.

3.10. Cost benefits for operators

Recognizing the substantial long-term benefits that digital education can bring to cultural tourism operators, policymakers are pivotal in ensuring the realization of these advantages. Drawing insights from Greece, Cyprus, Norway, and Austria, the following policy recommendations provide a comprehensive framework to maximize cost benefits and foster sustainable growth for cultural tourism operators:

1. **Financial Incentives for Digital Adoption**: Introduce financial incentives, such as tax credits or subsidies, to encourage cultural tourism operators to invest in digital education. Policymakers should establish a framework that rewards operators for embracing technology, enhancing their competitiveness, and contributing to the industry's innovation.
2. **Promotion of Workforce Development**: Develop and promote workforce development programs tailored for the cultural tourism sector. Policymakers should collaborate with educational institutions and industry experts to design training initiatives that address specific skill gaps, including digital literacy, marketing, and sustainable practices.

3. **Support for Rural Development**: Direct financial support and incentives towards cultural tourism operators in rural areas. Policymakers should recognize the potential of digital education to contribute to rural development, job creation, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Encouraging innovation in these areas can lead to enduring economic benefits.

4. **Industry Recognition and Certification**: Establish industry-recognized certifications for cultural tourism operators who undergo digital education programs. Policymakers should work with industry associations to create standardized certifications that enhance the credibility of operators, improve industry standards, and contribute to increased visitor satisfaction.

5. **Collaborative Marketing Initiatives**: Facilitate collaborative marketing initiatives to promote operators who have embraced digital education. Policymakers should encourage partnerships between cultural tourism operators, local tourism boards, and marketing agencies to collectively showcase the benefits of digital education and attract a wider audience.

6. **Tailored Financial Support Programs**: Design financial support programs that cater to the diverse needs of cultural tourism operators. Policymakers should consider a tiered approach, offering different levels of support based on the scale, location, and specialization of operators, ensuring equitable access to benefits.

7. **Innovation Hubs for Cultural Tourism**: Establish innovation hubs specifically focused on cultural tourism within the digital education landscape. Policymakers can support the creation of hubs that provide resources, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities for operators, fostering a culture of continuous innovation.

8. **International Collaboration and Recognition**: Explore opportunities for international collaboration and recognition of digital education programs in cultural tourism. Policymakers can engage with global tourism organizations to ensure that operators who invest in digital education receive international recognition, contributing to increased visibility and competitiveness.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, this policy recommendation report details a robust framework to propel cultural tourism education into a digital era, fostering sustainable growth, innovation, and inclusivity. The groups of insights from diverse cultural tourism landscapes, including Greece, Cyprus, Norway, and Austria, has informed a comprehensive set of directives that policymakers can employ to navigate the complexities of integrating digital education into the cultural tourism sector.

Key Takeaways:

a. **Collaboration as a pillar:** Collaboration emerges as a recurring theme throughout the recommendations. Whether it be in curriculum design, partnerships with technology companies, or establishing knowledge-sharing platforms, collaborative efforts are positioned as essentials for success. Policymakers are urged to master a collaborative culture that unites stakeholders, fostering a collective commitment to advancing cultural tourism education.

b. **Inclusivity and Regional Tailoring:** Recognizing the diversity inherent in cultural tourism offerings, recommendations emphasize inclusivity and the need for region-specific educational programs. Policymakers are prompted to craft policies that account for linguistic, cultural, and geographic variations, ensuring that educational initiatives resonate with local stakeholders and cater to the unique needs of each region.

c. **Financial Incentives and Government Support:** Financial incentives, grants, and government support emerge as powerful tools to incentivize operators and educational institutions. Policymakers are encouraged to design tailored financial support programs that acknowledge the diverse needs of operators, fostering a conducive environment for the seamless integration of digital education.

d. **Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation:** The iterative nature of the recommendations underscores the importance of continuous monitoring and adaptation. Policymakers are advised to establish robust systems for feedback collection, program evaluation, and adaptation, ensuring that cultural tourism education remains dynamic, relevant, and responsive to emerging trends.

e. **Digital Literacy as a Cornerstone**: Digital literacy is positioned as a cornerstone throughout the recommendations. Policymakers are urged to prioritize the development of digital skills, recognizing them as essential components for navigating the evolving technological landscape and ensuring the sector's competitiveness on a global scale.

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