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RURALYOUTH BEST PRACTICE HANDBOOK

RURALYOUTH: Empowering Rural Tourism through Entrepreneurship with Youth

Erasmus Plus KA2 Strategic Partnerships for Youth- 2020-1-TR01-KA205-091140

<https://ruralyouth.ogu.edu.tr/>



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CHAPTER I

RURALYOUTH BEST PRACTICE HANDBOOK

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OVERVIEW THE RURALYOUTH

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project RURALYOUTH forms a lifelong education system for tourism students who would like to be an entrepreneur in rural areas so the effective open-source education system as the output of the project provides improvement of the quality and efficiency of education and training as being indicated under the 2020 European Cooperation in education and training. According to the creativity and innovation features of the project, RURALYOUTH offers education and training at all levels on the open access system. This social inclusive education system provides new opportunities for being entrepreneurs at international level with the social aspect.

The project RURALYOUTH creates actions to improve knowledge of agricultural, touristic, rural, cultural and entrepreneurship among young people and will prevent miss-match for tourism students. With this project, which was formed with 5 partners, it was aimed to support the development of rural areas, to support lifelong learning, to increase awareness of the nationality through education and technology-based distance education model and to develop action plans in line with the European Youth Strategy. To support rural development and increase employment in rural areas, it is aimed to increase tourism activities in rural areas with entrepreneurship training modules to be created in the perspective of rural tourism. To achieve this goal, training modules will be designed together with partner organizations and training will be provided to students and entrepreneur candidates through the online training platform.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT: INNOVATION

During the project, the team of RURAL YOUTH will aim to form the rural entrepreneurship skills and create a healthy way to gain a new profession and qualification for the tourism students who want to develop a business plan on rural entrepreneurship. The project will be a useful tool to bring the young tourism students to the sustainable development of rural tourism business and related rural tourism activities. During the RURAL YOUTH training program, the young tourism students will have the chance to improve their knowledge of rural tourism via alternative and innovative education ways.

More specifically, RURALYOUTH's expected results will:

- to provide computer-based documentation about what means rural tourism, what infrastructure is needed when developing rural tourism business and ideas of sustainable development for rural areas.
- to promote a tool of specific rural tourism
- to promote rural tourism entrepreneurship

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- to form a encourage young tourism students to establish their own business in rural tourism.
- to find out success stories on rural tourism entrepreneurship
- to create a strong e-learning platform on rural tourism entrepreneurship
- to bring tourism students on the unique e-learning platform who are willing to be an entrepreneur.
- to offer the EU awareness-raising documents on the topic of rural tourism
- to create a strong EU cooperation

The main result within the completion of the project is to create equal opportunities that will encourage the young tourism students through flexible training, open and distance learning as the main outputs.

TARGET GROUP

The main target group of the project is all young people between the ages of 18-30 who want to be an entrepreneur in rural areas.

MAIN PILLAR OF THE RURALYOUTH TRAINING PROGRAM

The framework of the proposed training program will be based on 6 main pillars, every pillar aims to teach specific skills for rural entrepreneurship in tourism for tourism students.

These pillars are:

1. Building tourism students' rural tourism thinking and rural entrepreneurship thinking
2. Building rural entrepreneurship awareness
3. Assisting the tourism students who are interested in rural entrepreneurship
4. Developing an alternative promoting in rural areas through tourism students
5. Setting the rural entrepreneurship mindset of tourism in an alternative way
6. Experiencing the rural entrepreneurship advantage in tourism

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Main Aim: The aim of the RuralYouth Handbook is to inform learners about rural tourism entrepreneurship and to act as a guidebook for future entrepreneurship activities.

The Goals of Handbook

Through this handbook:

- * Learners are able to learn how to use strategies.
- * Learners are able to learn Country strategies and EU strategies in the field of rural tourism and entrepreneurship.
- * By learning the stories of practitioners with good practice examples and videos, they are able to learn what should be considered in future studies.

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of proposed handbook is based on three main pillars, each of which aim to promote specific skills for rural tourism and rural entrepreneurship field students.

These pillars are:

- 1-Setting the rural entrepreneur-based mindset of tourism and tourism field students who are interested in rural entrepreneurship
- 2- Understanding the marketing and promoting of rural tourism, rural entrepreneurship in rural tourism destination effectively as an alternative development tool
- 3- Building students' rural entrepreneurship thinking and awareness

Handbook includes three different issues in order for the work to reach the desired goal.



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WHY RURALYOUTH BEST PRACTICE HANDBOOK IS IMPORTANT?

Currently, rural youth have too little access to many of the ingredients of rural success. These include land, credit, farm inputs, agronomic and vocational training, insurance, and lucrative markets. Farming is also getting harder because of climate change, degradation of natural resources, water scarcity and loss of biodiversity. Revitalizing rural economies will require empowerment of youth in rural youth enterprises.

What helps young people succeed in rural tourism entrepreneurship?

Our handbook helps youth who will be future entrepreneurs. Our RURALYOUTH BEST PRACTICES from each partner country provide guidance for future youth entrepreneurship business.



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CHAPTER II.

WHAT ARE THE BEST PRACTICES OF EACH COUNTRY?



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BEST PRACTICES OF EACH COUNTRY

A best practice is a standard or set of principles that, when followed, are known to create positive outcomes. Best practices refer to how to complete a task or configure something.

PARTNER NAME

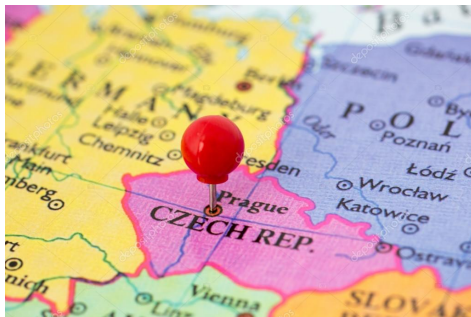
ProEduca

PROEDUCA

INTRODUCTION OF THE COUNTRY



COUNTRY NAME
The Czech Republic



GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE COUNTRY

The Czech Republic is a landlocked country in Central Europe. It is a relatively small country with area of 78.864 square kilometres. The country is bordered by Poland to the north, Germany to the west, Austria to the south and Slovakia to the east. Czech Republic has approximately 10.512.000 inhabitants. Its capital and largest city, with 1.3 million inhabitants, is Prague. The Country has 2 major cities other than Prague which are Brno and Ostrava. Majority of the people are Czechs and largest minorities are Slovaks, Poles and Germans. The Czech Republic includes the historical territories of Bohemia and Moravia and a small part of Silesia. Czech Republic is ruled by parliamentary democracy political system. The Country is in the Continental European Time zone (GMT +1). Czech Republic is using Czech Crown (CZK) as its currency. Czech language is written in Latin based Czech alphabet. First Czech state in history emerged as the Duchy of Bohemia in late 9th century. The Duchy was an Imperial State of the Holy Roman Empire. Charles the Fourth was the first king of Bohemia to be the Holy

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Roman Emperor in 1346. In 1526 Bohemia went under Habsburg control. In 1806 with the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, Bohemia became a part of Austrian Empire. In 1918 after the First World War, the First Czechoslovak Republic was established. In 1938 The country got invaded by Germany and got liberated on 9 May 1945.

Until the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Czechoslovakia was part of Warsaw Pact. In 1993 Czech Republic and Slovakia got separated as 2 different states. Since then, Czech Republic is a pluralist multi party parliamentary representative democracy. Czech Republic is a member state of NATO since 1999 and a member state of European Union since 2004.

COUNTRY TOURISM PROFILE

Czech Republic is one of the major tourist destinations in Europe. The Country is receiving approximately 20 million visitors annually. The capital, Prague, is the most popular destination, by itself receiving over 8 million visitors annually out of which almost 7 million are foreign. In 2015, Prague was the fifth most visited city in Europe after London, Paris, Istanbul and Rome. Other highly visited destinations include Karlštejn Castle, Kutná Hora, Brno, Český Krumlov, České Budějovice, Olomouc and the Lednice–Valtice Cultural Landscape. The tourists arriving to Czech Republic are mostly from Germany, Slovakia, and Poland. The main tourist attractions in Czech Republic are cultural heritage, nightlife, hiking and skiing, vineyards, and wine tourism. Czech Republic has 14 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Czech countryside offers protected areas such as Bohemian Paradise (Český ráj), Bohemian Karst (Český kras) and Šumava National Park. The countryside features castles, caves, and other landmarks. Skiing resorts are located from Northern East to Northern West Czech Republic. Moravian region is famous for its wine. Co-ordination of all entities operating in the tourism sector, legislation to improve tourism, consumer protection and European Union structural funds financing projects in the tourism sector are under central government's responsibility meanwhile approving development plans in the region and arranging the implementation of the development in the region are under the responsibility of regional governments. There is a Czech Tourism Authority which is responsible for presentation of the Czech Republic and Czech Convention Bureau is responsible for the promotion of the country in the field of congress and incentive tourism on domestic and foreign markets.

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RURAL TOURISM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Rural tourism in the Czech Republic is enjoying an unprecedented prosperity and is becoming a popular life trend. Hundreds of farms in each region of Czech Republic are offering unique environment to tourists. In South Moravia, it means living in the rural estates of most famous wine making region of the Czech Republic. In the farmsteads near the Krkonosze Natural Reserve rural tourism with ecotourism is presented. The region of Plzen in the west of the Czech Republic offers visits to the famous Czech breweries. The most common type of rural tourism in Czech Republic however is the horse farm. There are over 150 horse farms and estates all over the country which offers horse riding tours. Second most common type is educational tourism where guests are offered staying and excursions. In the vicinity of small Czech town Usti nad Labem, there are traditional horse breeding farms in rural hinterland and also goat farms. In the Czech Republic, many farms offer such services in a complex. Most of the visitors of the Czech Republic for the rural tourism are from Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and Sweden. Rural Development in Czech Republic is managed nationally through one Rural Development Programme (RDP), funded under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) which is a part of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) and national contributions. between 2014 and 2020, 3.5 billion Euros was invested by the Rural Development Program for the development of Czech agriculture. 2.3 billion Euros of this investment was from EU sources and 1.2 billion Euros was from Czech budget. The main objective of the program is to restore, preserve and improve ecosystems dependent on agriculture through, in particular, agri-environmental measures, as well as investments for competitiveness and innovation of agricultural holdings and support for young people's entry into agriculture or landscape infrastructure. The program also supports the diversification of economic activities in rural areas in order to create new jobs and increase economic development.



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COVID-19 AND TOURISM

The individual countries of the European Union are divided by colour according to the degree



of risk of infection which are red, orange, and green. Visitors from non-EU countries need to check if they are authorized to enter the country. Foreigners arriving from “Red” countries must fill in the arrival form and submit to the regional hygiene station the result of the PCR test within 7 days of arrival for the test performed in the Czech Republic or submit the test result, which was performed in EU countries. Passengers arriving from “Orange” countries can arrive without having to fill in an arrival form. Foreigners will have to submit a negative PCR test before entering a workplace or educational institution in the Czech Republic. Any person coming from green countries can enter the Czech Republic without any restrictions.

95 percent of hotels and other tourist accommodation establishments closed. 100 percent of travel agencies closed (Czech travel agencies reported more than 1 billion USD value of prepaid services for the 2020

season). Total halt of tourist business means a low chance for a quick restart of incoming tourism.

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The economic crisis caused by COVID-19 pandemic has painfully affected Czech tourism and all related sectors. Tourism-related businesses are expected to face a revenue decline of at least 47 percent in 2021. However, it can be as much as 80 percent depending on circumstances and a specific location. The number of nights spent in the country by non-residents are expected to decline to less than nine million in 2020, down 70 percent from almost 30 million in 2019.

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BEST PRACTICE-1

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POMOC
Týn nad Vltavou

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE

POMOC Týn nad Vltavou Association (Part of Social Farming in Visegrad Countries Best Practice)

LOCATION: Týn nad Vltavou, Czech Republic

WEB SITE: www.pomoc-tyn.cz

FULL NAME: POMOC Týn nad Vltavou, r.a. (CZ)

BACKGROUND

The POMOC association, zs, supports disadvantaged people from the Vltavotyn region and, together with them, tries to improve not only their condition (health, psychological, social), but also the places where they live. The basic pillar of the association is *social agriculture and social entrepreneurship*.



The main activity of the association can be divided into three areas:

1. Help for people with disabilities: social services, rehabilitation, supported housing, employment in sheltered workshops (**St. Agnes Home, ops**)

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2. Support for seniors, families with children, youth: social services, supported housing, leisure clubs, maternity and low-threshold centres (**Domovy KLAS, ops**)
3. Employment of people with disabilities in other places of the region (**Dílňy St. Jiljí ops**)

KEY INFORMATION

- This best practice has a direct relationship with the tourism field.
- It has an impact on local people. At present, there are about 140 employees, of which about 100 clients have a limited or changed working ability. At the same time, about 16 clients attend the stationary and social therapeutic workshops.
- The problem that the best practice solve in the local area is rehabilitation of people with disabilities.
- The best practice has been running since 1992 and there are local people among the employees.
- It is an eco- friendly best practice, and it has its own approach for sustainability.
- The organization aims for continuing development of farm activities, both in technology and in products themselves. It is an aim to continue to focus on product quality and distribution, especially in our region. Success in submission of various projects to support staff employment and technology investments is also key to the organization. Attention will also be focused on the development of cooperation with similarly oriented organizations in the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries.

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BEST PRACTICE-2

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE

ProEduca



BEMAGRO Malonty Organic Farm (Part of Social Farming in Visegrad Countries Best Practice)

LOCATION: Krumlov district, Czech Republic

WEB SITE: <http://www.bemagro.cz/>

FULL NAME: BEMAGRO JSC (CZ)

BACKGROUND



Bemagro Malonty is a joint-stock company established in 1994 from former state farms. It currently manages an area of more than 2,000 hectares, most of which consists of meadows and pastures, and roughly 500 hectares of land is ploughed. The farm is certified and included in the organic farming and biodynamic farming system; from the production point of view, it focuses mainly on dairy cattle breeding, cattle breeding without market milk production, and in terms of the Selský dvůr, also on backyard breeding of pigs, sheep, and poultry. In crop production, apart from classical field production, the purpose of which is to provide feed for bred animals and market crops (rye, wheat, oats, spelt, buckwheat, potatoes), space is dedicated to a vegetable garden that produces a wide variety of regional vegetables and herbs. Within the processing activities, a new biodynamic dairy processing facility was built on the farm.

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Given that agriculture is primary and in terms of income also the main activity of the organization, the activities included in the concept of social farming were added later, rather as a natural complement to the effort to improve the conditions in the microregion. Since 2006, there has been cooperation in education, and since 2008 the company has been involved in social activities. It is one of the largest employers in the region (about 50 permanent employees, another 20 seasonally), while also providing space for disadvantaged people in the labour market.

KEY INFORMATION

- This best practice has a direct relationship with the tourism field.
- It has an impact on local people. It is one of the largest employers in the region (about 50 permanent employees, another 20 seasonally), while also providing space for disadvantaged people in the labour market.
- The problem that the best practice solves in the local area:
An agricultural enterprise oriented to the development of a microregion – persons disadvantaged in the labour market are employed as needed – those who require help and do not threaten the operation of the enterprise.
- The best practice has been running since 1994 and there are local people among the employees.
- It is an eco- friendly best practice, and it has its own approach for sustainability.
- Extending the diversity of cultivated crops in terms of the production of vegetables (also according to the interest of customers), building a relaxation zone with ornamental flowers, trees and bushes, with an arbour and a playground for mothers with children, building slaughterhouses with meat production, new administrative buildings with a kitchen and canteen, a shop and a hall for people to meet each other, root waste water treatment plants, new stables for expanding livestock breeding and, last but not least, the solution of ecological energy sources. The farm directs all its activities to sustainability, both economic and environmental.

RELATED LINKS & SOURCES

- Voluntary Report: Impact of COVID-19 on the Czech Tourism and Food Service Sectors by Martina Hlavackova, Prague, 2020
- https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/country/czechrepublic_en?fbclid=IwAR0k9Q7L9s8Y1IcD5CjEPUSLppfmU-KVztQtJWY3X5bP6HhI6BKJSqWPLk
- <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/agrotourism-in-cr-increasingly-popular/r~i:article:604637/>
- <https://www.visitczechrepublic.com/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Republic
- https://www.mzv.cz/london/en/about_the_czech_republic/basic_information_on_the_czech_republic/index.html#:~:text=The%20Czech%20Republic%20is%20a,1.3%20million%20inhabitants%2C%20is%20Prague.
- <https://www.cottages-for-holidays.com/173/agrotourismo-en/czech-agro-en.html>

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BEST PRACTICES OF EACH COUNTRY

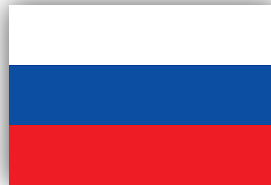
A best practice is a standard or set of principles that, when followed, are known to create positive outcomes. Best practices refer to how to complete a task or configure something.

PARTNER NAME



**SLOVAK UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY IN
BRATISLAVA**

INTRODUCTION OF THE COUNTRY



COUNTRY NAME
Slovakia



GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE COUNTRY

The Slovak Republic lies in Central Europe. Northern and central Slovakia are mountainous regions covered by the Carpathian Mountains. Southern and eastern Slovakia are lowland regions, and important agricultural areas of the country. The Danube River connects Slovakia with Vienna and Budapest, the Rhine-Main channel, and Black Sea ports.

The country borders with Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, and Ukraine.

The area of the Slovak Republic is 49,035 sq. km and the number of population is 5,397,036 (according 2011 census) and the average population density is 109.9 inhabitants per sq. km. The capital and largest city is Bratislava, with 424.4 thousand inhabitants (2016) and the second largest city is Košice, 239,171 inhabitants (2016). Official language is Slovak. Slovak language is written in Latin based alphabet. Majority of the population belong to the Slovak nationality (around 86%), followed by Hungarian (around 10%), Roma, Czech, Ruthenian, German, Polish, and Ukrainian minorities.

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The Slovak Republic enjoys a mild continental climate, with distinctive rotation of seasons. The average daily temperature is -2°C in winter and 21°C in summer. The coldest month is January; the warmest months are July and August. On average, snow cover remains in the highest locations for 130 days a year. The Country is in the Continental European Time zone (GMT +1).

Slovak territory was inhabited in prehistoric times. From this period several archaeological artifacts are preserved. The first state formation in the territory – Great Moravia, emerged in 9th century. Since 11th century the territory belonged to Hungarian kingdom, later to Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918. After the First World War, in 1918, Slovakia became a part of the First Czechoslovak Republic. In 1939, Czechoslovakia was broken up by Nazi Germany and Slovakia became a client state of German Reich. After the Second World War in 1945 Slovakia became a part of the Czechoslovak Republic, since 1948 ruled by communist regime until the Velvet Revolution in 1989. In 1993 Czech Republic and Slovakia got separated as 2 different states. Since then, Slovak Republic is a pluralist multi party parliamentary representative democracy. Slovak Republic is a member state of NATO since 2004 and a member state of European Union since 2004. Since 2009 is a member of eurozone and the currency is Euro.

COUNTRY TOURISM PROFILE

Slovak Republic is a popular tourism destination due to its rich natural and cultural heritage, natural landscapes, mountains, medieval towns and castles, and folk architecture. Ski resorts and spas are one of the major tourist destinations. In 2019, according to statistics, 6,432,934 people visited Slovakia. The number of foreign tourists was 2,475,094 and domestic visitors using accommodation establishments almost 4 million (3,957,840).



Image by Albert Hovorka from Pixabay

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The capital Bratislava and High Tatras mountain area are the most visited destinations. High Tatras offer opportunities for hiking and skiing. Most of the tourists arriving to Slovakia come from Czech Republic, on the second place are tourists from Poland. Other highly visited destinations include balneological, climatic, and mixed spa resorts, for example Piešťany and Trenčianske Teplice. Slovak republic has 7 UNESCO World Heritage Sites. 5 cultural heritage sites include: Bardejov Town Conservation Reserve, Historic Town of Banská Štiavnica and the Technical Monuments in its Vicinity, Levoča and Spiš Castle with the associated cultural monuments, rural village Vlkolínec, and Wooden Churches in the Carpathian Mountain Area. Natural sites are: Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Caves of Aggtelek and Slovak Karst.

Co-ordination of all entities operating in the tourism sector, legislation to improve tourism, consumer protection and European Union structural funds financing projects in the tourism sector are under central government's responsibility - Ministry of Transport and Construction. Approving development plans in the region and arranging the implementation of the development in the region are under the responsibility of regional governments. Many organizations are active in tourism and in the field of promotion of the country on domestic and foreign markets.

RURAL TOURISM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Rural tourism and entrepreneurship in the Slovak Republic is gaining importance of national policies and programmes. Microbusinesses and small enterprises are the dominant representatives of business in the rural environment.

In the last years, rural tourism and entrepreneurship in the Slovak Republic enjoyed prosperity and became popular. Many rural areas offer unique natural environment to tourists and small rural entrepreneurs offer individual accommodation in village and farmhouses. In southern wine making regions, for example in Slovak part of the Tokaj region, on the border with Hungary, the offer includes visits to wine cellars and vineyards, and offer for organizing conferences, work meetings or social events. For the type of tourism associated with physical activities, there are many farms offering horse riding.

Many small farms focus on offering stay and services for families with children, providing opportunities for children to become familiar with animals, typical for Slovak rural environment – goats, sheep, ducks, and many other. Many rural estates provide facilities for organization of workshops focused on traditional handicrafts and other educational activities.

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Image by Walkerssk from Pixabay

Rural Development in Slovak Republic is managed nationally through Rural Development Programme (RDP), funded under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) which is a part of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) and national contributions. important is the Programme of Village Renewal financed from environmental fund by Ministry of the Environment. The main objective of the program is to restore, preserve and improve environment of rural settlements. Every year a competition Village of the Year is organized by Slovak Environment Agency, promoting successful achievements in improvement of rural environment.

COVID-19 AND TOURISM



Image Lubos Houska from Pixabay

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected tourism sector in Slovakia and all related sectors.

In spring period 2020, during the first wave, and in winter period 2020-2021, during the second wave it caused closure of hotels and other tourist accommodation.

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establishments, closure of ski resorts, wellness, and recreation amenities. Restrictions of travels caused drop of foreign and also domestic visitors. In connection with Covid-19, the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic has been launching assistance in the form of a financial contribution for those legal entities and natural persons of entrepreneurs in the field of tourism, since 15 December 2020, which report reduced revenues by 40% compared to last year.

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BEST PRACTICE-1

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



SLOVAK UNIVERSITY OF
TECHNOLOGY IN BRATISLAVA

**Accommodation Facility Historical House
Ailit**



LOCATION: Podbranč, Senica district, Slovak Republic

WEB SITE: <https://www.tvojebytovanie.sk/h/historicky-objekt-ailit/4986>

FULL NAME: HISTORICKÝ OBJEKT AILIT PRIVÁT

BACKGROUND

The private house serves a daily breakfast buffet. The nearest airport Piešťany is located 56 km from the Ailit Historic Building. Piešťany is 43 km away and Skalica is 26 km away. You can go cycling in the surroundings. The historical building Ailit is located in Podbranč and offers accommodation with free WiFi, a garden with a playground and views of the garden. The staff of the Ailit Historical Building can arrange a bicycle rental for you. The units come with parquet floors, a seating area with a flat-screen TV, a fully equipped kitchenette with a dining area, and a private bathroom.



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KEY INFORMATION

- The best practice has direct relationship with the tourism field. It offers accommodation in the historical rural house, representing a typical folk rural architecture of the Kopanice region. It is located in a small rural village Podbranč, which has the form of dispersed settlement, consisting of houses and small farming estates, dispersed in a landscape offering many opportunities for recreation and tourism, hiking and cycling. The character of landscape is mountainous, dominated by the hill with the ruins of the castle Branč. The facility offers accommodation in four apartments, each equipped with its own kitchen and private bathroom, TV, Wi-Fi. The house is surrounded by garden, with children playground, grill area, wellness with small swimming pool. It is very attractive for families with children, as the garden also offers part with domestic animals – ducks, sheep, rabbits, mini pony and donkey. A buffet breakfast is served daily at the property.
- It has an impact on local people. In the Kopanice region, there are limited opportunities for employment, especially in the locations of dispersed settlements, which are remote from urban centers. The mountainous landscape is not favorable for agriculture, only mainly for sheep breeding or for plum orchards, but it very attractive for tourism. Small family business offering accommodation for tourists enhances the entrepreneurship of local people and self-employment in related tourism services – for example rental of bicycles and sport equipment, restaurant, and catering facilities, and also creates job opportunities. It shows that the restoration of historic buildings and folk architecture pays off and thus educates people to appreciate their cultural heritage.
- The problem that the best practice solves in the local area:
It contributes to the solutions of the problems caused by lack of employment in the local area and of also of abandonment of rural houses and agricultural land.
- The best practice has been running since 1994 and there are local people among the employees.
- It is an eco- friendly best practice, and it has its own approach for sustainability. The practice is eco-friendly, it has its own garden, with diversity of cultivated vegetables (also according to the interest of customers), and also fruits, eco-friendly relaxation zones with ornamental flowers, trees and bushes. For heating and other energy consumption it applies solutions minimizing the consumption and using renewable resources, it focuses on waste separation and recycling. All activities are aimed towards economic and environmental sustainability.



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BEST PRACTICE-2

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



Guesthouse Javorina



LOCATION: Čičmany, Žilina district, Slovak Republic

WEB SITE: <https://www.penzionjavorina.sk/>

FULL NAME: Penzion Javorina

BACKGROUND

This traditional farmhouse is located in the picturesque village of Čičmany, 40 km south of Žilina. Traditional Slovak recipes are served at the restaurant or on the summer terrace. On weekends, guests can also listen to folk music concerts at Javorina Penzion. Čičmany Ski Station is just 300 meters away. It is known for its unique painted log cabins. To save them, the village was declared a monument reserve of folk architecture. The village is also interesting for its folk costume, the atmosphere of the ancient past breathes here. The beautiful surroundings of Strážovské vrchy give perfect enjoyment of nature. In the summer, you can go hiking, there are plenty of footpaths. The surroundings of Rajecká dolina is something magical that every nature lover should see.

KEY INFORMATION

- The best practice has direct relationship with the tourism field. The Guesthouse Javorina is located in a small village Čičmany, famous for its uniquely painted wooden houses. For their protection, the village has been declared a historical preservation of folk architecture. The village is of great interest of tourist also thanks to the regional folk costumes and the atmosphere of the distant past. Wonderful environment of Strážov hills and Rajec valley provides plenty of hiking trails. The guesthouse Javorina is a reconstructed wooden folk residence that offers accommodation, meals and wellness services in accordance with its home-like atmosphere and traditions. The restaurant with domestic Slovak cuisine offers Slovak barbecue specialties and live music performances, during summertime on the terrace or in a stylish chalet at the farmyard.

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The accommodation capacity of the guesthouse is 42 beds, in comfortable 2 and 3-bedrooms or apartments with bathroom facilities. Some of the rooms have a private terrace with an overview of the farmyard and surrounding countryside. At the farmyard, chickens-catching, cow-feeding or caring for ponies can be tried out by guests during their stay. Relaxation services include Finnish Sauna and a Hot Tub. Also, sale of domestic products is provided – homemade products from the slaughterhouse, cheeses, jams, juices from nature, herbs from mountains.

- It has an impact on local people. The guesthouse provides job opportunities for local people, important in the region where the possibilities of employment are very limited. It employs local people as permanent or seasonal workers (waiters, chefs, animators, cleaners, etc.). It also cooperates with local food suppliers. As the resort is constantly developing and investing in new solutions, local construction companies also participate in the renovations. Restaurant, chalet, farmyard serve not only for tourists, but for local people. Local events are often organized in the resort.
 - The problem that the best practice solves in the local area: It contributes to the solutions of the problems caused by lack of employment in the remote rural area and attracts young people to stay in the village, which would otherwise serve only as a cottage and summer house recreational area.
 - The practice has been running since 2012. There are local people working in the facility, employed in guest services, restaurant, and farmyard. In addition, it cooperates with local vendors and construction companies.
 - It is an eco- friendly best practice, and it has its own approach for sustainability. The Guesthouse Javorina cares to behave in an eco-friendly way, focusing on minimizing energy consumption, waste separation and recycling. Activities are aimed towards economic and environmental, sustainability. It focuses also on bio and raw trends in food production, bio-products are used in the kitchen and sold in the shop of the domestic products. Guests are encouraged to behave in an environmentally friendly way.

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BEST PRACTICES OF EACH COUNTRY

A best practice is a standard or set of principles that, when followed, are known to create positive outcomes. Best practices refer to how to complete a task or configure something.

PARTNER NAME



ESKİŞEHİR
METROPOLITAN
MUNICIPALITY

INTRODUCTION OF THE COUNTRY



COUNTRY NAME
Türkiye



GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE COUNTRY

The Republic of Turkey is a nation with quite an impressive and ancient history; first known as well as the most ancient human settlement and monuments have recorded within the Göbeklitepe monoliths. The prominent iron age civilization such as the Hatti, and the well-known Hittites have recalled the Anatolia as their homes, as well as the Lydians whose biggest accomplishment being the invention of Money as well as increasing the economic activities through the Anatolia. The Anatolia also seen quite an active amount of Hellenic as well as Persian colonization as well through its history. The romans have built prominent cities through the entirety of Anatolia, with Eastern Romans called Byzantines even called the western Anatolia as their own.

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The Turks arrival on the Anatolia is well recorded with the Seljuk Empires rise, as well as the migration and growth of the local dynasties referred to as Beyliks, which the Ottomans became the most notorious and dominant force within these Beyliks. The Ottomans historical event as well as their prevalence are well recorded within the historical records; after the fall of the Ottomans and the creation of Turkish republic the state has been instated as a prevalent actor through the Asia Minor. The Turkish Republic prides itself with its accomplishments as well as its ancient traditions. The Republic being one of the first states to give woman the right to vote, the state represent all the parties as well as the citizens right to create their own independent media. The Population of the Turkey is estimated around Eighty-two million people, which the national income is estimated as much as 2.308 trillion dollars.

COUNTRY TOURISM PROFILE



The Republic of Turkey's tourism sectors mainly consist of seaside, and beach activities, guided tours and advertisement of its historical sites, tours, and guides for nature sites, as well as recently developed sectors such as rural tourism and activities for adventure enthusiasts. Turkey's overall revenue arisen from tourism has toppled around Thirty point five billion dollars. In 2019 Turkey has welcomed an official number of forty-five million tourists, as well as within 2020 the number of tourists welcomed by Turkey has estimated around twelve point three million people. The State, expectedly, seen withdrawal from larger number expectations of tourists because of the immense effects of the Covid-19, albeit the sectors impact has been mostly causing by the official shutdown policies.

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As referred the main attractions for the visitors are the easy to visit seas, many available activities within the coastal areas, as well as easy to access areas are already present within the referred areas, the visitors that choose to go for natural parks, resorts and more isolated areas tend to look for more specific themes for their interests. In 2020 the government instigated a fund policy from all the closed agencies for their costs; as well as dealing with available banks to offer agencies suitable credit deals, one-time packages to help them to go through the rough quarantine period. In 2019 the main and official policies generally include great advertisement campaigns, showing Turkish tourism centers all abroad the world and preserving the already existing architecture. The state's main efforts as of now, to get over with the quarantine conditions to open up the struggling agencies. The current conditions are mainly dependent on the Government actions.

RURAL TOURISM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP



The Rural tourism, and natural wonders of Turkey are quite varied and diverse. There are quite significant amounts of nature reserves, preservation areas as well as natural wonders within Anatolia. Among these wonderful and unique natural wonders of Turkey, there is Aras River, Pammukkale, Altıparmak mountains, Perşembe prairie, Karagöl lake, Pokut prairie, Ölüdeniz seaside, Delta of Gediz, Kelebekler valley

and many more, spread through the entire country. Among the many rural tourism variants there are activities and agencies for adrenaline enthusiasts, like valley parachute, rafting and similar occupations, as well as there are many destinations and places to go for the visitors that like to walk, trek, and adore the nature, like mountain hotels of Trabzon for example. The major contribution for the rural tourism, is the policy of 2003 referred to as the grand Tourism commission. The EU has included the Turkey directly within the IPARD program. There is also the 2015 – 2018 rural advancement and development plan that granted good benefits for the rural tourism agencies. The state's main policy is also given grants such as lesser taxations, as well as lesser amounts of rules to amend. The State also actively helps for advertisement of the agency's activities within the media, television and similar devices and social circles, to further to gain interest within the new tourism spots. Rural tourism organizations also get active support from the government's rural development support funds. Additional activities administered by the rural tourism agencies also include, private game reserves, endemic species preservation areas, designated terrain for nature based special events.



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COVID-19 AND TOURISM

The Covid-19 situation affected the Turkish tourism sector quite severely and has impacted a heavy blow through the Turkish Tourism agencies. The number of tourists coming to Turkey has significantly decreased, as the latest indicators shown Ninety nine percent deterioration through the tourism sector. The covid 19 situation has directly affected almost every operating agency within the tourism sector, hotels, airplane, and travel agencies have both seen decrease in their activities between fifty-five to seventy percent. The rural tourism does see a slight increase on interest, but that activity come from the local tourists, as the people are looking for potential getaways from population centers such as cities.



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BEST PRACTICE-1

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



Bademler Town of Natural Life Ecological Stay in hotels



LOCATION: Urla/İzmir, Aegean part of Anatolia, Türkiye

WEB SITE: <https://www.bademlerdogalyasamkoyu.com>

FULL NAME: BADEMLER DOĞAL YAŞAM KÖYÜ

BACKGROUND

Bungalow houses, which are completely wooden, will allow you to experience the natural beauty of the region and to experience a real nature tourism. Home pension is a type of accommodation preferred by those who want to be intertwined with the natural life of this region. Bademler Village Agricultural Development Cooperative, which was founded in 1962 under the leadership of Mahmut TÜRKMENÖĞLU, has been built on our 315 decares of land, which is one of our medium and long-term projects, in accordance with our life philosophy and intellectual structure, as a result of more than 50 years of experience.

It is a project carried out by İzmir Metropolitan Municipality 'Within the Scope of Local Development Planning' together with our Cooperative. It is a concrete and pioneering example of the 'İzmir Model', which aims to increase local and rural development, human and social welfare.

WORKING PLACES:

Cooperative Products Market
Cafeteria
Meeting room
workshops
Agricultural Studies
Animal Shelters

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KEY INFORMATION

- This best practice has a direct relationship with the tourism field. Indeed, the Bademler town is one of the first larger scale eco projects within the active field of tourism. In fact, the town's main purpose is to directly involve people with the towns natural aura as well as receiving participants and visitors.
- It has an impact on local people. It does have a considerable effect to the local denizens of the area, such as directly influencing the areas of available job opportunities, as well as directly increasing the number of visitors and tourists to the field that would inevitably give the locals new opportunities for their local business centers.
- The problem that the best practice solves in the local area:
It does solve specifically the increasing the amount of available job opportunities for the local civilians. The local town also effected by the local folkloric culture as well as the Ataturk's practices about modern society and principles.
- The Bademler natural village has created by 'local development plans' by the protocol and decree of the Izmir City's Authorities. The practice has been continuing since the year nineteen sixty-two, which preserves the importance of locals that are familiar with the local terrain and habitat.
- It is an eco- friendly best practice, and it has its own approach for sustainability. Indeed, it is, the villages construction as well as the architectural planning have developed by the greatest intent of causing minimal to no amounts of pollution, as well as all the plans within the Project gave the maximum and most dense areas for the natural terrain and ecological habitat. The entirety of the Village has based on being eco-friendly, as one Word within the beginning of its construction directly implies 'As Sovereign as a Tree, as brotherly as the whole forest!'



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BEST PRACTICE-2

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



**Grand Nature Lodging Project of Han
Municipality of Eskişehir
House lodging and Rural Tourism**

LOCATION: Han Municipality, Eskişehir, Türkiye

WEB SITE: <http://han.bel.tr/>

FULL NAME: HAN BELEDİYESİ

BACKGROUND

Han District is very rich in terms of historical artifacts for cultural tourism. Besides the world-famous Yazılıkaya (Midas City) and Midas Monument, Hüsrev Paşa Mosque, Hüsrev Paşa Bath, Hüsrev Paşa Primary School, Meydan Fountain, Underground City, Ancient Caravan and Expedition Road, King's Road, Kulapa, Karaağaç, Erten and Yazılıkaya mounds are among them. There are nearly 40 Hittite, Phrygian, Roman-Byzantine settlements, and ruins within the borders of our district. Almost 85% of them are unregistered. The most important source of livelihood is agriculture and animal husbandry. The district has been the scene of a very dense historical settlement. It has many Phrygian artifacts, Roman-Byzantine, Ottoman Civilizations, and cultural assets, including Yazılıkaya-Midas City.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Practice has indeed a direct relationship with the field of tourism, specifically with the cultural and historical advertising areas of the field. The area has an ancient history that is recorded to being, at least, three thousand years old, and being the most influential area of Phrygians, the ancient people were chosen the area to be their religious center. They have specifically created the Yazılıkaya Platform, for the intended purpose. Their elaborate and precise decorations such as impressive rock statues and monuments are preserved within the Yazılıkaya Valley. The area gathers the interest of hundreds of thousands of tourists because of being the infamous center of Phrygian activities. The 2021-year tourist expectation is well indicated being within the reach of minimum 1 million.

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<https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/seyahat/frigyada-hedef-1-milyon-turist,182A8FdYhUyGJeXLRVWrw>

The area has one hotel intended for rural visitors and tourists: as well as one gift shop, souvenir selling zones and gathering center in the Yazılıkaya monument place. In the year of 2020 Eskişehir grand municipality, Han municipality and Osmangazi University has collaborated to create house lodging Project and implemented it. In accordance with this Project, 10 house mini stay inns are opened for service.

- It has an impact on local people. The Implementation grants an immense opportunity for the advancement of local business sectors, new opportunities as well as the advancement of the local zone. The area could be also seen as a good convention for the necessary need of accommodation. In the same way this Project gives the local people additional income. The Projects sustainability gives the additional sector a chance for locals to sell their products to visitors. In this field the Han Municipality gifted a production center that the local woman produces their entirely organic, natural lavender soap, magnet, noodles, tarhana soup, bulghur, marmalade, natural vinegar and dairy products such as local endemic cheese variants and milk.
- The problem that the best practice solves in the local area: It successfully fixes the need of accommodation that the visitor tourists have, as well as it enhances the relationship between local people and the tourists. The areas agricultural sectors and their trade also develops the area significantly. The Project directly influences the area's economy. Along with the positive influence that allows the younger population to stay within their municipality and directly increasing the women independence.
- The Project has prepared through the year 2019 and implemented hence the year 2020. Eskişehir Grand Municipality and Osmangazi University have constantly look through the project's sustainability as well as renovation of advancement of the Project.
- It is an eco- friendly best practice, and it has its own approach for sustainability. The Project also helps the advancement of the area in terms of eco-tourism. In this matter the development of natural products such as organic soap products that have made from the lavender harvests, the wheats used in the organic noodles from ancestral agricultural activities, as well as the increase of aromatic plant cultivations, could be referred among the primary pros. Meanwhile the Eskişehir Municipalities Youth Center concludes, each year, the camp of production, that cultivates the youths help for the jobs within the town and each year's number of tourists arrived for ecological tourism actively helps through the advancement of local people's activities and overall stability.



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BEST PRACTICES OF EACH COUNTRY

A best practice is a standard or set of principles that, when followed, are known to create positive outcomes. Best practices refer to how to complete a task or configure something.

PARTNER NAME



ESKİŞEHİR OSMANGAZI
UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION OF THE COUNTRY



COUNTRY NAME
Türkiye



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BEST PRACTICE-1

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



**ESKİŞEHİR OSMANGAZI
UNIVERSITY**

RUBİZMO



LOCATION: EUROPE

WEB SITE: <https://rubizmo.eu/business>

FULL NAME: THE RUBIZMO PROJECT

BACKGROUND

RUBIZMO is a new European initiative working to discover the vital ingredients for developing entrepreneurship and successful business models in high potential sectors such as food and agriculture, new bio-based value chains and ecosystem services. New technologies and forms of collaboration amongst actors and sectors, as well as growing acknowledgement of biodiversity and climate change mitigation offer strong opportunities to bring about a new wave of entrepreneurial and economic activity in rural areas. RUBIZMO believes that this new set of dynamics mean that rural economies are ripe for change.

For these opportunities to be fully exploited, rural entrepreneurs and networks need support to cultivate fresh business ideas, choose the right business models and develop thriving environments for economic prosperity. The RUBIZMO success factors will be shared with a wide number of rural actors through a set of practical tools supporting collaboration, entrepreneurship and business development in rural communities. In addition, active coaching and peer-to-peer training will be provided to rural entrepreneurs and networks to instigate sustainable business transformation.

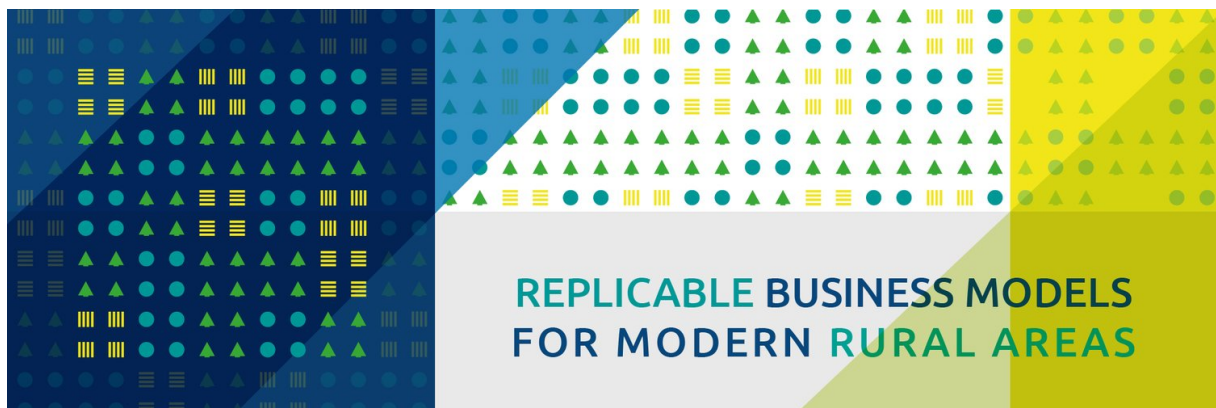
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KEY INFORMATION

- Rubizmo has indirect relationship with tourism. Rubizmo's main focus areas are rural entrepreneurship and business.
- RUBIZMO is a new European initiative working to discover the vital ingredients for developing entrepreneurship and successful business models in rural areas
- New technologies and forms of collaboration amongst actors and sectors, as well as growing acknowledgement of biodiversity and climate change mitigation offer strong opportunities to bring about a new wave of entrepreneurial and economic activity in rural areas. **RUBIZMO** believes that this new set of dynamics mean that rural economies are ripe for change.
- For these opportunities to be fully exploited, rural entrepreneurs and networks need support to cultivate fresh business ideas, choose the right business models and develop thriving environments for economic prosperity.
- To tackle this challenge, RUBIZMO experts are **analysing business models** from hundreds of previous funded and private enterprise initiatives. By examining the reasons for their success – or failure – in the context of their collaboration and support networks, the project will discover and share the key ingredients to recreate innovative business ideas all over Europe.
- The Project ends at 2018. Until 2018 their websites, ios and events still are in progress. They organize events with local people and also bring young entrepreneurs and local entrepreneurs together.
- It is a project on providing rural entrepreneurship. They contribute to sustainability by carrying out many awareness studies for both sustainability of projects and investment in rural areas.



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BEST PRACTICE-2

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



ESKİŞEHİR OSMANGAZI
UNIVERSITY

LAVENDER SCENTED VILLAGE



LOCATION : Non-Eu Country Isparta, Türkiye

WEB SITE: <https://keciborlulardernegi.com/>
<https://www.gelecekturizmde.com/lavanta-kokulu-koy/>

FULL NAME: LAVANTA KOKULU KÖY

BACKGROUND

Lavender Fragrant Village

Applicant: Keçiborlu Aid and Solidarity Association

Project Partner: Keçiborlu District Governorship, Kuyucak Village Headmanship

Kuyucak Village of Isparta provides 93% of lavender production in Turkey. With the project, In Kuyucak Village, it was aimed to revitalize rural tourism, to provide product diversity of lavender, to generate income for the local people, to activate the employment and entrepreneurship potential in the region. As a first step in this direction, a study trip was organized to the France-Provence region, which is one of the best practice examples of rural tourism in terms of being a model, with the participation of the notables of the region, the project team and lavender producer women. The Lavender Scented Village Women Entrepreneurs Cooperative, whose members are women, was established. Trainings were given to women in areas such as field promotion, cooperatives, rural tourism, and souvenir making. While 20 thousand tourists visited the region in the summer season of 2016, this number reached 140 thousand in the summer season of 2017 and 190 thousand in 2018.

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KEY INFORMATION

- Isparta Kuyucak village, providing 93% of the lavender production in Turkey. With the project, In Kuyucak Village, it was aimed to revive rural tourism, to provide lavender product diversity, to generate income for the local people, to activate the employment and entrepreneurship potential in the region. In this direction, as a first step, a study tour was organized in France-Provence region, which is one of the best practices of rural tourism, with the participation of the region's notables, project team and lavender producers. The Lavender Scented Village Women Entrepreneurs Cooperative, whose members are women, was established. Training was given to women in areas such as field promotion, cooperatives, rural tourism, and souvenir making. While 20 thousand tourists visited the region in the summer season of 2016, this number reached 140 thousand in the summer season of 2017 and 190 thousand in 2018.
- In the lavender farm the women in that village are working.
- The Lavender Scented Village project helps women to work with entrepreneurial activities, reduce poverty and promote the region with lavenders grown in the village. The project is a funded by the United Nations. and outsourced Project
- The best practice has been running since 2008 and there are local people among the employees.
- They focus on Sustainable Development goals such as: gender equality, reducing poverty, sustainability etc.



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RELATED LINKS & SOURCES

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<https://rubizmo.eu/business>
<https://keciborlulardernegi.com/>



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BEST PRACTICES OF EACH COUNTRY

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PARTNER NAME



**UNIVERSITY OF WARMIA
AND MAZURY IN
OLSZTYN -**

INTRODUCTION OF THE COUNTRY



**COUNTRY NAME
POLAND**



GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE COUNTRY

Poland, Republic of Poland (RP) - a unitary state in Central Europe, located between the Baltic Sea in the north and the Sudeten and Carpathian Mountains in the south, for the most part in the Vistula and Odra river basins. Poland borders Russia (with its Kaliningrad Oblast) and Lithuania to the north, Belarus and Ukraine to the east, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to the south, and Germany to the west. Most of Poland's northern border is marked by the Baltic Sea coast. The Polish Exclusive Economic Zone on the Baltic Sea borders the zones of Denmark and Sweden. The borders with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia are at the same time the external borders of the European Union and the Schengen area. Poland is an ethnically homogeneous country - 97% of the population declares Polish nationality.

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*The first historically confirmed date describing the history of Poland is the year 966, when Prince Mieszko I, the ruler of the areas which today are mostly within the borders of Poland, was baptised. In 1025 the Kingdom of Poland was established. In 1385 Poland made an agreement with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by signing the Union of Krewo; this union was strengthened by the Union of Lublin in 1569, which resulted in the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, one of the largest and most populous states on the map of 16th- and 17th-century Europe. It ceased to exist as a result of the Third Partition in 1795, when its territory was divided between Prussia, Russia and Austria.

After 123 years, at the end of World War I, in 1918, Poland regained its independence. On September 1, 1939, the Second World War began with Germany's attack on Poland, and on September 17, 1939 the Soviet Union invaded Poland, so that in October 1939 the entire country found itself under German and Soviet occupation. As a result of World War II over six million Polish citizens lost their lives. The Yalta Conference in February 1945 placed Poland in the Soviet sphere of influence. In July 1945 the Potsdam Conference moved the Polish borders westward (between the Oder and Lusatian Neisse lines and the Curzon line), incorporating the so-called Recovered Territories in place of the Eastern Borderlands. People's Republic of Poland (the name of the country adopted in 1952) was a satellite state of the USSR in the formula of the so-called people's democracy. It was ruled by the communist Polish Workers' Party and later by the Polish United Workers' Party (with the formal existence of satellite groups). During the Cold War the People's Republic of Poland was a member of the Warsaw Pact, thus it was a part of the so-called Eastern Bloc.

After the political changes initiated as a consequence of the Round Table Talks and partially democratic parliamentary elections in June 1989 the first government with a non-communist prime minister was formed. After the People's Autumn, Poland modified its constitution, changing the name of the country to Republic of Poland on December 31, 1989 and becoming a democratic country.

*Poland has an administrative area of 312,696 km², which ranks it 69th in the world and 9th in Europe. Populated by 37,672,367 people (2020), it ranks 38th in the world in terms of population and 5th in the European Union. Poland is divided into 16 provinces. Its largest city and also the capital is Warsaw.

*Since the beginning of the transition to a market economy, Poland has maintained a very high Human Development Index (HDI). Economic freedom is gradually increasing in the country. Poland is a democratic country with a developed, high-income economy and a high quality of life index; most Poles (57%) work in the service sector. Poland is the seventh largest economy in the European Union and one of the fastest growing European economies (2020). Domestic product per capita was nominally USD 15,692.51 in 2019 according to IMF calculations. The rate of economic growth puts Poland among the fastest growing countries in Europe. The service sector is responsible for the generation of 62.7% of the total GDP, industry 33.3%, agriculture 4%.

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COUNTRY TOURISM PROFILE



Tourism in Poland has an impact on the economy of the whole country through the tourist services market. Despite the massive loss of life and destruction of the country during World War II, Poland has managed to preserve much of its cultural wealth. There are 16 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 54 historical monuments and a large number of registered monuments. The most attractive cities for tourists are Krakow, Warsaw, Wroclaw, Gdansk,

Poznan, Szczecin, Lublin, Torun and Zakopane. Krynica-Zdrój, Karpacz, Szklarska Poręba, Biecz, Zamość, Sandomierz, Kazimierz Dolny, Częstochowa, Gniezno, Frombork, Malbork, Gdynia, Sopot, Kołobrzeg, Świnoujście and Międzyzdroje also have a rich tourist offer. Frequently visited are: Wieliczka Salt Mine, the Fryderyk Chopin Birthplace House museum in Żelazowa Wola near Sochaczew, the Auschwitz-Birkenau German concentration camp, the Baltic Sea coast, the Masurian Lake District, and the Tatras, home to Poland's highest peak and the famous Eagle's Path. Other popular holiday destinations are the Swietokrzyskie Mountains, the Sudety Mountains, the Beskidy Mountains, the Pieniny Mountains, the Jura Krakowsko-Czestochowska, the Roztocze Mountains, the lake districts (Suwalskie, Wielkopolskie, Lubuskie and Pomorskie) and the area around the Szczecinski and Wiślane Lagoons. Some small Polish towns associated in the international Cittaslow association strive to improve the quality of life by protecting the natural environment and supporting cultural diversity (including the promotion of traditional local products) and thus become attractive to tourists. Along with the development of road infrastructure, cycling tourism is growing (e.g. Eastern Cycling Trail Green Velo), and canoeing trails are marked out on natural watercourses and artificial reservoirs, e.g. Krutynia Rafting. Many cities have specially prepared offers for visiting them with children, such as Wrocław with its dwarves, Warsaw, Kielce, Gdańsk and Szczecin. Spa resorts such as Połczyn-Zdrój and Ciechocinek are also popular.

Poland is part of the global tourism market and is currently experiencing an upward trend in the number of visitors. Around 17.5 million tourists visit Poland annually (2019), making it one of the most visited countries in the world. According to the 2017 Global Peace Index, Poland ranks 33rd in the world (22nd in Europe) in terms of safety, while according to the 2018 Underwriters Laboratories report, Poland ranks 35th (27th in Europe) in terms of safety. In November 2018, Poland was ranked 7th in the International Tourism Rankings "Tourism Rank".

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RURAL TOURISM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Polish countryside is one of the few European examples of preserving traditional cultural landscape, authentic folk folklore, customs and traditions preserved and passed down from generation to generation. Poland has many regions characterized by beautiful, often almost pristine natural environment, and at the same time diverse landscape, original fauna and flora, free from crowds, mechanization and urbanization. Use of these resources and development of tourism is an opportunity not only for individual farms and villagers, but also for the whole local community. Polish rural areas are associated with hospitality, cultural heritage, excellent cuisine and richness of nature.

For many years rural areas have been a very popular place chosen as a tourist destination. A characteristic feature of tourism in these areas is that it takes place in typically agricultural areas and on a small scale. Thanks to a small number of accommodation and catering places and appropriate use of the existing resources and buildings, it is possible to maintain the original agricultural function of the area.

A number of different factors influence the development of tourism functions in rural areas in Poland. These include tourism values, tourism infrastructure, economic activity of the local community, tourism promotion, size of tourism in a given area, and finally state policy, transport accessibility and level of urbanization.

Natural assets and resources, as well as all products of human activity, are the most important elements which have a real impact on the development of tourism in rural areas and the choice of tourist destinations, and thus on the size of tourist traffic. Tourist development, thanks to which it is possible to adapt the natural and cultural environment to the development of tourist functions, is not without significance. Tourism development is identified with tourism infrastructure, which consists of accommodation facilities (hotels, guesthouses, campsites, campgrounds, agritourist lodgings), catering facilities (gastronomic facilities, e.g. bars, cafes, restaurants, etc.) and a wide range of tourist services. catering (catering facilities, e.g. bars, cafes, restaurants, eating places), transport (roads and transport points, transport links, e.g. ports and airports, stations and railroad lines, road networks, tourist trails) and accompanying facilities (e.g. ski lifts, travel agencies, cinemas, museums, stores, ambulance stations, police stations). These elements make up the so-called material base of tourism.

In rural areas, farms, wanting to improve their financial situation, decide to diversify their economic activities. Agrotourism - as one of the types of rural tourism - has been relatively popular for some time. It is a form of recreation taking place in rural areas of agricultural character, based on accommodation and recreational activities related to a farm or equivalent and its environment. Every farmer, who in addition to agricultural activity wants to provide agritourism services, faces a very difficult task, because he has to engage his time and skills in running the tourist activity. In addition, he should try to provide the highest level of accommodation, food and recreation services.

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These are factors determining financial benefits of service providers, and satisfaction of tourists with the services they receive is a chance to gain their trust and return to a proven place in the future. According to the Act of 29 August 1997 on hotel services and services of tour guides and tour operators (Journal of Laws 2019, item 238), an agritourism farm is included in the category of other facilities where hotel services may be provided. Such an object must meet the minimum requirements as to equipment, sanitary, fire and other requirements, which are specified by separate regulations (Article 35). It should also be entered into the register of other facilities providing hotel services, which is kept by the executive body of the municipality competent for the location of the facility.

The Ministry of Sport and Tourism in Poland periodically organises a competition entitled In the countryside it's best - 12 good practices in rural tourism. In 2018, prizes were awarded in the categories:

1. farmer's holiday:
<http://www.ziolowyzbanek.pl/>
<http://www.ola.agrowczasy.afr.pl/>
<http://www.srebrna-gora.pl/>,
2. countryside holiday:
<http://www.malowanewierchy.pl/>
<http://www.polesie.info/>
<http://www.villagreta.pl/>
3. rural tourism holiday offer:
<http://www.lawendowaosada.pl/>
<http://www.osadasredniowieczna.eu/>
<http://www.termyuniejow.pl/>
4. offering culinary routes in rural areas: <http://www.swietokrzyskakuzniasmakow.pl/>
<http://www.podkarpackiesmaki.pl/>
<http://www.facebook.com/kaliskiesmaki>

COVID-19 AND TOURISM

Among the travel trends mentioned at the beginning of 2020 appeared: a clear interest of tourists in the natural environment, which influences the development of tourism in rural or forest areas and a gradual shift from mass tourism to individual tourism. The current course of events related to the Covid-19 pandemic has affected not only the tourism industry but also most sectors of the economy. In a situation of uncertainty, tourists from Poland choose to vacation in the country more often. Interest in travel is also associated with huge challenges for owners of accommodation facilities. Particularly important will be taking care of appropriate sanitary and epidemiological conditions.

Travel in times of pandemic is getting shorter. Uncertainty, both viral and related to the labor market, encourage tourists to spend less and stay shorter. Silence, peace and nature that the Polish countryside can offer are very popular.

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In the countryside Poles tired of the pandemic can hide from the world, in forests full of fresh air, away from people. Tourists appreciate anew the places located among forests, greenery, near lakes, where it is easy to lose telephone coverage. Preparing meals from vegetables, fruits and herbs grown in one's own garden is also positively perceived. And milk straight from the cow, fresh eggs or real honey are very much attracting tourists from the city.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the development of rural tourism is an important contribution to the growing number of studies undertaken in Polish research centers.



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BEST PRACTICE-1

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



UNIVERSITY OF WARMIA
AND MAZURY IN
OLSZTYN -

Zalesie Mazury Active SPA



LOCATION: Zalesie 12, 11-010 Barczewo, Poland

WEB SITE: <https://www.zalesiemazury.pl/>

FULL NAME: Zalesie Mazury Active Spa

BACKGROUND

A private beach is located in a secluded, ecologically clean oasis of peace right at the Orzyc Wielki Lake, amidst a pine - spruce forest. This spacious 3,5 h complex spreads between the Orzyc Wielki Lake and the Pisa River, barely 3 km eastwards from the town of Barczewo, southwards from the route Olsztyn - Mrągowo – Augustów (road E16).

KEY INFORMATION

- Zalesie Mazury Active SPA has a direct relationship with the tourism field in Warmia and Mazury Voivodeship (Poland). It is a holiday resort with a private beach which is located in a secluded, ecologically clean oasis of peace right at the Orzyc Wielki Lake, amidst a pine - spruce forest. This spacious 3,5 h complex spreads between the Orzyc Wielki Lake and the Pisa River, barely 3 km eastwards from the town of Barczewo, southwards from the route Olsztyn - Mrągowo – Augustów (road E16). Zalesie is a sheer paradise, bursting with attractions at every single step. Zalesie Mazury Active SPA is open every season. It offers holidays with children, lakeside holidays, conferences and trainings for companies, family celebrations and SPA weekends. Zalesie Mazury Active SPA cooperates with local food and cosmetics suppliers. In addition, the company employs local people as permanent or seasonal workers (waiters, chefs, animators, cleaners, beauticians, masseurs etc.).

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- The resort is constantly developing and investing in new solutions. Local construction companies also participate in the renovations. What is more Zalesie Mazury Active SPA is a Partner of local initiatives – it cooperates with local institutions and also participates as a sponsor of local events. Holiday resort – its restaurant, swimming pool, private beach and kids area – is open not only for their clients (tourists) but also for local people.
- Warmia and Mazury Voivodeship is a region with high potential for tourism development due to the presence of many lakes and forests. On the other hand it is the region with the highest unemployment rate in Poland and one of the highest in all EU regions. The tourism industry is a chance to break this negative trend. While most smaller accommodation facilities employ workers mainly in the summer season, Zalesie Active SPA offers work all year round. This is a great opportunity especially for young people who dream of working in a tourist industry to gain their unique experience in tourism.
- Zalesie Mazury Active SPA has been running by a married couple since 2007. In high season, a holiday resort employs about 80 people, most of whom are local people. They are employed in both guest service and facility care. In addition, the hotel works with local vendors and construction companies.
- Zalesie Mazury Active SPA cares about sustainable development. In the accommodation facilities guests are encouraged to behave in an environmentally friendly way by using water and towels sparingly. During the organized feasts guests use bamboo plates. The property has its own sewage treatment plant. There are also solar panels on the roof of the hotel, which produce solar energy for heating the buildings.



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BEST PRACTICE-2

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



UNIVERSITY OF WARMIA
AND MAZURY IN
OLSZTYN -

Dwór Lipia Góra

LOCATION: Lipia Góra, 83-132 Morzeszczyn, Poland

WEB SITE: <https://www.facebook.com/DworLipiaGora>

FULL NAME: Dwór Lipia Góra

BACKGROUND



Agritourism farm.

Accommodation, business events, anniversaries, hen parties, family meetings. Rest in a magical old manor house, near a forest, in a quiet area in the picturesque Kociewie.

An ideal place for rest, contemplation of nature, art workshops, corporate and private events. A total of 20 beds in atmospheric interiors, a conference room for 20 people and

a spacious living room with a fireplace await our guests.

The manor house is located on the edge of the village on the Janka River, in a beautiful park with a pond, hedge alleys and specimens of several hundred years old trees, including two natural monuments.

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KEY INFORMATION

- Dwór Lipia Góra (Manor House) has a direct relationship with the tourism field in the North part of Poland. First of all, it offers relaxation in a magical old manor house, near a forest, in a quiet area in the picturesque Kociewie Region. The Lipia Góra Manor offer is varied and is based on the cultural and natural heritage of the region. An ideal place for rest, contemplation of nature, art workshops, corporate and private events. The manor house is situated on the edge of the village by the Janka River, in a beautiful park with a pond, hedge alleys and specimens of centuries-old trees, including two natural monuments. The mansion is open to anyone who would like to visit it and learn about its history.
- The Lipia Góra Manor has a prepared offer not only for tourists, but many prepared attractions can be participated by free of charge by residents of the village. Most importantly, the owners are involved in activities for the local community. They try to raise the inhabitants' knowledge about the culture and heritage of the region, as well as the Polish culture. The mansion organizes regular meetings with artists, handicraft exhibitions, music meetings, and poetry meetings. The most interesting attraction prepared for the residents were film meetings with screenings of Polish films nominated, among others to the Oscars Academy Award, attended by their creators.
- Lipia Góra Manor is a very good example of combining agritourism with cooperation with the local government, and above all with the inhabitants of the village of Lipia Góra and the Morzeszczyn commune in the field of broadly understood cultural and regional education. The Kociewie region, despite its natural and cultural values, is poorly recognized as a tourist region, therefore the combination of the activities of the Lipia Góra manor with the possibility of presenting local artists, their handicrafts and products is a very important element in local and regional development and, on the other hand, in the promotion of the facility.
- Lipia Góra has been running by a family since 2017, but before the opening of the tourist activity, meetings and cultural activities were conducted in the mansion. The property has been under family restoration for 30 years. There are no outsiders employed in the manor, but the owners indirectly buy local products from residents, which brings additional income to the residents
- Environmental and landscape protection is of particular importance in the Lipia Góra Manor House. The park adjacent to the manor house has been restored and is looked after by the owners. In the kitchen, the offer is varied (vegan cuisine is also offered) based on organic local food products from the own farm or from local farmers. The facility segregates waste and tourists are asked to pay attention to the care of the environment. The offer is adapted to the requirements of the environment and the improvement of the health of guests. The facility organizes yoga stays, green therapy in park and relaxing walks in the woods and meadows. The facility is pet-friendly tourists.

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BEST PRACTICES OF EACH COUNTRY

A best practice is a standard or set of principles that, when followed, are known to create positive outcomes. Best practices refer to how to complete a task or configure something.

PARTNER NAME



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INTRODUCTION OF THE COUNTRY



**COUNTRY NAME
LITHUANIA**



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BEST PRACTICE-1

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



M C M X X I I
VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY

Zalensai Farmstead Complex

LOCATION: Dubysos g. 10, Padubysio k., Vilkijos apyl. sen. LT - 54205 Kauno r.

WEB SITE: <https://www.zalensai.lt/en>

FULL NAME: Zalensai Farmstead complex

Interview with Irmantas from Zalensai Farmstead complex (2021 05 27)

**1. How can learners do tourism activities in rural areas? (What advice could you give them?)
What should the learners pay attention to in their strategy?**

- You mean rural tourism entrepreneurs themselves?

Yes, yes.

- It is important to know if you really want it, if you like it, if you are ready for it and if it will be your favourite job, because personally you will have to invest a lot of your money. So, first you need to know if that's really your job here. And what... you need to watch what's popular, what's new and original. But now it is popular to travel in two, four... You have to watch what changes in that direction. Are you organizing for some big companies or small. In fact, your strategy will depend on whether you rent canoes, or will provide rural tourism, or any other leisure entertainment. It seems to me the most important thing is whether you like it. When you like it, if it's yours, you just do it and everything goes.

2. Thank you very much. So, there is another question, what would be advice from your experience, if a future entrepreneur is planning to run rural tourism business? What are "Do's and Don'ts"?

- For me personally, when I work with canoes or campsites, I don't even know those mistakes, but the little things happen sometimes. What to avoid... I don't even know. Perhaps my advice would be to study well about such a business, to go talk to those who are already doing it, to consult with them or to go and stay as a guest (in order to find out how this business works for

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others). So, it is really important that someone share their experience and to analyse the market well. And then you can orient by yourself.

3. Okay, let's talk about deeper planning documents. What should the management strategy be? How to develop such a strategy?

- Here again, there are all those nuances of that management strategy. For example, there are cottages that can be rented (only one object) - it is easy to manage. Our strategy is completely different again... We don't have something just one type of service that you can order through booking.com or something like that. With us, canoes in one way, a gazebo or a large homestead work on a different principle again. We have other contacts, a person has to take a look before ordering our service, etc. There are very different nuances. As an example, we can mention the homestead "Atokampis". They organized events, then reoriented to couples, and now accept only couples. Prices, in my opinion, are cosmic there. But they have the largest queues, everything is booked for the summer, and people can order everything online. You can simply book a cottage online - it's a pretty simple way to manage it. Marketing is another matter. So, there are a variety of those nuances ... For example, employees, who are responsible for some tasks - it is important to choose such a one, who would know your business well. We have a few employees here who, of course, work for a long time here, and that's good - they know everything, can explain everything briefly to customers, and when we tell them to do this or that, we can be sure they'll do it without any problems. New employees - again you have to go all over again, explain everything, teach them - here are such nuances...

But the main team is still stable, after all, a family business?

- Yes, Zalensai Entertainment and Recreation Valley is a family business. We actually accept and coordinate all those orders ourselves. My wife and I are responsible for camp and canoes, my sister and mother work more with the homesteads. They are one group, we are another. We do not interfere with each other, but if additional services are needed, e.g., our canoes, they inform us, and we can provide it to customers. So, we are not only a harmonious and united family, but also closely cooperating colleagues, who have the main value – a person. If a stranger would do our work... Well, it is possible, but... here is such a very slippery thing, how much that person will be able to explain the situation, to tell what is possible and what is not, what we have and so on. How he will present everything to the customer... Because the first contact with a customer must be really good in order to make good impression that customer would choose your service. So, there is no need to have strangers to work directly with orders. We are able to manage it ourselves.

4. You have mentioned the marketing strategy. What should the marketing strategy be? How to present your services most effectively in these times of intense competition and the whole Covid-19 pandemic situation?

- Our Zalensai farmstead complex has been running for a long time (more than 20 years, since 1996), so usually many people already know what we provide or have already tried our services. Talking about marketing strategy, in my opinion it is very important to have a good internet website, which should not be overcrowded. You know, I am talking about all these filters and other popular things. But people need to know the real situation about your services and what you provide, without creating other illusions that don't exist.



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I mean, it is better not to create super glowing perfect room image on your internet website, as customers may be disappointed at your service later if they don't find exactly the same image in reality. In my opinion, it would be better to show everything the way it really is.

In addition, social networks are very helpful in advertising. The people there are very active. They respond to our posts, share our content, write comments and feedback. This helps to fill orders. Larger orders people choose in advance. They plan their budgets and so on. For example, you will not organise birthday or wedding celebration (where the budget is thousands of euros) just few days before it. Such large events require much more time and preparation. But if you want to spend weekend by canoeing, when the price is about 30 euros for canoe, this plan is much easier to realize, because you don't need special preparations - you just need to order such a service and that's it. It's very simple. So, social network for marketing purposes is really work for us.

Thank you, I got it. So basically, you use so-called "mouth to mouth" strategy, social networks and so on., yes?

- Yes, as I mentioned before, most of our clients try our services on their own and come back again and again. Or people hear about us from those who have tried what we provide.

But how about the beginners in the tourism business, who are new in tourism field, and no one knows them yet. What could you advise to their marketing strategy?

- Well, you have to know your market and find the needs of your potential customer. Then create as realistic as possible image of your business on your website and social networks. Because I don't know a better advertisement channel than a social network, where you can identify age group, location, habits and so on of your target customers'.

-

5. A few more questions. How much this rural tourism business related with ecology and sustainability? What is nature friendly behaviour? Maybe you have examples from your own experience?

- Well, nature friendly. I don't even know, actually... As a rural tourism we are already located in the countryside - in the valley of the river Dubysa. I don't even know how it can be more environmentally friendly...?

Well let's say sorting, or using organic products, or saving water and so on.

- I don't even call sorting as exclusivity. It has to be your lifestyle already. Of course, we may not be able to sort everything, but at least we are trying to do as much as possible.

Lettuce, other vegetables and food products we are buying from local people. In order to support local businesses and provide guest with ecological and healthy products.

In addition, our farmsteads use renewable electricity. We have built a solar collector (we plan to build even more in the future). So, we try to protect nature.

6. And the last question - what skills should future rural tourism entrepreneurs learn/improve? What advice would you give?

- What to learn? I can say - patience and try to understand the person from his side. Because you know everything about your services, which you always work with. However, your customers who may be coming here for the first time may know nothing about what you have and what services you can provide. So, each time you need to explain and show everything. It really requires a lot of patience and understanding. Because there are all sorts of people who might understand you, but some seem to pretend they are stupid (sorry, maybe that sounds ugly).

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- But here's the point - you have to keep patience and remain polite and kind to the customer. You have to be beautiful in the eyes of your client. "To be beautiful", I mean, that you have to explain the situation without any additional illusions. So that your customer can understand correctly and precisely what services you can provide them.

- To avoid any misunderstandings (when you say one thing, but the customer understands differently). I think this is the most important thing in the tourism business.

But when starting a tourism business, probably other things important as well? For example, how to set prices properly, how to do everything else? Probably not just the image of your business is important.

- Of course! You may find out the prices by making market research first. You need to visit your colleagues, who are already working in such a business. And you can see what habits your potential customers may have.

Sometimes people are willing to spend more. They just want to relax in very nice environment with all the best amenities. And they don't care about money at all. However, there are people, who are very economical and try to save money. Sometimes they even ask for a discount or extra services, which a higher than their ability to pay... But here again you need to be manoeuvrable and very tactical - to explain, that maybe they don't need these extra services or so.

Thank you for sharing your best practice! Do you have anything else to add?

- To sum up, I would say it is important for rural tourism beginners to do market research, know what others are offering, find out the needs of your potential customers and find the best original idea for your business. Of course, you have to create your business strategy. And you should have a realistic website. But the most important thing should be the people you provide your services to. So, polite and friendly communication with your customers is always necessary.

Thank you very much!



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BEST PRACTICE-2

NAME OF THE BEST PRACTICE



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VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY

Sadauskai homestead



LOCATION: Jurbarko pl. 351, Antalkių km., Vilkijos sen., Kauno rajonas, LT 54217

WEB SITE: <http://www.sadauskusodyba.lt/en/>

FULL NAME: Sadauskai homestead

BACKGROUND

On the Kaunas-Jurbarkas road, between kilometers 26 and 27, on the edge of the forest, 50 meters from the main road, there is the homestead of Laimutes and Stasios Sadauskas. Guests are welcome here all year round, whether it is heavy rain, strong wind or a blizzard, the homestead is easily accessible.

For those who want to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city or from angry neighbours, you can find peace in our homestead. Here, guests can enjoy a cosy environment, fresh air, and those who want a more active recreation can play volleyball and basketball. For those who prefer a quieter activity, we suggest fishing in the homestead's ponds or picking berries in the nearby forest. After an active day, we offer to enjoy the pleasures of the sauna using juniper, nettle, birch, or frozen shingles.

Guests are also invited to visit the traditional Lithuanian ethnographic cellar. Here tastes homemade salted bacon with pickled organic cucumbers, taste homemade cheese with various natural jams, taste apple or grape wine made on the homestead are offered. Since the homestead is spread over an area of 5 hectares, about 100 guests can relax comfortably at the same time.

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KEY INFORMATION

- Sadauskai homestead has a direct relationship with the tourism field. Families and other people, who want to get know the traditional village, to be surrounded by the calm of the countryside, natural greenery, and clean air, are very welcome in Sadauskai homestead. People can also visit the traditional ethnographic cellar of Sadauskai homestead, taste a very special homemade syrup of snowball-trees (which grow around the homestead territory), try homemade smoked meat, salted bacon, sausages and other traditional Lithuanian homemade dishes. In this way, people can gain knowledge about traditional Lithuanian culture and rural life.
- Sadauskai homestead creates a so-called tourism cluster in the local area. We work closely with local food suppliers. For example, we buy milk and other dairy products from a woman who has the only cow in our countryside. We buy vegetables from other local colleagues. Another woman raises pigs, so we can get pork products from her and then prepare our own homemade salted bacon and ect. So, tourism unites local people. Even together with the local community, we are negotiating with the municipality to create a cognitive trail in the forest. Because it is good not only for our Sadauskai homestead as a place for rural tourism, but also for local people who can have more beautiful places to spend time with their families. So, tourism creates the added value not only for us as a tourism business, but also for local people. And if here will be good to live for locals, it will be good for us as well (because we are also part of that community). Thus, tourism is very important not only for those engaged in tourism business, but also for local people by creating selfrealization possibility, a better quality of life and even a better image of the local area itself.
- We have such a problem that in the area where the Sadauskai homestead is located, the telephone and Internet connection is rather weak. So, together with local community we are trying to solve this problem by asking municipality to build communication poles. Another problem, there was a plan to cut down a forest nearby and to establish 100-hectare gravel quarry instead. But neither we don't want to have gravel quarry nearby, as well as local people don't want it. So again we, as a turism business, together with local comunity are trying to fight for the preservation of the forest. So we are working to solve more global problems that are related not only to our rural tourism business, but also to a better quality of life for local people. Because those problems always arise - roads, lighting, etc... So we have to collaborate with locals. In fact, we consider the needs of the local community first and only then our own needs as a tourism business.
- Sadauskai homestead has been running more than 20 years (approximately since 2000 y.). In the beginning we started with a small sauna, which was built for our personal needs only. But it so happened that it was rented by one neighbor, then other friends, and later other families started asking for rent for this sauna. So step by step we moved forward and started our own rural tourism business - Sadauskai homestead, which is now even more developed (we can invite many more people to stay in our new cottages).

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This family business was started by my parents and now I take care of it with my husband. And later, I hope, one of my children will take over this family business.

Of course, our homestead employs local people from Vilkiija town. Other local people from nearest villages also come to help when needed. For example, to weed the garden or help to service for festivals and other larger events in our Sadauskai homestead. We have even noticed that people who are coming to work and help in our homestead, are from generation to generation - if mother once came to help, so now her daughter comes to do that. In fact, it happens automatically. Because this rural tourism business somehow naturally involves people. Even if our business is more seasonal, but we also have orders in the winter, so we need local people who could easily come here to work.

- Sustainability is very important in our Sadauskai homestead. We have even set a challenge that our rural tourism business would be as sustainable as possible. Sustainable to people, to environment, to water, to plants, to food and so on. We are not sure what our customers think about it, but sustainability is very important to us personally and we are trying to achieve these sustainable goals. For example, we don't give towels to the laundry, but we do the laundry ourselves. Later, we dry the towels directly in the yard of our homestead. By the way, today guests from Germany came to stay at our Sadauskai homestead and they were fascinated of these white towels hanging in the yard. When the weather is such a good, the sun is shining, these towels or other laundry can dry very naturally. Even the smell becomes different - such a natural. So here it is sustainability with the environment. Food products we are also growing by ourselves. We have a greenhouse, where cucumbers, tomatoes, lettuce are grown. However, the quantity of these vegetables is not always enough, so we collaborate with our local people who can supply more of the products we need. We also raise hens in our homestead (we have eggs too). Moreover, we fertilize the plants with very natural organic fertilizers (such as fermented nettles, dandelions), which we start preparing in the fall. Even if the smell of such fertilizers is really bad, but it is the most natural and healthiest way to grow these plants. In Sadauskai homestead we use organic beddings from cotton or linen. Tablecloths as well from linen. And although we sometimes think about giving it up, because it is very difficult to maintain of linen material, to wash it, to drain it (teflon tablecloths would be much easier to maintain). But our values are different. So even if we have to take more difficult way, but we still stick to sustainable goals. Of course, it is not possible to achieve all the sustainability goals, but we are trying to do as much as we can. In addition, we want to show for our guests, that it is important to look not only about ourselves, but also about environment which surrounds us.



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