HOW TO ESTABLISH A RURAL TOURISM BUSINESS

GREEK NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION

CO-FINANCED BY ROMANIAN AND EUROPEAN FUNDS
“HOW TO ESTABLISH A RURAL TOURISM BUSINESS”

A DELIVERABLE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE E.U. PROGRAM

“HUMAN RESOURCES, A VALUABLE INVESTMENT IN THE ROMANIAN RURAL TOURISM”

CO-FINANCED BY ROMANIAN AND EUROPEAN FUNDS
(ROMANIAN SUPPORT FRAMEWORK- EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND)

ATHENS, 2012
The preparation of this GUIDE is one of the actions that Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO) undertook to realize as the Greek partner of the transnational scheme designated to carry out the project “The Human Resources, a Valuable Investment in the Romanian Rural Tourism”.

Maria Maraka, coordinator of the GNTO team participating in the project, is responsible for the concept and the content of the booklet.

Dr Aris Ikkos, ISHC, with broad and long time experience in tourism and alternative tourism development, contributed with the final editing.

Penelope Nompilaki, deputy coordinator, and Aggeliki Skiadopoulou, member of the GNTO team, collected primary data for the guide.

Through this guide it is intended to deliver the necessary information to anyone in a European country who plans to start and run a rural tourism business.

The guide also attempts to outline and answer questions commonly posed by those who intend to go into this kind of business. Therefore, the purpose of the guide is to provide a basic starting point for farmers and people living in rural areas who are interested to develop a tourism business.
Over recent years, rural tourism and agritourism stopped being exclusively linked to agricultural production and include a range of activities and services mostly related to the wider area’s characteristics (landscape and human interventions).

At the European Union level, rural tourism and agritourism are considered to be an effective means to help regions lagging behind, particularly rural areas, to combat economic decline and migration and assist their inhabitants reach a level of prosperity.

Therefore, a number of appropriate policies have been implemented to support rural tourism development within European countries as a tool to reduce regional disparities between prosperous and poor rural regions of the European Union.
The main objectives of this guide are:

- Introducing farmers and future businessmen to agritourism-rural tourism and their potentials by giving them the tools to decide whether or not they want to pursue tourism activity as an additional service within their current operation and make decisions that lead, apart from income increase, to sustain the farm and the assets and conserve natural resources.
- Providing entrepreneurs with basic information on how to start their own agritourism business.
- Assisting them in identifying business opportunities, exploring options for alternative (not just rural) enterprises and recognizing the advantages and disadvantages to deal with when starting a business in a specific rural context.
- Informing them on how to draft a tourism business plan and a marketing plan and on what are the required equipment, permits, insurance and financing tools.
- Giving them the tools to ensure customer satisfaction and generally to get assistance in developing a rural tourism business.
PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to help future agritourism and rural tourism entrepreneurs through the issues involved in starting a business in rural areas and provide some tips for getting started.

Based on the experience of others, the guide tells you how to:

- Identify tourism business opportunities in your area
- Recognize the advantages and disadvantages you have in starting such a business
- Draft a tourism business plan
- Develop a tourism business marketing plan
- Identify the necessary equipment, permits and insurance
- Understand how to ensure customer satisfaction
- Find assistance in developing your tourism business.
DEFINITE RURAL TOURISM

Although “tourism” is a single sector, it actually consists of different elements (tangible and intangible) and affects/is affected by many other sectors and activities. In this sense tourism development can be beneficial to other economic sectors.

In fact, tourism can become a boost to the entire local economy, if the goods and services needed for tourism are supplied by local producers and if tourism is developed in synergy with the other economic sectors.

Rural tourism and agritourism are the main forms of tourism that, by their nature, offer and provide products and services relying on the local resources and production, while it is supported by all other economic sectors with emphasis on the traditional activities and professions. Even if expenditures per capita from
agritourism are lower than those of other types of tourism, the local character of production and consumption offers higher added value locally.

**RURAL TOURISM AND AGRITOURISM - ALTERNATIVE ENTERPRISES - AGRITOURISM ENTERPRISES**

RURAL TOURISM AND AGRITOURISM: are carried out in the countryside, outside the urban domain. The rural tourism and agritourist product is complex and is the result of some particular interactions between the rural space, people who live in it and the local products and activities. This tourist product is very complex and its quality is dependent on some typical characteristics: the natural resources quality, the guest structure, the village structure, and the cultural wealth.

A simple description of what rural tourism and agritourism is could be as “the crossroad where agriculture and tourism meet”.

There are different definitions of rural and agritourism in literature. Lane (1994) defines rural tourism as “Tourism located in rural areas, namely, areas rural in scale, character and function reflecting the unique patterns of the rural environment, economy, history and location” and not every kind of tourist activity which takes place in rural areas is strictly “rural” (Petric, 2003). Lane specifies that “any activity that is not an integral part of the rural fabric and does not employ local resources cannot be considered as rural tourism”.

The distinguishing feature of rural tourism and agritourism is “to give visitors personalized contact, a taste of the physical and human environment of the countryside and (...) allow them to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of local people”.

Therefore, there are at least three important key elements that distinguish rural and agri-tourism from other forms of tourism:

a) Fulfilling people’s needs for information and participation in food production and processing and for better understanding farm culture and rural heritage,

b) Fulfilling needs for direct contact with animals, plants and rural environment,

c) Fulfilling the human need for experiencing the real life of a rural family and a rural society
In fact, the main difference between mass tourism model and rural tourism lies in the visitor’s profile: rural tourism customers, apart from their expectation to be active, informed and mentally engaged, they express a need to have authentic experiences that will get them back to their roots, and, in some small way, will positively affect their life.

ALTERNATIVE ENTERPRISES: The term Alternative Enterprise refers to enterprise’s diversification by widening the traditional production with additional products and services in order to add value to existing main production. An alternative rural enterprise is one that through enrichment of the production practices or services, packaging, processing and marketing improves its production and widens its appeal to consumers, thus adding value to its product.

AGRITOURISM AND RURAL TOURISM ENTERPRISES:
The major driving force behind rural tourism and agritourism is Entrepreneurship. Besides the production of crops, fruits, vegetables, flowers and livestock, rural and agritourism enterprises may act as alternative enterprises by including activities targeted to visitors.

More apparent farm tourism activities include accommodation, entertainment, recreation and educational activities.

Specific activities included concern:

• Agritourism. Providing visitors with accommodation in the farm and various activities to participate in and enjoy an agricultural experience. Activities included may be for-free fishing or hunting, pick-your-own fruits / vegetables, farm markets, sale of agricultural related crafts and much more.

• Agri-entertainment and recreation. Providing the public with fun- on-farm or on-the wider area include visiting abandoned settlements, horseback riding, mountain bike and hiking, ecotourism like bird watching and wildlife viewing, rock climbing, free camping, native dances, harvest and religion festivals, wine tasting etc.

• Agri-education. Providing formal and informal education and training through tours, seminars and other methods. The lessons can include teaching local cuisine, visiting historic and cultural attractions, teaching visitors about the past
and present and participating to arts and crafts workshops, gastronomy tours, historical agricultural display tours, and agricultural technical tours.

Rural and agritourism services, products and activities can be available either throughout the whole year around or seasonally. In Europe there is a certain degree of correlation between length of access to rural and agritourism products and services and geographical longitude and latitude. The short daylight and severe climate conditions during wintertime limit the provision of rural and agritourism services and products to a seasonal period and affect the whole business performance.

Most rural and agritourism enterprises employ a small number of employees, often relying on family’s own labour or a small number of people who are locally based. Employing local people and working with local suppliers adds to the business loyalty of the local society and to higher flexibility to its operation. Furthermore, it is likely to lead to a more genuine experience for the tourist, as the whole team serving him will be immersed in the same local culture.

By employing, on the other hand, part-time staff or seasonal workers, it becomes easier to respond adequately to the pattern of tourism demand, to control the costs and to manage the fluctuations in trade.

The small scale operation is accompanied by limited capital commitment. Most agritourism enterprises tend to take a step-by-step approach in expanding their business, avoiding risky adventures.

A first step to consider about the establishment of a rural tourism/agritourism enterprise is to evaluate personal resources and potentials and consider resources (natural and human) of the wider area and, in a second stage, to arrange and structure rural and agritourism services and products of the future enterprise.
1st STEP

ASSESSING PERSONAL RESOURCES

If you decide to start a tourism business in rural domain, you will find many people and organizations standing by to help you work out the details. But the first step is to be made by the land owner and future businessman. This is the one to be informed, consider all the factors, and make his decision about the enterprise to establish.

The desire and the ability to cater to tourists and meet their expectations of a visit in a rural area is the main prerequisite and the chief qualification for a land owner or a businessman aiming to make a living through a tourist activity in rural domain.

EVALUATING PERSONAL RESOURCES:

The success of every enterprise depends largely on offering potential visitors an experience they can't get elsewhere and they will choose it over all other options. Farms and the wider rural areas surrounding them are full of natural and human resources that provide great opportunities for alternative enterprises and agritourism. The first step to deal with in establishing a new agritourism/rural tourism business, i.e. a good inventory of personal and local resources (natural and social) that could support the tourism activity, will help you complete the next step, i.e. prepare a good business and marketing plan.

(a) Buildings Farm buildings are very important to preserve and are appreciated by rural and urban people alike. Buildings are also able to host many uses, or to be an attraction, in an alternative rural enterprise or agritourism business.
(b) **Assets.** Determining existing assets and equipment that could support your new business is an important step. For many agritourism businesses, buying equipment is the biggest start-up expense. You might need equipment for your new business and, in addition, you might need a new computer, a printer, a good digital camera, and so on.

(c) **Plants and animals** are the basic production component of nearly every farm operation and can provide an almost endless number of alternative enterprises and agritourism opportunities. Many forms of entertainment, education, and other agritourism services can be delivered to the public relying on related products, while, many uses can improve an in-farm agritourism experience.

(d) **Family Considerations**
Family resources, needs, goals, life style preferences and family cooperation are a crucial part of identifying alternative enterprises or agritourism opportunities, particularly as we are dealing with enterprises of a small (usually family) scale. In most cases, these enterprises require the whole family to be involved in the business; it is therefore necessary that all family members share and agree on the aforementioned characteristics of the new enterprise, as its success shall be affected by every family member’s attitude, behaviour and performance so that the family will reap the benefits of a successful enterprise.

The areas that need to be clarified by each one from the beginning include: satisfaction with the current farm business or employment situation, willingness to take risks with the new enterprise, role of each member of the family in the new business and types of services and products that are preferred.

The new business may require new activities, such as interaction with people — marketing directly to customers-applying new technologies etc. In this regard some members of the family may need to take courses on production, management, new technologies or marketing, particularly as they relate to serving tourists.
2nd STEP

CONSIDERING NATURAL AND SOCIAL RESOURCES OF THE BROADER AREA

Considering natural and social resources of the actual place and the broader area is the key to start a tourism business. The first question to pose is: “Why would anyone come here?” or “What is the attraction, or mix of attractions, that would draw visitors to this region or community?”

That is an important question to answer, because it is not right to assume that the area shall attract tourism based on the experience of another, perhaps neighboring village or region.

To ensure the attraction of an area which may be costly to attain, it is necessary to create a recognizable and competitive product that responds to the tourist expectations and needs.

One key to success is, after identifying attractions (as mentioned in previous paragraphs) in each region or village, to think about ways to make them appealing and accessible to visitors.

As the resources’ inventory is completed, the multiple-use or complementary resources and interaction among them will become apparent. Usually, key to the success of this effort is connecting interesting attractions so as to create a fulfilling unified experience.

Further, an assessment of lacking or over utilized local resources is necessary.

(a) Natural resources as the base for alternative tourism and agritourism.

The identification of natural resources that can support activities regarding alternative tourism can be written down in an inventory which could include:

**Landscape Features**

Natural landscape features such as scenic views, overlooks, hills, forests, mountains, valleys, and cliffs should be taken into account when deciding the best form of agritourism or alternative enterprises to be established within rural environment. These features, combined with the peace and spaciousness of most
rural areas, can be marketed as the perfect setting for a number of rural tourism/agritourism enterprises.

**Wetlands.**
By filtering water and providing habitat for many birds and other animals, wetlands can be used for outdoor lessons and practices and for bird watching and wildlife viewing activities.

---

**Pristine Nature and wildlife habitats.**
It is useful to evaluate the uniqueness, the quality and beauty of the scenery, and define the framework to various activities, such as wildlife viewing, bird watching, and viewing and studying flowers, plants and herbs in pristine environment, visiting pristine lakes, rivers, coastlines.
Wildlife habitat, on the other hand, determines the kinds of wildlife that is available in each property and the surrounding area. An alternative or agritourism enterprise that uses or highlights wildlife should focus on improving or enhancing the habitats that maintain them. Creating habitats to attract other wildlife species may be easy and should be considered. Appropriate NGO’s can offer technical and financial assistance for the development of wildlife habitats.

An alternative or agritourism enterprise can provide visitors with the support and the equipment to experience a whole range of outdoor activities that include an element of danger but do not require special training on the part of the clients. Examples include hiking, canoeing, kayaking, river rafting and sailing, mountaineering guide etc. or more demanding and hazardous activities like mountain climbing.
(b) Culture as the basis for alternative tourism:

Cultural or Heritage tourism is a form of tourism that has plenty of potential in rural areas all over Europe. It could be defined as tourism directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage, and special character of a rural area, such as “tangible” culture (traditional settlements, producing traditional handicrafts and artefacts, and lodging in traditional preserved buildings) and “intangible” culture, such as habits, conducting native dancing or musical performances and demonstrating local food preparation.
It is worth mentioning the example of the Greek cultural heritage: art, tradition, inspiration, artistry blended with clay, marble, silver and gold shape objects has been turning natural material into useful objects of high aesthetics. The crafts of pottery, of silversmiths and of goldsmiths has been passing on from one generation to the next till present times. Therefore, participation of visitors in those crafts contemporary workshops offers the opportunity of getting acquainted with the techniques and to appreciate their historical continuity.

(c) Social Resources

Community Characteristics and Infrastructure

Related to the previous topic is the consideration of community’s general characteristics, available resources and infrastructure. Although it may not be immediately apparent, the community does have an integral role in the development of entrepreneurial businesses. The community may be the neighbors, the county, or a larger entity.

In order to have an effect on community decisions and activities it is worth to contact the Municipality, the Chamber of Commerce or other boards, organizations such as the convention and visitor’s bureau, or other institutions and
business leagues. As an active member of the community, it is easier to influence community involvement in the business, but also it is more likely to receive local support.
3rd STEP

DECIDING ABOUT ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPACITY

One has more than one reason for starting an agritourism business and it is up to him/her to make this decision.

The desire to increase or maintain one’s income by diversifying the actual business is the most frequently referred motivation.

Some motivations may not match the reality of the situation; there is no single right motive, but it is important for all to understand theirs, to align their interests with others’ and to adopt successful measures. These will help to determine their actions.

The way to make a decision is through motivation analysis.

(a) What Is the Motivation?

All prospective enterprisers are moved from distinct, differentiated motivations, such as the following:

- Professional personal interest,
- Transition to a new form of additional alternative activity to primary production,
- Seeking retirement options,
- Opting for a new lifestyle,
- Educating visitors about farming or rural issues,

Other potential motivations could be preserving local history or exposing the family to other cultures.

A common motivation is “To make money”. This statement may imply a number of expectations, like:

- A positive cash flow,
- A net income enough to pay for subsistence related equipment and costs,
- A wish to finish one’s house, or to meet some other financial goal.

Financial success is also a relative goal: providing some employment for family and neighbors, and/or bring some cash to the community, and/or maintaining one’s equipment may be success for someone.
It is a fact that few small, rural tourism businesses produce big profit, but those that do so required years to reach high profitability. A conventional belief is that any new business takes three to five years to stabilize its operations; until it does, it could well be unprofitable.

There are questions that may help to highlight motivation and take a decision:

- Do I have, or am I willing to get, detailed knowledge of a new business?
- Do I enjoy meeting people and socializing with them?
- Do I like selling my services and providing personal service to strangers?
- Do I have the skills to operate necessary equipment?
- Do I need a steady, predictable income, or can I live with uncertainty?
- Is my family supportive, and can they make the necessary changes in their lives?
- Is my community supportive; will they accept visitors in the village?
- Am I good at taking care of details?
- Do I like this kind of work well enough to do it day after day into the future?

(b) Analysis of Strengths, Opportunities, Challenges and Problems

An analysis of strengths and opportunities versus challenges and problems is a useful tool to manage and overcome weaknesses that might otherwise stop the whole endeavor.

It is also useful to look at competitors and figure out ways to distinguish one’s enterprise from theirs.

Anyone can use this form of analysis as it does not require special training. It helps thinking through the questions and answering in a sincere way.

Here are some factors that might be included in the analysis and an indication of what might need to be considered:

Questions regarding **Strengths and Opportunities** may be about useful relations, good opportunities, required equipment or facilities already available, existing advantageous conditions and trends, established skills and competences.
A list of positive elements could be:

Strengths:
- Good knowledge of the region being a local resident;
- Friends, family, neighbors who can help;
- Available suitable field and other equipments and facilities useful for the new activity;
- Plenty of experience in the field of doing primary sector activities;
- Basing the development of the new activity on existing skills, abilities and interests.

Opportunities:
- Growing interest of the public in rural and agri-tourism;
- The EU and each European State are providing loans, technical assistance and guidance for rural tourism Small Enterprises;
- Travel Agents performing in receptive (in bound) tourism are looking for new products to sell.

Questions regarding Challenges and Problems may be about: lacking resources and equipment, required skills missing.

Challenges and Problems

Business and managerial experience are often lacking and require getting additional skills. Business management skills can be acquired through formal training or applied experience, and many village residents should be able to assure access to these skills through training courses existing either locally or in the wider region.

Initial capital for starting may be lacking. New businesses usually need a mix of cash and credit to start and to run until they become profitable. Lack of adequate funds (“under-capitalization”) can stop a new business operation.

Licenses are required

Access to the locality may be difficult and traveling to the place may involve high cost and/or take long time.

In many rural areas, residents tend to be divided on accepting tourism entrepreneurship. Some of them consider it an economic opportunity to residents and the region, while others consider it as intrusion into their lives and antagonistic
for the use of resources. A tourism entrepreneur who is not sensitive to community attitudes can encounter inflexibility and firm resistance in this regard. Furthermore, in order for the business to maintain its rural/agritouristic character, it is important that it is an ‘add-on’ to the existing way of life and does not replace it. In case it does, there is a risk that the whole development will become ‘soulless’ and resemble a theme park.

Several new agritourism businesses have high competition with existing and new businesses.

Planning ways to overcome, minimize or, at least, manage these impediments, you are taking an important step towards developing a successful agritourism business.

(c) How to Proceed

Once there are clear ideas regarding attributes of the farm and how these might be managed to include a tourism/recreation activity, as well as the type of guests to attract, the next issues to investigate are:

Regulatory barriers

Rural tourism business operators must meet many requirements imposed by local and state legal and regulatory framework. Some of these aim at the health, safety and well-being of travelers. Others are to ensure that businesses pay required fees and taxes.

Categories of legal requirements include:

- Land use permit and building approvals
- Business license
- Requirements related to employers
- Licensing and inspections including lodging and food service
- Licensing and equipment requirements related to providing tourism lodging and services
- Licenses, permits, and registrations for particular activities (guide etc)
- Liability insurance, first aid training, and other qualifications.
● Responding to special regulations (disabled accessibility, environmental schemes)
● Further challenges that small businesses need to address about food safety requirements and agricultural legislation.
● Requirements for accessing subsidies to finance the enterprise
DEFINING THE ENTERPRISE PROFILE

(a) What are the different types of tourism services that can be offered?
A wide range of rural / agritourism services and products can be offered that could be included into the following groups:
Rural and agri- accommodation, Rural and agri- catering business, “real agri-tourism”, rural and agri- retail business, cultural and heritage, rural and agri- sport, rural and agri-therapy, rural/agri-recreation and entertainment.
Each group offers its own set of services, products and activities. However, some of them may overlap.

- **Rural and agritourism accommodation services** comprise various kinds of accommodation in rural areas. Farmhouse accommodation, rural home--stays and rural B&B are the most common. As the differences between them are very slight, B&B is usually an “umbrella term” for a variety of agri- accommodation that includes a bed for the night and a breakfast in the morning.
Rural and agritourism accommodation can also be provided by hotels or hostels of the rural area.

- **Rural and agri-catering businesses (gastronomy)** are an integral part of agri-tourism. Food products may come from local producers, the agri-tourism farm’s own production or partly or entirely purchased from the broader area.
Agritourism enterprises that serve their own food products can increase income and provide information to the visitor about the whole chain of production, preparation and offer of the products.
In this frame, demonstrating food gathering and preparation is an appealing activity to be offered. It may also lead to cost containment if visitors are invited and are willing to share in these.

The meals can be limited to breakfast or to more meals, served outdoor, in a restaurant or in a special room of the agri-accommodation and be based on regional or national kitchen.

The variety and quality of the meals can diversify an agri-tourism enterprise from another and through the unlimited possibility of meals differentiation to promote the own cuisine and local production.

- **Proper agritourism**

  Related groups of products and services for creating a “real agritourism” product / experience are:

  Observation of agricultural production process, including plant production, animal production, some processing (e.g. help in cow milking, hay making, sheep shearing etc.), and participating in guided or individual farm tours and related activities as sowing of plants, harvesting or walking on-farm signed trails.

  Contact of tourists, particularly children, with domestic animals, including poultry, rabbits, goats, sheep, calves, etc.

  Tourists can also learn about local flora and recognize various plant species. Blooming of orchards and harvesting seem to be the most interesting moments. A farm prepared for tourists should have a room with posters e.g. introducing a
history of the landscape and land use systems, while some farms can create museums of agricultural machinery and rural culture (a product of ethnography). Increasingly, tourists show a keen interest in visiting small enterprises’ **processing facilities**. Creameries, dairies, wineries, olive-oil producing facilities, cookery and pastry and prepare old-school recipes of jams, stewed fruits, spoon sweets, home-made bread, fresh pasta, pies, liqueurs and other delights of the local production can be the best examples of such services. Furthermore, tourists watching or participating in the production process are more willing to buy products that they observed or participated themselves in their production.

**Direct sale** is an important agritourism service. Therefore, agritourism enterprises organize open-air markets or road stands or stalls advertised very often by the roads. Sometimes farmers offer stays in their farms connected with “**Pick-your-own**” of various products, e.g. fruits or vegetables (strawberries, raspberries, apples, pears, raisins etc). In this regard, orchards should have well preserved grass intercrop, broad enough for visitors to pick up their own fruits. This kind of agritourism products is very popular in most European countries and such farms usually offer accommodation or catering facilities and playgrounds for children.

- **Historical and modern agritourism farm:**
  As an attraction to prospective visitors, agritourism farms usually present contemporary production techniques. However, historical farms using old techniques and old machines can be organized and become very attractive to visitors. Managing a traditional farm requires quite a lot of expenditure on labour and capital and delivering tourist services (presentation and interpretation of traditional production techniques) means additional investment (human and economic).
  More simple and effective could be to organize in collaboration with other rural firms of the area a heritage park or local museum that exhibits material and posters showing old techniques of rural production.
  In some regions examples of traditional cultivation, agricultural production and traditional artifacts are exposed in Museums of Folk Art and Agriculture, frequently in special traditional buildings in historic villages.
Visits to Museums related to rural life and agro-activity and to historical and archeological sites are also an appropriate activity in this regard.

- Rural/agri-sport and active tourism
An activity that does not seem necessarily connected with agri-tourism, is sport. Rafting, kayaking, small boat tours, surfing and sailing are activities possible to promote in places by lakes, rivers and the sea of the rural environment.

However, agri-tourism and rural tourism enterprises usually have suitable conditions for different sport activities, especially when the sport discipline is connected with animals, natural and landscape resources and free space to practice the sport. Horse-back riding is a typical agri-tourism product. It may vary from one farm to another and it may comprise various activities connected with horses.
Mountaineering, snow ski, mountain ski and Hiking are also activities to combine with agritourism.

The involvement of an agritourism firm in providing sport services protects it from the high competition that may be experienced between accommodation and providers of catering services. Some agritourism and rural tourism enterprises located close to urban areas may include in their offer tennis fields or golf fields that are available in the neighboring urban area.
For some of the above mentioned sports and extreme sports, additional expenditure is often required in order to dispose special equipment for the tourists and also to employ expert guides.

- **Rural/Agri-therapy (health related products and services)**

Agritourism can be connected with health services or health-related products. Tourists coming to the countryside may expect possibility of a specific therapy, e.g. horse riding therapy (one of the methods for rehabilitation of disabled persons) or a special diet therapy, including consumption of “healthy” / “organic” products. “Green care” is a growing movement to provide health, social or educational benefits through farming for a wide range of people as well as the base for promoting mental and physical health through farming and environmental activities. It could provide services on a regular basis for participants who attend the farm or the natural environment activities as part of a structured care, rehabilitation, therapeutic or educational program. “Green” therapies using earth or animal
products are also applied, as well as therapies involving the use of plants e.g., horticultural therapy, forest therapy, flower therapy, herb therapy, etc.
Other forms of rural and agri-therapy involve api-therapy (use of various bee products) and spas and health resorts in rural areas, often out in the open space.

- **Rural/agri-recreation and agri-entertainment**

Agri-recreation is another branch of agritourism. It is considered to be an essential component of agritourism, as it is connected to the need of the tourists to have diverse experiences. Agri-recreation and agri-entertainment combine the hotel and gastronomic services of rural tourism to activities that aim to tourists’ entertainment.

In that context a “nature walk” may be included to show the habitat of wild plants, mountainous vegetation and natural woods in their original environment. In the same context, guided visits for wildlife and bird watching may be offered by a single or a group of businesses.
Many farmers may do well with re-creations of a former era. Some attractions may grow in relation to owner’s hobby like, old rural household, a recreation appealing to children etc.
Things to see and participate may include festivals, parties and special events carried out privately or publicly, for example an annual local festival or a thematic event organized by a farm business network or the local administration.

Means for highlighting cultural or heritage segments to tourists and improving tourism experience about “intangible” culture or heritage and of subsistent rural life could be:

- Organizing cultural tours and cultural interpretation sessions
- Offering lessons of local cuisine and traditional gastronomy.
- Producing and demonstrating traditional handicrafts
- Conducting traditional dance or music as a means to experience “intangible” culture.
- Marketing and selling artifacts to tourists; this can improve interaction with other farmers and enhance arts and crafts.

The above is in any case a partial list which may be enriched according to each area’s specific features.

It is important for each future entrepreneur to put himself in the position of tourists who might want to visit the specific region so as to sample characteristic products and services and have a pleasant time and differentiated, possibly unforgettable, experiences. It is also important that the future entrepreneur understands that what to him is ‘normal’ and ‘not important’, to a visitor may be unusual and a very interesting local custom.

Naturally, the above categories are not mutually exclusive. Very commonly, a specific agritourism business may combine several different types of services and assets.
BUSINESS PLANNING

Whether running an one-person business or an enterprise with many employees, it is necessary to define the business structure and to develop, even a simple, business plan.

The business plan need not be a thick volume of details written by a business consultant. It can very well be a brief document that the entrepreneur compiles by describing one’s purpose, targeted market resources and assets, marketing and operating plans, and showing how one intends to bring it all together.

The purpose in creating a business plan is summarized as follows:

It helps to define what the Product/Service will be: the product is everything one offers to satisfy customers’ needs and is defined by the features, optional services, quality, style, name, packaging, length of service, price, etc.

It helps to organize one’s thoughts about factors such as business structure, employees, financing, equipment, insurance and marketing.

Therefore, it can be used as a guide for starting up and managing the business.

It can be used to obtain financing by submitting the respective applications for loans or grants.

It can help identify risks that the enterprise might face, as well as strengths which should be emphasized.

It can be used to describe and explain the business concept to potential partners and focus employees on core business objectives and goals.

It should serve as a working plan to help make operational decisions.

A business plan can—and should—be modified during the operational stage of the business, as there is always a need to adapt to new requirements and challenges.

The parts forming a business plan are:

- The Creation of a Mission Statement and set of objectives reflecting the core purpose of the business and stating the basic values and goals in a short, focused sentence of no more than 20 words.
• The creation of a **Marketing Slogan**, consisting of a short, clever, even humorous translation of the mission statement that conveys a single, simple thought about the particular business to the particular customer profile.

• The **Set of Measurable Objectives and Goals**. Objectives are things to accomplish within the next year after the beginning of the operation; goals are to be met in 3-5 years.

Some areas for consideration may include volume of expected sales and profits, how to achieve customer satisfaction, owner compensation, initial number of employees, possible employee development, etc.

To set goals and objectives, the following questions may be of help:


- Who will be responsible for what activities?
- Who are the key employees and what are their titles?
- How long is the venture going to operate this venture?
- How many hours is the entrepreneur willing to commit to this venture?
- How is the entrepreneur going to ensure and promote customer satisfaction?
- When to start each specific activity?

• **Gather Information** from reputable sources to document the business plan. It is useful to know about potential visitors’ length of stay and expenditures, preferences and interests, competition and complementary services in the same area etc.

• **Describe the Farm and the new Enterprise**: When was it started, or projected to start? Why was it started? Who started it? How does the agritourism enterprise fit in with the overall farm operation? How is the business set up (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation etc)?

• **Describe the Product or Service**: Write down what one is selling to the public. What does it do? What makes it unique? What will it cost to provide this service or product? What are the charges? How does it compare to other similar enterprises? Are there similar services in the area? Why should people buy this particular service?

• **Define the Customers**: The focus of each business’ effort is placed on the consumer and this leads to an organization that revolves around the needs and interests of the customers to be served. Targeting specific market segments, it is
suitable to define: gender, age, income, broader location of origin, family status, children, education, and interests.

For example, in developing an ecotourism enterprise, one should probably look at special groups interested in environmental issues.

- **Compete or Complement**: Since agritourism is an emerging industry, the European Union and state agencies are encouraging enterprises to work together to attract visitors and share resources and market services. However, before any initiative for cooperation, one should first carefully develop and evaluate one’s business and product, considering one’s resources and activities and defining possible partners in order to widen or enrich the offered product.

- **Develop a Marketing Strategy**: The marketing and advertising method may be very simple as word of mouth and repeat customers, or it may involve an advertisement campaign with printed materials, radio spots, newspaper or other media advertising, mass mailings, and so on.

- Marketing strategy should be included in the business plan.

- **Management**: Identifying outsourcing consultants and advisors, including accountant, lawyer, banker, insurance broker and other consultants. In this regard it is of big aid to follow management schemes as ISO or HACCP recommended by European Union legislation; they prove to be methods of control and self control in terms of integrated quality management and food product hygiene.

- **Start-up Expenses**: Any new enterprise will have initial costs associated with what is necessary to start a business operation. Most of these costs will be one-time expenditures, while a few will occur every year. Examples include legal fees, licenses and permits, accounting fees, remodeling work, advertising, promotions, hiring costs, etc.

- **Employees**: Written job descriptions that clearly define duties of everyone occupied in the business and, for more complicated operations, a personnel manual may be helpful.

The number of employees needed to run the tourism part of the enterprise, their titles, job duties and skills and structure of salaries and wages should be identified.

The training needs that will be faced, who will conduct the employee training (in-house, paid consultant, community institutions, other businesses) and what will be the cost of the training are matters that should also be identified.
- **Insurance**: Identify the types of insurance for your business, including liability insurance for possible accidents of visitors.

- **Sales Forecast**: Forecasting sales are critical to the enterprise from both a management and sales point of view. There is no financial plan without an estimate of sales. A review of data on products, customers, competitors, and budgets to develop the trends and projections is a necessary tool.
6th STEP

DETERMINING INFRASTRUCTURE, EQUIPMENT AND OTHER SUPPORT NEEDS

For many rural tourism businesses, ensuring the required facilities for accommodation, food and any other services offered, and buying the necessary equipment is the largest initial expense. Before figuring out how to get what the business needs, one should determine what one already has and what is really needed.

In order to respond to the planned product and service, it may be necessary to have additional infrastructure or alternatively to renovate the existing one. In addition, a car, a new computer, a printer, a good digital camera or other equipment may be required.

It is advisable to resist the temptation to buy all the equipment up front as this could leave one without enough operating funds.

Conserving cash is one of the keys to surviving the early years in business.

**Making a Capital Goods Assessment**

Capital goods are things that cost capital (substantial amounts of money) to buy and which presumably will last at least a few years. Land, buildings, a truck are capital goods, whereas a tank of gas to run it isn’t. Machinery, other equipment, livestock, office furniture, computers, etc. are goods to estimate according to their life expectancy and use.

One could start by making a thorough list of all the capital goods that might be needed to run the business and then check off everything that is already available in useable condition. If it works, even if it is old, it should be checked.

Next, the remaining items on the list should be ranked as:

1. “Absolutely can’t do without”
2. “Necessary, but I could get started without”
3. “Desirable but not necessary”.

The items listed under 3 can be put aside until available money is closely calculated, and the operating plan is carefully ran through or, better yet, have some
operating experience. It is more expedient to focus planning on items under 1 and 2.

In terms of reusing old equipment and regarding items already available, there are three important provisions:

1. All equipment and places used by tourists have to be in good conditions and reliable. They can't be used in business if one cannot depend on them.
2. They have to be absolutely safe. No bad brakes, exposed belts, or broken cowlings that could hurt people. It’s not worth the risk.
3. It has to look pretty good so that it doesn’t downgrade the image of the business; on the contrary it is important to maintain a reputation for high quality in all aspects of the business.

It can be a difficult decision to spend scarce money to replace working equipment. One has to remember not to buy just because one wants some item; it is worth buying some equipment only if it is safer, more reliable, or if it is necessary to show to the clients the image of a quality operator.

For each of those items to be bought, one should first consider if it can be borrowed from friends or family and alternatively if renting or trading may not be a solution.

If not, there are these options:
- Pay cash from own resources
- Finance through the seller or by use of a credit card
- Take out a personal loan
- Take out a business loan

Once the decision is taken to finance the purchase, shopping can begin. It is probable that there is a notable difference from one dealer to the next for the same item. The purchasing may also be from catalogs or through the internet, and prices between catalogs tend to be similar. “Bargain” or “sale” catalogs may be presented with apparently discounted prices, but it would be worth to compare prices in any case to ensure a good bargain.
FINANCING

It is an old story: “The only people who can qualify for a loan are those who don’t need one”.

It is true that it is hard to get a loan to start a business unless one already has a proven track record in business. Lenders want to see a history of success in that kind of operation before they are willing to take a chance.

Land (that has a clear title), buildings and similar assets may be used to collateralize a tourism business loan. Skiffs, vehicles, camping gear, and the like have little or no value as guaranty, even if altogether they cost a lot to buy. However, they are often suitable to be financed through leasing schemes.

So, what is a small agritourism business start-up operator to do?

Here are some possibilities. One can:

- Go to a commercial bank, credit union, or finance company and offer property already owned, such as real estate, as collateral.
- Get equipment through leasing schemes
- Check all the available EU and government programs for agritourism, alternative tourism and small business development.
- Self-finance using savings, or by cashing-in stocks or retirement funds.
- Borrow from friends or relatives.
- Make all purchases on credit and conserve cash for emergencies.

All these options have advantages and disadvantages, and a start-up business may find that none of them works.

If the decision is to accept financing, one should pay close attention to factors such as:

- Repayment schedule
- Interest rate
- Penalties for late payment
- Insurance and other conditions of a loan.

In some cases low-interest credit cards can be helpful in the short term.
(a) Institutional assistance
It relates to coordination, support and other assistance that enables development of agritourism. This may involve government, industry or community-based initiatives that provide strategic direction and support to agritourism beyond the individual business scale.

Main tools and drivers are:
- Farmers’ markets
- Informal cooperation
- Supply chains (food and wine trails, guest houses and hotels, different rural businesses)
- Communication with consumers
- Contact with leaders and innovators

(b) Tourism networks, clusters and linkages
Tourism networks are recognized and strongly supported by European policies and funds, as a key element in Small and Medium Businesses, particularly in the agritourism sector.
Successful agritourism and rural tourism businesses often rely on clusters that provide an integrated product and diverse range of experiences that can meet visitor expectations and increases their view of the place. The product provided by clusters and thematic networks includes services and activities of different
agr.itourism and rural tourism enterprises, and an authentic regional tourism experience.
Business models that go beyond the owner-operator and involve another layer, through which several businesses link, can be helpful, making it more manageable and viable through economies of scale.
Not everything about local networking is positive. In certain cases progress made by business operators that conduct the network are not equivalent from partner to partner.
The main advantage of networking and business linkages is the integration and support that the new scheme can provide to all businesses involved leading, through synergies, to a ‘sum-total’ that is larger than its individual components.
Research by the World Tourism Organisation has shown that the most successful destinations are those where the various stakeholders cooperate closely and not those that are richly endowed with natural beauty or monuments.

(c) Training and development
Agritourism and rural tourism is mainly a service industry, and one important service is providing good information.
Clients expect that host community and the persons they contact have knowledge of the place and can drive them safety and correctly to the activities they are going to experience.
Especially if visitors are interested to be involved in alternative, adventure and soft adventure tourism activities they need guides with special skills and this is a definite asset for nature and wildlife tourism. Guests expect guides to know the common and often the scientific names of the wildlife and plants they see, as well as a lot about the habits, life histories, migration, and ecological habitat.
Likewise, a background in geography, geology, history, anthropology, or other science is helpful in geo-tourism, soft adventure, and cultural tourism.
Birding guides have to “really know birds”. Even though they may lack a higher education degree, they can, to this purpose, take courses, read books, and enhance their knowledge in other ways.
(d) Skills, Personal Traits, and Experience

The specific skills and personal traits required for running a successful rural tourism business vary to some extent with the kind of operation. But there are some qualities that are important to every tourism business, such as:

- **Communication**: The ability to connect with clients, to convey information effectively, and to enjoy an interactive relationship with all guests. The ability to modify client expectations in the face of adversity is an important skill to have.
- **Judgment and decision-making**: The ability to quickly anticipate or perceive threats to safety, comfort, and enjoyment and to decide how to remedy the situation.
- **Situational awareness**: Another way of saying the ability to see danger or discomfort and avoid it.
- **Behaviour management**: The ability to bring out the best in trip participants and to halt unacceptable behaviour without appearing heavy-handed.
- **Vision**: The ability to recognize opportunities to enhance visitor experience and to act on those opportunities.
- **Patience**: The ability to tolerate the shortcomings of clients, to listen to their stories, and to put up with bad weather and other kinds of adversity without showing your own unhappiness or anger.
- **Business management skills**: All of the above is secondary to the ability to manage the business to make a profit.

Some people seem to possess from birth all of the above. Most, however, have to learn and develop these skills and traits over time. Some can be learned in school or through a training session. In some cases, an internship or employment under a skilled manager is the best method.

In all cases, the value of education, skills, and personal traits is greatly enhanced by experience.

However, people who get involved in agritourism are likely to possess a set of existing skills. Many of them have significant business skills in other areas, a lot of connections, knowledge to access funds, programs and grants that others would not necessarily
consider. Much of the focus on improving skills is related to helping people establish their businesses.

In cases of existing agritourism operators, a range of training needs areas may be identified:

- Basic food safety and occupational health and safety training;
- Customer service, including providing “uniformity of experience” and ensuring that the operator understands the needs of the customer;
- Cultural awareness with tourists from abroad in particular and related to the attraction to different cultures;
- Understanding how tourism pricing/marketing works;
- Implementing industry standards and certification options;
- Improving marketing and market research skills;
- Understanding means of collaboration and networking.

(e) Interpretation

Interpretation, whether natural or cultural, means more than just presenting the facts. It means telling a story that brings the facts to life.

It should encourage the visitors to broaden their interest in the subject and to gain a greater understanding of it.

It should be interactive, providing the visitors an opportunity to ask questions, make observations, and offer their own opinions or interpretations.

To do this effectively requires that the interpreter learns something about the individuals he or she is addressing, which can be difficult with a large group, but is easy when the audience is only a few people.

Whether one takes formal training or simply develops one’s own skills, good interpretation will lead to consumer satisfaction, positive referrals, and more financial success in the long run.

(f) Certification systems:

Some enterprises in order to become more environmentally recognizable may go even further and conduct programs that certify tourism businesses as **ecologically sustainable** or meeting prescribed requirements. There are in this respect programs (EUROPEAN ECO-LABEL, GREEN KEY, BLUE FLAGS etc) that award coded logos to companies that meet eco or sustainable management
standards. These logos, printed on certificates or incorporated into company brochures and websites, can be used in marketing and advertising. Many operators believe that potential customers select them in part because they are certified eco-friendly.
MARKETING THE BUSINESS

For many tourism businesses, the hardest part is attracting enough customers to make the business profitable. “Build it and they will come” usually does not work in the competitive tourism industry, particularly in distant locations where few people ordinarily visit.

(a) What is marketing?
It is important to understand what the term marketing means. The process of attracting customers is called marketing, and it can be complicated, expensive, time consuming, and sometimes frustrating. But it is essential.

Besides the Business Plan, every new business needs a Marketing Plan as a step to emphasize the procedures to reach the future customer and sell its services or products.

But a Marketing Plan does more. It helps positioning each business in the specific market context. It determines the distinguishing elements between the business and the competitors. It specifies the elements guiding all future operations, which compose the final image or identity of the enterprise. Finally, it helps determine pricing of the products.

Marketing process has several components:
  • **Situation analysis**: First decision to make is to decide the nature and identity of the business and define its scope and then to figure out how to make it recognizable in the marketplace.
  • **Market research**: Corporations consider market research a very important tool to understand who buys their products and why; who buys competing products and
why; what consumers are looking for; how they make their buying decisions; how much they are ready to pay.

The same thing is needed, but on a smaller scale for an agritourism business.

An integral part of market research is competitive analysis — that is, understanding who the competitors are, what they offer, why people go to them, and what can be done to get access to a specific segment of the market.

It is important to understand how to attract clients who may alternatively choose to go to another business in the same or the next village or region. Market research will help to determine product placement, which means getting the specific product before the right audience.

Selling may be directly to the consumer, that is, the traveler, or it may be to travel intermediaries such as travel agents, tour packagers, or even to clubs, organizations, or corporations whose members or employees may become clients. There are advantages and disadvantages to both direct sales and intermediaries.

The most obvious disadvantage of using agents is that they take a fee or a commission.

In the first year the wish may be just for someone to come. After that, the objectives may be to increase sales by a certain percent, increase clients during low season, change the market mix from indirect to direct sales, or simply to produce a certain minimum amount of income.

**Pricing**, as a part of market research, simply means deciding how much to charge for services and product. But the product may have several components (transportation, lodging, meals), and each could have its own pricing, or it all could be packaged into a single price.

There are two approaches to pricing:

Decide how much one wants to make per client by calculating costs,

Find out what others are charging for similar products and then charge the same, more, or less, depending on adopted policy.

In general, pricing is not a good way to compete in the tourism business, for two reasons: One is that if charges are lower than a competitor, it can give the impression that the product is not as good.

Second, that if competing businesses start lowering prices to get a bigger share of customers, this can quickly lower the price to the point that no-one makes a profit.
Most experienced tourism operators would advise to set prices at a level where one can make a profit and then compete mainly on the basis of quality service.

(b) Developing a Marketing Plan
Through the Business Plan, the clientele, the business profile and offer and a plan for diffusing information about the enterprise to potential financing institutions and future clientele are already defined. By developing a Marketing Plan the two or three strong selling points of the service or operation are also identified. These might be: the success rate of a specific experience, exclusivity and solitude, facilities, location and access to area attractions, price, or other services you provide.

Determining the audience first will help choose the key selling points for the marketing strategy.

Marketing can be as simple as word-of-mouth referral, or involve an intensive promotion directed to the identified audience. If horse-riding activities, for example, are provided, marketing may emphasize the experiences of riding horses and outdoor activities. Anything highlighted must reflect these selling points in neat, high quality, and refined presentation. The three basics of advertising include:

- **The message**, i.e. the two or three strong selling points and additional information about the service,
- **The medium**, i.e. internet, publications, radio, TV, etc., and
- **The target audience** that one is trying to reach.

The message should tell about the type of activity or enterprise offered additional goods and services, directions to the location, costs of the activities and how to make reservations.

Originality is very important in marketing.

Keep the message simple.

Always check dates, fees, addresses and phone numbers for accuracy.

Make certain the goods and services advertised represent what can be delivered.

Contact someone experienced in website creation and desktop publishing to assist in design and creation of electronic and printed pieces; a good designer of electronic or printed material is probably one of the best investments you are required to make.
(c) The Medium
Marketing includes a wide range of activities, from public relations and advertising to promotions and trade shows.
The medium is the method by which the message is delivered to potential clients.
They might include:

- **Promotion.** This includes every way of getting the name and product of the business before potential customers. Promotion can include publicity, just getting the business name at the market. Or public relations, that is creating a positive image of the enterprise in the eye of the public.

Here are some examples:
- Search Engine Optimization and Social Media handling for the internet
- Press releases to newspapers, magazines, radio stations
- Sponsorship of community events, public radio, conservation groups, etc.
- Familiarization trips for tour agents or travel writers, so that they know the establishment and can talk or write about it
- Promotional items – pens, mugs, clothing with your company logo
- Public speaking and slide shows
- Brochures, business cards, and “rack cards”

- **Advertising,** on the other hand, involving promotion in the internet, newspapers and magazines, radio, TV, travel guides, brochures can in many cases be expensive. And most advertising professionals sustain that a single advertisement is almost worthless -if not included in an advertisement campaign over a period of months or years. Buying paid advertising, one needs to determine a measure of return on investment (ROI). Spending 1,00 Euro on an advertisement campaign and being able to trace 5,00 Euros worth of bookings to that campaign, then there is an ROI of 5 per 1 Euro invested.

To determine ROI, it is needed to track customers’ sources. That can mean simply asking them how they found out about the enterprise (it is surprising how many can’t remember). Or it may imply various devices, such as email or mailing addresses or phone numbers that are coded to indicate where the prospective client got the contact information.
Increasingly, businesses are buying small print advertisements simply to direct traffic to their websites. This type of advertisement needs little more than a captivating phrase (something like the defining statement) such as an attractive photo or logo and the website address and is a lot more cost effective. Social Media promotion is becoming increasingly important for raising awareness about a business or a destination.

- **Public Relations**
  ‘Public relations’ is defined as the creation and maintenance of a favorable image. It is part of marketing and advertising, but it goes further. A businessman should always be concerned with his business image. Public relation goals can range from satisfying the client about the whole experience to acceptance of the operation by neighbors, local community leaders, and the general public. It is worth the effort to foster the support of neighbors, local and state agencies, citizen groups and the local Chamber of Commerce or visitor bureau.

- **The Internet**
  The World Wide Web has fundamentally changed marketing, particularly in tourism, and studies show that 25 to 70 percent of travelers research and book all or parts of their trips on the Web. Many small businesses now devote the largest part of their advertisement budget to website design, optimization, and maintenance.

**Advantages**
- Can be accessed by virtually any computer in the world
- Can be relatively low cost to set up
- Continues to do its job indefinitely rather than for a single day or month
- Can include large quantities of copy (words) and all the photos one wants to post
- Can be made interactive and can be used to take bookings
- Can link and be linked to other websites.
Disadvantages
- Immense competition on the Web
- Most users only look at the first few sites that show up on a search
- Searchers scan quickly so they may miss important information
- Searchers must use the correct key words to find the site
- Websites must be maintained and must be updated to be effective
- Their promotion may require substantial human resources and cash.

Effective Web advertising is a mixture of art and science. It is advisable to hire an expert to build and optimize the site.
Keep in mind, however, that people who know how to create websites do not necessarily know how to write great advertising copy, and more importantly, do not necessarily know how to design effective websites or how to promote them. There are books, on-line sources, and consultants who can help to make a website fit to the particular business profile and be very helpful.

Here are some factors that make websites more effective:

1. **Good site design.** Get the most important information up front, since people spend only a few seconds looking at a site unless it really grabs their interest. Ensure easy site navigation.

2. **Search engine optimization.** Websites only work, because people use search engines to find what they are looking for, so the site has to be built correctly and include the right key words, page titles, and links to make it rank highly with the main search engines. The search engines change their ranking criteria from time to time so the optimization must be renewed at least annually. Use links to other sites, but learn to use them correctly.

3. **Web analytics.** One can hire services that analyze the site and tell how many “hits” the site is getting, where they are coming from, what key words are drawing the hits, and so on. Most servers also provide an analysis if you learn how to use them.

4. **Great copy.** Define the service, state its location, highlight elements that indicate that the entrepreneur knows what he/she is doing. Use simple, clear language and leave out buzzwords. Provide what the customer wants to know.
Develop a personality for the site and speak directly to the prospective customer. Put the reader into the experience rather than just list what is offered. Be sure that the site tells the reader how to reach you by email, postal service, phone, and fax and include instructions on “how to get there” by car, train, plane or boat.

(d) The Target Audience
Target audiences are distinct groups or segments of clients that one expects to reach when one employs different marketing strategies. The decision to target the service takes into account the characteristics of:
- Income level;
- Age;
- Location (in or out-of-state; urban/rural, international);
- Client preference (lodging, level of involvement: self guided versus guided, experience, etc.).

(e) Marketing Costs
The cost of marketing for an enterprise will largely depend on the size and type of the operation, the medium selected, and the number of times any advertisements are repeated. New operations typically spend substantial amounts of total operational costs on marketing for the first few years. It is important to keep good records about response to specific marketing efforts so that marketing can be more effective. With time and reputation, costs for marketing will be reduced.

(f) Putting it All Together:
By putting all previously referred tools together, the goal of marketing can be achieved: to know the customer so well that the product fits him and sells itself. The last four (4) actions necessary to complete the 7th Step are listed below:
1. Identify and describe the target market and determine what the target consumer desires.
2. Decide on the Positioning of the business in the Market, which it is expected to be strongly associated with the business name. Keep it short and simple, descriptive of some benefit to the customer, and different than competitors.
3. Decide on market expenditure level. Most established businesses spend 2-8% of gross sales on marketing.
4. Develop and shape a marketing mix. The marketing mix is the blend of tools that an enterprise uses to achieve its objectives with a target market. By shaping a marketing mix and position it is easier to create a unique identity for the business that attracts and retains customers, and to highlight uniqueness and difference.

(g) Situation Analysis
A situation analysis is a fundamental step that supplements the marketing plan. Analyzing the management policy, the information about enterprise customers, competitors and marketing environment, the evaluation of business effectiveness and client satisfaction, as well as manpower effectiveness, will most probably make the agritourism business successful.

(h) Post-Season Evaluation and Follow-Up
Rural tourism entrepreneur should be concerned about the clients’ satisfaction, provide input for improving the service, and encourage word-of-mouth advertising by past customers, particularly through Social Media where the business should be proactive – e.g. post visitors’ comments on its site or create its own page in one of the most popular Social Media.

It is great to see satisfied clients depart and not have to worry about them anymore. But, increasingly, rural tourism businesses are following up with past clients, weeks and even years later. Some send out trip evaluation forms. They ask a few questions with a check box system that allows the recipient to indicate how pleased or displeased they were with various aspects of their stay.

If well designed, the evaluation form could help the operators identify strengths and weaknesses in their business so they can improve the product. The questionnaire also expresses concern for the client’s satisfaction and reminds them of their trip to encourage word-of-mouth referral.

Many operators go beyond evaluation forms. They might target past clients by:
- Sending personalized Christmas cards or greetings on birthdays
- Sending photos or CDs of photos of the clients on special activities
- Requesting written comments, which they then use in their advertising
- Sending them ads for special rates, companion rates, or law fees for clients.
- Giving them small gifts on their departure
- Putting them on a print or e-mail list for a regular on-going newsletter

Operators can also inform previous clients about the schedule for the coming season. Whether or not an operator conducts post-season follow-up, he/she may be surprised at how many past clients will write back, send photos or even gifts, sometimes years after their visit to the place. It is this kind of personal contact that can make the rural and agritourism business rewarding even if profits are modest. Just be sure to reply to any correspondence from past clients. They are the best marketing tool.
10th STEP

SALES

After initiating the business operation and marketing efforts result in people coming and buying the product, it is important to treat this step as carefully as all the others.

First, before dealing with the client, a statement of “Terms and Conditions.” should be provided. This is usually a one page document stating what is provided and what not, when deposits and final payment are due, what the refund policy is, and so on.

The business-client relation “Terms and Conditions” may be already defined by National regulations or it could be shaped in accordance to that of other operators or a combination of both if National regulations are broad and not very specific.

An informed consent form may also be included, which is normally signed by the client. The informed consent simply tells clients of possible dangers (e.g. of horse-riding or diving) so that they cannot claim they did not know.

The liability release is a legal document in which, by signing, clients declare that if they get hurt, killed, or otherwise inconvenienced, they will not hold the business manager liable (that is, they will not sue for damages).

Some people may refuse to sign, but then the entrepreneur can also refuse to take them at the business or activity.

- Payment: It may be done by cash, check, money order, or credit card.

The traveling (and buying) public expects to use credit cards for all purposes, including making payments at remote locations. The cost of setting up to process credit card transactions may be more than a new business can justify; if so one needs to inform clients ahead of time. Otherwise one may have clients who dispose a card and no cash and there is not much one can do but hope the clients pay when they get home.

Also be doubtful of taking checks, especially foreign checks.

The way one takes people’s money can tell them a lot about the personality, professionalism, and quality of the business. So, be businesslike, but don’t appear greedy, and at all times be gracious, polite, and appreciative.
Let the clients know that you are glad that they chose to spend part of their vacation at the establishment. Some clients leave generous tips at the end of a trip. Others leave nothing and it is not an indication of how well they thought about the business and the persons involved. Some people only tip low paid help while others leave a large tip to the owner or chief of the workers expecting that it will be shared among all the employees. In many cases tipping behaviour is related to the local culture of the visitor.
6. IMPORTANT OPERATIONAL ISSUES

11th STEP

OPERATIONS AND SAFETY

Safety is very important in tourism and specifically in rural tourism and agritourism. Guests have entrusted their precious vacation time, their money, and their lives to the operator, who wants to ensure every visitor’s safety. Furthermore, bad news travel quickly and an injury or fatality could not only ruin the prospects for future business, but could influence the whole industry in the region. Adventure and Remote wilderness tours probably have the greatest physical dangers, but every kind of tourism business has its own risks. Operators should act on three elements of safety:

1. Perception of safety
2. Actual safety — that is, prevention of injury, and damage to property
3. Response to an emergency if, despite best efforts, an incident does occur.

It's not enough to know that the operation is safe. Clients must feel that they are safe. Many of them will be in a very unfamiliar situation — it could be the first time they have been in the wilderness — and they may be apprehensive, even frightened. This uneasiness (being “out of their comfort zone”) will detract from their enjoyment of the trip and could cause them to behave in ways that may actually increase the risk of accident. It is important that the accommodation or tour are presented in such a way that the clients immediately trust the operator and feel secure in every activity they plan to participate.
Conveying a Sense of Safety

Inappropriate actions like stunt driving (vehicles, ATVs, boats) or showing off with guns would not impress visitors with the guide’s skills.

There are several easy steps that can be taken to convey a sense of safety.

For example:

- **In vehicles:** Ensure that everyone driving a vehicle stays within speed limits.
- **In all kinds of boats:** Make sure everyone disposes a life jacket before boarding any open boat or going on deck aboard a covered boat. Be sure to give the Coast Guard-required safety briefing, point out the required safety information placard, and show the location of safety and survival equipment.
- **In camps and lodging:** Give a brief orientation explaining any dangers, such as low overheads or hot stoves; show escape routes, locations of fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and emergency response equipment.
- **Before entering country where there is a chance of encountering bears and other potentially dangerous wildlife:** – give a safety lecture, preferably with reading material clients can study on their own. Provide clear instructions on what to do in the unlikely event of a confrontation.
- **Generally in the field:** Set a pace based on the slowest member of the group or have an assistant stay with the slowest member(s). Point out hazards before clients reach them. Ask often how they are doing, offer plenty of opportunity to rest, drink liquids and eat snacks, add or remove clothing, and so on.
- **In deteriorating weather conditions:** Ensure clients adjust clothing appropriately. If necessary, stop the trip, set up camp early, or take whatever steps necessary to prevent hypothermia and related problems.
- **On any kind of tour:** Explain in advance how any emergency might be dealt with. Is radio/cell/satellite phone contact available? Can the location be pinpointed with GPS or other device?
- **Remain calm,** decisive, and in control, if conditions turn bad or something starts to go wrong.
Ensuring Safety

In order to ensure safety to clients, it is required planning and strictly practicing safe operations.

Elderly people with slow reflexes and diminished flexibility and people who are overweight are the most common victims. In a rural tourism business elderly people are often a considerable part of the clientele.

Tourists, as they are often unfamiliar with the local environment and usually come from urban environments, are extremely adept at stepping in holes, banging their heads on low overheads, touching hot stoves and mufflers, cutting and scraping themselves on sharp corners and rough rocks, getting stuck by spiny plants, and being stung by bees and wasps.

Remember, many people develop serious allergies as they get older, and a bee sting or bug bite can be a life-threatening emergency if the allergic reaction causes a constricted airway.

Rural residents know how to avoid chained sled dogs but tourists may not. Furthermore, any dog, cat or wild animal that can bite, scratch, or maul can transmit diseases.

In order to plan a response to anything that might go wrong, you first could make a list of all the things that can go wrong, from sprained ankles to heart attack, insulin shock (diabetics), and severe allergic reaction to bee stings or certain food. The operator (and the staff) should have first aid kits and be trained for every inconvenient.

In addition to personal injury, it’s one’s job to keep people from dropping their cameras off cliffs, setting fire to their clothing, dunking or splashing expensive optics and electronics, and losing personal items overboard or along the trail.

After having thought out of all the threats to visitor safety, develop a safety plan to ensure visitors’ well being. Write it down and make copies. This is particularly important if every visitor or group is not accompanied in the various activities by the employees or the person in charge of the enterprise.

It could be more effective, incorporate a safety plan into the materials to provide clients prior to or at the start of each outdoor activity. It will contribute to their sense of security and help them to understand better what they see and experience. This
plan doesn’t have to be elaborate. It could include just procedures that, if followed, may prevent most of the potential accidents. It is possible that after an incident a refund of their money be offered as a goodwill gesture, but it is better than exposing visitors to a potentially dangerous situation to prevent it. Last but not least, seriously consider insuring your business against accidents of visitors.
ACHIEVING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Components of Visitor Satisfaction

Safety and the perception of safety: As explained in the preceding chapter, visitors have to be safe, and they have to feel safe. Nothing takes the fun out of a trip like worrying about getting hurt. It’s important for the agritourism businessman constantly to take steps to eliminate those fears.

Food: Older people are also more sensitive to the food they eat. Many have allergies or special dietary requirements. Many have developed strong preferences and simply cannot enjoy an experience unless they get the foods they like. It is important to ask ahead of time about food preferences and restrictions, often due to religious beliefs. At the very least, the food has to be very good quality (fresh, good ingredients and properly prepared).

Convenience: This translates to quality accommodation and personal service. One can help visitors work out their plans, and answer all posed questions quickly and enthusiastically.

Outstanding Experience: It is important to provide an experience that distinguishes one’s service from the others’, and it’s up to each operator to make it memorable. Remember, visitors want to “experience” and “do,” not just “see.”

Time: it is very important to people on vacation or planning a vacation:
- Respond promptly to calls and emails
- Adhere strictly to set schedules.
- Try dealing with problems that may arise.

Maintain highest possible standards in every part of the operation, including:
- Food preparation
- Clothing and personal grooming – Be neat and clean;
- Maintenance of vehicles, equipment, and facilities;
- Personal conduct and speech;
- No smoking, drinking, swearing, or rough language around guests.

Learn to be a good listener. Visitors love to talk about themselves, their families, their homes, their jobs. They love to talk about the other places they have visited,
and compare them with yours. Ask lots of questions and appear or be interested in the answers, as they may also give you ideas on how to improve your own business. Never argue with clients about politics, religion, or anything else.

**Pay close attention to children** if any are on the trip. Parents will not be happy if their kids are unhappy. Parents must know at all times that the kids are safe, comfortable, and entertained. For parents, the value of a trip is measured by their children’s enjoyment.

“**Under-promise and over-deliver**” Give your guests a better experience than they expected.

**One final tip:** Be a tourist yourself. Go on trips, not just in your area but in other parts of the country and world, to see how other operators do it. You’ll probably be informed about some useful tips, and you’ll feel part of a global industry.
European Union considers and promotes agritourism as an important tool for maintaining farming activities, promoting diversification of economic practices in the countryside and the rural entrepreneurship, assisting in the preservation of cultural landscapes and contributing to the new ‘European model of farming’ (Commission of the European Communities, 1999). European Union policy on this regard encourages, supports and finances the development of tourism and agritourism activities in the rural area through special initiatives and programs (LEADER, Regulations for the modernization of Farm Exploitations etc) and the structural funds directed to each European country.
THE “LEADER” APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development policy, as an increasingly important component of the common agricultural policy (CAP), promotes sustainable development in Europe’s rural areas addressing economic, social and environmental concerns.

In this framework, “Leader” is an initiative financed by EU funds and is designed to help rural actors consider the long-term potential of their local region.

Encouraging the implementation of integrated, high-quality and original strategies for sustainable development, it has a strong focus on partnership and networks of exchange of experience.

As its name suggests, it is a method of mobilizing and delivering rural development in local rural communities, rather than a fixed set of measures to be implemented.

The main concept behind the Leader approach is that, given the diversity of European rural areas, development strategies are more effective and efficient if decided and implemented at local level by local actors, accompanied by clear and transparent procedures, the support of the relevant public administrations and the necessary technical assistance for the transfer of good practice.

Since its launch in 1991, Leader has provided rural communities in the EU with the tools to play an active role in shaping their own future. It has evolved over time, together with the rest of the CAP.

“Leader” encourages rural territories to explore new ways to become or to remain competitive, to make the most of their assets and to overcome the challenges they may face, such as an ageing population, poor levels of service provision, or a lack of employment opportunities.

“Leader” complements other European and national programs. For example, Leader actions can activate and mobilize local resources, by supporting pre-development projects (such as diagnostic studies and feasibility studies or local capacity building) which will improve these areas’ ability to access and use not only Leader funds but also other sources for financing their development (for example, wider EU and national rural and regional development programs).
Leader also assists sectors and categories of beneficiary which often receive no support, or only limited support, under other programs operating in rural areas, such as cultural activities, enhancement of the natural environment, rehabilitation of architecture and heritage buildings, rural tourism, improving the links between producers and consumers, etc.

“Leader” encourages socioeconomic players to work together to produce goods and services that generate maximum added value in their local area.

The difference between “Leader” and other more traditional rural policy measures is that it indicates ‘how’ to proceed rather than ‘what’ needs to be done.

The seven key features that summarize the Leader approach are:

1. Area-based local development strategy
2. Bottom-up approach
3. Public–private partnerships: The local action groups (LAGs)
4. Facilitating innovation
5. Integrated and multi-sectoral actions
6. Networking
7. Cooperation

For further information you may contact:

(a) European Leader Observatory established by the European Commission

The Leader Observatory website offers useful information at this site there is also a link to the sites of each of the national network units.

Leader+ Observatory contact point:

contact.point@leaderplus.org

Tel. (32-2) 235 20 20
Fax (32-2) 280 04 38
For information on EU rural development measures more generally, go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/index_en.htm

(b) National/regional level
The most immediate sources of information for practitioners are likely to be at national/regional level, depending on the programming structure of the country concerned.
These are too numerous to mention here but can be found either by using known national sources or by following the links at:

For existing EU Member States:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/memberstates/index_en.htm

For acceding countries and candidate countries:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/use/index_en.htm

(c) Other useful networks
ELARD (European Leader Association for Rural Development) ELARD is a non-profit-making association founded in 1999 which represents over 600 LAGs from nine EU Member States, either through their national networks or as individual members.
http://personal.telefonica.terra.es/web/elard/

Prepare (partnership for rural Europe)
The Prepare programme aims to strengthen civil society in rural areas, particularly in the 10 new Member States and the accession countries, and to promote multinational exchange in rural development. It has a particular focus on promoting partnership between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government in rural development, and therefore on the Leader approach.
http://www.preparenetwork.org/index.php

EuroGites or European Federation of Rural Tourism, A professional organization representing 36 associations from 29 countries across geographical
Europe and Israel. With an overall number of more than 100,000 establishments, it represents about 15% of European tourism overall. This ranges from the rural Bed & Breakfast and self-catering in private homes or farms to small family-run rural hotels and guesthouses.

Current member countries are Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and United Kingdom. [www.eurogites.org](http://www.eurogites.org).

Member States’ Leader national networks also produce regular publications, which can be found at:


_Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union, Free phone number:_

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11
ANNEX

CASE STUDIES IN GREECE HIGHLIGHTED THROUGH THE PROGRAM

The following case-studies are examples of best practices implemented in the Greek rural domain, which have been highlighted during the workshops organised by the Greek partners of the program as one of the program’s activities.

1. An Ecotourism Village in Crete (Axos Rethymno)

Located at an altitude of approximately 500 m., in a mountainous area of the Prefecture of Rethymno, in Central Crete, ENAGRON farm, an agritourism complex of accommodation structures, cultivations and pristine nature, is developed according to its owner’s concept: to provide a place where visitors can enjoy nature and hospitality all year through.

The proprietor of the enterprise ENAGRON was living in Athens working as an executive at a multinational enterprise, until he decided to come back to the place of his origin where he could find again the few things that have remained
pure and unaffected from human exploitation. As he cites “we realized that the essence of life was still there. Once again, we discovered the seasons, as nature has defined and measured them. We are fortunate since we can experience the light of the day and the silence of the night again”.

He re-cultivated and regenerated the farm that he inherited from his parents and restored and renovated the buildings, in order to establish an agritourism and ecotourism complex. In this objective he was eased by his previous business experience and financially supported by the loans and incentives offered by European Funds.

The aim, out of his own personal need, was to share the joy provided by the contact with nature and to host and welcome those overwhelmed by their memories or those that never had the luck of gaining experiences from living the countryside life. As he cites “We transformed our ideas into actions. Inspired by the creativity found in the natural environment, we succeeded in making our dream come true”.

The still inhabited Axos neighbouring village’s history extends from the Minoan times to the present, including the Roman times and the Byzantine era, when Axos used to be a prosperous city. Therefore, the monuments located in the wider area and the local tradition that is still apparent among the locals, constitute an important asset of ENAGRON enterprise.
The accommodation branch that includes 32 apartments (distributed over independent buildings equipped with all amenities), and public spaces (restaurant - tavern, traditional kafenio, lounge, bar, a congress hall and many outdoor covered areas) is completely immersed in various cultivations, such as olive groves, vineyards, vegetable gardens and fruit trees and the wild vegetation of Crete, the whole surrounded by the magnificent landscape.

All the above give guests the possibility to enjoy their stay in the fully furnished and equipped with all amenities (free internet access, central heating etc) accommodation complex and get unforgettable experiences by participating in a range of activities organised by the ENAGRON owner and his staff. For example, there are activities in and out of the farm and the surrounding area, including organized walks in nature on foot or with donkeys, always with the assistance of a guide. The activities are:

- Related to products and to the seasons of the year, such as the distillation of raki from grapes, wine and olive oil tasting, cheese-making, preserves-making, grape-harvest etc.
• Related to Cretan diet and nutrition: presentations of the form of Cretan nutrition, lessons on how to prepare Cretan cuisine dishes, cooking, bread baking courses, etc.

• Hiking, or exploring nature on donkey-back or with mountain bikes.

• Botanic walks - acquaintance with the herbs, the greenery and plants of Crete and with the wild Cretan flora.

• Visits to monuments and sites of the region, such as traditional villages, Byzantine churches, antiquities, monasteries, caves, stone huts on Mount Psiloritis etc.

• Acquaintance with the history, the tradition and the inhabitants of the region.

• Participation in cultural events, exhibitions, concerts

• Wandering through the village, familiarizing with the local way of life and the inhabitants, visiting stores for shopping local products and woven textiles and various coffee houses and restaurants

On the other hand, staying in the farm, there are a lot of things to do and see apart from just enjoying the place and the calmness; for example observe the way the farmer cultivates and takes care of the trees, the plants, the garden, the vineyard and the olive trees and take care of the farm animals and birds, together with the people of ENAGRON.
ENAGRON is a very successful business which contributed significantly to the development of agritourism in the region as it is a benchmark for many other enterprises established in the broader area. At the same time, it is an alternative destination for thousands of travellers flooding Cretan beaches in summertime and seeking a different more authentic experience.

GETTING INFORMED ABOUT TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES
2. A NETWORK OF BUSINESSES SURROUNDING THE LAKE KERKINI NATIONAL PARK

A SPECIAL AGRI AND ECO TOURISM DESTINATION OF HIGH QUALITY

- The Lake Kerkini National Park, in Macedonia, Northern Greece, was established with the aim of protecting the wider area of Kerkini wetland, and to ensure the harmonious co-existence of the natural and the anthropogenic environment and the viable development of the area. The area lies in the district of Serres, in Macedonia.

The Management Authority of Lake Kerkini was founded in 2003 in order to protect the rich biodiversity and administer the wider region of Kerkini wetland. It is currently funded by the Region of Central Macedonia through the Regional Operational Programme of Macedonia-Thrace 2007-2013.

The development of different enterprises that rely on the environment and the tradition of the ecosystem succeeded to create a tourism destination that attracts tourists through the year and at an increasing rate.

The enterprises supporting the tourist development of the place are:
A number of accommodation units are located around the lake.
• One of the first created is Guesthouse OIKOPERIHGITIS on the boarders of Lake Kerkini which in addition to the good structure and services offered, develops activities of environmental awareness and education for visitors related to the Lake ecosystem. Examples of those activities are canoeing, touring the lake with boats, a mobile camping for children and others, supported by state of the art guides / instructors with many years of experience.

• Guesthouse ICHNILATIS is another good example of accommodation facility combined with various activities by and in the lake, such as boat trips in the lake and bird-watching of rare bird species, horse-back riding near the lake and into the woods, seeing the lake by a closer view using a canoe, fishing by the river or in the lake.
The initiative of a group of women who were moved by the desire to help their place is the **Women Association of Ano Poroia**. The village of Ano Poroia, is located in a very beautiful site at an altitude of 380 m overlooking Lake Kerkini. The Association of the village is engaged in cultural events, in providing accommodation facilities, in the production of local products, in the collection and sale of herbs and aromatic plants. Those initiatives made Poroia and the Association known to a growing number of visitors from different places, mainly of Greece.

The Company Z. BORAS & Co is a unit situated close to Lake Kerkini, which processes, standardises and packages meat from buffalo and other kinds of livestock growing in the area. The tourist development of the broader Kerkini area helped to the promotion of the specific company’s products and today most of them are available in delicatessen stores and high quality restaurants of Athens and Thessaloniki.
Through the example of agritourism and ecotourism development of the Kerkini area we can note that a network of enterprises and organisations relying on a characteristic natural resource (the lake) and directly or indirectly related to tourism, acted in synergy and accomplished the development and viability of the wider area as a whole.
3. MILIA MOUNTAIN RETREAT, CRETE, GREECE

A top eco-lodge for active adventures and local culture directed to conscious tourists

MILIA is a unique and ambitious project regarding the conversion of a tiny old abandoned rural village to a beautifully restored tourism settlement hidden amongst century-old chestnut and olive trees on the mountains of western Crete. The creators of this tourism accommodation are two energetic, eco-minded locals who decided to bring back to life the abandoned settlement, using private and EU funds. They reconstructed old houses, reintroduced organic farming and livestock and replanted terraces. Stream water was piped in, solar electric panels were installed and a smooth road replaced the uncomfortable track.

The complex consists of 16 beautifully restored stone houses with simple bedrooms and bathrooms, a small swimming pool, wood-burning stoves, a spacious shared dining room and open common spaces. The whole settlement is perfectly integrated into the landscape and uses local resources in a sustainable manner.
A solar system provides some electricity but not enough for TV, radio or other appliances. But comforts are not requested in this place as guests may enjoy contact with nature and tradition in every their step, every moment of their stay. Guests may perform various activities in the settlement and the wider area; from bird watching, food collecting, mountain bike, hiking and trekking, experiencing local cuisine and wine preparation or relaxing on the veranda of the settlement with local meze and raki.
Different trails lead to gorges and sites of uncontaminated nature as well as traditional villages and archeological sites in the wider area.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Pigram J.J. (1993) “Planning for Tourism in a Rural Area; bridging the policy implementation gap”
- “Development of Rural Sustainable Tourism”, Ed. GEOTOUR (2005)
- “Sardegna Economica”: Rivista no 1/2002
- “Greening of remote tourism lodges - The role of tourism and recreation”, Ontario, (Oct. 1995)
- Dorobantu M.R., Fieldsend A., “Rural environment – a promoter of sustainable tourism within local communities in Romania”, 18th International Economic Conference
Project: “The Human Resources, a Valuable Investment in Romanian Rural Tourism!”,
ROMANIAN SUPPORT FRAMEWORK 2007-2013 - EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUNDS (POSDRU/68/5.2/S/36694)
Activity: A. 17. Measures in order to initiate a business in the rural area, in the field of rural tourism
FOLLOW GREECE EVERYWHERE

www.visitgreece.gr
Discover the fascination of Greece through our website!

www.my-greece.gr
Explore experiences, upload your own!

http://eepurl.com/WvnY
Sign up to our NEWSLETTER and uncover our hidden treasures!

www.facebook.com/visitgreecegr
Let’s talk about Greece!

www.twitter.com/visitgreecegr
Follow us on Twitter!

www.youtube.com/visitgreecegr
Watch our latest videos!

www.flickr.com/visitgreecegr
Can you see me? I was in Greece too!

www.foursquare.com/visitgreecegr
Follow our tips!

https://plus.google.com/+greece
Find out what Greece is all about!

http://pinterest.com/visitgreecegr
Let’s pin the beauties of Greece!

http://instagram.com/visitgreecegr
Capture & Share your moments in Greece!

GREEK NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION
www.visitgreece.gr