Cooperatives of Employment and Services in Rural areas

Recommendations Handbook

Booklet 1

Introduction

ČesR

INTERREG IVC

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The content of next booklets

1) Introduction

2) Business models which maximize the creation of services and jobs in self-catering accommodation

3) Added value based on diversification of services and personalized activities

4) Cooperation models for creating jobs and services

5) Human resources management in rural area
The concept of the CesR project came to life in Gozo (Malta) during a study visit conducted by the ICER project (Interreg IVC), although the two projects had nothing in common. The partners were lodged in self-catering accommodations with a wide array of services and facilities such as culinary arrangements, childcare, transportation and housecleaning. This piqued quite an interest as such services are not usually packaged into the concept of a self-catering accommodation.

Lead partner the Regional Tourism Development Board of Auvergne (France) put forward a proposal for deeper investigation concerning this issue and for focusing attention on potential policies to encourage and facilitate the creation of new avenues of services employment in self-catering accommodations, primarily in rural areas.

To avoid reinventing the wheel, the Regional Board decided to launch an inter-regional cooperation project to identify relevant policies in other European regions. The CesR project concept was thus penned and the Lead Partner began the search for partners tending to similar problems.

Subsequently, in cooperation with regional and international partners, the intention was enlarged in its scope and includes the sector of rural care services to secure & strengthen the jobs in that field.
Regional and local authorities have a key role to play in these issues, as some of them are direct providers of home-care services with the capacity to implement incentive policies and encourage other public and private bodies to create services and employment. The 6 regional and local partners involved in this CesR project, with the support of 2 research bodies, share their experiences in order to improve their policies and their future development in this field. On the basis of successful practices identified in these rural regions, the CesR partners intend to address the following questions:

How to improve the sustainability of jobs in the home-care services in rural area?

How to encourage the creation of new jobs in the rural tourism services?

**Partnership**

1. Regional Tourism Development Board of Auvergne – France, leader partner
2. Olomouc region – Czech Republic
3. Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization – Poland
4. Troodos Development Company – Cyprus
5. County Council of Granada – Spain
6. University of Latvia, Centre for European and Transition Studies – Latvia
7. Regional Development Agency Mura – Slovenia
8. Cork County Council – Ireland
Objectives of the project:
The all-encompassing objective is to identify and transfer public policies or instruments which would enable to create, strengthen and safeguard employment opportunities in the services sector in rural areas. In the context of population ageing in these areas, this territorial policy issue is of high relevance for the partner regions. So the general project sub-objective is “To improve the public policies and instruments of the partner-regions for new solutions to increase employment in rural areas”. Noteworthy is that 6 of the 8 partners have direct influence on their regional public policies and they will actively prepare the conditions of a successful transfer of the identified good practices into their regional strategy.

There are 3 OPERATIONAL sub-objectives of the CesR partners:

1. Identification of policies encouraging the creation of services in the rural tourism sector, in particular the self-catering accommodation sector impressively developed in rural area. Successful initiatives in Gozo show that the demand in terms of services in these accommodations is high. It is crucial to exploit the high potential of this sector in terms of jobs creation. (Details in booklets № 2 and 3).
2. Identification of effective public strategies implemented to improve sustainability of jobs in the field of home-care services. Many different kinds of instruments are developed by public authorities in Europe to confront, in particular, the problem of population aging and they warrant investigation and subsequent selection for rural development (Details in booklet № 4).

3. Identification of instruments allowing for linkage between home-care services and tourism services, so that the influx of demand can lead to creation of full-time jobs. Different instruments may be investigated, for example the French Job Share Company or the Group of Employers which can be used as tools to share jobs (Details in booklet № 5).
Overview of strengths of partners regions

The strengths of each region identified by the Partner countries can be divided into two general groups: core constituents of tourism development and linkages to tourist base.

Group 1: In all regions, cultural heritage and unspoiled nature were mentioned as the most important strengths, with a wide variety of opportunities for development of numerous activities (e.g. active tourism, ecotourism, heritage tourism, wine & culinary tourism, spa & wellness tourism). Furthermore, in 2 regions the welcoming attitude and hospitality of their inhabitants were highlighted as important elements (Ireland, Slovenia), while in three of them tradition, regional folklore (Cyprus, Czech Republic) were highlighted along with international festivals and events (Ireland). In the case of Olomouc region and Troodos, strong and recognized brands were also indicated as one of the strengths of the region.

Group 2: 4 out of 8 regions pointed out good transport infrastructure and /or accessibility as their strengths, especially flight connections (Cork County, Latvia, Poland). Pomurje region in Slovenia stood out in this but was then downgraded due to accessibility issues to the region. A robust transport infrastructure may be vital for development of short-term stays (weekends, public holidays, etc.) and also for foreign tourist visits. On the other hand, the supply of and diversity in accommodations in terms of its size (Czech Republic), quality and prices was essential in three countries (France, Poland, Spain). In Poland, numerous private entities operating in the tourism industry in Małopolska region, with its long upheld tradition of tourism development, was also considered as a significant strength.
Overview of shortcomings and weaknesses

The weaknesses of regions listed by Partner countries can be divided into four thematic groups: institutional and organizational, concerning transport infrastructure, concerning tourist base and economic processes.

Category 1: The lack of cooperation among various actors involved in the tourism sector was identified (Latvia, Poland), which is closely linked to weak management manifested by poor promotion/marketing/branding (Slovenia, Spain) and limited offer of integrated tourism packages (Cyprus, Slovenia). In certain cases, regions are not attractive enough neither for foreign nor for local investors. In Spain, the dearth in qualifications and experience in management of rural accommodation was also considered as a critical drawback and in Latvia and Czech Republic the language barrier in rural areas was pointed out as an obstacle to hosting foreign tourists.

Category 2: Congestion during the high season (Ireland, Poland), poor transport (road, train) access to remote or mountainous areas (Czech Republic, France) or poor/insufficient road network (Cyprus, Spain) were listed as secondary forms of difficulties rampant in the regions.

Category 3: In four out of eight regions, inadequate standards of accommodation (Czech Republic, Slovenia) or low standard in unapproved accommodation (Ireland, Poland) are seen as crucial chinks in the infrastructure. In Latvia, the general quality of services was highlighted...
as a problem while in the Czech Republic it was the insufficient supply of high quality accommodation that bore focus. In Granada, a large proportion of the rural accommodation operates illegally which may also contribute to the degradation in the quality of services.

**Category 4:** High unemployment (Czech Republic) and lack of employment opportunities (Cyprus) created especially in the self-catering accommodation industry (France) were mentioned in the three regions as shortcomings. Moreover, in three regions (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Spain), the out-going flow of population from rural to urban areas was also indicated as one of the main problems that the region struggles with. Out-going migration and aging population create a vicious circle as a direct consequence of insufficient employment opportunities in rural areas.

**Preliminary conclusions**

The identification of weaknesses of the regions might also prove useful in learning from one another and can enrich the exchanges between Partner countries in the CesR Project. The ideas regarding establishing good multi-sectorial cooperation, overcoming organizational obstacles and low quality of human resources are just a few examples of what may be addressed through the good practices. The presentation of good practices in terms of additional services and employment connected in self-catering accommodation sector are meant to identify, among others, the factors for success. Prevailing good examples of efficient cooperation and management in self-catering accommodations might become a model for other regions on how to proceed in this field.
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Booklet 2  Business models

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Business models which maximize the creation of services and jobs in self-catering accommodation

Most rural areas have difficulty establishing the necessary critical mass of facilities, producer services, and investments required to support economic development which in turn facilitates entrepreneurs to start-up enterprises in the area.

Peripheral rural areas where agglomeration effects are smaller find it difficult to achieve the necessary critical mass that would allow for competitive and coherent production/services, even in specific market niches, while also facing the threat of depopulation and decline.

The remoteness of rural areas makes it difficult to develop economies of scale and critical mass. This results in higher prices for goods and lower offer for services. The lack of transportation infrastructure makes it difficult to transport the goods and link up to outside markets. These compromised linkages also greatly hamper the knowledge and technology transfer between remote rural areas and their economic partners (competitors).

Similar issues in the private sector with low offer for services and goods, resulting in a higher price or unavailability of goods and services in rural or remote areas, exist also in public and semi-public services such as social, medical, pharmaceutical and postal services;
under pressure for streamlining the public sector, these services are cancelled or not made available to local residents in certain regions.

Existing services in regions can be maintained and facilitated through integration of multiple services “under one roof” and creation of critical mass to preserve jobs and services in the given region. These public sector activities can be complemented by the development of additional services which would be private in nature. A great potential for the development of additional services for the creation of critical mass of work in order to maintain or create jobs exists in rural areas attractive for tourism.

As mentioned above, the modern industrial production infrastructure requires conditions (transport availability, human capital) that cannot be provided by rural and remote regions. Therefore, an alternative for the development of some rural regions is tourism development which, however, requires a sufficient amount of attractions and supporting services (accommodation, catering and additional services) allowing for appropriate efficiency and certainty of sales associated with job creation. The creation of jobs in tourism must be based on sufficient amount (critical mass) of services and infrastructure for accommodation and tourism activities. In rural regions, self-catering accommodation often represents a large and untapped source of accommodation infrastructure.
Business models whose owners are not able to provide clients with additional services. In addition, operators of self-catering accommodation are not able to create jobs as they provide basic services by themselves. Cooperation from owners and establishing of joint management of their self-catering accommodation may bring new services, higher quality of services and the associated new jobs. This has been documented by services and activities of Baron Group Malta which inspired partner regions to the creation and implementation of the CesR project.

A great inspiration for the CesR project is good practice born from a private initiative on the island of Gozo (Malta). The Baron Group, a local firm, operates a number of traditional self-catering accommodation services for clients who spend their holidays on this sunny and tranquil island. The Baron Group oversees the operations of several private houses; the company thus creates jobs as part of its basic services and, in addition, it also provides lodging clients with associated services (additional services) vital to properly experiencing the leisure and entertainment the island has to offer. A guest browsing through the list of offerings would find, upon request, culinary activities (personal chef, traditional cooking lessons, wine and olive tasting), relaxation (yoga classes and massage treatments), beauty services (hairdresser, nail technician, beautician), adventure (hiking, diving, cycling, kayaking, etc) and other in-house services (babysitting and photography sessions).

Successful initiatives in Gozo show that when the offer exists, the demand in terms of services in these accommodations is high. It is crucial to exploit the high potential of this sector in terms of jobs creation.
The services to owners of the self-catering accommodation and the services to customers

Considering the models of managing the self-catering business, three general models can be distinguished (Figure 1). The owners of the self-catering accommodation can:

Type 1) manage their self-catering units together with hotels (Vienna Woods)

Type 2) develop their services offered to the customers by benefiting from the cooperation with other self-catering owners or groups of owners (Cork Angling Hub etc.)

Type 3) benefit from the services offered by management bodies (Baron Group Malta, Casale Panayiotis, AIP Sancy)

These three models require different levels of engagement of the owners into their business. Usually the owners of self-catering accommodation can manage basic services as cleaning, welcoming guests and checking at the end of the stay. Things are different when the self-catering accommodation is operated by the owner of another type of accommodation (e.g. hotel) nearby (ex. Vienna Woods).

Then, certain services might be shared between cooperating owners. Such form of cooperation requires close links and also trust (strong network) between the owners within very small region or municipality. In contrast to the other forms of cooperation (see in brochure 4), identified examples are focused directly on operating self-catering accommodation.

The last model describes the situation when the self-catering accommodation is run by a management body like AIP Sancy. Sufficient amount of properties
[critical mass] is needed at the same time, so that the management body can contract the necessary human resource. The properties must be in a reasonably small geographical area in order to reduce the management costs.

Self-catering accommodation are not solely owned and operated by people living in the area. A large group of owners, for various reasons, live far away. This can be the case of investors buying and renting holiday houses for financial and fiscal reasons (and successors acquired a house). These people need local support to manage their houses and deal with the customers.

The point here is not to indicate that one of the models is better than the others but to describe the diversity of models that can exist and be adapted in specific situations. In this perspective, each of the three models can produce a more or less compact offer of services to the customers.

Figure 1. Services to the owners and to the customers in the self-catering accommodation.
Vienna Woods hotel and villas (Cork County, Ireland)

Vienna Woods Hotel, Cork, is an 18\textsuperscript{th} century elegant country house tucked into a wooded backdrop on the outskirts of Cork City. The original regency decor has been retained to present a modern and luxurious fifty bedroom 4 star hotel with old-world charm.

The huge changes have taken place under a new owner who purchased the property in 2006. Since this time, the promising hotel and its surrounding was developed and transformed into a thriving business including expansion the square footage and construction of eight four-star self-catering villas. The hotel have expanded their portfolio to include self-catering accommodation facilities suitable for families with children or business travellers staying in the Cork area. Each of the self-catering villas is approved by Fáilte Ireland standards and contains four en-suite double bedrooms and a fully equipped kitchen.

The self-catering facilities strengthen the offering of Vienna Woods and work in tandem with the hotel. To provide just one example, in the midst of economic down-turn, emigration figures have increased which has led to higher numbers of overseas couples of Irish heritage looking to celebrate their wedding 'back
Weddings are the heart of the business carried out in Vienna Woods Hotel and self-catering facilities enable them to accommodate large groups of family and friends who need a base for more than the night of the wedding celebration, having travelled overseas. The intimacy and comfort created by having friends and family close during any wedding celebration heightens the customer experience, gives the hotel a competitive advantage and ultimately increases revenue.

Although the self-catering facilities are promoted by the Vienna Woods Hotel as being autonomous, several services are provided which enhance guest experience and encourage repeat business. Shopping services are available to guests of the self-catering villas, whereby requested items of food and toiletries are ordered prior to arrival. Cleaning services and change of linen are available from the hotel at an additional cost, a popular service during longer lettings or among corporate guests. Among family holiday-makers, the hotel's babysitting services are heralded and for pet lovers, the outdoor kennels which accompany some of the self-catering units are essential. Dining facilities are provided in the self-catering villas by the hotel chefs; hot, full Irish breakfasts can be served at the kitchen table or outdoor BBQs can be cooked for guests on the patio.
Cork Angling Hub - Bella Vista
(Cork County, Ireland)

It is a private initiative with support from public bodies as Failte Ireland (National Tourism Development Authority) and the Central Fisheries Board. The rationale for investment arose from the realization that the hotel was very well located for the sea angling market which prompted a decision by the proprietor to develop a product specifically suited to this market. Angling holidaymakers mainly travel in small groups and have a preference for self catering accommodation. This form of accommodation suits their need for greater space to store their fishing gear, freedom from scheduled meal times, capacity for small groups, and longer average stays.

The idea of Cork Angling Hub demonstrates a best practice example of excellence for a collaborative tourism partnership to create and offer new services focused on specific tourism market. Definitely, the cooperation and joint management provides the members with more effective promotion and mainly allows the sharing of equipment and services tailored to angling holiday makers. All relevant stakeholders are now members of Cork Harbour Angling Hub. This hub is being driven by the local community and the local angling tourism providers and this allows Failte Ireland to provide a secondary supporting role to the initiative and in that regard is a best practice example of a community driven tourism initiative.
Casale Panayiotis (Troodos, Cyprus)

Casale Panayiotis is one of the most successful and innovative agro-tourism projects in Cyprus offering agro touristic lodges. It is a private initiative project partly financed by national and EU funds that brought life to a dying village.

The Casale Panayiotis is a very interesting practice for joint management of the houses belonging to different owners. A management operator has been established providing various services to owners of village houses such as cleaning, laundry, check-in desk, reception, small repairs or fashioned of rooms. Joint management of accommodation capacities within Casale Panayiotis brings a higher quality of provided services and full time jobs that could not be created by individual self-catering houses. Moreover, the joint management also ensures more effective promotion of facilities managed by Casale Panayiotis as well as the local village of Kalapanayiotis.

The accommodation is sited in four independent traditional houses: Marathon, Troullion, Eliakon and Byzantino, which boast thirteen individually designed rooms and suites. The complex also includes a restaurant, coffee shop, spa, conference facility and cultural center (explained in detail in Booklet n°3), all managed by the same body. This project has contributed to the rejuvenation of the village, has provided economic benefits to the area and locals by employing local population.
AIP Sancy (Auvergne, France)

AIP Sancy is a real estate agency, a management body providing specific services, which offers:

- for the investment clientele: an accompaniment to define the product/market pair and advice for developing and finalising the architectural project (plot search, putting in touch with architects and building companies, ready to go projects)

- for the accommodation owner clientele: as well as the rental management, associated services aimed at tourist clients who rent the accommodation (welcoming the guests, cleaning the house between guests, cleaning the garden and checking if everything is working well when guests leave).

It demonstrates that the existence of services related to the rental management of the accommodation, beyond the increase in visits to the accommodation, creates added value for the tourist product and increases the economic impact on the local area, especially from a social point of view (creation or maintenance of jobs).

AIP Sancy services are focused on owners of self-catering accommodation who are not able to ensure the management of the property on the sufficient level due to the lack of time. Most of them actually live in cities and need the local support of such a management company to ensure all the above specified services.
Above mentioned examples are illustrating such business models, that as much as possible guarantee the sustainability of jobs in rural areas through both, self-catering accommodation as well as pooling the wide range of services under one roof. These are the two main ways how to ensure demand of not only incoming tourists, but also demand for such services from the side of local residents. In general we can say that almost all of the above practical activities, starting with two Irish examples Vienna Woods Cork Angling Hub, followed by Cyprian Casale Panayiotis and French AIP Sancy, have many features in common. The most important and most obvious among all these features is the very fact that such provided services would be completely missing in these rural regions if no such facility would be located there. All of the examples also confirmed the original idea from Gozo, ie showed that when the offer exists, the demand in terms of services in these accommodations is high.
Added value based on diversification of services and personalized activities

How to build tourist activities based on regional identity

Regions with very high landscape potential for tourism differ from other regions. This distinction mainly resides in the presence of attributes of natural and cultural-historical significance for tourism. Regions endowed with significant natural and cultural-historical realities are minutely affected by the activities of economic sectors. Optimality of natural conditions and environment may also be due to low concentration of industry, mining and other economic activities that significantly harm the environment and devastate the countryside.

Rural regions constantly develop in time and this development must be channelled in a positive direction. Greatly owing to the landscape potential, the local tourism business is a sector dominating others and exists as an important factor for further economic development of these regions. Revenues of regions oriented mainly toward this sector are characterized by volume-significant shares of income from tourism; the tourist business thus becomes a driving force of the local regional economies.
Services diversification

Rural regions, however, also must help themselves through the provision of a wide range of services with high added value. In other words, what travellers in general, and tourists in particular expect are services that are customised to their individual needs and preferences, available to them in a timely and accurate manner, either referring to demand responsiveness or “pushed” information services, and also available to them when they are on the move.

Likewise, also the providers of self-catering accommodation have their needs – for many different reasons, some facility owners do not reside in the place where the facility is located; other owners provide only part of the services and outsource the rest of them. Various examples of services provided both for tourists and property owners are discussed in the text below. This wide range of services and interconnections between service providers are the very things which form an ideal and highly efficient environment for the development of tourism.

The table opposite lists the additional services identified within the project.
### Types of additional services provided at the premises of self-catering accommodation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Accommodation services</th>
<th>Organization of free time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On-site - (within the facility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night-time accommodation and related services</td>
<td>Additional food services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- cleaning the room at the end of the stay</td>
<td>- delivery of fresh bread or other food products (e.g. dairy products, vegetables, fruits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- cleaning the room during the stay (e.g. on agreed days)</td>
<td>- delivery of prepared meals (catering services e.g. breakfast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- fresh bedding (at the beginning of the stay and/or a bed change during the stay)</td>
<td>- on-site cooking services (e.g. by local housewives or a chef)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- additional accessories (basic equipment e.g.: kitchen utensils; additional items e.g. wood for the fireplace, charcoal for barbecue)</td>
<td>- cooking course including tasting and a meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Informational material (e.g. guides, brochures, etc.)</td>
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The typology of additional services in the self-catering accommodation

The graph on page 6 demonstrates the additional services that could be developed in the self-catering accommodation. The five basic products and/or services are located in the middle of the circle:

1. Cleaning and care services – mainly concerns the basic cleaning before/after arrival/departure and basic care about the tourists

2. Food – normally inaccessible in self-catering accommodation but maybe some basic local products which grew in the area or were produced locally, can be bought by the tourist (e.g. milk and its products, eggs, bread, etc.)

3. Equipment and lodging – in the accommodation the basic equipment is accessible (e.g. utensils in the kitchen) and basic space for leisure (inside and outside, e.g. benches, veranda, etc.)

4. Information – basic information about the area (e.g. brochures, maybe local/regional newspapers)

5. Transport facilities – for instance if tourists come by car (e.g. parking places, bike places, etc.)

Further from the middle of the circle, the scope of services and products extends. However, the diagram does not indicate which activities or services are provided inside or outside accommodation facilities, but concentrates on more thematic approach. Thus, the extension of diversity of services offered is possible in all directions (the offer in the self-catering accommodation is more complex) or a specialization is possible, namely extension in one direction (e.g. towards events organization, or towards organization of trips and excursions). In this way, on the diagram, further from the middle of the circle may mean:
The tourist offer is more and more complex, more diversified experiences are offered, more products and services build on local and regional resources and identity; also it can be interpreted that, local and regional preconditions (i.e. diversity of resources) may enable creation of more diversified offer or hamper by:

The way of spending the time changes from more passive and non-organized towards more active and organized with the help of the self-catering owners; this may be also important in building the set of additional services by the owners of self-catering accommodation – what groups/types of tourists are coming and what groups would we like to attract to our self-catering accommodation?

The number of possibilities of cooperation with other services providers rises = there is also a dichotomy because the additional services can be provided by the owner (entirely) but it is more possible that they are provided with more or less direct cooperation with other providers

The intensity of interactions between tourists and owners of self-catering owners rises.

Photo: Joël Damase   Photo: Pierre Soissons
The variety of services that can be proposed to the customers is huge: in-house services, outdoor activities, wellness... In order to illustrate this variety, CesR partners selected the following examples of tourist products with original or interesting services:
Relax center Kolštejn - package of local products (Olomouc region, Czech Republic)

At the time of its establishment, the Kolštejn Relax Centre was an above-standard hotel with a superior quality wellness center. One of the management’s objectives was to provide a series of unique services that would attract and retain visitors to the remote mountain municipality of Branná. They decided to take advantage of services based on local sources and traditions and thus the resort was the first facility in the Jeseníky mountains that was awarded the regional quality brand for its services. The award of regional quality brand requires the facility to cooperate with local producers and farmers.

This unique offer of relaxation activities in a wellness center is unmatched in the entire Jeseníky mountains area. The wellness center includes six types of saunas, steam bath, heated benches, salt therapy, herbal tub, special batch, massages, tropical rain and refreshment pool.

A human body tired after mountain hiking activities must also gain inner strength and thus the Relax Centre has prepared a hall offering several potions. This is the first wellness tearoom in the Czech Republic. Another innovation in the resort concerns the first push scooter circuit in the Jeseníky mountains, along with a rent-a-scooter outlet. The push scooters are manufactured and distributed
globally not too far away from the resort. Last but not the least, a specialty of the Relax Centre concerns the recovery of the beer brewing tradition in the picturesque mountain village of Branná. The first brewing started in 1583. There is a microbrewery in the resort, brewing beer for the local restaurant and, in the future, the plan is to also supply a beer spa.

This initiative proves that various and high quality services are an excellent way to attract visitors, even in very remote areas.
**Bruveri - sauna (Sigulda area, Latvia)**

The tradition of sauna in Scandinavia and Baltic countries is very strong, and various sauna offers can be proposed to the tourists, in particular to foreign visitors who are not familiar with this activity.

A guesthouse in the ancient Gauja River valley, along the route to Devil’s Cliffs. A modern kitchen, fireplace stove. Special sauna procedures. A lovely pond, a place for sports, a pergola with an outdoor fireplace and lovely tourist trails along the Gauja River. Healing sauna procedures.

Today “Brūveri” is the biggest recreation centre in Sigulda region with the widest range of facilities and potential for sports events, relaxation, seminars, festivals and weddings, but it all began with the Velna ala’s sauna, which is also the biggest pride of “Brūveri” today and a very special place.

In this ecologically and energetically rich place, there is an herbal sauna from sound logs in Latvian style – this is what Velna ala’s sauna is like. This is different from other saunas and recreation areas, because here one can enjoy only sauna procedures. Drinking and parties are not compatible with real sauna procedures. Therefore Velna ala’s sauna has its own aura and feel, similar to that of old Latvian country saunas.

This example shows that services which are strongly linked to the identity and traditions of the area are very attractive, in particular to foreign visitors.
Tio Tobas - cave houses  
(Province of Granada, Spain)

Tio Tobas company proposes not only an original kind of self-catering accommodation (cave houses), but also original outdoor activities. The “Far West” looking area is a perfect land to experience 4x4 rides. This activity is proposed owing to a partnership with different providers in the vicinity (jobs creation).

Cuevas del Tio Tobas rural tourist accommodation are quality approved, situated in the region of Guadix, rich in cultural and natural heritage. Located in a village with many tourist leisure resorts for customers.

Tourist accommodation consists of 19 houses with pool, restaurant, café, Activities Company, crafts and cuisine of the Guadix region, exhibition, shop with branded products from the Natural Park of Andalusia, also a museum and interpretive center, workshop for recovery, enhancement and dissemination of troglodytism and Ethnographic Heritage in the area.

Besides the accommodation in cave houses, it offers different sensations and experiences through tour packages, specially designed for couples, groups or individual tourists and also provides many tailored
experiences for corporate groups and associations. They have always dedicated all efforts towards achieving customer satisfaction, working hard every day to improve and diversify their service, offering tailored experiences for each type of user. All services are provided by working with other companies in the area, either by hiring local staff, creating a positive socio-economic dynamic in the environment. This is a unique tourism product, since there is no other habitat of this kind in Europe. Its architectural originality, constant temperature and its cozy, intimate and rustic environment, have made these cave-houses a very popular and highly appreciated type of accommodation.

Tio Tobas has a very strict quality policy. This complex works by making quality Rural tourism and Ecotourism in Granada. In fact, it is credited with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and is also accredited as “The Tour Information Point of Sierra Nevada National Park”.

Tio Tobas
Bella Vista - angling services
(Cork County, Ireland)

Cork Harbour is a perfect location for angling. Various accommodation companies in the area built specific products for anglers (self-catering accommodation + angling trips with a guide). This is the case of the Bella Vista hotel, which created self-catering apartments to fit with the expectations of this clientele (thematic product with added value services).

The Bella Vista Hotel and Self Catering Suites is located in Cobh, Co Cork. It provides excellent views of the town and Cork Harbour, one of the largest natural harbours in the world. The premises was acquired by the current owner in 2001 and then extended into an 18 en-suite bedroom hotel. The addition of self-catering accommodation which contains 10 units was completed in 2007.

The rationale for investment arose from the realization that the hotel is very well located for the sea angling market. This project demonstrates a best practice example of excellence of a collaborative tourism partnership between Failte Ireland (National Tourism Development Authority), the Central Fisheries Board
and the Cork Angling Hub driven by the local community in promoting the angling market. As a result, the charter boats and angling operators in the Harbour area, along with accommodation providers (such as Bella Vista in this instance), pubs and restaurants have come together to promote the destination.

All of these stakeholders are now members of Cork Harbour Angling Hub. This hub is being driven by the local community and the local angling tourism providers and this allows Failte Ireland (National Tourism Development Authority) to provide a secondary supporting role to the initiative and in that regard is a best practice example of a community-driven tourism initiative.
Casale Panayiotis - sulfur water spa
(Troodos, Cyprus)

The thermal water of the Troodos Mountains, rich in sulfur, has unique properties. Casale Panayiotis built on this specific asset to create a spa. This spa is owned by an individual owner, but managed by the same company as the hotel and self-catering accommodations.

Casale Panayiotis is one of the most innovative agro-tourism projects in Cyprus offering agro touristic lodges. The Casale Panayiotis is a very interesting practice for joint management of the houses belonging to different owners.

The sulfur water spa is sited in center of Casale Panayiotis area. The complex also includes a restaurant, coffee shop, conference facility and cultural center. The spas are integrated part of the relax and leisure care in Casale Panayiotis, a perfect place to unwind, indulge and relax.

Accommodation, spa and services are all managed by the same body. All owners of the Casale Panayiotis buildings own shares of this management body.

In most of the cases, self-catering accommodation
businesses provide very basic in-house services: linen rental and cleaning at the end of the stay. But numerous other services can be proposed to the customers, as demonstrated by the Casale Panayiotis complex and the Baron Group Malta. These companies offer many additional in-house services, such as daily cleaning, babysitting, meals preparation by a chef, professional photographer etc. 33 % of the customers of the Baron Group Malta buy additional in-house services. It shows that there is a demand for it and that a market really exists.
Ballymaloe - cooking lessons
(Cork County, Ireland)

Ballymaloe complex includes bedrooms, self-catering accommodation units, restaurant, and events venue. It is operated jointly with a cookery school. It allows the guests to learn cooking during their stay.

Ballymaloe is one of the best known brands in Irish tourism. The Ballymaloe brand encompasses a restaurant with most of the ingredients coming from their own farm, walled garden and glasshouses, a country house hotel (30 bedrooms), a cookery school, self-catering accommodation, a kitchen and craft shop, café and a range of own brand food products, kitchen accessories and cookbooks. The different elements of the overall enterprise are run by members of the Allen family.

Ballymaloe is located near Shanagarry, Co. Cork, approximately 32km to the east of Cork City. The property comprises a historic house surrounded by a 400 acre working farm which was purchased by the Allen family in 1948. This project demonstrates a best practice example in its sustainable approach to farming, food tourism and the self-catering accommodation sector as well as its engagement and partnership with the local community in job creation and rural development.
Chata Magoda (Podkarpackie region, Poland)

This is a family-owned company which created tourist products including not only outdoor activities but also many services like meals preparation, equipment rental, transportation. Parts of these services are provided by the owners and their employees, but others are provided by local entrepreneurs. This is, for example, the case of catering.

This good practice example shows how a small family-owned company is operating a holiday home and a guesthouse with close cooperation with local entrepreneurs. These local entrepreneurs deliver additional services that attract tourists and make their stay more enjoyable and attractive in rural areas.

The company is self-sufficient from the very beginning when they started their business in Bieszczady mountains from their private funds. The gathered resources were sufficient to buy the land together with Bojkowska cottage which was their first home in Bieszczady Mountains. The guesthouse was created on the basis of the old house built from wood in 1930 that was transported from countryside near Rzeszów (Świelcza village). It is of high ecological standard built only from natural materials. This accommodation is attractive enough thanks to the services provided in the area.
Symposio – in-house services
(Troodos, Cyprus)

Symposio is mainly a restaurant, but also operates self-catering accommodation. The owner provides the customers with meals that he prepares. This is the most highly sought-after additional service. He also proposes a daily cleaning service and babysitting.

Symposio tavern and Agro tourist Lodgings are housed on the southern edge of Pelendri (Cyprus) and in a beautiful gentrified mansion offering local traditional food specialities and agro-tourist lodgings which consist of two little stony one-bedroom houses and a two-bedroom house. A fireplace and a yard with a traditional oven are available in all houses, while all the bedrooms include traditional furniture. When staying at lodgings, it is possible to have additional services such as catering, cleaning, babysitting, laundry etc. These services are offered by people in the village. The clients of this accommodation particularly appreciate the possibility to receive the meals from the restaurant.
Semenj center – creation of services (Bled area, Slovenia)

The goal of Semenj competence center is regional knowledge coupled with business and social collaboration of all shareholders in the community (public, private, business, NGO). The underlying reason of the practice is provision of support to SMEs and heritage communities to inculcate a systematic approach to development of ability for heritage sites cooperation with tourism industry and experts. It further aims to incentivize cooperation with public institutions, use of methods and techniques for sustainable development of heritage and the creation of adventurous authentic experiences.

During the last few years, many different activities have developed and matured under the supervision of Semenj. Among the 140 identified and analyzed cultural sites, 40 were chosen to develop the cooperation. These subjects are in close cooperation within the fields of extension of the tourist season. They created the complete offer of activities in the rain, to extend the tourist season and attract visitors to every village is collected in a presentation catalog and published on a website. It describes the short walks with an umbrella to the villages, water attractions (waterfalls, rivers, bridges, watering), cultural, historical and natural attractions as well as local stories and tales.
The above services, which have been identified within the CesR project have unique innovativeness, specificity and binding on employment and rural development of the region. For such rural and peripheral regions, the creation and development of these specific and unique services in tourism, is one of the few ways to preserve and create jobs. All above discussed initiatives proved that various and high quality services are an excellent way to attract visitors, even in very remote areas. Examples also show that services which are strongly linked to the identity and traditions of the area are very attractive, in particular to foreign visitors. It also showed that broader range of provided services means higher competitiveness and attractivity in both, tourists and local residents eyes.
Cooperation models for creating jobs and services

The cluster initiative may be described as a form of organized endeavor to increase the cluster growth and competitiveness within a region, which includes companies within the cluster, public sector representatives (government), the research and educational community and other collaborating institutions. Cluster initiatives have thus become the most important component in the process of increasing regional or business field growth and competitiveness.

Cluster initiatives that can be defined by themes (winter sports, high and low mountain areas, etc.) use tourism to stave of rural decay and deprivation, helped by the networking of the local companies working in partnership. It may relate, for example, to hotels and other entities providing accommodation, supermarkets selling local produce and other business centers, travel agencies, transport companies, restaurants, bars, night clubs, tourist commodities providers, universities and schools, local and central government, etc.

Thus destination management is the way for strong regions that have the courage to combine forces for the joint development, organization and active pitching of its competitive advantages. In this way destinations come into existence that offer the client a perfectly structured service chain reflecting his/her choice covering the entire process; starting with information
Cooperation

and easy booking, through impeccable sojourn, to homecoming.

Nowadays, the destination management concept is the most efficient way of managing and organizing regional tourism reflecting the relentlessly growing pressure of competitive environment. The essence of destination management is that it sees the destination as a single management objective (destination has become the decisive factor from the enquiry’s point view). It is based on the PPP principle (Public Private Partnership).

Networking has increasing influence on the following:

- Promotion of common goals in the growth of tourism within a particular area from the public administration and service providers’ point of view
- Private sector response, taking into account the visitor’s interests in a specific tourist destination
- Increasing the tourism competitiveness
- The ability to effectively communicate and share information

Local networks can be very helpful to organize the services in rural area, for example by sharing the contacts of relevant providers. What are the advantages of being a partner of such a platform or taking use of the services that it provides? This could be discussed as an alternative to the business models presented in booklet N°2, i.e. cooperation models as additional possibilities to organize/provide services. To illustrate how these platforms work, case studies come into play.
Biebrza Wetlands (Podlaskie region, Poland)

This company is a travel agency offering wildlife holidays. The founder of this company organized the entire tourist sector of the area from scratch, developing a network of services providers, sometimes after having trained them (for example, 180 professionally trained guides).

Biebrza Eco-Travel – a nature tourist agency operating in the Biebrza Wetlands (north-eastern Poland, Podlaskie region) – shows how to integrate local entrepreneurs and community around tourist services. It is also an interesting example of reversed tendency in the development of services in rural areas as the additional services were a trigger for the development of accommodation services (whereas in the other good practices detected within the CesR project the accommodation was the basis for the development of services). Thus it proves that once the additional services exist, the accommodation facilities start to develop.

The Biebrza Eco-Travel Company was founded in 1993 as a nature tourist agency. In the same year the rich wildlife, natural attributes, and beautiful landscape earned the Biebrza Wetlands the status of National
Park, the highest rank in Polish nature conservation. Soon thereafter, the Biebrza National Park was added to the Ramsar Convention list of most important sites for wetland conservation around the world.

The founder and owner of the Biebrza Eco-Travel is Katarzyna Ramontowska, who as a student of biology started her own business at the age of 20. There were neither accommodations nor transport for tourist available in the area of Biebrza Wetlands in early nineties. Katarzyna was the only qualified and available tour guide and she started to organize entire tourist sector from scratch.

Being the first regional company, offering wildlife holidays, Biebrza Eco-Travel for the past 19 years has been gradually working on tourist development of Biebrza region. The variety of accommodation and tourist services were increased significantly in the region together with the development of entrepreneurship and involvement of inhabitants. The company integrated local entrepreneurs and communities around tourist trips on Biebrza wetlands. Today, there are more than 180 professionally trained guides within the region.
Troodos: cooperation of the 3 companies (Cyprus)

Troodos is an example of a collaboration of stakeholders of touristic bodies (networking). These three bodies have given a common voice to the area and enabled the local communities to participate in the decision-making process. It is a common effort for the revitalization and regeneration of the Troodos mountainous area of Cyprus, an up-till-recently neglected area, based on the idea of sustainability and sustainable development and on a bottom-up approach.

It is an effort for new dynamics to be given to the area, supporting locals, reducing significantly the phenomenon of urbanization, allowing the young society to have the opportunity for staying in their own birth-place in a viable way. Cooperation is based on three main partners:

1. The **Troodos Tourism Board** was founded in 2007 with the purpose of developing and promoting the area of Troodos both in Cyprus as well as abroad. It is a collaboration of stakeholders of touristic bodies, namely the Cyprus Tourism Organization (CTO), the Troodos Communities, the Local Authorities, the hoteliers and travel agents of the region. It is located in Platres, one of the main tourist destinations in the
Troodos area. The main activities are the participation in touristic fairs in Cyprus and abroad for the promotion of the area, as well as for the promotion and development of special interest tourism such as biking, hiking and birdwatching.

2. The **Troodos Development Company** unites all areas (7 subareas / 78 communities) that constitute the Troodos region. It develops unbreakable ties and works for the development and promotion of the area and in parallel to solve the chronic problems that the various communities are facing.

3. The **Troodos Network initiative** was derived mainly from the Youth Centers of communities in Troodos for the sustainable development of their region. Team members worked on a local and regional basis and developed specific practices and pilot actions and worked on how innovation should be introduced in the region to enhance its growth.

The rich natural characteristics and culture of the area are being preserved and demonstrated in a sustainable way and through a bottom-up approach. All of these bodies cooperate on several actions and are participating in several EU-funded projects that contribute to the fulfillment of aspirations and scopes for the area based on common principles. Members of the board of the Troodos Regional Tourism Board are also members of the Troodos Network.
Lecrin Valley tourism association
(Seniorio de Nevada, Spain)

This is an example of collaboration with local entrepreneurs to achieve promotion and tourism development of Lecrín Valley, thereby turning the area itself into a destination. Affiliated companies coordinate amongst themselves to provide services to visitors and optimize their stay, satisfying the greatest number of demands with the available resources in the area.

The partners that make up the Association also collaborate on spreading events of others through their social networks. This maximizes the impact among clients of any of the associated companies, multiplying the supply available for the customers. They are recovering local identity, promoting historic festivals, folk customs, local gastronomy, etc., as tourist resource which not only helps to provide added value to offer, but also instills the residents of the Valley with pride regarding their customs and traditions.

Cooperating partners have a wide range of accommodations and services to suit all taste and pockets levels, ranging from the „Señorío de Nevada“ (exclusive high standing hotel) to small rural houses. This, combined with diverse thematic local resources of the region made available to customers, such as
wineries, monuments, nature, adventure sports, proximity to the city of Granada, Granada coast and Sierra Nevada sky resort, allows them to reach a wide range of users.

The fact that several local businesses have reached agreement, on their own initiative, to collaborate in order to provide Valley customers with better service and, in turn, attempt at prolonging their stay is a very important added value that goes beyond activities and service offerings carried out from the Association. This is easy to transfer in any European rural area, wherever conditions and interest to work together for the development of tourism exist.

Good practice has shown that it can perfectly combine different types of accommodations and activities aimed at diverse groups, thus covering a wider market. This initiative is a boost for business in the region as it includes a wide range of services anticipating the demands of their customers. This is, without doubt, one of the keys to success: to know your customer and create a „customized“ offer. This good practice is easily transferable to other European territories. It seeks to establish a form of cooperation between the companies related to tourism and services that can complement each other.
Gauja National Park cluster (Latvia)

The Cluster demonstrates a targeted cooperation between main stakeholders of tourism sector in a certain geographical area - within and around the Gauja National Park territory. This good practice shows that the creation of a cluster provides additional benefits to its members by implementing joint activities, such as marketing activities, representation of clusters companies abroad and pooling and sharing jobs and services within the geographical territory of this cluster. Two of the most important elements of functioning are targeted branding and marketing activities to promote the GNP as a tourism destination, putting an emphasis on the precisely segmented foreign markets.

The cluster has been created to increase the international competitiveness of this tourism destination, increase time spent by visitors in their destination, reduce the impact of seasonality, increase variety and quality of services, ensure sustainable development and optimal exploitation of invested resources, as well as to establish mutual trust among tourism market participants and ensure the involvement of research in adoption of innovation and other challenges.

Furthermore, this practice demonstrates that it is quite possible to unite market players, including public
and private institutions, if they have common targets and mutual interests. In addition, this good practice shows that the creation of cluster provides additional benefits to its members by implementing joint activities, such as marketing activities, representation of clusters companies abroad, pooling and sharing jobs and services within the geographical territory of this cluster. In turn, this results in additional jobs, increased employment and economic activity in the region.

Key success factors include established trilateral cooperation between businesses, local governments, education, research and environmental protection institutions based on organized cooperation, mutual respect, openness, knowledge and their targeted application. The cluster is a public - private initiative which was started at the end of 2011, thus, promoting the cooperation among more than 70 involved stakeholders mainly including tourism companies (~60), six municipalities, Vidzeme University and Environment Protection Authority to reach common targets. The cluster is located in the Gauja National Park territory and covers 20 km of the park’s periphery.
Hospitality of Slovenian Homes Institute (Slovenia)

Hospitality of Slovenian Homes Institute is a regional tourist organization for development of private accommodations and has been operating for over 10 years already and its mission is to establish conditions for the development and profitable business of smaller tourist accommodation providers through new forms of marketing, business cooperation and integration. This enables cooperation among various number of individuals and micro economic operators in providing a complete tourism services.

It also provides organizational and IT support environment for small and medium-sized companies and individuals to connect and to cooperate with each other, to be present on the common market together and offer tourism services in one package. It allows the establishment of tourism offer without construction of specific tourism infrastructure and creates jobs in rural and less developed areas.

The institute also delves into networking of smaller tourism service providers and their marketers and creates new marketing channels. It is also responsible for the use and development of information communication system ETRIPS - Electronic Travel Reservation Information System. “Related
computer applications are: ETRIPS-site and ETRIPS-Manager. Applications are the basis for developing a comprehensive platform ETRIPS - Electronic Business Travel Reservation Information System, which forwards the information to users for their activity, follows the implementation and allows the entry and transmission of information to the next participant and on this basis, allows to perform certain activities in the business system network or in the context of practice. business system network or in the context of practice.

The Hospitality of Slovenian Homes Institute provides technical assistance to its members and also through its catalog and ETRIPS - a website promoting their tourist accommodation offers. It offers an easy option of broadcasting tourism and its related activities to a wide range of people, allows property owners to activate available property without their presence, without their direct labor engagement. It also caters for tourism development in the particular area by using existing resources (people, real-estate, nature and other tourist attractions) that do not require major investments and creation of tourism products from the range of services of the tourism association participants.
NEC Cerknické
– Heritage communities network (Slovenia)

Notranjski Ecology Centre (NEC) Cerknické is a non-governmental and non-profit that acts as a competence center for business, education and sustainable rural development. The main activities of this organization include the creation and management of projects, development of rural regions and active participation in the LEADER program or running of incoming agencies.

Activities of NEC Cerknické demonstrate how to organize and manage places and communities rich with heritage in a way that provides new jobs for local people and improves their position in the society and in the market. Innovative tools for integrating local people and business to protect local heritage through products and services as they sell.

According to The Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society Heritage, a community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage to sustain and transmit to future generations. With the help of experts, NGOs and owners of the heritage locations they developed the national network of heritage communities in Slovenia. For such structures, there have been developed a set of standards based on good practices which had five pillars:

a) Heritage - each location or skill with heritage
value can cooperate with regional heritage protection institutes and experts which can describe the means and value of locations and ensure that locations are listed – in that way the heritage becomes a (strategic) resource also for the society.

b) Interpretation - each location can define the identity of the location and how it will be expressed to different target groups – the help of professional interpreters is recommended.

c) Entrepreneurship - each location is recommended to behave as an entrepreneur – means and methods for selling products and services of the location must be registered, which also includes selling the culture, traditions and folklore of that location. It also means that products and services of the location must generate at least 60% of annual income.

d) Project management - each location is recommended to develop improvements with the help of project management skills. Project can generate max 40% of the annual income.

e) Empowerment - each location is recommended to enter into local/regional community cooperation and development.

Natural and cultural heritage at the location, and people and experts interested to work together are the main forces that can transfer the idea of quality standards of heritage communities. Competence center Semenj in Gorenjska region is one of them (booklet № 3).
Accueil Paysan (France)

Accueil Paysan is a network of rural businesses, mainly linked with agriculture. The members of this network have different and complementary skills, and can provide services in each other’s businesses. For example, the massages provided in an Accueil Paysan self-catering house in Auvergne can be made by another member of the network.

An effective network can improve the quality of the products offered by exchanging know-how and services. This exchanging develops the turn-over of the associated companies and consequently, creates or maintains jobs in rural areas by farmers or non-farmers.

The creation of such a network answers the need of providing activity in rural area to keep these regions alive and help inhabitants and farmers to stay and live in the countryside. The main condition for the transfer is the existence of a strong local community. If it does not exist yet, it has to be created before trying to create the thematic network. Then the support of local authorities is a crucial point, not only to support the investment in self-catering houses or B&Bs, but also to facilitate the network in employing a coordinator. It is interesting to mention that accessibility is not an issue: the customers, who are interested in this kind of accommodation and are strongly linked to agriculture or farming, are willing to stay in the deep countryside.
Latvian Health Tourism Cluster (Latvia)

The cluster was established to stimulate the process of formulation and passing of laws and regulations of the resorts in Latvia and to ensure the development of a clean environment of the city resorts. Latvian Health Tourism cluster demonstrates the capabilities of several health-service oriented organizations to act in a common way in order to reduce individual costs for representation, strategy implementation and innovation.

Established in 2012, the Latvian Health Tourism cluster comprises of „Latvia’s resort town association”, Jurmala city council, several hospitals, rehabilitation centers, spas, tourism, medical and cosmetic sector organizations and businesses in Latvia and abroad, Riga Stradins University and several municipalities in Latvia.

Latvian Health Tourism cluster functions in five areas:
1. implementation of joint health tourism marketing activities,
2. promoting the expansion of export markets,
3. development of new and innovative health tourism products;
4. promoting cooperation between cluster partners to develop new services;
5. enhancing and intensifying cooperation in sharing human resources and the expenses for their training.
Regional branding in Olomouc region
(Czech Republic)

Regional brands in Olomouc Region have been created to support products originating from specific rural regions or protected areas and make them more noticeable. The brand may be granted only to a product that has been produced in the given region and has a certain relation to that region, e.g., it is a traditional local product, a product made of local raw materials, a product made by hands of the local people etc. The product also has to be of at least a standard quality and it must not cause harm to the environment.

The main objective of the local product branding is to make the traditional regions, which are known e.g. for their conserved nature, healthy environment or inhabitant traditions, more noticeable and to use their socio-economic advantages to bring benefits to the local inhabitants, particularly entrepreneurs and SMEs.

Consumers in the regions are the final target group on which regional brands are focused. As the brands emphasize uniqueness of the products as a first, they are intended for those who look for remarkableness and originality, fair personal approach, i.e., especially for tourists longing for an authentic souvenir or local people buying distinctive gifts for their kin or visitors.
Establishment, administration and development of regional branding is always an initiative of a concrete region: the brand is administered by a Regional Coordinator - a local organisation, e.g. a local action group, regional development agency etc. The coordinator establishes the new brand in the region, always in dialogue with other representatives of the region. The Certification Commission then decides about granting or not granting the brand to concrete products according to the specified criteria. The Commission is independent in every region; it consists of the region’s important representatives (entrepreneurs and others) and is usually headed by the Regional Coordinator.

The Regional Coordinator is responsible for ongoing functioning of the branding system, for co-ordination of the holders’ common activities as well as for promotion of the brand and branded products. The coordinator also discusses the sale and promotion of branded products with the region’s selling points. Thus, the system is never just about granting brands because certification is connected to a number of related activities.
Branding

Thematic centers of Troodos and branding strategy (Troodos, Cyprus)

A network of Thematic Centers is developed covering the wider Troodos area with respective Shops (Troodos Shops) demonstrating the local natural qualities, products and arts and culture of each respective village. The network employs locals and, more specifically, the Troodos Shops employ local women and crafts men. This project is based on a new holistic philosophy for the area which considers Troodos as a unified entity and as a natural and cultural area on the whole.

The Troodos Network in collaboration with experts-partners and stakeholders has developed a marketing plan to promote ecotourism in the Troodos Region network. This is based on thematic centers which were designed after study and consultation with the local community and covering all the qualities and quality products of Troodos that highlight the authentic and traditional countryside. The aim was and is to promote the tourist package called ‘Troodos’, which leverages cultural resources, traditional products and resources of the natural environment as a visitor’s attraction.

The thematic centers cover the mountains of Cyprus, which were divided into sub-regions: Solea, Pitsilia, Koumandaria, Krassochoria (wine villages), Marathasa, the Troodos National Forest Park and the mountain resorts of Limassol. Cooperation was established
with the bus companies of EMEL (Limassol) and OSEL (Nicosia) that have added stops covering all thematic centers. The other aspect of the innovation of this network is the creation of the „Troodos Shops“. These shops project traditional hospitality and traditional local flavours, along with contemporariness, selling products that are produced by households of Troodos in order to give an additional financial incentive for rural women, mostly, and to ensure their viability.

Currently 11 centers operate or are being developed in the area. These is a Traditional Arts and Crafts Center at Kaminaria, a Wine Center at Vouni, a Koumandaria Center at Zoopigi, a Mill and Flour Products Center at Galata, a 20th Century Famous Painters Center at Agios (Saint) Theodoros, a Sports and Fun Center at Troodos, an Environmental Education Center at Troodos, the G. Seferis Cultural Center at Platres, a Traditional Recipes Center at Arsos, a Byzantine period centre at Kouka and an Alternative energies Center at Amiandos.

**Bella Vista (Cork County, Ireland)**

This project demonstrates a best practice example of excellence of a collaborative tourism partnership between Failte Ireland (National Tourism Development Authority), the Central Fisheries Board and the Cork Angling Hub driven by the local community in promoting the angling market [more discussed in booklet № 3].
The Plum Trail Association  
(Malopolska region, Poland)

The „Plum Trail Association“ is a local action group consisting of 137 members, mostly providers of various tourism services in the area of seven municipalities. The Association has created a “Plum trail” which links different types of tourism and other services in their local territory.

Objective of the Association is to integrate everything in the region connected with plums, while the aim is to develop the local rural area with help of tourism and local products. Its activity affects agriculture, tourism and social development (education, culture), and the members and partners are various producers (farmers, growers), local SMEs and tourism providers, NGOs and local governments. The Association employs 4 people and some internship students.

The Association has created a “Plum trail” which is a tourism product linking different types of tourism and other services in their local area. The Association is aimed at promoting local products to strengthen and further develop tourism in the region. Since 2010 the Association has been organizing an annual culinary competition and publishing culinary books.

The Association sets up and supports “Let’s meet on the Plum Trail” event which is a series of activities taking
place every August-September. During this event, the Plum Trail Association uses a variety of promotional activities (events, exhibitions, competitions, training, conferences, study visits, workshops, etc), all connected with plums, and the members of the Association are required to join the event (i.e. restaurants and providers of accommodation are required to include regional certified products).

The cooperation of local actors in rural development and tourism is an essential condition for the success of the region. The above examples of cooperation in the field of tourism and rural development are highlighting the successful journey of formal cooperation and of common resources sharing. Only the cooperation between different actors can lead to synergy and transfer of innovations. All the cooperation activities have their own specific impact on both, the professional and general public. Nowadays, all above mentioned concepts are the most efficient ways of managing and organizing not only regional tourism by reflecting the relentlessly growing pressure of competitive environment.
Human resources management in rural area

Human capital and its outflow from the peripheral and remote areas is a crucial factor in the difficult-to-stop spiral of deepening problems in the rural regions. Utilizing the internal potential of the region, such as the natural and cultural heritage and others, it always must be built on the local social and human capital activity. However, the continuous outflow of young and educated people to work in urban areas pushes the region into the economic spiral of decline associated with rapid aging, poor educational structure and unemployment.

Human capital is the cornerstone of regional development that requires major care because, unlike other resources, it has the capability to move out of the region. Study trips during the CesR project uncovered some interesting examples of managing and developing human resources in the rural areas that were innovative or specific in their social context. Identified examples can be divided into two groups. The main group consists of examples of social enterprises or cooperatives that create stable full and part-time jobs which are tailored to vulnerable groups in the labour market and labour market conditions in the rural areas. The second group of good practice examples in human resource development contains actions dedicated to trainings and improvement of qualifications in rural areas.

In partner regions, there are various systems which allow sharing jobs and joint management of the human resource. Time sharing systems (companies) can be considered as another proxy to ensure the sustainability of jobs in rural areas, and particularly in the services sector. Further on, the specific cases illustrate different kinds of entities that provide such a system (e.g. dedicated enterprises or groups of entrepreneurs, etc.).
Business and Employment cooperatives (Auvergne, France)

Business and Employment Cooperatives (BEC) is a local development tool for its partners, local authorities or local State services. It helps people create their businesses by contracting them as employees in order to provide them with salary and health care coverage.

Many “employees” of Appuy Créateurs work in the field of services via daughter company Appuy Dom, which shares employees among the service sector in a rural area.

Business and employment cooperatives are a type of production-worker cooperative company (SCOP). SCOPs are commercial companies constructed as limited companies, which are arranged around the principle of participative management. On the same principle, the BECs are companies that advocate participative management.

The BEC steering committee can welcome representatives from local communities, public authorities and social organizations. This enables it to widen its spectrum of activity and to increase its local anchorage. The objective of the BEC is to provide workers, often previously unemployed, an alternative to registering with an individual company. They offer company creation project workers a protective and incentivizing legal framework which enables them to
not only test the suitability of their project by minimizing the risks of financial loss for the contractor, but also to benefit from the collective learning levers.

When a person wishes to join a BEC, they sign a contract with the BEC and become an accompanied contractor. Thus, legally as well as socially, it is as an employee of the cooperative that they perform their activity. The BEC serves as an intermediary between the entrepreneur and the client company.

The first contract that a person signs with the BEC lasts around six months. This period allows the employees to test the effectiveness of their projects while limiting the financial risks. If the activity is viable, the accompanied contractor becomes an employed contractor for a duration of around twenty-four months, before becoming a partner contractor. This evolution within the cooperative enables the project worker to experience the reality of the market while gaining experience among other partners in the cooperative.

It is up to the employed contractor to find his clients and negotiate contracts with them. This tool is very interesting to create individual jobs, so that some unemployed people can get back to work with a reduced financial risk. Reducing the risk is most important in rural area, where setting up a business is the most difficult. The BEC allows anybody, for a period of time, to be as safe as an employee and as free as an entrepreneur.
Social Cooperative Haven (Malopolska region, Poland)

The Social Cooperative Haven offers a range of services in the region of Myślenice, a rural area in Malopolska Voivodeship. The Social Cooperative Haven is a public-private initiative. The founding members are two legal entities of the municipality Raciechowice (public authorities) and the Association of volunteer firefighters (NGO).

The cooperative consists of people working in local companies, children from three local schools as well as ordinary municipality-residents (mostly adults and elderly), who enjoy meals prepared and delivered by employees of the Social Cooperative Haven. Daily, more than 400 meals are prepared. The Cooperative uses customized delivery vehicles for food delivery purposes.

The Cooperative’s main activities include daily preparation and catering as well as provision of maintenance/housekeeping services in three local schools in Raciechowice Municipality. Other activities include catering services for meetings, conferences and events organized in the region.

Social Cooperative Haven currently employs 18 persons on full-time contracts and additional 6 persons on part-time contracts. This employment scheme is an opportunity to people who are reinserting themselves into the labor market for the possibility of professional
and social activation and stabilization. Cultural activities prepared by Cooperation’s members are important both for cultural life of the municipality and for creating relationships and confidence between employees and local population.

Members of the Association of volunteer firefighters help the Social Cooperative members with cleaning, mowing, garbage collection and such while Social Cooperative members help firemen in the preparation of their events.

The Social Cooperative also manages the guesthouse which has been set up in a renovated school building. The guesthouse is situated in a quiet and peaceful area, has five guest rooms with private bathrooms, equipped kitchen and a conference room with multimedia equipment, while outside there is multifunctional playground, barbecue places and a roofed stage. Concerning catering, tourists can choose between self-catering to full-board service, or to opt for stocked-up refrigerator at the moment of check-in. In certain months the Cooperative’s income share from tourism services comes to 30%.

This example shows very well the complementarity of tourist accommodation and care services in rural area, as part of them require the same skills and can be operated by the same human resource.
Social Cooperative (Pomurje region, Slovenia)

The cooperative was founded with the purpose to identify and develop business opportunities in rural areas, to establish a quality system for the training of rural population especially persons belonging to vulnerable target groups, to help the rural population in raising financial resources and the registration of activities as well as to offer marketing assistance at rural products placement.

Activities of the cooperative are, among others, directed to the development of handicraft in conjunction with other rural activities and tourism which is becoming increasingly important in the marketing and identifying of countryside products. Cooperative activities are intertwined and past experience shows that this type of integration (e.g. crafts and culinary) of more activities enable a higher added value of products and increased recognition. To traditional local handicraft products they added a touch of modernity in order to become likeable and usable for today’s consumer. As far as culinary products are concerned, the traditional recipes were adapted to today’s requirements and trends (less sugar, low fat etc.).

During operation of the cooperative, several training programs in the field of handicrafts and cuisine have been developed and verified in practice (manufacturing products made of natural materials, baking pastries and
The cooperative is also a provider of preparation and testing to obtain national vocational qualifications for plaiter. From its founding the cooperative has developed over 60 new products that are verified on the market.

The mission of the cooperative is to develop socio-corporate culture among rural population, especially among vulnerable target groups in activities that have traditionally been tied to the countryside (local crafts, culinary, agriculture). Vulnerable target group support enables new employment opportunities to people from these target groups, possibility for additional income and a way out of poverty and social exclusion.

During operation of the cooperative to date, there have been over 1000 people from vulnerable groups involved in various activities of the cooperative. They see opportunities in developing an integrated offer that covers rural heritage and enables the development of new programs in the field of handicrafts as well as tourism. Opportunity in the field of handicraft and tourism is reflected in:

- combination of useful products from the bast, wicker and clay with farm products (honey, oil, vinegar, flour, grains),

- packaging of products and tourism products,

- sample model of architecture of traditional garden within rural estate,

- expansion of culinary offering for local users (schools, kindergartens etc.) for educational purposes as well as for catering service in self-catering houses and events.

Offer of services and products by the cooperative is focused on the region of Pomurje and the whole country. The number of users is expanding every year in the field of handicraft and culinary products (business and occasional gifts, caterings).
Worker-owned companies (Andalusia, Spain)

Since 1989 FEANSAL is the business organization who defends and represents labor societies (worker-owned companies) in Andalusia. The Andalusian Federation unites and represents these companies, defending their rights and making available to them a professional team to improve their competitiveness and stable and quality employment creation. Its main objectives are to foster and promote an entrepreneurial culture (collective entrepreneurship) and strengthen the fabric of the Andalusian labor societies.

Requirements and characteristics of industrial labor societies:

More than 50% of the company’s capital must belong to members/workers. Neither partner may hold stocks or shares representing more than one third of the share capital.

Labor societies care about members by the rule, that the number of yearly hours worked by employees on full-time contracts (for indefinite period) who are not partners, may not exceed 15% of the total yearly hours worked by partner workers if the company employs fewer than twenty-five workers.

In addition to the legal or statutory reserves that apply, the companies are required to establish a Special Reserve Fund, which will be provided with 10% of the
net profit of each year. In the event that labor society would enjoy the tax benefits that are determined in the law, the society itself should allocate the Special Reserve Fund in the year in which the taxable event occurs, 25% of the net profits.

The key importance of labor societies are the implications at economic, labor and social level in the territory where they are located. The main ECONOMIC EFFECTS include the fact that workers are co-owners and that makes them aware of the need to reinvest to strengthen the company. The decision-making is improved to flexibility because the workers accept changes in labor in exchange for ensuring economic viability conditions. In a wider context, the main economic advantage of worker-owned cooperatives is the possibility of more equitable distribution of income and wealth and reduction in the relocation of businesses and thus promoting socio-economic development of the territory. In the labor societies, job security is increased for workers and absenteeism is thus lower. Also participation in management leads to more suggestions for improvement and innovation.
Group of employers (Auvergne, France)

“Group of Employers” is a nonprofit association, which recruits staff to make them available for its members, in order to respond to durable occasional jobs, part time or seasonal, depending on demand. It ensures recruitment, jobs, management and training of employees.

GE2A is a group of employers working in the field of sports activities and counts 130 members. 80 % are associations, 20 % are public authorities. All members are responsible for the work contracts and salaries. If there is a decrease in activity, the GE and its members still have to pay their employees.

The group of employers (GE) is a structure that unites several companies. It is a tripartite type of employment because the employees sign a contract with the group of employers and work in the different member companies that form the group. These groups are instruments providing personnel to companies (physical or moral people) in the form of a voluntary association (non-profit making) or a cooperative company. The objective for the member companies of the group is to recruit shared employees who are then provided according to
their needs. They are responsible for the employment of their employees. The obligations of the members, users of personnel, are the same as for temporary work. But unlike the latter, the provision of the workforce is carried out internally. Finally, unlike temporary work, the groups of employers have the advantage of offering member companies a “qualification of employees”.

The added values of a Group of Employers for employer is that they have a legal framework for legible and suitable loaning of labour and recruiting of skills adapted to needs. Lastly via GE, employers are relieved from administrative approaches.

The added values of GE are more employee-oriented, like consolidating jobs by permanent contracts (full time jobs), having a unique job contract, facilitating access to training, enriching one’s occupational activity and others.
Time sharing company
(Auvergne, France)

Exceltio is a time-share company (ETTP) employing 20 people. This type of resource sharing of employees enables the provision of qualified personnel among businesses which cannot recruit themselves, due to their size or their means. The difference between Exceltio and a temporary work agency is that an ETTP contracts the employees for an unlimited period. These jobs are not as precarious as temporary jobs.

Exceltio indicates that it is 10% more expensive to contract an ETTP than to employ a person directly, but it avoids many issues: recruiting, training costs, legal risks and others. Most of Exceltio clients are SMEs of less than 30 people. Exceltio employs 80% of low qualified people, and 20% of management level employees.

The time-share company signs a permanent employment contract with the employee and on the other hand signs another contract (mission contract) with the client companies (often SMEs). This type of resource sharing has a lucrative goal and shared benefits. In fact, an ETTP has the same objective as a temping agency, that is to say, providing employees to companies for a specific period of time (one task during the day or for several hours). The employee is being shared with client companies (which have their
high season in the different period of the year). For example, a manufacturer of shutter blinds, who has a high season in spring and summer, mutualizes the employee with a tyre fitter with high season in autumn and winter. This requires a big capacity of adaptation of the employee – and sometimes suitable training.

However, unlike temping, the employees’ contracts are renowned for being of an indefinite period, according to the terms of the law. This implies that the employees are employed on a permanent basis by the ETTP. Thus, the contract can only be broken through redundancy, resignation or agreement of both parties. The employees are provided to client businesses, there is therefore no theoretical limit to the number of structures in which the employees can work. The main advantage for a client company is that they do not engage the personal administration (tax, insurance), flexibility of working time and so on.

The functioning of this type of business allows resource sharing of jobs which generally do not fill a full time schedule. The provision of the workforce is only done on request, which implies great flexibility.

There must be a coherent territorial approach for employees as well. It is ineffective if there exists a distance of more than 30 km between the employee’s home and the work place. Another condition is that the employees accept the transferability of their working location from one client company to another. The flexibility of the employees is one of the main conditions for this model.
Lifelong Learning (Granada, Spain)

Conditions within the labor market require not only lifelong learning, but often also change of the field of activities. Therefore it is very important to set up technical and professional background for lifelong learning and to create a retraining system. One of the identified good examples is Enturna School from Spanish province of Granada. The school was established by Provincial Council of Granada and the Provincial Tourist Board for Granada. Also institutions like Universities of Andalusia; Spanish Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism; Centre for Municipal Studies and International Cooperation; Rural Development Groups (LEADER) and commerce companies are participating in the process of development of the school.

The school is a rural tourism knowledge generation and dissemination center, which contributes to the training of business owners, entrepreneurs, students and the general population. The main objectives of Enturna is the promotion of rural tourism, improving its quality and performance, and ensuring that it plays its part as a revitalizing and diversifying element of the rural economy. Particular
goals are connected with the offer of requalification focused on rural tourism sector, providing training options to the local business owners, unifying territorially and institutionally dispersed activities and improvement of the competitiveness of the destination and local businesses.

In Enturna, these courses and trainings are offered for managers of local companies (Basic level course - one or two days; Higher level course of one week with visits and practical cases); as well as training for students of Master’s degree in rural tourism business management and local tourism management; Training for tourist business owners (self-catering accommodation etc.) and company managers: addressing „best practice“ cases, introduction to tourism and enterprise; marketing and commercialization; customer services; new technologies; destination management and others.

Given the small size and family nature of the majority of SMEs in this tourism sector, ENTURNA promises to contribute to its strengthening, supervising and assessing both public institutions such as rural tourism businesses to compete, at least, in the same conditions as other actors in the tourism sector.
As mentioned at the beginning of this manual, educated and skilled people are the cornerstone of any regional development and innovation in the cornerstones of services. Each of these examples is based on other principles and helps remote rural and peripheral regions differently. French GE2A and Exceltio are the right examples of sharing jobs and labor in the country. The social economy is not only focused on solving rural problems, but also specific labor market groups that need special protection, and access to the labor market. This brochure describes several good practice models, such as Business and Employment Cooperative (BEC), social cooperative (Haven, Pomelaj) or worker-owned companies (FENSAL). A special example is the emergence of educational institutions (Enturna) aimed squarely at addressing the problems of rural areas and unemployed people living in such localities.
www.cesr-project.eu

Contact person: Thomas Ducloutrier
Regional Tourism Development Board of Auvergne
Parc Technologique Clermont-Ferrand La Pardieu, 7 Allée Pierre de Fermat, CS 50502, 63178 Aubière Cedex
e-mail: thomas.ducloutrier@crdt-auvergne.fr  l  tel.: +33 473 294 940  l  www.auvergne-tourism.com