

Innovation in Rural Tourism

Cases from European Mountain Communities



Innovation in Rural Tourism Cases from European Mountain Communities



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Lifelong
Learning
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WHY MOUNTAINS? WHY DIFFERENT MOUNTAIN RANGES?

Rural tourism, due to its ability to improve welfare and to diversify economies, has long been recognized as a catalyst for development in many peripheral regions. However, this is especially relevant for mountain areas, which are characteristic for many of Europe's landscapes. Due to their diverse economic, cultural, environmental and social features, they are considered to be particularly fragile and sensitive systems. Mountain areas not only provide rich environmental resources and qualities, they are also home to valuable human resources and cultures, such as a wealth of local ways of life, knowledge and traditions, which have often been preserved due to limited access and communication possibilities.

This strong natural and cultural heritage represents a rich basis for the development of tourism activities, which may be able to revitalize communities and enhance the quality of life. It is particularly in mountain areas, where tourism often succeeds to meet the visitor's search for authenticity and to let them immerse into local experiences.

Due to the lack of access to educational possibilities, inhabitants of mountain areas, compared to the population of urban regions, often fail to benefit from their local resources. To face these particular challenges, the InRuTou project focused on the promotion of rural tourism education in two different mountain ranges, the Apennines and the Carpathians, which show many similarities but also many regional distinctions, in both, nature and culture. Local stakeholders could thus exchange their experiences as well as learn and inspire each other and from their counterparts in the Austrian Alps throughout the project.



FOREWORD FROM THE PARTNERS

The InRuTou project was developed and launched in 2012 by a group of individuals from diverse organizations and universities across Europe. Its successful implementation was based on their enthusiasm, professional interest and commitment to working on sustainable development, tourism and empowerment of rural communities in mountain regions.



InRuTou was both an exciting and a challenging endeavour. It combined academic and practical work, brought together organizations from seven countries, involved multiple local actors, used various approaches and methods, but it also faced a number of unexpected turns and obstacles in the course of project implementation, some even beyond the partners' sphere of influence.

Innovation in InRuTou is multifaceted: it lies not only in the combination of an online and face-to-face training approach, but also in bringing together communities from three different mountain regions (Alps, Apennines and Carpathians) to test and use them. The combination of their different experiences and ideas enhances the value of the project.

This publication introduces the beneficiary communities – pilot sites of the project in Austria, Italy, Poland, Romania and Ukraine and presents the process of the testing and results in each participating area. The aim of this final project publication is to provide inspiration and concrete examples of implementing the InRuTou training.

This collection of cases complements the InRuTou Transferability Manual – a methodological publication based on background and technical documents of the project. Both publications should be used together by organizations interested in transferring the InRuTou methods to other communities, regions, and countries.

We hope that this publication inspires transfer of the InRuTou experience elsewhere, look forward to feedback concerning our work on Innovation in Rural Tourism, and remain available for questions and advice regarding the application of our methods and their transferability.

The InRuTou project team

INTRODUCTION

The Innovation in Rural Tourism Project

The InRuTou project was developed to address the above challenges and to facilitate sustainable tourism in rural mountainous areas, by creating and testing a set of tools and innovative models and by training existing and new local tourism operators, which have various degrees of experience as well as different professional and educational backgrounds.

The project brought together partners (universities, research institutes and regional development organisations) from 6 countries, and its activities were implemented in six pilot areas located in five countries and across 3 different mountain ranges:

The Alps	The Apennines	The Carpathians
<p>Austria: Nationalpark Kalkalpen Region Ennstal & Steyrtal</p>	<p>Italy: Parco dell'Aveto</p>	<p>Romania: Tara Dornelor Poland: Beskidy Mountains Ukraine: Kosiv District, Storozhynestky District</p>

Map of the Location of the InRuTou pilot areas.




The project is based on an ICT – enhanced approach, including elearning, an online Sharing


Platform, and a desktop and mobile application – all described in the InRuTou Transferability Manual.





The InRuTou Course – Modules

The InRuTou e-Learning course consists of 6 modules:

 **Module 1: Entrepreneurship**
This module provides an introduction to entrepreneurship, from basic principles and terminology, to case studies and newspaper articles. The highlights of this module will provide tourism business managers with the necessary competencies to understand the entrepreneurship environment in rural areas. It will help participants to improve their skills in management and business model development. Additional resources have been designed to provide users with the knowledge on how to succeed with a start-up.

 **Module 2: Management**
Management is often highlighted as an important skill in enhancing rural tourism business. Management combines different skills and knowledge, including management of employees, organization, competition, conflicts, problem solving, and strategic thinking. The service level and risk management will help rural tourism providers achieve expected results and improve their business and services. The highlights of this module will provide tourism managers with the necessary competencies to understand the management concepts and to implement them in their rural businesses.

 **Module 3: Information and Communication Technologies**
ICT is highly important for business promotion in rural areas. The ICT module sheds light on the main ICT concepts that small and medium business managers should be aware of. It will provide a set of pre-defined web technologies to enhance business management, enabling participants to use the Internet as a tool for marketing, website management and communication with the customers, accessing websites and using search engine optimization. These knowledge and skills will enable participants to manage customer satisfaction and improve performance standards.

 **Module 4: Engaging Communities**
In order to develop sustainable tourism and attract visitors in a coordinated way, the community should learn how to share information among all local actors and cooperate. This module deals with Community Networking in the context of rural tourism. Basic thematic knowledge is provided; technical concepts, strategies and general issues are illustrated and discussed using case studies and newspaper articles. Knowledge and skills offered by this module will support identification of value chains and help finding innovative solutions in cooperation with other businesses.



Module 5: Marketing

Marketing encompasses a range of skills to improve a rural business: communication with the customers and selling products in a smart way, giving the business a new way of monitoring progress online and analyzing niche markets. Taking into account the generality of the topics related to marketing – communication, innovation, selling, branding, distribution, public relations, advertising, promotion, market research, and so on – this module highlights main concepts. It will enable trainees to improve sales management, generate new tactical sale plans and actualize their products and customer service, developing a proper strategy to deliver expected results.



Module 6: Sustainability in Tourism

This module is designed to enable business managers, service providers and decision makers to understand the concept of sustainability in tourism. It also aims at engaging community stakeholders in collaborative efforts to analyse their own sustainability and to develop strategies and projects for improving their performance in different aspects of sustainable tourism. Case Studies, articles and theoretical knowledge are used to discuss different forms of sustainable tourism and outline sustainable development in tourism. It emphasises the importance of community participation and provides ideas for sustainable mobility innovations at the destination.

Visit the Modules on www.learn.inrutou.eu



InRuTou

Innovation in Rural Tourism

home / **modules**

EP: THE E-LEARNING PLATFORM

Each Testing and Final Products section of this publication contains information about how the InRuTou Modules were used by each pilot area for conducting the piloting and creating final products.



PILOT AREA Nationalpark Kalkalpen Region Ennstal & Steyrtal – AUSTRIA

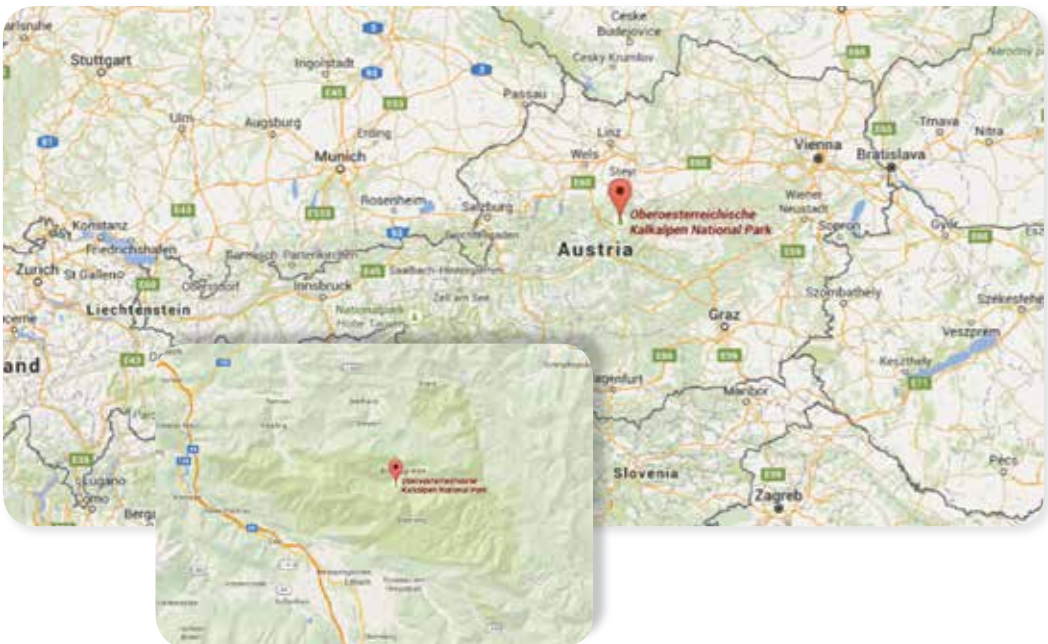
Introducing Nationalpark Kalkalpen Region Ennstal & Steyrtal, Austria

The Nationalpark Kalkalpen Region Ennstal & Steyrtal is located in Upper Austria and consists of nine villages in the area of Ennstal and Steyrtal. The population of the region is about 30.830 inhabitants and the total size of the area is approximately 956,92 km².

The main employments sectors are the Industry (Steyr), agriculture and tourism. Companies are mostly small- and middle-sized and family owned.

The Average number of tourists per year (arrivals and/or overnight stays) is about 40.000/150.000. There are about 120 accommodation providers and about 10 tour operators in this region. Main tourism activities in the area are hiking and cycling/mountain biking in the Nationalpark Kalkalpen. There are also some cultural attractions and local crafts, which are interesting for tourists.

Kalkalpen on the map



Nationalpark Kalkalpen is a well-developed tourism destination with a great diversity of tourism products and points of interest. Stakeholders from the region are actively participating in developing the destination and are already highly educated in tourism development, having completed a professional school for Tourism Management and/ or holding an academic degree in Tourism Management, Economics etc.

Testing InRuTou in Nationalpark Kalkalpen

The trainers/opinion leaders selected from the region were:

- Sandra Kraushofer, head of the Tourism board of National Park Ennstal and
- Eva Lubinger, head of the Tourism board for National Park Steyertal,

The opinion leaders attended the 1st train-the-trainer workshop in Vatra Dornei, Romania, on 16–19 July 2014, according to the InRuTou project plan. After the workshop they introduced the tools (Learning Platform, Sharing Platform) developed in the project to the stakeholders in the Austrian pilot area. The qualification and skills of the regional stakeholders rendered the InRuTou training too basic for the Austrian pilot area, and therefore not useful to them. Since the Tourism board directors have to act in the interest of their stakeholders, it has been decided that the Austrian participants will not undergo the testing themselves, but will provide support and share their experience with the participants in other InRuTou pilot countries via a study tour, and thus contribute to the applied part of the training.

The Study Tour

The study tour for the partners and the trainers from the other pilot regions took place from July 12th to July 14th in the National Park Steyertal. The aim of the study tour was to show the “best practices” in the tourism product development of the Austrian region and to share experience and knowledge.

The programme was made in a way, which allowed participants to “follow the steps” of the tourists and to see what the typical one-day trip in the region was. The participants visited the National Park centre in Molln with the exhibition “Mountain Forest and Water World”. During the guided tour, the participants experienced the flora and fauna of the national park from the tourists’ perspective and had the chance to learn about the organisation and the work of the National park centre. They also got to know the touristic products offered by the centre and discussed marketing strategies and tourism product development of the region with the organizers.





The second part of the tour was focused on the cultural tourism products of the region. The Participants visited a well-known local sword and armor blacksmith and a jew's harp (Maultrommel) producer. The two craftsmen are also very active tourism stakeholders because their workshops and skills are of a great interest

for the visitors. They organise guided tours and demonstrations of their work for the tourists and cooperate with other stakeholders in the region in order to create "packages" for a one-day trip. They shared their experience and were happy to present their workshops.



There was an organised lunch for the participants in the "floating pasture hut" at the lake Klaus, where the organizers talked about the entrepreneurs in the region and the way they develop and manage their products. The participants discussed the products of the region

and asked questions about the organisation of the work and the collaboration between the tourism board and the local stakeholders. The sustainable tourism management of the national park was also one of the main focuses of the discussion.



After lunch, participants went on a hiking trip to the "Leaking wall" (a local nature monument) and

had the opportunity to further discuss the touristic products while experiencing the local nature.

PILOT AREA Parco Naturale Regionale dell'Aveto – Liguria, **ITALY**

Introducing Parco Naturale Regionale dell'Aveto – Liguria, **Italy**

The territory of the Aveto Natural Park includes 3 valleys and 5 Municipalities (from north to south: S. Stefano d'Aveto, Rezzoaglio, Borzonasca, Mezzanego, Ne), with a total population of around 8.400 inhabitants and a total size of around 332 km². The **Consorzio Ospitalità Diffusa "Una Montagna di Accoglienza nel**

Parco" (Widespread Hospitality Tourist Association), through which the participation in the InRuTou project was undertaken, groups together around 100 tourism operators and public entities of the region, including the Natural Park Authorities.

Parco de'Il Aveto on the map





Most people work outside the area, towards the coast and in the bigger towns. In the area, the main sector is tertiary (commerce, construction), but tourism with a predominance of small family-owned businesses is also important; it is often linked to agricultural work (agritourism is quite common).

The main tourism strengths of the region are:

- Trails for every kind of outdoor sport such as hiking, biking, skiing, horseriding, canyoning.
- Beech and chestnut woods, meadows and rural landscapes, monumental trees and a great variety of environments within the protected area, rich of precious fauna (wolves, golden eagles etc.)
- Characteristic rural settlements and significant architectural works, such as the several bell



Mount Maggiorasca

- towers and several religious medieval churches of Baroque-style building
- Glacial lakes and the mines
- Wild horses

Tourism could be, without any doubt, the main activity of the area, but appropriate tourist offers and organizations need to be developed.

Testing InRuTou in Parco Naturale Regionale dell'Aveto

The selected Trainers/Opinion Leaders were:



Paolo Cresta,
Director of the
Aveto Nature Park



Claudia Fiori, Consultant of
Consorzio Ospitalità Diffusa
"Una Montagna di Accoglienza
nel Parco" for development and
funding projects and for social
media and communication

Italian trainers decided to group 2 modules at a time in the face-to-face meetings and then give an online appointment 1 week after each meeting to discuss the modules using the Sharing Platform.

Invitations to the meetings were made through posters hung in all the main villages, e-mails to a great number of tourism operators and other citizens, including public administrators, and personal telephone calls to those who were thought to be likely the most motivated participants.

The first meeting took place on the 18th of February in Borzonasca, in the head office of the Park, where the InRuTou project attracted a large number of participants. More than 40 people attended the meeting, including accommodation providers, restaurateurs, farmers, traders, hiking, horse-riding and mountain guides, tourist information centre assistants (not only from the Aveto Park but also from another neighbouring Regional Nature Park) and other tourist associations.

First subjects to be covered were “Sustainable development” and “Engaging communities”, then “Entrepreneurship” and “Management,” and eventually “ICT” and “Marketing.”

The trainers guided the attendants through the modules, arousing great interest in the audience. There was not much time left for discussion during the face-to-face meetings, but the discussion happened on the Sharing Platform. Moreover, some of the subscribers, who could not be present at the gathering, were able to

join the online discussion (they had received detailed instructions on how to use the learning and Sharing Platforms by e-mail).

Originally, it was planned to hold the two central face-to-face meetings twice in two different villages in order to facilitate participation of the residents living in the most remote part of the region. However, after following this plan for one of the meetings, it became clear that bringing all the people together was more important, so the second face-to-face meeting was held jointly.

The last meeting was on the 8th of April, and then 5 focus groups were created to start working on the following tourism products/themes:

- 1) Hiking and Biking
- 2) Wild Horses and Equestrian Tourism
- 3) Tours on the “Fieschi and Spinola Castles’ Route”
- 4) Card and Itineraries of Flavours
- 5) Educational Tour and 2.0 marketing strategy





All the participants seemed very interested and happy to try this new formative approach. The online appointments on the Sharing Plat-

form were full of enthusiasm and people seemed very willing to start to cooperate towards a common goal.



CHALLENGES:

- Finding appropriate videos and other training resources in Italian for the Learning Platform
- Involving public administrators
- Involving a great number of accommo-

dation providers, the main actors of the tourism industry

- Condensing all the contents in such a short time, with too little time left for face-to-face discussion



ADVICE:

- Go through 1 module at a time, in order to have enough time to see the contents more in depth together. It is especially important to allocate enough time for discussion. To achieve best results, follow the project Training Guidelines (See transferability Manual page 44) and hold a face-to-face meeting for each module, followed by an online meeting the week after – that means the course should take at least 12 weeks for 6 modules + other 2–3 months for the creation of new tourist products.
- Plan to start the course in time to finish everything before the high season (in the Italian Pilot, finishing in June was a bit too late and people were already too busy with their own activities)

- Ideally, if transferred to a different area/ country, the course would be greatly enhanced if the organizers could involve real experts, both for the search of resources in local language and for participation in face-to-face meetings to teach the subject of their competence. However, this is subject of available funds.
- Public administrators could be attracted by demonstrating them the results of the project. Addressing them in a group could help bring their attention to the tourism operator requests and the regional need of setting up a tourism strategy together
- Reaching a large number of tourism providers can be a long-term goal. Tangible results reached by a smaller group could interest and attract more people.

Which modules were useful for the piloting process, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	Presented together with Management. Important to understand that innovation and strategy are the basis of a successful business, and therefore proper market research should be carried out in order to understand what are the opportunities that a territory and the single businesses could exploit.
Management	Presented together with Entrepreneurship. It demonstrated the importance of management in the different aspects of a business, from personnel and customers, to the budget.
Information and Communication Technologies	Presented together with Marketing. It showed the importance of being actively present on the web and the possibilities offered by the social media in terms of low cost promotion and by the internet in terms of finding any kind of information.
Engaging Communities	Presented together with Sustainability in Tourism. It gave a hint of how tourism should involve all the people living in the region and that the process of tourism development can work much better when done cooperatively.
Marketing	Presented together with Information and Communication Technologies. It showed how strategy and planning are important in identifying a territory/ business identity and in building an effective marketing scheme, which can combine many different media.
Sustainability in Tourism	Presented together with Engaging Communities. This module generated a discussion especially about sustainable mobility, which is highly desirable both for environmental reasons and for practical needs of the area (lack of public transport).



Final Products

1. HIKING AND BIKING

Developed products:

Cooperation with a local bikers' association has been established for the creation of 2 new Mountain Biking (MTB) events:

- 1-day guided excursion in MTB with lunch in a refuge, guided visit to the S. Stefano d'Ave to Castle and final snack with local products. The event took place on July 25, 2015. This excursion was eventually combined with other events planned on the same day and the day after (guided hiking tours, another MTB excursion) in the same area and became a full package for the whole family
- 2-day MTB guided trip with dinner and overnight stay at one of the Park's refuges, which took place on 29–30 of August, 2015.

Future plans:

HIKING:

- creating different multi-day itineraries with luggage transfer, shuttle service, catering
- creating a multi-day itinerary from mountain to sea, with the same services
- setting up a list of "guaranteed" trails, continuously inspected and fixed

MOUNTAIN BIKING:

- keeping the 2 new events as regular annual appointments
- creating a list of the best "guaranteed" MTB itineraries, providing detailed information
- creating an offer of different grade guided tours (1 day or multi day)
- offer additional services: luggage transfer, transport, bike rentals (especially e-bike)



Mountain Biking in Autumn



Hiking towards Mount Aiona's Refuge

2. WILD HORSES AND EQUESTRIAN TOURISM

Developed products:

Cooperation among accommodation providers, equestrian guides and horse keepers gave birth to a few ideas of packages that need to be further developed in detail and promoted for the next year.

Future plans:

- 2-days tour "Wild horses + horsemanship"
- 2-days tour for "Over 65": a tour for elderly tourists, discovering traditional horse breeding and ways to approach and relate to horses, as well as participating in various activities with them
- 2-days tour "Nature & Horses"

Wild Horse Watching Tour



3. TOURS ON THE "FIESCHI AND SPINOLA CASTLES' ROUTE"

Developed products:

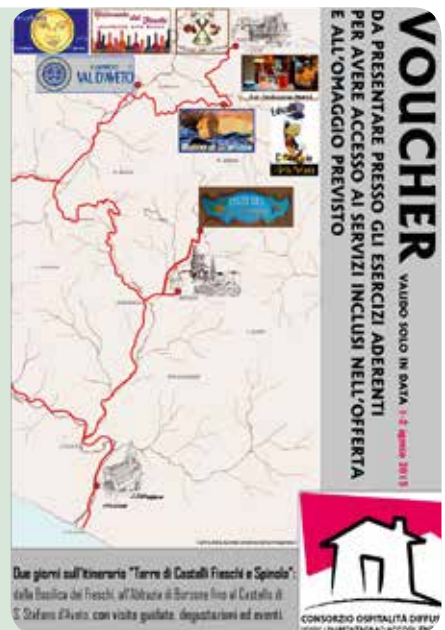
From a theoretical itinerary to a proper tourist package: 2 days across two valleys, discovering their most important historical and architectural monuments, accompanied by an expert + visits to local producers, events, restaurants and accommodation.

A few dates for the first tours were scheduled: 4–5 July and 1–2 August, 2015.

Future plans:

Repeat the offer and schedule new dates during the winter and spring months, possibly both in the 1-day and in the weekend format.

Fieschi Castles' Route, Italy



4. CARD AND ITINERARIES OF FLAVOURS

Developed products:

A tourist card was created as a test in one of our 3 valleys: the “Gusto Card” (Cards of Flavours) gives 3 opportunities to get a discount in the participating restaurants and accommodation facilities of Val Graveglia until the end of October 2015.

A connected “Itinerary of Flavours” has also been established: participants will meet their local “guide” at the farmers’ market and will then be guided to explore the territory and visit interesting features (Museum of Minerals, farms, water mills, etc.). The itinerary includes lunch in one of the restaurants or “agriturismo” of the valley with the guide, who will entertain the guests with more local anecdotes.

The members of this focus group designed the card and a brochure layout and managed to find a sponsor to cover printing and other costs even. 5.200 copies of the brochure and 2.000 cards were thus printed and distributed.

Scheduled dates for the Itinerary of Flavours: 25/07, 01/08, 22/08, 05/09, 26/09, 2015.

Future plans:

Repeat the offer and schedule new dates during the winter and spring months.



5. EDUCATIONAL TOUR AND 2.0 MARKETING STRATEGY

EDUCATIONAL TOUR

Developed products:

18–20 September, 2015: 3-days tour across the Aveto Park, involving bloggers and journalists. A detailed programme has been defined with accommodation, restaurants, things to do and to see, including a short MTB ride and a Wild Horse Watching excursion. A reception service has been established to manage contacts and logistics.

The hashtag to promote the event is: #enjoyParcoAveto

Future plans:

Possibly organize more of these events, in all the different seasons.
Develop more contacts with traditional and online Tour Operators.

2.0 MARKETING STRATEGY

Developed products:

Press releases, newsletters and basic social media activities.

Future plans:

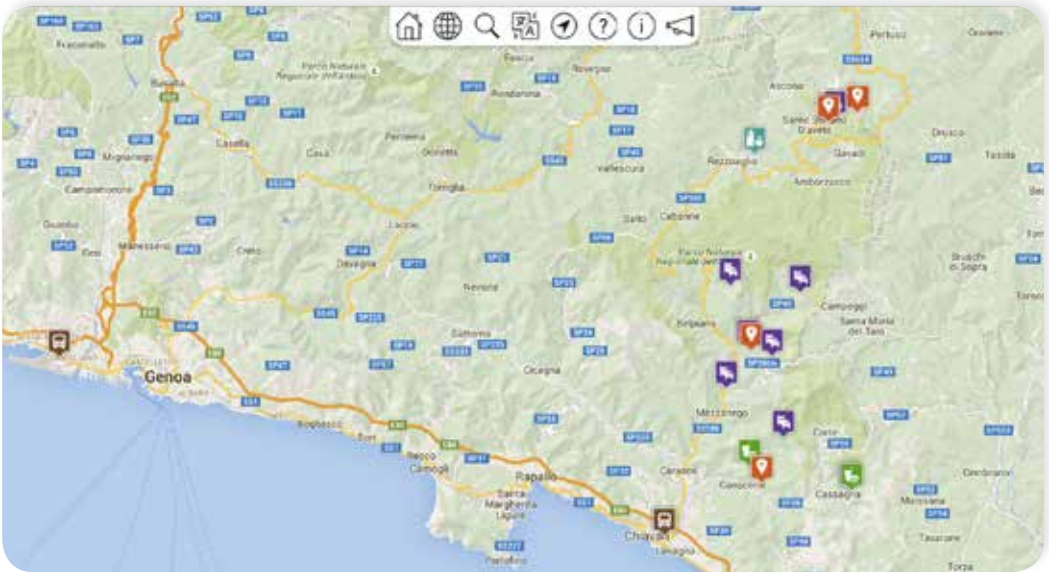
Implement promotion on the social media, trying to better identify each product's target.



Sturla Valley, Wild Horses with a view of the sea



Parco dell'Aveto ON THE (M)APP



View of the new developed products on the InRuTou (M)APP



Gravelia Valley



Ski mountaineering

Which modules were useful for creating final products, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	Generating ideas (all products)
Management	Used little
Information and Communication Technologies	Mainly used for “Marketing strategy” in order to support all the other products
Marketing	
Engaging Communities	<p>1) HIKING AND BIKING: we tried to involve as many subjects as we could who are connected with these two activities (associations, public entities, hikers, bikers etc.) and will continue to do it.</p> <p>2) WILD HORSES AND EQUESTRIAN TOURISM: extensive work with the local farmers is necessary in order to try and find a compromise between the safeguard of the wild horses and the protection of the farmers’ work from possible damages caused by horses</p> <p>3) CARD AND ITINERARIES OF FLAVOURS: a lot of people have been involved in the creation of this product (accommodation providers, restaurants, farmers, experts in local history or geology, craftsmen etc.)</p>
Sustainability in Tourism	We started promoting the possibility of car or lift sharing through a specific group on Facebook for every public event.



Aveto Valley



What did the participants think about InRuTou?

Fabrizia Grillo, 53, Equestrian and mountain guide, Pet Therapist,
Parco dell'Aveto – Italy

I am very glad to have attended the InRuTou course because it gave us the opportunity to “rack our brains” and give life to different new projects – some of which are already operating and other ones just about to start – all born from the common will – to revitalize our beautiful region and raise awareness about it.



Emery Vajda, 38, Geologist, Parco dell'Aveto – Italy

InRuTou is not only the research for tourist opportunities in rural areas, but also a signal of how much the sensitivity towards them is actually growing. It is the beginning of a path leading to quality tourism, to the fruition of a territory which is, and must be perceived as unique. It could even become a mission to redeem what had carelessly been put aside, a noble and difficult mission. And the enthusiasm with which this path has been started shows that it is possible to go this way. Let's not stop!

Davide Capone, 58, Aspiring Entrepreneur in Social Tourism,
Parco dell'Aveto – Italy

I am really happy I could take part in this project, which gave me the opportunity to meet local people and enterprises I didn't know before. This is a first step towards the creation of a new culture of hospitality by putting together different experiences, ideas and passions. I hope we will carry on with this important work even after the end of the project because our territory has a great need of it and I wish there could be a second level of InRuTou to give it continuity.



Gabriella Corradino, 41, Hiking guide, Tourist Office assistant,
Parco dell'Aveto – Italy



I really enjoyed the InRuTou project! It was very helpful to work with all the people involved in the development of local rural tourism and to meet each other. Sometimes people are reluctant to share their experiences and their knowledge with others, but during the meetings we spoke a lot, we compared our results and we started working on new projects. The course taught us the basics of marketing, entrepreneurship, and communication technologies and for many of us it was the first time in these subjects! Last, but not least, the final networking event in Vienna was great!!!! We met a lot of very interesting people; we talked about our projects in our countries ... fantastic!

I hope the InRuTou project is going on in the future.



Claudia Fiori, 43, Consultant of Consorzio Ospitalità Diffusa "Una Montagna di Accoglienza nel Parco" for development and funding projects and for social media and communication

Taking part in the INRUTOU project was a very challenging experience, an important chance to compare different ways to plan a tourism strategy, manage and settle local conflicts and develop new tourism products. This experience enhanced my knowledge in sustainable tourism and engaging communities techniques, which helped me in working with the thematic groups we created to develop new local tourism products.

Martina Migliuzzi, 43, Parco dell'Aveto's employee and Secretary of Consorzio Ospitalità Diffusa "Una Montagna di Accoglienza nel Parco", Coordinator of the Pilot Training in Italy



InRuTou represents for our region the first step on a long path that we necessarily have to undertake if we want to become a real tourist destination. A small, rural and simple one but unique, true and welcoming. This was really a great chance to start and I really hope that we will be able to carry on working together in this direction.



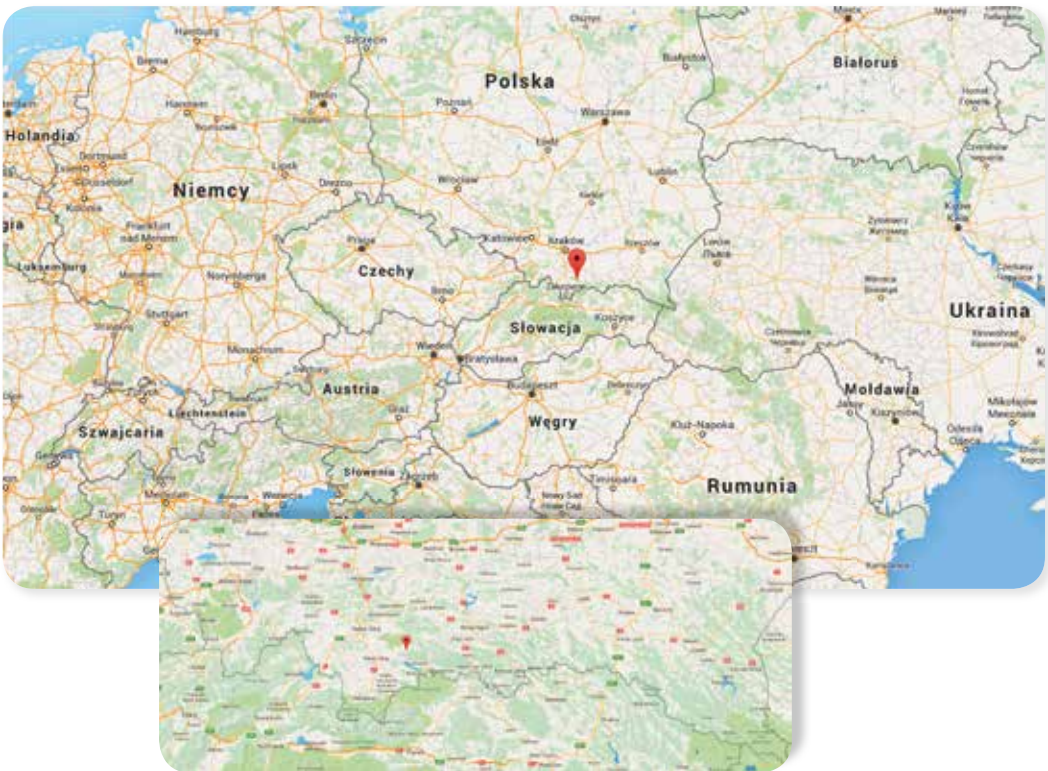
PILOT AREA Beskidy Mountains – POLAND

Introducing Beskidy Mountains – Poland

The mountain range of Beskidy is located in southern Poland, along the border with Slovakia, in the northern part of the great bend of the Carpathians – the highest mountains of Central Europe. Soft, wooded and mostly sand-

stone massifs, peaks with the average height of around 1200 meters above sea level and long mountain ranges linked with passes and picturesque landscape are the invitation for leisure and sport activities.

Beskidy Mountains on the map





The area of approximately 8790 km² has a population of about 1.5 million, concentrated mostly in villages and towns which are located in river valleys and basins. In some parts of the region, traditional style of life of mountaineers, who proudly celebrate their cultural heritage, was preserved. Turbulent history and economic realities left their mark especially in the eastern, depopulated and underdeveloped part.

The region is known for its nature. Four national and seven landscape parks are located in Beskidy region. They are guarding the wild nature of Beskidy, combined with traditional rural landscape and marked by hundreds of years of human presence.

Tourism, along with some agriculture and livestock farming, as well as forestry, is an important source of income for the local people, although lots of them work outside the region. Main forms of tourism include: hiking, biking, weekend air sports (paragliding), winter sports, and many areas are traditionally used for summer vacations or weekend holidays by the inhabitants of Polish cities.

Mass tourism is concentrated in certain areas, such as spas and winter sport resorts, leaving the rest of the region unfrequented by visitors and suitable for the development of individual and low impact family tourism. The need to develop high-quality and innovative rural tourism in the region was a key factor that led to choosing the area for the piloting within InRuTou project.



Testing InRuTou in Beskid Mountains

The selected trainers and opinion leaders were representatives of local communities from Beskid Mountains, willing to develop their own tourism products:

- Barbara Juroszek from Commune Cultural Centre in Istebna
- Józef Michałek from Transhumance Foundation and Agritourism Association "Nature" in Cieszyn
- Małgorzata and Jarosław Buczek from Association of Polish Highlanders in Ochotnica Górna
- Robert Księżopolski from "Dom Sądecki" Agritourism in Łącko
- Tomasz Szczotka from Polish Ecological Club Branch in Krynica Zdrój

The pilot training was structured to meet the needs of the local communities involved. At the beginning and the end of the piloting, we organized joint meetings with all interested stakeholders to give them an opportunity to share and discuss ideas. These central meetings were organised in different places to ensure larger participation of residents living in various parts of the region. In between, each community worked separately developing their products.

The first, introductory meeting was organized on 18 May 2015 in the village of Jaworzynka, in a small B&B facility taking part in the piloting. The purpose of this meeting was to gather all interested parties together, introduce the project, define and share expectations of participants towards it, and discuss the possibilities of developing local tourism projects in their communities. In addition, invited specialists presented the concept of sustainable tourism and rules of promoting tourism products.

Then, local meetings started and aimed at developing product ideas and discussing possibilities to implement them. The process was supported by facilitators – local opinion leaders and project personnel. The content of the InRuTou e-Learning Platform was systematically introduced to help with turning ideas into reality. The first module to be covered was Sustainable Tourism, followed by Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Management; we finalized with ICT and Engaging Communities.



Participants introducing themselves



Testing InRuTou digital tools



During six weeks between 18th of May and 7th of July 2015, seven concepts were formed:

- 1) Transhumance of Beskidzka 5 (villages of Brenna, Istebna Szczyrk, Ustroń and Wisła in Beskid Śląski mountains)
- 2) Pastoral Trail of Szczyrk (village of Szczyrk and its surroundings)
- 3) Pastoralism of Żywiecczyzna Region (villages of Koszarawa, Rajcza, Sobkówka, Ujsoły and Węgierska Górka in Beskid Żywiecki mountains)
- 4) Żywiecczyzna Scented with Herbs (village of Jeleśnia and its surroundings in Beskid Żywiecki mountains)
- 5) Flavours of Gorce Mountains (villages of Ochotnica Górna and Łopuszna and town of Nowy Targ in Gorce mountains)
- 6) Agrotourism in Dunajec River Valley (village of Łącko and its surroundings on the border of Gorce and Beskid Sądecki mountains)
- 7) Ornawa – land on Hungarian Route (village of Tyliz and its surroundings on the border of Beskid Sądecki and Beskid Niski mountains).

The meeting summarising the work done so far was held on July 7, 2015, in the village of Jeleśnia, in a recently established local Social Integration Centre that joined the project. The concepts for local tourism projects developed in the regions were presented. Attendants had a chance to share their ideas, discuss adopted approaches and experiences gathered so far. There was also an opportunity to taste actual local food products – elements of “Flavours of Gorce Mountains” and “Żywiecczyzna Scented with Herbs”. In small groups, participants worked through each module of the e-Learning Platform to summarise the knowledge gained so far and see if they can apply any other approach proposed in case studies for improvement of their ideas. The results of group work were presented and discussed on the forum. During the last part of the meeting, pilot training participants were offered the possibility to give open feedback on the InRuTou project, piloting and tools. It was decided that each community will continue working on their products, although not everyone was ready or interested to finalise it within InRuTou.



Discussing possibilities



C

CHALLENGES:

- Engaging diversified representation of local community interested in tourism development and maintaining their commitment throughout the whole process.
- Rural regions are often characterised by limited access to Internet; computer literacy is not as common as among inhabitants of urban areas. Take this into account while introducing the methodology and digital tools.
- Course attendants might be not familiarized with the concept of self-study and motivated to acquire knowledge themselves; try to maintain their interest and show the benefits.



Meetings were organized locally, in Carpathian villages participating in the project

A

ADVICE:

- Try to adjust the e-Learning Platform content in your language to your local specifics in order to better reach the target audience.
- Find respected and active local opinion leaders motivated to go through with the whole process. They will consolidate community around a common goal and see to its successful realization.
- Ensure that the group includes people with computer literacy who can take the responsibility for digital tools development, e.g. populating the map with points of interest (POIs) or setting up the website.
- The group process is time-consuming. Secure enough time to go through it properly (at least half a year, including low season). Make sure that everyone is committed to long-term activities.
- Gain some small funding to build a website, publish some leaflets or design a logo for the product, and so on. It would speed up the process and guarantee participants immediate kick-off of their product – the result they are looking for and can build following activities upon.
- Involve specialists from areas covered in different e-Learning modules; it's a valuable addition to the training process.



Which modules were useful for the piloting process, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	Covered during local meetings. Because of the different scale of activities, this module had limited use in the first stages of products' development.
Management	Covered during local meetings, perceived as not very practical for stakeholders involved (too specific or aimed at bigger scale entrepreneurs).
Information and Communication Technologies	Briefly introduced during the introductory meeting and thoroughly covered during the local ones. Presented tools were seen as vital to success in the promotion of the products.
Engaging Communities	Officially introduced during the last joint meeting as a basis for future development of the ideas. Attendants saw it as crucially important to the success of products' implementation and their further development. Known to be a difficult and fragile process, although examples given proved to be quite useful and inspiring.
Marketing	Partially covered during the introductory meeting and enhanced during the local ones, although the concepts presented sometimes seemed too advanced to be useful for stakeholders involved.
Sustainability in Tourism	Presented at the beginning of the course. Meant to constitute the background of each initiative, although its basics were widely discussed or even perceived as too idealistic.

Final Products

From the first meeting, piloting participants were encouraged to assess their region's potential and try to work out the best strategy for tourism development. Being at different stages of the later process, they focused on various levels, from gathering general ideas through checking local potential, to bringing ideas to life.

Therefore, only three of seven ideas discussed during piloting became tourism products, although still not equally advanced on their way to be ready-made. The remaining local commu-

nities decided to continue on their own. In case of "Transhumance of Beskidzka 5", tools offered by InRuTou were not crucial to the success of the product, as the participating communes already developed similar ones on their own. For "Pastoralism of Żywiecczyzna Region" and "Agrotourism in Dunajec River Valley", it was determined that much more time was needed locally to properly discuss the possibilities and establish a strong partnership around the initial idea. The development of Pastoral Trail of Szczyrk will be continued off-season.



ŻYWIECCZYNA SCENTED WITH HERBS

Żywiecczyzna Scented with Herbs is a small area nearby town of Żywiec where organic farming is becoming more and more popular. Inhabitants of a few neighbouring villages – Jeleśnia, Sopotnia and Koszarawa decided to promote their uniqueness. Unspoiled nature, small-scale vegetable and fruits cultivation and homemade products built the core of the product. And the most important, flagship product – calendula tea and other herbal teas are straight from home gardens. Tourists can spend their weekends or holidays on one of the farms that joined the project.

In close future, local Social Integration Centre will become the heart of the initiative and space dedicated to the development of local crafts, as well as an eco-education centre and an accommodation facility for green schools.

InRuTou tools will be used for product promotion (on-line map and mobile application) and further development (e-Learning Platform).



Traditionally smoked meats from Żywiec



Calendula



Home garden in Jeleśnia

FLAVOURS OF GORCE MOUNTAINS

Flavours of Gorce Mountains bring together farmers, shepherds, accommodation providers, craftsmen, artisans, and other inhabitants of the area interested in the development of soft tourism. Local authorities also support the project. The area is rich in nature (neighboring a national park) and flourishing culture, still cultivating traditional ways of land use. Tourists can taste the variety of homemade dishes, preserves and excellent dairy products from sheep and cow milk, as well as participate in craft workshops, local feasts or ceremonies.

The idea was born a couple of years ago in the village of Ochotnica Górna and is slowly spreading to the whole mountain range. All products, events and places will be certified; and the brand is meant to be well recognised and promoted nationwide.

The foundation of the offer is the tradition of sheep grazing on Carpathian mountain meadows, going back to medieval times. It was rejuvenated in the last years along with the a concept of the Valachian Cultural Trail, which is meant to go across the whole range of Carpathians.

InRuTou map and mobile application are believed to become the centre of on-line promotion of the product along with the e-Learning Platform that will help new partners to develop their projects and join the network.



From the left to the right: mountaineers are proud of their cultural heritage and cultivate local customs and traditions; sheep and cow cheeses with a protected designation of origin are produced in Ochotnica Górna; shepherding traditions in Gorce mountains go back to the beginnings of the fourteenth century.



ORNAWA – LAND ON HUNGARIAN ROUTE

Ornawa – land on Hungarian Route refers to medieval times when the nowadays small village of Tylicz was a border market town on a route from Poland to Hungary. The turbulent history and cultural influences of the borderland left many marks on landscape, architecture and customs, creating an interesting mix. The Local community plans to use this potential, along with a close location of Krynica Zdrój – the famous Polish spa, to attract guests who enjoy active holidays and outdoor activities.

The initiative is a part of activities undertaken by the local destination management organization, and the InRuTou digital map will be used for its promotion.



Tylicz is located in a valley, along which the old trade route unfolded



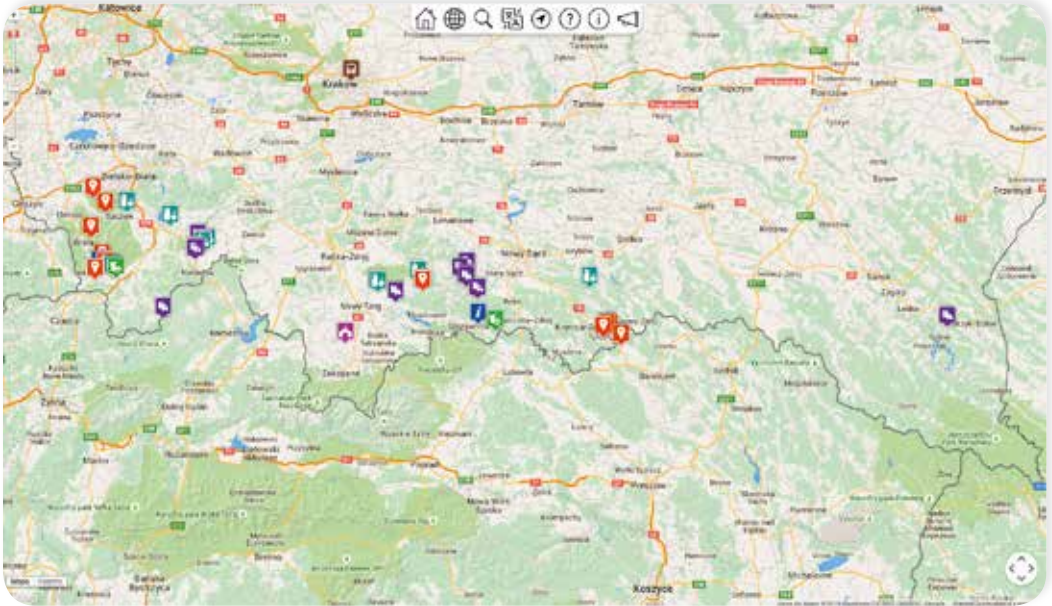
The surrounding picturesque countryside provides tourists with possibilities of peaceful rest all year round



The neighboring spa of Krynica Zdrój is located among scenic hills of Beskid Sądecki.



Beskydy Mountains **ON THE (M)APP**



The InRuTou (M)APP view with the Polish Points of Interest





Which modules were useful for creating final products, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	Used for all pilot products in the process of gathering ideas and forming initial concepts. Also used in “Żywiecczyzna Scented with Herbs” as an inspiration for possible future tourism businesses and developing activities of local Social Integration Centre.
Management	Case Study 2 was used as a background for the discussion about potential customer needs and how to meet them. Other aspects will be useful in the future, during next stages of product development.
Information and Communication Technologies	Important for all pilot products, as they are at the beginning of building their online presence. Essential for future work on commercialising the products as well.
Engaging Communities	Contributed to each pilot product development, as they are all based on community participation in the process.
Marketing	Used in the process of identifying competitive advantages of each pilot product.
Sustainability in Tourism	Introduced at the very beginning as a foundation of all activities undertaken.





What did the participants think about InRuTou?

Anna Bednarek, founder and leader of BEST PROEKO Association in Jeleśnia

From my point of view, participation in InRuTou project has been extremely valuable for our community. The e-Learning Platform offers lots of inspiration, good practices and useful tips on how to develop local tourism. It helps motivate people to undertake entrepreneurial activities in rural areas. And we really need this active approach; that's why we established the local Social Integration Centre. The content of the platform is very consistent in itself, helps to plan our activities as a whole in the long term and according to the concept of sustainability. And most importantly, we had the possibility to meet with other communities, inspire each other and establish the basis for possible future cooperation of rural mountain areas.



Małgorzata and Jarosław Buczek, owners of "Bacówka u Bucka" – shepherd's hut in Ochotnica Górna

Participation in InRuTou was an opportunity for us, a small community living in the mountains, to combine the strengths of inhabitants of the whole area. At present, our product includes not only traditional food products, but also accommodation, events, handicraft, workshops and other activities that may be interesting for tourists. Moreover, the map is a very simple and practical tool to use while searching for information and directions. At the same time, it shows the variety of offers and attracts attention.

Małgorzata Fedas, project manager, Ekopsychology Society

We're thrilled to have been given the chance to participate in InRuTou and bring the experience of our partners in innovative rural tourism development to the Polish part of the Carpathians. For local communities, InRuTou was a call to act and shape their tourism products. Especially digital tools proved to be very useful not only for promotion purposes but also for making an inventory of local potential. We hope that the work started within InRuTou will continue in the future and inspire other local communities to become successful rural tourism destinations.





PILOT AREA Tara Dornelor (Dorna country) – Suceava county, ROMANIA

Introducing Dorna country – Suceava county, Romania

Tara Dornelor, or Dorna country, is located in the North of Romania, and with respect to the cultural dimension – in the South of the historical region of Bucovina. Its cultural features, such as folk traditions, crafts, clothing

of the villagers during feasts, habits, and the way of life are profoundly influenced by the historical period of 1774–1918, when this territory was administered by the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Dorna country on the map



The borders of the Dorna Country shown here are approximate

Dorna country has rural population of 15.000, which is confronting economic gaps, lack of opportunities, social disparities, and other constraints common to the Romanian mountain areas and even to the entire Carpathian mountain range.

Traditional landscapes, temperate continental climate with mild summers and winters relatively rich in snow, the well preserved natural areas and the richness of plants, animals and habitats found in the Călimani National Park, attract tourists and provide optimism to the local youth who want to build a future through entrepreneurship in tourism. Tourism, along with animal husbandry and forestry, constitute the main economic pillars in the region. However, the local tourism providers still lack a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities of the mountain

destinations and need to acquire an overview of successful business models, innovation and information related to the impact of climate change and tourism marketing.

Tara Dornelor was selected as an InRuTou pilot area due to its tourist tradition, dating to the late eighteenth century, when the Austrians recognized the area's potential and developed it as a tourist destination, taking advantage of the spa services. At the moment, the quality of services and the diversity of the tourism offer need refreshment. Moreover, there is an urgent need to introduce the notion of sustainable development based on community decision-making. Participating in InRuTou was the perfect opportunity for Dorna Country, facilitating the steps needed to reinvent this area as an internationally recognized tourist destination.





Testing InRuTou in the Dorna country

After community consultations, 3 persons have been identified as suitable for the role of trainers/opinion leaders. They were selected according to their skills, knowledge, commitment and the general attitude towards tourism development. Of these 3, Petru Ciobanu was mostly an opinion leader, lacking the necessary time to act as a trainer.

- Petru Ciobanu – manager of Bucovina Adventure,
- Catalin Ursache – equestrian tourism operator and at present time one of the managers of “Dorna Country” Destination Management Organisation (an outcome of InRuTou),
- Dan Grigoroaea – ranger at Călimani National Park.

Some dissemination activities about the trainings have been done. Invitations were made through posters, e-mails and faxes sent to a great number of tourism operators and other categories of stakeholders, including public administrators, and the staff of the Călimani National Park, as well as via personal phone calls to those who were most likely to participate.

As an outcome, it was decided to group 2 modules at a time in the face-to-face meetings and to have breaks of approximately one month in between the meetings. Meanwhile, the InRuTou coordinators kept connection with the participants, mostly by phone or e-mail.



The location of the trainings was the conference room of the Mountain Farmers Federation "Dorna". Many stakeholders were already familiar with the location, and the Internet there could be used at an appropriate speed for free. Each session was structured in 2 parts. The first was devoted to presenting one module and the second was dedicated to the other, having a networking break in between in order to obtain a fair feedback and to share ideas. This seemed to be a good choice considering the fact that most of the attendees made links between the information presented in the first module and the ideas and examples provided in the second one.

The modules were presented during the face-to-face meetings in accordance with the recommendations and guidelines for pilot trainings, with one alteration – in Dorna Country, two modules have been combined per session: Entrepreneurship & Management, ICT & Engaging Communities, Marketing & Sustainable Tourism.

The project's dedicated instrument for communication – the Sharing Platform – has not enjoyed much success in this area, partly because not enough people have adequate access to the Internet, and those who have, are already bombarded with technology which they are still not accustomed to, such as Facebook, e-mail, Skype, etc. Therefore, they found it difficult to use yet another new communication tool.





CHALLENGES:

- Some of the most interested participants did not have Internet skills, and although they have a great knowledge of the area and have proven their entrepreneurial skill in tourism, they found it difficult to adapt to the modern ways of promoting their activities and their offers.
- Most of the attendees were not familiar with the concept of self-study, and they seemed to lack motivation to acquire knowledge by themselves.
- It was practically impossible to find resources similar to those used in InRuTou in the local language.



ADVICE:

- Usually, the mountain inhabitants have very limited access to the Internet, so computer literacy is not common. This should be considered when introducing the methodology and the communication tools.
- Try to establish the age balance but also consider the skill balance.
- If there is a real chance to establish productive working groups – do it! Otherwise, try to skip information that might be too challenging for some participants and start creating a pleasant networking environment. Introduce the participants to the basics of what you consider important for them without taking away their joy of discovery.



Which modules were useful for the piloting process, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	This module started out the pilot trainings. It provided the core of the trainings in Romania. There is a great need for simple entrepreneurial innovation in rural areas, such as the Carpathians. Presented together with Management.
Management	This module was quite technical to some of the attendees. Partly because of the legal differences between the case studies and the Romanian legislation and also because of the "Customer Relationship Management," which for some of the area's Tourist Managers was an "up to you" component of PR. Presented together with Entrepreneurship in the first training session.
Information and Communication Technologies	This module was presented in the second part of the second face-to-face meeting. It generated much interest because the age balance of the attendees was appropriate and the youth showed their enthusiasm. The feeling was that many of them could contribute to the identity of the area using ICT instruments, upgrading the business of those managers who are lacking the Social Media Marketing (SMM) skills. Presented after the Engaging Communities module, which proved to be a smart choice.
Engaging Communities	This module started the second face-to-face meeting. All the case studies were presented and in order to simplify the information, the Romanian trainers made a ppt. presentation with the most important aspects. Examples from Peru and other regions of Romania were presented in order to stimulate the attendees to pay more attention to the importance and benefits of joint initiatives. It worked!
Marketing	This module started the last training session, providing inputs on how smart planning is important in determining a territory/business identity. The aspect of combining different media channels was really attractive and it stimulated most of the participants to brainstorm about the existing gaps in their area and to try to identify simple low cost solutions.
Sustainability in Tourism	This module was presented last because the organizers saw it as a proper way to conclude the entire vocational training process of InRuTou. The idea of sustainability, as simple as it seems, is still posing problems at various levels, so for a proper understanding of how sustainability relates to rural tourism and mountain environments, it has been decided to tackle it at the end. Since sustainability involves management and marketing decisions based on the support of communities, it seemed to be the right choice.



Final Products

Considering the already existing tourism offer in the area, the availability and level of involvement of stakeholders, and based on discussions during the trainings, three concepts resulted:

- 1) a tourism program,
- 2) an administrative approach – a destination management organization (DMO) and
- 3) a Calendar of Events – seen as an instrument for promoting the cultural tourism in one representative village:

HORSEBACK ADVENTURES IN DORNA COUNTRY

This package proposes a 5 day horseback riding tour through the Dorna country. The visitors can discover the natural areas, their wildlife hotspots and can experience the traditional landscape well preserved in the villages. Five days of horseback riding helps establish emotional ties between the rider and the horse, offering a different dimension and a special perception of the area.

This program can take place only during the summer months. Accommodation is offered at guest-houses, huts and tents, luggage transfer being made with 4x4 vehicles. Meals are taken at both pensions and on site (at cauldron food, grill).

It is a package for those already familiar with horseback riding and motivated with 6–8 hours of riding time each day.



ESTABLISHMENT OF A DMO

One of the direct benefits of the InRuTou trainings was the way in which it attracted various categories of stakeholders to come together, encouraging them to cooperate to achieve a common goal. The national context, which allows the creation and recognition of ecotourism destinations, and the existence of a national strategy for the development of ecotourism, has led us to initiate the process of establishing a Destination Management Organization in Dorna Country as well. In this regard, an association, which could become the focal point of the destination and will be responsible for identifying and implementing the proper means of promoting the tourist offer, has been selected. It will act in a way to respect the principles of ecotourism and ensure cooperation and unity among the local stakeholders. At first, people were reluctant to engage, not understanding the concept of a DMO. However, after 3 training sessions, the organizers noticed that the participants were much more open to this idea; most actors became aware of the importance of joint management and a common identity that gives special advantages in determining the target market and local identity.





CIOCANESTI – CULTURAL PACKAGE – A CALENDAR OF EVENTS



DATE	EVENT
1–2 March	National Festival of Painted Eggs
9 April	Prospective health champions
18–24 May	The Mountain Week
29 June	Dedication day for the Hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul
30 June	Insights into the vast reserve of Rhodendron
14–20 July	Traditional Rafting Week on Bistrita Aurie river (Golden Bistrita)
15 August	The community day
16–17 August	National Trout Festival
8 September	“Răscolu Stâniei” Festival; – “Fussing the sheepfold” Dedication day of the wooden church of Botos
14 September	Dedication day for the Hermitage of “Holy Cross” Monastery
14 October	Dedication day of Saint “Stephen the Great” Monastery
27–28 December	The Festival of Folk Customs and Traditions

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

- Competition between counties – Tradition and sacred value held in Ciocănești Middle School, attended by children aged 4–14 years, comprising three sections: egg decoration, plastic composition, traditional stitches;
- Exhibition & competition of marriage chests from Moldavia, held at “Florin Gheuca Cultural Hall” Ciocănești;
- National exhibition of painted eggs
- Symposium, book releases, folklore performance

Competition in chess, table tennis, volleyball, and plastic composition on sport topics.

Environmental actions in the Suhard Mountains
 Tourist paths marking restoration
 “The Sheeps Measurement” at the sheepfolds, Subvăcărie, Tapu, Văcărie (traditional feast at the beginning of pastoral grazing season)

The Holy Liturgy at Saints Peter and Paul hermitage
 Painting camp at Botoș peak

Hiking and greening

Daily raft
 Demonstration of making the raft with the involvement of tourists

carrying out religious activities
 Visiting the “Oita” tourist mine
 Various presentations made by the Association of Animal Breeders’ Suhardul Ciocănești”

National Exhibition of marriage chests
 National Fishing Competition
 Gastronomy Competition
 Parade of folk costumes
 Folklore evenings

The ascent of the sheep owners to the sheepfold pasture – “The Plateau of Traditions”
 The most worthy young villager-contest
 Horseback riding Competition
 Recognition of sheeps by marks
 The milking of the sheeps
 The reckoning of the owners with the sheepfold master
 Moving the flocks to the autumn pastures
 The sheep owners traditional dance

Religious activities of the “Holy Cross” Monastery from Mount Suhard.
 “Tasting the nature delights” – Sales exhibition of products obtained from the wild berries of Mount Suhard.

Religious activities
 Exhibition of ancient icons

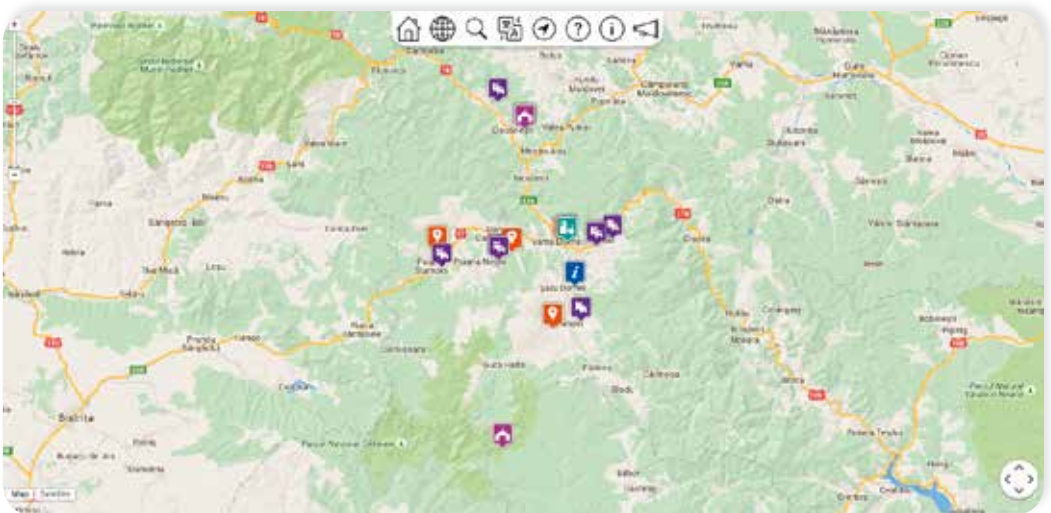
Christmas and New Year’s Eve Carols and a lot of other specific Carols and folk song such as: “Plugușorul”, “Jocul Caprei”, “Jocul căiuților”, “Sorcova”;
 Parade of folk masks;
 Drama portraying moments in the life of Stephen the Great in the interpretation of folk artists from Botos village.



Dorna country ON THE (M)APP

The (M)APP, developed by InRuTou, is used by the Romanian partner Romontana and its partners, but in the near future, as soon as complete information is obtained from the local stakeholders involved in tourism, it will be posted on the (M)APP, supporting and encouraging all those interested to use this instrument in order

to obtain higher visibility and to promote their offer. For the moment, Romontana added the most visited attractions of the rural area, but once we gather enough quality information, the application content will be updated with all the information that can interest all categories of tourists.



Romanian InRuTou achievements presented on the developed (M)APP

In the near future, the Romanian participants plan to create an adventure tourism package encompassing all activities that can be developed in the area according to seasons, to post all this in the (M)APP as a single Point of Interest (POI), and also as different attractions that can be done on their own. The same applies to wildlife observation tourism package. Rom-

ontana is also considering using the (M)APP as guidance for those who want to visit the natural protected areas.

Eventually, the plan is to transfer the experience, including the ICT instruments developed and the curricula, to other mountainous areas of Romania.

Which modules were useful for creating final products, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	Used to generate ideas. As a basis for all.
Management	Used as a basis for Ciocanesti – Cultural Package. Will be further used for the improvement of the products that have been successful.
Information and Communication Technologies	During the training. used as inspiration. Will be used to further develop all the products presented.
Engaging Communities	Used for “Horseback Adventures”. Helped everyone presented to understand how a tour operator can generate added value to both, its business and community, when supported by all stakeholders regardless of their involvement rate.
Marketing	Used as inspiration. Will be used together with ICT to develop a marketing strategy and to permanently keep the contact with those who tried any tourism offer presented at least once.
Sustainability in Tourism	Used to generate ideas. As a basis for all.





What did the participants think about InRuTou?

Adrian-Radu Rey, project manager, Romontana

I am delighted that such a project was carried out in our area, and I'm glad we can support rural actors to improve their offer, having the effective support offered by international bodies with extensive theoretical and practical experience.



Dănuț Ungureanu, rural tourism expert, Romontana

InRuTou creates innovative tools for rural tourism, contributing to the sustainable development of rural tourism destinations and the rediscovery of natural areas. It can be considered a success and a good practice example that could be extended to other destinations. It was a pleasure to work with such devoted personalities, having extensive experience in tourism and representatives of some of the most prestigious institutions from Europe!

Cătălin Ursache, equestrian tourism operator, Trainer

InRuTou opened the door for cooperation between entrepreneurs from rural areas. The stakeholders from these areas need links to bridge their ideas and expertise. These are difficult to obtain on your own. I think that's the main benefit offered by the project and hope that InRuTou is a starting point for other similar initiatives. Dorna Country needs innovation! It needs initiatives that inspire!



Marilena Niculița: attendant of the InRuTou training, Director of Ciocănești Painted Eggs Museum

Dorna country, this land of legend, is seen as an important tourist area of Romania. This project complements the need for information on the importance of landscape and mountain ecosystems and promotes the tourist attractions of the area, including the traditional products, unaltered folk customs, festivals, and not at least the welcoming hospitality of agritourist pensions.

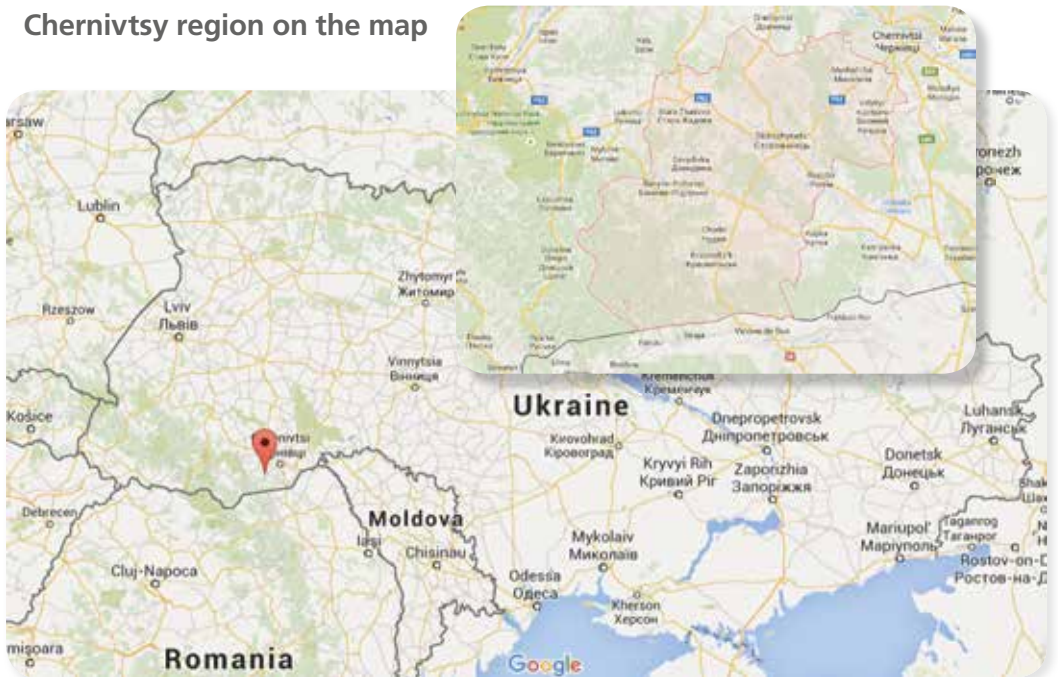
PILOT AREA Storozhynets district, Bukovyna land – Chernivtsy region, **UKRAINE**

Introducing Storozhynets district, Bukovyna land – Chernivtsy region, **Ukraine**

Storozhynets district is located in the south-western part of Chernivtsy oblast. In the south, it borders Romania, in the west – Vizhnitsky district. Two-thirds of the total area of the

district is covered by the Bucovina foothills, one-third – Bukovyna Carpathians. The climate in the foothills is moderately warm and humid.

Chernivtsy region on the map



The capital of the district is the town of Storozhynets – one of the oldest cities in Bukovyna. It is located in a picturesque valley on the left bank of the river Siret, at the foot of the Carpathians. The level of economic development of Chernivtsy region is one of the lowest in the

region and in Ukraine. The economy is based on agriculture, wood industry, food and light industry.

The main challenge in the district is infrastructure, including Internet access and roads.



There are 98 500 inhabitants living in the district, with the density of 84,9 inhabitants per km², 2144 officially registered unemployed persons, which is 2,2 % of the total population, but the rate of hidden unemployment is very high. Each third family has its member working abroad.

No specific destination management organisations or tour operators exist yet, but their functions are naturally taken by other tourism actors, such as providers of accommodation (rural tourism households), food and beverages, visitor attractions, and transport as well as tour operators located in the regional capital Chernivtsy and by the tourism department of the Storozhynets state administration. The area is rich with recreational and resort recourses. A dense network of rivers, forests (30% of the area), rich and diverse landscapes, mineral springs, historical and architectural attractions create good conditions for recreation, tourism and treatment.

Cultural attractions include traditional ethnic festivals and fairs: about 8 ethnographical festivals are held on the district level. In addition, every village of the area holds at least 3 festivals a year, "ethnic day" of the village, and a "day of youth". Besides, visitors could join summer and autumn fairs, as well as other events: Krasnoilska Polonyna, Birch Syrup Festival, Malanka, "from Christmas to Jordan", Ivana Kupala, Petrychera.

Tourism, especially rural tourism, is seen as one of the main opportunities for economic development and creation of new jobs and SME in the area.

Entrepreneurial spirit, sense of hospitality, innovation and creativity in thinking is highly important and well developed in the Storozhynets district. International, transboundary, thematic and geographic cooperation is seen as highly important, but needs to be fostered in the area.





Testing InRuTou in the Storozhynets district



Marina Konyak was selected as Trainer/opinion leader in the Storozhynets district – as a very enthusiastic and active, creative and capable leader in the area, highly respected, as well as open minded and approachable.

Three trainings were organized in 3 locations. A total of 74 participants attended the trainings – all of them invited by Marina Konyak. Three different focus groups have been formed:

- 1) internally displaced people group (organized in Chernivtsy city, where a special center for displaced people from Donbass and Crimea started to operate);
- 2) local NGO's and authorities involved in tourism (in a neighboring district),
- 3) local entrepreneurs involved in tourism (in Banyliv-Pidhirnyy village of the Storoshinets district)

Two modules, Marketing and Entrepreneurship, were covered, as the most necessary for the participants. The overall reaction to the training was positive. The participants have expressed willingness to continue self-education as well as sharing this knowledge with others.

The materials were appropriate, well understood and relevant; the cases evoked interest and quite a lengthy discussion.



C

CHALLENGES:

- Less than half of the participants have access to the Internet and therefore no e-mail or social media accounts.
- The Sharing Platform did not ignite any enthusiasm at all.
- The participants largely did not have smartphones to use the (M)APP in order to test it.
- Lack of understanding of the concept of sustainable tourism.

A

ADVICE:

- Patience is essential to continue this kind of educational work – it begins working and becomes understandable very slowly – however, the outcome is positive and useful.

Pay more attention to sustainable tourism, adopting the term to local and regional reality and needs. One suggestion in this respect is to spend more time during the trainings to explain, to push people to think more about their future/vision of the region and how to bring it to reality. Another possibility is providing additional simple and local examples. Finally, it is useful to find and join efforts with complementary activities, promoting sustainable development in the region, such as education for sustainable development.

Which modules were useful for the piloting process, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	All participants were interested in this module and hope to continue exploring it further by themselves.
Management	Used for general information and generating ideas
Information and Communication Technologies	Used for general information and generating ideas
Engaging Communities	Used for general information and generating ideas
Marketing	The most demanded module. Was done in all 3 trainings.
Sustainability in Tourism	Very difficult to understand the meaning of this module for the participants



Final Products

HANDMADE PRODUCTS COOPERATIVE AND FAIR

In March 2015, the first street fair for handmade souvenirs was held in Chernivtsy, where the participants offered the produced items for sale. After the initial success, the fair has become regular. The handmade master classes were also successful and continued until April. The participants still get together on regular basis to produce handmade souvenirs for sale. This process resulted in a cooperative for traditional crafts manufacturing, online shop to sell the products and a fair.

The online shop can be found here: <http://gtorba.com/>



USE OF THE INRUTOU TRAINING IN THE CHERNIVTSY UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT

The participants of the second training expressed interest in joining the Sharing Platform and using the e-Learning Platform for their work in the future. The teachers from the Chernivtsy University, Faculty of Tourism Management, expressed interest in making trainings for their students (3rd and 4th year) on the e-Learning Platform. This provided the university staff with an extra tool for their work and at the same time helped to broaden the use of the platform and receive valuable feedback from the university students.

MUSHROOMING AND GOAT MILKING COOPERATIVE

Participants of the third training in Banyliv-Pidgirny pilot village decided to create a cooperative for wild mushroom picking trips (with traditional mushroom drying, mushroom cuisine and mushroom selling), as well as providing goat milking lessons and selling goat milk. The cooperative has already started its work:

- Mushroom Tours have been organized from June until October. The program includes: rules of mushroom collecting and safety, cooking and keeping. In 2015 season – 150 tourists participated, recruited via information shared via Facebook, Tweeter, and private announcements, from people to people.
- On the Goat farm visitors can learn general information about goats, caring for them, and the practical attractions: grazing, milking, and milk tasting. 55 tourists participated from June until September, including mainly young people.

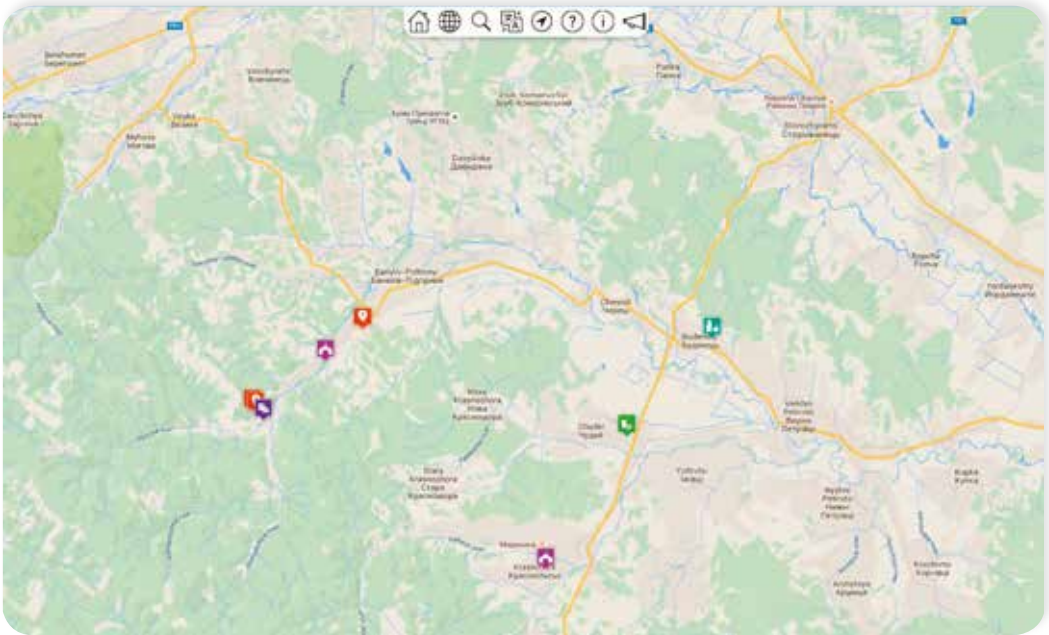


These products of the InRuTou trainings (street fair and internet shop, students' education, mushroom tourism and goat farm) will be further developed and improved by the par-

ticipants. Moreover, they plan to transfer their experience to other areas despite the many challenges and solutions they had to find together.



Chernivtsy region **ON THE (M)APP**



Some of the results of the InRuTou in the Chernivtsy region on the (M)APP



Which modules were useful for creating final products, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	Developing of a cooperative in Banyliv-Pidgirny and new businesses there (goat farm, mushroom trips)
Management	Used for general information and generating ideas
Information and Communication Technologies	Not studied in the pilot region, but final projects connected with it.
Engaging Communities	Used for general information and generating ideas
Marketing	The Marketing module was especially interesting and useful and lead to further discussion on a direct applicability, in particular creating a street fair and an online shop, promoting mushrooms trips.
Sustainability in Tourism	Used for general information and generating ideas





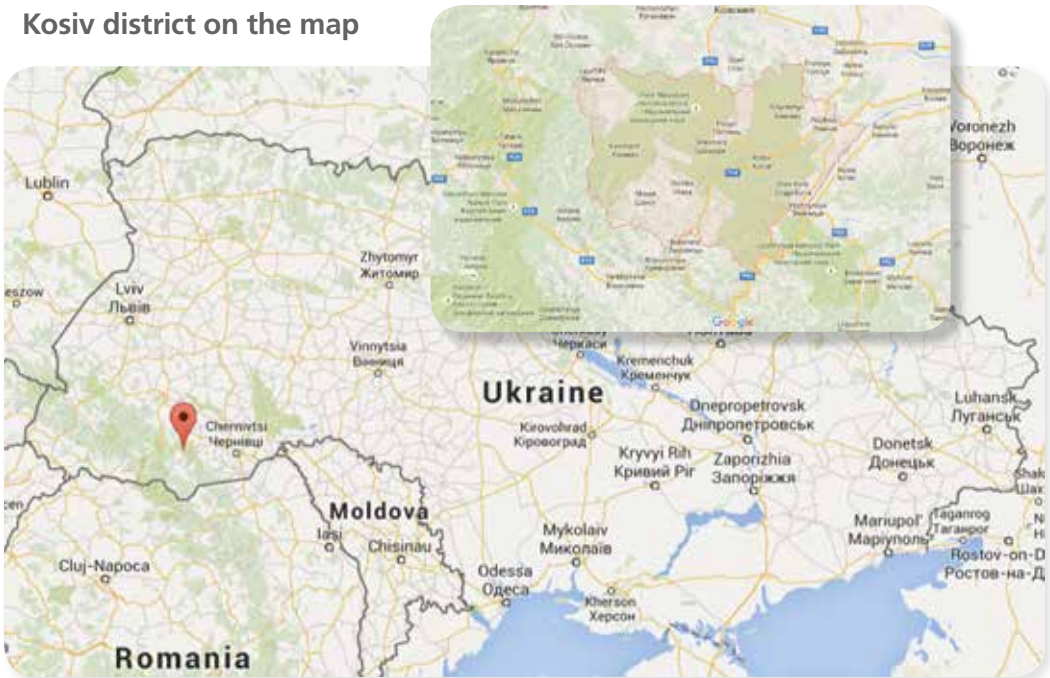
PILOT AREA Kosiv district, Hutsulshina land – Ivano-Frankivsk region, **UKRAINE**

Introducing Kosiv district, Hutsulshina land – Ivano-Frankivsk region, **Ukraine**

The Kosiv district area is well known as a recreation and tourism destination, due to its beautiful nature and landscapes, fresh air, mineral or just healthy drinking water, as well as many cultural traditions and monuments, including the best handicraft traditions in Ukraine. The moun-

tains rise up to 1000 m above the sea level in the mountainous part of the district. There are a few big rivers in the mountain valleys: Cheremosh – 80km, Pistynka – 56km, Rybnytza – 54km. The climate is moderately continental. The district is home to 88, 406 inhabitants.

Kosiv district on the map





Breeding is the main field of agriculture (60% of agricultural production). Traditional production includes milk and cheese, sheep wool blankets and clothes. Traditionally, agriculture and handicrafts have been the main employment sectors. But now, economy is refocusing on non-traditional fields: social services, trade, including outside of the region.

There are 650 small retail businesses, 140 food services, 60 different consumer services, and 8 officially registered markets in the district. Most of the companies are family owned (about 200 small enterprises and about 50000 private entrepreneurs).

The state of the environment depends on business development. In some cases, people care about nature because tourists come to Kosiv for healthy nature. For example, fish farmers care about the nature around their place because they depend on tourists who come there for fresh air and mountain fish, so the farmers are motivated to keep a small river clean.

There is a national nature park which causes a lot of conflicts because people want to have more land to build houses for tourists.

In general, people are very creative; they find solutions in hard economical situations and are able to develop businesses, especially family businesses.

Kosiv district is one of the main tourism destinations in the entire Ukrainian Carpathians because of nice nature, mountains, healthy food, cultural traditions, skiing, and mainly – its famous handicrafts. The Hutsuls (main local sub-ethnos) keep their cultural traditions, and this is well known around Ukraine. Hutsul cultural heritage is presented at different types of exhibitions, at national and local festivals. Such festivals are connected (mostly) with old traditions, such as sheepherding, cheese making, winter religion celebrations etc; some of them only exist in this area.



Like in the Storozhinets district, there are no specific destination management organisations or tour-operators, but their functions are naturally taken by other tourism actors, such as providers of accommodation (rural tourism

households), food and beverages, visitor attractions, and transportation. However, the many private tourist providers act separately with no common positioning as a sector; no coordination or supporting services exist.



Valylo – a traditional washing mashine

Testing InRuTou in the Kosiv district

Mykola Blyshnyuk was selected as the InRuTou Trainer/opinion leader. He is an open-minded, respected, approachable, creative and a capable leader who knows the local people, traditions, problems very well and is able to build cooperation between different people and structures; he has a good experience in teaching and trainings.

Two modules were chosen for the piloting: ICT and Marketing, due to the following reasons:

- There is no understanding of the Sustainable development concept – all official documents separately appeal to economy, social issues and environment without linking them; However, some aspects of sustainability have been addressed during the training indirectly.
- There is a large variety of local tourism attractions within local businesses, traditional and unique for the industry and connected to the Hutsul heritage (such as traditional crafts and souvenirs sold on the famous Kosiv market, traditional rituals shows – weddings, holiday celebrations, traditional crafts masterclasses, pastures visits, traditional music instruments etc., local museums and historic sites, Hutsul horse riding and fishing);
- There is very little coordination inside of the district with no information available outside of the destination (only printed booklets in some places);
- The rather bad quality of local roads reduces the potential quantity and quality of the tourists visiting the area;
- There is internet access (comparing with Chernivtsy region).

Therefore, these two modules were chosen specifically to encourage web-presence of local businesses and develop their cooperation with already established local internet resources (FB community, city website etc)

Half of the participants consisted of students from the Decorative and Applied arts Institute. The registration process showed that less than a half of the group has e-mail addresses, although most of the younger representatives were registered in social media.

There was quite a specific interest in trying to attract more tourists to the area, however, the discussion focused on what type of tourists should be targeted, and what should be the limit, since the area has limited natural capacity for traditional skiing and hiking tourism. Eventually, all agreed on a marketing concept of Kosiv as a centre of Hutsul traditional arts and crafts. The students were very enthusiastic about using social media for marketing.





CHALLENGES:

- The participants lacked specific knowledge about tourism: resource use, types of recreation, marketing concepts, etc. Some of this information was not available on the platform, as it is expected of trainees to already have some basic knowledge.
- Some of the examples used by the InRuTou platform system seemed somewhat difficult (unusual) for locals.
- Difficulties among the participants to find time to go through all modules
- Poor communication and cooperation among the community members who do not believe in a collective action as a local community
- No appropriate smartphones for testing and using the (M)APP
- Lack of understanding of the concept of sustainable tourism
- Using the Internet was often too difficult for the older generation.



Pilot training in Kosiv



ADVICE:

- It seems that the fragmented approach is not the most effective. The entire course would be more useful, especially for students. However, more information on the basics of the tourism industry and on sustainability of tourism would be needed for that. The latter concept was especially unfamiliar for locals, and would require more time than the project allowed.
- It would be helpful for the older generation to use the Internet and electronic tools, if someone from the younger generation could support them. In this respect, mixed age groups are more advantageous. However, younger people are more reluctant to participate in mixed age groups.
- Using more local examples when explaining tourism development and sustainable tourism was helpful.
- Slowly introducing InRuTou approaches and training, such as using social networks, and ICT tools can help people to become more open to community action and public participation

Which modules were useful for the piloting process, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	Used for general information and generating ideas
Management	Used for general information and generating ideas
Information and Communication Technologies	Younger participants started attempts to connect rich cultural traditions and handicrafts with modern possibilities of the Internet. However, there is still a lack of relevant tools. But the participants were asked to create a vision of future and then – individual steps of how to reach that vision, and they started thinking about it.
Engaging Communities	Used for general information and generating ideas
Marketing	A marketing concept set for the entire city or even region was an entirely new idea and at first, did not bring any enthusiasm, however, after discussion, several ideas that might develop further came up. The participants seemed to like this idea.
Sustainability in Tourism	Used for general information and generating ideas





Final Products

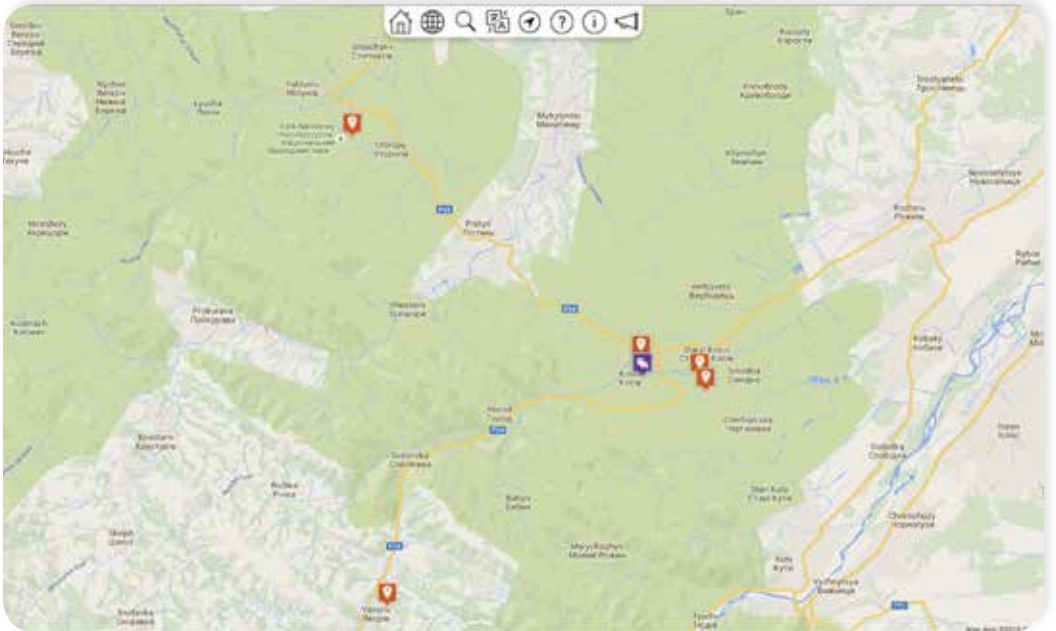
As a result of the training, the participants decided to cooperate better with the providers of the local web resources, which deal with cultural heritage and tourism, with respect to sharing information and promotion. Such integration allows to raise awareness about tourism points and to promote local products. In particular, there is

an agreement about cooperation with kosivart.com. Some points, connected with cultural heritage and information facilities, have been added to the (M)APP. Future plans of the participants include development of cooperation between stakeholders through local information resources. It is also a way to build a stronger community.



Pilot training in Kosiv

Kosiv region ON THE (M)APP



Some of the results of the InRuTou in the Kosiv District reflected on the (M)APP





Which modules were useful for creating final products, and how?

MODULE	HOW WAS IT USED?
Entrepreneurship	Used for general information and generating ideas
Management	Used for general information and generating ideas
Information and Communication Technologies	The pilot product directly connected with ICT
Engaging Communities	Used for general information and generating ideas
Marketing	Marketing through ICT is a way for rational development of the area.
Sustainability in Tourism	Used for general information and generating ideas



What did the participants think about InRuTou?

Maryna Konyak, trainer, opinion leader, Chernivtsy region:

"Healthy and creative relaxation is possible: fantastic and viable environment, harmony between man and nature. InRuTou helps to find this magic place."



Mykola Blyznyuk, trainer, opinion leader, Kosiv district:

"Our region has all possibilities for sustainable development, but most of the people do not know what it means. Just a quick look into the future suggested by the project expert Olga Ignatenko at the training ("please, imagine your place in 20 years: what would you like to see?") pushed the trainees to think about the future, life and ways to reach their vision. So, young people see the future of Kosiv as a place of sustainability. They start to think in this direction after the training."

Olga Ignatenko, project expert, "Green Dossier":

The concept of innovation is much easier than one would think: sometimes the simplest solutions can make a very big difference! Simple on-line presence and possibility to find and book tourism services online is an innovation for many rural communities. It does not require serious investments or infrastructure and at the same time improves accessibility of the area for the tourist through easier trip and activities planning.



Tamara Malkova, leader of "Green Dossier":

We all entered a new world. I mean not only modern technologies, but also new types of relations between people in communities and countries, innovative approaches to education, new possibilities to change our world for better together. Of course, technologies play an important role in changing the world, but they are just a tool. And people are always unique and they can use smart tools for making change.

INRUTOU PARTNERS

IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems

Krems, Austria www.fh-krems.ac.at



The IMC Krems is a highly recognised management and tourism University of Applied Sciences in Austria; it was founded in 1994. Over the past few years, the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems has built up a strong international reputation and now has approximately 2,000 students from all over the world as well as 150 employees and full-time faculty. Full-time and part-time Bachelor and Master Degree programmes are offered in the following areas: Business Studies, Life Sciences, and Health Studies.

The international approach and employability are the University's priorities, which is also reflected in the transnational programs in Azerbaijan, China, Ukraine and Vietnam. The core modules of the Tourism and Leisure Management Bachelor program include business administration, which provides a solid base for future management activities, languages, information and communication technologies as well as specialised tourism subjects such as Cultural Tourism or Sustainable Tourism Development.

SOPHIA Research & Innovation

Rome, Italy www.sophiari.eu



SOPHIA Research & Innovation is a not for profit Association which was created in 2009 in Rome to promote the participation of Italian public and private organisations in R&D and Innovation programmes, mainly supported by the European Union.

In this respect, SOPHIA provides consulting and management services to both, the public and private sectors, and more importantly, it participates in real projects in order to keep the pace with technological and methodological innovation, especially, but not exclusively in the area of Education and Training.

All the founding partners are senior professionals with decades of experience in such fields as European Programmes, IT applications, Education and Training and Innovation at large.

SOPHIA is involved in a number of financed projects, contributing to the project funded research activities, involved in the development of innovative learning platforms, methodologies, and training approaches or in the project's quality and evaluation activities.

BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Bournemouth, UK www1.bournemouth.ac.uk



Bournemouth University is a modern and innovative institution with six distinctive Schools of study reflecting our emphasis on education as a pathway to professional success. Within the International Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Research (ICTHR – School of Tourism), the eTourism Lab explores cutting edge information and communication technologies, alongside e-based strategic management and marketing for the tourism and hospitality industries. The School has a long tradition of generating research output in the information technology and information systems fields; the formation of the Lab demonstrates the university's commitment to this field.

Associazione seed

Canobbio, Switzerland www.seedlearn.org



Seed is a non-profit enterprise with expertise in education, technologies, and international development. Seed is engaged in development and social projects locally and internationally; it provides services to non-profit organizations.

Seed reinvests profit for human capital development in developing countries in the area of communication and education technologies.

EURAC

Bolzano, Italy www.eurac.edu



The European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano (EURAC) lies in the heart of the Dolomites. Created in 1992 as an independent research center, EURAC is home to researchers from all over Europe who work together on a wide range of interdisciplinary projects.

The research carried out by the Institute for Regional Development and Location Management the EURAC institute involved in this project, focuses on the sustainable development of mountain regions. The Institute forms part of an international network of government ministries, public bodies and other research institutes.

The scientific research of location management is concerned with the economic, political and spatial fundamentals required to ensure that locations remain competitive on a long-term basis. The practical focus is on tourism, culture and its interaction with the economy, as well as integrated local and urban development.

UNEP VIENNA SCC

Vienna, Austria

www.unep.org/roee/AbouttheOffice/UNEPinVienna

UNEP Vienna SCC is an outposted office of UNEP's Regional Office for Europe, specialized in the Carpathian Convention, mountain ecosystems and environmental programme delivery in South East Europe. UNEP Vienna provides the Secretariat to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. As the Environmental Reference Centre for the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, it promotes cooperation and experience exchange in research, nature protection and sustainable development between the mountainous areas.



ROMONTANA

Vatra Dornei, Romania www.romontana.org

National Association for Mountains Rural Development has been established in 2000 as an NGO with a purpose of supporting the sustainable development of the mountain areas in Romania. The specific objectives of the organizations are: supporting the sustainable development of tourism, training and education, integrated development of the mountain communities, promotion of mountain quality products and services, protection of the mountain environment and cultural heritage, facilitating experience exchanges and public-private partnership building, and mountain policies.



ECOPSYCHOLOGY SOCIETY

Zakliczyn, Poland www.ekopsychologia.pl

Ecopsychology Society was founded in 2003 to initiate, implement and promote activities for environmental protection and to build social responsibility towards natural heritage with particular emphasis on shaping the attitudes and activities of civil society development.

Ecopsychology supports public participation in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention in Poland, particularly in the aspect of sustainable development, tourism, cultural heritage, agriculture and education; it participates in working groups and other meetings of the Convention, representing the interests of the inhabitants of the Carpathians. The Society is a member of the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative and ANPED.



Green Dossier

Kyiv, Ukraine www.dossier.org.ua

The mission of the International Charitable Organisation "Information Center "Green Dossier" is (i) to engage as many people as possible in addressing problems of environment and sustainable development and (ii) to encourage public participation in decision making on these matters at different levels.

The organisation assists building of sustainable communities by providing environmental and social information, which helps to improve places where people live and work giving them a chance to play their real role in shaping change for a preferable future. Green Dossier helps in revival of cultural traditions, arts and environmentally friendly businesses, which is directly connected with nature conservation.

"Green Dossier" implemented more than 70 projects during 20 years of work. More than 20 of the projects were carried out in the Carpathian region.



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training, street fest, goat farm, mushroom trips)

Front Cover Top: Mircea Vergehet,

Front Cover Bottom: Juno Rahkonen, InRuTou partnership

Back Cover: Mircea Vergehet, InRuTou partnership

Innovation in Rural Tourism

Innovation in Rural Tourism – Cases from European Mountain Communities is the final publication of the InRuTou project. It introduces the beneficiary communities – pilot sites of the project in Austria, Italy, Poland, Romania and Ukraine and presents the piloting process and its results in each participating area. The aim of this publication is to provide inspiration for and concrete examples of implementing the InRuTou training.

This collection of cases complements the InRuTou Transferability Manual – a methodological publication based on the background and technical documents of the project. Both publications should be used together by organizations interested in transferring the InRuTou methods to other communities, regions, and countries.



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