InRuDou
Transferability Manual

Innovation in Rural Tourism
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www.inrutou.eu
WHY MOUNTAINS?

Mountainous areas in Europe are centres of natural and cultural diversity. However, their inhabitants are facing a lack of opportunities and limited possibility to participate in and influence local development processes. This causes outmigration of the population, abandonment of the rural settlements, especially by the younger generations, leading to environmental degradation and the loss of cultural traditions. The remaining rural population is struggling with the lack of infrastructure and development opportunities. At the same time, certain mountainous areas face pressure from various industrial sectors, including tourism, which often endangers the natural resources, is inconsiderate of proper benefit-sharing with the local population, and could lead to degradation of traditional lifestyles.

Gaining competencies in sustainable rural tourism provide the local population with opportunities to ensure economic, social and environmentally sustainable development in their rural mountain communities.
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 approaches, 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.

The present Manual is a methodological publication that explains how the project was developed based on its implementation process as well as background and technical documents. It strives to support interested organizations in transferring the InRuTou methods to other communities, regions, and countries.

It will be complimented by the final project publication, which introduces participating communities, and final project results.

We hope that this manual proves useful and look forward to feedback concerning our work on Innovation in Rural Tourism. We remain available for questions and advice regarding the application of our methods and their transferability.

The InRuTou project team
INTRODUCTION

Rural Tourism as an approach for development of the European Mountainous Regions

Many European rural mountain communities are facing challenges: economic stagnation, out-migration of the local population, exploitation of natural resources by third parties, degradation and loss of their unique natural and cultural resources.

Rural Tourism can provide a solution for sustainable regional development of these regions through positive economic, social and environmental impacts:

- generation of new businesses,
- creation of jobs,
- improvement of infrastructure and services,
- sustainability of the natural environment and landscapes,
- cultural enrichment of the local people,
- increasing public interest, due to the growing demand for leisure and tourism activities in rural areas.

What is Rural Tourism?
As rural tourism is very multi-faceted, problems with finding a commonly accepted definition persist. However, rural tourism might be described as “a wish to give visitors personalized contact, a taste of the physical and human environment of the countryside and opportunities to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of local people.” It is an important economic activity in the European Union, considered as a powerful means for socio-economic development and regeneration of rural areas, particularly for those affected by the decline of traditional agrarian activities and those endorsed with natural beauty.

Rural mountain communities often lack knowledge about tourism development: valorization, entrepreneurship, management, promotion of tourism resources, New Media use in tourism.

Mitigating these lacks is essential to develop functioning tourism structures in the rural mountain areas, which provide for economic revenues and possibilities to diversify rural livelihoods in the long-term.
European Policy Context

Rural development on the European level is reflected in publications of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development and its nonprofit body, the European Network for Rural Development. Within the EU Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development, the third priority is defined as “Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of the rural economy.” This third priority also emphasizes the diffusion of ICT as an important factor for the diversification of rural livelihoods. The tourism sector of the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry as well as the OECD’s Tourism Committee provide useful sources of information concerning the field of rural tourism.

Local Communities and Rural Tourism

A number of European rural areas have experienced a significant increase in tourism arrivals/stays in the past 10 years, and further increase is expected in the next decade. But mainstream rural tourism does not always empower rural mountain communities, which are often excluded from development processes.

The engagement and commitment of the local actors is the groundwork for the development of successful rural tourism initiatives. However, local inhabitants often lack adequate (theoretical) know-how and the right (practical) skills, essential for them to engage successfully in the tourism sector.

Educating and training rural residents can provide them with qualified abilities to enhance their competitiveness on the global market, it can foster all-inclusive destination governance as well as help generating new job opportunities and self-employment.

In this respect, the lack of Vocational Education and Training opportunities (VET) presents a serious challenge.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)
can be defined as Education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market.

Why ICT and (e)Learning?

Modern information and communication technology (ICT) offers vast possibilities both for tourism development and training.

The advent of the internet produced a paradigm shift: online technologies are increasingly necessary in rural destinations, which are often isolated and lack coordination and communication among each other, to keep up with the fast developments in the Tourism sector and be able to match the expectations of the visitors.

At the same time, professionals often do not have the time to engage in formal education (i.e. undergraduate or postgraduate courses) and attend university courses. An alternative would be training via the Internet.
The Internet and specifically eLearning, is helping professionals to gain the competences they need to properly run a business in the travel and tourism field.

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the learning environment is often referred as eLearning\textsuperscript{15}, defined by the European Commission as “the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration”\textsuperscript{16}. eLearning models could be situated in a continuum between fully face-to-face teaching and fully distance education through the internet\textsuperscript{17}, including also a mixed learning-teaching method called blended learning.

Blended Learning (b-learning), is a type of eLearning were students learn from both online and presence delivery. Blended learning can be seen as a hybrid of traditional face-to-face and online learning, where the instruction occurs both in the classroom and online; the online component becomes the natural extension of traditional classroom learning\textsuperscript{18}, and has been suggested as a solution to creating distance courses – eLearning courses – in a way that can overcome some challenges of Distance learning, such as feelings of isolation, time management problems, and limited accessibility to materials, to other students, and to instructors\textsuperscript{19}.

Knowledge, Skills and Attitude

The combination of three different dimensions is crucial within vocational education and training: knowledge, skills and attitude\textsuperscript{20,16}. All three have been integrated into the design of the InRuTou project and the resulting training material in the following way:

- **The knowledge layer**: learners are confronted with a series of resources that will expose them to cutting edge concepts within the different topics of the vocational training. Reasoning by example will make the internalization of the knowledge easier and immediate for practitioners.

- **The skills layer**: learners will have the possibility of gaining skills via the additional resources presented after every reading. With the final goals in mind learners will be stimulated to acquire the basic skills to build or enhance a new (or an existing) tourism product.

- **The attitude layer**: learners will be encouraged to develop attitudes in two different ways: (i) by understanding the tourism disposition towards the needs and wants of the final customers and (ii) by understanding the ways and advantages of working together (i.e. community consultation and collaboration) to achieve better results and improve environmental sustainability.
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:

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<tr>
<th>The Alps</th>
<th>The Apennines</th>
<th>The Carpathians</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria: Nationalpark Kalkalpen Region</td>
<td>Italy: Parco dell’Aveto</td>
<td>Romania: Tara Dornelor, Kosiv District, Storozhynestky District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poland: Beskidy Mountains, Storozhynestky District</td>
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Figure 1: 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 applications.

The developed tools and the training method were designed to:
• facilitate knowledge integration and experience exchange among the participating stakeholders on the community level,
• enable creation of joint innovative solutions, such as:
  – new local provider networks,
  – connections between local communities and the international tourism market, and
  – development of the rural tourist offers.

The “Innovation” in InRuTou

The training was designed to provide an innovative set of skills for the participants by addressing the three components:
• knowledge (identification of local tourism attractions),
• skills (management and promotional competences),
• attitude (entrepreneurship and hospitality).

This technology-enhanced VET was developed to promote the rural communities’ empowerment by:
• encouraging community consultations
• fostering the role of the tourism innovators, already operating within the region.
• Creating “multipliers” - “opinion leaders”, selected by the communities, able to integrate rural tourism with sustainable development and to coach other actors in the destination.

The beneficiaries learned about:
• sustainable development processes,
• entrepreneurship, and marketing and management
• community consultation and networking
• how to use technologies to support small and medium enterprises,
• how to use the internet to market the destination globally.

The InRuTou Process

The project included a number of stages:
• Background analysis, including desk-research, questionnaires among the local population of the pilot areas, interviews with representatives of best-practice cases and community consultations
• Development of a set of Competencies and the Pedagogical Model
• Development of the course materials
• Developing ICT Tools
• Experimentation & Validation: in two stages, 1) via the trainings of the trainers, and 2) pilot testing and pilot tourism product developments

In addition, throughout the project, partners disseminated information on the local, national, regional and international level, thus:
• promoting participation of the local population,
• receiving useful input from other interested actors
• promoting wider use of the project results
• promoting exploitation – further use of the project results in other communities, countries and regions.
Awareness and participation of the local communities was ensured by informing and inviting them to contribute to the project development from the beginning - via taking part in community consultations and trainings as potential tourism innovators – in order to contribute both to their empowerment and to the project sustainability.

How to use this Transferability Manual? Who is it for?

The goal of the manual is to support the transferability of the project results to other rural (mountain) regions by giving insights into the InRuTou project.

It provides ideas for: organizations and individuals, interested in initiating or enhancing community-based sustainable rural tourism development processes

The Manual briefly describes the main project components, to enable replication:

– Background Analysis, including community consultations
– Demand and Supply Framework
– Competence Framework
– The pedagogical model and Curriculum Design
– ICT Tools used
– Training guidelines
– Evaluating the trainings

Some advice tips from the project partners’ experience have been distributed throughout the text.

Many of the project documents can be found on the project website, for further information: www.inrutou.eu/achievements
Cooperation can be horizontal as well as vertical. It can imply sharing of one’s competences in exchange for the knowledge and skills of others.

- Cooperation is crucial for a coherent appearance of a tourism destination - the image, which the guests perceive.
- Cooperation is only beneficial if all involved actors pursue a common goal, if they face each other with trust and recognize the additional value, which partnerships offer.

Creating local networks is important for the development of rural tourism:

- Searching for and generating interfaces between single services/products and entering into partnerships results in optimized offers for the visitors.
- Tasks have to be clearly allocated and within networks rights as well as duties need to be clearly defined.
- Ultimately, broader synergies can be created through the building of local cooperation and thus strengthening regional economic cycles.

Regional partners that share the same aspirations can be particularly valuable regarding destination marketing, tourism distribution or quality management.

However, local actors or organizations should also be willing to take leadership in the tourism development process. Visionary thinking of single stakeholders has often proved to be the core gateway for rural tourism development.

Protected areas are often able to take in a leadership role for rural tourism development as they are closely interconnected with the local administration and are usually engaged in an extensive network, cooperating with important local stakeholders of different sectors.

A clear organizational and financial structure should be created for the establishment of successful rural tourism initiatives.

- Political support is needed for the start-up and eventually also the continuous financing of initiatives.
- Long-term private financial investments are necessary.
- Rural development is often facilitated if the public administration commits to initial investments. Public financing of basic infrastructures (notably transport infrastructures) is common in established alpine tourism destinations, nevertheless follow-up investments often have to be conducted privately (notably leisure infrastructures).
- Public-private-partnerships have also proven to be successful.

Destination management organizations (DMO) are often connected to the public administration. These organizations undertake strategic planning, management, communication and marketing, which is a fundamental success factor for the development of rural tourism. Being the “tourism linkage” between all stakeholders, they
are steering tourism development in the region, managing it effectively and driving it into a specific direction. DMOs often are at the main focal point for creating a destination’s image, which is one of the main aspects, why tourists chose a specific region for their holidays.

Up-to-date communication of both, the DMOs and the tourism entrepreneurs with local, national and international media is crucial. Moreover, entrepreneurs need to use modern and ICT-based communication technologies for the distribution and promotion of their products/services.

A regional umbrella brand has the potential to increase national and international knowledge about the area.

(Destination) umbrella brands act as a recognition factor and offer a security and trust element for the visitors because they guarantee a certain quality. They are an instrument for delivering a common message and conveying the desired image of a destination. Destination brands also generate a „we-feeling“ among the local stakeholders and increase willingness for cooperation. However, “rules” have to be defined, which are binding for all tourism providers that want to use a brand. Successful umbrella brands enhance awareness about the region and increase competitiveness as well as visitor numbers.

Guests are above all seeking products that are typical for the region and that express authenticity. Traditions and customs play an essential role in the creation of a regional identity. Moreover, the demand for offers increases if local tourism operators are able to sell them as a unique experience.

If a destination succeeds in incorporating awareness for the value of their own region and identity among all actors, then the valorization of the natural and cultural heritage is more likely to generate successful tourism products and offers.

In order for the rural tourism development to create benefits for the whole community, it needs to be based on the involvement of all local stakeholders.

However, particularly the involvement of the younger generation is highly important in the process of rural tourism development.

• The younger generation often shows a higher entrepreneurial spirit and willingness to be engaged in rural tourism activities.
• Young people should be supported in building a strong connection and identification with their home region.

Advice:
Define at the very beginning of the project common criteria for the selection of pilot areas (size, inhabitants, economic situation, etc.) as this simplifies the implementation of the same activities.

Discovering the strengths of a region and identifying common values are basic ingredients for developing rural tourism products and designing offers, as well as marketing these products and services.
A RURAL TOURISM TRAINING PROJECT – COMPONENTS
The background analysis serves to provide a basis for understanding the situation in the pilot areas and it helps to fit the training approach to the needs of the local population. It can help to:

- Identify relevant local stakeholders that are important for the success of the project activities.
- Give an insight into the current needs and demands of the local communities within the pilot areas – especially in the field of tourism vocational education.
- Outline relevant best practice examples across the Alps, the Apennine and the Carpathians.

Possible methods for conducting a background analysis include:

- Questionnaire survey,
- Expert interviews,
- Face-to-face and virtual focus groups,
- Case studies,
- Community consultations,
- Desk research
- Analysis of online search behavior

In the case of InRuTou, the following methods were applied:

### Questionnaire Survey

A quantitative questionnaire survey was developed and distributed among the inhabitants of the local pilot communities, both online and face-to-face. The partners targeted receiving 100 responses per pilot area.

### Online questionnaires can be prepared using a number of online tools, such as:

- Survey Monkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/)
- Lime Survey (https://www.limesurvey.org/en/)
- Google Forms (http://www.google.com/forms/about/)
- Kwik Surveys (https://kwiksurveys.com/)
- Survey Planet (https://surveyplanet.com/)
- Free Online Surveys (http://freeonlinesurveys.com/#)

Using open-source tools is a cost-effective way for the implementation of online surveys. However, it is recommended to study in detail the different features that these tools offer and select the one that is most adequate for the purpose of the analysis.

### Expert Interviews

**Implementation:** Qualitative expert interviews were conducted with representatives of best-practice case studies that are geographically dispersed across the pilot area countries. The experts commonly were the directors, owners or initiators of the different case studies. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via the telephone and they were based on a guideline with open-ended questions.

**Analysis:** The interviews were analyzed with the method GABEK\(^2\), which is suitable for the evaluation of complex and unstructured qualitative data.
GABEK allows for a computer aided reduction of the complexity of the data and it is suitable for a good visual representation of the material. The analysis is based on the selection of key words and on the relationships between these. The identified key words and their relationships may be depicted in causal net graphs, where arrows represent positive (and bullets negative) causal relationships. The figure below shows an example of a GABEK graph and it depicts the most important key words, which are related to the successful implementation of rural tourism initiatives or projects.

Figure 2. Factors of Success in the Context of Rural Tourism Development

Figure 2. Factors are based on best-practice communities; each connection in green is based on being mentioned by interviewees at least 3 times

Best Practice Case Studies Analysis

The identification of good practices within mountainous areas aimed at selecting examples of successful rural tourism development and at distinguishing typical strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities (SWOT framework\(^23\)) in the context of establishing rural tourism initiatives in mountain areas.
The case studies were selected based on the following characteristics:
- Taking place in a rural mountainous area
- Tourism – related
- Involving the local community
- Supporting local economic development
- Showing an effort in the field of sustainability
- Facilitating networking
- Innovative character
- Providing a memorable experience for tourists
- Possibly including ICT in implementation

Advice: The evaluation of qualitative data based on strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities (SWOT framework) has become a widely accepted strategic tool, since it allows the integration and synopsis of diverse information.

Community Consultations

Initial community consultations were implemented with a twofold purpose:
- Give the local actors a possibility to get to know the project and its aims, to maximize their opportunities, be informed and state their opinions before decisions are made.
- Identifying the social, economic and environmental background of the pilot areas as well as current problems and needs of the involved communities.

Community consultations can help to find the right people to involve in the project, to build acceptance and support for the project as well as create trust, synergies and a team spirit.

Advice: Define very clearly what the advantages and benefits the project creates for the local populations in pilot areas area are. This helps to raise interest and to generate engagement and commitment.
Some important questions that may be discussed during community consultations are:
• Which local actors have been present at the community consultation meeting?
• Which participants have been identified as being opinion leaders and could thus participate in the 1st train the trainers workshop?
• What is the current situation of the pilot area in relation to social, economic and environmental aspects?
• How is the tourism sector currently positioned?
• Is there a potential for further tourism development?
• What is the commitment of the local community?

The locals were invited to the community consultations in all participating communities using various means, including the distribution of a flyer, produced by the project partnership.
A focus groups is “[…] a special type of group in terms of purpose, size, composition, and procedures. A focus group is typically composed of 7-10 participants who are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the focus group.”

A focus group enables the facilitator to respond to the given comments (in contrary to a questionnaire) and to eventually pick up on certain aspects of the comments. In addition, it also allows the participants to comment on the comments of other participants.

Traditionally focus groups are implemented face-to-face, however, advances regarding technology have resulted in focus groups being increasingly conducted virtually. Synchronous, webcam and audio-based focus groups are difficult to implement due to various reasons such as unreliable internet access, etc. However, online focus group can also be organized by using asynchronous discussion boards.

Reports were produced of all Community consultations, which were integrated into the demand and supply framework (general aspects important for rural tourism development) as well as into the whole introductory part of the background report (pilot areas; social, economic and environmental background; key local stakeholders).
Demand and Supply Framework

Based on an extensive background analysis a set of criteria can be developed, which helps facilitating a long-term successful rural development process. The results of the various analyses (questionnaire survey, best-practice analysis, community consultations) can be used to identify these criteria.

They developed criteria for the “demand and supply framework” of the InRuTou project were divided into two categories:

1) Capacity building among local stakeholders in rural tourism, (knowledge, skills, attitude – Figure 3).
2) General aspects in the context of rural tourism development.

The criteria for the first category are based on the questionnaire survey among the local inhabitants and have been chosen according to the following aspects:

- Topics, where respondents expressed extremely low performance.
- Topics, which respondents considered to be totally important for tourism education.

The topics were assigned to 3 priority levels taking into account the stakeholder’s estimation of their own performance and the importance, which they allocated to each aspect. Thereby, level 1 is to be considered as the most important one, followed by level 2 and 3.

The example of the resulting Knowledge, skills and attitude criteria can be seen in the table below.
**Figure 3. Capacity Building in Rural Tourism: Knowledge, skills and attitude criteria table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDE CRITERIA</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
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<td>LEVEL 1</td>
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<td><strong>KNOWLEDGE</strong></td>
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<td>ICT for destination promotion</td>
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<td>Computer reservation systems for tourism use</td>
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<td>Financial tourism management</td>
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<td>Operational tourism management</td>
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<td>Eco-certification/labels in tourism</td>
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<td>Environmental tourism management</td>
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<td>Human resource management in tourism</td>
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<td>Quality management in tourism</td>
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<td>Public relations in tourism</td>
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<td>Sustainable tourism development</td>
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<td>Environmental responsibility in tourism</td>
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<td><strong>SKILLS</strong></td>
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<td>Foreign languages</td>
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<td>E-mailing and search engines</td>
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<td>Website development/design</td>
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<td>Newsletters for tourism use</td>
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<td>Mobile applications for tourism use</td>
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<td>Online tourism marketing</td>
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<td>Online tourism distribution</td>
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<td>Social media in tourism</td>
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<td>Accounting in tourism</td>
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<td>Strategic tourism business planning</td>
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<td>Visitor information</td>
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<td>Customer service in tourism</td>
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<td>Tourism communication</td>
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<td>Natural heritage valorization for tourism</td>
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<td>Tourism events organization</td>
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<td>Cultural heritage valorization for tourism</td>
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<td>Tourism product development</td>
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<td><strong>ATTITUDE</strong></td>
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<td>Cooperation and building partnerships</td>
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<td>Innovative thinking</td>
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<td>Geographical transboundary networking</td>
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<td>Thematical transboundary networking</td>
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<td>Intergenerational networking</td>
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<td>Sense of hospitality</td>
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<td>Creative thinking</td>
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<td>Entrepreneurial spirit</td>
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Tourism is a very complex domain integrating a wide range of competences: knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed in order to develop, enhance and sustain (rural) tourism businesses. Thus, working on competencies means creating competitive advantage for the organizations.

European Reference Frameworks for Competencies

Several European Reference Frameworks for competencies exist: 1. EQF Formulation, 2. e-Competence Framework, and 3. ECVET System.

1. EQF Formulation

The EQF (European Qualifications Framework) aims at relating different countries national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. EQF is expressed as a table of eight levels (Level 1 – basic to Level 8 – Advanced), each one defined by a series of statements relating to knowledge, skills and competences (Table1).

The European Qualifications Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 to 8</td>
<td>Described as theoretical and/or factual</td>
<td>Described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)</td>
<td>Described in terms of responsibility and autonomy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. e-Competence Framework
The European e-Competence Framework (e-CF) is a reference framework of 36 ICT competencies that can be used and understood by ICT user and supply companies, the public sector, educational and social partners across Europe (European Union ecompetences.eu). This framework is structured in four dimensions and they reflect different levels of business and human resource planning requirements in addition to competencies development. The e-CF described as follows:
– Dimension 1: the five e-Competence areas derived from the ICT business processes are: Plan, Build, Run, Enable, Manage:
– Dimension 2: a set of reference e-Competences with a generic description for each competence.
– Dimension 3: For each e-Competence, suitable proficiency level specifications ranging between e-Competence levels e-1 and e-5, which are related to the EQF levels 3 to 8.
– Dimension 4: Knowledge and Skills embedded within e-Competences are listed. The meaning is to provide value and context to the competencies.

The European e-Competence Framework defines and describes e-competencies and associated proficiency levels from the company viewpoint but also aligns with the EQF which uses learning levels. Accordingly, the e-CF levels range from 1, the lowest to 5, the highest and they correspond to EQF levels 3-8. In table 2 the correspondence between e-CF and EQF levels is shown.

### Correspondence Model between e-CF and EQF levels (EU)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e-CF Level</th>
<th>Related to EQF Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e-5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-2</td>
<td>4 and 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The European e-Competence Framework 2.0, is available for downloading at: http://www.ecompetences.eu/site/objects/download/5983_EUeCF2.0framework.pdf*
3. ECVET System
The European Credit System for vocational Education and Training is a policy instrument designed to improve the comparability and the mobility of learning outcomes across European education and training institutions. It's the new European instrument to promote mutual trust and mobility in vocational education and training. The system aims to facilitate the validation, recognition and accumulation of work-related skills and knowledge acquired during a stay in another country or in different situations. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and ECVET share the same approach to learning outcomes. EQF levels also provide a reference for ECVET.

ECVET aims for better compatibility between the different VET systems in place across Europe and their qualifications. The present training guidelines provide VET institutions orientation on the importance of each learning unit with a defined percentage in accordance to the ECVET principles.

**ECVET Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Build</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Run</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Enable</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Manage</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


For a rural tourism project, an adapted competence framework can be developed, based on the existing frameworks – this has been done in the InRuTou project.
Methods

A twofold methodology has been used by the InRuTou partners:

1. The background analysis (described above) which helped to:
   - determine the level of technology usage,
   - perception of competencies needed in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude
   - gather demographic data to better understand the target audience of the training

2. A structured literature review of the main published well-cited papers and books about rural tourism competencies and skills (described below)

Methodologically the research was designed following the steps presented below:

- Choice of the descriptive keywords relevant for the project
  - Rural Tourism Competencies
- First round of research on journals databases (Journal of Travel Research, Tourism Management, Annals of Tourism Research)
- First qualitative analysis and selection of other three informative keywords
  - Rural Tourism
  - Rural Tourism Innovation
  - Rural Tourism Strategy
- Second round of research on journal databases (Journal of Travel Research, Tourism Management, Annals of Tourism Research) and on Google Scholar (scholar.google.com).
- Collection of partner’s academic resources suggestions.
- Final collection of academic resources (91 articles and 9 books).

Structured Literature Review

Structured literature review is an analytical process where the researcher queries different resources (in our case academic journal databases and scholar.google.com the academic version of google.com) in order to harvest resources useful to tackle a research objective.

The research objective of this structured literature review was to gain insights from the academic literature about the competences needed by rural tourism managers.

Several keywords were chosen in order to search through the literature (Figure 4). The final sample consists of 91 articles and 9 books.

Advice: Find a balance between theoretical and research work and applied or practical project activities to generate benefits for local pilot areas and at the same time make a contribution for the scientific community. However – depending on the goal of the project – the practical activities should prevail.
Figure 4. The Research Process
Results

Six competencies were found to enhance business for rural tourism, and form the basis of the course:

1. **Sustainability in Tourism**
   Understanding of sustainability, especially with respect to the field of tourism, will improve the development of sustainable strategies for the eco-tourism activity plan. This competency covers most of the important topics regarding the rural tourism customers and sustainability in the business management. This competency is important to attract tourists and to help develop a new range of business packages to improve business and environmental responsibilities.

2. **Entrepreneurship**
   Entrepreneurship is a well-known topic for new business managers. This competency will allow trainees to improve their skills in management and business models development, as well as improving the entrepreneurial skills and attitude to forward new business to the rural tourism pilot areas.

3. **ICT**
   ICT is highly important for the development of the business promotion in rural areas. This competency will help improve website management and online communication with the customers, also improving innovation and ICT skills and the digital rural tourism development. It covers ICT development and management for business strategic leadership. The knowledge and skills will enable business managers to manage customer satisfaction and improve performance standards.

4. **Management**
   Management is often highlighted as important skill to enhance rural tourism business. Management includes different skills and knowledge, including management of employees, organization, competition and conflicts, problem solving, as well as strategic thinking. The service level and risk management will help rural tourism providers achieve expected results and improve their business and services.

5. **Marketing**
   This competency encompasses a range of skills to improve marketing of the rural business, their communication to the customers and selling their products in a smart way, giving the business a new way of monitoring their online business and analyzing niche markets. Marketing is a big topic that covers different kinds of skills, analyzing the needs of the business managers and training them. It will enable trainees to improve the sales management, generate new tactical sales plans and actualize their products and customer services, as well as develop a proper strategy to deliver expected results.

6. **Community Networking**
   In order to develop sustainable tourism and attract visitors in a coordinated way, the community should learn how to share information and cooperate among all local actors. This competency will support identification of value chains, and finding innovative solutions in cooperation with other business.
The design of the pedagogical model is an important aspect of the e-learning quality.

The major challenge is to develop a pedagogical model that can:
- combine the flexibility in time and space
- offer the trainee a curriculum that can develop their knowledge and skills and
- address the needs of the target audience for the e-learning/b-learning programme.

The strategy, plan of delivery and the instructional design of the general course frame should be decided in advance – and can be included in a Pedagogical Model and Curriculum Design.

The following pedagogical premises, specific to the travel and tourism sector, should be considered:

- There is the need to apply an innovative pedagogy to the teaching of tourism related subjects that takes into consideration:
  - the relationship between education and industry,
  - the multidisciplinary character and multicultural nature of the subject.
- The curriculum should be based on a specific set of competencies and practical skills.
  - competencies that focus on problem solving, teamwork, and conflict resolution
  - specialized or industry-specific skills, practical skills for business, networking and communication skills, management skills and research skills
- The innovative pedagogy should support active learning styles, delivering theoretically sound but practically-oriented curriculum

Assumptions to be considered when developing a pedagogical model

1. Knowledge is constructed based on students’ experiences.
2. Learning is a personal understanding and interpretation of knowledge.
3. Learning is a continued and active process, in which knowledge is developed based on experience.
4. Knowledge evolution is a result of discussion of different interpretations, sharing of various understandings and changing of students’ intellectual knowledge representation as a result of efficient collaborative learning.
5. Learning must be positioned in realistic models; evaluation and assessment must be integrated with a project or a task rather than a separated activity.
Learning Objectives

The pedagogy of the course as well as the delivery of each module has been designed to suit individual participants' needs, enabling them to fulfil their expectations.

In order to design appropriate learning objectives the Bloom’s taxonomy Figure 5 was used, which describes learning objectives based on 6 key levels: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation.

Course attendants should gain knowledge within the defined competency areas, and will be able to internalize and synthesize this knowledge, highlighting and analyzing their business needs. This is the prerequisite of comprehension, which will lead to the practical application of the learned concepts. An evaluation phase should also be designed.
Pedagogical Model

All the above considerations were taken into account when making the InRuTou pedagogical model (Figure 6).

The InRuTou Pedagogical approach follows the constructivist pedagogy, based on the assumption that knowledge is the product of many learner-centered processes, and including the social process of communication and negotiation (i.e., the social construction of reality). The blended learning environment will be designed and implemented, based on collaboration and interaction between students, so that learning is constructed by the group, rather than just the individual.

The constructivist school recognizes learning as an active process of constructing meaning by individuals through their interactions with the environment. Students do not memorize what the instructor said. Instead, they construct their own versions of the learning matter. Students should be helped to construct their own meaning of knowledge, enabling them to reflect upon, discuss and exchange ideas with their colleagues and instructors. Thus, from the constructivist viewpoint, the learner is an active processor of information.

This InRuTou pedagogical approach has been reflected and implemented in a blended learning course.

The course has been designed around 6 key modules, based on the 6 competencies identified in the Competence Framework. Each module has been designed around a series of different learning objectives based on Bloom Taxonomy, in order to create consistency throughout the whole course. Below (Figure 7) the design of the module structure is illustrated.
**In presence session:** held before starting the learning activity, in which the facilitator shares learning goals and the learners expose their expectations. This empathic approach leads to motivating participants over the course.

*The initial motivation, raised by the face to face meeting, is crucial for the success of the learning process. Learners should deeply understand and commit to the module(s) in order to gain the best out of each topic.*

**Self-study / Readings:** after the preliminary face to face meeting, a series of content is delivered to participants

**Resources:** a series of additional resources has been made available to participants in order to be able to operationalize the learnt content/examples. These resources guide participants to deeply understand the issues at stake and have been selected in order to enable them to put into practice the examples presented in the readings.

**Collaborative Activities:** ideas should be shared among the participants in order to find possible venues for collaboration and implementation within the local tourism community. This will foster community consultation and collaboration within the same destination in order to create and/or enhance tourism products.
Figure 7 – The General Module Structure

1st Meeting Face to Face
  - Video Presentation
  - Learning Objectives

Newspaper article 1
  - Script
  - Actions + Links
  - Evaluation

Newspaper article 2
  - Script
  - Actions + Links
  - Evaluation

Newspaper article 3
  - Script
  - Actions + Links
  - Evaluation

2nd Meeting Face to Face
  - Wrap up
  - Sharing Module
Each InRuTou module includes a video introducing the topic and three practical case studies (real or made-up), which lead to a series of “rules or principles” and action points. Participants have the possibility to further explore the topic by reading online resources. Case studies are presented in form of newspaper articles with images, written in non-scientific language.

Advice: Videos can be created using special programmes, such as http://www.videoscribe.com or https://www.moovly.com

The InRuTou videos have been made in English, and then sub-titles in project languages have been made.

The aim of the overall learning experience is to give each one of the attendants the possibility of increasing their knowledge, skills based on their different backgrounds and experiences.

The above is addressed through two critical lenses:

1. the extensive use of technology, which is now a pre-requisite for the success of the tourism business, and
2. the adoption of community consultation and collaboration to co-create tourism products (even involving final customers).

Advice: The 24/7 access to a computer and to the internet facilitates flexibility in time and space for the student to learn the content of each module as she/he finds necessary, and for the supervisor to support him/her.
The Transversal Module

The transversal module will be generated through the work of a pilot area within the 6 content modules, described above (Entrepreneurship, Management, ICT, Engaging Communities, Marketing, and Ecotourism and Sustainable Development). What constitutes the transversal module is the sum of the conversations generated by the training materials, reflective assignments, participants’ experience and trainers’ moderations. The main goal of the transversal module is to trigger the creation of the innovative tourism products by the training participants - the ultimate goal of the InRuTou innovative training. The six core modules of the InRuTou training experience have been conceived to give trainees all the tools to trigger the process of new products creation. The role of the transversal module is to help collect all inputs from trainees about a given product or service, which they would like to develop, supported by the different perspectives presented in the core six modules.

Assessment

The assessment of the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained by the trainees of the InRuTou project was done via quizzes, following each module, as well as via the interaction between the trainers/facilitators and the trainees.
Facilitator Guidelines

In open environment learning, the main role of the facilitator is to create a safe and respectful environment, where participants can feel comfortable sharing their knowledge and insights with each other. As such, the facilitator should use different methods, skills and tools to keep a group discussion running until a knowledge conclusion is reached.

In general the facilitator should follow these tips, to guarantee the successful development of the session:

1) develop objectives for the session;
2) follow the agenda;
3) decide on the session process;
4) briefing process;
5) logistical arrangements;
6) manage and control;
7) guidance;
8) display all the information.

Suggested facilitator profile requirements:

- Program and subject expertise for facilitating;
- Teaching/coaching/management experience;
- Familiarity with the use and delivery of technologies;
- Motivation and willingness to lead the given course;
- Good assessment skills

Facilitators should acknowledge their role in the course development and delivery, focusing both on the content and process, time management and paying attention to the agenda of each module.

Providing feedback is an important responsibility of the facilitator: during the face-to-face meetings the facilitator should provide the participants with a constructive feedback, identifying specific actions that might highlight the knowledge.
The Project Website

The project website contains information about the project goals, the partners (with links to all partner organizations’ websites), and information about project meetings and events. The website also provides the links to the main project outputs, and the eLearning and Sharing platforms. The website is in English, and the key contents are available in all partner languages.

Technical Solution

The Site was programmed using Word Press. Google analytics are being used to track the traffic on the website, as well as on the learning and sharing platforms.
The e-Learning Platform

The e-learning platform (EP) enables the training of local tourism developers.

From an instructional point of view, the EP integrates 3 principles:

1. Self-regulated learning, as each learner will be able to set her/his own pace in learning
2. Project-based learning, as all learning activities will be connected with the learners’ projects
3. Collaborative learning, fostering networking and sharing

Advice: Allow enough time for translations of the content to the needed languages (much more than expected). At the same time, be flexible in what has to be translated (depending on the context).

The EP is imagined as an open MOOC-like platform.

The content includes the following modules:

- MODULE 1. Cultural and natural heritage
- MODULE 2. Entrepreneurship
- MODULE 3. Hospitality
- MODULE 4. Management
- MODULE 5. Marketing
- MODULE 6. Community consultation
Each module is:

- introduced by a video, presenting the key topic and the learning goals.
- built around 3 case studies, each integrated with reflection questions, and a few principles that sum up their main learning points
- concluded with a self-evaluation instrument

Each module also includes a Satisfaction survey.

Each case study consists of the Main reading, a “Call for actions” – with practical information and video clips – as well as Additional resources – a collection of useful links.

The materials are available in all project languages.

**Technical Solution**

The EP has been implemented with WordPress, for the following reasons:

1. Consistency with the project website – for the back-end users;
2. Correspondence to a trend in open distance learning, namely Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) – for the trainees, in order to prepare them to learn with open online resources;
3. Using WordPress is a further step in promoting accessibility and actual reuse of contents after the project’s end. Publishing the training as open content makes it accessible to users without an access ID, and makes it indexable by search engines.
4. Single partners that intend to offer the InRuTou training fully online and will need additional e-learning tools will be able to open an LMS space (for example on Moodle) and connect that space to the open content published on the EP.
The Sharing Platform

This Social Media Platform (Sharing Platform) is dedicated to the sharing of experiences among participants in the InRuTou project pilot training in Austria, Romania, Italy, Poland and Ukraine. The aim of the platform is to document country progresses towards the design and development of innovative rural tourist products and to inspire colleagues in other European countries.

In this platform you’ll find:

- **blogposts related to pilot areas progresses during and beyond the learning experience leading to the design and production of touristic rural products, in English. This area is dedicated to cross-national online sharing.**
- **Pilot areas’ groups devoted to community discussion among participants of a given pilot area, in national languages.**
- **A dedicated group for trainers, where they can share their experiences first as learners and then as trainers during the InRuTou project.**
- **The sharing platform is where the trainers and trainees can store all the possible documents and exchange ideas about the process of tourism product creation, and as such, is an instrument enabling the transversal module – the exchange and cross-fertilization of ideas.**

Technical Solution

The SP has been developed with Word Press, with the plugin buddy press to allow web 2.0 functions.

- It contains posts from various groups: for the trainers, and the participants in the pilot regions.
- Trainers can write posts about the trainings, and manage respective participants’ groups in their countries.
- Participants of the training: interact in the groups.
The InRuTou (M)APP – the desktop and mobile application

The InRuTou (m)app is a software application that works both on a desktop/laptop computer and on mobile smart devices (iOS and Android). It offers (prospective) visitors a range of tourist attractions in the given areas, accessible through a map of the area itself. Tourists will be able to browse all the available attractions and to review the attractions and to post comments.

Thus, the objective of the application is two-fold:
- promoting rural destinations, and
- cataloguing rural attractions within given areas.

In other words, InRuTou (m)app collects geo-localized information on local attractions and resources in the testing communities. This tool can be used to promote rural destinations, to make them more “transparent” and friendly to tourists and potential visitors. The InRuTou (m)app can be easily updated also after the project’s end.

The two versions (for the Browsers and one for the smartphones/tablets) share most of the features while the smartphone version adds some extra features as detailed in the next table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of the InRuTou (M)APP</th>
<th>Browser</th>
<th>Smartphones/tablets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quickly position in any of the participants areas</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filters the points of interest depending on their category – to name few: Accommodations, Activities &amp; Attractions, Events, etc.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available in the following languages: English, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Ukrainian</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses the geo-localisation services to position the map in the actual location</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be included on any external web site with few lines of HTML code</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows to mark each point of interest as a favorite and list the favourites even when off-line</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The application has been developed in English, with a front-end available in all participating areas’ local languages, to serve national and international tourists.

The information uploaded by local tourist service providers will not be translated – the platform allows to enter translations for all the participating languages, however it’s possible that some Points of Interest (POIs) have a description in English only.

**Technical Solution**

The InRuTou (m)app is composed of three different layers:

1. **A back-office interface** to easily enter and amend data in the database. The database provides all the information available in the area that needs to be represented on the map, expressed as persistent and time-bound Points Of Interest (POI).
   - Examples of persistent POI are: hotels, natural attractions, etc.
   - Examples of time-bound POI are: cultural events, activities, etc.

   The back-office interface allows registered users to enter and amend data into the database with an easy-to-use interface.

   
   http://backoffice.inrutou.eu

2. **A user interface** presenting the POI for specific locations – the Browser version.

   The user interface will provide an easy way to create a website to promote an activity and it will include a page with a map of the area showing all the POI available in the surrounding area.

   The **map** is built on Google Maps API v.3 and will be shared between the desktop and the mobile app, and can be easily included on any other site (including the template site) by adding few lines of code in the page (embedding or using iframes).

   The map provides a responsive **web interface** – an interface usable at the same time both on desktop/laptop computer and mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets.

   The provided tools (buttons) include:

   - **Search**: POI can be searched within all the areas of the communities participating in the InRuTou project or just in the area close to the visitor location.
   - **Feedback** – visitors will be able to enter their feedback by filling a form; the feedback is sent to a centralised email that will be automatically forwarded to the area administrator.
   - **Contribute** – visitors will be able to contribute on the map contents; information about a nice restaurant, event or even a touristic spot can be entered in a form at the contribute page. The contributions are sent to a centralised email that will be automatically forwarded to the area administrator.
The area administrator is someone in charge of handling all the local feedback and contributions (see below). Typically she/he is someone living in the area and coordinating the activities/actors related to the InRuTou project.

http://inrutou.eu/app/

3. An app presenting the POI for specific locations – the smartphone/tablet version.

The app is compatible with iOS (Apple) and Android (Google, Samsung, Sony, HTC, etc.) devices and provides a map of the participating areas showing all the POI available in the surrounding area.

The app is build on Google Maps API v.3 and gets its data from the back-office interface.

The provided tools (buttons) include:

- **Search**: POI can be searched within all the areas of the communities participating in the InRuTou project or just in the area close to the visitor location.
- **Offline use**: Anytime the user can set any of the POIs on the map as a Favorite; by doing so the favorite POIs will be available also as an offline list – unfortunately as per the Google Terms of Use the map cannot be available offline.
- The app will be distributed free of charge on both the Apple Store and the Google Play Store – so it will help to let more people know about the InRuTou project.

Download links and the source code of the (m)app will be available after the release – details will be provided on the (m)app’s official page:

http://inrutou.eu/mapp/
The guidelines represent a tutorial for supporting the training. They indicate institutional, organisational, economical and sociocultural procedures to facilitate the train the trainers and the actual trainings, based on the materials developed by the InRuTou project.

The adapted guidelines consist of two parts: 
1) train the trainers, 
2) implementation of the pilot trainings.

Train the Trainers

Selection of Trainers

The selection of trainers in InRuTou was done by the project partners. However, this task can be performed by any implementing body (the destination management, tourism office, protected areas management, and NGO developing a tourism project, etc.)

The following (recommendatory) criteria are proposed for the selection of trainers: Trainers should …
• … have a personal connection to the respective destination
• … be willing and capable to implement the training on a continuous base within the respective destination
• … be interested and capable to act as trainers for other interested participants in their respective destination
• … have (at least basic) knowledge in didactics and tourism / regional development
• In case of international projects: … have enough English skills (reading, writing, talking) for the international exchange with other trainers

Process of Training the Trainers

Train the Trainers should take place in a series of two meetings mixing theoretical and practical approaches

The Implementing body (the destination management, tourism office, protected areas management, etc.) and trainers should go through all content before starting the course, and become familiar with using the electronic tools: the Sharing platform and the Mobile app.

At the first meeting the following could be explained to the trainees (future trainers in their respective destinations):
• The tasks of the trainers
• The structure and content of the course
  1. Pedagogical model
  2. Content and structure of the modules
• The technical tools behind the course
  1. The e-learning platform
  2. The sharing platform
  3. The partners forum
  4. The mobile application
Between the meetings the trainers have the task to go through all modules and check
• Understanding of content
• Understanding of implementation

The second meeting has the following tasks:
• Evaluation and updating of the content and structure of all modules
• Evaluation and updating of the functioning of all technical tools
• Clarification of any open questions

A third meeting could follow after the implementation of the trainings to reflect once more on the content. The meeting could be either physical or virtual.
The Pilot Trainings

The following section provides suggestions concerning the selection of trainees / participants of the trainings, the structure and implementation of the training course and the supporting documents / links.

*While we refer to these trainings as Pilot trainings, because in the InRuTou project they were used to test the learning materials and the training approach, they can actually be understood as community trainings, when the trainers – or opinion leaders, which have been prepared in the train the trainers – provide their gained knowledge, skills and attitudes further to support their communities in cooperative sustainable tourism development.

Selection of Participants

The selection of participants / trainees is done by any implementing body (the destination management, tourism office, protected areas management, NGO, etc.)

The selection of participants / trainees follows the following (recommendatory) criteria: Participants / trainees should …

• … have a personal connection to the respective destination
• … have enough computer and internet skills to follow an online course including webinars and installing and using a mobile application
• … be willing and capable to follow the complete training course
• … be willing and capable to implement (or contribute to the implementation) of concrete tourism products to develop the tourism profile of the destination

Structure of Course

The course is divided into 6 modules, each following a special time plan

Module 1: Entrepreneurship
This module provides an introduction to entrepreneurship, from basic principles and terminology thanks to case studies and newspaper articles. The highlights of this module will provide tourism business managers the necessary competencies to understand the entrepreneurship environment in rural areas. Additionally resources have been designed to give the knowledge on how to succeed with a start-up.

Module 2: Management
This module provides an introduction to Management, from basic principles and terminology to case studies and newspaper articles. The module was developed following the pedagogical model and containing the following sections: (i) learning objectives: based on the
bloom taxonomy; (ii) pre-requisites; (iii) main content; (iv) evaluation process. The highlights of this module will provide the tourism business managers with the necessary competencies to understand the management concepts and be able to implement it in their rural business – for that reason, the topics are easily understood and were chosen accordingly.

Module 3: ICT (Information and Communication Technology)
This module provides an introduction to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) basis, from basic principles and terminology to case studies and newspaper articles. 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 predefined web technologies to enhance business management, enabling the participants to use the internet as a tool for communication and marketing, accessing websites and using search engine optimization.

Module 4: Engaging Communities
This module deals with Community Networking in the rural tourism context. Basic thematic knowledge is provided as well as technical concepts, strategies and general issues are illustrated and discussed using case studies and newspaper articles. The module is based on the predefined pedagogical model and contains the following sections: (i) learning objectives: based on the Bloom Taxonomy; (ii) pre-requisites; (iii) main content (iv) evaluation process.

Module 5: Marketing
This module provides an introduction to Marketing, from basic principles and terminology to case studies and newspaper articles. Nowadays, the term “marketing” is widely used by everyday people without noticing it. 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 will highlight the main concepts considered to be important.

Module 6: Sustainable Tourism
This module is designed to enable business managers, service providers and decision makers to understand the concept of sustainability in tourism and to engage community stakeholders in collaborative efforts to analyse their own sustainability and to commonly develop strategies and projects for improving their performance in different aspects of sustainable tourism. Case Studies, articles as well as theoretical knowledge is used to discuss the different forms of sustainable tourism, outline sustainable development in tourism, emphasize the importance of community participation and provide ideas for sustainable mobility innovations at the destination.

Structure of Implementation
The Implementation of the course is following a structural plan laid down in the Pedagogical Model – page 32.

Participants will be guided through a series of steps that will allow them to design a series of collaborative activities, fostering collaboration in the rural destination. As new pedagogical trends emphasise the learner’s role in the organisation of learning, the InRuTou approach has been designed to help the learners throughout the overall process.
Each module will follow the same structure, as indicated in the chapter Pedagogical Module.

The first face-to-face meeting will be used to introduce the module and to watch the video with the participants. A discussion will follow about the expected outcome of the module. Each module will have three practical case studies (real or fake), which will lead to a series of “rules or principles” and action points. Participants will have the possibility to further explore the topic by reading online resources. Case studies will be presented in form of newspaper articles with images, written in non-scientific language.

After each case study there will be a quiz and a reflective assignment. This is not to be intended as an exam.

The reflective assignments are meant to be a set of open questions participants can reflect upon during the online part of the module. The goal is to relate what they have learnt in the module ‘case studies with their professional practice. When the participants will next meet with the trainers and colleague they will have the opportunity to discuss this questions all together. Discussing about them could also be started in the sharing platform, with the national and international colleagues!

The second face-to-face meeting will be devoted to generation of the networked ideas. The results of the group work will be uploaded into the transversal module, which will be designed as repository of ideas and cases with a series of tools for networking.

Three ways to complement each module can be suggested to the trainees:

1. Learners have the flexibility to start and complete the course in their own way: the only constrains are represented by the two face-to-face meetings that will be scheduled according to the needs of the participants.
2. Learners will have the possibility of working on their own proposed timetable and schedule. The transversal module will guarantee interactions among participants.
3. Learners will be encouraged to work in groups and to collaborate on a project to foster tourism products at their respective destination.

Timing and Order of the Modules

- The order of the modules follows the logical approach:
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Management
  - ICT (Information and Communication Technology)
  - Engaging Communities
  - Marketing
  - Sustainable Tourism

- In reasonable cases the implementing body can decide either to change the order of the modules or to offer only a selection of modules (e.g. if all trainees have common pre-skills on one of the modules, this specific topic might be skipped).
The timing in between the different modules should allow the participants enough time for reflection, preparation and fulfilment of all tasks, but may be adapted by the course leader to the specific needs of the group.

The second face-to-face meeting of one module may be linked to the first face-to-face meeting of the following module.

Therefore the duration of the complete course could last up to half a year.

The e-learning course should be followed by the development of tourism products by the participants. Communication within the group and in between trainees and trainers – and project partners / implementing bodies – is essential for the feasibility and success of the implementation of those tourism products.

**Languages of the Course**

- The course modules should be offered in the language of the participants, only for international exchange English is needed.

- For the time being the course modules and e-learning navigation exist in the following languages:
  - English
  - German
  - Italian
  - Romanian
  - Polish
  - Ukrainian

**Advice: Make use of existing media for sharing and promoting the project and training results, such as Facebook**

**Demands for the Venue**

- The face-to-face meetings should take part in a seminar facility that provides
  - … a cozy atmosphere for good working conditions
  - … internet access for all participants/trainees (WLAN)
  - … a projector and screen
  - … seminar materials like pin boards, flip-charts, etc.
  - … flexible positioning of chairs and tables
  - … possibilities to slip into smaller working groups

- Participants should bring own laptops, paper, etc.
EVALUATING VOCATIONAL TRAININGS
(LENA-MARIE LUN, EURAC)

Evaluating vocational trainings should aim at assessing both Train the Trainers seminars as well as the pilot trainings. The evaluation of the pilot trainings is particularly important as it helps to determine if the training programme was useful for the participants in terms of improving their access to the labor market. It gives not only the trainers, but also the wider community members, participating in the pilot trainings, a possibility of giving feedback on the training approach.

Ideally, the evaluation of a vocation education programme covers the following four levels (Kirkpatrick33):
1. Reaction: Evaluating what participants thought and felt about the training and how satisfied they were with the training.
2. Learning: Evaluating the increase in knowledge and/or skills, and change in attitudes.
3. Behavior: Evaluating the perceived usefulness of the training (transfer of knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes from classroom to the job). This evaluation commonly occurs 3–6 months post training while the trainee is performing the job.
4. Results: Measuring the final results that occurred because of attending and participating in a training program (can be monetary, performance-based, etc.)

Common Evaluation Methods are:
1. Standardized questionnaire surveys
2. Face-to-face or online focus groups

In the InRuTou project, three different evaluation phases were implemented in order to best identify the most successful and the most critical points of the training approach:

Phase 1.
Evaluation of the Train the Trainers
→ The evaluation of this phase took place via a standardized questionnaire that was distributed among the participants directly after the training. The questionnaire covered the following aspects:
- quality of trainers
- quality of the training class
- quality of the training venue

Advice: Keep questionnaires rather short and to the point to avoid that people lose their interest while filling in questionnaires and to simplify translation efforts when questionnaires are used in different countries.

Phase 2.
Evaluation of the Pilot Training Modules
→ The evaluation of this phase took place via a standardized online questionnaire, which was available on the e-learning platform after every module (entrepreneurship, management, information and communication technologies, engaging communities, marketing and ultimately sustainable tourism). The questionnaire covered the following aspects:
- overall satisfaction
- content
- tools
- teaching
Phase 3. 
**Overall Evaluation of the Pilot Trainings**

The evaluation of this phase took place via a small online focus group after the participants completed the last online module. For the implementation of the focus group the InRuTou sharing platform ([http://share.inrutou.eu/](http://share.inrutou.eu/)) was used. The focus group covered the following aspects:

- gained knowledge and skills
- impact regarding the access to the labor market

![Example of an InRuTou Training Survey](image)
REFERENCES


17. http://www.oecd.org/industry/tourism/


This definition is also used by the EQAVET - a community of practice bringing together Member States, Social Partners and the European Commission to promote European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET by using the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework.


26. The pilot area from Austria only participated in the first part of the training, but not in the piloting phase, because it has been determined that tourism development in the Austrian pilot area is too advanced to benefit from the training

27. http://www.gabek.com;


INRUTOU PARTNERS

**IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems**

*Krems, Austria*  [www.fh-krems.ac.at](http://www.fh-krems.ac.at)

The IMC Krems is a highly recognised management and tourism University of Applied Sciences in Austria and was founded in 1994. Over the past few years the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems has built up a strong international reputation and has now 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](http://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, 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](http://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 field and the formation of the Lab demonstrates the university’s commitment to this field.

**Associazione seed**

*Canobbio, Switzerland*  [www.seedlearn.org](http://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, and provides services to non-profit organizations.

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

**EURAC**

*Bolzano, Italy*  [www.eurac.edu](http://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 into 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/roe/AbouttheOffice/UNEPinVienna
UNEP Vienna SCC is an outposted office of UNEP’s Regional Office for Europe, specialized on the Carpathian Convention, on mountain ecosystems and on 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 NGO in the 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, mountain policies.

ECOPSYCHOLOGY SOCIETY
Kraków, Poland  www.ecopsychologia.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; 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 then 70 projects during 18 years working, among then more then 20 – in the Carpathian region
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Back Cover: Mircea Verghelet, InRuTou partnership
The InRuTou project developed and tested a set of tools and innovative models for supporting sustainable rural tourism in mountainous regions. The project partnership fostered community consultations, developed electronic training materials and trained local representatives in enhancing community tourism planning in five pilot areas in Italy, Poland, Romania and Ukraine, with support from a pilot area in Austria. The Transferability Manual is a methodological publication that explains how the project was developed based on its implementation process as well as background and technical documents. Its aim is to support interested organizations in transferring the InRuTou methods to other communities, regions, and countries.

Partner names and logos:

**IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems**
Krems, Austria  [www.fh-krems.ac.at](http://www.fh-krems.ac.at)

**SOPHIA Research & Innovation**
Rome, Italy  [www.sophiari.eu](http://www.sophiari.eu)

**BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY**
Bournemouth, UK  [www.bournemouth.ac.uk](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk)

**Associazione seed**
Canobbio, Switzerland  [www.seedlearn.org](http://www.seedlearn.org)

**EURAC**
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**UNEP VIENNA SCC**
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**ROMONTANA**
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