



Developing Sustainable Rural Tourism in Ukraine

PROJECT TITLE

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM – CAPACITY BUILDING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

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<http://www.euracademy-urtl.org>

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The context: Rural Tourism in Ukraine

Tourism plays a special role in national economies as it performs a number of economic, social, cultural, recreational, educational, and ecological functions. Many countries have been experiencing an aggravation of environmental, cultural and spiritual problems in large cities, which is associated with urbanization and industrialization. This process has objectively called forth the need for closer contacts of urban population with the environment and, consequently, the development of rural tourism.

The issue of rural tourism development in Ukraine has become especially pressing in the recent years. Recreation in rural areas has an extremely positive effect on the economy and the environment of Ukraine's regions due to the usage of the available private housing stock, an increased number of employment opportunities for the rural population, the possibility to sell locally produced products, providing tourists with ecologically clean food products, and nature preservation because of reduced anthropological burden.

Rural tourism has a considerable influence on rural improvement, social infrastructure development, service provision, and the improvement of rural demography. The available private housing stock acts as a social and economic precondition of rural tourism development in Ukraine. Potentially, it's over one million houses. Currently in Ukraine there are 6.2 million houses, 98% of them are privately owned. The number of unemployed or partially unemployed rural population is over 3 million people. The annual average of able-bodied citizens in rural areas is 6.4 million people. A considerable part of them are unemployed or partially employed. There is also a problem of selling agricultural products – two thirds of them are produced at private farms.

Thus, rural tourism development in Ukraine is one of the efficient means to create additional jobs. This can be solved through favourable environment for developing rural tourism and, as a consequence, for improving the social and economic situation in rural areas and reducing the unemployment level on the labour market in Ukraine.

The villages in the Carpathian region are the most popular among tourists. The Regional Tourist Information Centre's research proves that rural green tourism enjoys the highest popularity with tourists. Carpathian region in general and Yaremche in particular are in highest demand. The latter is further backed by the fact that in September 2003 Yaremche hosted an international seminar "Rural Tourism: Recommendations for Development", which was visited by FranceskoFrangialli, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization.



The Project

Welcome to the “Developing Sustainable Rural Tourism/Capacity Building for Rural Development Leaders” project.

This project runs within the framework of the EuropeAid - TACIS Institution Building Partnership Programme (IBPP) – Support to Civil Society and Local Initiatives strand and aims to assist local and regional organisations of the public, private and voluntary sectors in rural areas of Ukraine to build their capacity as leaders of rural development, by acquiring the necessary skills and competences to plan, manage and animate the development of sustainable rural tourism projects.



The specific objectives of the project are:

- To transfer know-how and experience on the development of sustainable rural tourism from all over Europe to existing or potential local “leaders” in rural areas of Ukraine, by offering structured courses, both in face-to-face situations (summer school) and through distance learning methodologies.
 - To encourage and promote the engagement of the target group in non-formal learning, leading to a lifelong learning “career”.
 - To introduce peer-learning and experience-based learning methodologies, allowing the target group of the project to improve their competences on a day-to-day, on-going basis.
 - To raise awareness on key concepts and practices, such as those referring to the provision of quality tourism, environment-friendly tourism, sound and responsible entrepreneurship in tourism and endogenous development of tourism.
 - To introduce best practice in the field of sustainable rural tourism that has been successfully tested in EU and Phare countries and guide the target group to develop local tourism initiatives as “pilot actions”, following the lessons learned from best practice examples.
- To encourage and promote communication and networking among similar organisations and individuals involved in rural tourism development within Ukraine and between Ukraine and the rest of Europe, to ensure continuous exchange of experience and opportunities for joint work.
 - To disseminate the project results as widely as possible in Ukraine and other Tacis countries, in order to promote lifelong learning for rural development, leadership for the application of strategies of rural tourism and networking among relevant actors.

The Summer School for Rural Development Leaders in Yaremche, Ukraine

Introduction

In May 2006 this core event of the project was held. The Summer School was organised jointly by the Carpathian Foundation (Uzhgorod, Ukraine) and Euracademy Association (Athens, Greece) and took place between 12 and 21 of May 2006, in Yaremcha, a small picturesque mountainous rural town in Ivano-Frankivsk region of Ukraine.

The main aim of the Summer School was to assist local and regional organisations of the public and voluntary sectors, as well as entrepreneurs in rural areas of Ukraine to build their capacity as leaders of rural development. The Summer School provided numerous opportunities to the participants to “learn how to learn” and to start acquiring the necessary skills and competences to plan, manage and animate the development of sustainable rural tourism projects. It also provided the opportunity to meet professionals and experts from Ukraine and the European Union, share experiences and develop ideas about developing sustainable rural tourism

In this scenic rural scenery, an international delegation of 52 participants, including academics, researchers and animators in the field of sustainable rural development met for 10 days. The 40 students who participated came from 14 different regions of Ukraine and had various professional backgrounds – officials of regional, district and local level, NGO project coordinators, managers, university staff, farmers, rural animators and others, equally representing public, private and NGO sectors.

! Please visit our website <http://www.euracademy-urfl.org> for more information on the Project Background.



the workgroups, led by the lecturer. The plenary concluded with participants from each group selecting one or more persons from within their groups, who presented the outcome of their discussions to the plenary.

Three workshops were also included, led by expert moderators, in which the participants presented their own case-studies and pilot projects, all relevant to sustainable rural tourism development. These pilot projects are to be assessed by a team of experts during the Workshop in Lviv November 6-8 2006, and four of them will be selected after extensive evaluation for further support during their implementation.

The Programme

The first part –“**Open Space**”– with duration of 1 day, provided the participants with an overview of the coming events and activities and introduced them to the structure of the Summer School, along with the training methodology adopted. This part gave participants the opportunity to introduce themselves to each other and to the Summer School staff and experts. The day started with a plenary and continued with the introduction to the training methodology which also included the introduction to the Participant’s Handbook. Finally the opening of the Summer School was concluded with a traditional dinner during the evening.



The third part was the “**Study Trips**”, with duration of 3 days. During the trips participants were able to further explore the issues and questions discussed during the previous sessions and get ‘hands on’ experience on the methodologies mentioned in the Thematic Guide. They worked in small groups of up to 8 persons, and each group followed different itineraries, visiting places of rural tourism interest and meeting rural tourism entrepreneurs, and members of local authorities and NGOs.

The second part –“**Theory & Practice**” – with duration of 4 days included 9 lectures on issues regarding Sustainable Rural Tourism. These Nine sub-themes were explored by nine different experts. Each lecture was followed by working group sessions, where the participants, split in small groups of 6-8 persons, debated the issues brought forward by the lecture. The discussion in the small groups was assisted by facilitators. A plenary session was organised after the end of

The fourth part of the Summer School: “**Reflection and sum-up**” with duration of 2 days, included the Study Trip reports, which were presented in a plenary session. An important activity of this part was the Conclusion Panel, where the Summer School activities, experiences and knowledge that were built during those 10 days were summarized.

The Summer Academy in Yaremche was visited by a number of honorable guests, among them Deputy Head of Ivano-Frankivsk Regional Administration Volodymyr

Shkvarylyuk, Head of the Board of Carpathian Tourism Board Mykhaylo Senychak, Chair of the Leading Department for Tourism and Culture in Ivano-Frankivsk region Volodymyr Fedorak, Chair of Tourism Department of Ivano-Frankivsk Olga Sokolova and others.

It should also be noted that the project leader, Euracademy Association and the project partner Carpathian Foundation have received a Letter of Recognition from the Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State Administration, regarding the Summer School and the project works held in the region

What Comes Next?

In the aftermath of the Summer School, 19 Pilot Project proposals were received which are already being reviewed by the Euracademy Association experts. The proposals will provide the theme of the Workshop to be held in Lviv, Ukraine 6-8 in November 2006, were a team of experts will

consult all Pilot Project applicants during a 3 day Workshop. The objective of the Workshop will be to help them further implement their projects. From the 21 Pilot Project proposals, 4 of them will be selected for further support by the team of experts and the rest will be given the option to seek further advice through participation in the e-learning course.

Among the next project activities foreseen for the nearest future are the following:

- Development of distance-learning course for those interested in rural tourism development which will be launched shortly.
- Publication of the Guide on Rural Tourism Development that will combine successful cases from European and domestic practice.
- Holding of a 3-day national workshop in November 2006

For a full report of the Summer School and more photos from the event please visit <http://www.euracademy-urtl.org>

! Don't forget to download the Participants' Handbook and your copy of the Thematic Guide on 'Developing Sustainable Rural Tourism'.

Visit our website for all the latest news on current and future activities.

! Next activity: 6-8 November 2006, Workshop for the Pilot Actions, Lviv Ukraine



The Euracademy Association was established in January 2004 in Athens Greece as a European non-profit membership organisation, in order to promote capacity building in rural areas and take forward the successful activities of the Euracademy project which was co-funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme until 2003.

The Euracademy Association draws together at present 14 corporate members, mainly higher educational institutions, and over 100 individual members with a professional and perennial commitment to rural development, aiming to promote capacity building in rural areas and mobilise animators and managers of rural development. For this purpose the Association organises and holds at themes pertinent to rural development, every year at least one Summer Academy and conducts research and studies as well as e-learning courses. By providing these activities, Euracademy Association offers an opportunity to its members to improve their skills, widen their experience and expand their professional qualifications by starting a personal itinerary of lifelong learning while also creating ample space for networking and cooperation in the framework of European projects.

The website of the Euracademy Association, <http://www.euracademy.org/>, is a rich informational resource on a variety of issues related to capacity building in rural areas, including the activities of the Association.



The Carpathian Foundation, established in 1994, is a unique, cross-border regional foundation that provides grants and technical assistance to NGOs and local governments, focusing primarily on inter-regional, economic development and transfrontier activities. It encourages the development of public/private/NGO partnerships, including cross-border and inter-ethnic approaches to promote regional and community development and to help prevent conflicts.

The Carpathian Foundation promotes good relations, social stability, and economic progress in the bordering regions of [Hungary](#), [Poland](#), [Romania](#), [Slovakia](#) and [Ukraine](#). It does so by providing financial and technical assistance to projects which will result in tangible benefits to the communities on both sides of national borders and which will improve the quality of life of the people in the cities and small towns of the Carpathian Mountains. <http://www.carpathianfoundation.org>



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