



A guide to the Evaluation of Heritage and Natural Resources

LLP - Grundtvig 2 No: 2008-1-RO1-GRU06-00119

Sustainable tourism that exploits resources in rural regions generates increasing benefits to these areas in terms of productivity, employment, improved distribution of wealth, conservation of the rural environment and culture, local people's involvement and a suitable way of adapting traditional beliefs and values to modern times.

Often, however, those who have always lived in a rural environment, particularly in the new accession countries, do not fully appreciate the potential of their rural heritage as a source of tourist interest. The question which led to the Panorama project was how people who live in rural areas can learn to evaluate and best exploit the potential of their built and natural heritage for alternative enterprise and agritourism, whilst at same time contributing to the conservation and improvement of natural resources, making the local countryside more attractive and enjoyable.

The objectives of the project are:

- To provide a simple system for interested stakeholders to evaluate the potential of their natural and heritage environment to create employment.
- To offer entrepreneurs in rural communities a self-guided process to make the first step in enterprise diversification.
- To help farm entrepreneurs make informed decisions so the steps they take will increase income, sustain the farm, and conserve natural resources.
- To help people in geographically and socially disadvantaged areas to become aware of and involved in the conservation and development of their rural environment.
- To promote care for the environment among local people.
- To help those who live in rural communities to adapt to new economic conditions and enable them to make full use of the resources they have at hand.
- To encourage young people to consider their rural environment as a source of profitable employment.
- To set up a network to favour exchanges of experiences between residents in rural areas and to encourage the sharing of information and experiences to foster co-operation in joint projects.

The project partnership achieved its aim to develop a step-by-step guide to the evaluation of heritage and natural resources which provides core criteria for use in evaluating potential resources for alternative enterprise and agritourism. The guide acts as an aid for stakeholders to evaluate the potential of their heritage resources as a provider for recreation for tourists based on local characteristics and opportunities, such as walks, heritage development, hiking, geographical features, historical sites, adventure activities etc, and to create employment. It includes case studies of best practices. Topics include, amongst others, how to identify resources, how new enterprises can complement existing rural enterprises, how individuals can contribute to the conservation and improvement of natural resources, what markets exist for the products that can be grown or produced, legal regulations and liability considerations, what European, State, and local grants, loans, or conservation programs can be used to assist in the development of these enterprises.

Approach:

The project partners examined the current situation in their regions and compared the results to other regions that have exploited their heritage and natural resources more fully. This gave each partner a benchmark from which to work. Each partner took responsibility for researching different aspects of the project and also identified key themes for their particular region. A series of workshops were organised to share experience and disseminate the project results to other beneficiaries. Where possible the workshops incorporated the members of all interest groups involved in rural development - Local Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, social agents, businesses, cultural groups and citizens.

Products and results:

- Online publication:
 - A guide to the Evaluation of Heritage and Natural Resources in English
 - A guide to the Evaluation of Heritage and Natural Resources in Spanish
- Project leaflet in Spanish and in English.
- Project webpage in English, Spanish and Lithuanian.
- Wiki of documents and reports on the project.

Photo gallery

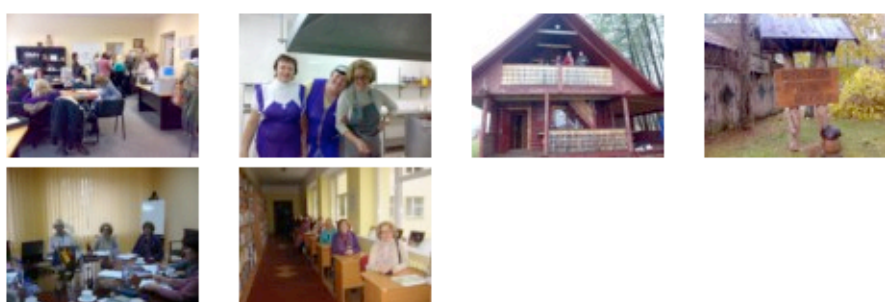
Belfast 2009.



Gijón 2009.



Alytus 2010.



Gijón 2010.



Belfast 2010.



Link:

<http://www.panorama.projektas.lt/Angluk/home.html>