EXPERIENCE
PEOPLE & CULTURE
IN EUROPE

cult
trips

tourism manual

Manual for the development
of a participative cultural tourism concept
in rural Europe

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cult trips

Manual for the development of a participative cultural tourism concept in rural Europe.

This manual is the result of a transnational EU-LEADER project with regions in Austria, Estonia, Finland, Italy and Luxembourg.

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TAURUS *pro*

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CULT RIPS
Europe
experience people & culture

The project working title is „CULTrips". This name is used throughout this manual. Up from the project process beginning we used for starting the logo here on the left.

At the end of the project we made a contest for a definitive logo which is now already used in this manual. Based on this, we decided to write in future the name as follows "CultTrips".

Webpages are reachable now under both names **www.cultrips.org** and **www.culttrips.org**

The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas.

LEADER • REDANGE / WILTZ

LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de l'Agriculture, de la Viticulture
et du Développement rural

Elinkeino-, liikenne- ja ympäristökeskus
Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment

Jetina

Local Action Group
Joensuun
seudun
Leader
est. 1996

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Steiermark

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Raplamaa
Partnerluskogu
LEADER

LEADER
EESTI

# ▶ Content

**▷ What is the purpose of this manual?**

This manual is a result of an EU-project (transnational cooperation in the LEADER program), the original goal of which was to develop an adaptable, sustainable, cultural and innovative tourism concept capable of being adopted by other regions or applied in other contexts. In this sense, therefore, this manual is intended to give **step-by-step guidelines**, how to practically implement a participative tourism approach concept by referring to **best practice examples of the CULTrips process**.

**▷ Who should use this manual?**

The manual is designed to assist regional managers, organisations and associations as well as tourism stakeholders wishing to implement a sustainable, cultural and innovative tourism project and requiring guidelines for the realisation.

**▷ How to use this manual?**

This manual provides a step-by-step-approach as an implementing guideline and is structured as shown in Figure 1. It is recommended to follow the steps as directly as possible, but some steps may also be combined.

Examples out of CULTrips and its participating regions as well as success stories will be cited to establish a concrete picture and illustrate the process. There are also various different tools usable for a project process. The manual will cite examples of different tools that were used for CULTrips, the usefulness of which will be illustrated by testimonials given by the project participants themselves.
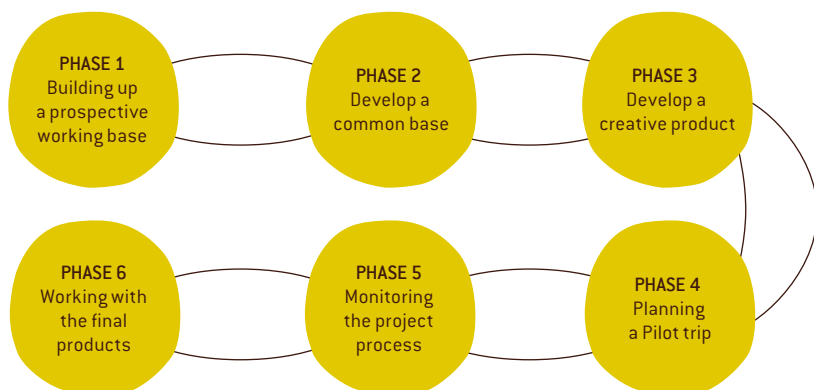
**Figure 1: Step-by-step-approach of the manual**



PHASE 1
Building up a prospective working base

PHASE 2
Develop a common base

PHASE 3
Develop a creative product

PHASE 6
Working with the final products

PHASE 5
Monitoring the project process

PHASE 4
Planning a Pilot trip

## ▶ Why was the project initiated?

The leading Local Action Group (LAG) Redange-Wiltz, together with the "d'Millen" association from Luxembourg, planned to implement a European tourism project. This project was intended to meet the increasing demand for individual fulfilment through an **authentic experience**, particularly in the fields of culture and tourism. The planned project thus sought to develop a **differing cultural tourism approach,** as opposed to traditional cultural tourism, away from mainstream tourism and as part of regional development. Therefore the approach aimed to focus on the **participatory involvement of the local population**, with a **strong focus on sustainability**. The key was to create **good relationships between guests (tourists) and locals** (cf. page 18), promote intercultural learning and experience local traditions through authentic activities. Furthermore a **transnational exchange** with other European rural regions was also aspired to. The **internationality** of the project meant all regions exchanged in a participative manner and supported each other by monitoring and evaluating the tourism products of other regions. Furthermore, the international aspect of the project supported the **cultural exchange** of all regions, meaning that after each meeting and Pilot trip, etc. people started to reflect on their own culture, tradition and lifestyle.

LAG Redange-Wiltz sought suitable LAG partners within the EU rural regions. Besides a passionate motivation for the project aims, similar structures of other LAGs were needed. The CULTrips project period in the LEADER program lasted from September 2010 until December 2013.

The following partner regions regions finally participated at the project:

▶ **LAG Redange-Wiltz Luxembourg**

LAG Redange-Wiltz is composed of the counties Redange and Wiltz. While Redange county had about 521 touristic arrivals (125 domestic and 396 international arrivals) and a total number of 2.059 overnight stays in 2010, Wiltz county had in the same period 26.350 arrivals (2.395 domestic and 23.955 international) and 103.770 overnight stays. Because of the small surface of Luxembourg it is obvious that the number of arrivals and overnight stays by international tourists is much higher than the number of domestic tourists.

**Luxembourg in general has a great diversity on a very small scale of:**

• landscapes: high plateau of the Ardennes in the north with lots of deep river valleys, forests and pastures, wine-growing area in the south-east, small Switzerland in the middle-east, red rock country in the south-west,

• cultural heritage: lots of castles in the countryside underline the moved past of the country,

• cultures: Luxembourg is a country with strong immigration, 44.5 % of the people living here are of foreign nationality – largest part are of Portuguese origin.



Wiltz

Wiltz

Redange

Redange

Luxembourg

▶ **LAG Urfahr-West Austria**

LAG Urfahr-West includes nine municipalities. The region generated together 20.528 tourist arrivals and 45.175 overnight stays. Referring to the accommodation facilities, the Urfahr-West region possesses 33 accommodations in winter 2010/2011 and 38 in summer 2011, while also the number of beds in this period has risen from 433 to 467 beds.

**Space and region:**

- The region Urfahr-West is a strong crossover region between suburban agglomeration (Linz) and rural area (Mühlviertel) distinguished by tight contrasts - the plain country alongside the Danube and the steep hills of the hilly Mühlviertel - with strong potentials for recreation and nature-experience in green areas.

- The population has a high density of graduates and a high share of "neo-rurals".

- The culture consists of less conventional heritage culture, but more living culture like innovative cultural events and architecture. The region has one of the most creative milieus in Austria at this level of "rurban" areas.
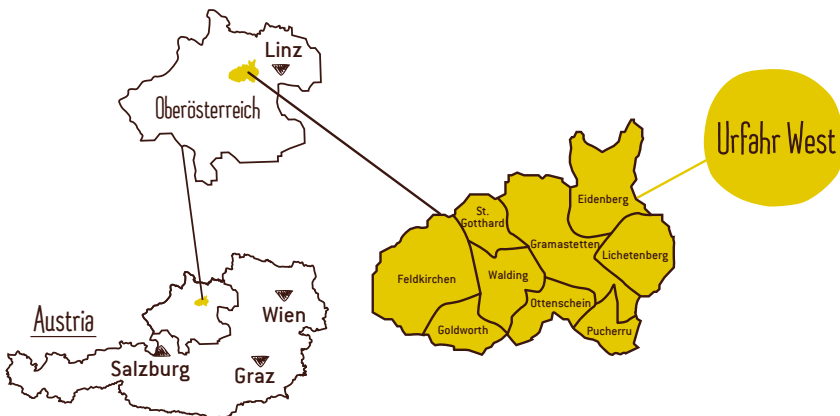
## ▶ LAGs Joensuu and Jetina in North Karelia, Finland

Finland

Karelia is a historical border area between West and East in Northern Europe. For many years the tourism has been one of the growing sectors in the region of North Karelia.
In year 2010 there were 267.349 tourist arrivals and 468.454 overnight stays and 47 accommodations offering 4.167 beds in North Karelia. In recent years the amount of Russian visitors has increased a lot. In year 2012 there were one and half million passenger crossings at Niirala international border crossing point. The regional tourism marketing company Karelia Expert Tourist Service Ltd. highlights next places and themes: Koli hill - the heart of the Finnish national landscape, Joensuu - the capital of Karelia, Karelian culture and kitchen, relaxing nature and four distinct seasons.

## ▶ Central Karelian Jetina LAG
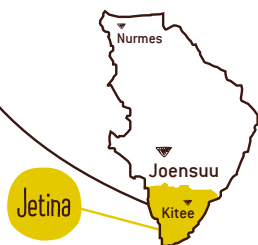
- Karelia region is situated in North Karelia in Eastern Finland at the Russian border. It comprises the area of three municipalities (Kitee, Rääkkylä and Tohmajärvi) with 19.000 inhabitants. Over a half of the working places are in service sector and over one fifth in manufacturing in year 2010.

- The landscape is characterised by large forest areas and lakes.

- The region is also known about its culture e.g. folk music.

## ▶ Joensuu Region LAG

- Joensuu region is situated in North Karelia in Eastern Finland. Joensuu is the administrative center with 74.000 inhabitants. Service sector covers over two thirds and manufacturing over one fifth of working places in year 2010.

- The rural landscape of the region is dominated by forest areas and several large lakes which are part of the Saimaa water system connected to the Baltic Sea.

- Local cultural life is based on the activity of voluntary associations.

▶ Our history

▶ **LAG Valle Umbra e Sibillini Italy**

LAG Valle Umbra e Sibillini is part of Foligno area which has a total number of 178.533 tourist arrivals (148.680 domestic and 29.853 international arrivals) and 481.280 overnight stays (415.482 domestic and 114.798 international overnight stays) in 2010.
Referring to the accommodation facilities Foligno area has 457 accommodations and 8.544 beds. It is apparently that a lot of accommodations are agro touristic accommodations that represent the biggest part with 251 establishments offering 3.616 beds.

**The Umbrian excellences: from the Umbra Valley to the Sibillini mountains:**

• The old-fashioned flavours of the Umbrian Valley and Sibillini mountains result from the land and the "products of the table".

• Quality and Tradition: the cities, the villages, the hamlets of our territory are famous for their gastronomic and agricultural excellences, as well as for their history, art and culture.

• Things to be treasured with jealousy and with love in order to pass them on with respect for the future generations.

Italia

Umbria

Perugia

Foligno

Valle Umbra e Sibillini

Terni
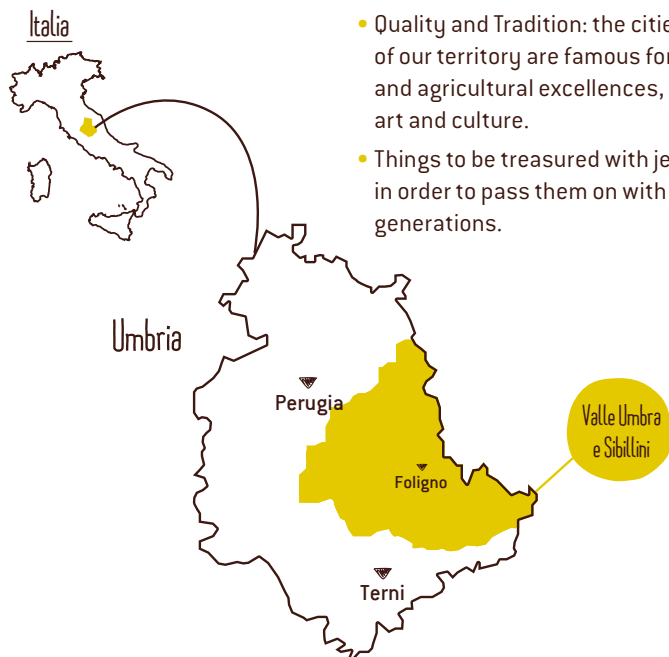
▶ **LAG Oststeirisches Kernland, Austria**

LAG Oststeirisches Kernland consists of 35 municipalities with in total 46.000 inhabitants. In 2011 the region had about 102.400 tourist arrivals and 336.200 overnight stays. The region Oststeirisches Kernland has about 200 accommodation facilities (hotels, bed&breakfasts, private guest rooms, farm holidays). It is remarkable that there is a lot of farm vacation in East Styria. 95 % of the tourists in the region East Styria come from Austria, 2 % from Germany, 2 % from Hungary.

- The region Oststeirisches Kernland is a mainly rural region with many fruit plantations (70 % of the apples in Austria are grown here) and wineyards.
- The only city is Hartberg with a beautiful old town centre.
- Tourists come here for relaxation, hiking, biking, good food and to enjoy nature.

Austria
Wien
Salzburg
Graz
Steiermark
Graz
Oststeirisches Kernland
Hartberg

▶ Our history
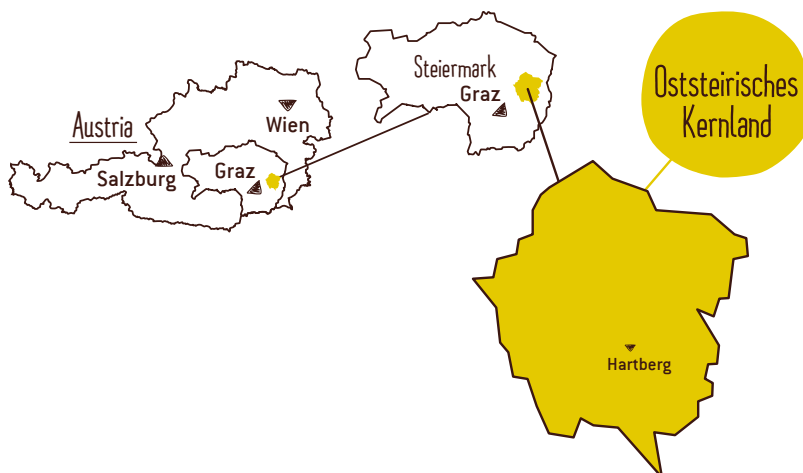
▶ LAG Raplamaa,
   Rapla county, Estonia

The territory of LAG Raplamaa, Rapla county (2.980 km², 37.000 residents), is a rural region characterised by developed agriculture and forestry, but also by a lack of big industry. The county is located in the middle of Estonia, in an area of forests, wilderness, but also plains and fields. The tourist potential of the region (well preserved old handicraft and farming traditions, widespread hunting, odd-looking landscape of swamps and moors, lot of renovated old manor houses), is mainly not discovered yet. The local tourism is based mostly on domestic guests from capital city Tallinn.

In LAG Raplamaa there are a total number of 10.269 tourist arrivals and 25.399 overnight stays. Compared to other Estonian regions like Lääne County and Pärnu County the numbers are low. Another peculiarity is that the number of domestic tourists is much higher than the number of international tourists whether arrivals or overnight stays. Referring to the accommodation facilities in Rapla County, there is a very small number of 16 accommodations offering 438 beds.
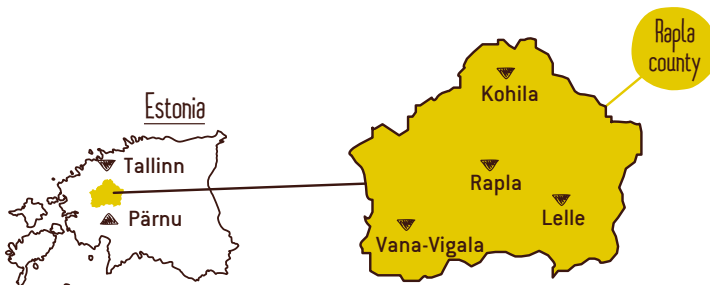
The following **similarities** are characterising
the LAG partners:

- Situated in rural areas
- Partly no touristic activities
- Looking to strengthen rural economic development
  activities
- Planning to integrate locals in rural development
  processes and projects and activation of their potentials
- Openness for a new innovative participative tourism
  approach and willingness to sustain the initiatives
  beyond the project duration.

However, these similarities aside the partner regions
also **differed as follows**:

- Initial position depending on the landscape, infrastruc-
  ture and cultural background
- Variety in tourism history track and touristic activities
- Prospective ideas what can be involved in future
  touristic activities
- Scope of budged and commitment of locals.

Within the CULTrips project, **variation in touristic demand** (tourist arrivals & overnight
stays) was exposed, e.g. LAG Raplamaa had the fewest touristic activities with
10.269 tourist arrivals and 25.399 overnight stays in 2010. Conversely,
North Karelia (incl. LAGs Joensuu/Jetina) had 267.649 tourist arrivals in 2010
and 468.454 overnight stays.

Moreover, **different types of accommodations** determine different focuses when developing tourism products. While the majority of accommodations in LAG Valle Umbra e Sibillini comprises agro touristic accommodation, LAG Oststeirisches Kernland offers many smaller rural lodgings (farms etc.).

▶ **How to organise and communicate within CULTrips?**

First of all, determine which levels and local stakeholders are affected by the project process and keep them informed of progress via face-to-face meetings or contact through email and telephone. Secondly, arranging **regular meetings** (face-to-face, online) with relevant stakeholders is vital to manage your project transparently and comprehensibly and integrate them.

Within CULTrips, **face-to-face meetings** and **online based webmeetings** were regularly arranged to guarantee a regular mutual exchange. Different **organisation groups** were established (steering committee, concept working group, management group) aiming to involve different kind of regional actors (local actors, tourism actors, LAG representatives, etc.) into the project process. Due to the Europe-wide presence of the different LAGs, as well as online web meetings, email contact and an **online platform** for sharing documents and files were constantly initiated.
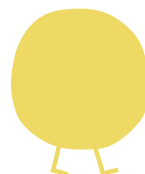
▶ **The role of external process accompaniment**

- Guarantee of a neutral position and opinion from the outside through the regular transfer of the project process to an objective level

- Consulting experiences in other project processes and knowledge about the key steps to follow

- Contributing to ensure the project participants do not lose the sight of the relevant project goals

- Establishing the foundation for progress of the project by offering theoretical methods that help to design the project process in a participative way

- Accompaniment of the process between the LAGs concerning the mutual exchange and communication

- Assistance in implementing the process

- Monitoring and evaluation of the process

- Moderation of face to face and online web meetings

- Giving thematic input

▶ Our history
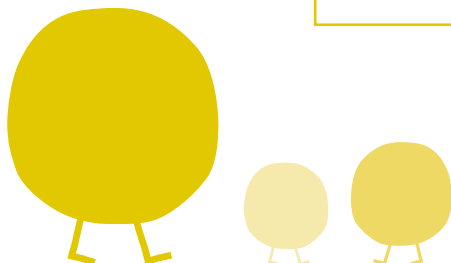
Within the CULTrips project, TAURUSpro, a consulting firm for ecological, regional and economic development, was charged for assistance in the CULTrips project. As process documents, the **tourism concept** paper provided information about the theoretical background of the project's philosophy. The present **manual**, designed at the end of the project, was used to describe the key aspects of CULTrips and its practical outcomes. Moreover, TAURUSpro guided the project process by preparing, moderating and reworking face-to-face meetings and online web meetings and providing information.
*The online web meetings were arranged by Katja Königstein WebModeration and prepared together with the LEAD partner and TAURUSpro.*



Katja Königstein, web moderation

"Working successfully in a transnational project team means overcoming one major challenge: Feeling close in a virtual project setting! Awareness of our partners' cultural landscape is key to appreciative communication. In specific terms, using online communication tools generates a virtual closeness, which makes a team more productive. Web meetings can generate the heartbeat to keep a project alive when there are few opportunities for face to face meetings."

To illustrate what results CULTrips had made possible for the participating regions, these "**quick wins**" show you the most essential outcomes of the project:

• CULTrips utilised a **process character** that means it was organised dynamically; enabling continuous reflections, changes and revisions to the development and content of the project. The accompanying tourism concept was therefore developed in a learning process and regularly adapted by all participating LAGs. It formed the basis for the project and cites different innovative ideas that provide sufficient scope for realising a subsequent CULTrips marketing strategy.

• "**CULTrips' glasses**" encompasses an overall definition of the philosophy and qualitative aspects of the CULTrips' project; referring to the defined CULTrips' key values and its significance for developing participative tourism products. If you have incorporated the key values of CULTrips, your perspective will change thanks to the glasses to a more participative and equal level of stakeholders.

• CULTrips' **key values** represent the project's philosophy and comprise eight different aspects illustrating its unique selling proposition (USP):

**Contact with locals:** give guests the chance to interact with locals.

**Learning together:** getting guests involved helps them familiarise themselves with local culture. Organising various activities such as workshops or cooking sessions enhances mutual exchange.

**Authenticity:** presenting themes originally or rooted from/in the region e.g. traditions, history or stories mediated by those who are deeply connected.

**Storytelling:** conveying insights via e.g. regional historical stories, myths or legends using dramaturgical elements.

**Hidden treasures:** showing places and actions with a certain uniqueness and not accessible to all visitors.

**Social sustainability:** respecting locals' culture, expectations and assumptions and contributing to more intercultural understanding and tolerance.

**Ecological sustainability:** the trip is as environmental friendly as possible in all attainable matters e.g. transportation, accommodation, meals, activities.

**Economic sustainability:** the extra income of the CULTrips serves also rural development concerns of the locals and may create new jobs for locals.

**Figure 2: CULTrips key values**

# What are the "quick wins" of CULTrips ?

- Developing a **niche tourism product** allows us to address a certain target group, cooperate with niche tourism providers and market via innovative niche channels.

- Adequately **marketable and participative cultural tourism products** that represent CULTrips' philosophy and key values are developed. They comprise various and wide-ranging products such as e.g. workshops, guided tours, discovery activities, gastronomic experiences and so on that can be combined easily and in a target-oriented manner (e.g. day modules, packages, etc.).

- The **target groups** of the ambitious cultural tourist and the unconventional discoverer with reference to the post-materialist and LOHAS were defined. (cf. page 30).

- The presence of culturally sensitive and storytelling **trained guides**.

- **Intercultural exchange**: Hosts and guests on a par. Within CULTrips, the use of the terms 'host' and 'guest' is emphasised to highlight the special connection.

- **Pilot trips** as chances to test, evaluate and adapt the developed tourism products as well as involve and convince potential local stakeholders to join the project. (cf. page 38).

- **Sustainable rural revitalisation** that strengthens local identity and boosts the involvement, participation and engagement of the local population.

- **Cooperation** with local, regional or international networks resp. tourism providers such as local tourism boards, local associations, incoming & outgoing tour operators and travel agencies, etc.

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▶ Manual - CULTrips

## ▶ What are the "quick wins" of CULTrips ?

The following CULTrips day was designed by LAG Joensuu/Jetina and shows relevant diverse aspects of CULTrips tourism products focusing on the participation of locals as well as the transfer of local culture and tradition to foreign visitors.

**"Traditions of the Islanders in Varpasalo and Oravisalo in Rääkkylä"**

● Workshop of Karelian pies (traditional food) with locals in the Varpasalo Village Hall



● Lunch in the Varpasalo Village Hall



● A Workshop of playing Kantele (traditional instrument) with locals in Varpasalo Village Hall

● Rowing activity involving a long wooden boat known as church boat, in the North Saimaa archipelago by Kipinaretket company

● Free time
● Farewell dinner with locals and sauna traditions

A creative tourism approach can help your region establish significant longterm process, which is successfully backed by locals. However, careful consideration and planning of the project is needed to develop a successful tourism approach that refers not only to regional uniqueness but also involves the local population in a participative manner.

When seeking to implement a promising project, it is advisable to engage in the following step-by-step approach to facilitate the development of a participative tourism approach.

▶ **PHASE 1 - establishing a prospective working base**

**Step 1 – Who must imperatively be involved in the project?**
The first step is to analyse and document the status quo, since the success of your project depends very much on the active involvement of the whole community.
This makes it important to know whom to involve.
It is best to choose stakeholders which are already anchored in the region to build up a constructive cooperative and long-lasting working relationship.

CULTrips used the **"Stakeholder Analysis"** tool to identify important stakeholders that influence and are influenced by the project. This was taken into consideration to look out for people that help the project progress, facilitate a win-win situation in the region and function as mediators for the project.
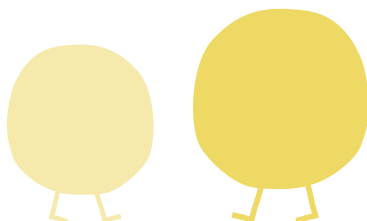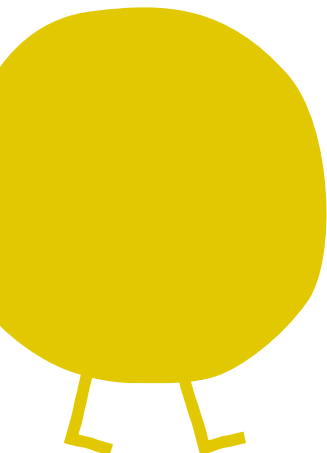


"Defining relevant partners like touristic players (e.g. hotels, tourist associations and guides) in our region and marketing partners helped clarify our touristic situation more accurately. The processes of researching, analysing and drawing showed us relevant communication and marketing relations. This process can be reviewed during the different project phases. Moreover, the graphic helped us in meetings with partners to discuss on the same level."

Karin Imlinger, LAG manager, Urfahr- West/ Austria

▶ What are the main steps to follow?

**The role of stakeholders**

Consulting a broad variety of stakeholders allows various knowledge to be used. You must identify those who can influence your project positively and bring it forward to establish a common regional network, which coincides with the determined project process approach. Be sure to involve many different actors to establish on a broad basis.

Potential stakeholders may include:

- Local population
- Accommodations
- Tour operators
- Local/ regional tourist boards
- Competitors
- Travel agencies
- Media
- Transport companies (ships, busses, etc.)
- Gastronomy owners
- Responsible persons on a local/regional level (e.g. mayor)

To conduct a **Stakeholder Analysis**

1• Brainstorm in a group to determine which stakeholders will be affected or should be included in the project development.

2• Group the stakeholders and find suitable categories for them.

3• Seek the stakeholders' interests and their motivation to cooperate with you. Identify expectations and needs as well as the influence of your different stakeholders to know when they should be involved.

4• Compare these stakeholders and decide when contact should be initiated.

Referring to and including local actors into the project will help cement the authenticity of your designed products. To use stakeholders as mediators for your project you must communicate your project philosophy to them.

### Step 2 – How to determine existing activities?

When deciding to pursue creative tourism development, it is imperative to start by appraising the assets in your region, including existing activities and those with the potential to be developed. Pre-existing and future activities should correspond to the project's philosophy, involve local stake-holders and facilitate a transfer of the local resp. regional culture and tradition.

To determine relevant pre-existing activities, CULTrips utilised the **"Inventory"** tool to collect important data, which was also made accessible online, allowing each region to enter its information about "Existing tourism activities and initiatives", "Accommodation providers, "Possible Stakeholders", "Places of interest" into an input mask. Moreover, the categories "Basics" and "Details" also provided certain information about the described activities, which could later be used for marketing processes. Besides getting an overview of the own status quo, ideas, activities and perspectives entered by other regions were also possible. During the 3-years-project period the database had to be regularly updated by regions.
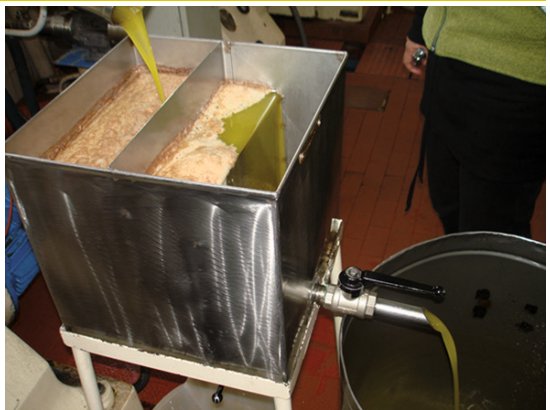




Olive harvesting by hand

Jaak Vitsur, LAG manager,
Raplamaa / Estonia

"The CULTrips inventory is the first attempt in Raplamaa region to build up a systematic database of material assets, sightseeing objects, preserved heritage objects and traditions, cultural events, which could be of interest for visitors and guests. During the process of compiling the inventory we made clear, how rich, miscellaneous, various is in fact the touristic potential of Raplamaa. We established contacts to hundreds of people, active in different sectors of rural life - environment, handicraft, agriculture, culture, food processing, sport, hunting etc. We found a lot of activists who are interested to participate in CULTrips activities in the future."

### Step 3 – How to seek a marketable theme?

Try to identify one or more themes under which you can categorise your regional activities. This theme should represent one major aspect of typical habits or specialities of your region and its inhabitants.

"Extra-virgin Olive Oil Tour" in Spello, including the manual olive oil harvest and visit to the "Frantoio di Spello" oil mill; including watching the oil process and tasting different types of oil.

### Step 4 – How to develop a common project goal?

At the beginning of the project it is important to clarify the project's overall goals, objectives, activities and its aspired outputs. An action plan is also needed, to guide you in how to proceed further in your region, while the overall project goal and subsequent purposes must also be defined.
The goal and purposes will establish the framework for the project's procedure and help you remain on the right track at all times. Another advantage of carrying out an action plan is that it is useful for monitoring and evaluation during and after the project.

The best is to develop an action plan within a group where the necessary stakeholders are participating.

Project management can be monitored in many different ways.
CULTrips utilised the tool "Logframe Matrix". To develop a Logframe Matrix:

1• Analyse the current situation by seeking stakeholders that can help you create a Logframe Matrix (see "Stakeholder Analysis").

2• Brainstorm to identify relevant problems in your region by creating a problem tree and try to define objectives that will help you solve them using a solution tree.

3• Use these objectives for your matrix by setting different levels of objectives.

4• Clarify your objectives with certain indicators, means of verifications and assumptions.

For CULTrips the following goal and its subsequent purposes were set:

Table 1: Extract of CULTrips' Logframe Matrix

| | INDICATORS | MEANS OF VERIFICATION | ASSUMPTIONS |
|---|---|---|---|
| GOAL – The impact of CULTrips has caused a new touristic positioning in the region. | Until September 2013 CULTrips offers are proudly promoted by the official tourism channels. | Observation of the homepages of the 3 most important tourist boards on an eye-catching position. | The contract of employment is extended. |
| PURPOSE – CULTrips has changed the locals' awareness and has created new innovative touristic products. | Within minimum 3 media reports on CULTrips, locals have made positive statements and reported about their new products. | Media (Homepage, Radio, TV, newspaper, ...) | Locals are open-minded and have a positive attitude towards CULTrips changes. |
| OUTPUT – Local stakeholders identify with key values of CULTrips and have started to create own touristic products. | Until July 2013 at least 5 stakeholders have been convinced and have created CULTrips offers. | Minimum 3 offers are available and promoted. | People are open-minded and enough time to reflect on the new tourism idea is available. |
| ACTIVITY 1 – Initiate personal contact and conversation to local actors. | Recommendations and networks | Time | |
| ACTIVITY 2 – Offer a workshop to explain the concept of CULTrips. | Relevant actors | Cost and time, adequate place for workshop | |

"The working process with the log frame matrix (particularly with the "problem tree" and "solution tree") helped us identify several problems in our region. By recognising them and considering solutions we could overcome some big obstacles and spread the value of this great touristic initiative among our stakeholders. We can really recommend using this tool – and the best way is to have an experienced person guiding you through the process."

Helga Bauer, project manager,
Oststeirisches Kernland/ Austria

**After following the phase 1 steps**
- You have established a **prospective network**, including relevant stakeholders from the local community
- You have identified **activities in your regions** that can continue to be developed as well as new activities that are worth implementing in your region
- You have set **marketable themes** to cluster your regional activities under a specific motto
- You have stated a **common project goal** and developed an **action plan** that shows the way forward

▶ **PHASE 2 - How to develop a common base and working environment?**

**Step 1 – How to find a definition?**
A definition will help you state the project's framework, whereupon you can determine which aspects your project illustrates and which segments affect it. Since the key is to seek a clear and distinctive definition for your project, all stakeholders realise that it should be developed in a participative manner.

For CULTrips different tourism approaches were analysed. Finally, CULTrips' ideas are theoretically linked to four definitions as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Mix of definitions
of CULTrips



CULTrips final definition is:

"CULTrips is a subset of sustainable tourism approaches: Cultural, Community Based and Creative Tourism. It is a journey towards an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning. CULTrips provides a connection with those living in the visited region and creates an exchange between living cultures of both guests and hosts. It involves a region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people, their history, art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements having shaped their way of life. Furthermore it also contributes to local economic development, cultural preservation and long-term benefits to the communities."

### Step 2 – How to define the matching target group?

It is important to learn about the expected target group. The better you know whom to address, the easier it is to develop adequate products for them. When developing touristic products, you respond to the motives and expectations of the target group. Ask yourself which type of tourist would be attracted by this tourism approach and which may have a high affinity with the philosophy and activities of the project. Another method may involve qualitative research interviews that reveal an initial overview of prospective customers.

In the CULTrips project, relevant literature and statistics concerning target group approaches were analysed in terms of compatibility with CULTrips. For this purpose, various tourism-related studies were examined, including the LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability), sinus milieus and INVENT data. Following this research the following two target groups were identified, the base of which follows both post-materialist and LOHAS approaches. LOHAS reflects a lifestyle looking to support both health and sustainability through a specific mode of consumption and the oriented selection of specific e.g. eco-friendly products. These two target groups are described according to certain aspects (Figure 4):

Figure 4:
CULTrips' target group

| | CHARACTERISTICS | TRAVEL VALUES |
|---|---|---|
| **AMBITIOUS CULTURE TOURIST** | • High level of education<br>• Middle/high level of income<br>• Employed and retired people<br>• Age: 50+ | • Broaden interest in cultural diversity, language and the local situation<br>• Open-minded and sensitive for ecological and social issues<br>• Authentic interaction with locals |
| **UNCONVENTIONAL DISCOVERER** | • High level of education<br>• Middle-aged people<br>• Employed persons, students<br>• Childless/ 50% live alone<br>• Openness to foreign countries/cultures<br>• Post-materialist | • Interest in food, tradition, language, foreign culture, way of life, contact to locals<br>• Off the beaten tourist track<br>• Individual experiences<br>• Discover on its own initiative and expect unpredictability |

**After implementing the steps of phase 2...**
- You have determined **your project's definition**, developed by including all relevant stakeholders in a participative manner
- You have identified your **matching target** group corresponding to your project approach and your offered products

▶ **PHASE 3 - How to develop a creative product?**

**Step 1 – How to deal with the challenges of the variety of activities?**

When designing your products and structuring your touristic offers, ensure that the following aspects are considered:

- Follow the **project process** approach (cf. page 18) by informing all relevant stakeholders regularly about the project progress and including them in appropriate decisions.

- **Involve local actors** to design new touristic products. The local population needs to get familiar with their fields of activities and responsibilities, so they can sustain the tourism product implementation and management in the region by themselves after the project period.

- The touristic offers should represent and convey defined **key values**, which refer to the region's culture, history and tradition, including typical food and beverage as well as regional characteristics. (cf. page 18).

- The designed products must emphasise **qualitative aspects**. Besides the quality of the product components themselves such as accommodation, transport, services, guiding and hospitality, sustainable ecological or environment-friendly or social sustainable criteria should be fulfilled; potentially by referring to existing labels.

Since the CULTrips project prioritised quality, some regions tried to seek labelled accommodations or those wanting to get a label. LAG Raplamaa is collaborating with the Toosikannu Holiday Centre (www.toosikannu.ee) that is applying for the European Eco Label.

## Step 2 – How to establish a regional network?

Look out for local and regional actors, institutions, organisations or cooperations with whom you can collaborate. These network partners must accept the key values and qualitative aspects of your project.

The Stakeholder Analysis method (cf. page 23) will help you identify the actors in your region with whom it is worth cooperating. Accordingly, you will establish a promising prospective network, which can sustain the project progress and strengthen regional networks.

> In the CULTrips project, LAG Redange-Wiltz utilised an advertisement in a regional newspaper to call for adequate local stakeholders and motivated project members. They also personally addressed LAG partners to join the project.
> Furthermore, LAG Oststeirisches Kernland tried to expand the scope of existing contacts to include tourism providers like the Landlust accommodation. Landlust is a group of rural accommodation belonging to the "European Eden Network" (European Destinations of Excellence).

## Step 3 - How to perform the financial calculation?

Ensure your arranged products generate additional income for the region and its local actors. Simultaneously, the product pricing should be designed to ensure the product represents balanced value-for-money for all stakeholders. When composing your offers, determine the break-even point referring to fixed and variable costs and indicate a price per group and per person so you can easily arrange your offers as day modules, packages, etc. A transparent price system makes your product more trustful for the customer. For example, put a representative example, visible for everyone, into your marketing brochure or online. Be conscious that if you want to market your offers with incoming agencies that they will add their commission to your offer prices (cf. marketing chapter).

> CULTrips utilised a designed calculation table that contains relevant pricing aspects referring to the activity template sheet. With this table the regions could arrange their offers, day modules and packages in an easily understandable way. The example showing the calculation table of LAG Redange-Wiltz gives a good overview of the different pricing options per person/group and the arranged mix of touristic offers.

**Figure 5: calculation table**
**LAG Redange-Wiltz**

| | | PRICE / GROUP | PRICE FOR 1 PERSON |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 12 persons | Average price |
| | DAY 1 : CALCULATION OF CHARGES | | |
| CATERING I | 1 picnic | 180,00 € | 15,00 € |
| CATERING II | 2 dinner | 300,00 € | 25,00 € |
| ACCOMMODATION | 1 double room incl. breakfast | 300,00 € | 25,00 € |
| WORKSHOP/EVENT I | 1 breadbaking | 150,00 € | 12,50 € |
| WORKSHOP/EVENT II | 2 visit of sawmill | 30,00 € | 2,50 € |
| GUIDED TOUR I | 1 smuggler tour | 120,00 € | 10,00 € |
| GUIDED TOUR II | 2 willow walk | 30,00 € | 2,50 € |
| TRANSPORT I | | - | - |
| TRANSPORT II | | - | - |
| ORGANIZATION I | | - | - |
| ORGANISATION II | | - | - |
| SUM (INCL. ORGANISATION, EXCL. TRANSPORT) | | 1.110,00 € | 92,50 € |
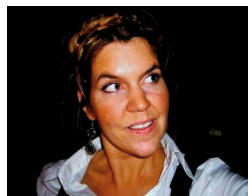


Julia Schrell, Project manager,
Redange-Wiltz/ Luxembourg

"The calculation table reveals a clear overview of the different activities, accommodation or information about organisational aspects in our region (list of offers). This list helps me create packages of offers for one day, several days or even one week. Moreover, thanks to this table I never lose overall sight of the costs of all of our activities."

**Step 4 – How to select and train your guides?**

Guides play key roles in almost all tourism projects as **mediators** to transfer the region's specialties to visitors.

When selecting your guides, look who has enough knowledge about the culture, lifestyle and tradition of the region and who is also **mentally anchored** there. Furthermore, it is important that the prospective guide is deeply involved in the project and can identify him/herself with the product

philosophy to transfer the essential project's values to guests. Guests feel more moved and emotionally involved as well as linked to the region, when the guide can transfer the region's specialties **authentically**. The better the guide's regional relations to other local actors are, the easier it is to establish a **prospective long-lasting regional network**.

It is helpful if the person in question already has experience or training as a guide. In particular, when involved in participative tourism, **mutual interest** is necessary. This means the guide must also be interested in learning from guests to share knowledge and avoid one-way experiences with whom it is worth cooperating. Accordingly, you will establish a promising prospective network, which can sustain the project progress and strengthen regional networks.

Within CULTrips we differentiated between different types of guides: **local guide** and care taker/**greeter guide**. The greeter guide accompanies the tour group all day and helps guests to see through **"CULTrips glasses"**.

While the local guide is only responsible for specific activities, the greeter-guide will also remain aware of the CULTrips key values.

**Practical training**

For CULTrips a **train the trainer workshop** was organised to train and educate trainees, who will later function as local guide trainers in their own regions. The trainees were selected by their own region and trained in different modules under several experts with various interdisciplinary backgrounds (e.g. marketing, storytelling, dramaturgy etc.). Besides learning how to view the region through "CULTrips glasses", the implementation of practical elements was also emphasised.

*"The train the trainer workshop gave me many useful tools which I can use as a CULTguide as well as a trainer. It was also a way to deepen the connection between other CULT guides from other countries."*

Auli Partio, LAG Jetina/ Finland


*"The workshop was a great step in bringing the CULTrips philosophy to a practical level. It provided effective tools to continue the development work in the CULTrips project in my area."*

Hannele Autti, LAG Joensuu/ Finland


*"I appreciated the very practical nature of the training. The active participation was really useful. It was good to reconsider the CULTrips values in depth, which were implemented in the tasks we had to fulfil. The atmosphere was very positive and constructive."*

Helga Bauer, LAG Oststeirisches Kernland/ Austria


*"We had three very different teachers with excellent know-how and very different training methods and ideas. I got many ideas for my own offers in CULTrips programme and making brochures for my offers. I also feel much more secure in my role as a CULTguide also because of Hannele's drama lecture."*

Julia Schrell, LAG Redange-Wiltz/ Luxemburg


*"Train the trainer workshop was a compact package of the elements needed for sharing the idea and values of CULTrips forward. It was also a great possibility for meeting and net-working people working within "the same fields."*

Suvi Kaljunen, LAG Jetina/Finland

### The need to use Storytelling

Emotional and dramaturgical communication was emphasised via the "**Storytelling**" method. This involves local actors having the chance to mediate insights in e.g. regional historical stories, myths or legends and give guests an understanding of cultural elements. Accordingly, it is ensured that the visitor associates positive thoughts and unforgettable travel experiences with the travel destination.

### Pass on the knowledge to others

Moreover, they learnt how to pass on the workshop content conveyed to other interested locals wishing to become local guides. Therefore, a handbook for the train the trainer work-shop was designed and distributed to trainees. This handbook contains the key outcomes of the trainer experts' knowledge and the practical exercises.



### Characteristics of future local & greeter guides

- Facilitator of the region's specialties
- Ambassador of the CULTrips philosophy
- Personality: independent go- getter, direct and to the point
- Knowledge about the region
- Local guides need to be rooted in the region
- Local guides must have good connections within the region
- Previous knowledge of CULTrips and enthusiasm for its philosophy

After having followed the steps of phase 3...

- You have designed **authentic qualitative tourism products** that follow the defined key values and optimally represent your project approach.
- You have established a **regional network** with cooperation partners.
- You have calculated your offers to ensure your project is **self-sustaining** and generates **additional income** for the region.
- You have designed **various offers** like day modules, packages, etc.
- You collaborate with **well-educated guides** that act as **mediators** of your region and seek a **mutual intercultural exchange with guests**.

▶ **PHASE 4 – How to plan, implement and evaluate a pilot trip (test trip)?**

**Step 1 – What is the purpose of a Pilot trip?**

A Pilot trip functions as a test trip to give feedback to the project's implementations and the developed tourism products. Besides test persons from other regions, a neutral external observer will also evaluate the Pilot trip. Using an evaluation method like a questionnaire ensures that all persons evaluate the same aspects. A Pilot trip will help you get a clear idea of how your products are perceived by outsiders and what you can improve to meet the expectations of your future target group.

**Step 2 – How to construct a Pilot trip day?**

- Look out for some **suitable local stakeholders** (identified in phase 1 step 1) that offer activities representing your project's philosophy and key values. Contact and interaction with your local residents is essential for establishing a well-functioning network that provides a good basis for future cooperation.
- Seeking a **balanced day program** including different types of activities (e.g. guided tours, workshops, shopping, etc.) and enough free time is important. It's best to position each Pilot trip day under a specific motto that connects the offered activities thematically.

- Each Pilot trip day might be accompanied by a "**care taker**"/**greeter guide**, a person in charge of the group, who also assists travellers upon their stay (cf. page 35). Nevertheless, each activity should be attended by a local guide who is responsible for the action and transfer of knowledge. Select your guides carefully (see phase 3) to guarantee a good Pilot trip.

- Besides the activities during the day you must also organise **catering, accommodation and transport** to facilitate the process. Hereby, references to local culture and tradition are indispensable.

**CULTrips Pilot trips had a specific motto for each day like in the Pilot trip in Luxembourg:**

**Day 1**
**Landscape & energy**

**Day 2**
**Landscape & experience**

**Day 3**
**Landscape & town**

*For CULTrips, web meetings with all participating actors of the Pilot trip were organised before and after the trip. This helped to create group dynamic processes and guaranteed the flow of intercultural dialogue.*

Joachim Albrech,
Managing Director TAURUSpro



Ensure you respect sustainable criteria (no plastic dishes) and regional food.

- Finding **adequate test persons** that are willing to evaluate your Pilot trip critically. Test persons can be individuals from other regions; ideally from various backgrounds (e.g. tourism consultants, mayors and journalists, etc.) to promote different perspectives. Besides being useful for the region that is organising the Pilot trip, the experiences of a Pilot trip can give test persons new ideas for their own regions through mutual exchange with others. Language is an essential key element.

- Seeking an **external observer** that is part of the group and has intensive contact with the test persons, but acts simultaneously and from a neutral position. This person will observe the trip from an outsider perspective and receives a realistic view of the processing of a Pilot trip.

"As external observer I got an outside and realistic view of the processing of a Pilot trip (group dynamics, language problems, trip program structure,…). From that point onwards, I was able to give feedback for the Pilot trip from a neutral and objective perspective, while still remaining part of the group and having intensive contact with all Pilot trip participants. It was remarkable to see how the different regions underwent a mutual learning process by discovering interesting and new ideas for own tourism products and using the given feedback to improve the project progress.
I can only recommend establishing an external observer in test trips to obtain neutral and objective feedback from outside positions."

- To get to know each other in advance and guarantee **continuous intercultural dialogue** before, during and after the Pilot trip, a (web) meeting before the Pilot trip with all participating actors is advisable.

- Choose an **adequate method to evaluate your test trip**. Developing a questionnaire that focuses on the different activities of the day trips and additionally requests different aspects concerning the project's philosophy may be advisable.

Figure 6 shows you an extract of the **questionnaire** from the Pilot trip to Italy. Besides the main characteristics of the activities, the defined key values of CULTrips were also requested.

**Figure 6: Extract of a questionnaire during the Pilot trip**

*Beside the European Pilot trips, some CULTrips regions also organised local Pilot trips to evaluate their CULTrips tourism products. The advantage of a local test trip is the direct involvement and information of local actors to gain them for the common project implementation.*

**DURING TRIP - NOVEMBER 19 - TRUFFLE AND ANCIENT TRADITION TOUR**

| HARVESTING TRUFFLE TOUR | Excellent | Good | Poor | Very poor | Indifferent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1 – Theme | x | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A2 – Diversification (variation of activities) | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A3 – Informative | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A4 – Action | ○ | ○ | x | ○ | ○ |
| A5 – Guidance of the guests | x | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A6 – Timing | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A7 – Duration | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A8 – Coherent environment | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| A9 – Catering (Mostra Mercato del Tartufo) | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| CULTRIPS CRITERIA HARVESTING TRUFFLE TOUR | Excellent | Good | Poor | Very poor | Indifferent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B1 - Interactive | ○ | ○ | x | ○ | ○ |
| B2 - Learning together | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | x |
| B3 - Understanding culture | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| B4 - Story tellers | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| B5 - Contact to locals | ○ | x | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Participants had to fill out questionnaires before, during and after the Pilot trip. The results point out, what participants already know about the country, culture and expectations towards the experiences on-site and what aspects could subsequently be confirmed or changed.

### Step 3 – How to handle feedback and information about the Pilot trip?

To handle the generated results and information prospectively, you must evaluate your collected data e.g. using the tool "SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats)"-Analysis. The data needs to be clustered in four columns. Be aware that strengths refer to internal assets and weaknesses to internal liabilities. Opportunities are external factors that could benefit the Pilot trip, while risks are external factors that could have negative impacts on the same.

For CULTrips, graphics like shown on page 43 were drawn of each activity evaluating defined aspects as well as the key values.

Sari Hirvonen, Local developer
of Oravisalo and Varpasalo villages,
Central Karelian Jetina/ Finland

"The CULTrips Pilot trip in Finland (5-10 Aug., 2012) was useful for our local network of the village and tourism actors in many ways. The trip was a great opportunity to encourage locals to participate locally in international project activities and everyone was able to find optimal tasks to perform. The trip also tested our organisational and cooperation skills. Based on guest feedback, we could recognise our weaknesses, making it subsequently easier to improve them. In general, however, the positive feedback established trust for our future activities. The Pilot trip was also seen in different media and the publicity had many impacts on our village life, including enhanced visibility for hamlets of fewer than 200 inhabitants. As a result of the whole Pilot trip process, cooperation among several actors and the sense of community progressed considerably."

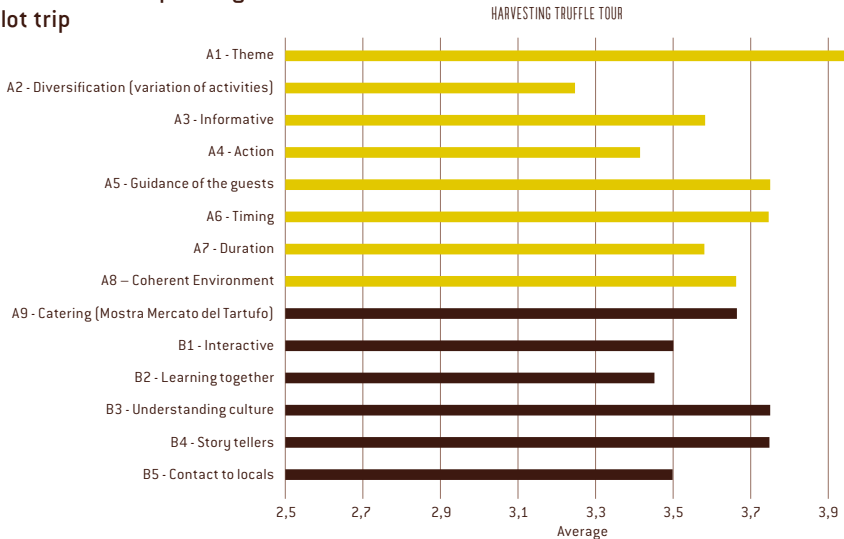**Figure 7: Example of the evaluated workshop during a Pilot trip**

HARVESTING TRUFFLE TOUR



| | Average |
|---|---|
| A1 - Theme | |
| A2 - Diversification (variation of activities) | |
| A3 - Informative | |
| A4 - Action | |
| A5 - Guidance of the guests | |
| A6 - Timing | |
| A7 - Duration | |
| A8 – Coherent Environment | |
| A9 - Catering (Mostra Mercato del Tartufo) | |
| B1 - Interactive | |
| B2 - Learning together | |
| B3 - Understanding culture | |
| B4 - Story tellers | |
| B5 - Contact to locals | |

2,5   2,7   2,9   3,1   3,3   3,5   3,7   3,9

**Figure 8: Extract of a SWOT Analysis from LAG Valle Umbra e Sibillini**

**STRENGTHS**
- Successful workshops with close contact to locals
- Local, traditional food
- Guidance of the truffle man and his involvement of the guests

**WEAKNESSES**
- The accommodation and its owner have to reflect more the CULTrips' philosophy.
- More attention for the ecological aspects
- Spending more time with the activities with locals

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Improvement of the locals' knowledge about the CULTrips' philosophy
- Developing a new kind of tourism in a just traditional touristic area

**THREATS**
- Expensive costs of some activities
- Availability of locals
- Marketing of these touristic offers

The "SWOT Analysis" tool helped estimate the good and poor aspects of the activities and accommodation, etc. as well as the combination of the activities in a Pilot trip day. Hereby LAG Valle Umbra e Sibillini could react and improve their program.

"We performed the SWOT analysis to assess potential and problems that we find in our Leader area from a tourist perspective. This allowed us to identify the strengths and opportunities that emerged in the implementation of our Pilot Trips but also the weaknesses encountered in some specific aspects. Doing the SWOT analysis and reflecting on the results together with some local actors, has helped us to improve our touristic "Cultrips offer" according to the big potential of our touristic area."

Marco Parroni, project manager,
Valle Umbra e Sibillini/ Italy

**After having followed the steps of phase 4...**

- You know why a Pilot trip (test trip) is a **useful tool** to evaluate your tourism products.
- You know how to **organise** and **structure a test trip**.
- You know **which methods** can be useful to obtain the necessary feedback and how to deal with these data.

▶ **PHASE 5 – Monitoring, improving and readjusting the project process**

To guarantee a **transparent process** you must monitor your project progress regularly. This is best done by utilising **different monitoring methods,** to allow your projects and tourism products to be improved and readjusted periodically. For this purpose you can use the following monitoring instruments:

- Always **check** whether **your set goal** (see phase 1 step 4) remains reachable and valid or if you must review it
- Arrange **regular face-to-face meetings** on site with the different local actors and project participants to monitor your project comprehensively
- **Online web meetings** will help you arrange regular meetings on a transnational level to remain clearly informed of the ongoing process in the partner regions
- Write **regular reports** concerning the status quo of the project progress. Share this information with other project participants to inform them about your current activities and challenges and to remain informed about their own situations.

▶ **PHASE 6 – The final product is developed and now?**

To date, you have had a broad variety of different marketable tourism products developed according to your defined key values/qualitative criteria. You have tested and adjusted your products in a Pilot trip. Your tourism products are actively supported by the local community and you have established a prospective network, including various stakeholders.

Now, you must consider how to market your developed products and which marketing distribution or communication channels you must use to reach your defined target group.

**Step 1 - How to develop a distinctive marketing strategy?**

The development of a **marketing plan** will help you determine your current market position, set your goals and decide which instruments are suitable to reach these goals. You must decide under what umbrella and with what kind of instruments you want to market your tourism products in future. The following keywords will give you an idea of which instruments you can use:

• Develop a **(experience) brand**

• Create and develop **various target orientated packages**

• Develop regularly new **innovative tourism products**

• Use **co-creation** or **prosumption (production & consumption)**. By giving your consumers a say and involving them into the designing of your products, you can increase their trust and customer satisfaction and respect the **customer value**. Thus, the consumer plays an active role in the idea-finding process.

• Seek a **transparent booking system**

• Utilise **group discounts** or **price segmentation** according your different target groups
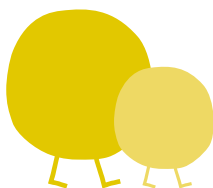
- Utilise **market segmentation strategies** that refer to your products or your target group markets

- Distribute and sell your tourism products via **different channels** e.g. booking platform, cooperation with travel agencies, etc.

- Present your tourism product on **tourism trades and fairs**

- Communicate your products via your **website, social media channels, newspaper article**, etc.

### Step 2 – How to seek different distribution channels?

If you have a concrete tourism product, look out for different distribution possibilities in your surroundings by considering which channels are best-placed to reach your defined target groups.

- **Local/regional/national tourism boards/offices**

- Use the **project website** to present your tourism products, modules, packages, etc. and integrate a booking system.

- **Social media channels** are one possibility to make use of a free tool. With social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc. you can reach a broad and worldwide audience.

- Try to cooperate with **regional, national and international tourism networks** that support the same philosophy as your project does and that enables you a broad market perception.

- Cooperation with **incoming / outgoing tour operators** and **travel agencies** following a sustainable approach.

CULTrips developed an **online activity template sheet**, where each region registered its own (developed) touristic activities according to certain details. With this activity template, different activities could be combined into a single day module or package. Every day module has a specific thematic motto, meaning the developed day modules and packages can be booked by individuals and groups. Accordingly, activities can be marketed on a regional level while conversely, there is scope to consider cooperation with other LAGs for mutual marketing on a transnational level.

LAG Redange-Wiltz cooperates with the incoming tour operator "Four" (www.four.lu). Its philosophy is based on the aspects of sustainability, fairness, healthiness and responsibility, meaning it shares the same values as the CULTrips project.

Right from day one, CULTrips presented its project via a website (www.cultrips.org) as well as on the social media channel Facebook (▶ CULTrips) and will use these in future as distribution and communication platforms.

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After having followed the steps of phase 6 ask yourself...

- Do I have **marketable tourism products**?

- Do I have a prospective **regional marketing network**?

- Which **channels** must I use to reach my focus target group?

- Always consider **monitoring and evaluating** your project process regularly!
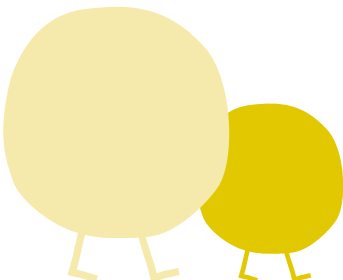
Evaluation is a good opportunity for your region to reflect on whether the goals defined at the beginning of the project have been reached or not. Therefore, it is important to consider **various evaluation methods** right from the start. These tools will help you identify the positive and improvable aspects of your process. In this way, you can guarantee constant improvement by identifying **lessons learnt and recommendations** that serve as suggestions for further project development.

For the CULTrips project various evaluation tools were used:

- **Setting goals** at the beginning of the project in a participative manner.
- **Continuous monitoring** to determine whether the project was on the right track (see phase 5).
- **Online evaluation survey** at the end of the project to state whether the aims based on the project proposal could be fulfilled and how useful the methods and tools were.
- The use of the **Logical Framework Matrix** (cf. page 28) verifies whether the initial set goal and objectives have been reached.
- Regular reporting using the **Three Month Report** and the **Annual Report** containing relevant information about the project progress. Besides the fields of activities, satisfaction with the process on a local and transnational level was rated. This information was useful for a **continuous rethinking of the project** process and also in comparison to other LAGs.
- **Web** and **face-to-face meetings** help parties get a regular overview of the process, including the activities and results in the participating regions.
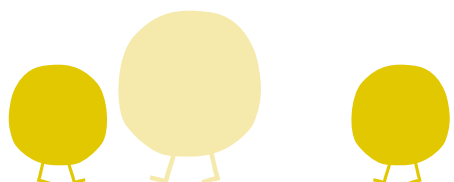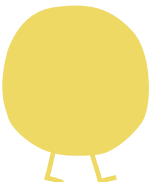
Fons Jacques, LAG manager,
Redange-Wiltz/Luxembourg

"Modern online communication tools played a major role in remaining permanently connected to the partner regions to ensure the common on-going process.

Certain that files and communications are available on an equal level for all people involved in the project on a common online platform, the chance to leverage tools like web meetings, via which we could discuss together without incurring considerable expenditure in terms of costs & time, was crucial for the project life. Using these tools, particularly in a transnational project with partners spread all over Europe, is key to ensuring a successful project."

## ▶ Key results of the CULTrips evaluation

- Despite the varying starting circumstances, at the end of the project period all participating LAGs were satisfied with the process initiated by the project, the tools they used and the added value for them and their region.

*"The project made me reflect on the different cultural and environmental heritages of the countries involved."*

*"We implicated an incoming agency active in sustainable tourism, which is an important step for the marketing process and responded to our local actors involved."*

*"Through the project we achieved good contacts with other networks in Europe (greeters, creative tourism, and sustainable tourism)."*

- The **tools** Pilot trip, Face-to-face Meetings, SWOT Analysis and Web-based Meetings were evaluated as most useful, and those in which many CULTrips actors were involved.

*"The experiences of the Pilot trip as a tool are useful in future for local actors and LAGs."*
*"Use the pilot persons as CULTrips ambassadors."*
*"Regular meetings are essential and also how all partners prepare for them."*

- Besides the **Pilot trip** one of the key tools of CULTrips became the **Train the Trainer** workshop. Here the satisfaction was very high.

- The actual marketing did not involve the phase of the CULTrips project, but only initiating first approaches to do so. However there will be a **follow up project** of CULTrips to perform that task.

- Ultimately, all LAGs are satisfied with their tourism products. Nevertheless, they were unsure about the future perspective e.g. stable local engagement and marketing of tourism products. Accordingly, it is important to note that **tourism products are the outcome of a longer process.**
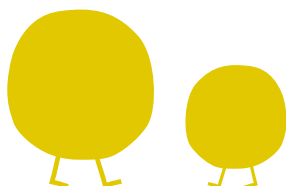
▶ **Lessons learnt**
  **from CULTrips**

**Lessons learnt on transnational level**

- Build up a project management on a web-based content management system. Be aware that depending on the level of involvement, there could be different tools possible for the project persons: project participants that only work for the project from time to time need more simple tools, while project managers who are more involved in the project need probably a web based management system. So it is a question when, how and for whom what type of tool should be used! Also always set up a **moderator** and responsible person for the process, when using a web-tool.

- **Involve all concerned people regularly** and **keep** them **active** in the process.

- Make the **differences** between the different cultures of the project partners **transparent** (budget, personal, time to investigate in the project etc.) so the relation between expected outputs and available resources is clear right from the beginning. Plan at least one working session for 2 hours for this (face-to-face meeting, web meeting).

- Make the team aware, what it means to work in different cultural surroundings like **differences in working habits**, etc., so the **level of tolerance** is higher. Plan working sessions and review your way of working together (face-to-face meeting at the beginning, later also web meeting is possible).

- Set everybody's **expectations and contributions** to the project by letting define the pot of gold and the crocodile to motivate each member of the group. Reflect on that paper every time you meet, if expectations and contributions are still the same or, if something changed.

## Why can evaluation be powerful within this process?

- Always calculate **enough time** for discussions and exchange between the transnational team, naturally in regard to time and financial budget available.

- **Write all steps down,** that have to be implemented in the project, and select tools for it in the beginning (e.g. by using the Logframe Matrix). Explain the tools in detail and let the project manager decide, when there is the right time to implement the tool. Results should be made transparent for all e.g. online.

- **All project managers or local actors** that work close with the local group should be **trained in the tools.** There should be at least one person who is competent in using all the tools.

- Let the project partners find a way, how to **exchange experiences of practices among their regions**. One idea is to connect local stakeholders in a blog or forum to activate them in exchanging their ideas also with each other. One of the project managers should moderate the blog etc.

- Practical aspects and good practices out of every region are integrated during the elaboration **of the Tourism Concept** to show the added-value of cooperation and ensure **the transfer of practical experiences** between the regions.

- Integrate **more transnational workshops like "Train the Trainer"** to build up accountability and to involve local people that are, at that state, in generally less involved in the region. Connect the stakeholders of such trainings in a network, keep them in touch with each other e.g. set up topics to discuss, initiate web-based meetings, etc.

- Once the tourism products are coming into shape, ask specialists for the **final designing and marketing on international level.**

**Lessons learnt on local level**

- Build up a **local project communication** using blogs, forums or other social-media applications etc. **Keep** the **stakeholders active** and **strongly involved** in the process. Always set up a moderator and responsible person for the process, when using these types of tools.

- Make a regional stakeholder and actor analysis to be sure to involve the right one's regarding the project objectives right from the beginning.

- Create a local concept working group (CWG) to ensure the process of the project on local level and have multiplicators for the project idea. The local working group may grow and change during the project life.

- Get out of the participants in CWG the ones who are able to help to support on transnational level regarding also eventual language abilities.
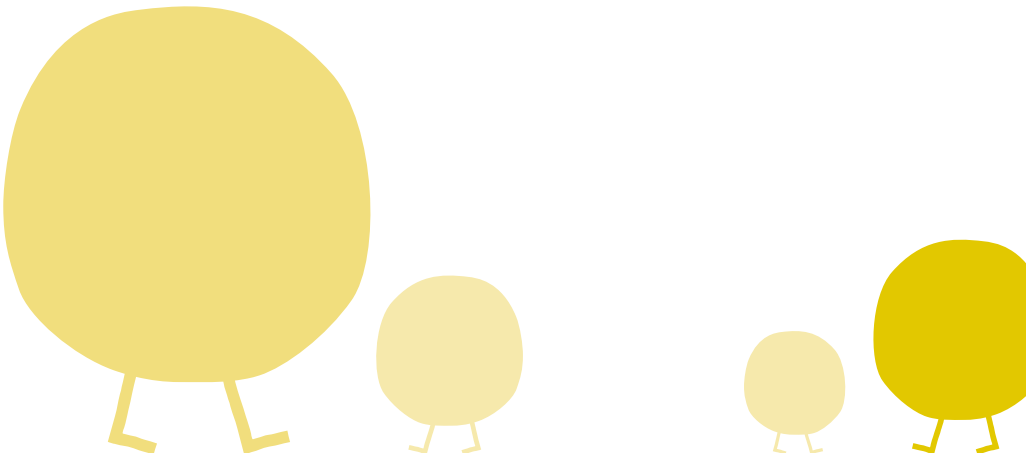
## ▶ 6. What further steps are possible?

After adopting the step-by-step-approach and seeing your project progress, consider further steps and how to keep your project on-going.

The developed marketing plan (cf. phase 6) establishes the basis to realise a **business plan**. A business plan is used for founding an enterprise/business and also helps convince banks, cooperation partners, etc. of the (financial) support. Besides the marketing plan, a business plan also contains relevant information about staff, distribution, financing, etc. to constitute the cost-effectiveness of the project.

Furthermore, it is also advisable to intensify your network activities and **connections to other creative and sustainable tourism networks** that match with your project's philosophy. In so doing, you will be able to find a prospective long-lasting connection option for your project.

CULTrips is planning to develop a business plan together with a specialised consulting agency both in this matter as well as screening EU programs for additional funding eligibility. On the one hand, this will establish the basis for founding an association or other organisation for further cooperation and marketing of CULTrips. Conversely, the project partners can apply for supplemental European project funds to anchor the CULTrips' approach.

Moreover, CULTrips had contact with **different tourism networks** such as Creative Tourism Austria (www.kreativreisen.at) and the Global Greeter Network (www.globalgreeternetwork.org) to determine an adequate and acceptable connection possibility.