

# TUTOR'S MANUAL



**STEFAN**

Sustainable Tourism: Eco-friendly Actions Network

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# STEFAN Project Overview



Nowadays, tourism represents the **third largest economic activity** in the European Union, and it is thus crucial for the Member States to become more involved in **sustainable tourism development**.

The general aim of the STEFAN: Sustainable Tourism: Eco-friendly Actions Network project is to underline the **importance of cooperation between tourism and ecology**, as well as to implement an **innovative training approach to ecotourism**. The development of ecotourism and sustainable tourism practices in partner countries - namely the Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, North Macedonia, and Slovenia - will enhance the broader European tourism industry and give a contribution to the Commission's "Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism".

By promoting professional knowledge of the matter, improving the quality of services, and supporting local cooperation, STEFAN aims at achieving good ecotourism and sustainable **tourism practices**, increasing the number of **tourism professionals**, and raising **entrepreneurial skills** and cooperation between educational companies, people working in the tourism sector, and tourists themselves.

The **main priorities** of STEFAN are to **develop a ground-breaking educational e-learning platform** and to **create educational material** focusing on practical tasks and on new IT opportunities (e.g. applications, QR codes, etc.) which are currently crucial for the European tourism sector. The training material will ensure high-quality and forward-looking education standards to a large number of relevant stakeholders: local entrepreneurs (current and future), young people interested in tourism, local development promoters and agents, local policy-makers, technicians, and professionals who would like to upgrade their skills, and many others.

On top of that, STEFAN will contribute to creating **new employment opportunities**, preserving local **cultural heritage**, promoting the conservation of **green areas**, raising awareness about **regional tourism potential**, and facilitating the **policy-making processes** at the local level.

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# Introduction

Welcome to the **Tutor's Manual of STEFAN project!**

This handbook aims to facilitate and assist you in providing the best educational and training support to the project's target stakeholders.

Its content revolves around four pillars - namely:

- the project's learning modules;
- your role as a tutor in teaching adult learning;
- the practice of ecotourism;
- the assessment and evaluation phase.

Before the tutoring starts, in this brief introduction, some practical information agreed upon by the project partners can be found, especially regarding the **pilot testing** of the STEFAN course, conceived to take place online – tutors and participants will be attending several, combined online sessions via Google Meet, Skype, Zoom, and other similar platforms.

*The recommendations included in this guide are based on the partner organizations' expertise and on the experience they gained thanks to the launch of previous similar initiatives as part of other projects.*

*We trust that this guide will help you deliver a positive teaching and learning experience, and that it will result in more effective and rewarding tutoring.*

# **PART I**

# **STEFAN LEARNING MODULES OVERVIEW**

# Learning Pathway

The learning path of this training considers a **blended learning methodology**, or more precisely an **online face-to-face encounter** with participants and an **online self-training course** that each participant will develop with tutor off-line assistance.

The following steps and phases ensure the course organization:

## PHASE 1:

### INITIAL CONTACT WITH PARTICIPANTS AND INTRODUCTORY SESSION

The course is supposed to start with one introductory session aimed at setting the tone for the upcoming ones. It is a chance to show the learners that the tutor wants to establish a relaxed atmosphere and encourage **active participation** and **exchange of knowledge and experience**.

The tutor should **contact each participant** to schedule the 1st online face-to-face session – (i.e via zoom or google meet). The tutor will send to the participants the link and credentials to access the scheduled online meeting. This programmed **encounter will take around 1 hour**.

During the face-to-face encounter, the tutor is expected to:

- Introduce themselves and make a general presentation of the training course and STEFAN project. Estimated time: 10 minutes.
- Collect participants' information profiles. Estimated time: 10 minutes. During the individual online face-to-face meeting, the tutor will compile the information while the participant will respond/compile the answers. It should be considered at least the following participant information: name/age; city/country; work position & sector; motivation to do this course; level of knowledge/involvement with sustainable ecotourism issues (see Annex 1)
- Specific training course information: modality and methodology, how to access the platform, sections and how the platform functions (a brief simulation), course duration, and other considerations. Estimated time: 20 minutes.
- Participants' doubts and questions. Estimated time: 10 minutes.
- Plan and schedule online and self-training courses. Estimated time: 10 minutes.

### ANNEX 1 - Document on session 1 tutor-participant

# Learning Pathway

## PHASE 2: RUN THE ONLINE COURSE

Based on the schedule agreed with the tutor, the participants will start to do the online course with **registration on the platform**. At the beginning of each module, an **initial test has to be performed** in order to test the initial level of knowledge of each participant. Then, the participant will have access to all contents, concepts, cases / best practices, and the bibliography of each module. In the end, the **initial test has to be performed a second time** in order to check the knowledge acquired in each module.

The estimated time of the **total course implementation is maximum six hours (45min or 60min estimated time per module)**. The advantage of this modality is the ability to pause and restart at any level from the last point studied. Only the test part – the quiz – will be performed in a row once the participant has started the assessment.

To facilitate learning and follow up, it is recommended that the tutor adopt the following approach:

- 1st individual learning session - the participants go through the modules 1-3
- 2nd face-to-face session between tutor-participant: 1 hour second online meeting
- Aim: discussion about the first 3 modules, problems that occurred, evaluation of the modules, platform

### ANNEX 2 - Document on session 2 tutor-participant

- 2nd individual learning session: participants going through the modules 4-6
- 3rd face-to-face session between tutor-participant: 1 hour face-to-face meeting
- Aim: discussion about modules 4-6, problems that occurred, evaluation of the modules, platform

### ANNEX 3 - Document on session 3 tutor-participant

## PHASE 3: DOUBTS & PROBLEMS

During the implementation of phase 2, the participant will have **offline assistance from the tutor** to clarify concepts or content doubts and resolve platform function problems. This assistance will be through email and phone calls. Tutor contact information will be given during the face-to-face encounter.

# Learning Goals

Each module has specific learning goals and they are the following:

## TRAINING MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO ECOTOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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After reading this module, the learners will have sufficient **conceptual and historical knowledge** to differentiate between sustainable tourism and ecotourism. The students will be introduced to **practical cases** as well as good practices to understand the concepts better. They will be able to understand the term **tourism product** without highly spread confusion. The learners will be given recommendations to develop an **eco-sustainable tourism product** without causing a negative impact on the environment.

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## TRAINING MODULE 2: ETHICAL ISSUES

After completing this module, the learners will be aware of the **importance of ethics in ecotourism** through concepts, history, and the most important documents of ethics. They will have deep knowledge of the documents by covering all the articles they contain. Apart from the theoretical part, the students will get **practical recommendations** on how to travel in an ethical way by knowing what to consider and what to avoid. Furthermore, the learners will find a link between ethical behavior and the pandemic situation based on the covid-19 example.

## TRAINING MODULE 3: SAFETY AND QUALITY IN ECOTOURISM

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With this module the students will learn how to **ensure safety and security** while providing high-quality service in ecotourism. They will be introduced to the guide for developing a **Safety Action Plan** and will understand the importance of **risk management**. Furthermore, the learners will be able to undertake specific actions to satisfy the needs of ecotourists and comply with the **existing international standards** to guarantee both safety and security in tourism services.

# Learning Goals

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## TRAINING MODULE 4: PROMOTION OF ECOTOURISM

After reading this module, the learners will be introduced to the **basics of Ecotourism Marketing** to be able to **develop a marketing plan** for tourism businesses. They will get theoretical knowledge as well as some tips and recommendations on **how to target international customers** and people from different cultures. The students will learn the importance of **digital marketing** for promoting a business and will acquire basic skills on how to use and combine diverse tools and strategies for **managing social media platforms**.

## TRAINING MODULE 5: ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT

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In this module the learners will gain knowledge of the characteristics of the **management of a business** that are the most relevant to the ecotourism sector. They will know the difference between managing a conventional tourism business and an ecotourism activity. The students will be able to develop a **vision of ecotourism management** considering the environment and surrounding communities to establish a feasible ecotourism business. Apart from the theoretical knowledge, the learners will be introduced to the **case study** to see the practical examples of the environment being an asset for generating a potentially successful tourism business.

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## TRAINING MODULE 6: TOURISM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

After completing this module, the learners will be able to provide **accessible services to individuals with disabilities** by understanding their special needs. They will learn the definition of disability as well as the ways of **creating a favorable environment** for persons with disabilities following the formula **Availability + Accessibility + Affordability** combined with quality and choice of the services. The main goal of this module is to **raise awareness** of the hospitality sector, become more inclusive, and eventually **make a social impact**.

## **PART II**

# **TEACHING ADULT LEARNING**

# Tutor's Role Description and Responsibilities

One representative from each partner country will be the tutor, as they have complex knowledge of the training material and they are perfectly aware of STEFAN project aims, objectives, target group, and every important aspect.

**The tutor's role and responsibility** are to organize and lead the online meetings with participants min. 3 times during the piloting phase (see **Part I, Learning Pathway, Phase 1**).

## **Requirements of the tutors:**

- Be available and provide additional information or help to the participants if needed
- Respect the time of the participants - be punctual during the tutor-participants meeting
- Provide feedback, guidelines and send notifications to the participants if needed during the learning process
- Be open, constructive and helpful
- Social skills - be able to attract participants and involve them
- Knowledge of the platform - able to help the participants if they face technical problems on the platform
- Teaching skills - be able to find solutions if the participants have lack of motivation or if they are tired and have difficulties on focusing

# Preparation and Planning

When setting the stage for the STEFAN course, the organization should be planned carefully - for instance, a tutor should arrange a place for online meetings that should prevent any disturbance (i.e noise, problems of internet connection) and ensure the smooth running of the course (c.f **Managing E-learning Effectively**)

Before the course starts, a tutor should prepare the **material** he/she is going to teach thoroughly.

The trainer should read the material and think about it: What questions would he/she ask? What could be confusing? What practical examples can he/she provide from his/her personal experience?

As for the meetings, a tutor should keep in mind that it is highly recommended to have the participants engage in a short **icebreaker activity** at the beginning, in order to get to know them better and encourage them to become friendly with each other. Furthermore, a trainer should remember that his/her role is to **facilitate** and not dominate the learning sessions. In this regard, it can be useful to always have some questions prepared in advance to help him/her **involve** the learners in the discussion. Some additional tips would be to behave in a professional manner at all times and to dress in a way that enables a tutor to assert both **authority and credibility**.

## 3.1. INTRODUCTORY SESSION

In order to make a strong start, the trainer can have an outline of the tutorial session and objectives.

The main aims of the introductory session are:

- To outline the course structure and time schedule
- To explain the principles of blended learning
- To explore the learners' expectations and motivation to take part in the course
- To explore the learners' previous experience

# Preparation and Planning

- To motivate and inspire learners
- To find out if learners have any particular barriers to their learning
- To set some 'ground rules for the course
- To explain the evaluation and certification process
- To establish the communication process
- To establish a good connection with the learners

See **Part I, Learning Pathway, Phase 1** for complete information related to the introductory session.

## 3.2. CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS

It is important to take into account the learners' expectations and past experiences, and select the **best approach** that the tutor thinks the learner would be comfortable with. Establishing clear expectations about a tutor's role and about the learner's role as a member of the online class is crucial for maintaining a good **working relationship**. The tutor should talk to the learner about his/her expectations of them, and ask about what expectations they have of him/her. Getting the learner to establish a set of **ground rules** for their online class must be considered. Some possible ground rules (for the learners and the tutor) may be:

- everyone shall be on time for the sessions
- the sound of all mobile phones shall be turned off during the classes
- everyone shall come prepared for each class
- everyone shall respect each other's point of view
- everyone shall listen to each other, and will not interrupt

## 3.3. NOTES ABOUT ADULT LEARNERS

In contrast to university students, adults have much more work and life experience which can be an excellent resource and contribution to the course activities. Therefore, a good tutor will stimulate a learning environment for participants to integrate new ideas with what they already know, show respect for them as individual learners, and value their experiences, perspectives, and contributions.

# Preparation & Planning

Besides, adults have a sense of purpose for their learning that is quite different from younger students. For instance, they often want to change their career, they may not be learning "just for learning's sake", and they have a very clear idea of what they want to do when they finish studying. Adult learners are **results-oriented**. They have **specific expectations** for what they will get out of learning activities and will often drop out of voluntary learning if their expectations are not met.

Adult students can be extremely **motivated** as well since they are spending their own time, money, and resources to study. They tend to be very **focused** in the online classroom and like to cover material quickly, but completely. Adult learners prefer learning environments that reinforce their learning and enable them to apply their learning immediately.

# Managing E-Learning Effectively

In order to have a good experience and success doing this online modality course, it is recommended that the tutors transmit to the participants the following tips to take into account:

## 1. Schedule your best time for study

*The impact of the hours of the day is not the same for everybody for study, so think about **what time could be the best for you**, considering also your habits and context.*

- *If you're a **morning person**, make time to study first thing.*
- *More of a **night owl**? Set aside an hour or two after dinner to cozy up to your computer. If the kids require your morning and evening attention, try to carve out a study session mid-day while they're at school. Brew your usual cup of coffee, put on your go-to playlist, and do whatever you need to get into the zone and down to business.*

## 2. Find a good place to do the course

*The same thing is about the place and context where you are going to do the online course. Some people prefer to do online courses at home, in the office, or in a library while others prefer to go to a coffee store or in a "PC-friendly area". Find the place **where you feel comfortable** with your style and needs.*

## 3. Eliminate distractions

*One of the most important challenges to face when taking an online course is **not to be distracted** by the context and daily obligations that put training in second place. From Netflix to social media to dishes piling up in the sink, you'll be faced with many distractions that can easily derail your studies. The best online students know how to lessen these distractions and **set aside time to focus**. Exactly how much of a challenge these distractions will prove to be will depend on your own unique personality and situation. For this, it is important to consider:*

- *try to previously organize the most suitable and available day and time;*
- *communicate with your family/friends/colleagues who are at home or in the office with you that during that day and time you will be "busy" taking the course;*
- *turn your cell phone off to avoid losing focus every time a text message, a notification pops up or calls;*
- *preferably use headphones or music to isolate yourself from the sounds around you;*
- *choose an "outside-home" place to eliminate the urge and multitask at home;*
- *close all your social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).*

# Managing E-Learning Effectively

*Find a strategy that works best for you!*

## **4. Make sure you have good quality and stable internet connection**

*This is a fundamental requirement to verify and **guarantee before starting the course in order to guarantee your optimal learning and enthusiasm** without having to redo the course section/exercise or lose the motivation of the course.*

## **5. Make sure to have the link and credentials to access the platform**

*Before the day and time scheduled to start the course, verify that the **credentials and access codes to the platform work**. Keep these credentials saved in an easily accessible folder or in your notebook that you use for the course. Also, check if it is required to download any special application for the platform.*

## **6. Not everyone learns in the same way**

*Not everyone learns the same way, so think about what types of information help you **best grasp new concepts** and employ relevant study strategies.*

- *If you're a visual learner: make sure to have a special notebook for your course notes and different kinds of colored pens and highlighters to highlight key concepts.*
- *If your best is listening: you can record the reading of the contents of the course so that you can listen to it on your cell phone at different times while you walk or go by bicycle/ bus/ car.*

## **7. Review the content or module with concepts completely new or difficult to get**

*If you identify that you did not retain the information in a particular module (because of the context or you were tired) or the concepts were complex and totally new, we recommend that you **review the module and re-read the notes** in your notebook.*

# Effective Individual and Small Group Teaching and Learning

In an individual or small teaching e-learning group, it is very important to **maintain fluid communication, follow up as detailed as possible, and create a climate of work and involvement** that means that the participant accepts the didactic activities proposed almost as a common job, as a road to travel together, with individual work but also overcoming barriers and common objectives that will lead them to **materialize the general objectives of the course**. This is especially of more importance when the course is individual (face-to-face).

In this context, the **role of the trainer** goes through the dynamization of the course, organization of activities, motivation of the student, and creation of a pleasant work environment that includes experiences for self-learning and the construction of knowledge.

This implies that the trainer, in order to develop an **efficient learning process** in the small group or individual course, must follow the following steps:

- **Provide motivating guidelines.** The trainer must explain the tasks and their importance in detail, seeking commitment and motivation. During the development of the activity in the forum or debate, they must control the performance of the participant, contributing knowledge, suggesting new paths, fostering collaboration, and stimulating reflection.
- **Facilitate the speech.** The trainer must start and maintain a dialogue with the learner, frequently participating in online discussions and involving students in a learning community. At the same time, the trainer must evaluate the answers and associate them with content, giving appropriate and relevant examples, and drawing attention to the best-reasoned answers.
- **Direct teaching.** Beyond promoting debate and participation, the trainer must assume the role of facilitator and content expert, showing himself as a competent professional, capable of identifying ideas and concepts, presenting them in an orderly manner, guiding the discourse, offering new sources of information, diagnosing misconceptions and organizing educational activities. In this sense, direct teaching translates into direct and proactive interventions that guarantee an effective and efficient educational experience.

# Effective Individual and Small Group Teaching and Learning

- **Moderator role.** Studies indicate that the frequency and quality of the interventions carried out in an online forum are mainly marked by the moderating activities of the trainer. Thus, the online trainer must organize the forum/discussions (objectives, rules, interventions, etc.) and must create a friendly and socially positive environment for the correct and optimal development of collective learning. To the extent that the online trainer regularly responds to the students' interventions, announces new activities, provides new materials, or encourages discussion, the motivational, social, and intellectual aspect is reinforced.

This means that to have consistent monitoring of the learning, it is important to establish an appropriate rhythm around the following tasks:

- **Doubt forum/discussions time.** The discussion threads that are activated in the course forum/discussion must be kept alive. It should be tried that the queries are not only answered by the trainer; a space for interaction should be created, where new discussions, links, and resources are provided to resolve issues. If this happens correctly, the trainer should moderate, not only encourage, and encourage research and "learning by doing".
- **Feedback on the evaluation tests.** In the event the learner decides to share the evaluation test, it is recommended for the tutor to talk face to face (online) in a meeting, sending a message to the student when they complete all the activities/questionnaires, highlighting their specificities and opportunities for improvement.
- **Correction of activities.** The resolution of the practical activity is an instrument for evaluating the course, and it must be corrected by assessing them from the point of view of the student's training.
- **Monitoring of progress and achievement of objectives.** A regular flow of communication must be maintained with each participant with the degree of progress through the course and those concepts that they masters and those that they must reinforce.

# Effective Small Group Teaching and Learning

In addition, for the course to be efficient, and for the participant to maximize its use of the learning and improvement opportunity that lies ahead, it is necessary for the trainer to organize an adequate tutoring/mentoring system in terms of times, modes, and communication tools that optimize learning, in addition to evaluating the individual tasks of the student throughout the course.

Finally, seeking to maximize the potential of the learning group, the trainer **must go beyond the previously established content**, and provide additional documentation and links to pages of interest, as well as optional activities, according to the **needs/opportunities** that arise in the course, or in its projection beyond its completion, so that learning is truly adapted and interactive because **each student will be able to delve into the aspects that they need the most, that interest them the most, or that most affect them in their specific professional context**; thus allowing to establish a personalized improvement path and self-managed by the student themselves.

**PART III**

**ECOTOURISM IN PRACTICE**

# Case Studies

## 1. HOW A NEW ECOTOURISM MODEL IS TRANSFORMING SPAIN'S MOST RURAL AREAS

Spain is a **demographically polarized country**, where, since the 1950s, there has been a **strong emigration** to urban centers and to coastal communities. As a consequence of this, not only did the rural areas worsen their situation, but the **natural resources around them were no longer worked and/or cared for**, except where the industry might have some specific interest in using them. In the 1990s it was already a very common phenomenon in Spain to find **entire villages abandoned**, or that thousands of small rural municipalities now had only a very old population, and a real state of semi-abandonment; in local communities that were dying -with their traditions, their peculiarities, their nuances, and their richness- as their **last inhabitants died**.

Since then, the Spanish Government and the Regional Governments have **established policies and financing lines** to improve the situation of rural areas in Spain. This served, for example, to be able to **restore homes** that had been left in poor condition, or that had been abandoned; and, among other things, began to promote their adaptation to be "**rural tourism houses**". With this initiative, people from rural areas or their relatives could **reform their old houses** with the help of public money on the condition that they remain as "rural tourism houses" for **at least the following ten years**.

At first, it was not a successful initiative, but its proliferation in numerous parts of Spain, as well as the tendency for the public to begin to value more positively the care of nature, or green tourism, caused it to begin to be an **incipient successful trend**, where a good part of the population of the large Spanish urban centers began to **return to the countryside** to rediscover their countries, their customs, their landscapes, their food, and drink, and their traditions.

Its success and its overcrowding caused a **new ecotourism sector to be gradually structured**, including additional services, activities, and other experiences that contribute to reinforcing an increasingly competitive tourist offer. In this way, it went from being an almost familiar and experimental option to being a **small industry linked to its environment and the attributes of ecotourism**. Over time, the public no longer only wanted to visit rural areas, but also to experience their reality, their natural resources, and live an experience.

# Case Studies

However, even though it has become a highly successful initiative in Spain, its development was largely **handmade and improvised**, where the associations of the sector have tried to promote the necessary **structuring and modernization** to be able to compete in a dynamic and digital world like the current one. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown have caused access to open rural environments, rural houses, and **green spaces to be valued more than ever** in Spain, as opposed to the urban life typical of large cities.

This has caused the fabric of rural areas to be divided into two, where some have been **definitively abandoned**, and others have improved their situation to such an extent that, where recently there were abandoned natural places and houses in poor condition, today they represent a **great real estate business**, and the appearance of businesses and services associated with this new activity, and the consequences of enhancing rural life and its advantages.

In this way, ecotourism and rural tourism have **resized and totally changed** the economic structure and activity of the Spanish rural fabric, leading even now to **stop the desertification of rural areas**, and causing new generations of Spaniards to start their businesses and their activity in rural areas.

Now it is common to find towns where you can enjoy a rural house with **magnificent services**, live an **ecotourism experience** in sports, exploration of nature, care for animals, participate in agricultural or livestock activities, enjoy incredible natural landscapes, know and taste local products, or learn about the differential culture of each site.

It should be noted that, in 2019, 289 ecotourism accommodation businesses received an estimated total of **781,654 guests** producing an economic impact of over **€230 million**. Meanwhile, 208 sustainable tourism activity companies received over **1.3 million clients**, generating an economic impact of over **€160 million** and directly creating **1,414 jobs**.

In 2020, rural tourism reached the figure of **2 million visitors**, only slowed down by the pandemic, while overnight stays rose to 2.33 on average; currently, **18,000 rural accommodation** opportunities are offered in Spain. Its success is manifested in the fact that the average visitor today is willing to pay **7% more** than what they paid the previous year for the same activities.

# Case Studies

At the same time, ecotourism visitors to rural environments have **become loyal**, and 40% are regular users, while 35% are sporadic users. In addition, its position in the strong tourist offer in Spain has been reinforced, and today 57% of people who come to live ecotourism experiences do so using their **main vacations** for it, when only 20 years ago this would have been impossible. Close to 100% of the 57% who use their main vacations for ecotourism in rural Spain are **very satisfied** with the experience and **hope to repeat it**.

Today **ecotourism is part of the usual plans** and efforts of the Ministry of Tourism of the Government of Spain, while it is promoted and supported by the different regional governments of the country. The **objectives** that have been set for **2030** are to reduce the seasonality of rural tourism, improve its quality, optimize its digitization, improve the existing marketing capacity in the sector, promote cooperation and exchange between the thousands of existing small ecotourism agents, face to have ecotourism with sustained and sustainable growth.

Indeed, this new ecotourism model, previously non-existent in Spain, is an important source of activity in rural Spain, but, in addition, due to its link with the natural environment, it is an essential way of **caring for existing natural resources**, and of **raising awareness** among the population about the need to preserve them.

## 2. ECO-ROMANIA

The Ecotourism Association of Romania, AER, has 56 members country-wide, **most of them small tourism businesses**, such as guesthouses or tourism agencies specializing in outdoor programs and rural culture. Another part of its membership is represented by **organizations for nature conservation and sustainable development**, and a smaller percentage is represented by individuals who wish to support the activity of the association and, through their profession, are interested in the development of ecotourism in Romania.

# Case Studies

Eco-Romania is the brand of its activity, **offering accommodations, trails, activities, and events, which can be discovered and filtered by areas, types, and months of the year.** In this way, Eco Romania is today a very powerful point of supply of eco-tourism opportunities, offering not only a high number of possibilities and variety, but also the possibility of being able to decide on your own route or programming according to tastes, interests, and requirements.

That is why they offer different **ecotourism destinations** where you can find different activity options and different attractions in each of them, linking multiple local offers that **combine different ecotourism elements and activities.** The public only has to choose the area and find before them different possibilities to do in that area, accommodation options, and complete information about it, including images and videos, which make it much more attractive and easier for people to choose to enjoy ecotourism services in Romania.

One of the strengths of Eco Romania is to have been able, first, to have **a very broad base of places, activities, accommodation points, additional services, and all kinds of compliments** for what the ecotourism experience of people means today, and secondly, having managed to create small, numerous and varied ecotourism packages, **also shown in a very accessible, simple and attractive way.** All this, optimizing the Romanian ecotourism fabric and taking advantage of its full potential.

Browsing their website, one ends up taking their first step towards an ecotourism trip, where they can quickly decide with **great visual support where they want to go, what activities, options, and additional services are there, the possibilities of contact, and even find out if there are guided tours and how to obtain them.** It is, in short, the agile structuring of a complete, attractive service, arranged online in a very simple and accessible way.

Additionally, in order to maintain the quality of the service, Eco-Romania also has its own **quality certification**, which promotes both the direct services and the existing individual indirect services, and offered through its services and its associates, such as the **experience** packages or possibilities of complementarity that they offer, are in accordance with that positive feeling that the visitor obtains from the moment he begins to plan his trip

# Case Studies

In order to put something like this together, Eco-Romania, as an initiative of AER, **has personnel specialized in consulting ecotourism projects**. In addition, AER maintains collaborative relationships with international specialists in tourism and related fields from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and France. They may become involved in consultancy services for their input of knowledge and good practices from their countries. AER is also in touch with the academic environment, by collaborating with Romanian and foreign professors, as well as with the private sector, through the AER members, especially the small companies present on the Western European market for more than 10 years.

**In this process, the success of Eco-Romania has arisen from the following elements:**

- Create a sufficiently broad database of places, activities, and services, prioritizing their quality and complementarity.
- Create a web page that not only promotes the general activities of the association but that, from the first moment, is structured as a very useful and simple tool to find attractive possibilities of doing ecotourism in Romania.
- Allow the visitor to find possibilities quickly and adapted to their needs, being able to establish filters by type, activity, or directly choose an area.
- Each card of each area, for example, offers at least three attractive experiences to be carried out there, and a possibility of accommodation according to the characteristics of the place and the experience that is intended to be promoted. These possibilities also offer how-to contact, or links to their own web pages, as well as online purchase/booking websites.
- The presentation of all these options and places is very visual, careful, and simple. It has been decided not to complicate navigation, and that the strong point is a combination of simplicity and the attractiveness of the product/service/place that is being offered. The photographs are of high quality, and this has been complemented in many cases even with videos.
- The descriptions are careful, and concrete, and are accompanied by photographs that demonstrate both what can be done and the attractiveness described.
- In order to avoid being a mere container of offers, the routes proposed to make sense by themselves, are attractive, and a quality certification has been established that guarantees the specialization, characteristics, and level of quality of the experience that the user obtains.

# Case Studies

All this as a whole has led Eco-Romania to be a very interesting success story: they have done something that is also done in other places, but the **care in how to do it**, in offering a **simple** and **attractive experience** from the very navigation when looking for experiences, and **designing experiences** or offering complementary services that are consistent with the main search of the visitor, also **taking care of their quality** and presentation, **have made their results and success superior** to what this type of initiative has reached on other occasions.

### 3. TRENINO, ITALIAN DOLOMITES, ITALY - GREEN INSTITUTE

Trentino is an autonomous province located in Northern Italy and has a resident population of approximately 524,000 inhabitants. In the economic system, tourism is a major source of income and shows progressive growth, both in summer and in winter, thanks to a steady increase in both the quality of the offers of holiday accommodation and a diverse range of activities. Within the territory, there are 1,500 hotel facilities with a total of 94,000 beds, as well as more than double this number of beds in complementary businesses such as private apartments and second homes. The natural beauty of Lake Garda, the Dolomites, and the valleys bring millions of tourists to spend their holidays in Trentino which has established itself as a destination of excellence at national and international levels. Considering only the hotels and related businesses, there were about 3.5 million arrivals (in 2012) and 15.5 million bookings (2012), with the major growth trend being in foreign arrivals. Trentino offers over 500 km of slopes for alpine skiing linked by 236 lifts and a further 500 km of cross-country ski trails and 500 km of bike paths constructed for family cycling, with as many trails for mountain biking.

Trentino prepared and successfully held the Nordic World Ski Championships from February 20 to March 3, 2013. This major event was hailed as the first international skiing event to be certified for the accessibility of the sites and services. As a result of this effort, for the first time, the Nordic World Ski Championships were completely free from any architectural barriers. Stadiums in Lago di Tesero and Predazzo were awarded the Certificate of Accessible Fiemme – OPEN EVENT, in order to guarantee access to everybody to all the competitions and events.

# Case Studies

These measures were part of a major program of accessibility that involved the entire valley and aimed to open the world event and Val di Fiemme to everybody, including disabled persons but also elderly people and people with food allergies and intolerances, for whom restaurants and hotels prepare specific menus. During the event, over 400 people with disabilities and carers attended, demonstrating the success of the initiative.

The activities carried out by the Mountain Academy of Trentino, through collaboration with the cooperative Handicrea and Informatica Trentino, have led to the development of a mobile application that enables people with disabilities and reduced mobility to move around within the territory with greater peace of mind, being aware of the access barriers and where to find accessible services.

The app now contains about 1,200 facilities, all of which have been carefully surveyed:

- 800 structures in Trento
- 200 structures in Rovereto
- About 70 structures in Val di Fiemme
- 150 structures used during the Universiade

The disabled person has the possibility to create their own personal profile, specifying their own characteristics, and decide on the type of services which they want to access (restaurant, bar, hotel, etc..).

The software indicates the level of accessibility and provides detailed information on the paths a result of a mapping carried out by the cooperative Handicrea. Indicates if a place is available and the best way to reach it.

The Academy has formed a working group with the participation of all the associations that deal with disability services aimed at the revision and implementation of the web portal [www.trentinopertutti.it](http://www.trentinopertutti.it)

The website is very basic and will be developed, presenting a comprehensive guide to accessibility of the different areas and facilities within the entire the region.

# Case Studies

## Measures Undertaken

Certification of Accessibility of Nordic World Ski Championships 2013 in Val di Fiemme involved the entire territory in the following specific actions:

- Involvement of all local stakeholders (community of Valle, municipalities, associations, training institutes, etc. .) through holding numerous meetings in the area aimed at achieving the objectives;
- Infrastructure works for the accessibility of facilities in the World Championship venue (grandstands, parking, transportation, trails, restaurants, bars, tickets office): all functional areas of the event were made accessible.
- Training to volunteers: training activities were carried out with about 200 volunteers training in schools. They have been made aware of the needs of disabled visitors and how to cater to them.
- Special assistance: Special service teams were operating throughout the event.
- Accessible information: an accessible section of the portal of the event was created and information was also provided in alternative formats and via specific information tools. The info point for the event was made, conforming to accessibility standards.
- A Mobile App " Accessible Trentino" was created for the World Cup, aimed at people with disabilities.

## Overall Business Impact in Trentino

Hotels and other Businesses in Trentino have changed their practices in line with making their facilities and services friendlier to disabled visitors. This has been a gradual change as there were disabled visitors to the area before the World Cup but the World Cup event undoubtedly served to focus attention on this target group and create new business opportunities.

Considering the promotion of accessible tourism in Trentino, there is still no dedicated section or link to guide disabled tourists to the information they may be looking for.

# Case Studies

The website does not include any links to SportABILI, nor does it contain, for example, a section with available hotels or available sports activities. Available accommodation for people with special needs can be found on the Trentino website, but they are not collected in one place.

On the other hand, a search on Trip Advisor for Wheelchair Accessible Accommodation lists more than 618 hotels with wheelchair access and more than 39 wheelchair-accessible rental accommodations in the Trentino-Alto Adige region.

The incentive of capturing part of the World Cup market – and opportunities for the continued success of the destination meant that local businesses were strongly involved in the accessibility work, making access and service. For the realization of the World Cup Fiemme 2013, the Accessible Trentino project received money from the province. The province of Trentino received some state funds for the World Cup event.

The World Cup marked the start of the new era of accessible tourism offers in Trentino, as shown in the impact it has had on suppliers and visitors since that time.

Source of information: <https://docplayer.net › 227909527-Mapping-and-perfor...>

# Exercises and Group Activities

At the time of the **online face-to-face sessions**, learners can be attributed some **free time** to address the exercises listed below, should they want to train and learn more. Given the short duration of these sessions, assigning the exercises as recommended homework appears to be the most convenient way of proceeding. The aim is to enable the learner to question and **develop the concepts previously addressed** while offering a **certain degree of autonomy** in learners' work and progress. On this matter, it is advisable to bear in mind that the different exercises might require to be **tailored to the background and profile of the learner**. Training a person with good communication skills to apply an obvious exercise on a related topic would not be relevant. To some extent, all learners' knowledge may anyhow be (re)assessed and measured by the **competence validation tool** (quizzes).

Before moving on to each module's respective exercise, tutors are encouraged to present **real examples of similar best practices** approached in the modules – funded under local/national programs or initiatives. This approach is intended to help learners better conceive these practices and to serve as an additional incentive for possible future projects.

As aforementioned, each module developed and approached can be supported with the following respective exercises.

## MODULE 1 - EXERCISE

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### Activity

- Describe a sustainable ecotourism case that exists in your country and develop the characteristics that it should have to be considered as such.
- Can this case be considered sustainable ecotourism, sustainable tourism, or solely ecotourism? Yes/No. Why? Please explain.
- Could this case be considered a tourism product? Yes/No. Why?

### Objective

To identify and differentiate the basic concepts of ecotourism, sustainable tourism, sustainable ecotourism, and tourism products.

# Exercises and Group Activities

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## MODULE 2 - EXERCISE

### Activity

- Find organisations that are dealing with tourism ethics or associations that have been developed to provide ethical behaviour for people/animals/nature.
- Imagine that you are involved in a project. Its aim is to provide ethical behaviour and respect to host communities/locals of tourism destinations. What are the main principles that you think are important to follow?
- You plan to create a tourism business. You can choose the type of your business - local farmer, small producer, craftsman, accommodation provider, etc. Collect 5 ethical rules that you plan to follow in your business.
- Collect min. 5 actions that are against ethics in connection with tourism
- Collect min. 4 rules toward people which will help you to be ethical in connection with travelling during covid-19.

### Objective

- To emphasise the importance of ethical behaviour - not only from the side of the customers, but also from the side of tourism providers
- To encourage tourist service providers to imagine themselves in the place of the local population
- To provide creative practical task for the participants and provide development possibility of their business idea in the field of ethics

## MODULE 3 - EXERCISE

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### Activity

Create a social media marketing message.

### Objective

- To enable learners to identify the advantages of the products/services in the tourism sector they provide; to highlight the “green” and ‘sustainable’ features of their products/services;

# Exercises and Group Activities

- To be able to develop a comparative analysis of their ecotourism product/services with the existing alternatives;
- To gain practical knowledge for developing a social media marketing message by using the social media channels.

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## MODULE 4 - EXERCISE

### Activity

Assess the risk of ecotourism activities (activities to be defined by the tutor).

### Objective

- To enable learners to identify hazards in popular green tourism activities; to make them reflect on how they can manage risks arising from these hazards by setting safety control measures;
- To gain a practical understanding of the process of risk management and development of a safety action plan.

## MODULE 5 - EXERCISE

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### Activity

- Review the information available about Eco-Romania in this course and on its website: [www.eco-romania.ro/en/](http://www.eco-romania.ro/en/)
- Describe in general lines what you have found that they offer.
- Reflect for ten minutes on how you think that offer can be managed, and where its success lies. Why do you think it has worked so well?
- Read about the official Certification of eco-Romania, and answer the following question: is this certification a consequence of the success of eco-Romania, or one of its causes?
- Based on what you have learned in this training, and on what you have learned about eco-Romania, write 5 sentences that define specific aspects of ecotourism management to take care of or implement, linked to the successful example of the Romanian initiative that you have learned about.

# Exercises and Group Activities

- To finish, think of each of these 5 statements, as if they were recommendations, and write whether those aspects to take care of or implement are applicable in your environment. If so, try to define briefly how you would apply them.

## Objective

- To analyze a generic success story and extract its successes, improvements, and comparative advantages.
- To obtain conclusions applicable to other different environments from the point of view of ecotourism management.
- To draw conclusions about the application of those conclusions in our ecotourism business, in our geographical environment, natural environment, or to the ecotourism resources around us.

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## MODULE 6 - EXERCISE

## Activity

- List all indoor hotel facilities needed to ensure a pleasant stay for customers with disabilities.
- List all possible adaptive activities in the hotel's surrounding area which might be introduced and are accessible to persons with disabilities.

## Objective

To raise awareness of the learner about the benefits of creating a favorable environment for persons with disabilities among service providers in the hospitality sector.

**PART IV**  
**TO GO FURTHER**

# Assessment

In the frame of the STEFAN course, learning occurs through **communication and online social interaction**, learners shall be encouraged to share, question, reflect on and challenge ideas so that their knowledge is completed, reinforced, and improved.

STEFAN course offers various kinds of **self-check tools**, notably the Competence Validation Tool (quizzes) which can be used for each module before and the self assessment which comes after each module. To this end, tutors can assess and measure the progress of their learners).

**Effective learning** is most likely to occur if learners have the opportunity to hear a lecture or take part in a discussion, see a demonstration or visual display, discuss the material, and have an opportunity to do something with this material. 'Doing' or 'active learning engages students in two aspects – doing things and thinking about the things they are doing (Bonwell and Eison, 1991).

**Engaging with the learning material** through activities by themselves is ensured throughout the course via various exercises that the learners are encouraged to carry out from home, as a completion of the modules.

A part of the assessment of the STEFAN course is based on the **learners' engagement in self-directed and meaningful learning experiences**. The learners' **portfolio of solutions** to the different exercises can therefore be used for formative assessment.

Upon the decision the **monitoring the exercises** to be assessed, tutors should take into consideration the following information:

- The assessment methods and criteria should be made **clear from the very beginning**, during the first online face-to-face meeting.;
- The assessment methods must be **linked to objectives and goals** of the course;
- Relative **importance (weighting) of each item of assessment** (for example if you decide to include certain exercises or make your own multiple choice test);
- **Due dates for assessment**, for example, the deadline for the exercise, date for doing the quizzes for assessment, etc.).

# Providing Feedback

Provide feedback to students is a **key element** of the learning and training process, which must be properly cared for and developed. It contributes not only to ensure the **effectiveness of learning**, but also increases its quality and is a totally **decisive element** in guaranteeing student involvement during the process, the course, or the development of the different activities that structure them.

For this, we must assume that it is necessary to carry out **adequate feedback**, both associated with the regular progress of the course and its details, as well as associated with the training or the course in general.

For this feedback to be more effective, it should be given **immediately after the tasks have been completed**. Immediate feedback makes learning more meaningful. In this way, the results are more efficient, since the errors and false beliefs of the students can be corrected more quickly, just at the moment in which the doubt or the challenge that they have to face occurs. Conditions for feedback to be **effective**:

- It has to be appropriate, and adjusted to the task that the student is doing.
- Believable, realistic not exaggerated.
- Recurrent, repeated each time the student performs a task.
- Adequate amount, being careful not to overdo the reinforcers, either positive or negative.
- Descriptive. Define very well what you have done and how you have done it without evaluations or prejudices.
- Proactive, that generates an action that favors repetition and avoids frustration.
- Easy to understand. It must be given in clear and concise language.
- Based on objective and real data.
- Based on a work plan so that the phases or stages to achieve this learning are clearly seen.
- In various ways. There may be several ways to give feedback depending on whether it is face-to-face learning or if it is online.
- In a tight time. We know that immediate feedback is much more effective.
- It should encourage constant practice to consolidate learning.

In short, **feedback is a key piece to ensuring efficient learning**. Immediate feedback favors autonomy and self-learning. In addition, fluid and immediate feedback can be a very **powerful motivator** and cause personal challenges to overcome in the following activities when dealing with the following content.

# Providing Feedback

Here are some brief **tips for designing a proper feedback** process that maximizes the potential of the training:

- He has a good understanding of the difference between what the student has done and how he can improve it.
- Base yourself on facts.
- Be very clear about what you want your students to achieve, and what they need to know and be able to do.
- Tell the student how far she has come and give her hints on how she can improve.
- Always explain why.
- Be empathic.
- Always be positive and constructive.
- Communicate your conviction that you can do better.
- Comment on the work, do not judge the students.
- Focus on the main elements.
- Choose the right moment.
- Try to create an emotional connection with the student.
- Learn from student reactions to your feedback.
- Discuss your feedback with the student if you think it is necessary.
- Learn from student reactions to your feedback.
- Adapt your communication style when necessary.

In summary, feedback has the potential to **support** learning performance, has the power to **motivate** students to continue learning, facilitates **autonomy** and self-efficacy, allowing students to **reduce the gap** between their current learning and the desired result; but it **needs to be personalized**, and carried out with care and planning, according to the characteristics of the course, the activities planned, and the profile of the recipient.

# Evaluation: Self-reflection and Evaluation & Learner Evaluation of the Tutor

Annex 4 - Evaluation questionnaire for learners

# Consortium



**INSTITUT PRO REGIONALNI ROZVOJ, o.p.s.**  
Czech Republic



**ACADEMIA POSTAL 3 VIGO s.l.**  
Spain



**ECOCENTER ALAPÍTVÁNY**  
Hungary



**ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
GREEN INSTITUTE SKOPJE**  
The Republic of North Macedonia



**ASK DEVELOPMENT d.o.o. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**  
Slovenia