



DigiHike Guide



Guide for the development of basic hiking skills



Viaje a la
Sostenibilidad



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

DigiHike – Shaping sustainable local development in outdoor sports through volunteers' skills development.

Nr. 622417-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-SPO-SSCP



This document is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIGIHIKE GUIDE

1 FOREWORD

2 INTRODUCTION

6 CHAPTER 1 - WHY

12 CHAPTER 2 - WHO

17 CHAPTER 3 - WHAT

25 CHAPTER 4 - WHERE

29 CHAPTER 5 - WHEN

35 CONCLUSIONS

36 APPENDIXES

Foreword

The first reaction when covid 19 appeared was: please, stay at home, be isolated! With knowledge about the illness and with easing the tension, we again have the wish and need to be out.

Today, while we are slowly coming out of the emergency, the desire to return to practice outdoor activities is enormous. A desire that bodes well for the future of slow and sustainable tourism. Slow and sustainable, two adjectives that are becoming increasingly important and meaningful. The slow motion with easy steps along paths is replacing the isolation or frantic frenzy of the holidays (between two waves of infection), where you had to do everything in a short time, then failing to enjoy even that moment of freedom.

Sustainability is fast becoming the watchword of modern life. Modern ramblers are aware that we can't master the nature but become intelligent users, respectful of the rhythms of mother nature, in harmony with her.

A proverb from the Far East says: If you want to go fast go alone. If you want to go for a long time go in company. With isolation, we missed human warmth (starting with handshake). We missed social affections, safety, fun. Contact with nature and people will support the recovery.

"The presence of hikers stimulates local economies and encourages knowledge of the history and culture of the places crossed"



The rebirth of outdoor activities has also added another advantage, of no less importance: the economic revival induced by the presence of hikers along the paths of the different territories.

A presence that stimulates local economies and encourages knowledge of the history and culture of the places crossed.

All over the world, digitalization gives new possibilities to make easier your choice and identify the points of interest you would like to touch.

For all of the above, I proudly sign the preface of this *"Dighike Guide for the development of basic hiking skills"*, which hopefully will contribute to boosting hiking, trekking and all European outdoor activities, because we all need to discover again our relationship with the nature.

I have to repeat that we are part of nature, and we are not supposed to master her, but instead, we should stay with her and walk together along the paths of life.

So, my warmest welcome to this initiative, and now ... wear your boots and enjoy your stay into the wilderness/nature!

Boris Micic

**PRESIDENT OF THE
EUROPEAN RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION - ERA**



Introduction

We are slowly coming out of the most difficult period of recent history and today, more than ever, we feel a strong desire to travel and get closer to people, to nature.

The Italian anthropologist D. Canestrini, in his book published a few years ago, asked a topic question: how will we travel in the future? It is not a trivial question, since technological evolution is evolving faster and faster and, by now, in a lifetime it is possible to witness more than one technological leap.

We are all called to adapt, more or less willingly, to the new realities in order to work, to maintain our social contacts, or to spend our free time.

With the advent of an increasingly advanced digitalization, our reality has dematerialized and the advent of the pandemic has favored a greater social distancing, necessary to prevent the spread of the virus.

Even in the hiking sector, the health emergency made it necessary to comply with new rules and procedures, to guarantee the health of participants.

The Italian sociologist Franco Ferrarotti called it a "cold sociality" because, while allowing us to continue to communicate, it risks making us lose the physicality of the other, the feeling of warmth transmitted by a handshake, by a hug, by the vision of a face not covered by the mask. However, fortunately for human beings, social activities remain vital in order to allow the transmission of sensations, which keep emotions alive.

Among these, we would like to remind one that, more than others, contributes to reuniting the soul of the human beings to their natural environment. We are talking about hiking, an activity that can certainly be carried out in solitude, but that in the company gives additional sensations, given by the contact with nature and by the presence of human beings, a social animal par excellence.

So, let's start again to do what we love, to walk along the paths of all Europe, to admire nature, to listen to its silences and to savor the pleasure of being together, but let's never forget to do it with the usual responsibility and the indispensable caution, both with maximum regard to the precautions related to the pandemic and with the necessary attention to safety, which must accompany every hiking activity, starting from the study of the route and the knowledge of the weather forecasts.

Also in a technological era, the journey on foot maintains its initial and romantic physicality, to which is added a digital dimension that, allows people to access always and everywhere to the necessary information sources,

permits to fully enjoy the beauty of a healthy walk in nature. In this way, the journey is not dematerialized, but it is enriched with new tools, new possibilities, new experiences.

Digitalization, therefore, allows you to get in touch with new friends even very far away, to work together, to exchange opinions and experiences, to team up and to collaborate profitably for a common purpose, which is nothing more than the metaphor of unity that today the whole society needs. This is more true in the European context, where the successful experience of the Erasmus+ program today meets hiking.

An outdoor activity increasingly aware of its enormous social potential, which is combined with the ability to raise awareness of delicate environmental issues and the attitude to also represent a formidable economic stimulus even for those areas that, perhaps, do not fall within the large tourist flows. In this way, digitalization promotes knowledge and rediscovery, opening a window on the world in general and on lesser-known hiking routes in particular. Routes that cross areas full of history, culture, biodiversity and, last but not least, food and wine attractions. In a word, a world full of humanity, sometimes simple and austere but always available for comparison, hospitality, acceptance of the other.

A world that we will discover traveling on foot, but also through a glass of wine, music, a traditional dish, a chat while we walk along the streets and meet people.

Routes that cross areas full of history, culture, biodiversity, food and wine attraction.



The process for the creation of this Guide was based on three main steps:

- a field and desk research phase in Croatia, Italy, Portugal and Spain;
- the elaboration of the guide;
- testing and reviewing of the Guide during the face-to-face workshops held in Zaragoza (Spain) in January 2022.

In this context chapter 1 – WHY is intended to give general knowledge of outdoor activities benefits. Hiking and other outdoor activities, by definition, are 100% fun, so on this chapter you will not read about amusement, which is the very basic of our commitment.

It will focus on other aspects, such as health, environment and economy, three benefits that are closely tied to outdoor activities. Health and environment are quite obvious, although not immediately noticeably.

The economic aspects of hiking and other outdoor activities are the most hidden benefits. In fact, the growing presence of hikers along the paths has important and positive implications on local economy and boost the promotion of the territory.

Routes that cross areas full of history, culture, biodiversity, food and wine attraction.



Chapter 2 – WHO will explain that hiking/outdoor activities are intended for anyone, no matter the age or physical capabilities. Everyone is able to take part in this kind of activity, at one's own level and pace. There are no whatsoever counterindications.

Since the Guide is intended to give tips to local organizations, the main goal of this chapter will be to point out the steps for useful planning of the outdoor event. The organizer must be aware that hikers have different physical capabilities and consequently they should be able to offer different solutions. In this chapter, you're going to find out more about how to organize an outdoor activity according to your own needs and possibilities and answer to your participants' specific needs, capabilities and expectations.

The first part will speak to you as a traveler looking to find an outdoor activity for yourself. You're going to find out more about what to consider when choosing the right trip for yourself to make sure you have a pleasurable, safe, and educational experience.

In the second part, we'll cover the perspective of the organizers who want to adapt their adventure tourism offer to their audience(s). When doing something for another person - whether it's a commercial or non-profit service activity, developing a product, writing a text, or giving a talk - the first thing to consider is the perspective of the other person. You need to put yourself in their shoes to understand what their capabilities, strengths, challenges, needs, and questions are.

To deliver a satisfying service experience, you need to gather as much information as possible about your target group. Adapt your offer to the specific needs of the people you want to reach. An adventure tourism offer should never be a one-size-fits-all service.

Chapter 3 – WHAT is intended to illustrate how to conduct an outdoor activity. Hikers should know what is important for the activity they are going to face and "master" the content of their backpack, understand the basic rules of safety and know their own capabilities. The organizer must have a basic knowledge of subjects like meteorology, local history and heritage, botanic, communication and should have the ability of storytelling. It should then be well aware of local dangers. They absolutely need also to master first aid procedures. In order to improve their activities, the organizers should also improve their ability to extract experiences from mistakes and without the natural fear of doing mistakes.

In addition to this, the organizer should be able to help local actors to understand the needs of hikers and adapt their offer.

Chapter 4 – WHERE will inform outdoor activities organizers on the importance to differentiate hiking offers. In fact, hikers, while they are rambling through territories, are looking for different experiences. Some could search for gastronomic experiences related to the local traditions/history, some others for a better knowledge of the local environment, some for the perfect picture of the best landscape.

The organizers need to differentiate touristic offers in order to meet all those needs. Since their activities are rooted in a deep knowledge of the local area, they have to concentrate on events that will be able of meeting the requests of the hikers and improving the local economy.

Their knowledge of the territory should drive hikers to appreciate all aspects of the touristic sight, making an offer - for example - for photo contests of the same sight in different seasons.

Chapter 5 – WHEN is intended to focalize on the necessity to vary touristic offers in order to attract hikers not only in the summertime but all year long. For hikers, this means the possibility to deepen their knowledge of local heritage/environment throughout the year. For organizers represents an additional opportunity that will give the possibility to differentiate experiences and will have important implications on local economies.

Attracting hikers all year long represents an additional opportunity that will have important implications on local economies.



This Guide will be based on learning outcomes so as to be applicable in different contexts, addressing the needs of voluntary staff (trainers, e-facilitators, youth workers etc.) in different European countries.

In order to facilitate the trainers, at the beginning of each main training chapter (why, who, what, where, when) there is a section intended to indicate the expected learning outcomes.

At the end of each main chapter, readers can find a question and answer section aimed at focusing key words/subjects.

The contents of this guide will be further developed, and additional content will be used, when necessary, in the form of carefully selected OERs and other available resources (in English and national languages), in order to update it and at the same time tailor them to meet the specific needs of each country.

To respond adequately to the growing attention to outdoor activities, these must always be accompanied by initiatives and solicitations to promote environmental education, adequate training in planning and accompaniment, in order to prevent any form of improvisation.

Specific training guidelines and a dedicated training workshop will empower trainers and volunteers in boosting the educational process.



The present guide, therefore, wants to help to organize outdoor activities in order to promote responsible attendance, certainly made of hiking, cycling, all the several snow activities or free climbing, just to name a few. But it also represents a training tool for supporting volunteers to deal with any unforeseen events, respect for the environment, sense of limit, orientation skills, understanding of potential dangers and self-rescue competence, protection of different cultures and identities, sustainable development and economy.

A guide that, therefore, is aimed at both volunteer operators and those, private or institutional Authorities, who wish to increase the tourist flow in their territories, without distorting their natural characteristics, promoting initiatives that stimulate curiosity and to learn about paths, attractions, traditions, history, culture, local food and wine.

This Guide wants to help to organize outdoor activities (...) and promote initiatives that stimulate curiosity and to learn about paths, attractions, traditions, history, culture, local food and wine.

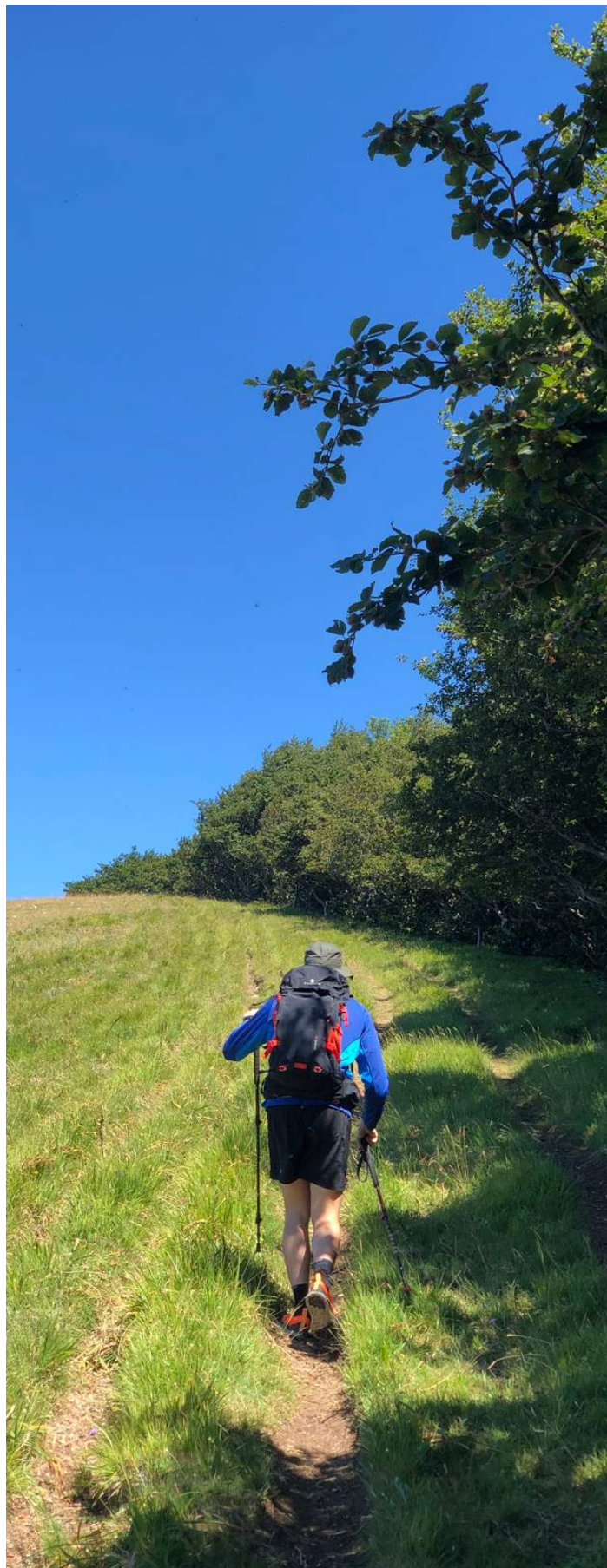
But the Guide is also useful for those who wish to approach this healthy outdoor activity and embrace its philosophy of life, supporting the natural desire for reconciliation with other living forms. On the other hand, even the Italian philosopher-singer Giorgio Gaber stated that "freedom is participation".

A desire that is in us, and that represents a very strong propulsive energy which, also with the help of new technologies, leads us to conceive, design and realize our dreams.

By choosing sustainable, responsible and experiential tourism we will also provide our fundamental contribution to supporting the circular economy.

The final message of this guide, in a nutshell, is an invitation to work together so that the worst remains behind us and the best is a goal that lies before us.

Let's start again with outdoor activities after a difficult period! Therefore, taking as an example the exhortation that the Italian writer Alessandro Manzoni expressed through the Grand Spanish Chancellor of Milan "Adelante Pedro, con juicio". In this way the journey on foot, step by step towards the goal, will become a metaphor of life and freedom and, with it, a return to our essence as humans in harmony with nature.





Chapter 1

WHY

Users will be able to:

- understand the general benefits of hiking/outdoor activities
- acquire knowledge regarding the health benefits of hiking/outdoor
- be aware of the effects of these activities on the environment
- improve their awareness on positive implications of hiking/outdoor activities for local economies and for the promotion of the territory

WHY

The pandemic has blown up the bench of everyday life, involving many sectors in this tsunami, including hiking activities.

This, however, has only increased the speed with which artificial intelligence is entering our everyday lives.

Although, by definition, hiking is meeting, relationships and friendships, personal relationships have moved into the virtual world, increasing the use of digital tools.

This forces us to reinvent ourselves and study new ways of balancing hiking with modernity, leading the hiker by the hand to live much more complete and sustainable experiences. Not even teaching activity can escape this logic in this long wave of digitalization. And digitalization is more than welcome if this means allowing more users to meet, to confront, to collaborate, dreaming of leaving their footsteps along the paths of our Europe, old enough to understand that the path to serenity is not opposition but reconciliation with the environment.

The digital era forces us to reinvent ourselves and study new ways of balancing hiking with modernity.



And fortunately, we are all becoming slowly aware that there is no future without getting back in tune with the other forms of life on this planet. Today, in fact, we can move and communicate at a speed unknown to 99% of human history. But this does not mean that we must do things in a hurry, that we must accept the frenetic pace that society would like to impose on us. Because haste is a bad counselor, which often misleads us and puts us in a state of continuous distress, with the constant anxious chase of anything even when we don't know what or where it is. In practice, we risk becoming what Lewis Carroll described as the evil queen (Red Queen) who, at the

end of "Through the Looking Glass", explains to the astonished Alice that "you have to run faster and faster to stay in the same place".

HEALTH

For this reason more and more citizens are rediscovering the pleasure of slowness, which is not only a search for philosophical contemplation, but also a practical necessity, indispensable to find our balance, to think, to restore harmony with nature.

Green spaces, parks, natural reserves offer, in fact, that peace and wellbeing that we need so much. Already more than forty years ago, numerous researches have shown the very close link between human health and the time spent in the midst of nature.

The American biologist Edward Osborne Wilson, twice Pulitzer Prize winner for non-fiction, has hypothesized that human beings have an innate connection with the environment and, precisely for this reason, they absolutely need to have a close relationship with Mother Nature in order to feel good. Many other studies indicate that this is even more necessary for children and adolescents, for whom spending some time outdoors not only promotes a healthy and robust constitution but also affects their psychological wellbeing and their ability to learn.

A nice walk produces, in fact, a series of healthy effects: it fights infections, increases the immune system, boosts memory and triggers good mood. By constantly practicing any outdoor activity, the body is toned and natural light allows the production of Vitamin D, which fixes calcium in the bones, thus avoiding problems related to osteoporosis. Numerous studies have shown that outdoor activities also have positive effects against depression and improve memory performance.

A study by the University of Michigan observed in a group of volunteers who had walked in the green, a memory enhancement of 20%. They had identical results both in the summer and winter months, a sign that outdoor activities are always good, all year round. Basically, a natural relaxation technique that allows us to reduce fatigue and nervousness, making ourselves and our relationship with nature return to the centre of our attention.

Outdoor activities also reduce overall mortality by 30% and the risk of cardiovascular disease by 25-30%. A kind of miraculous and natural cure that brings more benefits than medicines. Hiking, for example, is a natural therapy without side effects (if you do not carry a backpack with all your home décor), relatively low cost, which allows you to train the heart and consume the body fat in excess, to improve overall muscle tone, to strengthen the bones thanks to the

mechanical action of the muscles, to improve breathing by increasing the oxygenation of all tissues, to control blood sugar, to increase blood circulation by avoiding fluid retention, to keep blood pressure under control. Not bad at all.

Not only that, immersion in nature helps younger people (but also those who have more "experience") to understand the evolutionary mechanisms better than any book. The observation of nature outside the urban centres, in fact, reserves many surprises. Even wild animals in fact, differ sometimes a lot, from the species accustomed to living within urban agglomerations. Many studies have, in fact, shown that "citizen" animals are grayed, sedentary, too thin or obese, screamers (to overcome the loud background noise), enterprising but also very stressed, very often junk food lovers (in the literal sense of the expression).

In essence, conducting outdoor activities is a medicine that, properly administered, fights the development of chronic diseases, guaranteeing the person considerable individual advantages, sometimes avoiding unpleasant hospitalizations and the use of medicines. The World Health Organization (WHO) in its guidelines indicates that are necessary "at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity" to stay healthy and combat chronic non-communicable diseases. The WHO considers this a key factor in achieving some key health goals for 2025.

Being in the middle of nature, therefore, not only improves our results, but also makes us feel better, finding balance. Ultimately, nature is and will always remain our most obvious and healthiest medicine. A fact well known by those who regularly practice outdoor activities and that must also be clear to those who organize such events.

ENVIRONMENT

Who knows what Mother Nature would tell us if it could speak our language. Most likely she would reproach us for not being sufficiently attentive and responsible towards her health, which is also ours. Many still consider nature as something indestructible and eternal, when in reality it is fragile and sensitively exposed to the manifestations of human irresponsibility.

In this context, the return (because this is what it is) towards a closer relationship with nature allows participants in outdoor activities to better understand the delicate balances that regulate the life of other living beings and, consequently, to understand the danger represented by indifference towards environmental issues.

Lucretius (Titus Lucretius Carus, 99 B.C. – 55 B.C.) in his "De Rerum Natura" outlines the meaning of life with these beautiful words "the birth is renewed from thing to thing and to none life is given in property but to all in use".

A truth understood more than two thousand years ago and that applies to all living beings on this planet, from the insect that lives only one day to the eagle, to the man, to the elephant, to the turtle, which live tens of years.

A truth that seems forgotten by modern man, in favour of a race towards technological well-being that is endangering nature, the source of our life.

Yet, although super-technological, we are part of nature. Even if we have become predators from prey, we are still inextricably linked to Mother Nature, indispensable for our survival. And despite this, we continue to pollute the land, seas, rivers and air with tons of filthy rubbish, convinced that we can dare everything and convinced that we can strictly control climate and biodiversity.

And outdoor activities have the purpose of bringing mankind closer to nature. Not only a lot of fun, therefore, but the rediscovery of the pleasure of attending green spaces and contact with the environment.

A "natural" return to the past that allows us to acquire a new awareness of the indissoluble bond with other living beings.

The rediscovery of the pleasure of attending green spaces and contact with the environment.



ECONOMY

However, while hiking shows close links with environmental aspects, this type of activity also has a significant economic dimension, related to tourism. It is, in fact, an opportunity for certain areas marginalized by mass tourism to return to growth, without changing their nature. Areas wrongly considered "minor" that for years have suffered the phenomenon of depopulation, aging and lack of economic opportunities.

Slow and gentle tourism, which develops around hiking routes and cultural initiatives, being low consumption of the territory can, instead, favour their revival by attracting capital and stimulating innovative development strategies, respectful of nature and local traditions.

Hiking is an opportunity for certain areas marginalized by mass tourism to return to growth.



Common heritage is the ability to systematize and develop, already on the territories, the maximum degree of "intimacy" with the outside world. As Emanuele Cenghiaro says "it is the extroflexion factor: the more a community grows in its ability to entertain dialogues with other systems, the more resilient it becomes and able to identify alternatives, those elements of utility that allow it to understand what to bet on".

In this way the social capital, cultural wealth and dialogical capacity of the entire system increases. So does the magic that captures the hikers, the infatuation that makes you come back.

The rebirth should take place through various directions, the main of which is the offer of sports and recreational

activities, as well as cultural activities related to the natural environment.

This driving force should be followed by an adequate offer for overnight stays and restaurants, to be developed without distorting the authenticity of the place but, on the contrary, making sure to emphasize the beauty of the places, the quality of the products, the hospitality of the residents.

Following a renewed environmental sensitivity, land-intensive projects should be avoided, focusing instead on the characteristics of the territory, in order to attract visitors and create jobs that would be oxygen for the local economy.

And this is why lately we are focusing a lot on local culture and traditions, slow and sustainable attendance to attract tourists and visitors eager to take an experiential holiday in the middle of nature, immersing themselves in a more "human-scale" system of life. Outdoor activities allow, therefore, to regain spaces and places that we had to give up because of the unbridled race to the cities, especially for work needs. We are talking about lesser-known hiking trails that cross areas partially affected or even ignored by mass tourism, both because they have remained hooked to the rural traditions of the past, and for the lack of large investments and, therefore, of operators interest to direct there tourist flows. Places far from the large hotels or famous attractions, sometimes neglected because they are not traditional tourist destinations but, thanks to this, places that have remained unchanged in their integrity and culture. Places substantially remained incorrupt by modernity, to live and visit appreciating the ancient rural perfection. Places to be enhanced, not contaminated with exasperated consumerism, but recover (even economically) savouring lights, 21 colours, flavours and emotions that only certain landscapes are able to inspire.

Because in these places, in addition to sight, all the senses are involved and satisfied.

Places to be enhanced, not contaminated with exasperated consumerism, but recovered (even economically).

Like the hearing that, far from the noisy mass tourist centres too often distorted by an increasingly radical anthropic transformation, manages to appreciate the harmony of silence that only close contact with the truest nature can give. Like the taste, which is fully satisfied only by tasting ancient local flavours and sipping a sincere wine. Rural settlements to be discovered, or rather rediscovered,

with admiration and deference, given that these are libraries where our history and culture are kept.

Places that perhaps do not have modern or avant-garde facilities, but that have proudly maintained their roots and that open up to tourism for that natural desire to meet "the other", while focusing on sustainability and traditions, on culture and priceless landscapes, which evoke feelings of serenity and peace.

In such a context, hiking becomes the most suitable activity to immerse yourself in an intact environment, which often offers views of extraordinary beauty, to be contemplated alone or in company, savouring its charm and remaining seduced by this rediscovered intimacy and balance with nature. Getting closer to the territory, savouring the history, culture, customs and food and wine specialties of areas that are not the elective destination of the great tourist flow or that host tourists only at particular times of the year, being instead excluded in the remaining time.

GASTRONOMY

Areas that can offer to the hikers gastronomy that enhances the essence of the product with the tasty wisdom of the fathers, which makes you savor a whirlwind of flavors and aromas worthy of the Venice Carnival. In essence, the rediscovery of the food and wine aspects of the territory as a testimony of its culture, its history, its traditions. Because, to fully understand a territory you must also understand the origin of its traditional dishes, which are firmly rooted in its history and culture. Only in this way will we fully understand why, for example, a process as simple as cooking spaghetti fails to those who are far from that kind of experience and ancient tradition.



To fully understand a territory you must also understand the origin of its traditional dishes, which are firmly rooted in its history and culture.

A healthy immersion in the varied traditional cuisine, often of peasant origin, can give the hiker a total sensory experience, the only one able to make him fully understand the real culture of the place. And then there is the wine, which is part of the culture of the Mediterranean people.

Since its appearance in Mesopotamia, "wine has crossed the centuries, accompanied men with sweet arrogance towards the oblivion of the senses and in the joy of banquets, also becoming a liturgical instrument for mystical and religious celebration".

Wine is mentioned several times in the Bible, starting from the Old Testament where it is remembered as "Noah, who was a farmer, began to plant the vineyard and drank wine". In the New Testament, it becomes a metaphor for life, establishing itself as the central point of the Christian liturgy.

A product of the work of the fields that, in all its forms, has always been sung and praised by poets and writers since the epic of Gilgamesh, the famous Sumerian epic poem.

A topic also treated by Plato, Aristophanes, Marcus Porcius Cato, Virgil, Pliny the Elder, Dante, Boccaccio, Baudelaire, Leopardi, Carducci, Manzoni, Miguel de Cervantes, D'Annunzio and last, but not least, Mario Soldati who remembers how "the nobility of wine is precisely this: that it is never a detached and abstract object", but that provides a sensory experience closely linked to the territory of origin.

But not only wine.

How many times, during our hiking activity on the mountains, we had the opportunity to taste a mountain cheese, discovering with amazement that each place has its own organoleptic characteristics, just like the cru of a noble wine. Each mountain pasture is, in fact, an unrepeatable context, for altitude, slope, variety of herbs and exposure to the sun.

Each country, especially the Mediterranean ones, therefore has unique and inimitable products, which enrich the experience of the excursion with exceptional flavour. Products that distinguish the territory and represent its culture and traditions.

One of these areas is located, just as an example, in Cilento. Land of intense scents, with a gentle air and landscapes hidden between hills and mountains or lying along the wild coast that millennia ago welcomed the Hellenic civilization and its myths.

As in all of Campania and, more generally, in southern Italy, thanks to the Greek colonists has developed and spread, for example, the viticulture of some types of *vitis vinifera* that, after crossing the Mediterranean, have adapted to the territories now included in the National Park of Cilento and Vallo di Diano, a vast area of the province of Salerno today a World Heritage Site but too often ignored by mass tourist flows. Aglianico, Piediroso,

Fiano, Greco bianco, Malvasia are vines that produce renowned wines which, combined with the tasty local dishes of Campania Felix, allow you to taste, it is appropriate to say, every aspect of the territoriality of these areas, appreciated for at least twenty centuries. An ancient land of Magna Graecia that boasts precious products such as great wines and the rare and buffalo milk, which originates mozzarella appreciated and exported everywhere.

But all around the coastline of Mediterranean you can taste wine specialties, such as the Portuguese Porto, the Spanish Sangría, the Croatian Zlatna vrbnicka zlahtina. And, if you walk in northern Europe, you cannot miss tasting the french Bourgogne or the fantastic “bière d’Abbaye” belges.



Q&A

WHY should I plan or conduct outdoor activities?

1 Outdoor activities, as well as fun, are good for health, increase the economy of the territory and allow participants to deepen their knowledge of the history, traditions and culture of the place.

WHY are outdoor activities important for small villages?

2 By attracting slow tourism, important economic opportunities are offered to the inhabitants of small villages and the depopulation of the territory is combated.

WHY does planning and conducting outdoor activities help fight pollution and help contain the effects of climate change?

3 Attracting more people to hike in the woods allows them to better understand the mechanisms that regulate nature and allows a greater awareness of environmental issues.

WHY do you need to be prepared in order to plan effectively your outdoor activities?

4 Although the conduct of outdoor activities always presents a certain amount of unpredictability, the planning of any outdoor activities must still be carried out without leaving room for improvisation, both to allow anyone to enjoy all aspects of the hiking and to avoid any danger to the safety of the participants.





Chapter 2

WHO

Users will be able to:

- define their expectations and possibilities about going on an outdoor adventure activity
- identify and define a target group for their touristic offer
- adapt their touristic offer to their target group's needs
- gain understanding about how to approach creating a promotional strategy for their touristic offer
- gather relevant information about their participants to prepare an outdoor activity

WHO

AS A TRAVELLER WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING YOUR OUTDOOR TRIP?

With this guide in your hands, you are probably already aware that outdoor activities are meant for everyone. Connecting not just with nature, but also the cultural environment and heritage of a place can be a valuable experience for anyone if adapted well to their needs.

If you are considering exploring a remote area in a more adventurous, but also sustainable way, you should answer the following questions before continuing to plan your trip. It might help you to do this in a conversation with a friend or by writing it down.

1. What is the motivation for your trip/activity? Choose all answers that apply

- to experience something new/an adventure;
- to challenge myself physically;
- to challenge myself mentally;
- to have fun;
- to relax;
- to learn something;
- to experience a new place;
- to meet new people;
- to enjoy the company of people you know;
- something else (what)?

2. How much time & money do you have to spend?

3. Where do you want to go?

4. What is it about that specific place you want to experience or learn?

5. Can you find an activity from the existing offer that answers those needs? If not, do you have the resources (knowledge, money, time) to organize it yourself?

6. Do you see any inner or outer limitations that prevent you from fulfilling your expectations?

The most important thing, of course, is your motivation. Knowing your expectations well will allow you to align your plan to them. In a self-reflection, you can explore each of the listed reasons more in detail to find out how you're going to cater to them.

Your perceived limitations are also an important question you should take time to resolve. For each limitation you've written down, go through it again and see how you can plan around them. Do they really prevent you from doing what you want or do you just need to find alternatives to the typical solution?

AS AN ORGANIZER: STEPS TO TAKE WHEN ORGANIZING AN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

Developing and implementing an outdoor touristic offer in your area requires time, knowledge, resources, and - as in any design process - quite some trial and error. In this part of the chapter, we're going to go through the steps you need to take to create a great user experience.

STEP 1 - Define your offer/activity

You probably have already completed most of this step, but let's not continue to the next one before you have all the details of your idea lined out! This is the moment to define what your offer will be. So, you need to find an answer to the following questions:

- What is special about your local area that you want to share with its visitors?
- Why should someone visit your area and engage in your activity?
- Why should you be the one to organize and offer that activity? What resources do you have in terms of specific knowledge, infrastructure, or material/financial resources to invest?
- Do you want your offer to be for-profit or not-for-profit? How will you cover your costs?
- How are you going to make your activity sustainable? What's the ecological or social impact of your activity? How is your offer going to be successful in the long term?

A bonus-step in this moment would be to conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats) of your offer to better understand your inner and outer environment. Feel free to use the description and template from this article (Annex 1) to facilitate your analysis.

STEP 2 - Find partners for mutual benefit

Now that you've developed your idea and analyzed your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, it's time to start promoting it among local stakeholders.

If your goal is to promote your local area, and that area is remote and rather underdeveloped, chances are there are more people who think like you and can offer an added value to your undertaking. Support from the local community is crucial for the long-term success of a local tourist initiative and its sustainability.

When choosing your partners, start from the "Weaknesses" you came up with in your SWOT analysis.



What knowledge and resources are you missing and who can help you with that?

Do you have concerns about safety procedures in your offer?

Do you have enough knowledge about the cultural and natural heritage of your area, or is there someone who can add value in that aspect of your offer?

Maybe you need help in organizational and management aspects of your undertaking?

Find the partners who can compensate for your weaknesses and add value to your offer! But make sure to be clear what the benefit for them will be before you present a partnership proposal.

STEP 3 - Define your target group

Now that you know what your offer will be and why you are developing and organizing it, you need to understand WHO you're doing this for. Knowing your target audience is not only important so that you can make sure they have a good experience on your activity, but also to be able to promote your offer through the right channels and reach the people your activity is suitable for.

When defining your audience, you can start by developing one or several buyer personas. A buyer persona is your imaginary typical customer, based both on your experience and your goals.

Add as many details about the persona as possible and, when you start implementing your activity, regularly review and update it.

For the start, you can develop one persona but as you expand your offer and your understanding of your audience, you can add more categories of clients.

To develop your persona, you can use Annex 2.



STEP 4 - Review your offer and adapt it to your target group

Now that you know more about who you're preparing your offer for, go back to step one and reconsider your idea.

Is it adapted to the needs and interests of your target group? What do you need to change to make it more suited to their motivation and abilities?

STEP 5 - Develop a risk-assessment and emergency-plan

Implementing outdoor activities with groups of people, especially within the tourism industry, comes with a natural risk of accidents and injuries.

Although you have the responsibility as the organizer to systematically minimize that risk, be aware that nature always has an unforeseeable element about it and accidents happen even with the best risk prevention methods.

Therefore, you also need a detailed and realistic emergency plan.

No matter what your level of experience in the outdoors and in leading people is, establish contacts with the local mountain rescue service, other outdoor associations and first aid professionals. Regularly refresh your knowledge about first aid procedures, preferably about first aid in wilderness settings.

With the help of more experienced partners or individuals, develop written safety and emergency procedures.

- Are you going to include minors?
- Are there people with physical disabilities or health problems that need special attention?
- How are you going to respond to different dietary needs and restrictions?

Be aware of the specifics of your target group and be honest with yourself in understanding who you can include or whether you need additional help from outside to make your activity inclusive.

To protect yourself and to make it easier to deal with accidents when they happen, think about whether you can enroll your participants in an insurance plan that covers accidents during your offer?

Will you require them to have travel insurance or valid health insurance to take part in your activity? Will they sign a liability waiver to free you from responsibility in case of accidents?

Make sure that you understand your legal responsibility for your clients. Ensure you have all the necessary certificates to lead people outdoors before you do.

STEP 6 - Promote your offer with your audience in mind

Now that your idea for your adventure tourism offer in your community is developed, you've networked in your local community, established partnerships and gained supporters, you're clear about your target group, and have a written safety and risk-assessment plan - it's time to get the word about your offer out there!

Although most outdoor and nature enthusiasts are less enthusiastic about marketing and technology, this step is inevitable and crucial for the success of your undertaking. How will you attract visitors to your area if they never even hear about it? As you want to attract people from all over the world, the best way to reach them will be by using digital marketing.

Not just can you reach a much larger audience than with traditional marketing methods but you can also use free tools and channels to gain visibility.

Although marketing and promotion is a topic too large to cover in the scope of this guide, what you need to take away from this step is that, just like your offer, you need to adapt your promotion and marketing strategy to your target audience.

Before choosing where to allocate your resources (in terms of time and money), think about where you can find your ideal visitors:

- What social media platforms do they mostly use (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, Pinterest, Tiktok, etc.)?
- How do they prefer to communicate (by email, phone, messenger apps, through social media, website contact forms, etc.)?
- Where do they look for information, news, and recommendations? (google, niche news portals, Facebook groups, friends' social media etc.)
- What form of content do they prefer to consume? (videos, short text forms, longer articles, posts, etc.)

No matter what your budget for promotion and marketing might be, it's smart to put it into the places where you will be able to find your potential clients. Also, make sure to create a long-term communication strategy and promote your offer during the whole year, not just in peak season. Finally, send out the messages that speak to your clients. Make it about them and their experience, not just about what you and your area have to offer.

STEP 7 - Gather information about your participants

Once the word is out that your activity is happening and applications start coming in, make sure that you gather all the necessary information about your participants before they arrive.

Depending on what type of activity you're preparing, you need to create forms that the participants are going to fill to provide you with the information you need. This medical questionnaire could help in the preparation of outdoor education activities that include a multi-day hiking and camping expedition

The more physically and mentally demanding and risky your offer is, the more you need to know about your participants to prepare yourself well.

Possible information you might want to gather in advance are:

- age and gender;
- medical condition (injuries, chronic or acute diseases, vaccination status, medicine intake, pregnancy, allergies, mental health state, etc.);
- dietary needs (allergies and special diets);
- emergency contact & travel/health insurance;
- level of experience in the outdoors;
- motivation and expectations (in short).

Be sure you gather and keep all this confidential information in accordance with national rules and regulations (privacy), which can slightly vary in different European countries.

When you've gathered all the important information about your participants - preferably leaving you with enough time for preparations - you can go ahead and sketch out the final plan of your activity.

Make a list of participants with the most important information about them, including their contact info and emergency contacts, and have it with you during your whole trip.

If there are any medical or dietary conditions you feel you lack information about, consult an expert before your trip. Plan ahead how you're going to cater to different dietary needs. Adapt the length or difficulty of your planned route if you notice from their application forms that your group's expectations are not aligned with your plan.



Q&A

WHO can go on an outdoor adventure trip and how do you choose your ideal outdoor adventure experience?

1 Anyone can engage in outdoor adventure activities, as long as you choose and plan your trip wisely and according to your skills, capabilities, and interests. To have a good experience, you need to first define what you're looking for so you can choose from the offer that is out there. When choosing a more remote and unexplored area to travel to, be aware that planning your trip ahead might be more difficult than usual. Small, local tourist initiatives might be lacking the resources to promote their offer online, so you should be open to improvisation and spontaneous decisions on the spot. But that's exactly what it's all about! Be adventurous and enjoy the authentic experience!

WHO is your target group?

2 When planning an outdoor touristic offer, no matter what type of area or activity you want to promote, remember that, if you want to succeed, you need to tailor your offer to your target group. Think about what's special about your area and the natural and cultural heritage there is. WHO do you think would enjoy that type of area and activity most?

WHO is your customer of the upcoming activity?

3 Be empathetic, get into your imaginary visitor's shoes, and design an offer they will enjoy and remember. Keep in mind their needs and adapt your safety protocols to them. If there's something you feel you lack the knowledge or experience about, partner up with others from your community! Having a strong team and a network of supporters is an asset in any undertaking.

WHO are you promoting your offer to and what marketing efforts will you undertake?

4 If you want to touristically promote rural and less populated mountainous regions of your country, remember to market your offer through digital channels. As with the design of your offer, in your marketing efforts you need to be equally focused on your specific target group. Find out where they are online and reach them there!

WHO is going to prepare the implementation of the activity?

5 Finally, when you have your participants ready to join you on an outdoor adventure, make sure to gather all the important information about them, both about their expectations and their physical state and capabilities. You can ask them to fill a medical profile or write down why they want to take part in your activity.

Take their perspective into account when you plan your activity, prepare yourself well, and enjoy the experience!





Chapter 3

WHAT

Users will be able to:

- understand the relevance of the weather conditions
- understand the relevance of a correct planning in order to safely conduct an outdoor activity
- improve their knowledge on key aspects needed to safely go hiking/implement outdoor activities
- understand the importance of communication for the successful delivery of an outdoor activity
- understand the role played by cultural and natural heritage of remote areas

This chapter contains useful tips in order to develop capacities to safely go trekking and can be used either by trekkers and organizers. However, the organizers should master all this subjects, since they have the responsibility of the whole group.

METEREOLOGY

Although weather changes quickly in the mountains, it's always best to check the official weather forecast before you hit the trail or start your outdoor activity, regardless of the season.

The consultation of websites and/or apps is strongly recommended, but you should also consider that forecasts are predictions. Checking the official weather forecast before heading out on a hike or any other outdoor activities is strongly suggested however, knowing what the changes look like can be a great skill on any outdoor trip. While hiking or practicing any outdoor activity or sport, always keep an eye on your environment. This is the reason why you should know how to interpret weather phenomena correctly because changes in the weather come suddenly and a thunderstorm can be dangerous.

While heading out on a hike or any outdoor activities, it is important to be able to read the weather and spot some of the most common signals that typically signal changing weather, namely:

- **Wind** can affect your balance and practicing a mountain activity or sport with high winds can be challenging and exhausting. Remember that wind always increases with altitude. High winds don't mean you have to miss out on your day outside, but it might mean that you change your plans, taking a lower route for example. Above the level 6 Strong breeze (39–49 km/h) of the Beaufort wind force scale one notices resistance while walking. Level 7 whole will affect your balance. Avoid exposed ridge lines and cliffy edges.
- **Cloud formations:** the clouds form is a direct result of atmospheric changes, so they can be a great indicator of things to come. Being able to recognize and interpret cloud formations is a vital skill to master when practicing outdoor activities. Be careful if you see flat clouds at the bottom with huge blooms rising vertically. In fact, thunderhead is the most recognizable sign of danger. Such cloud formation usually results in heavy rains and dangerous lightning and thunder. If you see lightning in the distance, you can estimate the storm distance by counting the seconds between the flash and the first crack of thunder.

Sound travels at 330 metres (approximately) per second. Multiply this number by the number of seconds between the lightning and the thunder and you get the distance. For example, if 3 seconds have elapsed, the lightning bolt will have been 990 metres away. If you do see lightning, it's strongly recommended to get off a peak or ridge immediately.

It's also important to carry with you a reliable indicator of the weather, such as the barometer or wristwatches with integrated barometers. This tool is able to measure air pressure and its variation. Therefore can help forecast short-term changes in weather conditions.

However, it is essential to always carry a raincoat and a windproof jacket in your rucksack. In the mountains, the temperature can also drop rapidly, 0.6 C/ with every 100m. of ascent, so a sweatshirt should always fit in the backpack.

LOCAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Hiking and other mountain activities rarely take place only in natural environments. While hiking we can for example chance upon small villages, hamlets, castles and churches, the ruins and sites of archaeological, cultural and environmental interest that represent our historical memory and cultural identity.

Ancient cultivations, with productions, on slopes and terraces, are evidence of how the human history is closely connected to the history of nature.

Indeed, cultural heritage stores the historical memory of human societies, playing a key role in contributing to the understanding of our identity and to the promotion of a specific area. It is worthy of note that both the cultural and natural heritage are among the key factors for sustainable development of tourism.

Understanding the cultural and natural heritage of a remote area is a strategic factor for its promotion and valorisation. Promoting a remote area is a key precondition for increasing the attractiveness of our remote areas.



Both the cultural and natural heritage are among the key factors for sustainable development of tourism.

What can be done in that regard? Under the framework of the LLP Programme, the Responsalliance Project identified some activities that can be performed to understand and promote the local environmental and cultural heritage:

- explore local traditions, customs, rituals, festivals, myths and legends, lifestyle, crafts and cuisine and create and promote own programs or thematic tourism products;
- create and offer activities tailored in scope and time with the calendar of local events – fairs, festivals;
- arrange and offer a visit of a traditional local feast – e.g. a celebration of the days of various saints with ritual dishes and folklore;
- arrange demonstrations of cooking local foods/ drinks – tasting home recipes, making home brandy, vintage and making wine;
- arrange demonstrations of local crafts – pottery, wood carving, hand loom weaving etc.;
- offer visitors the opportunity to try to make a small souvenir by themselves;
- arrange demonstrations of local folklore – songs, dances, rituals, legends.
- Thematic excursions for example can take place to promote local food and wine in order to have direct contact with the local communities. Respect for environmental, historical, artistic and anthropic assets must be the basis of sustainable behavior and respect for environmental dynamics.

BOTANIC

Perhaps the aspects of plant ecology are the most immediate aspects to be grasped while hiking. In fact, as well as satisfying legitimate curiosity about plant nomenclature, they can provide information on many other areas. When hiking on steep slopes it is useful to observe how the roots play a fundamental role in preventing landslides. One third of a liter of rain is retained by the roots, one third by the leaves and one third evaporates through the leaves. In addition, plants can provide useful, albeit empirical, indications of the altitude of the place we're travelling through: 400-600m are usually occupied by oaks, 600-800m by beeches, 800-1200m by conifers, and beyond that by meadows and pastures.

The plant heritage must always be safeguarded because of

the important and irreplaceable role it plays both in the production of oxygen and the sequestration of carbon dioxide.



LOCAL DANGERS & FIRST AID

Sometimes even the simplest excursions can conceal particular pitfalls. In particular, it is good to know whether your body can withstand high or low temperatures. It is important to know the height difference of the excursion, the time required, and whether your body is trained to withstand it.

Before starting your experience in the mountain, it is a good idea to read the area on maps and, once in the area, ask the locals whether or not the trails are passable. Before setting off, it is strongly recommended to leave word of the destination you wish to reach.

While practicing mountain activities, it may happen that you may encounter some health problems. In such cases, you should remain calm and first of all reassure the injured person. Before calling for help, look around carefully to provide information on the location of the site (buildings, roads, springs, shape of the mountains, etc.) and answer the emergency number 1 operator's questions slowly.

It is best not to administer drugs but to identify procedures of which you have specific knowledge. If there is no telephone service, it is advisable for at least one person to remain with the injured person and for others to reach the nearest inhabited place to ask for assistance.

SAFETY

Nature can be unpredictable, so it is crucial to minimize the odds of encountering an emergency while practicing a mountain activity and equip people to handle one just in case. No matter the difficulty level, distance, or obstacles involved, it is important to make sure hikers and people practicing any mountain activity stay safe on the trails to make the most of the outdoor experience.

It is worthy of note that even experienced mountain lovers can get caught in a thunderstorm, get injured etc., so appropriate preventive measures are needed to reduce risks.



Nature can be unpredictable, it is important to make sure hikers and people practicing any mountain activity stay safe on the trails

Below you can find some general safety precautions for hikers and mountain to follow before and during every activity in the mountain:

- **don't go alone, travel with a companion.** You don't want to be by yourself in case of an emergency, so bring at least one friend or family member. If you decide to practice mountain activity alone, make sure someone knows where you are headed and when you should be expected back;
- **planning ahead** with due diligence is a crucial skill. Study your itinerary in advance and create an itinerary and share it with someone outside of the group. It is also extremely important to make sure to identify an activity which suits your physical abilities and training;
- **check the weather forecasts** before you hit the trail or when starting any adventure sport or activity;
- make sure to **bring the items can make things easier** on a windy or drippy day and help you stay dry and comfortable, e.g. trekking poles (great tool for maintaining balance), raining jacket, wear appropriate/waterproof footwear, technical socks;
- **dress appropriately** for the weather and the outdoor activity you will practice and bring along the appropriate equipment needed for the one you will practice (e.g. trekking poles, harness, snow shoes, ski etc.);
- if you and your group are caught in a thunderstorm or lightning storm on the mountain, the first thing to do is to **seek shelter** quickly. You can find shelter from lightning in a dense forest or in a hollow. Do not seek shelter under a tree since it is extremely dangerous. Do not stay on high points like a ridge or a summit, if the thunderstorm caught you there, try to find shelter in a depression, valley, or low point;
- if you have a large group with you on the mountain, you are advised to **split up** and stay as far away from each other as possible;
- **pack the 10 essentials:** essential equipment can be a lifesaver in an emergency. The objective of the 10 essentials is to ensure that you can respond to an emergency and spend at least one night outdoors:
 1. First aid kit (customize your first aid kit!);
 2. Navigation: map, compass, GPS device, altimeter, satellite communicator, or satellite phone;
 3. Sun protection: sunscreen, sunglasses, hat, sun-protective, clothes;
 4. Insulation: jacket/raincoat etc.;
 5. Illumination: flashlight, lantern, or headlamp plus (extra batteries);
 6. Knife;
 7. Fire: matches, lighter, tinder, or stove as appropriate;
 8. Extra food: at least an extra day's supply;
 9. Extra water: at least an extra day's supply;
 10. Extra clothes: at least an extra day's supply.

The list is non-exhaustive and adaptable, so keep the circumstances of your hike in mind when assembling and keep the list under review and to amend it as necessary.

- **avoid getting lost:** bring a trail map and a copy of the trail description. If you choose to bring electronic copies on your phone, make sure you have a USB power bank. A GPS or GPS app is also a good idea;
- **don't walk off-trail;**
- **be ready to come back.**



EQUIPMENT: THE BACKPACK PACKING ABCD

On any nature trip, particularly in remote wilderness, a certain level of self-reliance is required from the Rambler. The feeling that you're carrying everything you need on your back is not just weight on your shoulders but gives you a sense of self-confidence and independence.

Learning to pack your backpack in the most light and efficient way takes practice and experience.

Remember: a healthy person can carry around 20-25% of their own body mass and shouldn't carry more for a larger period of time!

When it comes to the backpack, take one that's made for the activity you're going to engage in and choose the right size:

- For a 1-day trip, 20-30l of volume should be enough
- For an overnight trip where you're carrying your food with you, opt for 30-40l
- If you're carrying equipment for several days (e.g. tent, sleeping bag, cooking gear, food), you'll probably need 50-70l.

Most backpacks can be adjusted to fit different sizes, so make sure to try it out and adjust to your back.

When packing, try out the easy-to-remember ABCD mode:

A for **Accessible**.

Remember to have the essentials (headlamp, toilet paper, map & compass or GPS, rain cover, snack) in the most accessible places, usually the side pockets and the top of the pack.

B for **Bulky**.

The heaviest items (food and cooking gear, fuel-bottle, tent) should be inside the large compartment of your backpack and close to your back.

C for **Compressive** and **D** for **Dry**.

Compress your clothes and sleeping bag when packing them and make sure to keep them dry. Put them in a plastic bag before putting them inside your pack to prevent them from getting wet (yes, even if you're using a rain cover)

STORYTELLING OUTDOORS

Communication is a well-defined process of sharing different information, ideas, feelings, etc. between two or a group of people. The purpose of this process is to arrive at a common understanding.

Communication is considered as the heart of professional, personal and social life. How can we communicate effectively with the group while practicing outdoor activities?

The guiding principle of effective communication is less about talking and more about listening.

Below you can find some tips for effectively connecting with your audience while practicing outdoor activities:

- adapt to your audience: by knowing more about your audience (their age, expectations, previous experience in the outdoors etc), one is able to better craft your message so that they will receive it the way one intended. Being able to link your ideas with those things the audience already cares about is very powerful;
- set clear goals and expectations for your group: make them clear for yourself and make it mutual;
- ask questions and practice active listening;
- keep it simple: try to be clear and concise and try to avoid technical language.

Storytelling is essential to effective communication and audience's engagement. It can be a powerful technique in taking ideas and turning them into compelling stories that people love to listen to. Why? Simple, storytelling is likely to bring about more engagement with an audience than traditional communication.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCES/MISTAKES

Outdoor activities can provide elements of training and reflection before, during and after they take place. Moving in an out-of-town environment involves questioning one's own points of view, interacting with other participants, as well as with the environmental dynamics.

We can all learn from nature and the life lessons we learn are vital to one's own personal development. In particular, being able to review one's own mistakes represents a key issue in one's development.



ADAPTING THE OFFER TO NEEDS OF HIKERS

Among hikers we can include a vast variety of travelers and walkers with very different needs and interests.

When planning and hike or designing a tourist offer for travelers, local organizations need to carefully consider the target group they are going to involve: are there any people who might struggle with physical demanding routes? Is there anyone afraid of heights? Is there any special need person in the group? Should the natural heritage be the main focus of the experience or is it better to include historical points of interests?

These and other questions should always be answered prior to the outdoor experience in order to avoid unpleasant surprises or, even worse, potential risks.

The adaptation of the experience to the needs of the hikers implies the general understanding and the knowledge of the group and in particular:

- the physical condition of each participants and the level of athletic fitness
- the interests of the group in terms of culture, history, nature
- the time available by the group
- the interest of the group in combining the outdoor experience with meals (e.g. packed lunch or local enogastronomic offer)
- the type of outdoor experience to be implemented (ex. guided tour, adventure hiking, relaxing walk, etc).

Organizer and promoter should collect relevant information during the design and planning of the activities, either with the direct involvement of participants in the planning phase or through online surveys or informal meeting.



Q&A

WHAT are two aspects that typically signal changing weather that outdoor lovers should be able to read?

1

1.Wind: wind can affect your balance and practicing a mountain activity with high winds can be challenging and exhausting. Remember that wind always increases with altitude. High winds don't mean you have to miss out on your day outside, but it might mean that you change your plans, taking a lower route for example thus avoiding exposed ridge lines and cliffy edges.

2.Cloud formations: the clouds form is a direct result of atmospheric changes, so they can be a great indicator of things to come. Being able to recognize and interpret cloud formations is a vital skill to master when practicing outdoor activity. Be careful if you see flat clouds at the bottom with huge blooms rising vertically. In fact, thunderhead is the most recognizable sign of danger. Such cloud formation usually results in heavy rains and dangerous lightning and thunder.

WHAT should be planned carefully in order to safely conduct your outdoor activities?

2

Sometimes even the simplest excursions can conceal particular pitfalls. In particular, it is good to know whether your body can withstand high or low temperatures. It is important to know the height difference of the excursion, the time required, and whether your body is trained to withstand it. Before starting your experience in the mountain, it is a good idea to read the area on maps and, once in the area, ask the locals whether or not the trails are passable. Before setting off, it is strongly recommended to leave word of the destination you wish to reach. Nature can be unpredictable, so it is crucial to minimize the odds of encountering an emergency while practicing a mountain activity or sport and equip people to handle one just in case. No matter the difficulty level, distance, or obstacles involved, it is important to make sure hikers and people practicing any mountain activity or sport stay safe on the trails to make the most of the outdoor experience.

WHAT should you take into account in the planning an outdoor activity??

3

Knowing your capabilities and your visitors' capabilities is what should set a framework for planning the scope of your activity. Be fully aware of the mental and physical capabilities, the medical conditions, hard skills in using equipment, previous experience, and expectations and motivation of everyone involved in the activity. Adjust the level of challenge accordingly (in terms of length, difficulty of terrain, logistical support, etc.)

WHAT are the important aspects that make the experience impactful for your participants?

4

Engage them. Don't offer a pre-made experience but include them as much as possible into shaping the adventure with their ideas, decisions, shared work, and thoughts. Use the plan-do-review model and build rapport. Tell them stories about the area they're visiting, either popular ones or some you've experienced yourself.





Chapter 4

WHERE

Users will be able to:

- gather information about choosing a hiking trail
- understand the importance to diversify the hiking offer
- correctly identify hiking themes
- understand hiking and sustainability

Hiking as an open-air, outdoor activity is amongst the most popular when it comes to tourists and day-trippers who visit mountain areas and protected natural spaces in Spain as well as most European countries.

As a travel experience, hiking is not limited to a single point or space and instead takes place in motion across landscapes. Therefore, as an individual as well as an organizer one has to take into consideration many factors when thinking of the hiking destinations and what they have to offer.

Whether you are an individual planning your first or next hiking adventure or an organizer considering ways to promote your local destination, there are things to consider in relation to the hiking trails on offer, the surrounding areas as well as additional activities and services to offer hiking enthusiasts.

Ecotourism is on the rise, proving that there is a growing appreciation (even more so as a consequence of the pandemic) for the natural heritage and interest in authentic, meaningful and immersive experiences. As organizers, wanting to provide new experiences and activities for visitors can be a straining effort.

HIKING TRAILS

The scenic factor is one of the most important criteria when choosing a hiking trail. Whether you like hiking through forests, wildflower covered meadows, underneath waterfalls, along historic routes or to reach areas with fantastic views, it will be one of the most important factors in choosing your next hiking route. However, for the best hiking experience, be sure to weigh in other factors in addition to the scenic goal. In order to prepare for your hike well, make sure to search for information online (websites, blogs, reviews) for GPS trails. Apart from detailed information about the ascent, descent and distance they provide information about the terrain, wild animals, equipment needed, etc. Reading the opinions and comments of other hikers beforehand will help you in making an informed, realistic decision.

When choosing a trail, first of all, there is the issue of how much time you have available, whether it is several days, one day, an afternoon or only a couple of hours.

To that you would have to add the time needed to go to the site and back and based on that decide for a longer or shorter route. Once you have chosen your trail, stick to it, make sure to walk on the designated path as going off can cause erosion and be harmful to the very nature you have set off to enjoy.

The actual time needed for the hike will depend on our physical strength and whether you are hiking alone or in a group, who that group consists of and their pace because a group travels only as fast as its slowest member. If you are hiking with kids or someone new to hiking, make sure to choose an easy trail.

There are many trails specially adapted to children and can serve as an excellent introduction to hiking for the little ones, an example of such is the Ruta de las Icnitas in Soria, Spain, which follows the footsteps of dinosaurs. If possible, opt for an alternative hiking destination or a less touristic trail as it will provide a more authentic experience.



As an organizer you should be conscious of the natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, that surrounds you, what is unique about your area and find creative ways to make others fall in love with it. Based on that, consider different trails to offer potential visitors, from easy hikes that are great for beginners and families to more strenuous and longer hikes for the more experienced hikers. Hiking trails should provide visitors contact with unique landscapes and habitats, endemic biodiversity, and local human heritage, as key components of any ecotourism experience.

Depending on your local area and the level of attractiveness of the landscape you could opt to provide additional routes which offer, apart from cultural or natural heritage, other gastronomic or sensory content in order to make the trails more appealing. Having said this, too much of an interference can be a put-off so it is important to find a fine balance which offers hikers an additional activity without being too intrusive. As the managing organization of the area, make sure that the different trails under your care are well maintained, have excellent signage and clear cut directions, and provide adequate services.

Hiking trails should provide visitors contact with unique landscapes and habitats, endemic biodiversity, and local human heritage, as key components of any ecotourism experience.

SURROUNDING AREA

When considering a hiking trip take into account that one of the objectives of hiking tourism is to bring tourists closer to nature and help them find out more about the area by discovering diverse heritage and ethnographic features, preferably situated near the paths or tracks they are walking on. Hiking equals a slow consumption of the landscape, through adapted and well-managed routes, which are equipped with specialized tourist services and facilities located in close proximity.

However, it is not enough to develop hiking holiday ideas based solely on the high-quality services or involving the creation of routes through attractive, picturesque landscapes, it is necessary to design and create memorable experiences within dynamic settings. The increasing demand for hiking tourism has prompted more creative and innovative solutions to the layout and design of hiking routes. Hiking tourism organizers are taking into consideration the fact that their visitors come from different geographical areas, different socio-demographic profiles (families with small children, people over 60, singles, etc.), different religions, varied personal interests (users who view "the path as the destination," users interested in natural or cultural heritage, users who are interested in socializing, users who like to "collect routes," users concerned about their health and physical wellbeing, etc.) or people with physical disabilities or impaired vision, to cite just a few.

Creating a theme around the routes could make the walk more attractive for the general public, and by doing so make it easier to market as a tourism product.

An example of such itinerary is the Camino del Cid, a cultural tourism route that crosses Spain from the northwest to the southeast and follows the history and the story of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, El Cid Campeador, a famous medieval knight of the 11th century who, together with Don Quixote and Don Juan, is one of Spain's most famous literary characters.

Creating a theme around the routes could make the walk more attractive.



Other examples of a theme routes is the "Via di Francesco" following in the footsteps of Saint Francis. Saint Francis (1182-1226), a very spiritual man who said words that still make mankind think today.

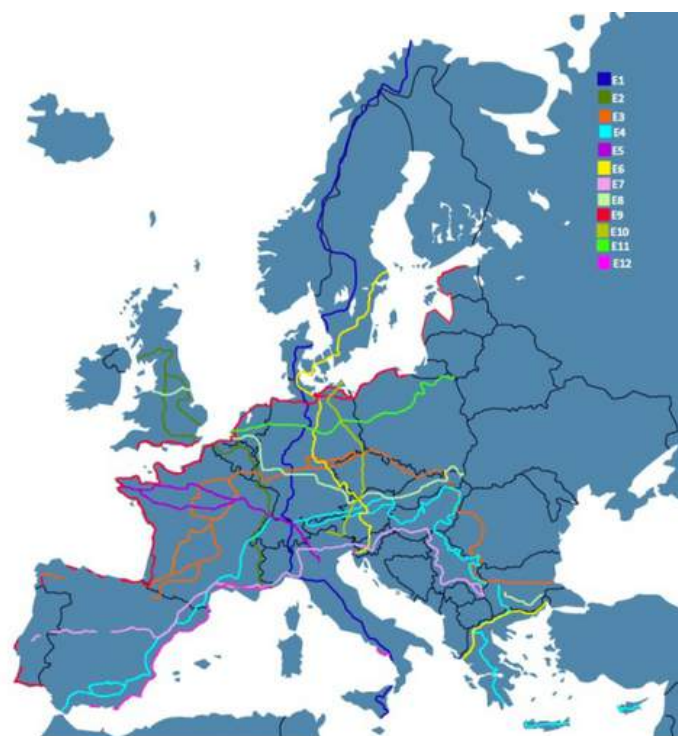
The Via di Francesco takes an ancient Roman road from Florence to Rome, following in the footsteps of Saint Francis across the peaceful countryside. The full Via di Francesco is 450km and we over tours from Assisi to Rome, which is about 239km.

On the south-eastern slopes of Velebit, the most magnificent mountain chain in Croatia, there is a thematic hiking trail named after a classic and beloved literature character – The Little Prince. The trail takes us through strange and beautiful natural karst formations which remind of the ancient corridors, gates and rooms, or of the dragon's backbone, which adds to the mystical atmosphere and causes us to stop in awe. The author of the trail, Tatek expressed this awe: "At this trail the time actually ceases to exist, because you are so amazed by the beauty of the landscape so that you forget everything else.". The trail passes through the Velebit nature park and leads to the top Bili Kuk (1171), which offers a magnificent view of the many sharp surrounding peaks and vast forests of beech and fir, which are especially beautiful in autumn.

The Wool route in Portugal, covering Covilha, Gouveia, Guarda Butters, Penamacor, Pinhel and Seia, some of the main, centers of the tradition of wool. This is a historical route full of traditions, knowledge and the culture of the wool craft. This route recreates the paths followed by wool traders who bought Spanish Merino wool and sold it to wool factories.

You can also walk along the numerous European paths, organized by the European Ramblers Association (ERA), which operationally uses the volunteers of the national association that are part of it.

It's a network of paths that cross Europe from East to West and from North to South, such as the European Path 1 (E1), going from North Cape (NOR) to the extreme south of Sicily (more than 7.000 km), which is emblematic of the European desire to connect areas and populations geographically distant from each other, through good practice of hiking.



However, since the need for a “real” experience is increasing, there are more and more offers of walks which take us back in time, to a period when life was slower and crossing large distances was a necessity rather than pleasure.

Offers that will help you to understand local heritage and will set the background for storytelling.

Such are the Rutas de la transhumancia (Transhumance routes) which have a high ethnographic and experiential content, consisting of a series of hiking routes along sheep droving paths.

They were used for centuries for moving livestock in search of pastures, a profession which is dying and is being kept “alive” thanks to rural tourism. As well as hiking, the tourists also discover more about the life of a shepherd and participate in different shepherding activities.

SERVICES

Organizers of hiking tourism have to consider not only the routes and the themes but also the services which are provided for the different tourist profiles. Traditionally, hikers were nature lovers with modest needs who shared rooms and were content with a rooftop over their heads and a provision of locally cooked dishes.

Nowadays, hiking tourists have more pronounced needs and expect to find high-quality services along the hiking paths. In order to meet the needs of hiking tourists one should understand well the profile of the tourist the site attracts and specialize in the niche

rather than trying to attract mass tourism and offer low quality services. Increasingly, hotels which specialize in this segment of the market offer facilities and schedules adapted to meet additional specific needs of hikers, such as tourist information point, rental of kit, transport of luggage, guide services, food in route, and in numerous cases, even additional services such as a spa or yoga classes. High-end hotels are not a prerequisite for hikers, consider instead the possibility of rural houses which offer a more authentic experience as they are usually run by local community members, providing an additional income and boosting the local economy.

Restaurants within the hiking tourism sector are often high quality establishments which offer authenticity in the form of local products and typical gastronomy, adapted to the dietary requirements of hikers. Gastronomy as part of intangible cultural heritage, is a form of consumption which adds quality to the tourism experience. Alongside restaurants there are many local producers who offer specific products along these lines. Also known as “foot and food” routes they are aimed at small groups, in which walking is combined with the discovery and enjoyment of local gastronomy.

An example of such routes are the wine routes which cross winegrowing areas all across Spain, such as D.O. Rioja, and combine visits to wineries and wine tasting activities while hiking through vineyard landscapes.

Other services to consider are: medical centre, pharmacy retail store for hiking gear and clothes, souvenir shop with local products, guided visits for small groups, adventure activities, banks and ATMs, postal service, and transportation services.

Q&A

WHERE to begin?

1 Create a theme, a story. Every trail should, just as a good storyteller, be able to captivate you and take you on a journey where you are able to discover new things by using all senses. Organizers need to provide activities which are dynamic and participative, opening the world of natural heritage not just to the experienced hikers but also to those who are just beginners, on their way to reconnect with nature. The activities that are provided need to be meaningfully chosen and help visitors appreciate the natural elements rather than have the sole purpose of entertainment. When designing a route seek professional interpreters who can cater to the needs of different groups and profiles of visitors.

WHERE can visitors to your site get quality hiking experiences?

2 Guided visits. Hiking guides are there to inform and guide visitors, preferably in small groups, and are key agents in promoting sustainable tourism in natural protected areas. During the pandemic national parks witnessed an increase in the number of first-time visitors who often lack knowledge about leaving no trace behind them and it is important as organizers to find adequate ways to communicate that the ecological footprint visitors can negatively impact the natural heritage that attracted them in the first place. Hiking guides can play a crucial role in addressing and communicating these issues.

WHERE to look in order to make your hiking destination stand out?

3 Stay unique in your ways. Do not intend to compete with other sites in their bustling tourist offer. Research the origin of different food, customs, traditions typical in your area.

WHERE can you find and how can you reach out to first-time visitors?

4 Digitalize. Make sure you have an up and running website which can provide visitors with all the information they might need before their visit. Be realistic as to what is on offer. If you choose to use apps or social media make sure they are regularly updated.

WHERE to put a limit to interpretation?

5 Put emphasis on details. Hiking is a slow form of tourism and hikers are nature lovers who want to take in the landscape as much as appreciate small elements found on their paths. Organize a photo contest which will focus on these small details and have someone explain what it is that is on view as opposed to putting up signs which can visually pollute the landscape. For the overnight visitors organize a stargazing experience far from the light pollution of the cities.





Chapter 5

WHEN

Users will be able to:

- plan outdoor activities taking advantages of the season specificity
- valorize their cultural/natural heritage throughout the year
- design outdoor offers creating synergies with local stakeholders
- contribute to the reduction of environmental impact caused by mass tourism in peak seasons
- distribute tourist flows throughout the year

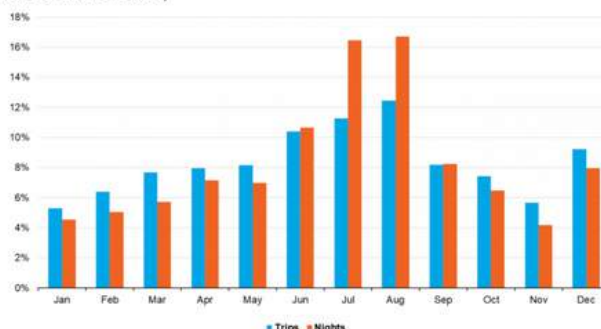
The data from years 2020 show that EU residents made nearly 85 million long trips of at least four overnight stays in the month of August. This represents 17 % of all long trips made through the entire year. Looking at the summer season from June to September, more than half of all long trips were made during these four months.

National data seem to confirm the trend: July or August were the most chosen months for going on holidays for residents of EU Member States with the exception of: Germany and Luxembourg, where June was the peak month, Malta (September closely followed by December) and Romania (December closely followed by August).

At EU level, one in eight trips were concentrated in just one month (August). This peak was even more pronounced for Greece where the residents preferred August for 32 % of their trips, followed by Italy and Bulgaria where 19 % of their residents' trips were made in August.

During the two summer months of July and August, EU residents spent nearly one third of all tourism nights spent in 2019, while for the Greek tourists this share was 60 %, followed by Italians (46 %) and Slovenians (42 %).

Monthly share of trips and nights spent by EU residents, 2019 (% share on the 12 months)



It is also interesting to have a look at the age of the tourists, 22 % of all tourism nights in 2019 were spent by Europeans aged 65 or more. Compared with the seasonal pattern of nights spent by the other age groups, these nights were more evenly spread throughout the year.

The July and August peak was a bit less pronounced, representing 28 % of the entire year's tourism nights, while for the other age groups this share was on average 35 %. People aged 65 or more were more likely to travel during the shoulder season (April to June and September to October, i.e. the months in between the bottom and peak season). Compared with the seasonal pattern of nights spent by the other age groups, these nights were more evenly spread throughout the year. The July and August peak was a bit less pronounced, representing 28 % of the entire year's tourism nights, while for the other age groups this share was on average 35 %.

People aged 65 or more were more likely to travel during the shoulder season (April to June and September to October, i.e. the months in between the bottom and peak season). At least 25 % of all the the nights spent in April, May, September and November were spent by older tourists aged 65 or more, with May reaching 29 %.

What do those data represent? It is quite easy, and not surprising, to observe that tourism flows³ are very much condensed in 3 or 4 months of the year.

But it is not only that: by looking at the "Seasonality in tourism demand"⁴ statistics provided by Eurostat⁵ we can observe also different trends according to the tourists age and the type of tourism involved.

How do outdoor and adventure tourism can place itself in the tourism seasonality and how it can contribute to reduce the impact of mass tourism flows?

To answer to this question, we first need to understand what is the seasonality impact on the environment and the society. Seasonality is *"a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, [which] may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment, and admissions to attractions"* (Butler, 1994). Causing fluctuations in tourist activity, seasonality is considered as a strategic issue for the tourism industry. Seasonality problem is therefore widely perceived as an issue to be "tackled" at a policy and operational level. In some cases, where the economy of rural destinations balances tourism alongside other activities, seasonality in demand can be a great opportunity.

However, seasonality can create obstacles to social and economic patterns (e.g. employment, income, utilization of structures, emigration of population, quality of life, etc.). That's especially true for those communities located in rural areas and where tourism represents or could play a key role to local development.

Seasonal effects can impact three main dimensions: economic impacts, socio-cultural and ecological impacts. Let's begin with the seasonality and its economic impacts. The off-peak periods generate the loss of profits, mainly caused by the inefficient use of resources and facilities. Peak-period traffic congestion, access to basic services and significant increases in the costs of services and goods deeply impact the socio-cultural dimension.

Such challenges show the need to carry out some change and implement strategies aimed to extend the main season or to attract more visitors outside the season.

Regarding the ecological dimension, the massive concentration of visitors during the peak season has very negative ecological consequences. One only need think of the physical erosion of footpath and other natural resources, litter problems, disturbance of wildlife, and congestion of rural paths.

Such challenges show the need to carry out some changes and implement strategies aimed to extend the main season or to attract more visitors outside the season.



Europeans have a passion for adventure travels.

According to statistics, each year Europeans make an average of 100 million adventure trips to another country. Besides being adventure tourists, they also contribute greatly to the local economies they spend their time in during the travel: two-thirds of all their travel expenses are spent on location. Europeans seeking unique experiences and their changing attitude to wellness and technology are altering the market, offering local organizations many opportunities.

Adventure tourism is a tourism trip entailing at least two of the following three components: physical activity, natural environment, cultural immersion. Since activities in adventure tourism contain a certain level of risk, some skills from the tourists are required. Adventure tourism is a very large tourism segment and consists of many niche markets.

Adventure tourism is then a form a sustainable tourism that can take place in any environment, but that mostly takes place in rural/remote areas since it depends on the natural and/or cultural resources to develop and carry out certain activities.

It is worthy of note that responsible tourism can generate income and additional funding for the development of infrastructures and services in rural areas, where other economic activity, apart from agriculture, is often not taking place.



Adventure tourism is then a form a sustainable tourism that can take place in any environment, but that mostly takes place in rural/remote areas.

The type of activities carried out by adventure tourists are also less conditioned by seasonality. Indeed, such activities can be also enjoyed in the shoulder or off-peak seasons, which alleviates high tourism penetration concentrated during a short period during the year.

Adventure tourism activities can also generate more stable employment opportunities for the local population. On several occasions, adventure tourists also prefer to reach their destinations using eco-friendly transport.

Relying on natural and/or cultural resources, adventure tourism aims to promote and valorize such resources and it often leads to the generation of protected natural areas or species and the preservation of local traditions.

Adventure tourism has grown exponentially all over the world, making more some rural/remote areas previously undiscovered more appealing.

Adventure tourism categorized into two kinds:

- Soft adventures: compared to hard adventure activities, they are less dangerous and hardly require previous skills and experience. Soft tourism includes activities such as: backpacking, birdwatching, canoeing, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, kayaking, sailing etc. Sometimes soft adventure activities can turn into hard adventure activities, such hiking in extreme weather conditions. In addition, assessing the danger and the skills depends to a large extent on our own perception.
- Hard adventures comprise activities with high levels of risk, requiring advanced skills and experience. Risks are not related only to bad/extreme weather conditions, but also to nature and characteristics of difficulty of the site to which you are not prepared, such as encounters with wild animals (bears, wild boars, stray dogs of large size, etc.).

On the ground of the above, as compared to other forms of tourism (e.g. urban tourism), we can affirm that adventure tourism has the potential to develop the local economy under the respect of nature, culture, and people. Furthermore, it also allows for the variation of touristic offer, contributing to the reduction of the negative impact caused by mass tourism seasonality. As shown above, the great variety of activities offered by both soft and hard adventure tourism, can attract travelers throughout the year.

Not surprisingly, 2020 marked the 'Year of Tourism and Rural Development'. According to the UNWTO, the sustainability of tourism in rural areas will only be successful if a comprehensive, inclusive planning strategy is adopted and implemented based on a multi-action and multi-stakeholder participatory approach.

The UNWTO Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development aim to help both the governments, the private sector and the international community in developing tourism in rural territories in a way that contributes to inclusive, sustainable and resilient development. The outdoor activities can be practiced, in different ways, all year round. In the autumn season it will allow to appreciate the vitality of marginal areas, the colorful palette offered by the foliage and appreciate the typical local food from producer to consumer.

The paths can be travelled on foot, horseback or donkey. In winter the presence of snow will allow you to appreciate the silences and observe the traces left by animals.

This Winter Walking Experience along paths can be made with snowshoes or skis in order to have a different look even on known paths.

The refreshment stop, in the restaurant of a small centre, will make us appreciate the products of the territory.

The sustainability of tourism in rural areas will only be successful if a comprehensive, inclusive planning strategy is adopted and implemented based on a multi-action and multi-stakeholder participatory approach.



In spring we will be struck by the awakening of nature and perhaps also by the early fatigue that will be mitigated by a drink at a spring of fresh water and a stop on a meadow. The days gradually lengthen, and we can take advantage of it to go to lesser known but more intriguing destinations. Spring is also the ideal season to discover the network of minor roads by mountain bike.

In the summer we can start to ride on mule tracks and paths at higher altitudes, immersed in coniferous and beech forests, in search of a bit of fresh air and discover unexpected views. Along the water courses it will be possible to try exciting canoe descents and for the most daring a hang-gliding flight will be an unforgettable experience.

Practicing the mountain all year round is not only a protection of the same, but also the promotion of an income integration of local communities in order to avoid depopulation with the serious social and ecological damage that this entails.

Given the challenges and the opportunities described above, we would like to share with organizations, local entities, associations, local business and stakeholders and more in general with the local communities of rural areas, some tips and recommendations on how to implement effective strategies that might help them in favoring a more balanced seasonality while contributing to a sustainable local development.

Here you go with a list of tips:

- study and analyze the potential of the area you operate (have a look at Section HOW of this guide for additional insights);
- be creative in identifying, developing and offering a unique adventure experience. Have a clear proposition, focusing on one or a few activities. However, you need to offer sufficient alternatives to serve people with a variety of physical conditions and skills;
- develop a clear proposition, where you focus on one of the segments. Collaborate with other tour operators or local organizations to attract leisure adventure travellers through the implementation of soft adventure activities. As data have shown, tourists age can be a key factor to consider;
- to attract high specialism adventure tourists, make sure you are a specialist within your area. Make sure you know everything about the service you are offering (ex. rely on a professional hiking guide);
- create synergies with the local community and market actors so to provide a complete offer to the visitors (ex. restaurants, hotels, shops, etc.);
- include farmer organizations, rural producer organizations or cooperatives in your offer development;
- use local experiences and produce in your product offering. For example, offer horse riding tours along rural paths, visits to farms or rural production/processing facilities, local handicrafts workshops, or (visits to) rural markets or events;
- offer traditional local food and offer travellers the opportunity to visit the farm, participate in the harvest and/or help prepare the food;
- maintain the quality of your local environment. This is essential to the appeal of your destination, as well as for sustainability;
- give tourists information on how to behave responsibly towards the local environment and culture, for example by using less water, energy or paper towels;
- incorporate sustainable and environmentally friendly practices;
- cooperate with small-scale adventure tourism companies. They will probably be among the first to send their clients to the rural areas you intend to promote;
- offer safe and clean services. Most travellers are less adventurous than they like to think they are, especially in this category. If your idea is to offer a hike, make sure that the route you choose is clear and where it is almost impossible to get lost;
- offer a proposition including some activities suited to for children. In fact, when it comes to adventure travel, many leisure adventure tourists bring their younger kids. For example, when offering kayaking tours, also offer a tour suitable for children;
- offer more comfort, but not luxury, to mature adventure travellers, as they might prefer high quality rooms equipped with comfortable beds and chairs, air conditioning, etc.



Q&A

WHEN you plan outdoor activities is it important to take into account tourist flows and adjust the offer according to seasonality?

1

Not surprisingly, tourism flows are very much condensed in 3 or 4 months of the year. But it is not only that: we can also observe different trends according to the tourists age and the type of tourism involved. Varying the touristic offer of rural areas thanks to outdoor activity with regards to age, interest of travellers, etc means on the one hand to reduce the impact of seasonality on the environment and on the society and on the other to create great economic opportunities for local communities.

Considering that outdoor activities can be practiced, in different ways, all year round, local organizations and stakeholders should team up in the design and planning of targeted activities that might attract travellers all year round. The type of activities carried out by adventure tourists are also less conditioned by seasonality. Indeed, such activities can be also enjoyed in the shoulder or off-peak seasons, which alleviates high tourism penetration concentrated during a short period during the year.

WHEN planning and designing outdoor offers what kind of activities can be proposed to adventurous travelers?

2

Adventure tourism is a tourism trip entailing at least two of the following three components: physical activity, natural environment, cultural immersion. It is categorized into two kinds:

- Hard adventures comprise activities with high levels of risk, requiring advanced skills and experience. Hard tourism includes activities such as climbing mountains, trekking, sky diving etc.
- Soft adventures: compared to hard adventure activities, they are less dangerous and hardly require previous skills and experience. Soft tourism includes activities such as: backpacking, birdwatching, canoeing, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, kayaking, sailing etc.

WHEN designing a touristic offer what are the most important aspects to consider to attract travelers all year round?

3

- Be creative in identifying, developing and offering a unique adventure experience. Have a clear proposition, focusing on one or a few activities).

However, you need to offer sufficient alternatives to serve people with a variety of physical conditions and skills.

- Create synergies with the local community and market actors so to provide a complete offer to the visitors (ex. restaurants, hotels, shops, etc.);
- To attract high specialism adventure tourists, make sure you are a specialist within your area. Make sure you know everything about the service you are offering (ex. rely on a professional hiking guide).

Conclusions

The support to the development of remote and rural areas can find its key driver in the promotion of natural and cultural heritage through outdoor activities.

The very nature of rural areas, the lack of infrastructures and the remoteness of their location make those areas ideal for slow and sustainable mobility. Trekking and outdoor sports represent a perfect tool to reach this objective.

The DigiHike Guide is exactly addressing the needs of local and voluntary organizations in supporting their capacity building in organizing outdoor events. The role of local organizations, being them associations, NGOs, or local bodies, is crucial but often these organizations do not have the capacity or the skills to organize such events. In this regard, the DigiHike guide's structure seeks to support the organizations to understand what is the social potential of outdoor activities (chapter WHY and WHO), what does it take to organize an outdoor event (chapters HOW and WHAT) and what local organizations should take into account in order to make the event sustainable and protect and promote the uniqueness of natural and cultural heritage (chapters WHERE and WHEN).

Besides addressing the trekking skills from a technical point of view, the DigiHike Guide offers two practical appendices ("Tips for effective planning" and "My perfect walking event") that integrate the Guide and give it a transnational dimension.

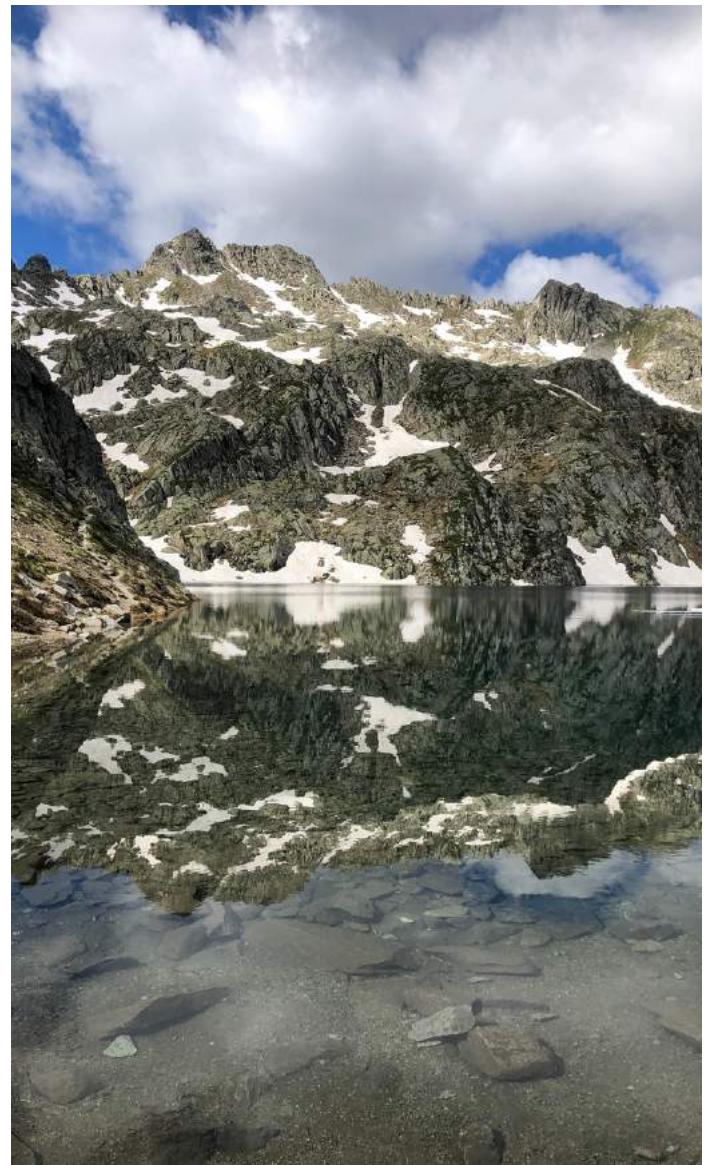
The DigiHike Guide, published under a Creative Common license, is available in four European languages besides English: Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Croatian.

The open access of the Guide will allow local organizations active in several countries to develop skills needed for broadening the offer of the local community both for tourists and locals. The promotion of the outdoor represents not only an opportunity in terms of well-being but also for its economic impact and the ability to create professional and sustainable opportunities for remote areas.

In fact, the DigiHike Guide covers topics ranging from the importance of seasonality in the touristic development, the role of local stakeholders in the outdoor offer (local producers, hospitality services, restaurants etc.) to the relevance of combining the outdoor activity with cultural experiences such as enogastronomy.

The formal development of a set of competencies to be employed in the market would have a double benefit for organizations' staff members: first of all as professional development and the potential creation of an on-the-side or part-time occupation, and secondly for the organizations that could, in turn, widen the services provided in a professional way.

The Guide becomes then an educational tool for voluntary staff of local organizations operating in remote and rural areas that together with the 'DigiHike Toolkit for digital promotion' constitute a full package that will support organizations all along the journey towards a real valorization of rural area and a change of direction in the urban drift.





Appendixes

Appendix 1 -SWOT Analysis template

Appendix 2 - Buyer Persona template

Appendix 3 - My perfect International Walk Event

Appendix 4 - Template for designing and promoting an outdoor touristic offer

Appendix 5 - Tips for effective planning

Appendix 1

SWOT Analysis template


SWOT analysis (or SWOT matrix) is a strategic planning and strategic management technique used to help a person or organization identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to business competition or project planning. It is sometimes called situational assessment or situational analysis. This technique is designed for use in the preliminary stages of decision-making processes and can be used as a tool for evaluation of the strategic position of organizations of many kinds (for-profit enterprises, local and national governments, NGOs, etc.). It is intended to identify the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving the objectives of the venture or project ([Wikipedia](#)).



Appendix 2

Buyer Persona template

A persona, (also user persona, customer persona, buyer persona) in user-centered design and marketing is a fictional character created to represent a user type that might use a site, brand, or product in a similar way. Marketers may use personas together with market segmentation, where the qualitative personas are constructed to be representative of specific segments. Personas are useful in considering the goals, desires, and limitations of brand buyers and users in order to help to guide decisions about a service, product or interaction space such as features, interactions, and visual design of a website ([Wikipedia](#)).

Background <i>Write here:</i>	Type of hikers/travellers	Challenges <i>Write here:</i>
Demographics <i>Write here:</i>		Trekking interests <i>Write here:</i>
Goals <i>Write here:</i>	Hobbies and interests <i>Write here:</i>	Major risks: <i>Write here:</i>

Appendix 3

My perfect international walk event *



EUROPEAN RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION

Operating Manual

My perfect International Walk Event

My perfect Cross-border Walk Event

*How to predict everything and how
to deal with problems that need to be quickly solved*



ERA Strategy - Point n. 2 – Rambling events activities

(*) This Annex was included in the DigiHike Guide thanks to the concession of ERA, Author of the Operating Manual.

INDEX

1. Definition of an International Walk Event or a Cross-border Walk Event
2. Why organize an International Walk Event or a Cross-border Walk Event: two important reasons
3. Analysis of the geographical-territorial context
4. Name of the event and creation of a logo
5. Analysis of available human resources
6. Application to the ERA for the organisation of the event. Sponsorships and support
7. Identification of the target to which the proposal should be addressed
8. Definition of the programme of activities to be proposed
9. Identification of hospitality facilities
10. Development of contacts on the territory for its involvement partnerships formalised by acts and/or documents
11. Definition of the economic needs for the event
12. Quantification of the amount for individual fee registration
13. Identification of the professional entity that will manage the booking contacts
14. Promotion of the event: from graphic solutions to communication
15. Building of the human resources pyramid
16. Interativity of the processes
17. On going expenditure control and final reporting
18. Event of thanks reserved for those who have collaborated in the initiative.

1. DEFINITION OF AN INTERNATIONAL WALK EVENT OR A CROSS-BORDER WALK EVENT

What is a hiking event? It is the first question to be answered. An International Walk Event or a Cross-border Walk event is a meeting designed to bring together walkers from various European Countries and beyond. can be international or crossborder: in any case, the goal is to create the conditions for bringing together

walkers from different corners of Europe and from different cultures.

2. WHY ORGANIZE AN INTERNATIONAL WALK EVENT OR A CROSS-BORDER WALK EVENT: TWO IMPORTANT REASONS

In Europe (and in the whole world) there are thousands and thousands of places where you can walk, some really famous (which do not need advertising or events because they are perfectly known), others unknown to most people. The difference between the many places is given by the possibility of to do something of interesting, in our case, the walking activity. A place where "can do" becomes an attractive place.

The organization of an international or cross-border hiking event covers this gap for the places that will host the event. Another important reason is connected to the sociological component of the European Ramblers Association (ERA) mission and to many affiliated Member Organisations (MOs). To overcome the cultural barriers and prejudices that have always caused conflicts between peoples, to achieve a mutual knowledge that can help to overcome these difficulties, to create new friendships and co-operations, to generate sharing and mutual help.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL-TERRITORIAL CONTEXT

Each of us, after all, is convinced that the places where he lives are among the most beautiful places in the world. Maybe this is true. We must not forget, however, that what we find to be beautiful or interesting doesn't produce the same effect on other people. With meticulousness and great care we have to identify the places that will be the destinations available for to the participants of our event. If we take, for example, the walking sector, it is not necessary to offer our participants the opportunity to reach the highest peak in our region: that can be done, of course, but not only this.

The paths that we will choose have to be able to offer a wide window on the natural environment quality of the area where the event will take place. Also as regards the cultural visit destinations, we must have the ability to choose the monuments, churches, palaces, historic streets of the cities that best introduce the visitor into the history of the territory. All the destinations that we want to make available, must be collected in a brochure that we could also call MY WALKS LIST, WALKS A LA CARTE or something like that. But I repeat: the important thing is knowing how to choose the destinations so as to make the participants experience a full-immersion into the territory.



4.NAME OF THE EVENT AND CREATION OF A LOGO

The identification of the name to be attributed to the event is a factor of considerable importance. Being able to formulate an evocative name for our initiative, easy to remember, which draws inspiration from the territory, playing with words and, for example, mixing them up to invent a new one that is explanatory, means having already scored points in our card.

Even the logo must be easily recognizable, using a palette of colors that must strike the imagination of the potential participant in order to guide his choice.

I use as an example the logo of the first International Walk Event held on the E12 - Mediterranean path, held in the year 2013, in Cilento, Italy. For the realization of the event logo the E of E-paths was used; this letter, rotated by 90°, became the M of the Mediterranean Sea. We used the colors that characterize that region, the yellow of the sun, the green of the woods and the blue of the sea.

This is just an example and there are opened grasslands where imagination can run!

5.ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE HUMAN RESOURCES

One of the things to keep in mind is the analysis of available human resources. This is one of the factors that can condition our project, making it a successful event or making it go down in history as a disaster to forget.

The Federation or Organization that intends to try its hand at this enterprise, will have to carry out this evaluation without easy enthusiasm, in order to verify the presence or not of the human resources, available both in terms of quantity and skills. To proceed in this analysis, you can use the index-cards that are attached to this manual.

6.APPLICATION TO THE ERA FOR THE ORGANISATION OF THE EVENT. SPONSORSHIPS AND SUPPORT

An International Walk Event, to be held as part of the ERA's major organisation and under its umbrella, must be subordinated, first of all, to the presentation of an application for authorisation.

The application must be accompanied by a general report explaining the event (the region where it is to be held, the date, duration and other general information). In the same application, patronage and possible support in the organisation may be requested.

7.IDENTIFICATION OF THE TARGET TO WHICH THE PROPOSAL SHOULD BE ADDRESSED

Who are the potential participants at our event? They are people who love nature, have good physical condition and good health, good economic capacity, have some free time at their disposal, love to discover new places, are attracted by the possibility of doing this activity together with other people, do not need great luxuries, want to learn about other cultures, including local gastronomy. In other words, we are the target: the walkers!

In addition to the great people who join the ERA affiliated MOs, there are people in Europe and around the world who have a great desire to get to know each other. Today technology provides us with mass communication tools, capable of getting our message across to every corner of the world in a matter of seconds: this is no small help compared to simply ten years ago.

8.DEFINITION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES TO BE PROPOSED

The analysis provided for in point 3), if correctly carried out, puts us in a position to quickly define the program of the various activities that will be possible to carry out during our event.

In order to have the maximum coverage of the requests that can be made, in the presence of an event lasting 7/8 days, it will be necessary to have at least 15 walking paths and at least 8/10 tourist or historical-cultural destinations available. It is also necessary to foresee an evening, in the middle of the period, in which all the participants of the event can take part, with a common dinner, with the possibility to have a show, to dance... and above all to be able to talk among all the participants.

9.IDENTIFICATION OF HOSPITALITY FACILITIES

An event spread over several days can only be held in an area that has an accommodation capacity that can guarantee an adequate number of beds and, at the same time, a varied range of costs. Generally, a walker does not ask for luxurious rooms where to sleep, but comfortable ones. Every kind of hospitality can be proposed: from the hostel to the family pension, from the residence to the hotel. Generally, a half-board offer is preferred, but also offers that only include a bed and breakfast can be offered. The requests generally concern double rooms (most of the cases), few requests for triple rooms, with some needs for single rooms.



With regard to unit costs, it must be borne in mind that, indicatively, a cost of 50 euros per day in half board is well accepted by walkers; this is only an indicative figure, because the proposed cost must be determined on the basis of the average costs practiced in the area hosting the event, greater or lesser that may result.

With regard to the hospitality facilities, some considerations must be made. For a better management of logistics and end-of-day briefings (where indications are given, for example, for the activities of the next day), it would be advisable to choose hotels with a good number of rooms (100 and above). If this isn't possible, the best solutions will be chosen to minimise the impact of group fragmentation on time management.

10.DEVELOPMENT OF CONTACTS ON THE TERRITORY FOR ITS INVOLVEMENT - PARTNERSHIPS FORMALISED BY ACTS AND/OR DOCUMENTS

Organizing an international event should not only be seen as an opportunity for the ERA MOs that proposes it. It is a moment that must see the territory involved, because its knowledge by the participants is one of the objectives for which such an event is organized.

It is necessary to identify which actors in the territory can be more interested according to their institutional mission.

The second step is to start contacts with the stakeholders who have been selected, illustrate to them the objectives, the advantages, the opportunity is made available to the entire

territory in terms of visibility and direct and indirect economic impact. The agreements that will be agreed upon, will have to be made official through the signing of official documents showing the respective organizational and economic commitments. This is very important to avoid negative surprises.

11.DEFINITION OF THE ECONOMIC NEEDS FOR THE EVENT

It is extremely important to carry out a thorough and weighted analysis of the costs to be incurred related to the management of the event. All activities that will result in costs to be incurred, must be identified and must be quantified by excess and not by default.

Only by way of example and without this list being exhaustive, the following categories of expenditure are indicated:

- Travel, board and lodging expenses (where necessary, of course) for all persons who will be involved in the management of the hotels to the places of walk or visit and return;

- The cost of transfers to / from the participants' airport;
- The cost of the interpreters who will accompany the groups;
- The cost of food to be offered for the common evening with all participants;
- Costs for the tour operator or other company that will manage the booking.

In order to meet the management costs that will be quantified, the best condition would be that the sponsors or bodies that support the event, take charge of the organization costs. Any difference can be divided into the total registration fee of the participants, which will include the cost of the hotels and the registration fee, as well as any fees for all items that make up the event budget.

Another item concerns the equipments of the guides and volunteers who will work for the event. It is necessary to make a different T-shirt to easily identify the staff, some walkie-talkie for the guides on the route, a backpack for them ... are just a few elements that can be useful. The budget should also include entertainment costs to host Authorities invited to the event, testimonials, special guests. Are just some example.

12.QUANTIFICATION OF THE AMOUNT FOR INDIVIDUAL FEE REGISTRATION

In order to guarantee a certain tranquillity to the economic management of the event, in the absence of adequate external economic resources that may come from public administrations, commercial sponsors, tourism organizations, etc., it is necessary to provide for the payment of a registration fee. Normally, the amount of this fee is between 25 and 30 euros or in equivalent value in the case of local currency. This fee can be used to prepare, for example, the welcome kit to gift to the participants, a common party, etc.

It is clear that the rest of the costs must be borne economically by the productive organisations of the territory, which after all, are the stakeholders most interested in the development of the event.

13.IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL ENTITY THAT WILL MANAGE THE BOOKING CONTACTS

The management of the booking, in a preferential way, must be entrusted to professionals in the sector. In fact, unlike the people who work as volunteers in MOs, Tour operators, travel agencies or companies that organise events normally, have the necessary skills and tools for a proper and efficient management of this delicate service. The body that will have been chosen and that will take care of the contact phase and the management of the booking, can be awarded a percentage amount of the volume of business that will be generated by the bookings.

The agreement between the MO and the chosen entity will be established through the signing of a contract.

The obligations of the entity responsible for the booking include the identification of hotels or other hospitality facilities, including the necessary contacts for the negotiation of costs. The responsibility for the services to be provided by the hotels, or other hospitality facilities, must be borne by the booking agent. Personnel appointed by the booking agent will be present at the hotels when participants arrive and will endeavour to resolve any problems that arise when the room is taken. Obviously, this kind of assistance must continue throughout the duration of the event. The booking manager will keep the Event Manager constantly informed of the progress of the work entrusted to him/her, including the trend of economic flows.

At the end of the event, the entity responsible for the booking will send to the Event manager a detailed report of the work carried incurred.

It is recommended to pay particular attention when choosing this partner who will play a really important part in the success of the event, because the quality of its performance will condition, especially if negative or insufficient, the final result of the event.

In addition, since the body responsible for the booking is the structure that will manage the financial collection deriving from the bookings, it will be necessary to pay extreme attention to its references, so as to avoid giving the assignment to a body with which one could enter into litigation.

14.PROMOTION OF THE EVENT: FROM GRAPHIC SOLUTIONS TO COMMUNICATION

In point 4) above, indications have been given regarding the name of the event and the logo. In this chapter we will talk about the communication activity and the materials that must be produced. In order to present the event at the ERA General Assembly in the first phase of its launch, a colour flyer in A4 format or a small brochure, whose contents illustrate the event to be proposed to the attention of Delegates and MOs, may be sufficient. At the same meeting of the ERA Assembly, the Event manager or person of his trust, will illustrate the event with the help of videos, Powerpoint presentations or other materials suitable for the purpose. In the following weeks, the event organisers will send the flyer or brochure to the Presidents and to the headquarters of the MOs with the traditional post service, including a letter of introduction to the event; the official addresses of the MOs will be provided to the organisers by the ERA Secretariat.

The ERA will support the dissemination of information about the event through the use of its communication channels, sending the flyer or brochure files via email with attachments and publishing some news on the social media.

In the meantime, the event organizing group will prepare other materials that may concern the paths chosen for the event, the monuments that can be visited, the natural environment of the area where the event will be held and everything deemed useful to intrigue potential participants.

Of course, the web communication will play a very important role: a website dedicated to the event, a facebook page, an Instagram profile are the most used platforms today and are sufficient to cover all age groups of possible participants.

It will certainly be useful to detect, if not already done, the paths with GPS equipment so that you can have the digital tracks of the routes and publish them on the specially built website. It will be a signal of dynamism and modernity of the group that proposes the event. The event will have to be supported by a communication campaign that must not know stops! It will certainly be useful to detect, if not already done, the paths with GPS equipment.

Getting the digital tracks of the routes, they can be published on the event website. It will be a sign of dynamism and modernity of the group that proposes the event. The event must be supported by a communication campaign that must not be stopped!

15.BUILDING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES PYRAMID

In this paragraph are listed the figures necessary to manage the event with a certain mastery. It is very important to define the tasks of each individual figure through a detailed **index-card** at the end of this Appendix:

- *The Event Manager*
- *The Human Resources Coordinator*
- *The Leader group*
- *The Paths manager*
- *The Walking guides*
- *The Joker "multitasking"*

The *Event manager* is the general responsible for organising the event. He is the person who has been in contact with ERA since the event was approved. The Event manager identifies the people within his Federation / Organization that must be responsible for the various sectors; he coordinates their work through scheduled meetings and whenever he sees the need; he is the legal and economic responsible for the event. His/her tasks include contact with the participating groups, personal visit of the groups, preferably at the beginning of the walks / guided tours in the morning or dinner with them in the evening.

The *Human Resources Coordinator* is the person who, together with the Event manager, identifies the people who will be called to the top of each area of work and the people who will work with these managers. The Human Resources Coordinator follows the activities of each group of people involved in the organisation and management of the event, and reports directly to the Event manager in a subordinate position.



The *Leader group* is the interface person between a group of participants and the event organisers. He/she must speak the language of origin of the group he has been entrusted with or at least must speak English. It is the problem solving of any urgent requests that participants can express and acts independently for irrelevant things. Inform the Human Resources Coordinator of any particular problems that require special and demanding decisions. The *Leader group* every evening send to the Human Resources Coordinator a progress report on the day's activities, either in abbreviated form (SMS, whatsapp message or similar) or by telephone.

The *paths manager* is responsible for identifying the routes on which the walking activities will take place. Once the official list of routes has been approved, he/she takes care of its maintenance, marking the routes if necessary and reporting any difficulties to the Human Resources Coordinator. He/she is responsible for this task until the end of the event.

The *Walking Guides* is responsible for the walkers on the route. Each route must be entrusted to at least two Walking Guides, in order to be able to manage any particular problems and/or accidents that may occur during the day walk. They will always follow the same route to ensure perfect knowledge of the path and therefore, the best management of the walks and assistance to participants. In case of low turnout, they will be assigned to other routes for a day or more, helping the guides that manage the walk on another route. They immediately report any incidents to the Human Resources Coordinator and every evening send him a report on the day's activities, either in abbreviated form (SMS, whatsapp message or similar) or by telephone.

The joker "multitasking" is a multitasking figure, able to replace any unavailability of other figures that may occur during the event. They must be in sufficient number to ensure sufficient replacement if necessary. However, they will be able to participate in the activities of help and collaboration with other people responsible for the routes, Walk leader; also, prepare packages with gifts and souvenirs for participants, solutions to problems that may be presented to participants and other small works that may be necessary.

16. QUANTIFICATION OF THE AMOUNT FOR INDIVIDUAL FEE REGISTRATION

Like any project to be carried out, even the best planned event can present unforeseen events, situations that were not hypothesized or conceivable. The recommendation that can be made to those who want to organize an event (International Walk Event or Cross-border Walk Event) is not to be rigidly tied to the original design scheme, but to have the right flexibility in order to find the appropriate solutions in progress, without distorting the original idea. The solution of a problem, in this case, becomes an opportunity that can improve the performance of the MOs that proposed the event and can make the participants' experience more interesting.

17. ONGOING CONTROL AND EXPENDITURE AND FINAL REPORTING

As the Event manager is responsible for the good and successful management of the event, he must always have the spending trend under control. In order not to overburden himself with tasks, the event manager can instruct a person he trusts to keep the economic performance of the event under control. The person in charge periodically informs the event manager and, above all, informs him in right time when any problems arise. At the end of the event, the Event manager will submit a final report to his MO, including the event's financial statement.

18. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At the end of the event, when the final curtains will be fall down, it's important to give honours to the people that worked to realise the event.

Just as an example, a common dinner for the whole staff, a medal and so on. It's the better way to build and to reinforce the sense of belonging.



INDEX CARD

to be compulsorily filled in and attached to the project to be submitted to ERA

Role in the event _____

Name and Surname: _____

Address: _____

Tel.number/mobile: _____

E-mail _____

Role in your Federation / Organisation: _____

Owned skills: _____

Declarations of tasks to be carried out
(to be drawn up as clearly as possible)

Appendix 4

Template for designing and promoting an outdoor touristic offer

PART 1 – CHOOSE WHAT YOU WANT TO PROMOTE

1	Which is the area you would like to promote?	<i>Be creative and pick an underdeveloped and little-known areas</i>
2	What in particular of the natural & cultural heritage of this area you want to promote?	<i>Think of unique e peculiar elements!</i>
3	Why do you think it would be valuable to promote that specific area?	<i>Think of return in terms of cultural promotion, economic benefits, good governance of the territory etc.</i>
4	Are there similar offers available in the area?	<i>Carry out a research aimed to investigate any possible existing offers available in the same area.</i>

PART 2 – DEFINE YOUR OFFER

1	Who do you think is the ideal target group for you offer?	<i>Young people? Families? Experienced trekkers? 50 to 60 years old people?</i>
2	What kind of outdoor activity can be proposed to have ramblers explore and promote the area identified?	<i>Trekking? Rafting? Camping? Please describe in detail the outdoor activities from point of interests, technical details and so on</i>
3	How could you enrich the outdoor activity by combining it with cultural and social aspects?	<i>Be creative, there can be endless options from enogastronomic experiences, horse riding, accessible tourism with people with disabilities to music festival and adventure games for kids</i>

4	When would be the best period of the year to propose your offer?	<i>Think not only in terms of the weather but also in terms of sustainability (seasonality, tourist flows etc.)</i>
5	What are the relevant stakeholders you should involve in the organization of the activity?	<i>From public entities to small business and local resident of the area you identified, everyone can play a crucial role. Think carefully!</i>
6	Do you have enough internal resource to organize and implement the activity and promote it?	<i>Support, funding and sponsors can always be helpful considering that almost all small organization can count mainly on volunteers.</i>
7	Are there similar offers available in the area?	<i>Carry out a research aimed to investigate any possible existing offers available in the same area.</i>

PART 3 – DIGITAL PROMOTION OF YOU OFFER

1	What kind of communication channels are suitable to promote you offer?	<i>Start from your target groups and choose the best communication channels to be used (social media, websites, online platforms for outdoor, magazines etc.)</i>
2	What kind of promotional material you could create?	<i>Leaflets, social media campaign, video, touristic package, brochure etc.</i>
3	Build your own communication plan	<i>Message you want to delivery, calendar of communication activities, communication strategy etc.</i>

Appendix 5

Tips for effective planning

Any planning process need to give answer to three important questions related with reflexion, analyses, and action:



Where do we want to go?

- What is the problem or the main question?
- Definition of the main goal.



Where are we?

- Analyse of the internal and external context.
- Define the goals, strategies, and program the actions

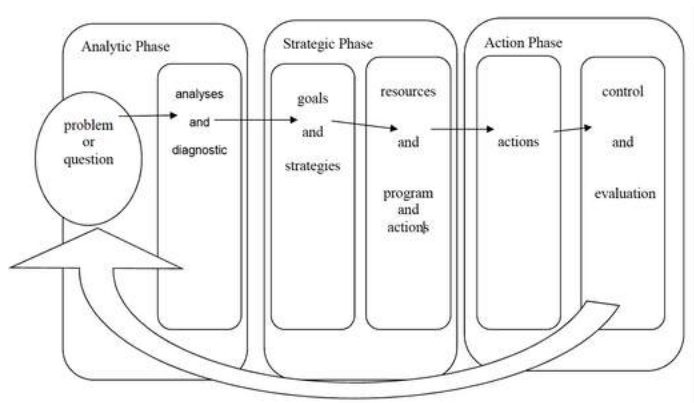


What are we going to do?

- How are we going to use our resources?
- What are the main obstacles and how will we overcome them?
- How are we going to control and evaluate the result?

After giving answer to these three questions the planning process must be realized using at least three phases:

1. *Analytic phase*: stage for reflexion, analyses, and diagnostic.
2. *Strategic Phase*: stage for the definition of goals, strategies, resources, and programmed actions.
3. *Action Phase*: stage for implementation of the actions, control, and evaluation of the results.



THE DIGIHIKE 10 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PLANNING

1

Plan, plan and plan more

It sounds obvious, of course, but the best way to ensure your outdoor event is a success is to plan effectively from the very start. It's a good idea to use an online project management tool, such as Asana or Trello (among many others), but you also need to know the answers to several questions.

What is the purpose of the event? What type of facilities do you need? What is the budget? What are the health and safety protocols you will need to implement?

Taking these initial considerations into account will help guide your decisions and in turn guarantee your outdoor activities or sports event is a total success.

Analytic Phase Strategic Phase Action Phase problem or question analyses and diagnostic goals and strategies resources and program and actions actions control and evaluation.

2

Pick the perfect date

Picking the right date is essential. Making sure your event doesn't fall on the same day as any other outdoor activities or sports event or local get-together will ensure that not only people will attend, but that your event will leave a lasting impact. You should think about picking a date that gives you enough time to plan and promote the event well. You need also to have in consideration the weather and the season of the year, particularly if it's an outdoor event.

3

Choose the right venue/ activity

The venue you choose for your outdoor activities or sports event must have enough capacity and be safe and accessible to everyone, whether it be an indoor or an outdoor space. It is also important to consider what capacity will be in accordance with social distancing rules.

4

Plan what the event will be like

Is it a match, a tournament, a league, a walking or running event? How many people or teams will take part? How many activities will be featured? What is the format? The more you know about the event the better. It's a good idea to put down everything you know about the event, from start to finish, on a piece of paper. This will help you get an overview of what the event will look like, resulting in you having to improvise less. Think also in the development of a "plan B".

5

Calculate the supplies you will need

Make a list of the supplies you will need to hold your outdoor event, from certificates, signs, whistles, medals, prizes, gifts, food and water. And, of course, don't forget about personal protective equipment (PPE), such as face masks, hand gels, disinfectants and other cleaning products



6 Train staff and volunteers

If you want to know how to plan an outdoor event, one of the most important things to consider is how many people you will need to attend to the participants.

Most outdoor events combine contracted staff and volunteers. How you select and train the team will have a big impact on the success of your event. Make sure you invest enough time in training all the people who will be working on “the big day”, ensuring they know exactly what they should be doing and when.

7 Promote your event

Make sure you actively promote your outdoor event. Send information via email, use social media and, if you've got the budget for it, launch an advertising campaign in the press or out of home (on billboards, public transport, etc.).

Don't forget to invite the local press and relevant influencers to the event: they will do their bit to promote it. The more effort (and resources) you pour into promoting your event, the better the results will be. Do not forget to film and photograph all the activities.

8 Safety first!

Outdoor activities and sporting event insurances are necessary to safeguard event organisers and attendees. It is important to have your own event insurance to cover all your potential hazards. Creating a risk assessment document will list the hazards identified for your outdoor event and suggested contingencies to lessen or eliminate the risks.

This document will be a key requirement of any insurer and should be created in advance to give staff time to discuss potential hazards during the event and what measures to put in place to mitigate the risks identified. You should also develop a “plan b” in case of the event go in a wrong away.

9 Invite key-stakeholders and sponsors

It's very important to use your sport event to engage key-stakeholders and sponsors of the current event or of your future events. Feel free to invite local politicians, decision makers and your sponsors to your sport event. Give them a great VIP experience and they will continue to work with you in the future.

10 Review all the plan

Go through all the details of your outdoor event plan with the organising staff, and the volunteers, so that everyone understands how they will proceed and how social distancing measures will be adhered to. Assign all tasks beforehand and ensure everyone knows their roles and what you expect from them so that the day runs as smoothly as possible.

OERs & References

Chapter 1

WHY

- [Hiking Europe](#) (EN)
- [Natural and Cultural Heritage in Europe](#)
- [Cultural Routes: an e-learning tool to drive mountain areas on the path of sustainable tourism](#) (EN)
- [Guida pratica per escursionisti curiosi](#) (IT)
- [Il mondo della Federazione Italiana Escursionismo](#) (IT)

Chapter 2

WHO

- [SWOT Analysis](#) (EN)
- [Buyer personas](#) (EN)
- [Medical questionnaire](#) (EN)

Chapter 3

WHAT

- [Sicurezza in montagna](#) (IT)
- [Essential hiking safety tips you should always follow](#) (EN)
- [Metereologia](#) (IT)
- [How to correctly predict the weather when hiking](#) (EN)
- [How to read clouds and predict the weather](#) (EN)
- [Wind speeds in the mountains](#) (EN)
- [The Complete Guide to Hiking for Beginners](#) (EN)
- [Eco-tourism](#) (EN)
- [How to pack and hoist a backpack](#) (EN)
- [How to promote the local environmental and cultural heritage towards customers and staff?](#) (EN)
- [Communicate effectively](#) (EN)

Chapter 4

WHERE

- [Hiking Tourism in Spain: Origins, Issues and transformations](#) (EN)
- [Assessing Ecotourism Potential of Hiking Trails: A framework to incorporate ecological and cultural features and seasonality](#) (EN)
- [How to Choose the Right Hiking Trail](#) (EN)
- [Senderismo](#) (ES)
- [The Wool Route - Translana](#) (EN)
- [La Via di San Francesco](#) (EN)



OERs & References

Chapter 5

WHEN

- [UNWTO Recommendations on Tourism and Rural Development – A Guide to Making Tourism an Effective Tool for Rural Development](#)
- [UNESCO World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Toolkit](#) (EN)
- [Seasonality in tourism demand](#) (EN)
- [MEDUSA Project](#) (EN)
- [Meteorology and Snow Indicators](#) (EN)
- [Tourism 4 SDGs](#) (EN)
- [UNWTO global tourism dashboard](#) (EN)

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

DigiHike – Shaping sustainable local development in outdoor sports through volunteers' skills development.

Nr. 622417-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-SPO-SSCP



This document is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)