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PROMOTING HERITAGE - AND CULTURE - BASED EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN

Project No BSB-1145



COMMON BORDERS. COMMON SOLUTIONS.



**PROMOTING HERITAGE - AND CULTURE - BASED EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM IN
THE BLACK SEA BASIN**

Project No BSB-1145

Compendium of Best Practices

of business models for experiential tourism in the Black Sea Basin

May 2021

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Authors and Credits:

Varna University of Management (VUM)

For the BSB Region

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)

For Greece

City_Space_Flux Research Group

Athena Yiannakou, Professor, AUTH

Angelina Apostolou, Researcher, AUTH

Vasiliki Birou-Athanasiou, Researcher, AUTH

Apostolos Papagiannakis, Associate Professor, AUTH PRO-EXTOUR Project Coordinator

Contributions:

Athina Vitopoulou, Assistant Professor, AUTH

Georgian Arts and Culture Centre (GACC)

For Georgia

Lela Khartishvili, GACC PRO-EXTOUR Project Tourism Expert/researcher

Mariam Dvalishvili, GACC PRO-EXTOUR Project Manager

Natia Trapidze, GACC PRO-EXTOUR Project Coordinator

Mariam Kakhniashvili, GACC PRO-EXTOUR Project Assistant

Yerevan State University (YSU)

For Armenia

Gor Aleksanyan, Associate Professor, YSU, Researcher

Seyran Suvaryan, Associate Professor, YSU, Researcher

Alexander Markarov, Professor, YSU PRO-EXTOUR Project Coordinator

Culinary Art and Hospitality Association (CAHA)

For Bulgaria



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FOREWORDS

Good practices for experiential activities do exist in the Black Sea countries. These practices need to be identified and promoted so that other undertakings and entrepreneurs learn from them and in turn improve their businesses.

This Compendium of Best Practices contains 75 innovative and interesting models for experience-based tourist services and products in the Black Sea area. The countries, represented in PRO EXTOUR project, namely Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia and Greece, are represented with 15 best practices each. Another 15 cases display interesting ventures from Moldova, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine in order to encompass the territory the Black Sea Basin as much as possible. The Compendium is complemented with an on-line database containing full-text descriptions of the ventures as well as their contacts integrated at the PRO EXTOUR web-site <https://proextour.eu/>.

The best practices are associated predominantly with but not limited to experiencing culture and heritage. Similarly, the profiles of the service providers are versatile and include not only business entities, but also NGOs, public bodies, informal groups, event information centres offer and others. The information about them was gathered via desk research and structured interviews following a purposefully designed outline to collect information on the business models, as well as, other information, which is needed for the database. On this basis, general Blueprints describing the main features of successful business models and pathways for the adoption of these models by other companies and/or institutions.

The Compendium of Best Practices and Blueprints for of business models for experiential tourism in the Black Sea Basin constitute the Inventory of Business Models, elaborated by PRO EXTOUR expert team and partnership.

The purpose of the Inventory is to promote the value-generation potential of experiential tourism as well as collaborative action and networking among business, local communities and decision-makers for the adoption of policies favouring experiential tourism.

This document is available in in English.





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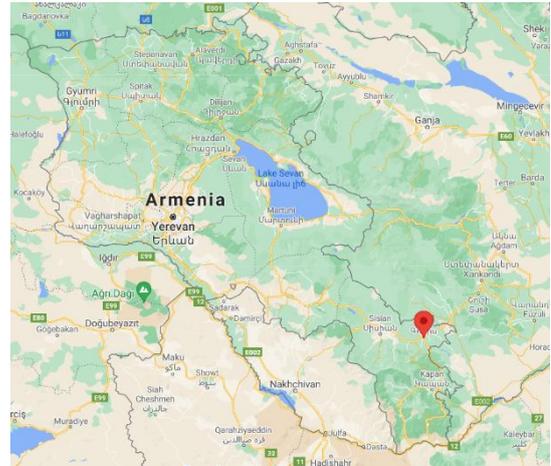
ARMENIA

Hotel Yeghevnut



Location: Republic of Armenia/Syunik Region/
t. Goris

Key words: Hotel



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Hand cream making with beeswax master class



The hotel offers an experience based on one of Syunik's traditional occupations, beekeeping. The traditions of beekeeping, the advantages and difficulties are presented in a hundred-year-old building. During the performance interesting stories about beekeeping, about lifestyle of bees and honey production are presented to the visitors. On-site beeswax produces a fragrant hand cream that is also used to treat dry skin. Moreover, with

the help of the specialist the visitors can create their own beeswax cream by choosing and mixing different essential oils, each with its own smell and properties, and then learn the delicate process of mixing them with beeswax. In addition, the visitors can join tours to Syunik tourist attractions¹.

Marketing approach

The organization has its own website (<https://hotelyeghevnut.com/>), runs a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/yeghevnuthotel/>) and profiles on Booking.com, and TripAdvisor. In addition, the hotel has a Google Maps location and cooperates with tour operators.



¹ More detailed information can be found at the following link: <https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/beekeeping-hand-cream-master-beekeeper/> (Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Financial situation

Financial stability is mainly ensured by the income from the sale of services provided by the enterprise. The organization also, if necessary, took business loans, through which it was able to create new services and ensure sustainable operations. Grant programs have also been used to enhance financial stability.

Key success factors and challenges

The bases for success are considered being a family activity, always being optimistic and having a positive attitude towards the future. At the same time, it is very important to consider the organized cooperation and initiative, teamwork, employees as a key player in the enterprise. Challenges have also accompanied the establishment of business. In particular, initially there was a lack of knowledge about tourism activities, one-sided perceptions of tourism (tourist as an observer, not a participant), lack of experience for organized experiences. At present, the key challenge is the loss of old connections due to COVID-19 because of the closure of these enterprises.

Plans for future development

The key directions for future development are the establishment of new cooperation, the approach of starting all over again in many initiatives, the addition of new services (in the form of agro-cultural tours), the increase of new experiences (culinary, carpet weaving), the strengthening of cooperation with the state. The owners plan to install a solar power plant in order to reduce the cost of electricity.



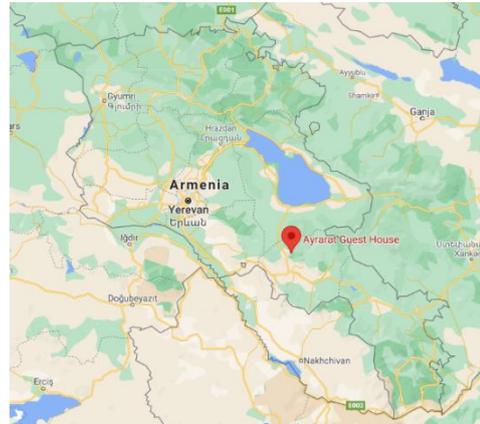
Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/yeghevnuhotel/>



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Guest House Legend



Location: Republic of Armenia/Vayots dzor Region/
v. Artabuynk

Key words: Guesthouse

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Smbataberd fortress hike and gata baking master class.



Smbataberd is one of the big and impregnable fortresses of Vayots Dzor. It is built on a high triangular hill rising in deep valleys and is one of the most remarkable defence complexes in Armenia. The hiking trip ends at the "Legend" guest house in the village of Artabuynk near Smbataberd. There, the visitors can take part in one of the most famous Armenian culinary traditions - the baking of tonri gata. The process includes

the process of making gata khoriz (core of gata), stuffing it and baking the gata itself. All guests leave the place with a unique recipe for gata, which they can later to prepare for their family and friends².

Marketing approach

The organization has a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SMBATABERT/>), it is registered on TripAdvisor and Booking.com, has a Google Maps location, and cooperates with tour operators.

Financial situation

The main sources of financial stability are the income from the sale of organized services and personal investments.

² More detailed information can be found at the following link:
<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/smbataberd-fortress-hike-gata-baking/>
(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)

Key success factors and challenges

The key to success is to make dreams a goal, dedication, a smile, the geographical location of the enterprise, the presence and proximity of natural, historical, and cultural sites, ecologically clean environment, cooperation and new tour products like experiences, hiking. COVID-19 is considered a key challenge for business activities, with its consequences and the issue of information exchange and dissemination.

Plans for future development

In the future, they want to turn the guesthouse into a recreation area, a complex with various services. They are currently rebranding their activities and will soon be introduced to the market in a new way.



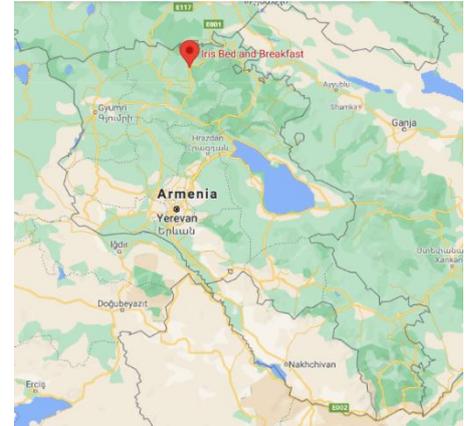
Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/SMBATABERT/>

Guest House Iris



Location: Republic of Armenia/Lori Region/ t. Alaverdi

Key words: Guesthouse



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Tanapoor (soup made by “tan”) cooking master class



As the first female guesthouse owner in the town of Alaverdi, Irina Israyelyan founded Iris Guesthouse to present the iconic natural landscape, culinary traditions, and culture of the Lori region. From her diverse menu, Irina offers three different cooking classes to her visitors. One of them is a master class on making butter soup (tanov apoor) which is a common dish in Lori cuisine. Tan soup is made by a unique recipe, and the main ingredient is

the traditional buttermilk drink called “tan”. During the preparation of the soup, visitors will learn how the “tan” was made in ancient times by mixing it in a churn. “Tan” soup was a modest meal among the villagers and, despite its name, it contains few calories. The guesthouse owner will share with the guests her own recipe, which is made at home. Another important feature of this recipe is that the soup is not mixed at all, and when the soup starts to boil, each participant can enrich the taste of the soup by adding seasonal herbs to it³.

Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/IrisGuestHouseArmenia/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/bnbiris/>) pages, it is registered on Booking.com and TripAdvisor and has a Google Maps location.

³ More detailed information can be found at the following link:
<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/cook-armenians-favorite-yogurt-soup-tanov/>
(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Financial situation

Financial stability is ensured mainly by the income from the sale of products and services and through participation in various grant programs. At the same time, a certain amount of money is always provided as an inviolable financial means of ensuring business continuity.

Key success factors and challenges

The main guarantee of success is to set the right and clear goals and, in general, purposefulness, devotion to one's own work and having the necessary skills (organizational, food preparation) for the organized work.



The ability to be open and understanding to new ideas is also important, as well as the flexibility and ability to respond quickly to changes (the bakery has become a family café as a result of COVID-19). The main challenge is the unreasonable pricing by organizations offering such services and the situation created by COVID-19 in general.

Plans for future development

In the near future, it is planned to diversify the target market, in addition to focusing on inbound tourism, to start adapting services to the features and requirements of domestic tourism. It is also planned to develop tourism products based on the cultural elements of this region, in particular the use of local bakery.



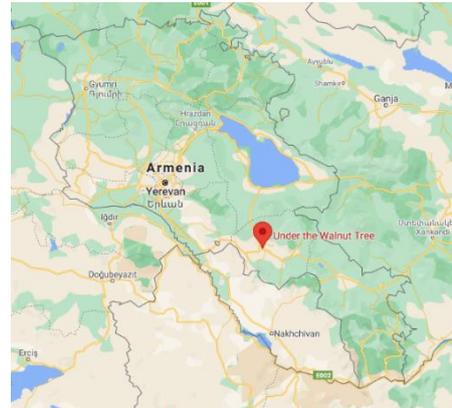
Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/IrisGuestHouseArmenia>



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Guest House “Under the Walnut Tree”



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Vayots dzor Region / t. Eghegnadzor

Key words: Guesthouse

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Anyone can learn how to make gata in tonir



"Under the Walnut Tree" is a family guesthouse, food experience and restaurant. The visitors can learn about Armenian traditions and take part in a gata making masterclass and learn how to bake gata in a tonir. Gata is a cake that is traditionally made during holidays, weddings, rituals and other special occasions. The guests can learn many

creative tricks that Armenian culinary masters use at the Vayots Dzor Gata Festival to prepare their gata. Before baking gata, they can also taste some of the local vodkas made from grapes, plums, apples, berries and other fruits. Finally, the tourists can enjoy a meal in the large courtyard of the guesthouse with delicious dishes, as well as herbal tea and other refreshments⁴.

Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/underthewalnuttree14/>) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/_under_the_walnut_tree_/) pages, it is registered on Google my business, TripAdvisor, and has a Google Maps location.

Financial situation

Grant programs and business loans have formed the basis for ensuring financial stability, and at present it is provided by revenues from the sale of own products and services.

⁴ More detailed information can be found at the following link:
<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/learn-how-make-gata-local-baker/>
(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Key success factors and challenges

The main guarantee of success was working with the family and the compassionate attitude towards work and always ensuring high quality and its continuous improvement. The main challenge is the offers of similar services at a lower price in the market.



Plans for future development

In the future it is planned to expand the guesthouse, to create and develop new services and build more overnight capacities. The provision of buffet services is also currently being developed.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/underthewalnuttree14>

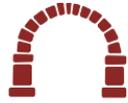
https://www.instagram.com/_under_the_walnut_tree_/



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Guest House Chalet-Gyumri



CHALET

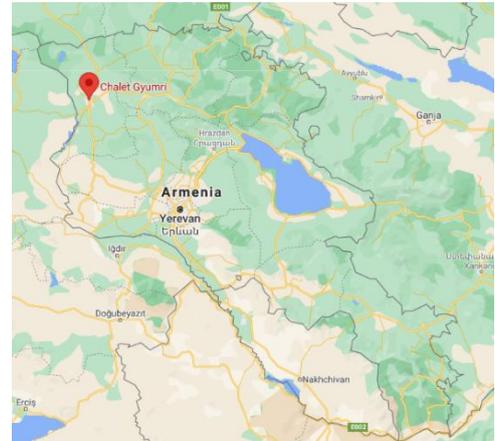
Gyumri

Location: Republic of Armenia/ Shirak Region / t. Gyumri

Key words: Guesthouse, social entrepreneurship

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The owners of Chalet Gyumri offer chanakh dish and sweet pokhindz making master class.



Its guests can find traditional recipes that Armenians have passed down through generations and their roots go back to time immemorial. Anyone interested can take part in their preparation. In "Chalet-Gyumri" the visitors will learn the family recipe for making chanakh, a dish that is usually made with beef meat, sometimes with lamb meat. They can also make pokhindz as a dessert while the main

dish is cooking. It is possible to observe the technique of getting flour from roasted wheat. When it is ready, it can be mixed it with honey, milk and add dried fruits, peas, etc. to taste. The children might be especially interested in visiting the small farm of the animals next to the guest house. In the farm, they will see Armenian Van cats and gampr dogs and hear interesting stories.

It also worth having a look at the small souvenir pavilion, offering the works of local handicraftsmen⁵.

Marketing approach

The organization has its own website (<http://chaletgyumri.am>) profiles on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ChaletGyumri/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/chaletgyumri/>). It is registered in TripAdvisor, and on Google Maps. The business cooperates with tour operators, too.

⁵ More detailed information can be found at the following link:
<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/Chanakh-dish-sweet-pokhindz-making-class-chalet-gyumri/> (Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Financial situation

Financial stability is mainly ensured by charitable investors and programs, as well as part of the income from related agricultural activities is used to ensure the continuity of these activities. Friends support the business, too.



Key success factors and challenges

The key factors for success are related to the purposefulness of the activity, unity and family and strong teamwork. The main challenges were the organizational issues of using the area in this activity, in particular, when cleaning the area and adjusting the compliance with the master plan of the town.

Plans for future development

Future developments are predetermined by the situation created by COVID-19 and the geopolitical situation in the region. In general, it plans to continue the same activities, develop charitable work and create similar structures.



Sources of the images:

<http://chaletgyumri.am>

<https://www.facebook.com/ChaletGyumri>

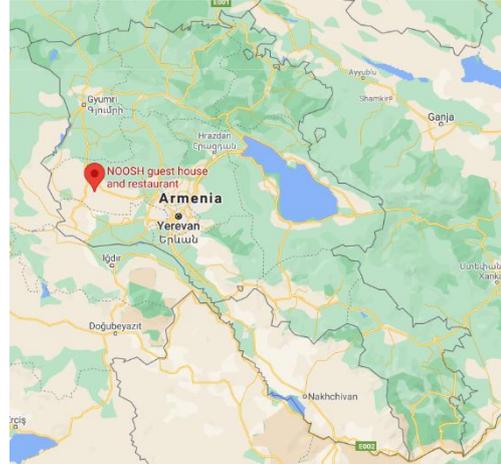
<https://www.instagram.com/chaletgyumri/>



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Noosh Guest House and Restaurant



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Aragatsotn Region / v. Ashnak

Key words: Restaurant, Guesthouse

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Klulik and Nooshello making experience



Master classes of different dishes and various food-related events are organized in the restaurant. Old recipes are brought up and included in the menu. The owners of the guesthouse organize events that are part of agro-tourism, such as harvesting, animal care, as well as walks. The goal of the owners is not only to prepare the food, but also to help tourists connect with the country through the kitchen, to pass on a "delicious" piece of their culture. Dialogues around the table are organized, promoting intercultural communication and

bridges are built between people from different cultures⁶.

Marketing approach

The organization runs its own website (<http://www.noosh.am>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/nooshguesthouse/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/nooshguesthouse/>) pages. It is registered in Booking.com, TripAdvisor and has a Google Maps location. Besides that, the owners organize various events, information visits, which help them get more popular among potential visitors.

Financial situation

Initially, the funds were invested at the expense of equity. Later, financial stability was maintained with the income from restaurant and hotel activities i.e. self-financing. At the same time, in cooperation with local farmers, the guesthouse sells to its guests 5 types of local cheese. Grant programs are also used to ensure financial stability.

⁶ More detailed information can be found at the following link: <http://noosh.am/> (Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Key success factors and challenges

The main guarantees of success are courage, clearly formulated dreams and goals. Vocational education has served as a solid foundation for success, i.e. mastering professional (tourism) knowledge and skills (organizational, linguistic), knowledge of different cultures, as well as being in a favourable geographical position of the enterprise. The main challenges for the development of the activity were the sceptical attitude of the locals towards the implementation of their activity, finding employees from the village (lack of skills of locals and often the stereotypical attitude towards working on the front line of the service is "shameful"). Problems in the village, especially with two key infrastructures, are water supply and electricity. In particular, water is supplied for an hour and during strong winds the electricity is often cut off. To solve the problem, the owners collect water in special containers, and regarding the electricity problem, special motors are used. Raising awareness is also a challenge.



Plans for future development

In the near future, it is planned to spread the activity in other regions and communities of the Republic of Armenia. In particular, it is planned to open a cafe in Dsegh village of Lori region soon, and based on that, in the future, to open a boutique hotel. It is also planned to use an alternative energy source in the near future, in the form of solar power plants.



Sources of the images:

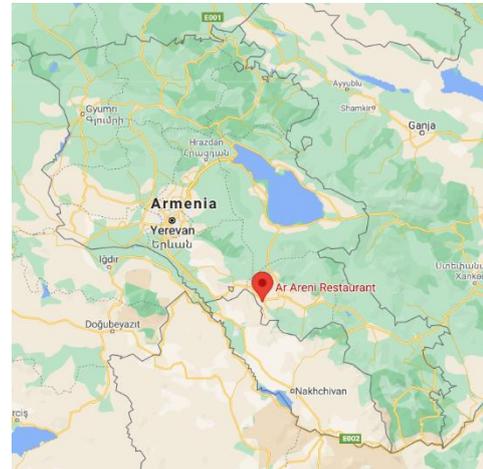
<http://www.noosh.am>

<https://www.facebook.com/nooshguesthouse>

<https://www.instagram.com/nooshguesthouse>

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Restaurant Ar Areni



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Vayots dzor Region/v. Areni

Key words: Restaurant, Wine making

Description of best practice related to HCBET
Viticulture, tolma and fish cooking master class



According to the archaeological data of Areni-1 cave in Vayots Dzor, winemaking in Armenia started as far back as 4000 BC. By visiting here and participating in any stage of grape cultivation, the guests can get acquainted with the ancient traditions of gardening and winemaking. After that, there is an option to take part in one of the two culinary master classes offered at the Ar Aren family restaurant, too.

Tolma master class. Grape leaves are used in many national dishes and are an integral part of traditional tolma. In case the guests visit the place during the period of collecting fresh leaves, they can collect the leaves from the garden and wrap tolma in them.

Fish cooking master class. The river flowing through the village of Areni is famous for the most delicious fishes (koghak) of the region, which is often caught and used by the locals in the kitchen. The guests, who have chosen to attend this masterclass, will be introduced to the local method and recipe of cooking fish. They will be involved in the cooking process and will be able to apply the new skills in their own kitchen in the future⁷.



⁷ More detailed information can be found at the following link:
<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/vine-wine-follow-grapes-journey/>
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Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ArAreniRestaurant/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/ar.arenis/>) pages, is registered with TripAdvisor, and has a Google Maps location. It organizes study visits.

Financial situation

Financial stability is ensured at the expense of revenues from the sale of own products and services. Borrowing in the form of business loans is also used.

Key success factors and challenges

The key to success are purposefulness, diligence, creativity, striving for a prosperous life for the generation, having a teamwork spirit, being a business family. Possession of professional winemaking skills (production, tasting) are also guarantees of success. The creation and establishment of the business was also facilitated by the partner-clients (tour operators, tour guides), who expressed a wish to have a more organized environment of rest and food during their visit. The main challenge for the activity is the large number of similar services (winemaking, food organization) in the village, as a result of which it is very difficult to ensure originality.

Plans for future development

Future development plans are related to strengthening the enterprise's marketing policy (production of souvenirs in the form of wine bottles, appropriate packaging and design), acquisition of new winemaking equipment and improvement of relevant infrastructure.

Sources of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/ArAreniRestaurant/>

<https://www.instagram.com/ar.arenis/>

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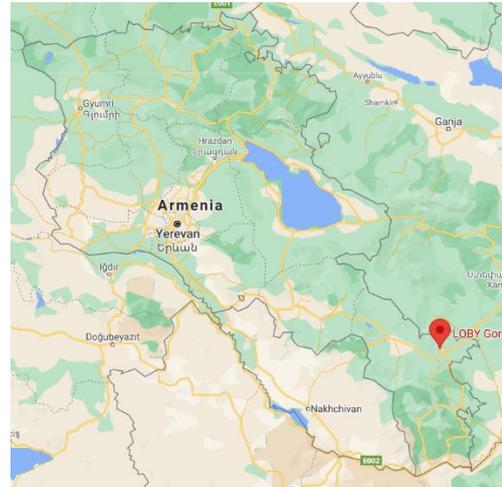
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Restaurant LOBY



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Syunik Region
/v. Verishen

Key words: Restaurant

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Make a special tolma with bean leaves at Loby



Both traditional and modern dishes are included in the menu of LOBY restaurant, which are prepared with fresh organic products harvested from the garden. Beans from this region are known for their taste. Goris tolma (which differs from tolmas made in other regions of Armenia) is another special dish on the LOGY's menu, traditionally prepared by the grandmother of the family.

The guests can take part in the preparation of tolma from beginning to end is a memorable experience intertwined with Armenian culture.

In case the visitors happen to come to the restaurant in the summer time, they will also wrap tolma with bean leaves, which is one of the ancient culinary traditions of the region. Before the tolma is cooked, they will have the opportunity to pick fresh vegetables and fruits growing in the home garden, which will not only complement the dining table, but also show how this family maintains the traditions of self-sufficient, waste-free agriculture. In the fall period, the guests can take part in another activity - they can peel dried beans together with their hosts⁸.



⁸ More detailed information can be found at the following link:
<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/Make-special-tolma-bean-leaves-Loby/>
(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)

Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/LOBYGORIS/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/lobygoris/>) pages. It is registered in TripAdvisor, has a Google Maps location.

Financial situation

Financial stability is largely driven by revenue from the sale of basic products and services, as well as, in part, by capacity building through grant programs.

Key success factors and challenges

A key factor in the development of a business is its family, the family's willingness to share its own cultural values and way of life, and its ability to provide guests with access to a family environment, as well as a desire to continue family traditions. Personal qualities, in the form of professional knowledge and skills and attachment to the rural / native environment are also considered the guarantee of success. The challenge for the development of the activity is the implementation of effective marketing strategy, investing one's own time in this business more effectively. The situations created by COVID-19 is also considered a challenge.

Plans for future development

In the future, it is planned to build a guesthouse, which will also serve as a tourist information centre, where it will be possible to find systematic information about the cultural life and activities of people living in the village, it will also implement social programs and contribute to the development of agro-tourism.



Source of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/LOBYGORIS/>

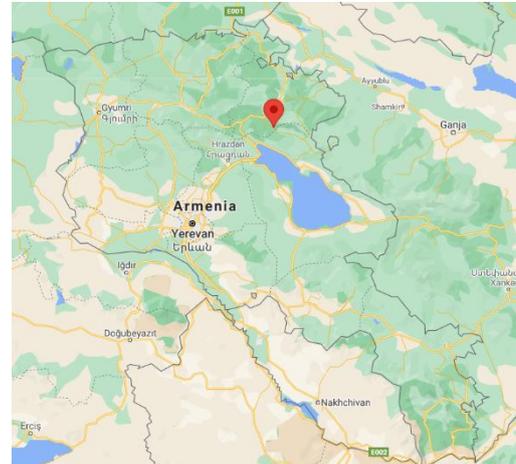
<https://www.instagram.com/lobygoris/>



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Restaurant Aghavnatun



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Tavush Region / v. Aghavnavank

Key words: Restaurant, Wine making

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Make traditional losh and barbecue in a special tonir



With its customs, traditions and cuisine, Aghavnavank is a perfect place to get familiar with the Armenian culture through a losh baking and barbecue master class. Tonir is a necessity for local losh baking, which can be tasted only in this region, and which is perfectly combined with barbecue.

By visiting Aghavnatun, the guests will have the opportunity to take part in the process of making bread (losh) while listening to stories about this tradition. The freshly baked losh goes well with the near made barbecue. Tavush pork, from which barbecue is made, is famous all over Armenia for its unique taste. The visitors will be taught the skills of properly marinating meat with thyme. While the meat is grilling, they will head to the cellar to taste the homemade vodkas and unique wines to discover the full range of Aghavnatun flavors and aromas⁹.

Marketing approach

The organization has a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/AghavnatunArmenia>), a Google Maps location. It is represented in various events and cooperates with tour operators.

⁹More detailed information can be found at the following link:
<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/make-losh-and-barbecue-special-tonir>
(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Financial situation

The main means of ensuring financial stability are the income from the sale of the offered products and services, as well as, to a certain extent, business loans and grants. Orientation to both domestic and inbound tourism markets is considered an important factor in ensuring financial stability.



Key success factors and challenges

The main factors of success are purposefulness, personal qualities, support of the villagers and being in the neighbourhood of the famous historical and cultural monument (Aghavnavank). Challenges for the development of activities are the underdevelopment of water, electricity, gas supply infrastructure and, as such, the lack of business activities in the village and the problems related to cooperation.

Plans for future development

It is planned to diversify the services in the near future, in particular, due to the construction of a guesthouse, a new wine factory and the development of cultural cuisine.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/AghavnatunArmenia>



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Mosh workshop and shop

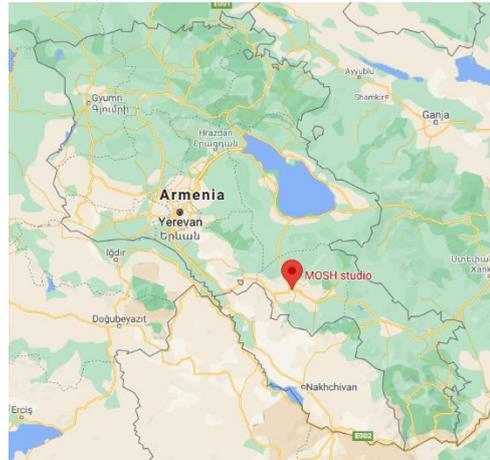


Location: Republic of Armenia/ Vayots dzor Region /t. Eghegnadzor

Key words: Craft, Art, Fashion

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Create your own folk art doll



As a workshop and a shop, "Mosh" studio combines fashion and tradition, as well as old decorative art and its own artistic vision. Here a new life is given to the Armenian ornaments, as well as beautiful clothes are made for women. During the master classes, visitors can make "wish-fulfilling dolls" using the collected fabrics and patches. These dolls express not only their personalities, but also the centuries-old Armenian cultural identity. The master classes

give the participants an opportunity to get acquainted in detail with the Armenian folk beliefs and traditions related to dolls passed down from generation to generation¹⁰.

Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/studiomosh/>) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/_mosh_studio_/) pages, and has a Google Maps location. It organizes various events, too.

Financial situation

Financial stability is mainly ensured by the income from the sale of the created products and services, especially as a result of the purchases of the regular customers of the region,



¹⁰ More detailed information can be found at the following link: <https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/create-your-own-folk-art-doll/> (Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Armenia, the USA and Europe. Grant programs have also contributed to financial stability.

Key success factors and challenges

The main guarantee of success is the pursuit of a childhood dream of having such an activity. The aspiration to create jobs and have one's own business also contributed to the creation and development of the activity. The main obstacle to the development of the activity is the stereotypical attitude of the locals towards innovation and especially towards the image of a business woman in the community environment. Studying the market and being the first in that area was also a big problem.

Plans for future development

It is planned to open branches in Yerevan and other big cities of Armenia in the near future and also to export the products. It is also planned to develop the use of industrial waste (derived from textiles) and to offer experiences and master classes to local children to develop their respective skills. In the future, there is also a desire to open an Art-cafe, which will be designed to organize the guests' rest in a unique way.



Source of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/studiomosh/>

https://www.instagram.com/_mosh_studio_/



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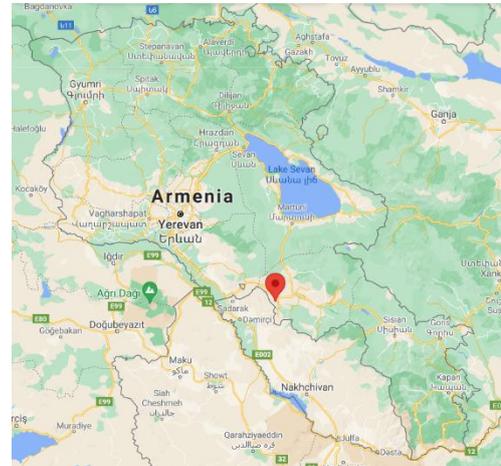
Art Center Arhestanots



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Vayots dzor Region / v. Areni

Key words: Craft, Art

Description of best practice related to HCBET
Pottery master class and making clay souvenirs



Formerly a chapel, then a house of culture, a warehouse and even used as a cafe, this building has now become a hospitable roof for representatives of all generations, who can show their creativity. The visitors can learn where the local clay is found and how it differs from clay in other regions, while mixing it with their own hands. This is a touching experience that everyone can enjoy. There are three offered options and

experiment with Areni handicraft traditions.

- *Make an ornament* by arranging the baked clay ankles on the thread.
- *Illustrate the clay* candlesticks with brushes and acrylic paints.
- *Work with local clay*, making cups, small plates, or other items.¹¹

Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/arhestanots.studio/>) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/arpine_arhestanots/) pages and has a Google Maps location.

¹¹ More detailed information can be found at the following link: <https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/Take-family-friendly-clay-lessons-Arpinе/> (Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Financial situation

Financial stability is ensured through the sale of the products and services offered and the income from trainings for local youth. Grant programs have also contributed to financial stability.

Key success factors and challenges

The key to success is the uniqueness of the products and services offered in the region, as well as the variety of offers and the availability of alternatives in the form of experiences and ensuring the involvement of local rural youth. The main challenge is the situation created because of COVID-19.



Plans for future development

In the future, it is planned to increase the types of offered experiences and also to open a teahouse.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/arhestanots.studio/>

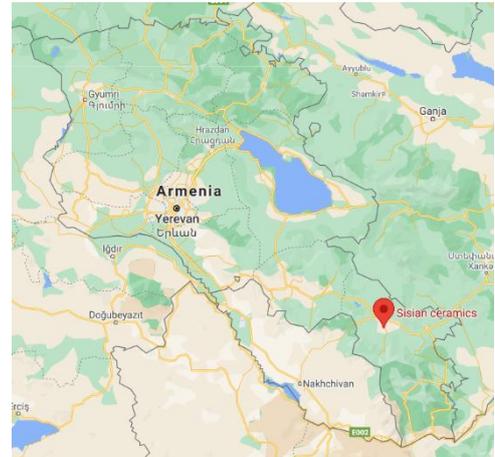
https://www.instagram.com/arpine_arhestanots/



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Sisian Ceramics



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Syunik Region / t. Sisian

Key words: Craft, Art

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Pottery class and batik scarf making



Pottery is one of the oldest crafts in Armenia, which is known for jars of food and drink created as far back as in the 3rd millennium BC. Visitors can work with clay on a potter's wheel or make batik scarves under the professional guidance of masters. At the end, visitors can enjoy refreshing drinks on the balcony and take their creations home as a souvenir. In addition, many items can

be purchased from the shop.¹²

Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SisianCeramics/>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/sisianceramics/>) pages. It is registered in TripAdvisor, has a Google Maps location.

Financial situation

Business loans and grants have been the basis for ensuring financial stability, but the main source of income is the sale of own products and services.



¹² More detailed information can be found at the following links:

<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/learn-throw-pottery-armenian-master/>

(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)

<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/make-your-own-batik-scarf/>

(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Key success factors and challenges

The main guarantee of success is purposefulness, dedication to work and the desire to learn constantly. Challenges for the business are the consequences of COVID-19, as well as some difficulties related to the proper organization of business, especially in the development and implementation of marketing steps.

Plans for future development

In the near future, it is planned to have a complete complex for the development of cultural tourism, to develop its own guesthouse and hotel and the already operating restaurant business. It is also planned to develop educational activities based on the organization of pottery lessons and archaeological educational activities.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/SisianCeramics/>

<https://www.instagram.com/sisianceramics/>



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Wool-to-Carpet

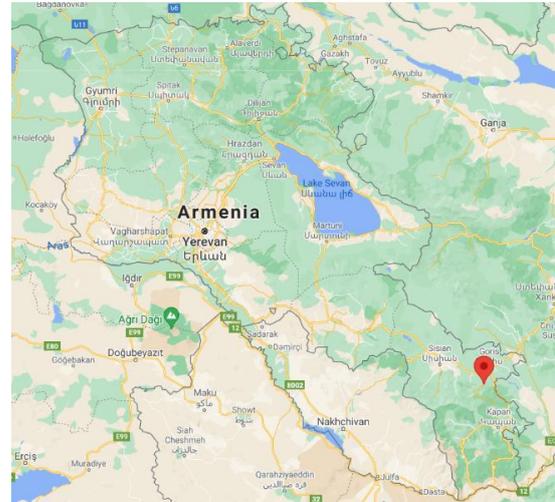


Location: Republic of Armenia/ Syunik Region / v. Shinuhayr

Key words: Craft, social entrepreneurship

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Making Armenian carpets



The "Wool-to-Carpet" social enterprise turns wool into natural carpets, household goods and personal items. The products use not only all the natural shades of sheep wool, but also (and, more importantly) the creativity and design skills of local women. The visitors of the workshop can take part in the complete "Wool-to-Carpet" experience by choosing one of the two options: a tour of the workshop with a meal that includes

local food and drinks, or just a tour of the workshop.

An experiences specialist can show the guests how to spin the wool in the traditional way using a spinning wheel, and in a modern way, on a spinning wheel that works on foot. After processing the wool, the artists teach their guests how to make carpets and other handicrafts.

During the whole process the guests not only get acquainted with the technique of carpet weaving, but also with the collection of cultural motifs used in the design of carpets.¹³

Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/gorishandmade/>) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/goris_handmade/) pages and participates in various events.

¹³ More detailed information can be found at the following link: <https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/transform-rough-wool-fine-armenian-carpet/> (Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Financial situation

Grants and business loans have been the basis for ensuring financial stability, and currently the main means of ensuring financial stability are revenues from own products and services.

Key success factors and challenges

The key to success is the right idea (restoring old Armenian traditions and customs and presenting them anew), the choice of location (crossroads) and the proximity of local and international historical and cultural monuments, the support of "My Armenia" program to develop packages, increase awareness and in the form of capacity building. The main challenges for the activity are the situation created because of COVID-19 and the weak level of digitalization of services.



Plans for future development

The installation and development of the "mobile experience" service is envisaged in the near future, both in the region and in the whole of Armenia. At present, on the basis of the acquired sewing machines, it is planned to develop the production of bags with a combination of fabric and leather, and in the future, it is possible to create a production of furniture as well.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/gorishandmade/>

https://www.instagram.com/goris_handmade/



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Mayilyan Woodcarving



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Tavush Region /
t. Ijevan

Key words: Craft

Description of best practice related to HCBET
Woodcarving master class



Half-day or one-day hiking is offered in Tavush region, as well as wood carving master classes either in the workshop or during walks right on the road. The master is a 4th generation carpenter and a specialized hiking guide. The master will demonstrate his wood carving skills on pieces of wood and tree trunks, which he collects during expeditions. Visitors can engrave with the help of a master and then take the work they have prepared with them¹⁴

Marketing approach

The organization has a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MayilyanTour>) and a Google Maps location.

Financial situation

Financial stability is mainly ensured by the income from the sale of own products and services.

Key success factors and challenges

The key to success has been mastering the skills of organizing the services offered and having the appropriate professional qualities, teamwork and cooperation, and looking at organizations in the market as partners rather than competitors. Being a family activity, being based on the homeland, local nature and traditions was also considered a guarantee of success. Challenges

¹⁴ More detailed information can be found at the following link:
<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/learn-woodcarving-local-master/>
(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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for the development of the activity are not the ownership of the Art Institute, but the renting, the difficulties of the implementation of the marketing part of the activity.

Plans for future development

In the near future, it is planned to solve the problem of the workshop-studio and to develop the experiential services offered during the organized walks and to develop the experiences within the framework of processing semi-precious stones.



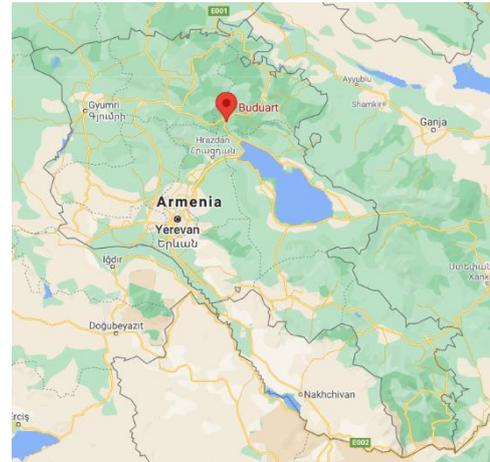
Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/MayilyanTour>



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Buduart



Location: Republic of Armenia/ Tavush Region /
t. Dilijan

Key words: Art, Craft

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Copper jewellery making master class



Buduart was founded as a gallery, which at the same time serves as a place for customers to discover their creative abilities while enjoying a glass of wine with friends. The Buduart workshop-studio is run by local artists. Coffee and tea will be served during the work, but the guests can buy wine, too, in order to stimulate their creative thinking. Master

classes are great for groups of up to 15 people and last about 2 hours. At the end of the master class the guests can take their own works as a souvenir. Batik and professional drawing lessons are offered for those who want to discover their painting skills.¹⁵

Marketing approach

The organization has Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/buduart.dilijan/>) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/buduar_t/) pages and has a Google Maps location. Besides, the studio hosts and participates in various events.

¹⁵ More detailed information can be found at the following links:

<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/create-your-own-copper-jewelry/>

(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)

<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/make-your-own-batik-scarf-dilijan/>

(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)

<https://myarmenia.si.edu/en/guide/experience/painting-lessons-professional-artist/>

(Last check: 16/05/21, 13:00)



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Financial situation

Financial stability is ensured by the income from the sale of own products and services, as well as by external, related professional activities.

Key success factors and challenges

The key factor of success is the location of the activity, which is considered one of the parts of Dilijan's tourist attraction and is located in a so-called tourist environment. Possession of relevant knowledge and skills for the implementation of the work is also considered a guarantee of success. Financial difficulties and the organization of effective marketing activities are considered as the main challenges for the development of the activity.



Plans for future development

In the near future, it is planned to develop the activity due to the development of guest house activities by diversifying the offered services.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/buduart.dilijan/>

https://www.instagram.com/buduar_t/



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BULGARIA

Ethnographic Complex Damascena



Location: Skobelevo Village, Pavel Banya Municipality, Southeast Planning Region

Key words: Ethnographic museum, Rose oil distillery



Description of best practice related to HCBET



“Damascena” is the first private rose oil distillery, found in 1991. It is situated in the heart of the Rose valley, in Southeast Bulgaria, in Pavel Banya municipality, and welcomes visitors for guided tours around the chateaux-like property offering a range of activities and services.

The distillery was named after the famous rose “Damascene” which is one of the Bulgarian national symbols. Traditionally, the country is one of the leading rose oil exporters and rose water and

perfume are among the key ingredients of the majority of branded cosmetics products, foods and beverages produced in Bulgaria.

“Damascena” company hosts an ethnographic museum related to rose oil production. The visitors can observe the process of extraction of oil out of rose petals and learn interesting facts about the history of the rose oil, its features and ways of application. An ancient rose extractor called “gulpana” and many other rose-extracting tools are exhibited in the museum.



The visitors are also encouraged to visit the modern distillery



with frescoes (wall painting)

retelling the story of the rose from its picking to the production of the rose oil (which is also known as the “liquid gold of Bulgaria”).

A Thracian culture centre with fragments of Thracian sanctuaries and mounds is another “must see” attraction. Recently, a bio park for wild animals was built to enrich the tourism offering.

Common borders. Common solutions.



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During the “Pink Campaign” (May/June) visitors can participate in the process of picking of the roses. Special folklore program is offered which includes additional activities, such as degustation of rose liqueur, rose jam and rose pie.



Marketing approach

The Distillery is advertising its activities on-line (in special events and bookings sites) or on its own web site (<https://www.damascena.net/> (which won a prestigious award “site of the year” for 2020).

In 2020, “Damascena” Ethnographic Complex was recognized as a major contributor towards the establishment of the brand *Destination Bulgaria* and was awarded a Certificate for successful cultural tourism and leadership in the production of rose oil.

Financial situation

Entrance fee for Complex “Damascena” is 12 BGN (or 6 Euro) with various discounts for students, children and senior citizens. Additional cost is charged for special services, activities and folklore programs.

Key success factors and challenges

Among the key success factors are:

- The unique ethnographic museum featuring the Bulgarian symbol - the rose “Damascene”;
- The possibility for the visitors to observe the process of extraction and distillation of rose oil out of rose petals;
- Tourists can participate in various activities, including rose-picking (seasonal in May/June), folklore program, rose products degustation etc.;
- Thracian cultural centre adds educational value to the overall experience.



The COVID-19 pandemic has a negative effect on the work of the complex, since most of the activities for visitors have been cancelled. The complex had to close for several month during 2020 and 2021.

Source of the images: <https://www.damascena.net/>



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Garden of the Cyrillic Letters (“Dvor na Kirilizata”)

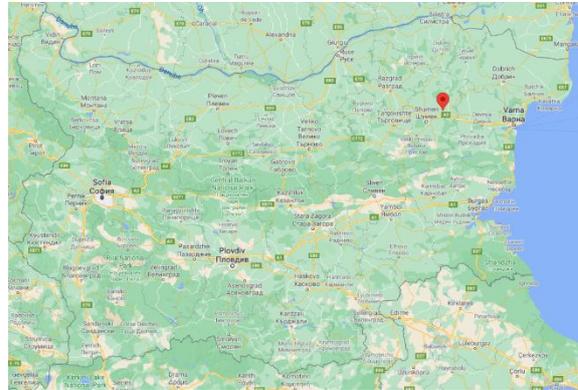
Location: Pliska, Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Monument of the Cyrillic Alphabet, Historical-cultural attraction

Description of best practice related to HCBET

A monumental complex of the Cyrillic alphabet and the Bulgarian ancient and contemporary history. Its name (in translation “Garden of the Cyrillic alphabet”) comes from the big letters erected in the yard of a castle made of stone.

The complex is a man-made attraction and opened in 2015 near Pliska, the first capital of Bulgaria. An interesting fact about the place is that it was designed, financed and built by a foreigner - an Armenian immigrant who moved to Bulgaria three decades ago - Karen Alexanian. He bought 8000 sq. m. of land and hired historians, architects, craftsmen, Bulgarian and foreign experts and artists to create this unique monument aiming to bring alive the Cyrillic alphabet and to promote national pride and spirit.



The complex has two distinctive areas: the front gate leads to the Garden of the Letters. The letters are huge sculptures made by hand out of stone. The second area is the Fortress with an exhibition of wax figures of the Bulgarian tsars and khans, and a gallery of pictures presenting Bulgaria’s glorious past.

There is also the so-called “Walk of the Writers” where 80 prominent Bulgarian and international authors are presented.

Marketing approach

The complex has its own web site <http://xn--80aaafj0aaapmrl0ae8a3d.bg/news/>, which serves not just for promotional but also for educational purposes, and provides valuable information on historic facts about the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet.

The monument is popular among tourists because it is situated near a major tourist site “Pliska - the first Bulgarian Capital”. It takes advantage of joint advertising and distribution, so the visitors can buy a combined ticket for both attractions, which instigates a great number of visitations.



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The monument also attracts children from schools from all over Bulgaria because of its interesting layout and format.

Besides, the Garden of the Cyrillic Letters hosts many events: cultural activities, personal and corporate celebrations.

Financial situation

The complex charges a nominal entrance fee.

It also receives income from rents (some of the premises are used by third parties).

Key success factors and challenges

- Unique attraction featuring the Cyrillic (Bulgarian) alphabet;
- Exhibition of paintings and wax figures with which history can come into life;
- Involvement of tourists via events and other activities.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/dvornakirilicata/>



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E-Tours



Location: Dobrich, Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Tour agent, tour operator, walking tour



Description of best practice related to HCBET



E-Tours is a licensed tour operator and tour agent situated in Dobrich and Varna. It organizes guided tours and vacations in Bulgaria and around the world with a focus on the neighbouring countries, such as Romania, Turkey, Greece, etc.

The company has established positions on the local market due to the great variety of package tours it creates and promotes via its website <http://e-tours.bg>. Unlike most of its competitors, E-tours is striving for originality and excellence, offering off-the-beaten-track

destinations and unique experiences for the tourists.

Recently, it included in its program a free of charge walking tour around the city of Dobrich. The tour is approximately two hours long and is aimed at residents and guests of Dobrich who want to know more about the history of the city and to experience vividly and remarkably little known facts and places around.

It is also a wonderful way for socialization and making new friends. Residents are proud to present the rich heritage of their hometown, while tourists (both Bulgarian and foreigners) are benefiting from the opportunity to meet a true “Dobrichlia” (a native of Dobrich). Those contacts often result in friendship thus strengthening the experiential element of the activity.

E-Tours offer two types of theme walking tours:

1. Walking tour around Dobrich and
2. Walking tour “The living past of Dobrich”

The tours go around sightseeing, monuments and heritage sites most of which are unknown even to local residents such as:





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- Monuments of people who have contributed to the city’s prosperity (such as the first mayor; businessmen and sponsors who have established schools, galleries and museums; soldiers who died for the freedom of our homeland; poets and writers who highlighted Dobrudzha in their work; emblematic literature character such as the flower boy Ljutzkan at the picture above;
- Stone fountain build century ago, which is known as the “Eyes of Dobrich”;
- Remarkable architectural heritage sites;
- Military cemetery.



Marketing approach



The Walking tour is announced on the web site of the agency. Leaflets and posters are also prepared and distributed around the town. Tours get organized regularly, usually once per month and often around big holidays, such as the Bulgaria Liberation Day, which is on 3rd March. Being free of charge is one of the reasons for its popularity and the announcement are often done by word of mouth since many participants are bringing their friends and relatives with them

Financial situation

The tour is free of charge. It aims at encouraging local residents and visitors to be more conscious about the history and cultural heritage of the city of Dobrich. Apart from having educational and social purposes, the tour also promotes the organizing company (E-tours) and enhances its popularity among the potential consumers.

Key success factors and challenges

- The tour reveals little known heritage (historical and cultural) and is appealing for both- residents and visitors of Dobrich;
- Tour is guided by experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides who add additional value for the participants;
- Tour is free of charge which attracts many participants from all walks of life;





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- Technical equipment is professional. Printed materials are prepared and distributed to the participants;
- The activity provides opportunity for meaningful social contact and personal enrichment.

Plans for future development

The company is planning more free trips outside the city of Dobrich. The aim will be to familiarize residents and visitors with the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the nearby villages and towns. The focus is again on the unusual landscapes, not-so-popular sites and monuments, which often break the stereotypes that most people hold about Dobrudzha region.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.e-tours.bg/>

<https://www.facebook.com/etoursltd>



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Guest House “Levana”

Location: Bulgarevo Village, Dobrich district,
Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Traditional stone guesthouse, cultural
events



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Guesthouse “Levana” is a home with a unique charm and character, built in 1944 and situated in Bulgarevo village, just 5 km away from Kaliakra Cape. The design and architecture combine natural materials such as stone and wood to create a traditional and cosy atmosphere, combined with the comfort of the modern home. The big yard offers several recreational areas, including a children playground, BBQ, swimming pool and outdoor bath facilities.



The idea behind the creation of “Levana” is to create a childhood-like place, a lost paradise where visitors can reunite with their roots and with themselves walking barefoot on the grass, eating freshly picked fruits and vegetables. The connection with the hosts is evident in every detail. As a reviewer notes “... here you can talk to Krasimir and Lady Anastasia and listen to their story. A story that goes back at least 100 years... And that is when you start appreciating

even more this place. Because it was built out of love and respect”.

The hosts cater for the needs of their guests by providing a number of options for both active and relaxing stay. For example, they organize bicycle rentals and tours to the nearby sites such as Kaliakra Cape, Bolata, and Yailata natural reserves.



The house works in close collaboration with the local authorities (Bulgarevo Town Hall and Kavarna Municipality) for the organization and promotion of a number of cultural activities and events. Some examples are the folklore fest “Songs and Dances in Bulgarevo”, the annual Celebration of the Melon or the famous “Horo na Megdana” (Round dance in the centre of the village), which takes place regularly in the warm summer evenings and brings together locals and tourists.



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The house also patronizes the biggest rock and metal music events such as July morning or Bulgarevo Rock. They also organize educational and cultural events inside Levana's premises such as arts exhibitions, concerts and others.

Marketing approach

Guest House "Levana" advertises its activities on its Facebook page.

It is presented in a number of platforms for on-line reservations such as booking.com, vila.bg, pochivka.bg.

Financial situation

Main income source is room sale and renting of premises for cultural, corporate and personal events.

Key success factors and challenges

- Authentic vintage atmosphere, enhanced by the stunning combination of natural building materials: stone and wood and a number of traditional artefacts such as stone hearth, donkey cart etc.;
- Great location near major tourist attractions: Kaliakra Cape, Oyster Sea Farm, Black Sea coast. Convenient access for Bulgarian and Romanian tourists;
- Diverse offer including a wide range of activities and experiences: cultural, traditional (folklore), recreational etc.;
- Intense interaction between hosts and visitors. Tourists are welcomed as real guests and enjoy persistent communication with the local residents;
- Collaboration with local authorities for the creation of augmented experience for the visitors by offering a number of opportunities for involvement in cultural and socializing events and activities.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/LevanaHouse/photos>



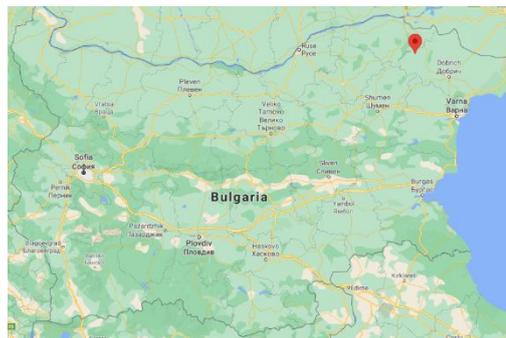
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Guest House “Maria-Nevena”

Location: Bezmer Village, Tervel Municipality, Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Guesthouse, crafts, rites, traditional way of living, contact with local residents



Description of best practice related to HCBET



“Maria-Nevena” guesthouse is situated in Bezmer Village, Tervel Municipality, and consists of 7 guest rooms equipped with modern amenities such as Wi-Fi, kitchenette etc. The yard is 4 ha and includes a natural vegetable garden, where eco products are grown, as well as an orchard offering delightful seasonal fruits to the visitors. There is a children’s playground, gazebo and recreational areas in the open. The house provides a large kitchen and dining room in which guests can prepare meals and socialize with the hosts and other guests.

An interesting attraction is the small museum exhibition staged in one of the premises near the main house displaying the traditional rites and crafts of Dobrudzha region. Antique agricultural and craftsmen’s tools are also exhibited and the guests are encouraged to try working with them, so they can get a more authentic feeling of what life was decades ago.

The hosts are trying to keep close contact with their guests and are always ready to help, serve, guide, or just to chat with the tourists. They also prepare upon request meals typical for the region, and the tourists often take active part in the cooking.

Organized tours to the nearby natural and cultural sites are also available. Activities in which tourists can be involved include climbing in the area of Dry River’s gorge, visitation of Rock monastery, hunting in the pheasant’s gaming reserve, fishing in one of the eight micro dams or visiting the legendary sanctuary of water spring Koru.

Hosts offer some other unusual experiences such as donkey- and horse-ride.

In 2008, the house received the prestigious “Green House” Certificate awarded by the Bulgarian Association of Alternative Tourism (BAAT) for its green and sustainable approach, offering of healthy traditional food produce and promotion of the local cultural and ethnographic heritage.





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Marketing approach

“Maria Nevena” guesthouse has a web page:
<http://www.maria-nevena.com/>

It is promoted in several specialized on-line platforms such as room.bg and b hotels.guide-bulgaria.com, via social media and word of mouth.

Financial situation

The initial funding for the construction and renovation of the house was obtained partially through the EU programs for rural and regional development.



The operational expenses are covered by the sale of accommodation services. The prices are very affordable and the capacity is only 17 guests maximum at a time. The house is open throughout the year, but has peak attendance in spring and autumn or during the national holidays.

Key success factors



- Authentic, memorable experience of a traditional Dobrudzha home;
- Intense interaction between host and guests;
- Numerous activities and attractions that visitors can participate in, including an ethno-crafts exhibition;
- Stimulation of all senses, including gastronomic degustation.

Challenges

Destination is not popular and unknown to the tourists

- Infrastructure to the site (especially roads) is in poor condition;
- The house experiences strong seasonal demand with prolonged off-season during autumn and winter.



Sources of the images:

<http://www.maria-nevena.com/>

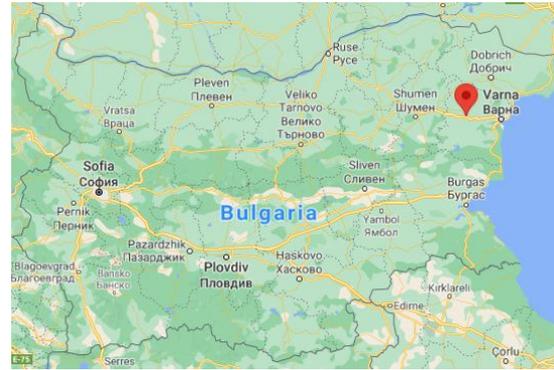
<https://vila.bg/house-mariya--nevena-724.html>



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Historical Park



Location: Neofit Rilski Village, Varna District, Northeast Planning Region

Key words/ Key words): Purpose-built attraction, historical and cultural heritage

Description of best practice related to HCBET



The Historical Park is a purpose-built tourist attraction aimed at showcasing Bulgarian history, traditional, cultural and ethnic heritage to the local and foreign visitors. The park opened in 2019 and is in the heart of a large-scale project spanning on more than 50 hectares. It is unique for its grandeur and complexity and offers an interactive experience of the country from 10,000 years back in time during the five eras of human

civilization. Staged exhibitions re-creates the historical development of our land from the Chalcolithic and Neolithic eras, through the glorious history of the Thracians and Rome, until the heyday of the First and Second Bulgarian Kingdoms. The exhibitions present fragments of the everyday life and culture of our ancestors including traditional cuisine and delicacies offered to the tourists. Some important landmarks are reconstructed such as the Thracian Tomb of Aleksandrovo in order to deliver an authentic and three dimensional experience. In the Historical park the past is evident through all senses thanks to the meticulous attention to every detail and the availability of a number of activities in which visitors can participate in such as archery, Thracian ritual wine drinking from exquisite rhytons and phiales, pictures taken in traditional outfits from various eras, tours in a Thracian chariot, pony rides and a themed playground.

The parks offer a full range of services such as themed attractions combined with catering, recreation, entertainment and educational events, team building, musical and arts performances etc.





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The materials used for construction are consistent with the relevant era (example: stone, wood, marble, ceramic, etc.). The food and beverages areas also re-create the traditional ambience of the epoch and guests can try dishes prepared according to authentic recipes with natural Bulgarian products. In the process of planning and building of the park more than 4000 people were involved, thus including history experts and archaeologists, master craftsmen, writers and



researchers. All efforts were made to achieve realistic and authentic interpretation of the Bulgarian past.



The park hosts thematic events such as international artist competition and exhibition of historical painting, archery tournament, arts performances, re-enactment of events from Ancient Thrace and Medieval Bulgaria period, medieval foods and crafts festivals, and many others.

Marketing approach

The park undertook a mass promotional campaign during its opening in 2019. Since then it promotes mainly through PR campaign and press releases in the local and national media, the web page of the park (ipark.bg) and social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Facebook (example: <https://youtu.be/UuArbUIWL98>)

Because of the unique ambience it creates, the park is preferred as a scene for video filming and big educational, corporate or personal events (field trips, conferences, trainings, weddings, etc.). Theme events and competitions are also very attractive for the mass audience. This helps promote the park even further since many people have the opportunity to visit and appreciate its resources.

Important distribution channels are also the organized packaged tours sold by local or international tour operators.

The Historic Park is gaining popularity by publishing a number of illustrated children and adult's books and encyclopaedias. They are sold at the souvenir shop in the park and bookstores throughout the country. The books





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are translated into 7 foreign languages and aim at promoting the rich and valuable Bulgarian culture and historical heritage.

The park also organizes role-playing games such as the coming edition of the “New Khan” game in which participants are fully immersed in the action and experience first-hand a real historic event from 7th Century A.D (the creation of the first Bulgarian Kingdom). The games are an excellent team building activity, which develops leadership, initiative and stamina,

challenging the body and the mind. The participants are divided into three teams, each of them competing for the “Bulgarian throne”.

Financial situation

The park’s income comes primarily from the entrance fees paid by individuals or groups of tourists. Discounts and special cards are available.

Other sources of incomes are project-based activities, rent of facilities for various events, food, beverages and souvenir sales. Participation in some attractions is additionally charged.

Key success factors and challenges

- Unique combination of culture, education and entertainment;
- Authentic ambience and experience of the Bulgarian history;
- The biggest and only national attraction of this scale;
- Wholesome sensorial and memorable experience (audio, visual and kinaesthetic) for the visitors;
- Intense festival and events program, providing diversity of activities and opportunity for involvement;
- Environmentally friendly (biodegradable waste procedures are introduced throughout the territory of the park);
- Vast open spaces allowing for a great number of visitors in coherence with the health and safety regulations (social distancing in accordance to the COVID19 restrictions).

Source of the images:

https://www.facebook.com/HistoricalPark.BG/photos/?ref=page_internal



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Honey House Mihovi/ Medena Kashta Mihovi

Location: Prilep Village, Dobrich Municipality,
Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Guesthouse, traditional crafts, honey
production, Api - Tourism



Description of best practice related to HCBET



Honey House

Mihovi is situated in the lovely countryside village of Prilep. It is just 45 km north of Varna and 30 km southeast of Dobrich. The village is unique with its landscape - a mountain situated beneath the plateau of Dobrudzha. The visitors can enjoy the incredible taste of hand-made sweets, made with honey and tahini; try a honey bar, a honey brandy and a high-energy cocktail of honey, pollen and a fresh citrus.

While tasting the sweet delights made out of honey, the tourists can watch documentary about bees' life and work of the apiary and learn interesting facts about beekeeping from ancient time to today. They also have the chance to find out more about the curative and high-nutritive qualities of the bee products - honey, pollen, propolis, royal jelly, homogenate drone-brood etc.

In the garden, various types of bee houses are presented: stone caves, stumps and hollows, a clay beehive used in Egypt and Israel and a skep, typical for the region. The visitors can observe the glass beehive and study the bees' life inside. It offers the opportunity to see how the bee workers bring in pollen and nectar and also ventilate and build the wax cells of their honeycomb. The Honey House has a little shop where visitors can see and buy bee products.

Beekeepers Mihovi have been devoted to the apiculture since 1994. From a hobby, bee keeping became a family business. At present, they cultivate 200 beehives in four apiaries. They sell their products online and at farmers markets and are well known to the local consumers.

The main purpose of Honey House Mihovi is to advance the education of the public in the craft of beekeeping, to promote an appreciation of the traditional ways of cultivating bees and producing honey and api-products as well as to raise awareness of the importance of the bees in the environment.





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They welcome individuals and organised groups of tourists, students and children to actively participate and observe the process of honey extraction. This is a memorable and enriching experience, which brings them closer to nature.

Marketing approach

The Honey House has a website <http://www.medenakyshta.com/en/honey-house-mihovi/> and a Facebook page where the latest news and events are shared.

They sell their products online and at specialised farmers markets in Dobrich and Varna. They also participate in various agricultural and beekeepers' trade shows and fairs. They have won some of the most prestigious awards in the sector e.g. "Beekeeper of Dobrudzha".

Financial situation

The company's income comes mainly from sales of honey and bee products.

Tourism is an additional occupation for the family that is mostly used for promotion and social purposes: education, socialisation and preservation of traditions.

Key success factors and challenges

- Offering a unique and memorable experience for the visitors;
- Education and encouraging love for the natural bee products;
- Promotion of the traditional apiculture among local residents, young people and visitors.



Sources of the images:

<http://www.medenakyshta.com/en/galeria/>

<https://www.facebook.com/medenakyshta/photos>



Project funded by EUROPEAN UNION



Street Food & Art Festival (“Кино и Храна“)



Location: Varna, Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Food, Art, Music, Cinema, Street Festival

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Street Food & Music Festival is a new model of city festival which brings together visual arts, music and food on Varna’s streets.



The festival is a five-day event and includes a number of free workshops and degustation. It provides a scene for many artists who perform before a broad audience of visitors. Culinary bloggers are doing live demonstrations. Famous musicians or actors are also preparing food before their fans. Chefs celebrities are featured and are responsible for the culinary masterpiece available to the visitors on the street. Chef Instructors from the Culinary Institute at VUM are also among the active participants.

Each festival day is completed with an evening open cinema or live concert.

The kids are not forgotten and have special programs that include crafts and cooking lessons.

The last day the Street Food Award ceremony takes place and the winner has the chance to present the country in the Grand Finale in Switzerland.

Recently, the festival’s location have increased to include also the cities of Bourgas and Plovdiv

Marketing approach

The organizers are promoting the festival via various media: through their web-site <http://www.streetfoodfest.bg/> and Facebook page. They also use printed materials, such as posters and billboards and advertise in radio and local TVs.



Financial situation

Festival is partially free. For some of the events an entrance fee is required. The main income comes from the sale of food and drinks. The festival also attracts a number of sponsors who willingly support the popular event.

Key success factors and challenges

Success is due to:

- Innovative approach of combining street food with arts and music;
- Choosing prime location (in the heart of Varna near the Sea Garden entrance) which is an important factor for event's popularity and the excellent attendance rate;
- Affordability and variety of experiences: low or no entrance fee; various culinary demonstrations with free or paid degustation;
- Appealing to almost all types of people, activities provided for all age groups (including children), cinema and concerts are based on various themes covering a broad audience;
- Involving a number of celebrities (chefs, actors, musicians, artists) who attract even more visitors.



Challenges: COVID19 pandemic cut the number of participants and lead to cancellation of some of the envisaged activities.

Plans for future development

Plans for a new location of the festival (in Sofia and other bigger cities).

Source of the images:

<https://namoreto.bg/festivalat-kino-i-hrana-se-zavrashta-vav-varna-v-kraya-na-avgust/>

<https://varna.streetfoodfest.bg>

<https://www.facebook.com/StreetFoodAndArtFestival/photos/590168424995005>

<https://www.facebook.com/StreetFoodAndArtFestival/photos/595500741128440>

“Praznik na garnetata” (Pottery Fest)



Location: Zimnitza and Alexandria Villages, Krushari Municipality, Northeast Planning Region



Key words: Food, crafts and arts festival “Praznik na garnetata” (Pottery fest)

Description of best practice related to HCBET

“Pottery Fest” also known as “Dobrudzha’s Culinary Academy” is a food and arts festival staged originally in the village of Zimnitza since 2009. The activity is organized by the local community (including owners of tourism businesses, residents and authorities’ representatives) with the main purpose to promote regional traditions, arts, crafts, products and cooking techniques and to attract more visitors to the area.



The location of the festival alters and in recent years it has been staged in the village of Alexandria, again in Krushary Municipality, which is a part of the Dobrudzha region (northeastern Bulgaria). The population is rather diverse, consisting of four different ethnos - Bulgarians, Turks, Gypsies and Tatars. Tourism resources are abundant; there are opportunities for developing eco, rural, hunting, heritage and wine tourism. The region hosts more than twenty various places of interests including ancient fortresses, necropolis, rock monasteries, historical buildings, unique natural sites, etc. Unfortunately, most of them are unknown to the wider public. Some tourist sites have been included in alternative tourism packages and the visitors are mainly day-trippers (excursionists).

“Pottery fest” focuses on cooking, showcasing and degustation of typical food and dishes, music, dances and other folklore performances in which visitors may actively take part. In recent years crafts demonstrations such as painting, knitting, embroidery and forging were added. The programme of the festival includes: exposition and degustation of typical dishes; a contest for the best authentic dish and wine; a contest for best decorated stall; crafts; folklore music



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and dances; animation for children and adults; agricultural trade fair. The event is annual and attracts around 200 visitors. The participants are locals and tourists who have some culinary talents and zest for traditional cuisine.



The organizers are local enthusiasts supported by the authorities (Krushary Municipality) and other stakeholders such as the regional historical museum in Dobrich, Bulgarian Association of Rural and EcoTourism, regional educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

Marketing approach

Regional and national televisions and newspapers cover the event (e.g. the 2012-edition was filmed by a national television channel that staged a cooking show in six series around the regional cuisine theme). Moreover, the event is promoted through social media and is featured in the events calendar of various specialist sites for tourism and cultural festivals.



The event was nominated for one of the 100 most important attractions in a trans-border destination project between Romania and Bulgaria and was featured in a trade show in Euphoria (Romania) where it received international attention.

Financial situation

The food festival is attempting to reach broader support from the corporate sector and non-profit organizations. In 2014 for example, there were more than 80 private companies and organizations listed as sponsors of the event.

A symbolic entrance fee was paid for participation in some of the editions of the festival.

Another important source of income is sale of goods, souvenirs, food products and beverages.





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Key success factors

- Active involvement of tourists and local residents (visitors not only observe, or make degustation, but also are invited to cook traditional dishes in pottery);
- Combination of music, arts, crafts and culinary degustation;
- Cultural and educational benefits. The festival is also attended by local schools as an opportunity to enhance the Bulgarian identity among youth;
- Destination becomes more attractive to tourists and they are encouraged to discover more aspects of this little-known region.

Challenges

- Transport infrastructure needs urgent improvement. In rainy days, the festival site is practically inaccessible;
- More facilities for the visitors' accommodation should be planned - such as public restrooms, pick nick areas, recreational shadowed or air-conditioned zones etc.;
- COVID19 pandemic lead to cancellation of the last year addition and it is not evident whether the festival will be held in 2021.

Sources of the images:

<https://pronewsdobrich.bg/2020/06/02/pravyat-kulinarna-kniga-i-film-za-unikalnia-praznik-na-garnetata/>

https://www.sabori.bg/folk_fest_sub/view.html?oid=50105

<https://duma.bg/?go=news&p=detail&nodelid=33431>



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Zheravna Festival of the National Costumes



Location: Zheravna, Southeast Planning Region

Key words: Folk, ethnic festival, national costumes, traditions

Description of best practice related to HCBET



Zharavna Festival of the National Folk Costumes was first staged in 2008. The idea stemmed from a wedding ceremony on which the bride, the groom, and the guests were dressed in traditional folk costumes and which gained great popularity and made headlines on the news. The aim of the event is to promote the Bulgarian traditional spirit among residents and tourists. The festival presents an

opportunity for experiencing a unique century-old atmosphere, meeting like-minded people and to take part in folk dances, crafts, songs and culinary degustation.

The festival is staged for three days (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) in the month of August, just on the eve of the religious feast Assumption of the Theotokos.

The organizer is the owner of the national dance club “Bulgare” Hristo Dimitrov, private sponsors, Zheravna Town Hall, and Kotel Municipality.

Zheravna is an architecture and ethnographic reserve that has preserved the traditional atmosphere of a Renascent Bulgaria. The very location of the festival is in the open, amid a pine forest on Dobromeritza hill.

The program includes staging of a traditional Bulgarian wedding, art performances of various folk dance clubs from all over the country, rites (such as fire waking or “nestinarstvo”), degustation of traditional dishes, crafts, competitions for best authentic costume, games, concerts and many others.





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Everyone attending the festival is asked to be dressed in a folk costume (authentic or stylized), apparel from the beginning of the twentieth century or priestly garments. Folk costumes, traditional for other peoples and countries, are also allowed. There is also an option for renting a costume at the entrance of the festival.

The festival has some other strict rules. It forbids, for example, the use of

modern devices and accessories such as cell phones, watches, purses, sunglasses etc. The import of all kinds of plastic or paper products or packages (bottles, cups, plates, napkins) is also forbidden. Taking photos for the first two days is also not allowed in order to keep the ancient spirit of the event. As the organizers explain, *“The prohibition of objects of modern life is necessary in order to give the fullest possible authenticity of the atmosphere in the desire to bring it closer to the Bulgarian life of a century and a half, which is one of the conditions for the festival. The idea is for the participants to jump back in time, as early as possible in the years of our Revival, the atmosphere in which our ancestors lived.”*

Marketing approach



The festival is promoted on the Internet through web page nosia.bg, and social media (Facebook, YouTube, etc.). It is also presented on various sites and events calendars. Video clips and TV reports are streamed on national media such as https://youtu.be/6_kkws2UYnQ, https://youtu.be/fJ_fBMoD3oA?list=RDCMUCESbtUwr86kTHqWj5AsyJpA

Financial situation

The festival entrance is with a fee per person or per group. The children and senior people benefit from discounts. Zheravna residents are exempt from paying entrance fees.

The festival also attracts a number of corporate and private sponsors.

Common borders. Common solutions.



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Other incomes come from sale of food, goods and services, and participation in various activities,

Key success factors

- Unique century-old atmosphere, re-creating the traditional lifestyle away from the modern amenities and urban conveniences;
- Showcasing ethnic arts and culture;
- Visitors' active involvement: participants are not mere spectators but take part in creation of their own experience;
- Educational, cultural and personal enrichment; enhanced national pride and identity;
- Numerous social benefits: visitors stay together for three days and have time to get to know each other in various settings and activities.

Challenges

The global pandemic caused cancellation of the festival in 2020. There are plans for its staging in 2021 but it is uncertain to predict whether it will take place or not this year. It is probable that the pandemic can cause a decrease of the interest in participation in such mass crowded events for safety reasons.

Sources of the images:

<http://www.jeravna.com/festival.php>

<http://www.nosia.bg/en/gallery/>



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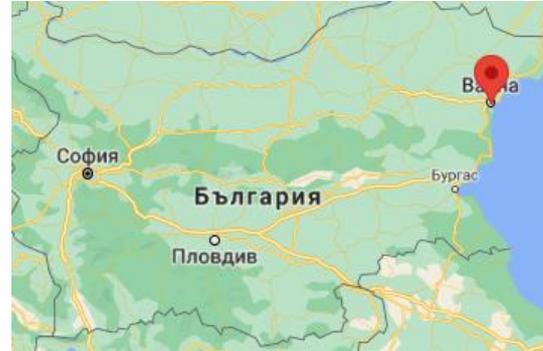
Varna Winery



ВИНАРСКА ИЗБА ВАРНА

Location: Varna, Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Winery



Description of best practice related to HCBET



Varna Winery is a project of Grigor Grigorov (vine-grower and investor) and Tsanko Stanchev (oenologist/ wine expert). The winery's aim is to revive the wine producing traditions of Varna region.

The winery is especially designed for wine tourism and is open for visitation and degustation. The cellar is located 2 km from the beach, in the immediate vicinity of Albena, Balchik and Golden Sands resorts. 'Varna Winery' is equipped with modern facilities for

producing high-quality wines. The technology is at the same time modern and traditional. This is the first place in Bulgaria where mashed grape and wine is transferred through gravity, without using pumps. This method supplements the gentle manual operations for making unique wines.

The wine tours promote the traditions of wine making and include a guided tour around the facilities with discussion about the production methodology, tasting of three or more wines manufactured on spot (Riesling, Rose and Syrah) and food to refresh the taste (usually small bite-size cheese mix). The tours last from 45 to 95 minutes.



Marketing approach

The winery is advertising online and through its own web page varnawinery.eu



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Financial situation

The winery offers several price options for wine tasting tours such as economy package, silver and gold package ranging from 7 to 15 EUR

Substantial portion of the income is due to the wine sales and hosting of various corporate and private events

Key success factors and challenges

- Involvement of all visitors' senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch);
- Creation of unique and memorable experience;
- Knowledgeable guided visit;
- Degustation is paired with educational benefits;
- Wine tasting is a symbol of prestige.

The winery was closed in the beginning of the COVID19 pandemic and is expected to reopen any time now.

Source of the images: <https://varnawinery.eu/>

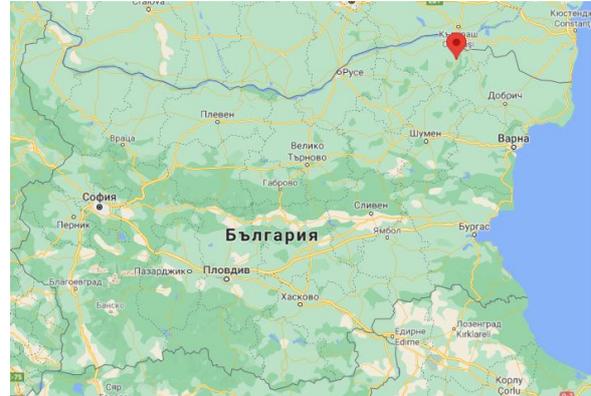




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Ethnographic Complex Dobrujanska Kashta/ Dobrudzha House



Location: Alfatar, Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Ethnographic complex, folklore program, traditional crafts and rites

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Dobrudzha House in Alfatar is a traditional authentic house built in 1893 and transformed into an ethnographic museum in 1984.

It represents a typical Renaissance home from the region of South Dobrudzha and exhibits a number of artefacts used by our ancestors in their everyday life, work and leisure. The colourful carpets, clothes and the antique furniture recall the spirit of the “golden” past of the Bulgarian revival period.

The house is managed by Alfatar Municipality that actively collaborates with the local community and the folklore ensemble for performances and activities aimed at bringing the house into life. Residents in Alfatar are eager to show to visitors the rich folklore and cultural heritage of Dobrudzha. They would dress in traditional authentic costumes inherited by their ancestors and perform songs and dances for the tourists who visit the ethnographic museum. They will re-construct some of the typical practices such as welcoming guests with bread, salt and honey.



When walking around the house, the tourists are encouraged to try on working with the ancient tools they would see inside and locals are enthusiastic to show them the right way to do it is. Sometimes they would demonstrate real-life practices such as wool spinning, crochet or embroidery and the visitors are welcome to participate in a traditional craft-making activity, such as preparing “martenitsa” or “kozunak”.



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Dobrujanska Kashta and the folklore ensemble also organize various events during the national and traditional holidays. For example, on Eastern, there is a mass egg-colouring activity, where every visitor has a chance to dye eggs in natural paints assisted by locals dressed in national costumes. Other holidays like Christmas, Saint's feasts and the day before Palm Sunday (Lazarus Day) are also celebrated accordingly, rites and traditions are observed and anyone who is visiting in the house during this time can take part in the festive activities.



One of the most sumptuous performances in the House is the re-construction of the typical Alfatar wedding. Dozens of "actors" (local enthusiasts) participate in this whole spectacle. The performance of the wedding won a gold medal in a National folklore competition. Other activities patronized by Alfatar Municipality are the Bread Fest and the Garden Fest. During those events the local community gathers in the centre of the village and showcases various bread and pastry products, vegetables and fruit. Those exhibits attract a huge interest and many visitors are drawn to the town by the opportunity to taste and buy local food products and to know more about the regional cuisine.

Marketing approach



Alfatar Municipality is advertising their activities on their website and Facebook profile.

For the organized visit, there are contractual agreements with the Tour-operator but individual tourists can also arrange a performance of a write upon request.

Most of the events during the Holidays are organized by the local community and the folklore ensemble for free. Every visitor in Dobrudja House can observe and participate in those active activities.

The House was featured in a series of short movies made by the National Television which present the rites performed by the folklore ensemble such as Alfatar wedding.

Because of its intense cultural program, Alfatar gained national recognition as a cradle of the Bulgarian traditions. It is presented often in news reports in the national TV, radio and printed media. The PRs activities and the intended actions towards the popularization of the region outline Alfatar as one of the best destinations for cultural and heritage tourism in North East Bulgaria.



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Financial situation

Direct income is received from entrance fee and paid performances.

Some activities are financed by the municipality budget or by national or EU-based projects.

Key success factors

- Traditional, authentic environment presenting a typical house from the region of Dobrudzha;
- Active participation of the local community in creating memorable and enriching experience;
- Performances of various rites and reconstruction of traditional crafts in which tourists can take part;
- A large diversity of events and activities showcasing the various aspects of the cultural ethnographic heritage of the region;
- A range of intellectual, sensual and emotional triggers designed for a wholesome and enriching tourism experience: exhibition of arts, songs, dances, culinary degustation, participation in crafts, story-telling etc.;
- Intense interaction between local and visitors.



Plans for future development

Alfatar Municipality and Dobrudzha House are planning to continue diversifying the activities and events they organize for visitors. They are hoping that after the stall in arrivals in 2020 caused by Covid19 pandemic, the tourism in the region will be revived and there will be more opportunities for cultural exchange between hosts and visitors.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/chitalishte.alfatar>



Project funded by EUROPEAN UNION



Ongul Historical Centre

Location: Bulgarevo Village, Kavarna Municipality, Northeast Planning Region

Key words: Historical centre, old Bulgarian Kingdom, private heritage museum



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The audio-visual centre “Ongul” opened in August 2014 with the aim to present and promote the turbulent history of the Bulgarian land and the cultural heritage of our ancestors.

The complex consists of a wooden fenced fortress with gates and fortified towers in resemblance to the antique city of Ongul built by the founder of our country - Khan Asparuh.

The fortress hosts nine thematic halls which revive the history of the Bulgarian lands starting 7500 ago to present days.



Digital speakers and a blue light lead visitors through the halls and visualizes synchronically the images relevant to the narrative. This technology advancement enhances the focus of the tourist and helps create a more vivid illustration of the past. Learning about history becomes an exciting and interesting experience.

Special attention is paid to the most ancient inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula - the Thracian people. The Bulgarian history is presented with its peaks and downs, glory and misfortune in seven foreign languages. An exhibition of various military and agricultural artefacts is situated in the yard of the complex.

The visitors can take pictures dressed in ancient chain mails holding cold weapons typical for the ancient Bulgarian soldiers.

Marketing approach

The centre is a heritage attraction included in the program of most of the local tour operators. Almost all tours or day-trips to Kaliakra Cape and the vicinity provide a short visit to Ongul.

The complex is also visited by individual tourists who are looking for more authentic and interesting experiences. It is presented in a number of private travel blogs whose authors are the best ambassadors of the Ongul’s magic.





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As for the moment, the centre does not have a website, but its Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/OngalBulgarevo/>) is updated regularly.

Financial situation

There is a nominal entrance fee for access to the museum. The founder and owner is an enthusiastic historian and prioritizes the educational and social benefits over the financial profit.



Key success factors

- Digitized audio-visual interpretation of the Bulgarian history;
- Story telling rather than mere facts, data and information;
- Spectacular re-construction of the history, including possibility to touch and play with items from the past;
- The manager/owner/founder is passionate about promoting the greatness of Bulgaria's past and is open for discussion with the visitors.

Plans for future development

The founder, Valentin Simeonov, is planning to enhance the experience with more images and enriched digital visualization.

Sources of the images:

<https://bg.followthesisters.com/ongyla-selo-balgarevo/>

<https://time2travel.bg/nos-kaliakra/>



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Festival na Zelenikata (Festival of the Periwinkle)



Location: Zubernovo Village, Strandja Natural Park, Southeast Planning Region

Key words: Eco, cultural and heritage festival

Description of best practice related to HCBT

Hundreds of nature lovers walk each year in May along the routes designed by the Strandja Nature Park Directorate during the Periwinkle Festival.

Enthusiastic participants are drawn by the blooming periwinkles, beautiful views of Strandja, authentic villages, and mysterious chapels. The periwinkle (“Strandjanska zelenika”) is a relict plant, iconic for Strandja Mountain.

This year’s 17th Strandja Periwinkle Festival gathered many visitors under the shade of the nearly 1000-year-old oak in Tulpan (near the village of Zubernovo). Traditionally, the festival began with the performances of the Strandja anthem “Yasen mesez” (Clear Moon) and the song “You are beautiful, my forest”. Before the start of the routes, the tourists enjoyed the folk performances of the amateur group from the town of Marko Tarnovo and the ensemble Tsarevo.



Strandja Nature Park is the organizer of the event and offered to the visitors several thematic routes such as: 1) Predators in Strandja (4 hours of walking with focus on the mountain’s fauna); 2) Pilgrim route with visits of several chapels and temples; 3) Eco route (circular, 2-3 hours’ route) which goes through century old beech trees, evergreens, blooming periwinkles and 6 endemic plants (growing only in this region); 4) walk in the oldest Bulgarian natural reserve - Silkoskia.



The festival is two days long and during that time an intense cultural program is envisaged. It includes songs, folklore dances (hora), culinary degustation, crafts, competitions, and many others. Usually the event attracts more than 2000 participants, but this year due to the Covin19 measurements, the visitors’ number was reduced to 700 and some of the planned social and cultural activities were cancelled.



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Marketing approach



The festival is featured in the Strandja Nature Park website (strandja.bg), as well as in its Facebook page which is updated regularly.

The event is also widely advertised in local and national media, on events calendars and on specialized on-line platforms

One of the best promotions is the word-of-mouth of every excited tourist who has participated once and drawn forever to the beauty and mystery of Strandja.

Financial situation

The initiative receives project-based funding. The activities are financed by Strandja Nature Park budget as well as by Regional Water and Environmental Inspectorate in Bourgas.

Key success factors and challenges

- Unique combination of environmental, traditional, ethnic and pilgrimage tourism;
- Tourists are involved in many aspects: walking, dancing, information, education, socializing with guides and other tourists;
- The festival promotes sustainable living, love for the nature and return to the routes;
- Strandja is one of the best preserved territories where all villages retain their authentic architecture and atmosphere. Tourists can experience Strandja in all of its aspects: as a natural park, as an architectural and ethnic reserve, as a place for worship and spiritual growth;
- The event was suspended in 2020 due to COVID19 pandemic. In 2021, its attendance dropped and some of the cultural activities were cancelled.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/strandja/photos/>



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Museum of the Mosaics

Location: Devnia, Northeast Planning Region

Key words Mosaics museum, Roman period, historical and cultural heritage

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Devnia is a small town near the Bulgarian sea capital Varna. It used to be however, one of the biggest cities of the Rome Empire and was known as Martzianopol. Due to the existence of natural springs with healing waters, the location was attractive to many and has a century-old history dating back to the Thracian settlements. It was destroyed in 596 and brought back to life in 1976 by a group of prominent archaeologists. During the excavations an imposing villa was discovered. Its floors were decorated with fine mosaic. The hypothesis dates the building back to II - IV century. The villa has many mosaic fragments, marble, frescos and stone columns. In view of the preservation of the priceless mosaic, a museum was built.



The mosaic presents various scenes of the life of the ancient people, ornaments, stylized flowers and animals. They are true masterpieces of antique art. One of the iconic mosaics in the museum is the visage of Gorgona Medusa whose role was to protect the hosts and to repel the enemies. There are several other unique mosaics which represent scenes from the Roman mythology.



The museum also hosts an exhibition with items and artefacts discovered during the excavations. The Mosaic Museum organized the first Gladiator fight in its yard. In a partnership with the Club for history reconstruction "Skitia Minor", the museum celebrated its 30th anniversary. All visitors were dressed in white togas and wore laurel wreaths. The spirit of ancient Rome was revived by this mass spectacle and the tourists were in the role of the audience, who had to decide with thumbs

up or down the fate of the gladiators.



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Marketing approach

The museum is one of the 100th National Tourists Sites and is included into most of the country's online platform and specialized sites for museums

The museum does not have website or Facebook page



It is presented by a number of PR publications.

Information for its offering can be found in many personal travel blogs.

Financial situation

The museum receives an income from sale of entrée tickets. It also relies on the municipality and national budget and is eligible to apply to several EU projects.

Key success factors

- Authentic, well preserved heritage;
- Unique tourist attraction;
- Reconstruction of historical events with the visitors' active participation.



Source of the images: <http://www.museology.bg/bg/museums/>



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GEORGIA

Khevsureti and Community Workshop

Location: Georgia/Pshav-Khevsureti, village Korsha

Key words: master classes, cultural events - exhibitions, youth camps and workshops

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Non-entrepreneurial (non-commercial) Legal Entity

"Khevsureti and Community" is a studio engaged in heritage crafts, conducting cultural events - exhibitions, youth camps and workshops for the purpose of activation of the local youth and forming them as entrepreneurs since 2014. Activities of "Khevsureti and Community" began with hosting the visitor and introduction of the studio. There are several artists in the Arabuli family - father and one son are painters and another son is a theater playwright and a writer. Creativity of the family members influenced the studio environment. The guesthouse "Korsha" is decorated with original and ethnographic elements where creativity and individualism of the family are felt.

The family owns 1 ha of land (with residential area of 120 square meters) and is actively engaged in farming - they have cattle and produce milk products for their own consumption. Almost all of the products offered to visitors are local. Products (eggs, cheese, melted butter) for visitors are bought from some families (mainly from the population of Barisakho community



and part of vegetables are purchased in Zhinvali or Tbilisi). Gastronomy has become a necessary attribute of their offer and beer-brewing process is also shown to visitors. Such processes are always interesting for visitors. Delivery of local products positively influences creation of confidence in the family.

The organization also founded the festival "Chirdili" and tries to hold it systematically by raising required funds.



Marketing approach

The organization receives local and foreign tourists and familiarizes them with the culture of Khevsureti, works with local families and implements various projects with their engagement (local masters, ethnographers, women working on embroidery and knitting). Their goal is to expand the community-based activities, to restore and preserve the living culture of the region. At the distance of one kilometre from the studio, there is a camping zone and an adapted café where the local community gathers. Socialization is a very natural process in such environment. Tourists become familiar and feel the identity of locals, nature, values and the lifestyle common for Khevsureti.

"Khevsureti and Community" promotes products via the Facebook page. It has also concluded business agreements with the leading tour operators in Georgia and has direct contacts with international organizations and embassies. Large part of their visitors arrives in the family upon recommendation of their friends and acquaintances.

Financial situation

Initially, the idea of creating the studio appeared due to the lack of souvenirs. At the same time, festivals were held and funds were collected for required materials, transport and food. Two years later the project was funded by the Ministry of Culture, but the festivals were suspended from 2016. Later, the studio continued to exist with the support of Strategic Research and Development Centre and the Georgian Arts and Culture Centre. They also enjoy an interest-free loan issued by the finance organization "Crystal".

Success factors and challenges

According to the hosts, key to the business success is constant readiness to learn something new. Despite vast experience, the family members are willing to attend seminars in eco-tourism again and retrain the local guides for the new season.

The family tries to maintain authenticity - keep balance between art and business in the process of product commercialization.



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Plans for the future development

The organization tries to expand the community-based activities and therefore, enhance communication with people engaged in the community. In addition, their goal is to develop and promote experiential tourism (which implies more engagement of tourists in the process) as a separate field of tourism. During the post-pandemic period, they consider focusing on domestic tourism and camps and cooperating with other studios (such as the studio located in Kazbegi, as well as felt house "Pesvebi" in Dedoplistskaro).

The host have a good understanding of business needs. At this stage, they need a large write screen to fix installations in the open air, invite sculptors and architects who will make various figures from wood for the festival and these installations will remain onsite in the future.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/festivalchirdili>



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Komli

Location: Georgia/Guria, Ozurgeti

Key words: agritourism farm, culinary offers, cultural tours

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Agro-tourism guesthouse "Komli" is arranged with original and ethnographic elements. The family owns up to 1 ha of land with residential area of 100 square meters. Kvevri wine and tea, as well as vegetables, nuts and jams are produced in "Komli" for visitors and for own consumption. Creativity and individualism of the family are felt. They created glamorous camping (glamping) in "Komli" - a barrel shape bedroom, an old granary was transformed into a cottage. They started to build a hobbit house with the ground architecture. To realize new ideas, the family plans to arrange a summer kitchen, additional bedroom-barrels and tree houses. The head of the family, Mrs. Mery, has a long experience of working at the Scientific-Research Institute of Anaseuli Tea and Subtropical Cultures. She managed to restore the forgotten tea culture in "Komli" and integrate it into touristic offers. The approach of "Komli" hosts is a good example of filling and using the space with new ideas.



The history of "Komli" is about daring and creative women. According to the host, during the Soviet period, when the Scientific-Research Institute of Anaseuli Tea and Subtropical Cultures was of the USSR-wide importance, Ozurgeti was a typical academic town with several scientific buildings, house of culture, shops and dormitories, where post-graduate students from all parts of the world, mostly from Sri Lanka and India used to arrive to study the tea culture.



Initially, the business idea of the Tea Route came to mind of the American son-in-law of the family. He learnt about the history of the tea culture in Georgia (the date of its origination is considered to be the year 1847) from the head of the family. Thereafter, he personally found additional information about the tea tradition and started thinking about its restoration. Mrs. Mery was pessimistic about this idea and did not believe in restoration of this culture and especially, starting the business. According to the family

members, the "dream" of the American son-in-law came true ten years later when Guria Municipal and EU Project "Participatory Principles in Development of Tourism in Guria" was launched. The family won a small grant within the framework of this project and started to arrange the Tea Route and Tea Tour.



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The hosts say that receipt of tourists is not their end in itself. They want to restore the former appearance of their household. First of all, they want to restore the initial appearance of the wine-cellar and grow a vineyard to produce collection wines. They have a small collection of unique Gurian grape specifies yet: Kamuri, Sakmiela, Badagi, Mtevandidi. But the vineyard is too young yet, so they purchased grapes and made wine for the first time after so many years. Meanwhile, they created a logotype of "Komli" and bottled the wine - 400 bottles in total. Out of these, they exported 252 bottles to the USA.

Marketing approach



The family uses personal contacts - friends and acquaintances, social network, as well as Airbnb, Booking, TripAdvisor platforms to sell their product. They have a webpage - <http://komligeorgia.tilda.ws>. "Komli" is a member of agro-tourism network and will use this platform in the future.

One of the most emotional stories told by the family is related to the life of ancestors of the hostess, namely, their political imprisonment and the period of their participation in World War II. This makes the political-historic events of the country clear. Visitors view the historic photos and the old letters (some of them were transformed into cards and the visitors may take them in memory).

Success factors and challenges

According to the hostess, the main idea is to feel harmony with the nature and create a space for happiness and cognition, be able to share the cultural traditions to others in a new way.

Diversity and traditions are the main resources of the family; however, the key to success is the creativity of this hostess and her own interpretation of the product. The family found the history of the Georgian tea. For example, the visitors are told about Lao Jonjao who was the largest project according to the family. After the hostess shares the history of tea to the visitors, she takes them to the tea plantation, teaches them how to collect tea and thereafter the visitors taste the tea collected on their own. The visitors return with fantastic emotions and continue to





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communicate with the family. The received impressions push them to new things and inspiration.

Plans for the future development

Hosts of "Komli" have ambitious plans - to continue export and supply Washington restaurant. The organization tries to expand the community-based activities and therefore, enhance communication with people engaged in the community, motivation and activation of the team.

The village faces the problem of irrigation. The region is abounding in water, but they still have a problem with water. Currently, they are using a well, but the well dries up during the draught and is not enough for large consumption. There is a large water supply pipe on the main road of the village which supplies Ozurgeti but it is an expensive project and the families could not afford using this pipe.

They want to use Kikvata River for irrigation and not have to irrigate with artesian water. Finally, they want to make all this as dynamic as an eco-village - do everything as it was two centuries ago, but now with modern knowledge and approach.



The central sewage system is also problematic. In the modern conditions, soil and waters are contaminated with household waste. The knowledge of composting is lost. "Komli" already has a properly functioning septic system with the support of the UN Women's Fund Project, an initiative group of women living in rural areas was created for raising awareness about the need and usage of the septic toilet and responsibility in general. The family also plans to use the solar energy resources to the maximum extent possible.

Source of the images: <http://komligeorgia.tilda.ws>



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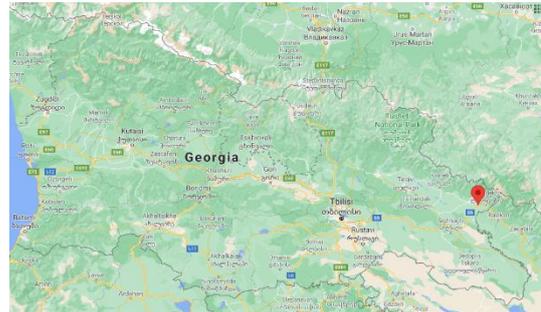
Agro-tourism Centre “Korena”

Location: Georgia/Imereti, village Gelati

Key words: Culinary offers, gastro tours, folk events, ethno-tours

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The hosts of Agro-tourism Centre “Korena” started activities by offering food and accommodation services to visitors. The business idea came to mind of the founder of the Centre, Maia Kezevadze during her business visit to Poland where she became familiarized with activities of agro-tourism enterprises in Lower Silesia. The family purchased a 170-year old Imeretian House “Oda”, found old items and created a space where visitors become acquainted with Imereti culture in a traditional environment.



Currently, there are to family hotels and catering facilities in “Korena”. Total area of agro-tourism farms is 2500 square meters. The hosts are engaged in agriculture, vineyard practice, grow vegetables, fruits, have cattle (and therefore, their own milk products). They buy other products mainly from neighbours.

The family expanded the hotel offers to receive visitors. The hostess is often invited to share her experience at trainings. The hostess, Mrs. Maia considers that there are many novelties in this sector and it is required to systematically organize courses on gastronomic issues and food delivery to employees. She also developed her own tourist routes - walking and cycling tours to nearby territories.

Additional activities of the family include “Imereti Tour” which mainly cover tours to Zemo Imereti and Racha, as well as Svaneti. According to the family members, visitors particularly like listening to stories about food traditions and masterclasses on these topics.

Mrs. Maia actively cooperates with local residents, including members of the church choir. She established a folkloric ensemble “Trio Okriba” together with them, created masterclasses of the Georgian dances (Rachuli and Acharuli) and songs. The family organizes tours for Polish, Czech and Lithuanian travel companies. Additionally, eco-camps are organized in cooperation with CENN. They provide seasonal agro-tourism offers too. 14 persons, mostly socially vulnerable women, are employed at the agro-tourism facility. Innovation of the activities is the offers provided with engagement of rural population. They create various



items with their own hands and thereafter their hand-made items are sold. Employees of the organization include certified guides, experienced drivers and family cooks.

Marketing approach

According to the hostess, most of their visitors are sent by their previous visitors. Instagram and Facebook platforms work well, but it is also planned to make a webpage in the nearest future. Another noteworthy segment is tour operators and booking.com.



Financial situation

Customers of the agro-tourism facilities are both foreign and Georgian visitors. As agro-tourism has been developing actively, competition is high, however, all houses have their own niche. This centre has been actively operating on the tourism market since 2008. The founders are oriented at innovation and progress. Folklore and dance masterclasses are held - this service is mainly provided by local population.

Today, "Korena" expands its business with its own income, however, the initial stage began with assistance of international fund projects in 2008. They received small grants that were used for infrastructure projects.

Financial profitability of the business is mainly preconditioned by satisfaction of visitors. The flow of visitors increases on an annual basis. Use of local products in food services also positively influences the factors of confidence and satisfaction.

Success factors and challenges

Mrs. Maia, hostess of "Korena" names labour and positivity as the key to success. Quality of services has been preserved since 2008 and is directed at creating a pleasant, comfortable environment for visitors. According to the family members, seeing successfully examples in Poland and interviewing the hosts were highly important. They clearly saw their own resources and local conditions, realized the threats and risks associated with starting a tourism business. They mentioned that agreement and engagement of family members are highly important. In this family business, the host is the manager, tour operator, chef cook, waiter and supplier. It is necessary to work in a coordinated manner and distribute the duties, keep a gender balance when making a decision and be oriented at progress. Due to their activities it is important to cooperate with the local community.

Plans for the future development

For better demonstration of attractions and experience gained onsite, the family plans to introduce a full cycle of production onsite. First of all, they are thinking about making a wine-cellar to show the process of wine-making and storage to visitors. From the next year, they plan to produce branded wine and sauce to sell it at the local market. They have purchased wine-making technologies, received construction materials, written a project for purchase of

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heating system and solar heaters. They are considering to increase the number of hotel rooms in the future.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/RuralGuesthouseKorena/>



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Folklore House Zugdidi

Location: Georgia/Samegrelo, Zugdidi

Key words: Ethno-tourism, folklore and culinary

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Architecture, exterior and interior of „Folklore House Zugdidi“ reflect the innovative thinking and creativity of its founder and host, Beso Chitanava. Mr. Beso has a knowledge in many fields. He is a choirmaster, gardener-decorator, embroiderer, cook and a designer. "Folklore House Zugdidi" with the ancient items located in one space revives the history, ethnography and the old culture of Samegrelo. Of course, the best narrator here is Beso Chitanava himself who loves each item particularly and often uses some of them when hosting foreign tourists.



Mr. Beso designed and constructed a third-storey house with a tower. Currently, his farm



includes 2 residential houses and the adjacent yard (600 square meter yard and 128 square meter residential house), as well as a nursery arranged on the area of 3200 square meters. Mr. Beso grows plants in the nursery which are used for landscaping of yards.

Mr. Beso expanded the hotel offers to receive visitors. In his opinion, this sector is inexhaustible and allows for offering many novelties. Therefore, it is always open to new ideas. Innovative nature of the activities lies in the comprehensive nature of the offer. It includes familiarization with Megrelian songs, hospitality, cuisine, handicrafts (embroidery), interior and exterior. Visitors are also impressed by making mint sauce for one of the distinguished dishes of the Megrelian cuisine - Gebzhalia which has a special flavour.





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Marketing approach

According to the host, good impression is the best recommendation. Most part of their tourists are sent by their previous visitors. Significant role was played by the interest of local and national TV companies and international organizations and their coverage in media. Awareness and accordingly, the number of visitors, including local visitors residing in Georgia was increased.

Customers are mainly European, American and Australian visitors. The number of French-speaking visitors is particularly high. The host speaks French and has many friends in France. Visitors contact him by email or phone in advance and book a visit.



Besarion Chitanava manages the entire visit mostly on his own - organizes a culinary masterclass, teaches songs. He holds a different niche in Samegrelo and therefore, he has no rivals actually.

Financial situation

Mr. Besarion used to be the director of the Folklore House, but the organization did not have any premises and was provided a shelter by other institutions. Finally, he built a building with the assistance of his friends and

made the Folklore House. As he had been keen on cooking since childhood, he decided to familiarize visitors with the part of folklore called "Megrelian Culinary Art" in the same space. He has never used a grant.

Success factors and challenges

According to Beso Chitanava, key to success is doing what you like and believing that you can succeed in everything. Direct communication with visitors and engagement of each of them in the creative process predetermine the fact that all visitors leave the "Folklore House" satisfied.

Plans for the future development

Considering the increasing demand, Mr. Beso decided to offer visitors the opportunity to stay overnight. Construction is currently underway. The kitchen is located on the first floor and finally, a mixture of the folk and classic styles must be created. There is a dining room on the second floor, which will be occupied in case of arrival of large groups. Bedrooms and WC/bathrooms for visitors will be located on the second and the third floors (it will be possible to accommodate 18 visitors). A wine cellar is being constructed in the yard. As one of the processions of Mr. Beso is related to gardening, the yard and the surroundings will be landscaped.

Source of the images: Google



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Pottery Workshop „Orkoli“

Location: Georgia/Samegrelo, Zugdidi

Key words: Art & Craft, master classes in pottery-making

Description of best practice related to HCBET



Robert and Tsira

Absnadze are professional ceramists. Their studio "Orkoli" is a popular touristic place. Traditional pottery, vases, decorative wall dishes decorated with Georgian ornaments and sculptures of various figures, as well as examples depicting the modern and the recent history are created in the studio. Events are often held here for the purpose of introduction and promotion of the Georgian heritage.

The family expanded its offers for receiving visitors. They run a family café next to the studio. There is a small shop where visitors can purchase the items.

15 local masters are employed at the studio and their items are sold in souvenir shops throughout Georgia. Within the

framework of services offered by "Orkoli" for the tourism market of Georgia, visitors can watch the continuous work process and participate in the masterclass.

History

The idea to establish "Orkoli" belongs to Robert Absnadze. He gained knowledge at Tbilisi Academy of Arts and has been working in three genres - sculpture, pottery and pictorial art - for over 30 years. The other family members soon jointed Mr. Robert and painting, modelling and pictorial art have become the main source of the Absnadze family for the last several years. The idea of turning the activities of "Orkoli" into business appeared in 2011 and the author of this idea is the master's spouse, Mrs. Tsira. Later, this idea became a successful business as a result of joint work.



Marketing approach

Customers of the studio are tourist groups visiting Zugdidi or travelling to Svaneti. Most of them are visitors from Poland, Russia, USA, Estonia, and Croatia.



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International projects, namely, USAID ZRDA have positively influenced increase of recognition. The studio is included in the tourist map, in itineraries and often hosts various info-tours.

In addition to cultural products produced locally, the source of income of "Orkoli" is demonstration of the production process and conducting masterclasses for the youth and tourists.



Success factors and challenges

According to the artist, the main thing is to know your job and do it honestly. Key to their success and their strength lie in the unity of their family.

Plans for future development

Under the conditions of the Pandemic, the future plan of the studio is to make an online shop.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/ORKOLStudio/>



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Ethno Village "Sisatura"

Location: Georgia/Samegrelo, village Chkhorია

Key words: Ethno torus, folk and culinary classes, agritourism

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Ethnographic village "Sisatura" was established by Marika Todua and her spouse in village Chkhorია. They restored all types of residences to the initial form. "Sisatura" is located on the area of 3 ha and offers three different spaces to visitors - ethnographic space where traditional Megrelian residences, auxiliary rooms and authentic



household and agricultural items are presented; the leisure zone where visitors carry out various activities in the nature, around the lake and the agricultural zone. "Sisatura" demonstrates the unique Megrelian-Colchian peculiarities, history, traditions and ethnography of Samegrelo region. Visitors can view ancient stone and wood utensils - Megrelian ethnographic items. "Sisatura" is a family business in which the entire family is engaged. Father-in-law, a professional musician, specialized in

playing the accordion and member of the local folkloric ensemble. He gives music lessons to visitors if they desire. The trip to "Sisatura" includes attending culinary masterclasses, familiarization with traditions of the Megrelian family feast and tasting dishes.

Marketing approach

Recognition of the ethnographic village increased by means of the local and national TV channels. They successfully cooperate with the Destination Management Organization. At this stage, they need to gain competencies required for digital branding to present their business via the Internet.





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Success factors and challenges



In the opinion of the hosts, the guarantee for success is doing things that are valuable for them and that make them proud. Emotions, interest and engagement of visitors are indicators of success of their business.

Mrs. Marika says that key to success of "Sisatura" is its unique character, which implies revival of Megrelian ethnic culture, traditions and customs based on Colchian traditions. Additional advantage of "Sisatura" is that most of ingredients required for the

dishes cooked within the framework of the service (vegetables, dairy products and other agricultural products) are grown and produced locally.



Plans for the future development

"Sisatura" will meet the new season of 2021 with novelties. The hosts plan to sell local products and produce vodka - Dirpa. A family restaurant and a new open space for cultural events (folkloric songs, dances, classical music, various creative events) will be added to the space. The goal of "Sisatura" is to promote the local traditions, culture, gastronomy using modern digital tools (promotional video clips, culinary lessons) and disseminate them on respective platforms, conduct virtual masterclasses via Internet platform, as well as increase the number of hotel rooms in order to receive tourist groups in the future.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/SisaturaethnoVillage/>



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Ethno Village "Mokvare"

Location: Georgia/Upper Ajara

Key words: Ethno tours, folk and culinary classes

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Guesthouse "Mokvare" is visited by tourists from all parts of the worlds to study the Georgian and namely, Merisi folklore. Founders of "Mokvare" are distinguished for cordial hospitality and sincerity. Jemal Turmanidze has been performing Merisi folklore since childhood. This family has a very longstanding history in folklore. Availability of voices of ancestors recorded three generations ago became the reason for creation of "Mokvare". The Turmanidze family and ensemble "Mokvare" became popular by these records and the concert held at the Large Hall of Conservatoire. After that, the guesthouse "Mokvare" was established upon request and with the support of society.



Marketing approach

Unique nature of "Mokvare" is predetermined by the unity of Adjarian Mountains, waterfall and forest. Natural honey, vodka, jam, wine and Mrs. Manana's workshop on Adjarian dishes create a unique atmosphere. A local folkloric group, two drivers for transportation of visitors and two local cook assistants are employed here.

Internet is actively used to increase recognition. It is now possible to share the secret recipes of Mrs. Manana's Adjarian dishes by means of video recipes. However, actual attendance has another advantage - the different method of making Adjarian cheese is rather tangible and it is possible to taste Sinori, Borano and other popular dishes onsite.

The Turmanidze family hosts large tourist groups. In this regard, they cooperate with foreign and local organizations. They are presented on market by means of travel companies, social media and other info tourist webpages. Before the pandemic, their main segment was foreign organized (group) tourists, but now they are considering to create offers to the local market too and tailor the resources to the local requirements.



At this stage, they need to acquire competencies required for digital branding to present successfully their business on the Internet. They are willing to publish their offers on more platforms.



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Success factors and challenges

Before the pandemic, a large number of tourists preconditioned success of business. The visitors were familiarized with folklore and Georgian traditions, were offered local, healthy rural products to taste, were taken to the vineyard, vegetable gardens etc. which positively influenced formation of confidence in the offer. In the opinion of the host, key to success is stirring emotions among visitors, their engagement in the process and original form of transfer of narration.



Plans for the future development

At this stage, the family plans to increase the number of hotel rooms and improve the guesthouse infrastructure, as well as use solar panels.

Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/Mokvare/>



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Family Hotel "Gallery"

Location: Georgia/Racha-Lechkhumi, Oni

Key words: Ethno tours, master classes



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The Gugushvili Family Hotel is located in a calm and cosy place on the fringe of a forest in the centre of Oni, Racha and has been hosting visitors since 2000. However, the family hotel "Gallery" which includes the old building and creates a space for new experiences for visitors started operating from 2010. After the restoration, the family hotel "Gallery" was granted a cultural heritage award for the new life. Interior of the



family hotel is arranged in a traditional style, mostly with handmade items and details common for the region. The buildings are equipped with the Georgian traditional furniture and paintings by the hostess which creates a cosy and warm environment for visitors. There are a library, a gallery and a collection of interesting minerals and stones here ... The hotel has a garden with fruit trees, flowers and leisure zone. Visitors are offered tours to waterfalls, caves, lakes, glaciers and

other historic sites.

Marketing approach

Most of visitors are foreigners; however, the number of Georgian visitors has also increased during the Pandemic. According to the host, visitors often arrive for the second time.

Visitors are taught how to cook traditional dishes, distil chacha, and bake bread in the tandoor. Visitors participate in Rtveli (traditional vintage and rural harvest holiday), pressing wine and thereafter they taste the wine pressed on their own. It is also possible to attend pictorial art, woodcarving, batik and felt processing masterclasses.



Success factors and challenges

In the opinion of the host of the family, Mr. Temur, it is important to know exactly what you want to do and love your job. This is the key to success. If a person is not lazy, he will succeed in everything.



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Plans for the future development

It is planned to expand the activities - increase the number of hotel rooms - in the future.



Source of the images: <https://hotelinracha.business.site/>



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Pottery Studio in Mtskheta

Location: Georgia/Mtskheta

Key words: Art & Craft, master classes in pottery-making



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The studio of the father and son, Eldar and Giorgi Mamaladze is located in the centre of Mtskheta, in the vicinity of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The masters continue working on ceramics using the old traditional methods - they are producing small-size household items, as well as wall dishes, decorative sculptures, compositions.

Mr. Eldar started creative activities by painting since childhood, while studying at school and later, continued working on ceramics at the Faculty of Applied Arts.



The ceramist remembers that the unique pieces of work created at the factory together with his team were sent to all leading countries of the world and were highly evaluated. The factory was closed in 1990 due to the economic crisis in the country.

The master continued working actively in his favourite field of activities and taught this craft to his own son.

The idea of transforming the studio activities into business appeared in 2012 and the studio and the adjacent yard were arranged more conveniently for tourists. Mainly two persons, Eldar and Giorgi Mamaladze, are employed at the studio and their functions are distributed equally.

Marketing approach

The main customers are tourists passing by in Mtskheta. The studio is located next to one of the most popular cultural sites of Georgia, Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and is visited by many tourists, mostly foreign tourists, however, Giorgi Mamaladze contacts them via Facebook page.

There have been many cases when tourists who had already visited the studio, returned with their friends or family members several years ago and purchased some items again.

After rehabilitation of Mtskheta, the gate of the residential house of the Mamaladze family was subject to common renewal. A signboard appeared on the gate drawing attention of tourists to the studio. Attractiveness of the place is also preconditioned by the fact that visitors can make clay items on their own and after their burning, the host offers them to deliver the items by mail, including sending them abroad.



Financial situation

The number of visitors sharply reduced at the studio as a result of pandemic; however, work on online sales began.

Success factors and challenges

In the opinion of ceramists, for revival of the industry it will be good to open vocational schools, factories staffed with professionals. Mr. Eldar mentioned that success comes only as a result of hard work and boundless love of one's job.

Plans for the future development

Under conditions of the pandemic, the future plans of the studio is to make an online shop.



Source of the images: Google



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"Ikorta" Enamel Jewellery Studio

Location: Georgia/ Tserovani village

Key words: Enamel Jewellery Studio

Description of best practice related to HCBET

"Ikorta" Enamel Jewellery Studio was created in 2011, within the framework of the organization "The Better Future". "Ikorta" operates in Tserovani IDP settlement and creates opportunities for civil and economic development in Tserovani IDP settlement.



Mission of the social studio is to employ internally displaced women from Akhagori and Tskhinvali, promote heritage crafts and ensure sustainability of a social enterprise, while its goal is to popularize the traditional cloisonné enamel technique, employ internally displaced women and young people and reinvest the income received from the enterprise into the studio activities. 12 internally displaced women for whom alternative forms of employment are not currently available are employed at the studio; there is a small shop at the studio where visitors can purchase items. The items are sold in souvenir shops throughout Georgia.



"Ikorta" offers its customers a wide range of silver decorations and items made using the traditional Georgian enamel technique, including, rings, earrings, pendants, bracelets etc.

Within the services offered by "Ikorta" studio for the Georgian touristic market, visitors can watch all stages, enamel production, and participate in the masterclass. Visitors also listen to a story about origination of Tserovani settlement and are willing to make their contribution to facilitation of employment of local women and young people.

Marketing approach

Corporate order service is developed at the enterprise.

"Ikorta" successfully sells the items by means of an online shop on Facebook. The Facebook pages publishes photo and video material depicting the enamel production process to attract and interest a wider audience.





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Generally, the products are sold via Internet. 80% of buyers are foreign tourists. At the same time, masterclasses are often conducted at the request of tour operators.



Financial situation

The idea of foundation of a social enterprise was preconditioned by increase of the number of IDPs in Georgia after the 2008 War and creation of Tserovani IDP settlement. The income received from the enterprise is used for implementation of various programs of the organization.

As a result of participation in several grant competitions, equipment of the studio was significantly improved. Currently, "Apprenticeship Program" is implemented in cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council. Within the framework of this Program, two young persons will be studying the enamel art and at the same time, work at the enterprise during ten years.

The organization uses the profit received from the enterprise to conduct professional retraining and various activities. The enterprise develops stably and reinvests the profit in business and social goals.

Success factors and challenges

The main goal of activities of "Ikorta" is a social mission, facilitation of employment of women and young people. Patience and commitment are key to success.

Plans for the future development

The future plans mainly include increase of online technologies and sales volumes.



Source of the images: https://www.instagram.com/ikorta_jewelry/?hl=en



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Agri-tourism Farm

Location: Georgia/ Samtskhe-Javakheti region, Akhatskhe

Key words: Apicutlre, agriourism



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Agri-tourism farm is located at Akhaltsikhe-Sapara touristic route which is occupied during the touristic season and very many tourists are interested not only in visiting the farm but also in purchase of honey and other products.



Zaza Ivanidze initially bread bees in village Muskhi and decided to establish a honey house and study apitherapy and today he is the Chairman of the Georgia Beekeepers Union. Mr. Zaza taught local children how to take care of bees and was actively engaged in professional educational activities. Zaza equipped the residential house in such manner that he can offer the masterclass in Meskhetian cuisine to any interested person. On the

basis of tourism industry demands, Zaza Ivanidze developed a touristic package which includes a visit to a centenary garden of fruit trees of local species and the bee-garden, engagement of tourists in the ongoing works (harvesting, honey making, candle making, obtaining bee milk), product tasting (fruit, honey (acacia, chestnut, alpine), bread, cheese, vodka, gozinaki, mulberry bakmaz). Tourists can also purchase products onsite. A picnic area is provided in the yard.

Visitors are hosted by Zaza and his spouse, but in case of need, the fellow villagers help them too. The products used for cooking dishes were grown by him. He pays particular attention to reproduction and popularization of local Meskhetian species. Baking "Tsiteli Doli" (red wheat) bread in Meskhetian bakery should be mentioned. He obtains products in his own bio-farm from fruit trees of endemic species, makes bakmaz and tklapi from unique species of mulberry, as well as grows flax.





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Marketing approach

Zaza is contacted mostly by phone to book a visit. Share of passer-by tourists is also high. He is often visited by Georgian politicians and foreign diplomats. He participated in several TV films and shows which made him more popular.

Financial situation

Though the village is land-poor, but biologically pure environment predetermines a high price of the produced honey. The profitable business is based on preservation and improvement of the honey quality, as well as development of new markets (both in Georgia and abroad). Diversification of products and services is also noteworthy. The family has expanded offers for receiving visitors. The kitchen was equipped in accordance with food safety requirements. This was facilitated by participation in a grant competition. Donor organizations allowed the family to participate in local and foreign exhibitions and study tours.

Zaza Ivanidze Agri-Tourism Farm is a member of several NGOs and Mr. Zaza also manages a cooperative store. He is actively engaged in educational activities.



Success factors and challenges

The business was launched with one hive and today he owns a multi-functional farm. Ideas appeared during the work process and were realized by hard work and enthusiasm. In Zaza's opinion, people should do the things that they can do best of all. Sense of responsibility, passion for one's work, loyalty and boldness are keys to achievement of the goal.

Plans for the future development

For the future, Mr. Zaza plans to offer a full packages of services for visitors interested in arrangement of Meskhetian bakery and Meskhetian cuisine. The offer includes overnight accommodation, meals, visit to the farm and engagement in the farmer's activities.

Source of the images: Google



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Art Residence

Location: Georgia/ Shida Kartli,

Key words: Art & Craft, ceramic design



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The modern art space "Art Residence" belongs to a ceramist and designer, Otar Vepkhvadze and a painter, Ia Gigoshvili. This place is visited by people of various professions from all parts of the world. Properly arranged interior allows. The interior provides an opportunity for creative work. Visitors may view pieces of work of the hosts in the gallery and attend ceramics masterclasses. According to hosts, "Art Residence" is the space where Georgian and foreign artists meet each other. Their activities are directly linked to development of creative tourism - tourists meet artists, while foreign artists can visit the space and work there.



Tourists can also stay at the hotel overnight. The overnight accommodation offer includes cultural and walking tours too.

Marketing approach

The goal of visiting "Art Residence" by tourists is to study working on ceramics. The studio additionally offers tourists masterclasses in easel graphic works, working on Murano glass. Georgian cloisonné enamel, jeweller's art etching technologies and printing are taught in case of desire. Tourist can visit musical events, listen to the Georgian live music and taste family wine pressed in family vineyards.

Financial situation

The hosts developed the business using their own funds and new ideas came to their mind during the work process. The hosts say that there is a need of engagement of the state. In their opinion,





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the governmental tourism agencies should become familiarized and listen to ideas of similar enterprises and support them. The host emphasizes infrastructure problems, for example, the problem of access road to "Art Villa Garikula" where the hosts have a land parcel. International artist festivals and other events are jointly held here, however, unstable supply of water, power and Internet often hinders this. Lack of interest of local population in engagement in the activities should also be mentioned. For the purpose of promoting increase of

activities and engagement, Otar Vepkhvadze offered additional services - masterclasses in art-therapy to local residents.

At this stage, for promotion of the creative tourism business it is important to study principles of cultural tourism management, improve social media management competences and conduct trainings in hospitality service to the service staff.

Success factors and challenges

The hosts say that these creative works are created at dictation of the "Highest Power". Mood, emotion, desire to create and share to society are important for success. The main goal of the hosts is to create a harmonious environment.

Plans for the future development

For the future, they plan to expand a long stall in the studio and want to place everything in one space to make the environment better perceptible for tourists. They want to use additional materials, including the local Georgian clay which has its colour and spirit, as well as make glazes by turquoise stones of the local Tedzami River



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/artistsresidencegallery>



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"Lost Ridge Inn, Brewery & Ranch"

Location: Georgia/ Khati/Kedeli village

Key words: Agro, eco and gastro tourism



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Agro- and ecotourism facility is located in the village Kedeli, Signagi municipality and includes a rancho of horses, a hotel and a brewery. The touristic complex with its various attractions and the leisure destination is the most interesting concept with the example of revival of a lost and forgotten place. The complex unites a small-size hotel, the 19th century restored houses of



the traditional Kakhetian architecture. Similar to horses, these houses also have nicknames and a history. For example, one house is called "Piruzza" (meaning - turquoise) due to turquoise elements used in its interior and exterior. Old illustrations are preserved on the walls of its bedroom. In addition to this house, you will find a house "Archaeology" which was half buried and destroyed. The house was cleaned, restored and not it represents an interesting example of preservation of the old historic appearance and combination of modern elements; In addition, visitors are

offered equestrian, cultural and gastronomic tours here. They have a micro-brewery and offer a wide range of craft beer; dishes cooked from ecologically pure products grown in their own vegetable gardens or purchased from local farmers; various activities are available for visitors - tours, masterclasses, tastings. It is also possible to organize private and corporate events.

According to the host, since 2012, the company has been making efforts for development of this place in the right direction, creation of an eco-village and continuation of restoration of traditional Kizikian houses. Two houses are restored in their complex. Local population is employed, ecologically pure products are purchased from them, bio-gardens are grown, eco-friendly waste processing system is attempted to be introduced, for example, after beer is brewed, horses are fed with the barley waste, manure is used to fertilize the garden and hay collected there is stored for horses for winter.





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Marketing approach

The main customers of Lost Ridge Inn Brewery and Horse Ranch are the citizens of Georgia, foreigners residing in Georgia, diplomatic missions and tourists. In addition to digital booking platforms and cooperation with local and international travel companies, the company actively uses social media: Facebook, Instagram, cooperates with so-called influencers, journalists and people who share their impressions and experience with their audience.

One of the directions are events and so-called, pop-ups. Pop-up event of the partner restaurant, different gastronomic events of "Lost Ridge Inn" (for example, Mexican, Italian etc.) were held several times in 2020. In addition, lectures and work meetings were held, mainly related to eco-friendly, natural and biomaterials, construction and production, eco-tourism etc.

One of the priority directions of the company's marketing is popularization by a continuous, so-called "word of mouth" method. The process must be permanent and visitors must be always provided with the same or improved quality and attitude. The key to success of this approach is that each visitor leaves so much satisfied that apart from the desire to return to this place again, they should be willing to share their impressions with other people.

Today, there are 8 rooms and up to 20 employees in the touristic complex. According to the founder of the complex, the Pandemic affected their activities and changed the expansion plans, however they used the period of inactivity for performance of internal works and innovating the activities of their touristic complex. They used the free time resulting from suspended projects for implementation of their future plans in a closer future.

Success factors and challenges

Tabagari says that they offer visitors the love of travel and leisure, i.e. the things that they would wish for the best leisure themselves. Love of communication, friendly environment and a team of interesting people are important. Eco-friendly attitude to the environment, loyalty to values and sincerity are also very significant. The company pays particular attention to client communication and service, individual approach and formation of personal relations with each customer. It tries to pay particular attention to requests, desires and needs of visitors, take care of awareness and satisfaction of each visitor; sincere, friendly and individual approach makes this company different from others and this is emphasized by visitors;

Plans for the future development

The company has many future plans. One of the next projects is development of bio-gardens, restoration of other local houses, adding new rooms and maintenance of the external perimeter; planting trees, etc., arrangement of wind streak, entertainment zone for children and other additional areas and to achieve these goals, the company plans to carry out additional investments for development and expansion of the complex in 2021-2025.

In addition, it is planned to open a new type of art space and a social enterprise;

Based on local and international sales of beer produced by the company, increase of production will be also planned;



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The company is actively engaged in development of equestrian tourism, is a member of the Equestrian Travel Association, initiator and supporter of necessary and interesting ideas.



Sources of the images:

<https://lostridgeinn.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/lostridgeinn/>



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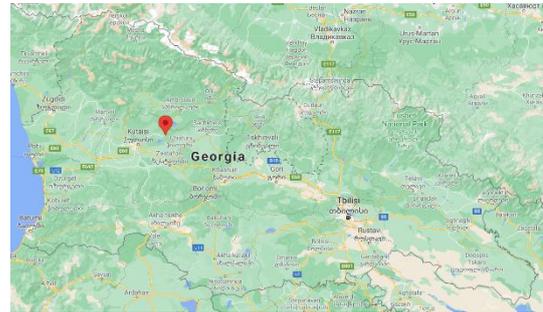
The Georgian Gagate

Location: Georgia/Imereti/ Tkibuli

Key words: Craft, master classes

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Levan Tskipurishvili established a small workshop together with his friend 25 years ago. The two young men from Tkibuli started processing gagate by a new method. Later, two companions joined them. The friends acted based on the knowledge verbally received from elder residents of Tkibuli and also learnt by observing others. As they mention, they were looking for something innovative and different. Levan and his friends dedicated many years to obtain this knowledge and now they are teaching this technology to seven young persons from Tkibuli.



"The Black Treasure" is produced in Dzirovani, one of Tkibuli villages. This type of fossil coal has a very high quality, but it is less valued in Georgia. More and more foreign tourist visit the



gagate workshop in village Dabadzveli during the touristic season. A special webpage is created for sale of the products. Decorations made of the Georgian gagate are very attractive for tourists. Due to this fact, Levan Tskipurishvili decided to rehabilitate the workshop and turn it into a touristic attraction. Today, tourists watch the decoration production process with great interest, view the products and leave the place in an inspired mood.

Marketing approach

A special webpage was created for sale of the products. Financial success was predetermined by different products which are distinguished for high quality and authenticity of the raw material. The produces are also sold by private orders, at exhibitions and fairs, via social networks.



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Success factors and challenges

One of the main factors for making visitors interested is the so-called "story-telling" - Tkibuli residents have a legend about "The Black Treasure": one forester was digging "black" soil, found an unprocessed piece of gagate and used it as a talisman. The stone brought luck to the forester and his poor family. Other peasants also heard this story and called gagate "a noble stone". Women used to attach it to cradles to ward off the evil eye, men made talismans and amulets for luck. Later, gagate necklace was presented to the fiancée on the day of engagement. It was necessary to include an item made of this stone in the dowry.

Plans for the future development

Levan plans to turn the semi-precious Georgian stone into a brand in the future. Considering the growing demand, the friends decided to offer additional services to tourists. Arrangement of the area behind the workshop where a dining room and an open space with a fireplace are located is already finished. As Zedubani village and the neighbour villages are known for tea culture, Levan plans to add tea tasting and serving treats to the workshop offer so that the tourists can stay there longer and feel comfortable. The workshop members also plan to landscape the yard and make an exhibition corner.

Source of the images: Google



Project funded by EUROPEAN UNION



Ceramics Studio and Museum

Location: Georgia/Gori

Key words: Art & Craft, master classes in pottery-making

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Tatulashvili studio and a small museum is located in the center of Gori and occupies the first floor of the residential house and the adjacent yard. An exhibition hall, a studio equipped with required inventory and a shop are located here. The yard is mainly used for decorative purposes and relaxation of tourists.



Traditional examples of glazed ceramics of Gori are produced in the museum. These include cups, jugs, bowls decorated with green ornaments applied to whitish or yellow glaze, zoomorphic drinking vessels, wine vessels and communicating vessels of other form. His white glazed vessels with blue floral ornaments is particularly distinguished.

The entire Tatulashvili family, grandfather, father and brother of the ceramists used to work on traditional ceramics of Gori. Giorgi and his brother have been continuing the traditional crafts inherited from their ancestors for more than 20 years. Several years ago, the house of Tatulashvili family in Gori was a place of social gathering.

The growing interest of visitors predetermined formation of pottery as a masterclass and touristic offer that includes participation in the full cycle of pottery production. Giorgi Tatulashvili initiated giving free classes in pottery where the interested young people learn working on clay. Access to novelties of the industry is provide through cooperation with the Georgian Heritage Crafts Association.





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Marketing approach

According to the hosts, their loyal visitors send most visitors. Visitors mostly contact them in advance by phone and book a visit. Giorgi Tatulashvili personally hosts visitors, tells them the history and shows the pottery production process. However, he also cooperates with local travel agencies. The museum is included in Google map and the Georgian cultural route - "Georgian Ceramics Route". International organizations became interested as a result of coverage by local and national TV channels. The Ceramics Studio and Museum is often visited by employees of embassies and diplomatic missions with their families.

Financial situation



Mr. Giorgi has participated in several grant projects which ensured arrangement and equipment of the studio as well as introduction of the learning course practice. His works are sold in almost all souvenir shops of Georgia, in his own studio-shop, in the shops of art galleries, at exhibitions and fairs, at local and international sales exhibitions and via social networks.

Success factors and challenges

According to Mr. Giorgi, the key factor of success is continuation of the tradition of ancestors which is particularly attractive, unique and interesting for tourists and visitors.

Considering the growing demand, Mr. Giorgi plans active participation in educational projects.

Source of the images: Google



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GREECE

Traditional Guesthouse of Dimosthenis



Location: Goumenissa - Kilkis, Central Macedonia

Key words: Traditional accommodation, various activities in the area and in Paiko Mountain

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The guesthouse offers a bit variety of activities to its visitors:

- Traditional food tasting, in cooperation with local food producers;
- Biking and hiking in waymarked paths or blooming cherries area / sunflowers area/ meadows;
- Picnic in Paiko Mountain;
- Agricultural activities in collaboration with other alternative and experiential tourism enterprises or local producers;
- Night walks to observe fireflies or full moon;
- Archery and weaving lessons;
- Thematic activities related to mushrooms (truffle etc.);
- Narratives of children fairytales;
- Synergies with the museums and archaeological sites of the area for group tours and activities.





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Marketing approach

The guesthouse runs its own website and profile on the social media. Besides, it gets promoted through blogs and radio stations, as well as word of mouth.

Key success factors and challenges

- Investigation of the needs and the profile of the visitor. Personalized tour packages for the best possible guest experience;
- Deep and specific knowledge and skills of the particular activity, history, culture of the place and local life;
- Focus on the creation of a friendly atmosphere;
- Constant passion about the activity;
- Trying to differentiate their enterprise from a mass tourism accommodation to a place where the visitor could feel familiar, learn the history of the place and have adventure activities;
- Absence of promotion of the area by public bodies;
- Lack of willingness for combined action and networking between tourism stakeholders;
- Lack of collective vision and tourism Master plan.

Plans for future development

The owners plan to sustain and further develop the existing activities, as well as to cooperate further with local enterprises from their field of interest. In addition, they plan develop a consistent and professional approach in the fields of visual communication and marketing and to approach new international tourism markets.

Sources of the images:

<http://www.dimosthenis.gr/>

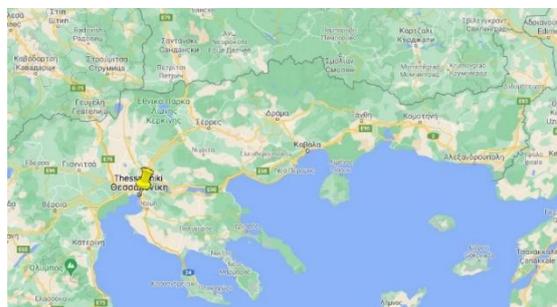
<https://www.facebook.com/dimosthenisguesthouse/>



Project funded by EUROPEAN UNION



Dot2dot



Location: Thessaloniki, Central Macedonia

Key words: walking tours, thematic tours

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Dot2dot is a Sightseeing tour agency in Thessaloniki. Its activities include themed walks and alternative routes in the city of Thessaloniki and nearby archaeological sites, educational programs for educational and social organizations, as well as cultural and artistic workshops and events for kids and adults.

The agency offer themed walks and alternative routes in the city. They use interdisciplinary approach, involving not only the presentation of information, but trough storytelling and role playing techniques the visitors have the chance to gain a vivid and unforgettable experience.

The tour guides use carefully designed scenarios, with an emphasis given on the surroundings and the triggering of senses, feelings, emotions and thoughts. Visitors are invited to uncover mysteries or solve enigmas and many times historical information is given through a small minute performance by actors.



Common borders. Common solutions.



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Marketing approach

The agency promotes its activities through a website (<https://www.dot2dot.gr/>), profiles on the social media (Facebook and LinkedIn). They send a newsletter on a regular basis, too

Key success factors and challenges

- Deep knowledge about the definition and dimensions of experiential tourism;
- Focusing on the visitor's value and needs. Activities are designed based on the interests and specifics of the visitor;
- The groups are small, which makes the tour more experiential;
- Fully designed tourism product (activities, transportation, payment methods, insurance, adapting information to the specifics of the visitor);
- Well qualified employees (deep knowledge about the history and the culture of the place, foreign languages, creativity, communication skills);
- Constant training and education in the new tourism trends and challenges;
- Designed tours for the disabled and the elderly people.

Plans for future development

The founders of the agency plan to enrich the content of themed walks and alternative routes and to enlarge their team, so they can work with more groups.

Sources of the images:

<https://www.dot2dot.gr/>

<https://www.facebook.com/dot2dot.thess>



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Epiculiar Tours



Location: Thessaloniki, Athens

Key words: Experiential tours in Athens and Thessaloniki regions.

Description of best practice related to HCBET



Hospitality and friendliness as key elements in the creation of unique, “authentic”, and memorable experiences. For this purpose, when organising a tour, the team of the agency is always intending to provide their clients the opportunity to meet local people, get to know their lifestyle through everyday stories and local experiences, so they work in close cooperation with the locals.

The activities take place not necessarily in historical landmarks or basic historical places

of the city, but in points with a hidden history. Besides, options for traditional cooking lessons, traditional food or wine tasting are usually included in the programme.

Marketing approach

The agency runs its own website and profiles on the social media. Besides, they use different online platforms and collaborate with alternative international tourist offices and online travel agencies

Key success factors and challenges

Epiculiar Tours offers a fully designed tourism product (activities, transportation, payment methods, insurance, adapting information to the specifics of the visitor). They offer liability insurance policies and alternative payment methods.

The team has a deep knowledge about the meaning and dimensions of experiential tours and design activities based on the interests and specifics of each visitor. Besides, they focus on the creation of a friendly atmosphere between visitors and hosts. Due to various specialties of hosts - architects, philologists, guides etc. they employ an interdisciplinary approach when designing their tours.

The tours are organised in small groups, so every guest can be actively involved and gain more vivid experience.



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All employees are well-qualified (having deep knowledge about the history and the culture of the place, foreign languages, passion, social and communication skills, adaptability in urgent conditions), but they undergo a constant training and education in the new tourism trends and challenges. In addition, in order to be competitive on the market, the agency constantly adapts its experiences and activities to the new conditions.

The agency offers guided tours adapted to the needs of the disabled and the elderly people.



Plans for future development

The agency is aimed at constant development and enrichment of the content of existing experiences.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.epiculiar.tours/>

<https://www.facebook.com/epiculiar.greece/>



Project funded by EUROPEAN UNION



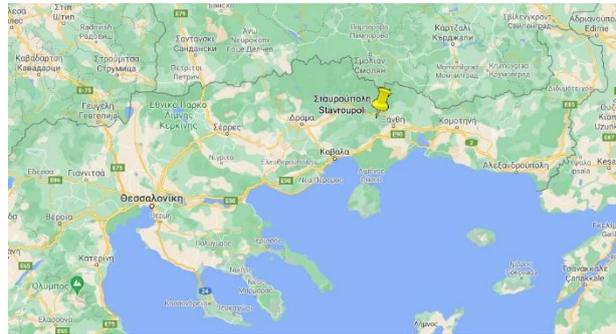
Hotel Nemesis



HOTEL NEMESIS

Location: Komnina, Xanthi, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace

Key words: Hotel with restaurant, Theme park, Adventure activities



Description of best practice related to HCBET



Hotel Nemesis is a complex of 8 stone castles. The interior is decorated with earth colours, rooms combine remarkably the natural stones of the region with traditional wooden furniture, thus creating a warm, very special atmosphere for each guest.

Besides accommodation, the hotel offers a thematic park with animals, so the visitor to experience the wildlife.

For the guests preferring more active way of spending their holiday, they organise trips with canoe-kayak or rafting on Nestos River as well

as mountain biking and hiking activities in waymarked paths.

Marketing approach

The hotel runs its own website (<https://www.hotelnemesis.gr/en>) and social media profiles on Facebook and Instagram and other online platforms (Booking.com and TripAdvisor)



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Key success factors and challenges

- Deep and specific knowledge and skills of the particular activity, history, culture of the place and local life;
- Focus on the creation of a friendly atmosphere;
- Constant passion about the activity;
- Trying to differentiate their enterprise from a mass tourism accommodation to a place where the visitor could feel familiar, learn the history of the place and have adventure activities;
- Trying to maintain and further develop their activities despite the absence of local trained staff and tax incentives in remote areas.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.hotelnemesis.gr/en>

<https://www.facebook.com/Hotel-Nemesis-112208320155/>



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MKS Travel Services Kesoglou Miltiadis

Location: Central Macedonia

Key words: Travel agent related with mass and alternative tourism activities



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The agency actively promotes alternative forms of tourism (cultural, religious, agricultural, adventure tourism etc.), despite the dominance of mass tourism. In their offer they usually include traditional cooking lessons in traditional restaurants, traditional food and wine tasting and agritourism activities such as the oyster - mussel farms of National Park of the Axios - Loudias - Aliakmon Delta, buffalo breeding in Lake Kerkini, Agricultural Beekeeping Cooperative of Nikiti

Marketing approach

The agency runs its own website (<https://mks.net.gr/>). It collaborates with international travel agencies and actively participates in various travel fairs and tourism exhibitions (such as ITB, Filoxenia).

Key success factors and challenges

According to the owners, the key for their organisational success is the constant passion about the activities they do, as well as deep and specific knowledge and skills of the history, culture of the place and local life. Having a multi-lingual staff, they can offer high quality services to foreign tourists coming from different countries. For them is important to keep both flexibility and consistency in the process from design, trough offering and during the delivery of personalized experiential programs/ packages.

Another factor for their success are the partnerships they have developed with Management Authorities (Axios - Loudias - Aliakmon Delta), National Parks (Lake Kerkini) as well as many different experienced and accredited partners (such as guides)

In order to keep its competitive position, the organisation encourages the constant training and education in the new tourism trends and challenges.

Plans for future development

The agency is planning to invest efforts in further promotion of the destination of the wider region of Macedonia and Thrace, as well as design of new quality products in collaboration with public and private partners and bodies. In addition, they plan to expand their partner network with foreign and domestic bodies.

In the light of the current pandemic, the team is also searching for solutions how to manage the new requirements that will arise in the post-COVID period.

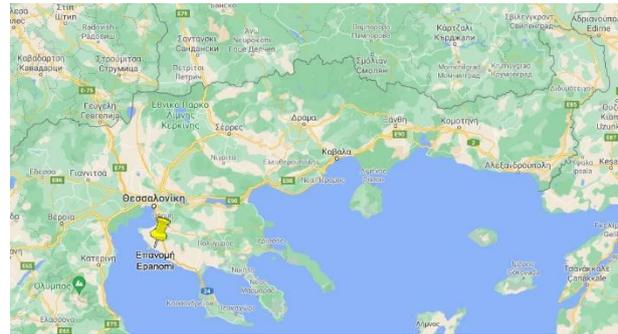


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Ktima Gerovasileiou

Ktima GEROVASSILIOU



Location: Epanomi, Thessaloniki, Central Macedonia

Key words: vineyard, winery, wine museum, education programmes and guided tours

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Ktima Gerovasileiou is a complex including a vineyard, a winery and a wine museum.



The complex offers to its visitors various organized activities, including visits of the vineyard and winery, wine and food tastings, guided tours, educational programs. It hosts different events (seminars, lectures, theatrical and musical performances, movie screenings, painting exhibitions, related to the history of the place and the wine). The team also gets involved in the production of publications related to locals and the history of the region.

Marketing approach

The winery runs its own website (<https://www.gerovassiliou.gr/en/node>) and profile on the social media. It also relies on the visitors' reviews, as they consider the word of mouth as a strong communication and marketing tool.

Key success factors and challenges

- Production of quality wines;
- Deep wine knowledge and, also, knowledge about the history and the culture of the place;
- Cooperation with local enterprises (restaurants and hotels);
- Well qualified employees (foreign languages, communication skills);
- Small groups → more experiential;
- Constant training and education of the workforce;
- Take advantage of tourism demand related with wine tourism activities;

Plans for future development

The team plans to involve the visitors more actively in experience-based activities, such as harvesting, and picnics in the vineyard. They also intent to attract local visitors from Epanomi region. Besides, the implementation of new digital technologies in the Wine Museum (digital guided tours, QR codes) are also considered.



Source of the images: <https://www.gerovassiliou.gr/en/node>



Project funded by EUROPEAN UNION



Ktima Kyr Gianni



Location: Yianakohori, Naoussa, Central Macedonia

Key words: Wine and food tasting, guided tours

Description of best practice related to HCBET



The wine estate Kir-Yianni is one of Greece’s largest vineyards. Besides good wines, it offers to its visitors a wide range of additional services and experiences, such as:

- Guided tours and visits to the winery, where the guests can get more information about the process of vinification, production, bottling and storage areas, cellars for wine aging;
- Cooking lessons with ingredients from the vineyard;
- Picnics and bicycle races in the vineyards;
- Painting exhibitions and art galleries related to place’s history and wine;
- Guided tours in archaeological sites of the region and information about wine;
- Theatrical performances and movie screenings related to wine and place’s history;
- Possibility for visitor to take part in the harvesting of the grapes.

Marketing approach

The winery runs its own website (<https://kiryianni.gr/>) and maintains profiles on the social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). It gets promoted by “word of mouth”.

In addition, the business relies on strong collaboration with international tourist offices that promote wine tourism.





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Key success factors and challenges

One of the key factors for success of the organisation is the deep knowledge about the wine (the wine estate is run by Stelios Boutaris, a fifth generation of winemakers) also, knowledge about the history and the culture of the place.

The wine estate actively cooperates with local enterprises and trade associations of the region in order to promote local products, which helps not only for the distribution of the production, but also as a strong communication/marketing tool.

The tours and the activities offered to the guests take place in small groups, which makes them more experiential and memorable.

Last, but not the least, at the moment, in the tourism sector the demand related with wine tourism activities is rising, which provides excellent opportunities for growth.



Plans for future development

The owners intend to support actively the overall development of tourism in the region, through their activities. In addition, they plan to establish cooperation with regional/local cultural institutions and museums.



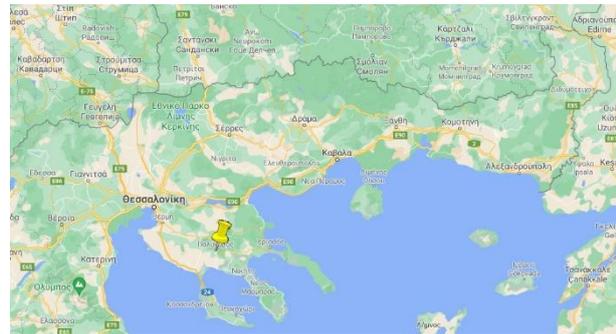
Source of the images: <https://kiryianni.gr/>



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Ktima Tsipelis



Location: Agios Dimitrios, Polygyros, Halkidiki, Central Macedonia

Key words: essential oils, vineyard and olives

Description of best practice related to HCBET



Tsipeli's estate is a 100 acres land full of olive trees and vineyards. It offers to its visitors possibility to learn about essential oils distillery, taste local food and wine and take part in guided tours in olive groves and vineyards.

Marketing approach

The place is promoted through the Airbnb platform, Halkidiki Tourism Organization and runs own profile in the Social media (Facebook fan page).

Key success factors and challenges

The most important factor for the success of the business is the focus on alternative tourism activities/experiences despite the dominance of mass tourism, which makes their offer unique. The team of the estate is passionate about what they do and possess deep knowledge about the history of the place and the local culture. All this, combined with well-developed social and communication skills of the staff, ensure positive and unforgettable experience for the visitors.

Plans for future development

At the moment, the most important task is to adapt the activities and experiences to the new conditions, caused by the pandemic.



Source of the images:

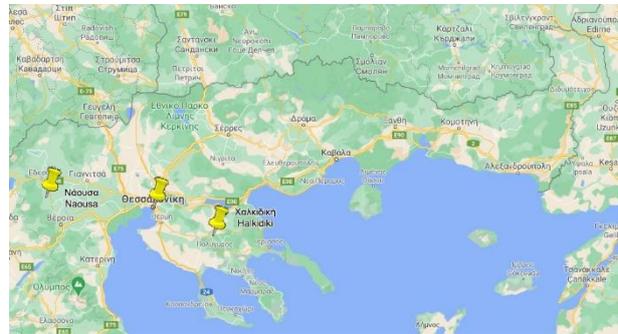
<https://www.facebook.com/%CE%9A%CF%84%CE%AE%CE%BC%CE%B1-%CE%A4%CF%83%CE%B9%CF%80%CE%AD%CE%BB%CE%B7-1411291145866997/>



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TRIGIRO



Location: Thessaloniki, Halkidiki, Naousa,
Central Macedonia

Key words: guided bicycle tours

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Trigiro is an agency, offering bicycle tours, combined with hiking, tasting and feeling. They help visitor discover a place through trekking, biking, food and wine tasting.

The organisation closely cooperates with local wineries and restaurants, which are included in the tours.

Trigiro was awarded as an adventure tour operator of the year 2019 by the Luxury Travel Awards (<https://www.ltgawards.com/de-index.html>)





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Marketing approach

The agency runs its website (<https://trigiroweb.com>) and profiles on the Social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest). Besides, it participates in various travel fairs and tourism exhibitions and gets promoted in the inflight magazines, too.

Key success factors and challenges

The main success factors for the agency can be classified as internal and external.

The internal ones describe the features of the organisation itself:

- Unique offer - personalized activities and experiences;
- Work in small groups, which makes the trips more experiential;
- Well qualified employees speaking 5 foreign languages, having a vast international experience, who are passionate about nature and alternative tourism practices;
- Local guides with good knowledge about the local life;
- Capacity to successfully respond to cases of emergency, as well as functional, cultural infrastructural and transportation problems;
- Successful deal with insurance issues.

As an external factor can be mentioned the increased demand to alternative forms of tourism (nature, adventure etc.), which ensures a special marketing segment for the agency.

Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/trigiroweb>



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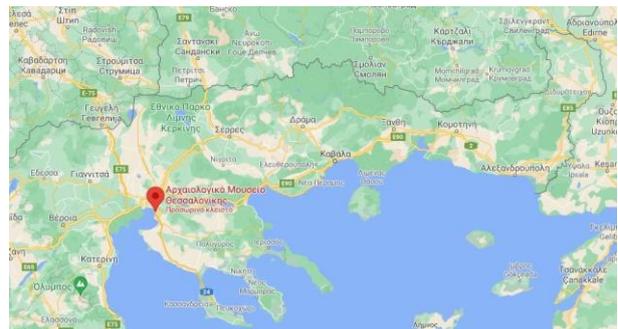
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki



ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF THESSALONIKI

Location: Thessaloniki, Central Macedonia, Greece

Key words: archaeological museum



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki is one of the largest museums in Greece and the central archaeological museum of northern Greece. All visitors are welcome to experience its unique collections of ancient artefacts as well as its rich and engaging cultural activities, such as:

- Wheel pottery workshop (creation of copies of ancient Greek pottery, figurines, etc.);
- Metal stamps copies of ancient coins workshop;
- Theatrical mask making workshop;
- Paper folding workshop - origami;
- Escape room;
- Excavation simulation;
- Treasure hunt;
- Theatrical improvisations - events;
- Role-playing games (RPG) inside the museum exhibitions;
- Gastronomy evenings, wine tasting events.



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Marketing approach

The Museum has a strong presence on the internet maintaining an own website (<https://www.amth.gr/en>) profiles on the Social media (Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Vimeo and YouTube).

Key success factors and challenges

- Deep Knowledge of the culture and heritage of the region;
- Activities are designed based on the interests and specifics of the visitor (special emphasis on the disabled people);
- Fully designed product;
- Very well qualified employees ;
- Collaboration with additional institutional bodies from the rest of the country and from abroad;
- Cooperation with local administration authorities;
- Quality control - quality certification of the offered programs.

Plans for future development

The team of the museum plans to develop new programs based on technologies, virtual reality, etc. and activities designed for people with disabilities (especially people with vision or hearing impairment)

Sources of the images:

<https://www.amth.gr/en>

<https://www.facebook.com/archaeologicalmuseumofthessaloniki>

<https://www.instagram.com/archmuseumofthessaloniki/>



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“Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalcidice and Mount Athos”

Location: Poligiros Chalkidiki, Region of Central Macedonia, Greece

Key words: historical site, cultural heritage



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The Ephorate of Antiquities of Chalcidice and Mount Athos handles issues related to archaeological sites, monuments and historical sites, dating from the prehistoric era to 1830, as well as museums referring to the respective period. It is responsible for the protection and management of archaeological sites, monuments and historical sites, the planning and conduct of excavations and any form of archaeological research, the preparation of studies, the planning and execution of projects, for the protection, maintenance, restoration, landscaping and promotion of archaeological sites, monuments and historical sites, the protection of the natural landscape that surrounds them and the examination of requests for execution of projects that affect them directly or indirectly in cooperation with the competent services. Among its activities are:

- Participation in exhibitions in the country and abroad;
- Participation in International and European programs;
- Organization and participation in workshops, conferences, seminars;
- Design, organization and presentation of educational programs, cultural promotion events;
- Promotion of communication activities, as well as the (production of conventional and digital publications and educational material...);
- Co-organization of exhibitions or events jointly with Municipalities.





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ΕΝΑΣ ΠΥΡΓΟΣ
ΑΦΗΓΕΙΤΑΙ
ΤΗΝ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΟΥ

Νέα Φώκεια
Χαλκιδικής
8-9 & 15-16
ΑΥΓΟΥΣΤΟΥ
21:00-00:00

Ένα τρισδιάστατο
οπτικοακουστικό ταξίδι
στο παρελθόν
του μετοχιακού πύργου
της αγιορείτικης μονής
Αγίου Παύλου

Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού & Αθλητισμού

Εφορεία Αρχαιοτήτων
Χαλκιδικής και Αγίου Όρους

η προβολή θα επαναλαμβάνεται κάθε 30 λεπτά

Marketing approach

Being a public service there is no marketing approach developed.

Key success factors and challenges

The institution has a strong partnership network involving:

- Directorates of the Central Service and the other Services of the Ministry of Culture and Sports;
- Local Government bodies and other parties in order to draw up program contracts with them for the research, protection, restoration and promotion of archaeological sites and monuments;
- Collaboration with the schools.

The ephorate is open to the local society and is involved in the Utilization of the cultural heritage of "Mount Athos". Besides, the administration of the site is actively involved in the adoption of new legislation on the lending of antiquities.

Plans for future development

In the future, it is planned different activities for the open public to be organised, such as overnight in a museum, in a monument or site or involvement of the guests in an excavation or in the maintenance process.

Source of the images: Google



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“Ephorate of Antiquities of Drama”

Location: Drama, Central Macedonia, Greece

Key words: historical site, cultural heritage



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The Ephorate of Antiquities of Drama is a Regional Service of the General Directorate of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, of the Ministry of Culture and Sports at the level of Directorate, has its seat in Drama and territorial responsibility of the Regional Unit of Drama. The competence of the Ephorate concerns all issues related to the preservation, protection and preservation of antiquities, scientific research, discovery, preservation, promotion of antiquities and newer religious monuments. It also arranges the exhibition of the findings at the Archaeological Museum of Drama, the planning, management, study and execution of any archaeological project, the maintenance, repair, restoration, restoration, promotion and shaping of monuments and archaeological sites.

Main activities and applied innovations:

- Participation in international and European programs;
- Participation in exhibitions in the country and abroad;
- Organization and participation in workshops, conferences, seminars;
- Design, organization and presentation of educational programs, cultural promotion events;
- Promotion of communication activities, as well as the (production of conventional and digital publications and educational material...);
- Co-organization of exhibitions or events jointly with Municipalities.

Marketing approach

Given the public nature of its activities, there is no marketing strategy.

Key success factors and challenges

- Cooperation with the Directorates of the Central Service and the other Services of the Ministry of Culture and Sports
- Cooperation with Local Government bodies
- The ephorate is open to the local society.
- Joint care of archaeological sites

Plans for future development

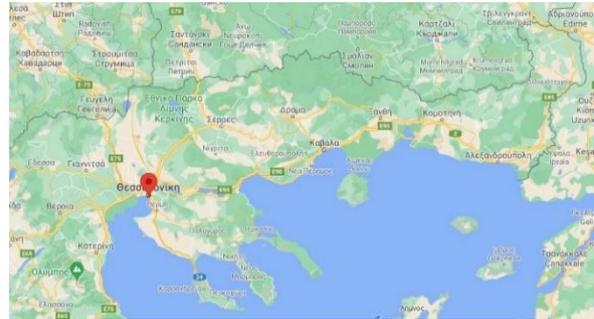
In the future, it is planned stronger collaboration with private entities to be developed.



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«Παίζοντας σε παραδοσιακά μονοπάτια» /
Play in Traditional Ways Programme



Location: Thessaloniki, Central Macedonia, Greece

Key words: activities for kids, traditional games, cultural heritage

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The program “Playing in Traditional Ways” is designed for children of preschool and primary school age. Having a focus on the traditional games and customs, the programme has both educational and entertaining roles. It presents manners, customs and games that were found in Ancient Greece and were adopted by the Christians or new ones which were created over the years, combined with customs associated with the 4 seasons of the year, the cycle of life and the others celebration.

The teacher shapes the learning field in the classroom and its main goal is to get children in touch with traditional customs, through playing.

Through the experiential approach, the participants have the opportunity to get acquainted with the customs and practices of Popular Culture, the significance of the past, the adoption of positive ways and attitudes regarding nature and the environment. They also recognize the importance of protecting and preserving the world's cultural heritage.

In addition, the implementation of different customs and traditional games helps for socialization and strengthening of team spirit within the children.





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Marketing approach

The project has a website (<http://paizontasparadosiaka.gr/?lang=en>) and a profile on the social media (Facebook). In addition, the founders of the initiative participate in different thematic conferences and events.

Key success factors and challenges

Among the key success factors are:

- Specialized design of the offered programs - to be both informative and entertaining for the children;
- Connection with the tangible and intangible cultural heritage;
- Cooperation with schools, municipalities, universities, museums, collaborations.

Plans for future development

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team plans to develop on-line actions with experiential character.

Sources of the images:

<http://paizontasparadosiaka.gr/?lang=en>

<https://www.facebook.com/%CE%A0%CE%B1%CE%AF%CE%B6%CE%BF%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B1%CF%82-%CF%83%CE%B5-%CE%A0%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%B4%CE%BF%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%AC-%CE%9C%CE%BF%CE%BD%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%AC%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%B1-1917685201693212/>



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“Veria Volta - ταξίδι στον τόπο”



Location: Veria, State of Imathia, Greece

Key words: guided tours



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Veria Volta (the word stands for walk in Greek) offers a proposal for a leisurely ride with an interesting destination. Activities include thematic walks in the city of Veria and in the nearby and relatively close areas. Visitors are invited to walk in the natural environment, in history, in people's traditions, in secret places, etc.

Combining the walks with different activities, allows the visitor to become a shareholder of history, time, customs, tastes of the area, a participant in activities that bring them closer to the local crops, fruit harvesting, knowledge etc.

The Veria Volta offers the following activities:

- Volta (walk) in the place of the stars (archaeological sites);
- "Ambra catabra and the Archaeological Museum for children comes to life";
- Volta (walk) in Antiquity and relax with a trip to ancient flavours (ancient Greek snacks);



- Volta (walk) in Byzantine Veria, the “Small Jerusalem of the Balkans” and tasting with dinner of Byzantine food;
Journeys in nature and knowledge / Walks for families with children;
- Walk in nature and looking for different types of herbs;
- "Gnorizo ton topo" (Γνωρίζω τον τόπο) Experiential walk in the cotton fields with 15 contemporary artists and creation of 30 works of art on the theme of cotton.



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- Walk to the Aristotle School "the Harvard" of antiquity and to the surrounding vineyards of Naoussa in the cauldrons with boiling tsipouro, an ancient art that is preserved until now in the area;
- Volta - Acquaintance with the traditions and participation in customs and events.



Marketing approach

Veria Volta runs a website (<http://www.veria-volta.gr/>) and a profile on the Social media (Facebook - Veria Volta)

In addition, the tours are promoted in the media through daily and weekly press of the Prefecture and the neighbouring Prefectures, TV or Web Channels and Blogs that are interested in thematic tourism with adults and children and radio spots

Key success factors and challenges

One of the main success factors is the special design of the activities (based on the interests and specifics of the visitors) and the active participation of the guests, which provides them unique and positive experience.

In addition, the collaboration with artists, historians, tour guides, connoisseur, cooks, trainers, cultural management experts helps developing a diverse and interesting offer. This includes cooperation with the «Ekkokistirio Ideon» (Εκκοκκιστήριο Ιδεών) where many of the final actions and presentations of the productions of the visitors take place.



ΕΚΚΟΚΚΙΣΤΗΡΙΟ ΙΔΕΩΝ

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Plans for future development

The plan for future development involve expansion of activities that connect the arts of the past with the planning of the future with raw materials that exist in the area.

Sources of the images:

<http://www.veria-volta.gr/>

<https://www.facebook.com/VERIA-VOLTA-1627255950850258>



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“Ziogas Western City”



Location: Leykohori, Lahana, Region of Central Macedonia, Greece

Key words: agrotourism, outdoor activities

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Ziogas Western City provides an alternative touristic (agrotourism) attraction. Visitors can ride horses on trails (the inexperienced guests can receive a horse riding lesson), drink their coffee or eat like cowboys used to, walk around a petting zoo and spend the night in one of the Western City’s wooden cottages. Additional activities, which the guests can try, are:



- Hiking: using routes on the Klepe Mountain of Lefkochori, sightseeing, one of which is the chapel of St. George situated on the top of the mountain and on a 750m altitude;
- Fishing: an artificial pond located only 200meters away from the farm is ideal for fishing;
- Sharpshooting-Archery.

Marketing approach

Ziogas Western City has its own website (<https://horses.gr>) and a profile on the social media (Instagram). Besides, it is presented on different tourism exhibitions.

Key success factors and challenges

The key success factors for the complex is the unique offer, the variety of entertaining activities as well as well-qualified and friendly staff.

Plans for future development

Plans include the expansion of the range of activities and further expand of the accommodation section.

Source of the images: <https://horses.gr>



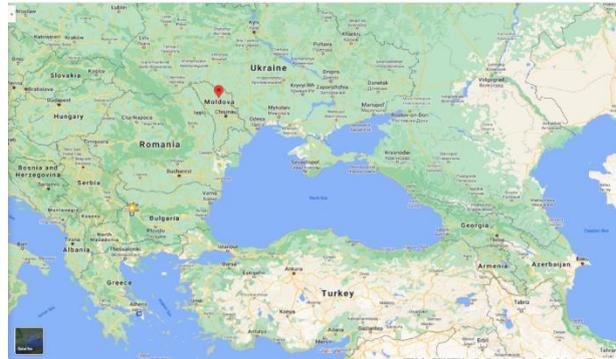


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MOLDOVA

National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism (ANTREC)



The National Association of Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism (ANTREC) in Moldova is a non-governmental, apolitical, non-profit organization. It is founded in 2000 and is the first professional rural tourism association in the country that have created a network of guesthouses.

Location: Moldova

Key words: festival, traditions, culture

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The Festival of national traditions “Duminica Mare” (Great Sunday) is organized since 2009 and became an annual June event for the Domulgeni Village, Floresti District in Moldova. The event aims to present and promote the local folklore and traditions, handicraft and gastronomic traditions. Each year the organizers prepare rich artistic programme for those who are passionate about traditions, rituals and folk songs. It is mandatory for the visitors to do the traditional hora dance.

The festival also hosts some interesting activities like woodcarving or weaving carpets and rugs workshops, pottery and ceramics demonstration and others.

Besides these mini-shows visitors have the opportunity to visit the village`s attractions: household of a beekeeper, a household-museum of over 100 years and the church “St. Nicolae”.



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Marketing approach

The festival is promoted through standard tools - press releases, Facebook and the organizer`s webpage. The mass and best promotion is mouth-to-mouth one which indeed is the driver for the event`s popularity.

However, due to positive visitors` feedback and event`s popularity, it is listed among top 15 Moldovan festivals.

Financial situation

The event is free of charge and with open access for all interested parties. The event is organized with low-costs due to the support of the local community that is interested to attract visitors and potential customers and to the media responsiveness to the nationally recognized organizer.

Key success factors and challenges

Key factors for success of the event are:

- common interest and cooperation between the organizers and the local community;
- diversity of experiences that event provides - from mini-shows of traditions to experiential craftsmen workshops and culinary delights tasting.

Plans for future development

The future development refers to attraction of more foreign tourists from new countries.

Source of the images: ANTREC Moldova website, <http://www.moldova-tourism.md/>



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Guest House “Casa de sub Stîncă” (The House under the Rock)

Location: Trebujeni, Moldova

Key words: Bed and Breakfast, National Cuisine, Traditional Arts and Handicrafts

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The team of the guesthouse is trying to offer to the guests not only one service but also memories and emotions. Therefore, they involve their guests in different activities: gastronomical master class, folklore performance, off road tours, bike tours, walking tours, artisanal master class, household activities (water the garden, pick vegetables, collect eggs from the chicken nests, take part in the wine-making process, etc.). All the complimentary services make the offer more interesting and attractive.





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Marketing approach

The main channels of promotion are Internet-based: the Guesthouse maintains an own website (<http://www.pensiuneorhei.com/>) and a profile on the Social Media ([Facebook](#)). Besides, the place is promoted trough DMOs: the portals [Winetours in Moldova](#), [Moldova to Visit](#). It is possible to make online reservation trough Booking.com and Airbnb.

Financial situation

The enterprise operates with its own revenue to fund its activity. The organizational website was developed with the strategic support of the Moldova Competitiveness Project, funded by USAID, Sweden and UK aid in the program of development of hospitality tourist destinations in the framework of the country brand "Tree of Life", developed in partnership with the National Association for Incoming Tourism.

Key success factors and challenges

The main factor for success is the fact that the organization aims to keep the local traditions alive and offers an authentic experience to all guests, taking into account their interests. The biggest challenge at the moment is to recover from the COVID-19 crisis, which had a very negative impact on all business, operating in the tourism sector.

Plans for future development

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, more Moldavian visitors started to visit the place, so the organisation plans to improve their offer and adapt some of the services to the local market.

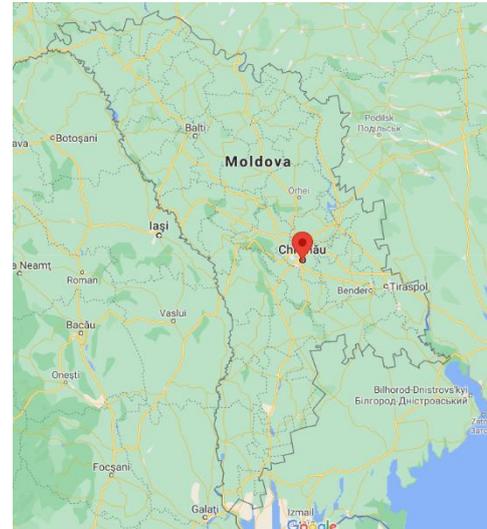
Source of the images: <https://pensiuneorhei.com/en/home/>



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Winetours Moldova



Location: Moldova (The office of the organisation is located in Chisinau, but they organize tours in the whole country)

Key words: Wine tasting, Culinary Tours

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Winetours Moldova is a boutique agency creating genuine and delicious Wine & Culinary journeys with a first-class experience.

The vision of the company is to become the leading wine-tourism operator in Republic of Moldova, by continuously developing new relationships and opportunities, and providing always amazing and memorable Wine Travel Experiences.

Currently the company portfolio includes wine tours with different duration (1 - 3 days) including visits to local wineries and rural guesthouses located throughout the whole country. In addition, they offer corporate services, as organising corporate events, teambuilding activities as well as conferences and seminars.



Marketing approach

The organisation maintains its own [website](#), available in three languages: Romanian, English, Russian, and profiles in the social media: [Facebook](#) (with nearly 4000 followers) and [Instagram](#) (with about 1500 followers). It is possible to contact them via email, WhatsApp and Viber or chat with someone from their team directly on the website. The agency is also promoted on the platform [TripAdvisor.com](#)



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Financial situation

The source of financing of the agency activities is operating with the revenue generated.

Key success factors and challenges

The company's mission is to offer amazing and memorable Wine Travel Experiences in Moldova, by offering a first class service. By keeping high quality of the services offered, company has received two awards:

- A Certificate of Excellence, based on the consistently great reviews they have earned on the world's largest travel site TripAdvisor.com in 2018
- At the 16th edition of the National Wine Day, in 2017, The Government of Republic of Moldova awarded Winetours Moldova for outstanding achievements in the development and promotion of oenotourism. For the first time a travel agency is awarded with the Gratitude Medal "Wine of Moldova. A legend alive".

The activity of the agency has a strong social impact: thanks to the partnerships created with small family businesses (such as wineries and guesthouses) the company increases their visibility among the local and international visitors and this way supports their activity and help them generate better incomes.

From the historical and cultural point of view, Winetours Moldova offers the travellers meaningful experience and presents the Moldovan culture, traditions and way of living in the rural areas in a unique and attractive way.

The biggest challenge the agency is facing now is the COVID-19 crisis, which had a strong negative impact on the tourism in general. This will affect the possibilities of the company to offer their products, as some of the businesses included in the tours had to close up and stop functioning. On the other hand, the restrictions for travelling and the economic crisis following the pandemic significantly limited the number of travellers/consumer of the company services, which affects the financial stability of the organisation, too.

Plans for future development

According to the information from their website, the team got a break from this activity until June 30th 2021. The team is using this time to revise the organizational strategy and the portfolio of their services.

Sources of the images:

<https://winetours.md/>

<https://www.facebook.com/WineToursMoldova>



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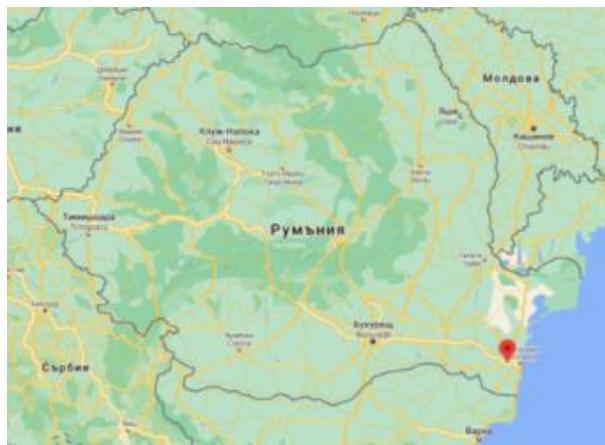
ROMANIA

Murfatlar Resort`s Tours and Tastings



Location: Murfatlar, Romania

Key words: wine tours and tastings, cultural heritage



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Romania's wine culture has a long history. Today, the country is the 13th largest wine producer worldwide and the 6th largest in Europe. The country is home to more than 250 wine cellars, but only 140 of them produce and sell bottled wine.



The Murfatlar Resort`s history begins in 1907 when the first experimental plantations were established in the Murfatlar Nursery. For a short time, between 1939 and 1942, the Nursery became Via Regala. In 1942, the Murfatlar Experimental Viticulture Resort was founded, subordinated to the Romanian Institute of Agronomic Research. Since 2002 and until now, the Resort operates under the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences `Gheorge Ionescu Sisesti` - Bucharest (ASAS), under the current name: Murfatlar Research-Development Station for Viticulture and Vinification, administering 108.34 hectares of land owned by ASAS and 81.86 hectares of land owned by the state. Among the creations of the Resort, we mention the varieties Columna, Mamaia - for wine and Aurana - for the table, as well as the numerous quality clones.

The Murfatlar Vineyard Resort is one of the famous and largest winery producers. Driven by the tourist interest it included wine tasting and wine selling services in its portfolio. There are 2 wine tasting options: *Standard* and *Premium* offering tasting of more than 5 wines and a gift bottle ((s). A walk through the winery is also included.

Marketing approach

Marketing approach that came out to be most successful for promoting wine tasting activities is networking with local tour operators and tour guides. Often tourists are interested in such tours but are challenged to find appropriate itinerary and transport, so including the on-the



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spot tasting as part of specialized tours became most suitable way for the developing this type of activity.

Financial situation

The Murfatlar Vineyard Resort`s key activities are related to the development and production of different wine types. That is financed through the ASAS` budget and guarantees its sustainability. The wine tasting is a supporting activity that does not require allocation of financial resources and/or staff.

Key success factors and challenges

Key factors for success came out to be the networking with partners and diversity of tours offered.

Plans for future development

The future development refers to attracting visitors from new territories.



Source of the images: Murfatlar Research-Development Station for Viticulture and Vinification website



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Noua ne pasa Association

(The organisation is developing several cultural projects, including “Bucharest Urban Adventures” and Interesting Times Bureau (alternative guided tours))



Changing the way people
see the world for



Location: Bucharest

Key words: Cultural NGO

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The NGO was found about 12 years ago by young people who were studying History at the university at that moment (currently, two of them are working as professors with PhD in History). The idea about the NGO was provoked by the lack of interest in the culture and the history of the city among the people who live here, as well as among the tourists.

The aim of the team is to explore the heritage from a different perspective - not only the objects and places included in the official heritage databases or lists, but to bring more attention on the local culture and on the everyday life of the local people. Because the way people live now is a result of the events and the processes that have happened in the past. In addition, the current culture is just as important as the history.

For instance they organize gastronomy tours, so people can taste traditional Romanian dishes, they also work on the new trend, which started developing about 10 years ago - winery and craft beer tours (during those tours the guests can visit local breweries and wineries, see the authentic way how those drinks are made and also taste them).

The founders of Noua ne pasa Association see the city as a living open space, where both locals and guests can experience it, but also where everyone can give something back, so they run a lot of cultural and art projects. For instance, they organise street art events to give more colour to the city.





At the moment, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the organisation had to switch online, as everyone else - so they started offering online mini-courses or virtual tours of Bucharest for local and international public.

Marketing approach

The organisation is communicating their activities online (via website and fan-page on the social media: a Facebook fan pages with more than 4,500 followers and an Instagram profile with almost 900 followers)

One of their projects “Bucharest Urban Adventures” is available on Tripadvisor.com, having more than 1000 positive reviews.

Financial situation

The organisation offers paid services (tours), which generate a revenue to fund their activities. In addition, as NGO *Noua ne pasa* cooperates with different organisations and donors, who support some of their cultural projects.



Key success factors and challenges

The founders of the association are proud to share that their activities really opened the city to foreigners, but also encouraged the foreign guests to meet and speak with the local people, and somehow changed the perception of what tourism means, at least in Bucharest.

10-15 years ago, when no tourists had the courage to go to the local market, *Noua ne pasa's* founders were the ones, who brought groups of tourists there. They encouraged them to buy local products, to talk with the people there, even to have a small picnic on the market place.



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Even now, they are the only ones, who makes certain types of tours - for instance beer tours, cemetery tours (to bring the tourists to the cemetery and organise discussions there - about the traditions, connected with this aspect of the Romanian culture, about the specific architecture there and so on) or the communist tour.

The biggest challenge they face now is the fact that in order to develop experiential tourism, the providers need to have tourists, who come physically and experience the place, feel the atmosphere, smell and taste the local cuisine and drinks. In the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic and all restrictions for travelling and organisation of physical events, this is not quite possible. Even if the organisation hosts many activities online (as everyone else), they share that their biggest need is to go back to the normal life.

Plans for future development

During the lockdown, the team of the association has made a lot of research and prepared new tours, which are now ready to start once tourists will be able to travel again.

Sources of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/slowtravelbucharest>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/151014976953676/?ref=newsfeed>



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Timisoara - European Capital of Culture 2021

(Changed to 2023)

Shine your light - Light up your city!



timisoara2021.ro

Location: Timisoara and the region around it

Key words: Timisoara 2021 - European Capital of Culture

Description of best practice related to HCBET

“European Capital of Culture” is an initiative putting culture at the heart of European cities with EU support for a yearlong celebration of art and culture. Every year one or more European cities get the title and organise a rich programme of events and activities. More information about the initiative is available here: <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policies/culture-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-culture>



The European Capital of Culture would attract visitors from across Europe and all kinds of tourists - those, who search for medium quality products/services for lower price, as well as those who really want to have meaningful experience. For this reason, the Timisoara 2021 European Capital of Culture team aims to create a diverse offer, which would meet the expectations of all:

- a strong cultural product, which would also involve the visitors in the creation of a certain event/experience (e.g. to create a space, where everyone (both hosts and visitors) can share their stories);
- tasting the local food and wines;
- programmes about Timisoara, its history and culture;
- “visit like a local” initiative - to invite local people to become tour-guides for a day and show the foreign visitors their favourite places, shops, etc. (these are usually small businesses, away from the popular touristic places).

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- another type of event would be to bring the tourists to smaller villages, where people play and sing popular local songs. Most of those people are amateurs, and some of them have not studied music, but they can perform the local songs and music and this way create a unique atmosphere, presenting the local culture.

The team believes that with all these types of activities would create a unique culture-based experience for the tourists, and make them want to come back again. In addition, it would be a great support for the small local businesses, which otherwise do not get popular among the foreign visitors.

Marketing approach

The Association does not directly sell own touristic products, but acts rather as a platform, which promotes the local businesses, organisations and individuals (artists), who have something meaningful to offer to the incoming tourists. Besides, the initiative supports the organisation of cultural events and projects.

The Timisoara European Capital of Culture Association has its own website, as well as profiles on the social media: YouTube, twitter, Instagram (with 2,879 followers) and Facebook (with 38,000+ followers).

Financial situation

As an association, the organisation can receive funding in the framework of different programmes and schemes on local, national and European level.

Key success factors and challenges

Holding the title “European Capital of Culture” is a significant recognition on an EU level, which can attract a significant number of visitors. This would be an opportunity to have a strong socio-economic impact, providing the opportunity to promote small local businesses and product to the international visitors.

On the other hand the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and all the restrictions imposed made it difficult to implement the initially planned programme and challenged the team to find ways how to organize and implement cultural events in a new way and format.

Plans for future development

Because of the outbreak of the new coronavirus pandemic and the imposed sanitary conditions, which prevent the unfolding of cultural and artistic events, as well as gathering big groups and movement of people, the programme of Timisoara European Capital of Culture 2021 is moved to 2023.

Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/2023timisoara/>



Project funded by EUROPEAN UNION



`Pestisorul De Aur` Children Folklore Festival

Location: Tulcea, Romania

Key words: festival, traditions, culture, youth

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Tulcea County School Inspectorate is a public institution organizing, administering and monitoring the educational process in Tulcea.

The International Folklore Festival Children and Youth `Golden Fish` started in 1993 based on the idea of a local children`s folk ensemble to create a true celebration of folk. The aim of the event is Danube to gather messengers of folklore from the country and abroad and it was successfully achieved event by the very first edition which was attended by 7 foreign folk ensembles (Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Albania, Georgi, Russia, Moldova) and 10 sets representing different counties within Romania. During the years, the number of folk who request participation is rising and thus, allows rigorous selection so to accept only those with high artistic concept.



This festival has not lost its attraction, continued to increase the number of shows held by the young participants. The large number of people forced virtually the organizers for the coming years to hold outdoor performances outside competition.



Marketing approach

The festival is promoted through standard tools - press releases, Facebook. With over 20 years of history it is now popular enough amongst folk ensembles and audience.

However, it is listed in the annual published by the International Council of Folklore Festivals Organization (CIOFF) Section B of UNESCO.



Financial situation

The event is financially sustainable as a major co-part of the funds for the event are provided by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and Tulcea Country Council. Private companies also contribute due to the important role of the event.

Key success factors and challenges

Key factors for success of the event are:

- Diversity of cultures presented;
- Attractive folk parade on the streets and presentations on the scene.

Plans for future development

The future development refers to attraction of more foreign ensembles from new counties and diversification of the festival`s programme according to the new trends.

Source of the images: Google

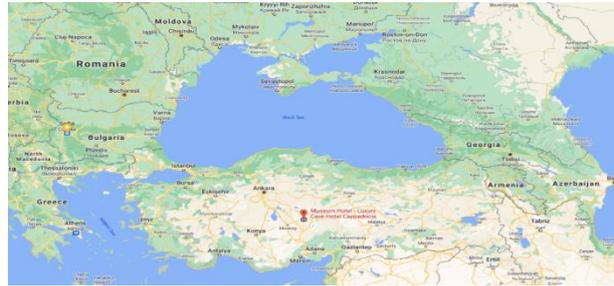


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TURKEY

Museum Hotel Kapadokia



The RELAIS & CHATEUX Organisation was established in 1954 in France. Today it is turned into prestigious network of more than 500 exceptional luxury hotels and gourmet restaurants spread across 60 countries on 5 continents.

The Museum Hotel is the only hotel in Turkey invited to join the Relais and Chateaux family. Besides artistic nature and exquisite cuisine, the hotel`s unique museum concept and thousand-year-old caves turns it into important addition to the Relais and Chateaux.

Location: Kapadokia, Turkey

Key words: historical monuments, heritage, culture, living museum concept, boutique hotel, culture;

Description of best practice related to HCBET



Museum Hotel is the world`s first `living museum` concept hotel. It is built through a project of restoring caves and stone houses thousands of years old, as well as buildings that are the most magnificent examples of craftsmanship in the region.

The hotel operates since 2003 and every area of it- the room, the public areas the hotel restaurant, and even the cave tunnels - display examples of priceless historical monuments from the rich Cappadocian

culture (built through Hittite, Roman, Seljuk, and Ottoman periods).

The hotel features 30 rooms and suites. These cave rooms and specially restored traditional rooms give guests the opportunity to live within the splendour and surroundings of history. All the rooms, suites, the Lil`a restaurant, the reception, and all the outer spaces are decorated with valuable—and in some cases, priceless—antiques, registered in Nevşehir Museum.

Marketing approach

The marketing approach is oriented to provide high quality services (55 specially trained staff ensure the unique experience of guests in only 30 rooms) for wealthy true lovers of history that will appreciate the unique design and the deluxe experience that the hotel provides. The hotel is designed, presented and promoted as a piece of history in the focal point of Cappadocian culture.



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Financial situation

Relatively, the prices correspond to the high quality of the services and are one of the highest in the area. However, to ensure sustainability the Museum Hotel offers tourist packets and products from other forms of niche tourism - i.e. weddings, wellness, gourmet, etc.



Key success factors and challenges

The success of the business model is ensured by its uniqueness and novelty - it is the world's first hotel that utilize the 'living museum' concept. The place also benefits from its membership in the Relais and Chateaux family and the multitude internationally recognized awards.

Key challenges for the management become manifestation of competitors that are replicating the success. However, although there are many facilities from the cave hotel type, yet historical artefacts exposure remains unique for this particular place.

Plans for future development

The hotel plans to develop further the opportunities for nice-type tourism.



Sources of the images:

<https://www.museumhotel.com.tr/en>

<https://www.facebook.com/MuseumHotelCappadocia/>



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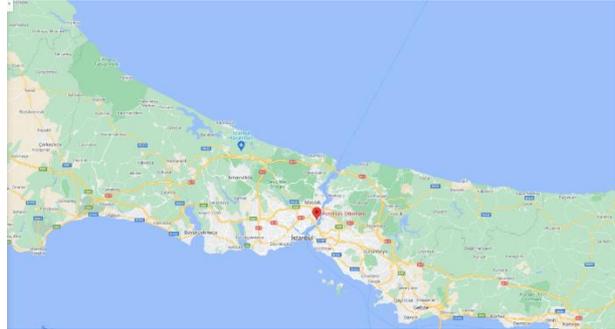
Hotel Les Ottomans



Excellence is our Heritage

Location: Istanbul, Turkey

Key words: history, heritage, culture, boutique hotel, culture;



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Hotel Les Ottomans is located in the premises of a former 18th century seaside mansion set on the shores of the Bosphorous. The exterior of the mansion was renovated according to its original structure whereas the interiors were uniquely decorated to provide unique experience. Eye-catching at every turn, each suite at HôteL Les Ottomans is individually decorated in a mix of Ottoman Empire meets Feng Shui. The ten suites are named after wives of Ottoman Sultans and are packed with intricate detailing that feature gold paintwork, parquet flooring, Venetian-like velvet walls, mosaics, a red-panelled ceiling with black chandeliers and Turkish works of art.

This boutique hotel is served by 2 restaurants and provides SPA facilities and Hammam treatments.





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Marketing approach

The marketing approach is oriented to provide high quality luxury services but to ensure unique experience for the lovers of history and culture. The unique hotel is designed, presented and promoted as Ottoman style luxury pearl.

Financial situation

The Les Ottomans Hotel Services are quite expensive for the ordinary mass tourism, however they are acceptable for celebrities and business visits. While the costs for sustaining the luxury of the place remain high and the target visits are not so common the owner is challenged to sustain the viability of the organization following currency crisis in the summer of 2018 and the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

Key success factors and challenges

The success of the business model is ensured by its uniqueness. The place also benefits from its membership in the Small Luxury Hotels of the world community as well as and the multitude internationally recognized awards.

Key challenges for the management is to sustain the luxury standard of the hotel but to decrease the costs.

Plans for future development

Managerial plans refer to enriching and complementing accommodation services and to target new markets.

Sources of the images:

<http://www.lesottomans.com/>

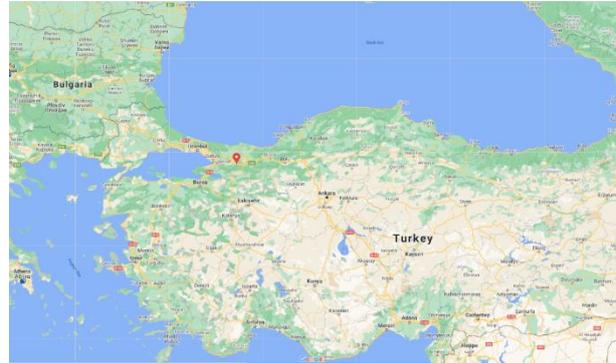
<https://www.facebook.com/Lesottomanshotel>



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Istanbul on Food



Location: Istanbul, Turkey

Key words: traditional cuisine, culture, experience, city tours;

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Istanbul on Food is a small family business ran by 2 culinary enthusiasts and cultural experts who have hand-picked every element of the tours offered so to create unforgettable Istanbul memory.

It operates variety of food tours for taste lovers. These include tours named `The taste of 2 continents`, `Flavours of the Old city`, `Taksim Evening Food Tour` and private food tours. The tour packages promise unique journey with sample tastings from one of the best food shops and local restaurants. The tours are designed as an off-the-beaten-path immersion inside Istanbul's cuisine and a glimpse of Turkish culture and daily life. They provide sample tastings from homemade dishes and street foods to traditional kebabs in eateries and restaurants from neighbourhoods and backstreets of the city. Thus, the tours set up a unique journey through the not-so-popular parts of the city.



Marketing approach

Since the company is not the only one offering that type of guided tours it has undertaken a marketing approach that puts emphasis on the unexplored city neighbourhoods and backstreets where many eateries and restaurants that offer traditional foods are located.

The company advertise themselves in quite traditional way - own website and i-sites for booking and sharing experience (e.g. via TripAdvisor, etc.). The focus is on the personal experience and the tours are organized for very small groups - up to 8 people. However, due to a high-rate of user responses the company is among the top-rated ones.

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Financial situation

All offered tours are balanced in their price offer - since that is a family ran business, its founders guide most of the tours and thus, decrease the personal costs. The organization conducts with priority those tours which make it popular and distinguishable from the other competitors. That indeed means that tours with low interest are not already on the market.

Key success factors and challenges

Key factors for company success:

- Focus on hidden, not-so-popular places that provide best traditional dishes;
- Balanced price-experience rate;
- Good quality and customer-experience orientation that provides positive feedback and lists the company`s tours among the top 10.

The key challenge is the number of tours that can be organized within certain period.

Plans for future development

Managerial plans refer to expansion of the team so more than 1 tour can be organized and as well as further enrichment of tour portfolio.

Source of the images: <https://istanbulonfood.com/>



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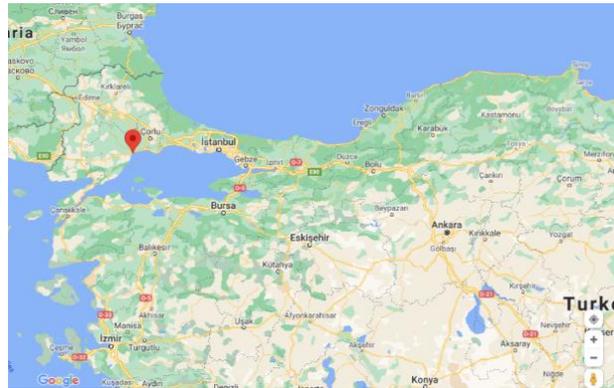
Tekirdag Cherry Festival

Location: Tekirdag Province

Key words traditions, cultural heritage, festival

Description of best practice related to HCBET

Tekirdag Province, located in East Thrace region of the country, is one of only three provinces entirely within continental Europe. Tekirdag is the capital of the province and the largest city in European Turkey aside from the European section of Istanbul.



Tekirdag Cherry Festival started to be celebrated for the first time in 1962 under the name of “Cherry Cümbüşü”. It was renamed in 1964 and became a traditional annual event that creates a wide range of cultural and entertainment activities. Usually it is held in the first or second week of June and lasts for 4 days. During the festival, corteges, exhibitions, shows, lantern processions, night concerts, cherry competitions,

sailing competitions, festival beauty contests, picnics are held and ends with closing concerts. Fireworks shows are held and amusement parks are established. Many companies also find the opportunity to introduce their products in the aisles they open.

Cherry has a special place for Tekirdağ with its appearance, taste and festival organized in its name.

Marketing approach

With its 50 years of celebration the festival is well known among local people and international visitors. It attracts participants and visitors easily due to the scale and significance of the event. Although a key factor for the festival promotion are the local tour operators and agents, a mass-media promotion is also conducted.

Financial situation

The Mayors of Tekirdağ undertake the Presidency of the Celebration Committee of the Tekirdag Cherry Festival. Since the festival is a platform for promoting Tekirdag and attracting international visitors the local





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authorities allocates funds from its budget not only to organize the fest but also to make it in a large-scale magnificent event.

Key success factors and challenges

Key factors for success of the festival are the traditional roots. The large investments on behalf of Tekirdag municipality are also in favour of the festival.



Plans for future development

The future development refers to attracting visitors from new territories.



Source of the images: Suleymanpasha province official webpage



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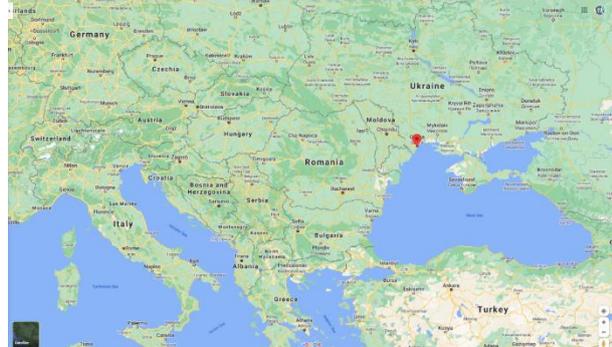
UKRAINE

Odessa Food Tour

Odessa Walks

Location: Odessa, Ukraine

Key words: cuisine, traditions, culture, heritage, tours



Description of best practice related to HCBET

Odessa Walks was established in 2011 by a team of people passionate about guiding and history. All of them are proud of their family roots and love their hometowns - Odessa (Ukraine), Constanta (RO), Varna and Nessebar (BG). The company pioneered many interesting tours amongst which the original history, culture and Food lovers Tour in the Black Sea Ports (hometowns of the founders).

Odessa offers a unique cuisine - a mix of Greek, Bulgarian, Jewish, French, Russian and Ukrainian. Odessa has a reputation of being one of the greatest culinary and cultural centres of Ukraine and the former USSR.

Odessa Food (walk) tour explores the city`s history, lifestyle and culture. On this Foodie walk `one literally eat the way through Odessa`s historical quarter`. There are stops at three local restaurants, each with a different flavour for seated food tastings. In between the stops the food lovers move through the old town, uncovering its hidden gems and exploring the famous sights.

The tour is organized for a small group of people - 12 max.

Marketing approach

The tours are promoted with a standard marketing approach - via Facebook, own website, platforms for tourism (TripAdvisor, Viator, etc.). The company tours are listed among top 20`s users favourites due to the positive response.

Financial situation

The tour is offered on a balanced price. This is reasonable in view of the owner`s active involvement as tour guide. The tour is more popular during winter as it provides cosy and warm food stops.

However, the sustainability of the company is secured through all packages of tours that are offered, incl. on an international level.



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Key success factors and challenges

Key factors for success of the tour and company are:

- Entrepreneurial passion and international diversity in the ownership and offered tours;
- Tours that are designed and guided by local people;
- Promotion from 3 countries - Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria.

Plans for future development

The future development refers to enlargement of the offered tour packages.



Source of the images: <https://www.facebook.com/odessawalks>



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Chornobyl Tour

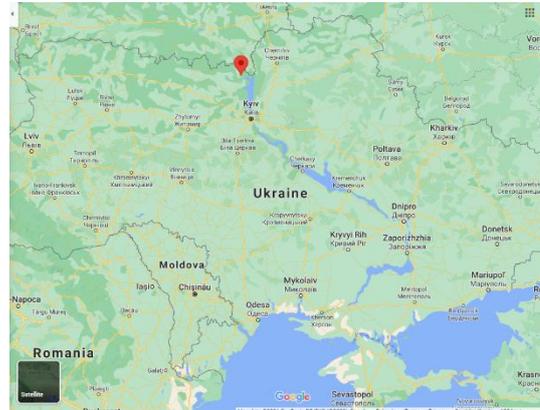
Location: The Agency is located in Kyiv, but they organize tours to Chornobyl

Key words: Travel Agency

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The agency organizes interactive programmes, including different activities, such as:

- visiting the Chornobyl exclusion zone - the world heritage site;
- dining in the Chornobyl nuclear power plant canteen with local employees;
- measurement of radiation with a dosimeter during the tour, which allows comparing the level of radiation on different locations;
- watching the documentaries during the way to/from the site for a better understanding of the accident on the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant;
- teaching skill of radiation survival during the tour;
- visiting the self-settlers (locals who stayed in the Exclusion zone after the accident in 1986);
- exploring the local flora and fauna;
- offering of a wide variety of the Chornobyl-related souvenirs;
- possibility to send a post-card from Chornobyl to a friend or family members.





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Marketing approach

The agency uses different channels to communicate with their potential customers. For example, they actively work in the Social Media (by posting professional content on the regular schedule, communicating and engaging with customers/followers), using SEO. In addition, once they identify potential customers, they keep them involved using different forms of personal communication (face-to-face/ telephone/ personalized emails; surveys)

Besides, the company is using the B2B approach by creating new partnerships during the exhibitions or workshops.

Last, but not the least, their active social position is a great promotion of the business, too.

Financial situation

The agency generates revenue from the services and products they offer to the tourists and this way they fund their activities.

Key success factors and challenges

The team believes that Ukraine has many local traditions, beautiful sites and local food, which attracts the international tourists.

In addition, Chernobyl is a unique tourist destination - people will go there, since there is no other place in the world where they can get such experience. Therefore, focus on the distinctiveness is the key to the success in tourism.

Besides, the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the team of the agency also identifies challenges for the heritage and culture-based experiential tourism in general. In their opinion, there should be a better understanding of the importance of the heritage sites, so, hopefully, in the future, the important cultural and historical sites will not get ruined before they start being supported and protected on the governmental level.

Plans for future development

The team of the agency took time during the pandemic to review their business strategy and change or correct the direction, find ways how to develop the domestic tourism (develop and support local product) and get ready for the next tourism season. They are optimistic, that as soon as the pandemic is over, people will go back to traveling.

Source of the images:

<https://www.facebook.com/chernobyltour/photos/a.2289044554473052/2297480430296131>)



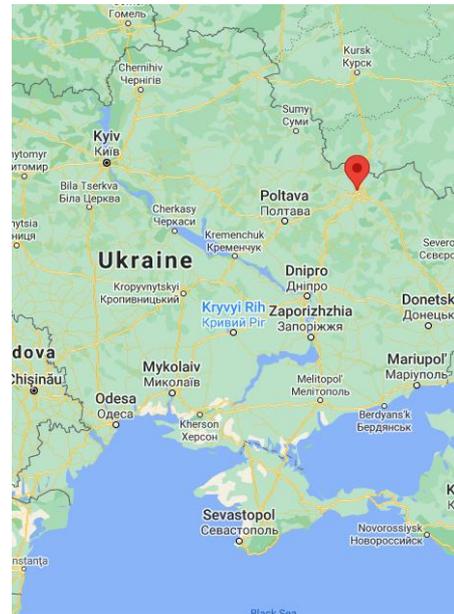
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TURAL Service (International Travel and Tourism Club “ALPHA” (Alpha Travel Club))

Location: Ukraine and abroad (the office is located in Kharkiv, but the agency organizes trips abroad for Ukrainian tourists, mainly visiting different destinations, located on the Black sea coast)

Key words: tour agency, tour operators, outbound tourism



Description of best practice related to HCBET

The team organizes different activities for individual tourists and small organized groups: festivals of creativity for children, visits to wineries and tastings, gastronomic meetings in traditional establishments, student internships abroad and courses for professional development of Ukrainian academics.



Marketing approach

In order to reach their customers, the agency uses social media, email marketing

Financial situation

The agency is working mainly with individual travellers and small groups of tourists. Their clients choose experiential tourism, including event tourism. The agency cooperates with small

host companies and private guides in the countries they organize trips to. The team of the agency considers this model as most relevant for the development of cultural heritage and experiential tourism. However, development is impossible without special programs and information support.

Key success factors and challenges

The team of the agency always keeps an eye on the trends in the demand. Being a small family business and having many years of experience in creating author’s tours, the organisation has the flexibility and skills to change its offer, in response to the changes in the customers’ preferences. For instance, they have observed that the gastronomic tours has become





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increasingly popular lately, so they are working on the development of such products at the moment.

Concerning the challenges, the biggest ones now are related to the COVID-19 pandemic and all the restrictions imposed, in this regards, which make it very complicated to organize touristic experiences, especially abroad.

Plans for future development

In the nearest future, the company is aiming to enrich its portfolio including the development of more tours including new activities and destinations.



Source of the images: <http://www.turalservice.com/>

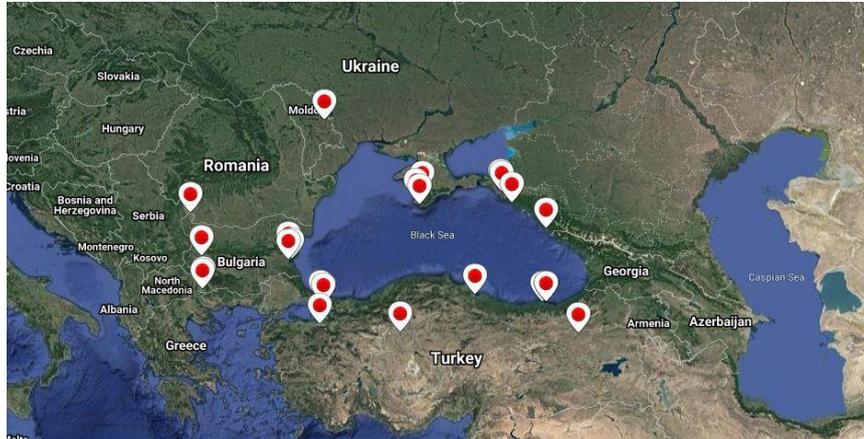


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Black Sea Cuisine

(A trans-regional cluster initiative, coordinated by the International Transcoast Executive Committee (BSC ITEC) <https://blackseacuisine.world/contact-us/>)



Location: Black Sea region

Key words: cuisine, traditions, culture

Description of best practice related to HCBET

The countries in the Black Sea Basin avail of unique culinary traditions and authentic cuisines. Many tourist products and services are organized based on the culinary traditions of the specific places and areas. Yet, many studies indicate that none of the cuisines of the countries bordering the Black Sea features in the TOP-20 of the most popular cuisines. Some of them are not in the TOP-40, even in the TOP-50. Further research has shown that Black Sea Cuisine as a title does exist in the majority of consumers' minds, however, people are hardly able to name the dishes and tastes that are associated with it.

That is why a voluntary team of chefs, hotel and restaurant managers decided to launch the initiative "Black Sea Cuisine" and establish a new a culinary brand that is to turn the Black Sea Coast into an internationally attractive destination for gastronomic tourism.

The idea was first launched by the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers in Russia after Sochi was elected to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2014. Afterwards, partner from Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Turkey and Ukraine joined. The initiative is managed by the Black Sea Cuisine.

The mission of the initiative is to develop and offer to final consumers as well as involved small, medium and big size enterprises a distinct and accomplished Brand - the Black Sea Cuisine - and make it well recognizable and appreciated worldwide.

The main trait of the Black Sea Cuisine Initiative is that it is a non-formal cross-border cooperation of like-minded experts and professionals in hospitality and gastronomy who share the same passion for the food and eating traditions in along the Black Sea Coast. It resembles very much a community of practice where the members interact regularly to improve their

knowledge and skills, to revive and compare the indigenous recipes across borders, as well as to organize and participate in various publicity events in order to introduce and promote the new brand.

The main elements and activities of the Black Sea Cuisine include:

- gathering a common data-base of dishes that are typical for the Black Sea area and organizing it along the different geographic and cultural zones along the coast - east, west, north and south;
- selection of 50 dishes and 25 original food products that form the Black Sea Cuisine, including fish, meat, fruits, vegetables, cheeses, herbs and spices;

The culinary selection is complemented by drinks. The experts have had the difficult task of screening over 650 collected proposals to elaborate a representative selection of dishes that fulfil the criteria for the brand.

- development and offering of a menu of food and traditional recipes that are classified as Black Sea Cuisine in the establishments of the members of the initiative;
- The selection of the most marketable dishes from Common Database form the Short Integrated Menu (SIM) as an undisputed core of Black Sea Cuisine Brand.
- organization of promotional and awareness-raising events for the culinary traditions and the traditional food along the Black Sea coast;
- sustaining a blog of the brand, production and dissemination of video-material;
- enlarging the informal team of the initiative with experts, practitioners and entrepreneurs from all Black Sea countries;
- mobilizing the local and regional potential to include the Black Sea Cuisine in the list of top-15 most popular cuisines in the long run;



Marketing approach

The Black Sea Cuisine brand was initially promoted via informal communication channels and on-line media. It has a website and blog that publish information not only on the brand, but also on the development trends in the food sector as well as on hospitality. The initiative caught the attention of regional media, which developed reports on it.

Common borders. Common solutions.



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In the next stages, concepts will be developed for many format promotional events - festivals, fairs, exhibitions, gala evenings, culinary master classes, etc., aimed at promoting Black Sea Cuisine. The promoters of the initiative believe that these activities will help to improve the quality of the tourist flow and reduce the anthropogenic impact on coastal areas in the region.

Financial situation

The promoters of the idea for the establishment of the Black Sea cuisine brand have organized themselves as regional horizontal cluster and function as an informal network and community of practice. The members are distinctive restaurants, hotels, wineries and producers that are working to implement the Black Sea Cuisine strategy as an added value to their regular offer. The sustainability of these ventures guarantees the sustainability of initiative.

Key success factors and challenges

Key factors for success of the initiative are:

- Community of like-minded experts, professionals and entrepreneurs in culinary arts and hospitality representing different Black Sea countries;
- Diversity of cultures presented;
- Established need, demand and niche for locally-based gastronomic tourism in the Black Sea region;
- Based on shared interest and bottom-up cooperation among professionals and entrepreneurs;
- Shared regional identity and genuine cross-cultural collaboration.

Plans for future development

The future development refers to the establishment of the Black Sea Cuisine brand on the market and creating a network of establishments (restaurants, hotels, guesthouses, etc.) where the brand menu is offered on a permanent basis. The overall aim is to position Black Sea Cuisine Brand in the list of 15 internationally most recognizable world cuisines by the end of 2025. Another aim is to create a Black Sea Cuisine Recipes Directory as a guide with clues for professional chefs and non-professional enthusiasts alike. Even at this early stage, the Brand could provide benefits to a number of stakeholders, including franchising operations among Black Sea Cuisine Branded restaurants, street food vendors, food and wine producers and retailers, etc.

Source of the images: Google



The editor of the material: Varna University of Management

Address: Bulgaria, 9000 Varna, 13A Oborishte str.

Phone: +359 58 655 620

E-mail: projects_dept@vumk.eu

Website: www.vumk.bg

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