

IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE PARTICIPATORY INCLUSIVE TOURISM

European Youth Roots

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This publication has been authored and designed by:

FilmWorks Trust

Pimlico Resource Centre,

Walston House,

Aylesford Street,

London

SW1V 3RL

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About the European Youth Roots project

The European Youth Roots project promotes the involvement of young people in innovative projects in the field of participatory and sustainable tourism, co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, it aims to raise awareness on the theme of sustainable and inclusive tourism and develop new innovative approaches to enable more young people to get involved in the industry. The project is provided by a partnership of 7 European organisations:



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Foreword

This handbook has been created to support young people within rural areas and/or areas with population decline, interested in implementing sustainable, participatory, and inclusive tourism products either within established tourism businesses, or as new start-ups.

There is a demand for such products generated by an increasing number of consumers looking for a more accessible, greener, more personally enriching and more ethical holiday experience; there

is great opportunity for young entrepreneurs to take advantage of this, launching their own tourism products or adjusting an existing business to meet this market.

Part One will support the ideation and creation of a new tourism product, providing you with an overview to sustainable, participatory and inclusive tourism and the key attributes they need to support you in defining your own product.

Part Two will provide guidance on the marketing of the new tourism product and the necessary information to kick-start its implementation and your business plan. Further information on this topic can be found in our accompanying manual on promoting your tourism business.

Part Three provides advice on the legal aspects to consider when selling tourism services within Europe and additional information on how to maximise your sustainability and accessibility credentials.

We use case studies throughout this manual, providing examples of how others have successfully built sustainable, participatory, and inclusive tourism products to inspire you.

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THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SUSTAINABLE, PARTICIPATORY, AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM



Be the change that you
wish to see in the World.

Mahatma Gandhi



DEFINING WHAT WE MEAN BY SUSTAINABLE, PARTICIPATORY, AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM

To begin, we will define what we mean by Sustainable, Participatory, or Inclusive tourism, as there is considerable confusion on these terms:

Sustainable Tourism is defined as tourism or traveling that reduces the environmental impacts of its activities and sustains the well-being of the host communities, economically and culturally, as well as preserving the local environment.

Participatory Tourism can be defined as engaging local stakeholders with tourists and tourism in their area and ensuring active participation in the tourism offer. This could range from local communities hosting tourists in their own homes and providing tours to mass re-enactments of historical events or demonstrations of traditional cultures, crafts and lifestyles. Communication and collaboration is key to participatory tourism.

Inclusive can be defined as opening tourism to all audiences regardless of ability. This could range from older guests to wheelchair users, children or adults on the autistic spectrum, young mothers with prams, individuals with hearing or visual impairments - reducing barriers for participation. "All people have the right to enjoy tourism, whatever their background or abilities" Source: European Network of Accessible Tourism (ENAT) Code of Good Conduct, 2020

Tourism products that are sustainable, participatory and inclusive tourism, as we will outline in this manual, are the future of modern tourism and provide a real opportunity for young entrepreneurs.



THE OPPORTUNITY

There is a growing demand across Europe, and around the World, for a more sustainable form of tourism. More and more individuals are looking to lessen their impact on the environment while enjoying an enriching personal experience on holiday, with a more ethical form of tourism. This growth, and interest, in a greener form of tourism, has been driven by increased awareness of climate change and the negative environmental, and cultural, impact of mass tourism.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation defines Sustainable Tourism as "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities."

Sustainable tourism is therefore more than simply a low impact on the environment, its goal is to maximise the positive impacts of tourism for everyone while

respecting the environment, supporting the local economy and remaining culturally and socially aware.

Tourism products that are participatory, fits within this ethos, by putting the host community first, so everyone is consulted and works together for the social and economic benefits, environmental preservation and great guest experiences.

This collaboration and sharing of the benefits to all stakeholders in tourism, through a participatory approach, creates tourism products that not only provide unique encounters for tourists to discover and learn but collectively contribute to the local communities they visit, and therefore their sustainability.

Opening up a tourism product to all, is also a key aspect of sustainable tourism, and this includes travellers with disabilities or additional needs.

Inclusive Tourism creates an environment where people of all ages and abilities are welcome, with their needs catered for or supported. This includes those with mobility, hearing, sight, cognitive, or intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, as well as elderly people and people with temporary disabilities.

Considering the above, it is fair to say that businesses and young people looking to offer sustainable, participatory and inclusive tourism products need to look beyond their environmental impact to see what societal impact they can have, supporting the local community or indigenous people, seeing how can involve them in the business, generate income with them, and help preserve their customs and traditions, all while providing life-enhancing experiences for all tourists, regardless of ability or disability.

A Growing Market

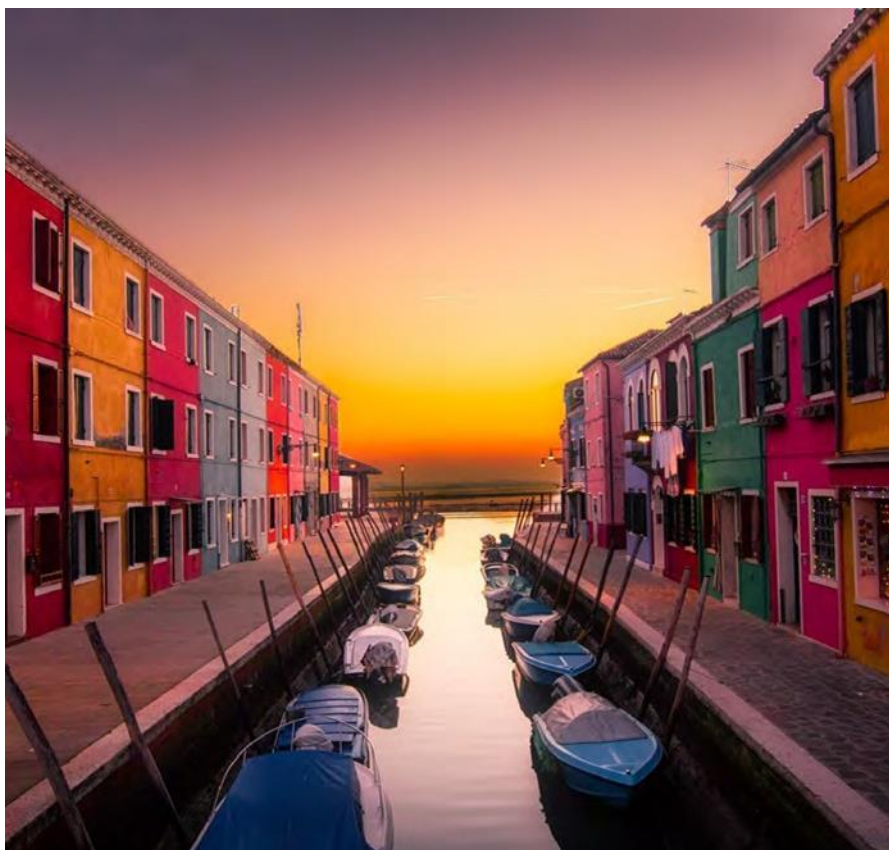
In many sectors, it is a fact that consumers are turning towards more sustainable options as their concern for the environment grows. From green energy to sustainably sourced clothing to ethical food and drink, consumers are increasingly choosing eco-brands and sustainable alternatives, looking for the green option and occasionally paying a small premium for this.

This drive towards green includes tourism where there is an increasing number of self-identified eco-tourists as well as a larger number of tourists, who while they may not identify as eco-tourists are making decisions based on green factors and green certification or awards especially when criteria such as quality and price are matched.

We know from research that increasing numbers of travellers are concerned about their carbon footprint and seeking ways to minimise the environmental impact of their travels - the Swedish have a word *flygskam*, which means 'flight-shame', reflecting the travel guilt that many are now expressing as they become increasingly aware of the impact flying and other forms of travel have on the planet.

As rapidly growing numbers of tourists want their travel to be less invasive, environmentally and culturally, and more beneficial economically to their hosts; ecotourism, including several types of wildlife-based experiences, has become increasingly popular, now contributing to an estimated 40% of all tourist activities (GlobalData, 2017; Belicia & Islam, 2018).

According to The International Ecotourism Society the market for sustainable tourism, across all destinations, has been growing since the 1990s at a rate of between 20-34% every year.



Recent years have seen a continual expansion of this sector and, despite the interruption to normal business caused by COVID-19, it is predicted to return to normal and then grow further in the future.

This expansion in sustainable tourism is seen all across Europe. In Italy, as the awareness of the impact travel had on the environment rose significantly between 2011 and 2019, so did the share of Italian tourists considering environmentally-friendly aspects when planning trips.

As of 2019, roughly 60 percent of Italians claimed to make eco-friendly choices while organising their trip destinations, accommodation and transport, and data shows that tourists are increasingly choosing eco-friendly holidays in Italy with, for example, 54 million overnight stays in Italy by tourists cycling on holiday in 2019.

According to the World Tourism Organization, responsible or ecotourism is known by 60% of French people, more than 80% of whom prefer travel agencies with a responsible and ecological approach. In addition, 88% of French people agree to find it important to act in favour of the environment, more than half of which are ready to pay more for a destination entering into sustainable tourism.

Looking at the demand for accessible and inclusive tourism products, the number of tourists with one form of disability or another is increasing along with the aging world population, therefore increasing the number of disabled individuals looking for accessible holidays.

Europe, in particular, has a large market for inclusive and accessible tourism.

According to the CBI Research, there were around 140 million people with access needs in Europe. This number is expected to reach 160 million by 2025, due to the aging population.

People with disabilities aged 15-64 account for around a third of people with access needs in Europe.

Senior citizens (aged 65 or older) make up the other two-thirds of people with disabilities in Europe.

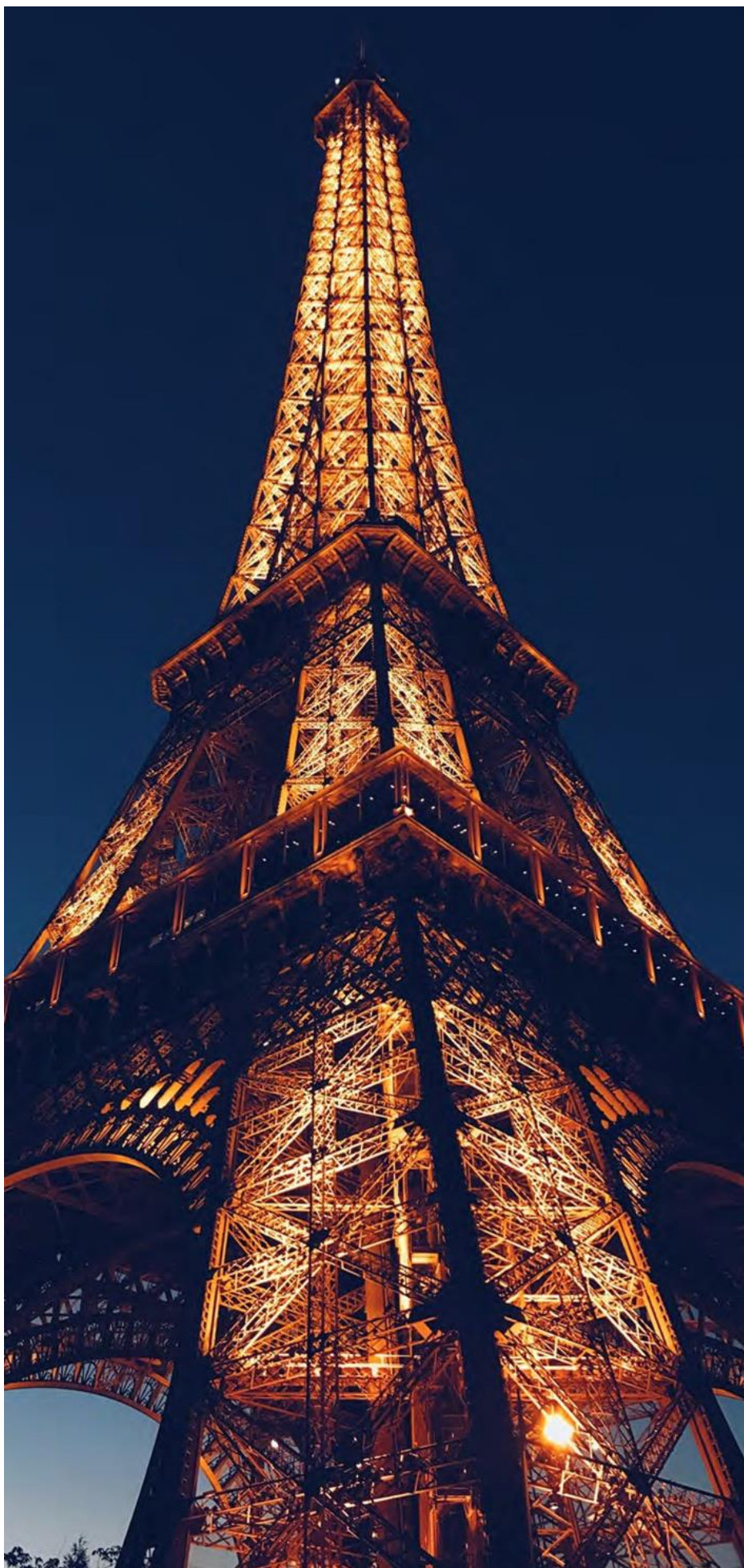
More than a third of Europeans over 65 have some form of age-related disability and this proportion is expected to increase. Europe is currently home to almost 100 million seniors (age 65+), which is around 19% of all inhabitants. By 2030, the percentage of senior citizens is expected to rise to 24%. Although these disabilities may differ from those in the 15-64 group, the accessibility requirements are similar.

To travel, these people need to have their access needs met. Improving accessibility can therefore bring lasting economic and social benefits, especially as Europeans with access needs travel with 2 additional companions, on average.

As accessible destinations and tourism products continue to be limited, travellers with disabilities have a relatively limited choice. This generates a high level of loyalty to accessible destinations, making them relatively likely to return and recommend.

For example, in Germany about 37% of disabled people previously decided not to travel due to a lack of accessible facilities. However, 48% would travel more if the facilities were available and 60% would be willing to pay more for improved accessibility.

Improving accessibility and supporting inclusion can provide a clear competitive advantage in this market, while broadening your customer base.



CASE STUDY: LOST IN NATURE OUTDOOR FESTIVAL

The Lost in Nature Outdoor Festival is hosted in Salento, in the southernmost region of Italy, Puglia. An area of natural beauty, with crystal-clear waters, stunning cliffs, gorgeous countryside and small Italian villages.

This yearly festival encompassed outdoor sports (kayaking, kitesurfing, windsurfing, stand up paddleboarding, rock-climbing, coastal trekking, cycling, yoga, acroyoga, slackline and a few more) as well as workshops for adults and children (wild herbs and fauna recognition, mindfulness and breathing exercise). The festival celebrated sustainability, wellness and nature.

The founders of the festival are Lidia Chiappalone, a 32-year-old with a background in quality management, marketing and communication as well as local tourism development and Sara Simeone, a 27-years old web designer and sustainable tourism graduate, working alongside a team including an Italian Sign Language speaker and a group of guides, instructors, camping owners.

Hosted in 2019 and 2020, the tickets were sold out (although activities were scaled back in 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic) with extremely positive feedback from participants.

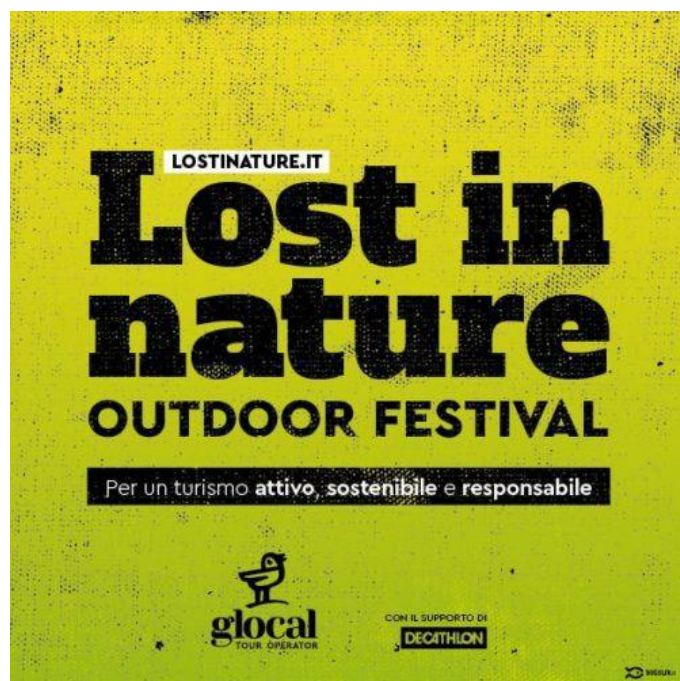
The success of the Festival was due to its planning and management approach. Chiappalone and Simeone, engaged stakeholders throughout the planning to ensure their needs were met and their involvement delivered results for them; from increasing the revenues of small accommodation facilities and local food producers, promoting local musicians or simply providing an enriching and empowering experience to attendees.

"That was an unforgettable experience! Breath-taking climbs, kayaking on crystal-clear waters, cycling among century-old olive trees and refreshing woods, meditating in calm"

Dario from Florence

"It is an opportunity to share sports and nature with people alike: I strongly suggest it!"

Annalisa from Bari



Aspects of a Sustainable, Participatory and Inclusive Tourism Product

When considering creating a new tourism offer it is important to understand the key elements which will attract a tourist searching for a sustainable, participatory or inclusive experience :

Sustainable

Nature

Being in nature, preferably in untouched wildlife or remote or unique landscapes, is very important, especially to the eco-tourist. Whether that is seeing and enjoying the wildlife or beautiful landscapes, nature and wildlife frequently top the list of must-haves.

Think about how nature could possibly play a part in your offer; from coastal kayak tours to hiking through the mountains and wild camping under star-filled skies, what can your local environment offer? Are you in a National Park or a scientifically significant area?

Across Europe, wildlife watching has become a lucrative industry with growing demand from visitors and an increase in the number of commercial operators concentrated on delivering wildlife encounters.

In the UK, visits to seaside and coastal regions are a large proportion of holiday trip destinations (England – 36.1%, Scotland – 21.6%, Wales –

50.9%) (GBTS, 2018), with many visitors drawn by the beautiful environment, wildlife and marine-based activities.

In Scotland alone, nature-based tourism generates £1.4 billion annually with over 10% of that attributed to wildlife watching activities (Bryden et al., 2010).

Environmentally Friendly

Green tourists and eco-tourists want their stay, and every aspect of their holiday to be environmentally friendly, and as carbon-neutral as possible. If you have an existing building you want to let out as a holiday cottage, how can you make it as environmentally friendly as possible? Can you off-set your emissions by tree-planting?

Whatever you do, don't forget to let your customers know.

We provide some examples of ways to improve your environmental efficiency in Part Three of this manual.

Small-scale and Individualistic

Eco-tourists are typically looking for small-scale activities that are more personal and one-to-one than mass tourism; so small locally run accommodation rather than mega-chains, a local hired guide walking them through the town and providing a one-to-one tour.

Participatory

Simple and slower living

Tourists interested in participatory holidays want to reconnect with traditional values, like simpler ways of living, a slower pace of life and family-centred lifestyles. Community-based activities, arts and crafts, a sense of returning to earlier, simpler times.

How can you include the simpler pleasures within your offer – from enjoying the countryside and roaming the wilderness, cooking over an open fire, to building a shelter out in the woods. It could be as easy as highlighting local walks and cycle paths or inspiring journeys to take by train or boat.



Embedded within the local community

Participatory tourists want to know they are supporting local communities and know that their tourism is benefiting them positively. They also want to experience anything unique within the local community – events, people or history. So as part of your offer consider how you can include the local; whether that is featuring local artists, highlighting local community businesses or detailing the area's history, buying food locally and highlighting its provenance to your customers or simply stocking local guides and local books, or informing individuals about local charities and causes. How can you support the local economy? And involve them in your tourism offer? Are there local farmers willing and able to produce good quality food for your business? Where can the tourists stay, eat and enjoy?

Authentic, Immersion and Experiential

Participatory tourists are looking for authentic experiences, unique moments either interacting with local cultures or experiencing a once in a lifetime event. From enjoying traditional foods prepared by local guides to bird watching and whale watching tours. Is there something unique locally that you can share with visitors?

Educational or Experience-led

An enriching personal experience is important to the tourist, whether this is simply a good local guide leading them through the landscape or a hands-on experience where they help build a community school or harvest and cook food from the fields.

Whether self-guided or instructed, an element of education or instruction needs to be considered.



From leading alpacas through the mountains to cooking traditional food and eating it alongside the village elders, what elements of education or experience could you add into their day? Do you have local conservation organisations you can partner with?

Communication

Don't forget to communicate with the local community and ideally co-create solutions with them, look at ways everyone within the community can benefit from the tourism and feel some degree of ownership.

Inclusion

Accessibility

The quality and accessibility of accommodation is especially important to disabled travellers; clean, secure and well-maintained facilities, personalised services, friendly staff, baggage service, spacious rooms, comfortable beds and quiet nights.

Accessible accommodation shouldn't just be functional. It should also be designed with the relaxed atmosphere and style of other tourist facilities.

Travellers with disabilities like to engage in outdoor activities on their holidays. This can range from excursions to more intensive activities like canoeing.

Group activities are especially popular. To offer these activities, you may need special equipment like adapted all-terrain vehicles, pool lifts or beach wheelchairs.

Clear information

Travelling with a disability requires considerable organisation. To arrange a holiday, travellers with disabilities need clear and reliable information on the availability of accessible facilities and services. However, such information is often lacking.

This poses a major barrier for travellers with access needs,

because they need to know if accessible facilities and services are available. In fact, about 50% would travel more if they had the proper information.

Travellers with disabilities are more likely to have special dietary preferences or requirements than other travellers. This makes the availability of special menus especially important to this segment.

People with disabilities tend to have greater health concerns. A lack of medical assistance and health care can pose a considerable barrier and leads to low satisfaction rates. To feel more secure about travelling away from their local health services, travellers with disabilities often inquire about the facilities at their destination in advance.

To give travellers the necessary confidence, provide information on the accessibility of your local infrastructures and services, include a point of contact in your communication so the reader can obtain more information

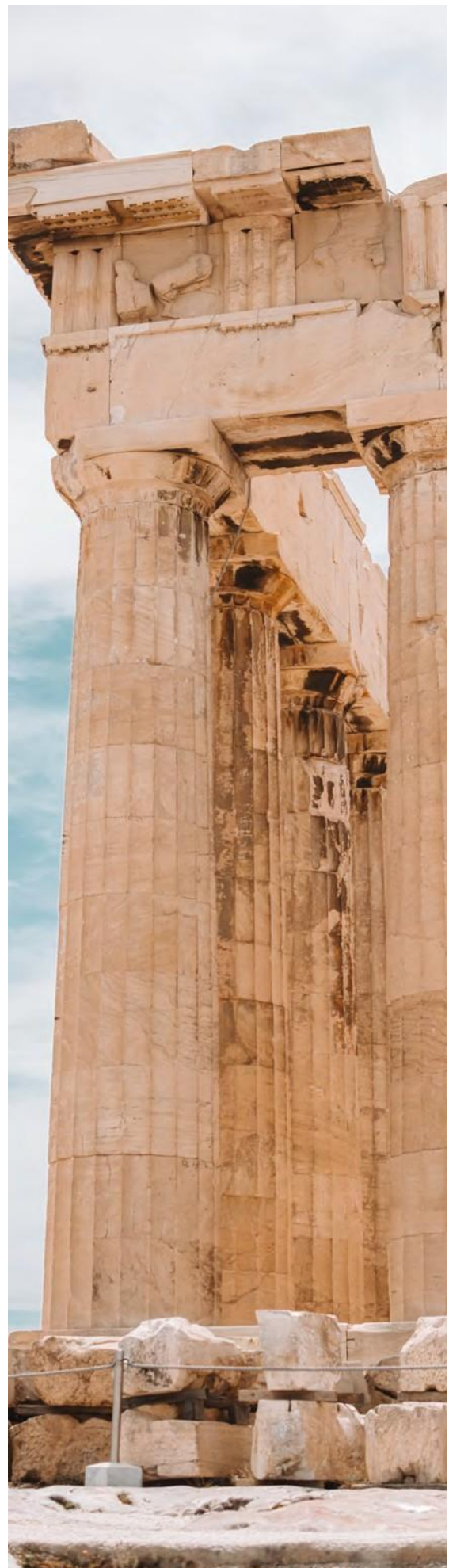
Providing quality information includes making it available to travellers with disabilities. For example, your website must be designed to accommodate for people with visual or hearing impairments. Factors to consider include text size, contrast, voice function and ease of navigation.

The ENAT Code of Good Conduct is an international certification scheme for tourism businesses and organisations, recognising their efforts to promote accessible travel and tourism. It consists of eight guiding principles that make your product accessible to all visitors with access needs.

Use the ENAT Code of Conduct as a guideline to increase your chances of meeting the expectations of European travellers with disabilities.

For details, refer to the ENAT Code of Good Conduct Background Information.

Whether designing your tourism product from scratch or branching out from an existing tourism business, an understanding of the economic, social and environmental impacts need to be at the core of your business plan.



EXERCISE

Nature

What does the local environment provide in terms of wildlife and landscape to enjoy?

Uniqueness

Is there anything locally that is different from anywhere else? A unique community or group of indigenous people?

Education

What can you share with the tourist? What can they learn about? What will learn? What will they enjoy? How can you build environmental and cultural awareness?

Individualistic

How can you personalise the experience to make it feel like it is just for them?

Simple

How can you include some elements of simple living within your offer? Nature treks, outdoor cooking or night sky watching?

EXERCISE

Local

How can you bring the local community in? Either by using local, seasonal food in meals or advertising local restaurants. What positive impact will your business have on the local economy? How will your business give back or contribute?

Environmentally Friendly

What do you need to do to be as green and environmentally friendly as possible? How will you minimise environmental impact? What will the environmental impact be?

Accessibility

How can you make the experience accessible for everyone? Are there any specific accessibility concerns?

Positive Impact

What positive impact will your business have on customers? What will they take away?

CASE STUDY: ECOMARINE

EcoMarine Malta was born in 2018 when Patrizia Patti and Giovanni De Lazzari, the founders, decided to bring their experience in Italy to Malta, with the aim of creating the first sustainable "Marine Life Watching" enterprise in Malta, taking up the challenge to merge public awareness with research.

EcoMarine Malta is all about capturing the beauty of the sea and all its creatures in a tranquil and educational environment.

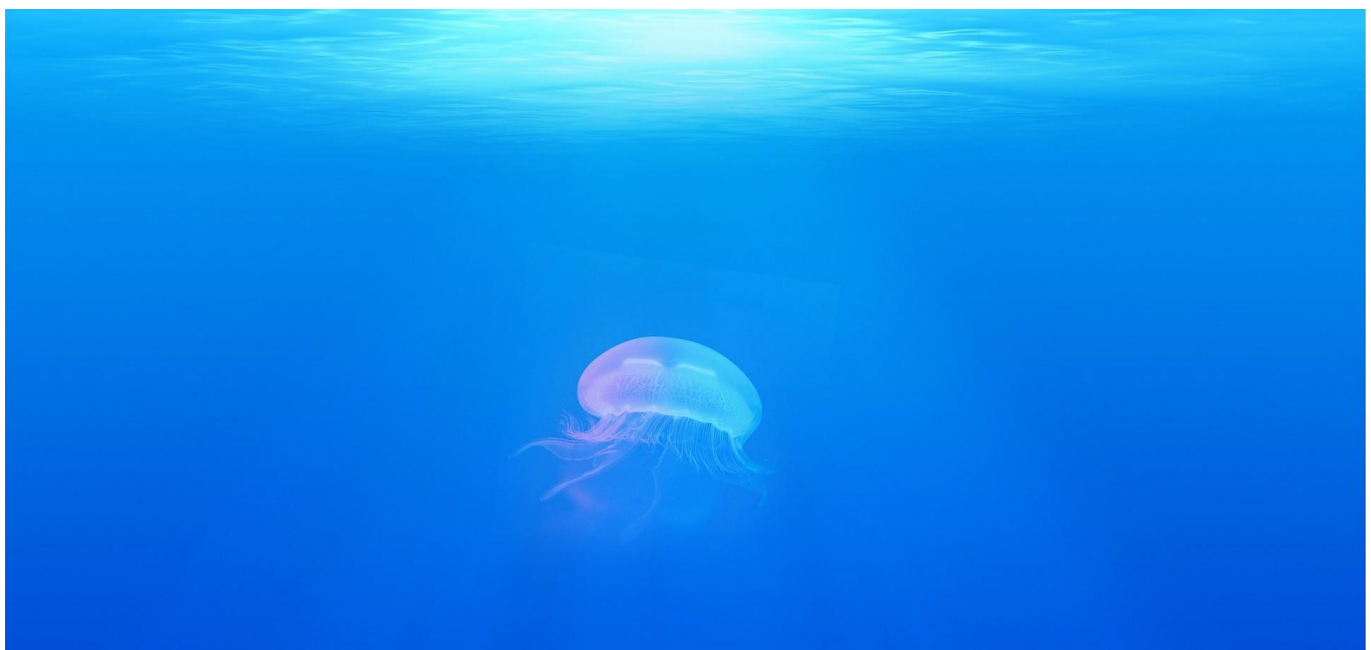
Combining fun, sustainability and respect for nature is the challenge EcoMarine faces every day.

By having them get involved and through direct experiences, more awareness is created, and understanding of how everyone protect our seas.

The courses and tours are structured to guide the participant through a friendly and joyful path ending with increased awareness and attention towards environmental issues.

The project is developing sustainable marine tourism in collaborations with other enterprises that help the community, take care of the environment and create unique and memorable experiences for visitors.

At the moment EcoMarine is still the only company offering boat-based eco-friendly tours with a marine scientist on board in Malta and Gozo.





2 MARKETING A NEW TOURISM PRODUCT

“

Do the best you can
until you know better.
Then when you know
better, do better.

Maya Angelou



MARKETING

The modern, digital age has changed the way that individuals buy holidays. The modern consumer carries out significant online research before committing their money, whether they are buying a new car, a piece of furniture or booking a holiday. They read reviews, testimonials and guides; they devour all the online pieces of information they can find. The more expensive the product they are buying, the longer they'll take and the more information they'll consume.

Not that long ago, potential tourists walked into travel agents and leaved through brochures, trusting the knowledge of the travel agent and the small amount of text provided in the brochure, to be factual and accurate.

Now a modern, digital consumer will carry out hours of research before committing to a holiday or tourism experience.

Nervous, wary of being scammed or losing money, or having a terrible experience on holiday, the modern tourist needs to trust you and the experience you are offering, and this trust is developed through the potential customer reading reviews, seeing the accommodation, reading about the locations, wildlife, tours available etc.

Consuming a large amount of content, each piece of which needs to reassure them or excite and

inspire them, until they commit to buying.

This means that at the heart of your marketing plan needs to be content; content designed to attract a clearly defined audience and move them from interested to buying.

What does this mean for your new tourism product?

It means you will need to acquire some digital marketing experience or find an agency that can do this for you.

Once you have decided on your tourism product, to attract customers you need to create as much content as possible and keep creating content, publishing it to as many platforms as possible, including your own website.

The more content you create the more inbound customers you'll be able to attract, and the more trust you'll be able to build up until they press "buy", and the higher you will rank on google searches.

Website

It is absolutely vital to have a content rich website. There are many tools for creating your own website so if confident, you can create your own website using for example WordPress, without the need for specialist knowledge or the ability to code. If less confident in your design skills, you can employ a web agency or freelance web designer.

prominent location so users can easily find it.

The internet is an especially important source of information for people with disabilities. For many, it is their primary source of information. European travellers with disabilities increasingly book their holidays directly with local tourism providers, especially those from younger generations, so consider additional accessibility options - font sizing, colour choice - as well as providing clear accessibility information.

Social Media

Customers will typically be across several social media platforms, so a presence on the main three would be recommended – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



search terms typed into your website allow you to see what your customers are most concerned about and allow you to directly address it or if it is already addressed on the website then perhaps move it to a more

and others, as well as capture testimonials for your website and social channels.

Media Outreach and PR

As well as online activities, think about ways to engage and inform traditional and online media - from TV programming to magazine and print, nationally, regionally and

internationally. Research the names of travel editors or editors in the field of your particular tourism product, for example if you include food or nature or sport.

The media is always looking for stories and something interesting to cover, so if you can provide them with a news-worthy story, you might be able to get some publicity.

A link from a mainstream media company, such as a national broadcaster, to your website would increase your google rank and adds to that trust we are looking to foster within your prospective customer.

Guidebooks are still a good way of promoting tourist destinations. Some guidebooks charge, for your business to be featured, and others don't, so be sure to check what their policy is on membership fees.

Linking between all three social platforms and your website also raises your web pages rank as well as drives traffic, increases conversation and engagement. Depending upon your demographic and target audience, other platforms might be worth adding into the mix.

Review Sites

You'll want to encourage your customers to leave reviews on review websites such as TripAdvisor

CASE STUDY: WEGOGREENR

We Go GreenR is a young start-up from Bordeaux, that launched a website for booking eco-responsible accommodation and local activities for the whole of France.

The idea was born in the minds of two city-dwellers in their thirties, who are as much in love with travel as they are sensitive to environmental issues.

Like more than 7 out of 10 travellers, they were ready to opt for a more nature-friendly holiday by staying in an eco-responsible establishment.

Faced with the difficulty of finding a place that meets all their requirements (pleasure, comfort, nature, discovery, respect for the environment, and all this for a reasonable budget), they decided to take action, and in May 2020

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launched We Go GreenR to make it easier to find verified eco-accommodation and environmentally friendly activities locally in France.



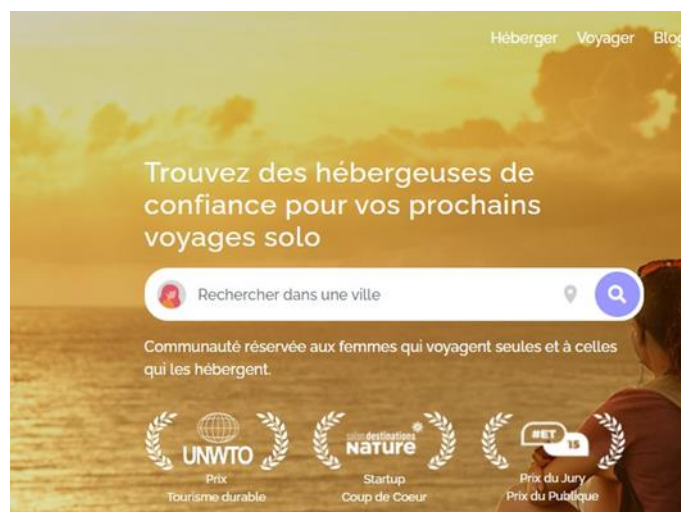
CASE STUDY: LA VOYAGEUSE

La Voyageuse is a web platform operating in French and English, and a mobile app that networks women who travel alone and need to find verified and trusted hosts around the world, directly with hosts.

Travelling alone can be a liberating experience, giving yourself the chance to discover yourself, others and an open and welcoming world, however, safety concerns and travelling alone to a new city or country can be worrying for unaccompanied women.

La Voyageuse, built on personal experience of the founders, helps by providing trusted hosts, who can offer accommodation as well as our local tours.

As well as providing safety and local knowledge, it can break the loneliness of some hosts, so everyone benefits.



Direct Marketing

Creating a database of enquiries and customers (subject to GDPR regulations around marketing and processing) allows you to continue to market to new prospects and contact potential return visitors with offers via email or post.

Certification Schemes and Awards

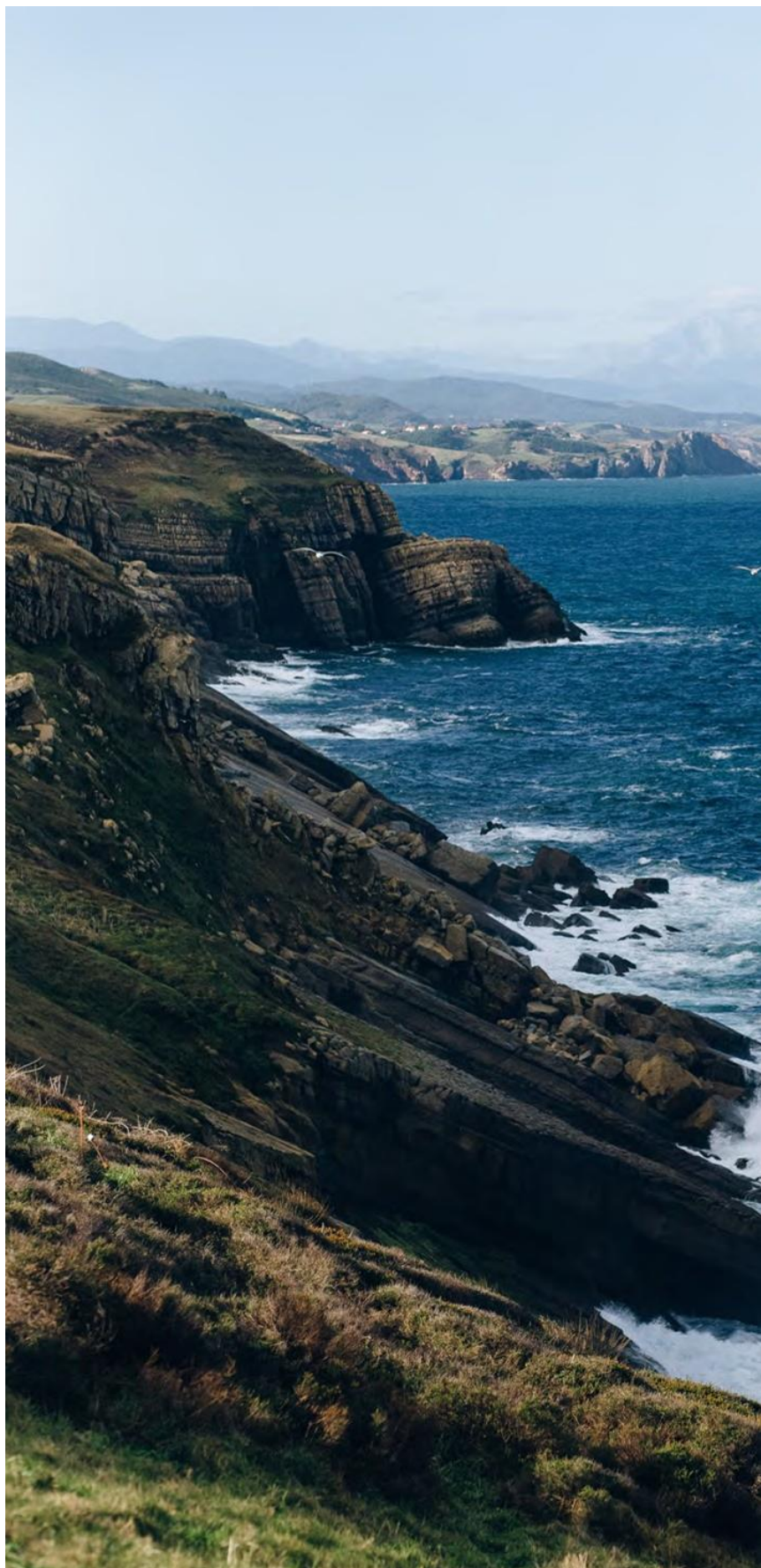
As well as proving your environmental credentials, certification schemes and awards are great ways of marketing to prospective customers, providing a great news-worthy story to broadcast across all channels and acting as a seal of approval or quality, which again increases the trust a visitor will feel.

Schemes such as the Green Tourism Award, the EU's Flower Ecolabel and Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism.

Awards are all examples of schemes or awards you can put yourself forward for.

Using Established Travel Agents and Travel Operators

For any start-up, it can be tough to attract new customers without the marketing database, reputation or reviews needed to find and reassure the browsing eco-tourist. You may consider partnering with a mainstream or niche travel agent or travel operator.



We cannot advise you on the legal aspects of any partnership you seek out and instead advise you to take independent legal advice before you sign with travel agents or operators. Remember European tour operators will always seek professional and reliable suppliers. They need to protect their own brand image, consequently, many European tour operators will have their own code of conduct, which they require their suppliers to comply with.

A typical code of conduct may include health and safety requirements, guest and staff management processes, environmental standards, or local impact as well as regulatory relating to insurances, the avoidance of child or forced labour and corporate social responsibility. A tour operator will monitor press and review sites to ensure a high standard is continually met, as any negative press will reflect on them too.

Example Travel Operators:
Responsibletravel.com

Responsibletravel.com is one of the leading internet retailer of ecotourism holidays, offering a wide range of holidays, tours and excursions. To be advertised and partnered with Responsibletravel, and join their network, you would need to fulfil specific environmental, social and economic criteria. The cost would depend on the size and nature of your business. You would also need to pay a commission for every booking.

There are many similar travel agencies similar to Responsibletravel that could be approached.

A number of European tour operators specialise in accessible tourism and travellers with disabilities often prefer the reliability of tour operators and complete packages.



Disabled associations and societies

In Europe, people with disabilities are often members of organisations aimed at specific illnesses or disabilities.

They are also likely to be regular visitors of related websites. It could be valuable to approach such organisations, as they offer direct access to potential customers who are looking for accessible holidays and offering a discount to members or some other benefit.

CASE STUDY: GOBOAT

GoBoat was founded in 2014 in Copenhagen by the three entrepreneurs Anders, Kasper and Carl with the ambition to make the water accessible to everyone.

Since then, more than a million people has enjoyed memorable experiences on the water with GoBoat around the world.

GoBoat cares about the sustainable experience in order to leave as few carbon footprints as possible, sailing only on renewable water, wind and solar energy, and encouraging sailors to pick up rubbish they see floating.

“GoBoat came to life because we wanted to provide unique experiences and unforgettable memories

on the water to as many people as possible. The idea sprung from a fascination for the maritime universe and the joy and freedom you feel when spending time on the water. We strive to deliver safe and comfortable experiences with a high level of service. We want to ensure that you always feel welcome and that you have the best possible experience on the water.”



CASE STUDY: SPRING BILDUNGS URLAUB

Spring's Educational Institution in Hessen Germany runs accredited courses in Personal & Professional Development and attracts German Tourists to Malta for short Educational Holidays.

German tourists visit Malta for 5-to-10-day Educational Holidays and attend courses in Personal & Professional Development, combining culture with coaching.

This in turn is creating a new niche in tourism in Malta and involves, participatory, inclusive and sustainable tourism concepts connecting tourists to Maltese Heritage and culture.



Writing up your Business Plan

The best way to review and present your tourism product is to create a business plan. A typical business plan needs to contain the following:

Executive Summary - this section will summarise all the important information from the whole business plan in a maximum of 2 pages.

Think of it as a cinema trailer for your entire idea, but one that gives the ending away. As it is a complete summary of the entire plan, it might be best to write it after writing all the other sections.

Key topics to cover are what you are offering, who you are and why you are particularly qualified to do this and who you will be targeting, what you need to deliver and what support or funding you need.

Business Description – this is where you break down all the necessary information for an investor or bank to understand what your tourism product is.

Objectives - Start by stating your objectives, and what they are. Aim for a maximum of four key objectives. This could be launching a new, unique business that is profitable within a year for example.

Type of business – explain what sector/niche you will be in – so for example bike hire or outdoor learning provider – or what you will be offering.

Target market – who are you marketing to? For example, nature lovers and those interested in mountain climbing.

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of running this business – for example you could operate from a beautiful, historical

barn in the middle of a natural landscape but one that is in need of renovation. What experience or skills do you have?

Whether you will be operating as a Sole proprietor, Partnership or Limited Liability Company.

Give a description of the products or services you will be offering. Describe things such as level and quality of service. What is the price of your product or service? How and where will it be delivered? Briefly how will it be marketed and sold?

Management and Organisation - The aim of this section is to demonstrate why you are for this project? What's your skillset, experience and passion for this project. You should list your professional experience, skills and qualifications, and those of your team, specifically highlighting any relevant ecotourism experience.

You can also provide details of all your professional advisors: solicitors, accountants, bankers, insurance brokers, business advisors or mentors, which will show funders that you have the necessary support and back-up.

Market Analysis and Marketing Plan - Following on from our outline of the marketing options available to you, this section of the business plan is where you need to put your research and findings, as well as your target pricing and numbers.

Firstly Define your Total Market – carry out research to estimate how many tourists visit your region and country and why. This will enable you to define your potential market size.

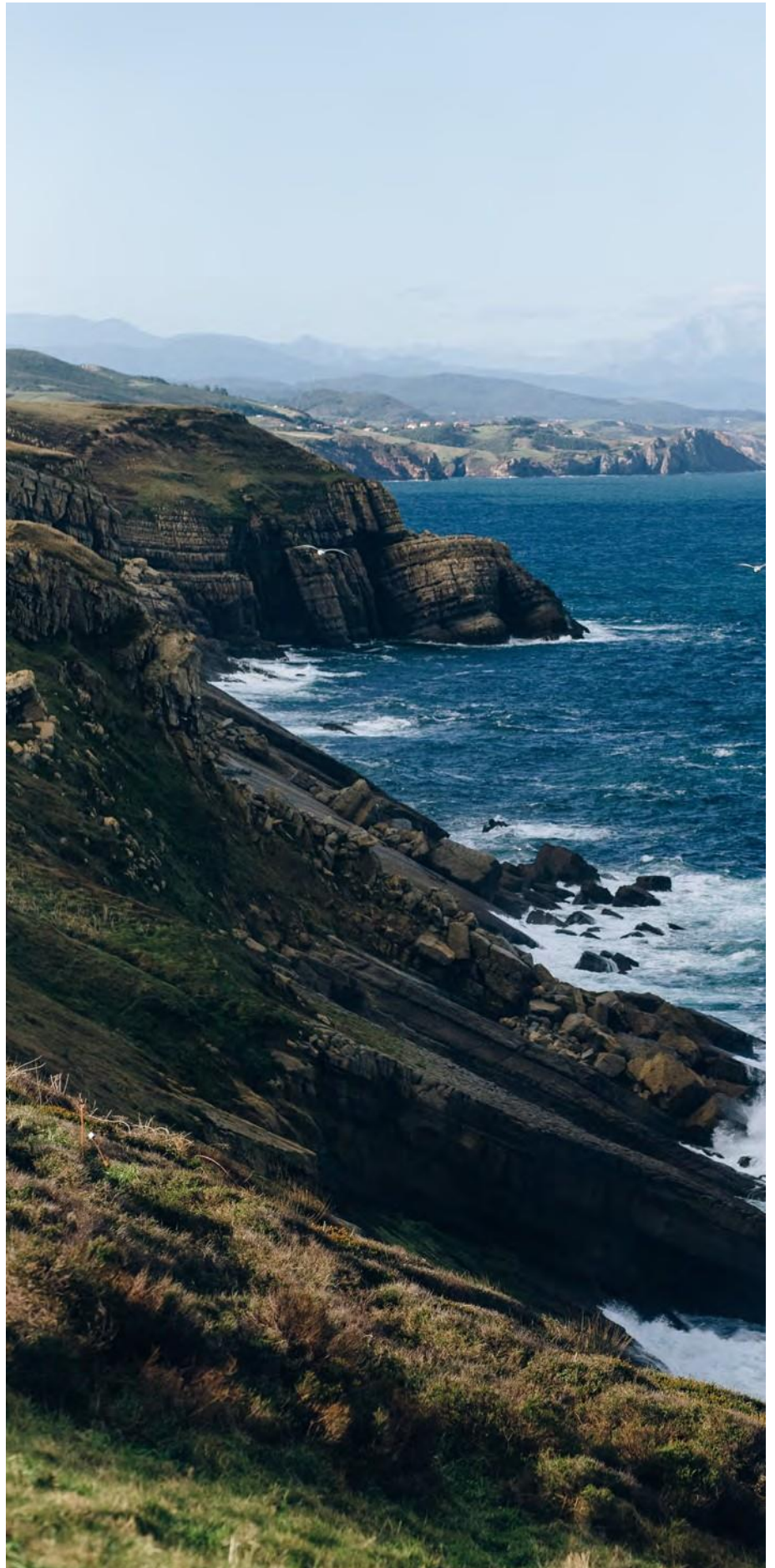
Project your Market Share of this market – estimate the size of the target market you plan to capture. For example, you may estimate that your business will capture 20% of tourists visiting your region, who are seeking a back to basics, nature holiday.



Analyse the competition – List the strengths and weaknesses of each competitor and compare your product or service to theirs.

Marketing and Sales Strategy – in this section outline how your tourism product will achieve its goal through a marketing and sales strategy. Set out your marketing plan, or your action plan. Take account of what your competitors are doing, and how they are getting publicity. Where are your customers? How can you get your content in front of them? Where do you currently rank on search engines and what are you going to do to move up the search results. What will the price of your product or service will be?

Costs and budget – most importantly how much money will you need?



EXERCISE

Business Planning Tips

Here are a few tips for when it comes to writing a Business Plan for your business:

- Be as concise as possible. Potential investors and backers will want to know as much as possible about your business idea from a quick glance. Make sure you include a summary of your business, and how it will make money from the start. Avoid jargon and use simple language throughout.
- Understand your market and audience. Make sure you are clear about who you are selling to. How unique is your idea? Are there other companies selling similar products/services? What makes yours different?
- Understand your finances and the potential profits. An essential part of any business plan is understanding what money will be needed to start and maintain the business and how you'll make a profit.

As an exercise, complete the template below which will help you to start thinking about the information you will need for your business plan and your business.

What's the big idea?

Write a short paragraph outlining your business idea and its aims.

In a single sentence

What's the elevator pitch for your business? Write a single sentence that explains what you'll do or what your idea is.

Where's the money coming from?

Write a short paragraph outlining the finances. How will you make money?

EXERCISE

Why do you want to do this?

What's your personal motivation for running the business?

Your experience

What skills, experience, training, qualifications do you have that will help you?

Your customers

Describe your typical customer. Where are they? What is their motivation for choosing your business or service?

Your competition

Are there many companies already providing a similar service? If there are, what are they charging? Why will your business be better/different?

How will you attract customers to your business?

What are you going to do? Why will this work? How much will it cost?

3

THINGS TO CONSIDER

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In the realm of ideas everything depends on enthusiasm... in the real world all rests on perseverance.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

CASE STUDY: LES OISEAUX DE PASSAGE

Les Oiseaux de Passage brings together an ecosystem of partners from the tourism, culture and social economy sectors: Tourist accommodation providers, groups of inhabitants, leisure service providers, local producers, artists, nature parks, visitor sites, directly with potential tourists.

Currently in beta, Les Oiseaux de Passage is a cooperative travel platform, built in response to a strong demand from the tourism industry to have a tool that allows them to link their offers together and tell the story of their destination to develop its attractiveness.



CASE STUDY: ULISSE TRAVEL

Ulisse Travel Experiences is an online platform committed to making experiential and environmentally- friendly tourism experiences in Italy, Europe and the World, accessible to deaf people.

The word uLISse contains the word LIS, standing for Lingua Internazionale dei Segni, or International Sign Language.

Ulisse empower unemployed young people by training them to be tourist guides and "local friends" to lead deaf tourists in experiences they're often excluded from due to physical barriers.

With the aim of creating an online and offline community of international deaf travellers and tourism operators, Ulisse promotes debate on themes such as sustainable tourism, social innovation, and the education of N.E.E.T. (not in education, employment or training) deaf people.

"Deaf people often encounter several difficulties to accomplish tourism experiences. Most times they do not get discouraged and travel anyway, whether it's a deserved vacation or an extraordinary adventure. But can you imagine how much more satisfied would they be, or how much more would they travel, if there were trips specifically designed for them?"





THINGS TO CONSIDER

There are a number of mandatory, legal requirements that organisations will need to fulfil before being able to offer their services to customers, and there is a number of EU regulations that cover Travel and Tourism that you will need to be aware of before you start selling your new tourism product.

The European Travel Directive

This protects travellers' rights when they book a combination of two different types of travel service

(such as accommodation, a tourist service – like whale watching or night sky observing, transport), with rights to cancel, clear liability and the need to have liability insurance and insolvency protection in place.

Comprehensive Liability Insurance

If you sell tours or packages directly to European travellers, you are expected to have comprehensive liability insurance, so they are fully covered while under your care.

This includes bodily injury and property damage, auto and watercraft liability insurance if necessary.

GDPR rules apply to the European travel industry, including tour operators which directly handle traveller personal data.

See General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679

Corporate Social Responsibility Policy

A corporate social responsibility policy is where you spell out your green policies and detail how you impact the local economy and environment. It is your green mission statement that should be proudly viewable on your website.

Ways to Make Tourism Products Environmentally Friendly

As a sustainable tourism provider, your customers will be expecting high levels of recycling, energy efficiency and a focus on sustainability. Below we detail several key areas of consideration, when running your business:

Energy Saving

One of the easiest options is to replace all lights with more efficient LED lighting, investigate low-energy and energy-efficient appliances, and encourage staff and guests to switch off when not in use. Insulate windows, doors, walls and ceilings to maximise heat retention and heat loss. Install smart meters to enable you to monitor usage.

Alternative and Renewable Energy

Investigate alternative or renewable energy sources. From solar panels on the roof to geothermal heating, there are a number of affordable and efficient ways to be carbon neutral, as well as a number of Green Energy suppliers.

Off-set schemes

Carbon off-set schemes, where trees are planted to counteract the carbon dioxide released through fossil fuels, are a way to move towards carbon neutrality if alternative or renewables are unavailable or prohibitive expensive.

Reducing water usage

If you provide accommodation, have



the option for your guests to not have their towels and sheets changed daily. Use efficient washing machines and have automatic cut-off or water efficient taps and toilet facilities. Compostable toilets for camping facilities can provide a useful eco-addition.

Buying local

As well as supporting the local economy, reducing the number of food miles, that is the number of miles that food travels from field to plate, is beneficial for carbon footprints.

Green procurement

When food cannot be sourced locally, then choose ethical and sustainable sources, preferably ones certified as such, like Fairtrade certified foods.

Recycling and biodegradable

A high level of recycling, composting of food waste, and a focus on reducing single-use plastics and waste is essential to reduce landfill. Biodegradable cleaning and wash powder can reduce our impact on the environment and nature.

Encouraging guests to use green options

With all these options, make your guests and customers aware of them, and help them follow the rules, for everyone's benefit. Encourage them where possible to use green transport options such as cycling and have partner organisations or transport options and advice available for them.

Ways to Make Tourism Products More Accessible and Inclusive

Adapting to cater for all needs

Adjust your product to the needs and requirements of the accessible tourism market. For example, by offering accessible facilities like ground-floor rooms, ramps, shower chairs, facilities for electric wheelchairs and suitable storage for medication; rooms especially designed for handicapped people.

Check every step of the journey from point of arrival

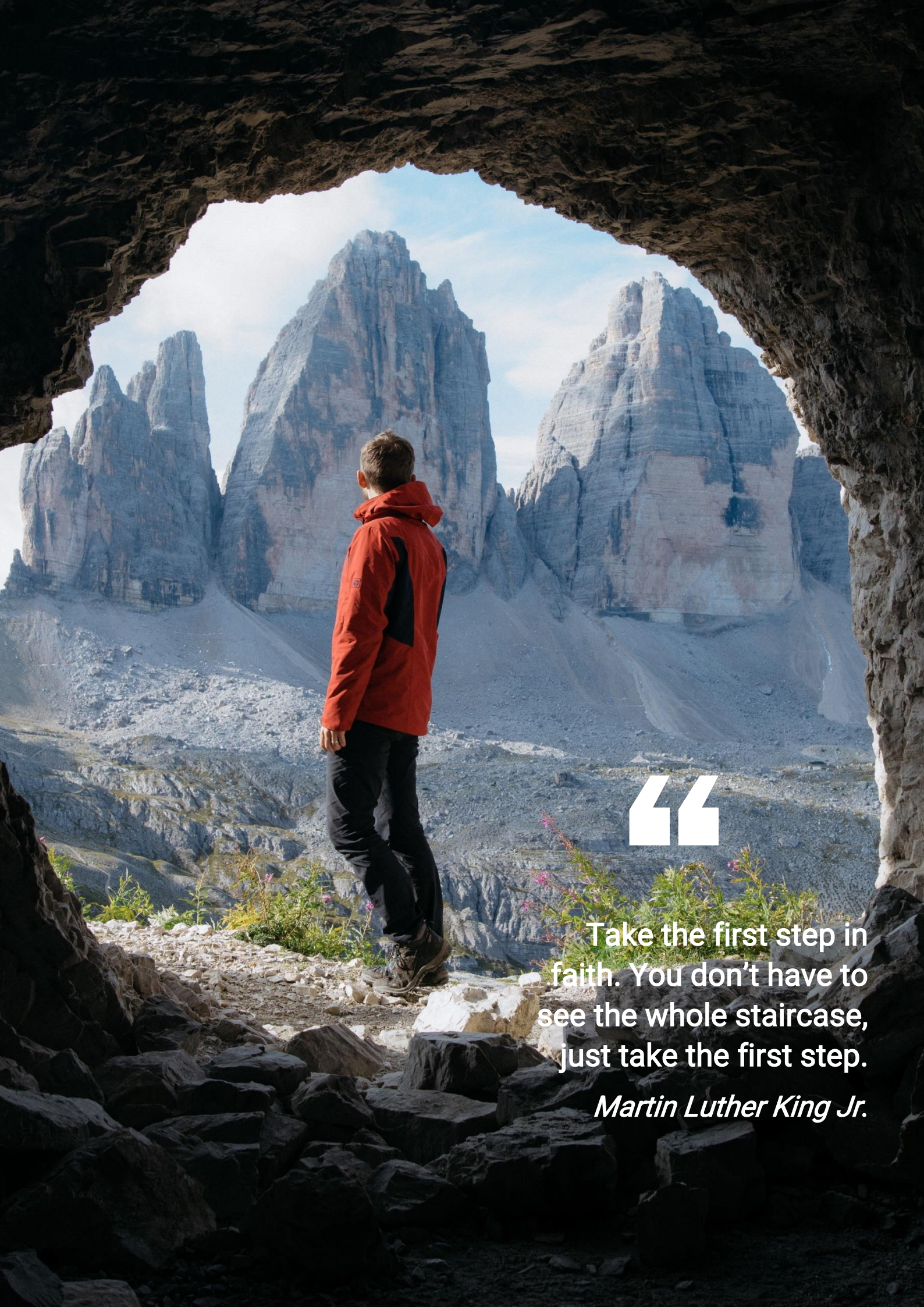
Make sure that your regional airport has access facilities for people with disabilities, including passenger- boarding bridges for entering and exiting aircrafts. Have a disabled- friendly taxi service available to take guests from the airport and meet and greet. Ensure access to buildings, rooms and facilities. Make sure your emergency exits and equipment are accessible for people with disabilities.

Information and training

Provide detailed, solid and reliable information about the availability of accessible facilities and services. Train your staff on accessibility. They should know how to support travellers with access needs without bringing too much attention to their disabilities.

Make information on healthcare and emergency services easily available to travellers and tour operators





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Take the first step in
faith. You don't have to
see the whole staircase,
just take the first step.

Martin Luther King Jr.