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Leader “RDP 2007-2013”

ENHANCEMENT OF RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITIES

Preface:

The development and promotion of development resources (agricultural tourism, local products, culture, gastronomy etc) in each country, region, municipality, leader area etc depends mainly on 2 groups of partners:

1. The local government authorities (regions, municipalities) that, among their other tasks, have also the responsibility for the development and promotion of the tourism product of their area of responsibility.
2. The entrepreneurs who have related their business activity with the development and growth of the area they are established.

Our proposal deals with a dynamic way of collaboration between these two groups (authorities and entrepreneurs) that reform the development perspective through a series of course-seminars and workshops of high professional level, which aim at the efficient development and promotion of the aforementioned development resources of the areas of interest.



The Problem:

All the Leader areas are based on the promotion of the previously mentioned development resources, since the development strategy of every area is based on these resources too.

In each such area, a great number of enterprises and other actions which belong to the Leader Philosophic point of view, have been funded by programs, such as the Axis 4 program of the current programmatic period. This funding took place in order to enhance the overall development process of the rural areas, according to the dimension of the corresponding development resources of each area.

Until the year of 2009, when the Greek crisis' effects became obvious, , the Greek and European middle class was able to support the previously mentioned enterprises.

The current Greek financial crisis and the serious financial problems in the North European countries, created a gap which seems to be insurmountable.

The lack of orientation to other markets is another fact which made this problematic situation more severe.

During the last 3 years, we can notice that several promotional actions have taken place in these areas.

The regions and the municipalities have disbursed great funds and disposed human resources for tourism promotion in their areas.

However, the results were not of equal importance with the corresponding funds and the efforts that took place.

Due to the financial crisis, the need for competitive advantage and efficient promotion has become more intense than ever. The integration of the modern trends in the administration and promotion of the overall supply of goods and services, is imperative for every single area of interest.

What can be inferred is:

- The weak integration of new promotional capabilities which are provided by the modern market.
- The weakness of early response to the new 'needs' and 'wants' of the markets.



The main cause is the lack of knowledge about the aforementioned issues on behalf of both the entrepreneurs of the tourism market and the local government authorities which make decisions about the promotional actions that would be funded.

Another important cause, which is connected with the previous one, is the weakness or even the reluctance for collaboration between the tourism entrepreneurs and the government authorities.

We have noticed that there is a serious gap and a great weakness in the understanding of the specificities which exist in the function of the business-working environment of these two groups of partners.

Proposal:

The prime element in the solution of these problems, is both the knowledge and the understanding of:

- the business object
- the specificities of every single partner
- the capabilities which derive from the modern technology
- the 'needs' and 'wants' of the markets of interest.

METHOD:

To this direction, we are going to form and develop a model of one and two days seminars and workshops of high professional level. This model will be implemented in every single area of interest, for all the mentioned fields of development resources (agricultural tourism, local products, culture, gastronomy etc).

The series of themes will be referred to the gain of knowledge and perception about the above issues, through two parallel and separate sections, one for each group of partners (entrepreneurs-public sector). A third section which will be referred to both groups of partners will take place as well.

The main purpose of the previously mentioned methodological approach is the construction of networks and thematic fields among the areas. Thereafter the continuous monitoring and the integration of new technologies in the promotion of the contribution of every area (thematic fields, goods, services etc) will be achieved.



The main feature of our approach / the **Innovation**:

The formation of the program, integrates several innovative elements. This elements have been recognized by the Hellenic Tourism Organization (**EOT**) and the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (**SETE**) which expressed their interest to support this proposal.

- For the first time, we simultaneously provide separate sections (for investors of the private sector and government authorities of every area and transnational areas as well), which formulate and implement the promotional and developmental policies for their areas through public and private funds.
- There will be participation of both groups of partners, at the same place, for certain subjects which concern both the participants (investors and government authorities).
- Workshops in which there are issues of common interest to both groups of partner, but also issues concerning only people of the market.
- Successful and recognized scientists and executives of the international tourism market are going to participate as key speakers and transmit their experiences.
- Online participation (live streaming) in case of inability to attend in person.
- Opportunities of organization of business meetings in the frame of the workshops' implementation.
- Case Study about the presented issues. In this case study, are going to participate particular companies from every single participating area and one local government authority.
- Creation of 'final products' with the use of ICT Tools

INDICATIVE CONTENT

A)Implementation of Workshops with special themes

Local Government Authorities	Entrepreneurs
<p>Destination Management & Marketing Systems (DMMS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The functions and the roles of DMMS through the utilization of electronic systems (ICT) • Analysis of international DMMS good practices which are based on modern ICT tools. <p>Ws: Design of DMMS , as a proposal for tourism market of each area.</p>	<p>Web Marketing of goods, products and areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important elements in the design of a website. • Digital Market Research • Search Engine Optimization & Search Engine Marketing • Online advertizing and promotion. Digital Marketing. • Social media in Web/ Digital Research and Marketing.



Audience: Entrepreneurs and local government authorities
<u>Tourism Web Marketing (common for both groups of partners)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Marketing Tools and Web Distribution Channels • Social Media (Web 2.0) and Web Tourism Marketing • <u>WS: Collaboration between two groups of partners about integrated promotional actions of a single area. Use of Social Networks and specialized web-sites.</u>
Innovation and Internet. A Modern tool for facing the crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exogenous tourism environment & crises. • Combination of Internet and Innovation as a means of facing crisis? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Market Research. Combined actions of Private and Public Sector. • Mini Case Studies to be implemented by the work groups of the project.

B) Approach for every thematic sector of intervention: (Just an example)

Sectors of Intervention	Transnational Participant Areas							
	i.e LAG* of Kavala	i.e LAG of Pella	i.e LAG of	i.e LAG of	i.e LAG of	etc		
Tourism:	X	X	X	X				
Local Products:	X				X			
Cultural Heritage:	X	X	X		X			
Gastronomy:	X		X	X				
Other:								

*LAG= Local Action Group

Analysis for every sector of intervention (the thematic field of tourism has been chosen as example- according to this approach the same analysis will be cited for the rest of the sectors of intervention).

B1) Creation of tourism packages and utilization of the existing ones (i.e PROAGRITOUR II) that will be promoted through ICT.

- Selection of several companies from every single area of interest,
 - Workshops about the preparation of tourist packages.
 - Workshops about Web / Digital Marketing.
 - Workshops about distribution channels.



- Area selection
 - Workshop regarding the highlighting of the key-elements of interest for the Internet users
 - Workshops about Web Research
 - Workshops about Web Promotion

Goal:

The establishment of this action in annual basis. As a result, every area of intervention will take advantage of modern trends, developments and perspectives through the connection and collaboration among the entrepreneurs local government authorities.

Advantages for the areas of interest:

- The areas of interest will be related to a special thematic event.
- The international scope of this event will upgrade the image of these areas.
- Added benefits are going to occur through the homogenization of the transnational areas and the collaboration among entrepreneurs and the local government of each area.
- The capability of the implementation of this project in different areas (according to the thematic choice of each area) and the connection of their local development strategies (participation of local government authorities and entrepreneurs who operate in these areas) through common promotional actions and the utilization of common ICT tools, aim at the achievement of multiplying benefits.

DELIVERABLES

A) Stages of preparation

- PREPARATION: This stage includes the design and the organization of the project, from the Time Schedule to the detailed budget. Interest Expression Invitation for every area which wants to participate and determine its budget.
 - Deliverable (Del): Pre contract for collaboration among the interested national and transnational partners and specialization of the budget.
 - Del: Submission of the transnational plan by each partner at the corresponding national service which deals with the program.
 - Del: Approval of the transnational plan.



B) Implementation Stage

- ACTIONS' ALLOCATION. The thematic sections will be determined.
 - Del: Research through the project partners in order to define the local thematic sections.
 - Del: Redesign of the Workshops in order to be corresponding to the thematic sections.
 - Del: Design of the Exercise of the two-days' Workshop for each thematic field and each area of intervention.
- INTERNAL IMPLEMENTATION:
 - Del: An informational website
 - Del: An electronic Forum
 - Del: e-newsletter authoring and distribution
- PROMOTIONAL ACTIONS. To achieve attraction in the country of each project-partner.
 - Del: Planning of the actions.
 - Del: Distribution mail List.
 - Del: Design of posters, invitations and web Banners.
 - Del: Design of a Web Marketing Campaign (also as an opportunity to promote web actions)
- COORDINATION: Determination of the tasks of the coordination work.
 - Del: Establishment of the work team
 - Del: Determination of the selection criteria that should be fulfilled by the members of the work team.
 - Del: Team's staffing with partners' executives (Coordination Work Team).
 - Del: Business Meetings among transnational partners executives (Work Team)
(Del: Πεπραγμένα, Participants list, meeting program, etc)
- Operational Training Platform
 - In collaboration to the corresponding speakers, a training platform with integrated innovative features will be designed.
 - Selection of Web tools.
 - Selection of Mobile Applications for Smartphone platforms.
 - Del: Selection of an Online Monitoring Platform for the two-days' Workshop.
- SELECTION for the case studies- Criteria Determination (Del)
 - Each project-partner will select one enterprise as a web promotion paradigm.
 - A LEADER area will be chosen by the work team for web promotion purposes.



C) Two-days' Workshops which will be implemented for each thematic field/sector (at least one for each country)

Place selection where the simultaneous workshops (for entrepreneurs, for local government executives and for both groups of partners) will take place.

- Special Secretariat for two-day workshop monitoring.
 - List of Participants, organizing of procedural tasks(Travel, Accommodation)
 - Translations, notes, teams and workshops arrangements etc
 - Events- Excursion- Animator- Tour Guide- Happenings-TV-spot
 - **Deliverables**
 - Del: A full volume of lectures, speeches, expressions of opinion.
 - Del: One print in the language of each country which participates in the project.
 - Case Studies (use of ICT)
 - Del: A Digital Campaign of enterprises (one from each area) and an area of determination (local government authorities)
 - Creation of Tourism Packages or/and utilization of the existing ones (PROAGRITOUR II)
 - Collaboration among enterprises and local government authorities from different areas.
 - **Deliverables**
 - Guide-Case Study results
 - ✓ Del: One print in the language of each country which participates in the project.
 - On line Request System for ICT Marketing
 - ✓ Del: Creation in 5 languages.
 - Creation of an open online platform which will integrate all the ICT tools that are utilized.
 - Participation process of each interested enterprise (of the intervention areas).
 - Del: at the common tourism packages
 - Del: at the common promotional actions (participation in thematic expeditions, interconnection with thematic websites , interconnection with social media, participation in common destination channels etc).

The above will be created for each selected thematic field/sector.



D) Synergy of the thematic sectors

- Organization of two or three-days presentations and results analysis.
 - Results analysis for each thematic sector
 - Synergy Workshops of thematic sectors.
- Networking- viability after the implementation
 - Transnational or national or local joint venture for the business utilization of the program's results.

