

**INNO NATOUR.**  
**Lesson learnt from**  
**Innovation in Nature Based**  
**Tourism Services**

**Contact:**

Faculty of Economics and Public Administration

„Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava

Universității str., no. 13, Building H

720229 SUCEAVA, ROMANIA

Phone: (+40) 230 216147 ext. 294

Erasmus IP web site: [www.innonatour.usv.ro](http://www.innonatour.usv.ro)

Faculty web site: [www.seap.usv.ro](http://www.seap.usv.ro)

University web site: [www.usv.ro](http://www.usv.ro)

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# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>STUDENTS OF THE 2011-2012 ERASMUS IP .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>LECTURERS, TUTORS AND EXPERTS OF THE 2011-2012 ERASMUS IP .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>RESULTS OF THE ERASMUS IP INNO NATOUR 2011-2012 .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>FINAL REPORTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>INDIVIDUAL POST CASE STUDIES OF THE STUDENTS .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS .....</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>153</b>



# INTRODUCTION

The European Union gives a main role to the research, development and innovation domain (RDI) for consolidation of the competitiveness and for the economical growth. Changes occurred in technology and society demands introduce changes in traditional higher education, quality being seen as a knowledge generation in academia nowadays. These developments will be within a socio-economic and demographic context which itself is being called into question. The social sciences, by their nature, enable us to include the way in which the societies are organised and governed and how they evolve and change. They also provide us the opportunity of identifying the factors which contribute to the social, economic, political and cultural change. Social research can supply solutions, for example, to the questions concerning the changing living conditions, current economic trends and migratory flows, changes in work, and in the roles of men and women, population trends, the need to have new forms of governance, etc. It therefore plays a fundamental role in the formulation and implementation of policies at all levels, including the European level.

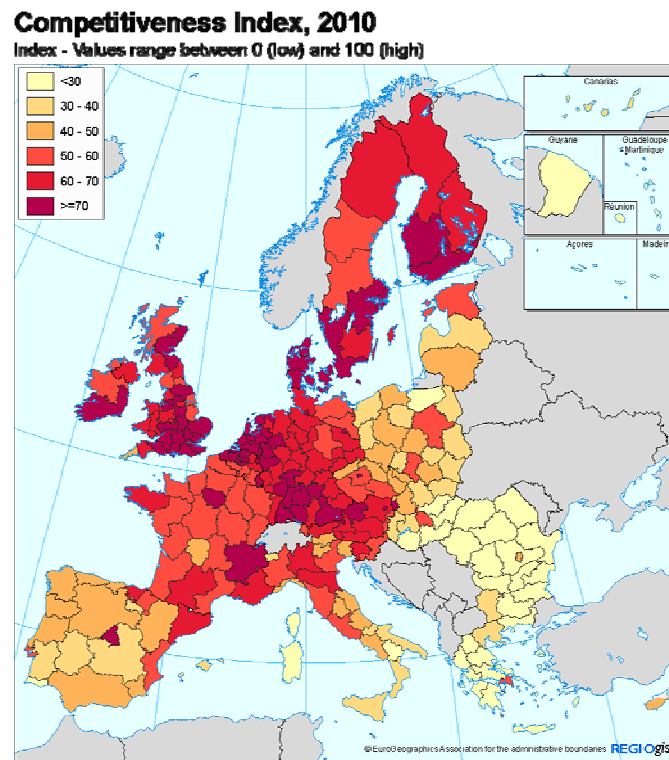
2009 has been dedicated to Creativity and Innovation according to European Union (<http://create2009.europa.eu/>). The European Year of Creativity and Innovation has the objective to raise awareness of the importance of creativity and innovation for personal, social and economic development, to disseminate good practices, stimulate education and research, and promote policy debate and development.

Over recent years, OECD work on regional competitiveness addresses both the measurement of regional performance through statistics and policies to address key factors that can improve the competitiveness of regions. OECD studies have focused on the significance of regional specialisation and clusters including a benchmarking of national cluster policies and of regional innovation strategies. Regional competitiveness is a key theme in the OECD's territorial reviews and analysis of urban and rural development policies (OECD 2011).

In 2010, the European Commission developed a new regional competitiveness index in the context of the European Commission's 5<sup>th</sup> Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion (European Commission 2010b). It is based on a total of 11 sets of indicators covering institutions; infrastructure, health, quality of primary and secondary education, higher education and lifelong training, labour market efficiency, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, innovation, and macroeconomic stability. Measured against the background of the level of development of regions, the index suggests that

- in less developed EU regions, factors such as education, basic infrastructure, good governance, and the quality of public health care have a strong influence on economic development;
- in the medium stage of development, an efficient labour market, tertiary education and good access to markets are important;
- in the most advanced economies, business sophistication, technological readiness and other factors contributing to innovation are important.

As indicated on the map below, overall competitiveness is highest in the Nordic regions, in South-East England, in the Netherlands and in Southern Germany. In some member states such as Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, differences in competitiveness between regions are large, and in most countries, whether more developed or less developed, the capital city region has the highest competitiveness score. These results emphasise the fact that competitiveness has a strong regional dimension.



In EU there are still maintaining significant differences between the state members. In spite of intensive research work and new knowledge on innovation, and on knowledge transmission in Nature Based Tourism Services, there is lack of educational courses and curricula in regular higher education in this topic. Especially, there is a lack of professional master level education, focusing on creation and implementation of innovations and entrepreneurship related tourism area.

Nature-based tourism can broadly be defined as tourism, with main activities related to nature. It is a growing industry sector providing new sources of livelihood to diversify the traditional rural economics, namely agriculture and forestry. The income generating form nature tourism typically remains in the rural regions, it usually requires strong local knowledge base and the sector is labor intensive, which characteristics make it especially interesting in respect of rural development.

Identifying the nature of innovation in tourism entails looking for features that are either shared with or distinct from those of innovations in other service industries, but it also entails comparisons with the more general models found in manufacturing. In addition, issues arising in agriculture may shed some light as well.

However, even though the nature-based tourism sector is growing rapidly in many respects in Europe, the level of innovations (both product and process innovations) in nature tourism and recreation services has not been reported as very high (see e.g. Nybakk et al. 2005, Rametsteiner et al. 2005). This brings out the question, if the possibilities and opportunities have been recognised and utilised in all their potential. The competition in the nature tourism is increasing concerning especially foreign niche customer groups. The innovativeness is an important element in the competitiveness of companies and has been seen as one of the indicators of the future development of the sector (e.g. Rametsteiner et al. 2005).

In creating new ideas and opportunities, the role of key actors and co-operation partners is essential. Those actors, who have the knowledge and access on nature resources, play very important role. In European context nature-based tourism utilizes typically forests in some form and in many cases the forest areas are not owned by the entrepreneurs. This brings out not only the questions of property rights but also the one of combining the interests of user groups of the forest areas (Matilainen and Lähdesmäki 2009). Equally important role have those actors, who have the “access to customers” in the marketing channels. For a nature-based company to be able

to combine these different types of information and actors to cross-sectoral networks and co-operation is essential, and it provides a big challenge to the sector especially in small and micro company level (see e.g. Rametsteiner et al. 2005, Luostarinen 2005, Lunnan et al. 2005). The important questions in order to support innovation activity in nature-based tourism sector are, how simultaneously guarantee the access to the needed natural resource (in this study forest areas) and to the customers, organize the business activities effectively and to combine the interests of different stakeholder groups, both local and wider, for the use of forest areas in order to successfully generate and develop the nature-based tourism sector as part of rural economics.

In tourism, small operators in particular are more sensitive to competition from their partners than to the benefits of working together. Most of the collaboration tends to involve destination marketing driven by territorial authorities.

In order to overcome these problems, the small and micro size companies have to find successful networking and co-operation strategies. Typically rurally located nature-based tourism companies form complex co-operation relationships to ensure their activities, and are continuously developing this co-operation, without which their companies would extinct. In addition especially in rural regions the social sustainability of business activities plays an important role in success of the company.

Professional Master level education and PhD studies are at starting stage in Europe; many institutions have just started or are going to start the programmes. There is need for interdisciplinary education which emphasises co-operation and networking at second cycle level. Also the involvement of enterprises and working life in general is necessary in the education. At present, the link between education and professional training, innovation and correct stimulation of economic development on one hand, and the amount and level of economic growth, on the other hand, becomes increasingly obvious.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The course is designed for undergraduate and postgraduate students in the field of business, tourism, and environmental sciences and related disciplines. The third and final IP course was held at “Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania, from 6 to 18 May 2012.

The main aim of this IP was to improve the multilateral cooperation between higher education institution, to increase the volume of student and teaching staff mobility and on the other hand to transfer the knowledge on innovation, innovation management and entrepreneurship straight from practice into the education by means of organizing a practical educational course, and by working with real world cases. The transfer targeted tourism enterprises sector and constituted a positive input to the improvement of regional innovation processes in European areas. The Erasmus IP followed to increase the degree of transparency and compatibility between higher education and advanced vocational education qualifications gained in Europe: in Finland, Italy, Austria, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.

The secondary aim of the IP was to develop and test new curriculum and teaching materials in the topic of Innovations and entrepreneurship in nature based tourism services in Europe, addressing therefore the need of improving educational supply on the topic.

The IP course brought together students from six European countries: Finland, Italy, Austria, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. The countries were selected according to their innovation level, so within this IP was pursued the knowledge transfer and the experience exchange between countries with different levels regarding innovation. In this context, the IP allowed members of the teaching staff to exchange views on teaching content and new curricula approaches. The partner institutions involved in this IP course were: Savonia University of Applied Sciences from Finland, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences from Austria, University of Forestry from Bulgaria, Technical University in Zvolen from Slovakia and University of Padova from Italy.

Also, there were involved 4 enterprises from Romania, in the field of tourism services, which collaborated in providing information and support, being selected as innovative enterprises for the real world studies, and which were analyzed by students during the IP. Each enterprise had to nominate one member, which stayed in contact with students during the IP, participated at three meetings with students and offered information regarding the enterprise. The enterprises were: Bucovina Association Tourism, ODN Pension, Hilde’s Residence, Sonnenhof Hotel.

The main activities of the IP were divided in three stages:

Stage I: Students had to prepare an innovative case study from their own country

Stage II: 11 days of intensive course in Suceava, Romania: intensive course on special domains, work groups activities, field trips, excursions.

Stage III: Each student finalized his case study report. The final analysis was presented to the company that represented his case study.

The participation and successful completion of the course gave a student 10 ECTS credits. 3 ECTS were from the contact course, 4 from the case study prior to the course and orientation and reporting gave 3 credits each.

The **web page** of the IP course: [www.innonatour.usv.ro](http://www.innonatour.usv.ro)



## STUDENTS OF THE 2011-2012 ERASMUS IP

No.	Name	Country
1.	Johanna LAITINEN	<b>Finland</b>
2.	Rosa PIETIKÄINEN	
3.	Ossi TAAVITSAINEN	
4.	Kata TOLVANEN	
5.	Helmut HALLER	<b>Austria</b>
6.	Anna SCHOEPFER	
7.	Birgit WAGNER	
8.	Natascha DEBES	<b>Italy</b>
9.	Eleonora GIULIODORI	
10.	Valeria CARDELLI	
11.	Elisa PITTURA	
12.	Anna BORTOLAZZI	
13.	Ivelina Stoycheva VELKOVA	<b>Bulgaria</b>
14.	Adriana TERZIEVA	
15.	Marieta LITARSKA	
16.	Andrea UHERCOVA	<b>Slovakia</b>
17.	Zuzana MATUSOVA	
18.	Anna BOHACOVA	
19.	Natalia KUBICOVA	
20.	Remo CURALET	<b>Romania</b>
21.	Marius Florin VIȘAN	
22.	Anca URSESCU	
23.	Sorina PUIUL	
24.	Ancuța COTOARĂ	

## LECTURERS, TUTORS AND EXPERTS OF THE 2011-2012 ERASMUS IP

No.	Name	Country
1.	Daniel HALAJ	<b>Slovakia</b>
2.	Magdalena PICHLEROVA	
3.	Matteo FAVERO	<b>Italy</b>
4.	Vladimir STOJANOVSKI	<b>Austria</b>
5.	Gerhard WEISS	
6.	Miika KAJANUS	<b>Finland</b>
7.	Anja Lappi HAUTAMÄKI	
8.	Carmen NĂSTASE	<b>Romania</b>
9.	Angela ALBU	
10.	Laura BOURIAUD	
11.	Mihai POPESCU	
12.	Carmen BOGHEAN	
13.	Adrian Liviu SCUTARIU	
14.	Otilia BORDEIANU	
15.	Iulian CONDRATOV	
16.	Ruxandra BEJINARU	
17.	Alina LEȘAN	



**Carmen NĂSTASE** – INNO NATOUR Project Manager  
 „Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania  
 Faculty of Economics and Public Administration  
 E-mail: [ncarmen@usv.ro](mailto:ncarmen@usv.ro), [carmennastase@gmail.com](mailto:carmennastase@gmail.com)  
 Web : [www.seap.usv.ro/~carmenn](http://www.seap.usv.ro/~carmenn)

#### **Current activity**

- *Professor PhD., Dean* of the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava
- *Editor in chief*, The USV Annals of Economics and Public Administration, scientific journal indexed in international databases ([www.seap.usv.ro/annals](http://www.seap.usv.ro/annals))

Trainer certificate of CEFE International-Competency based Economies through Formation of Entreprise (2004); Certification of Quality manager/Service, CERTQUA Management Bonn (2006); Certification of Auditor/Service, CERTQUA Management Bonn (2007); ARACIS Evaluator (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), Specialization *Management* (from 2007); CNCSIS Evaluator (The National University Research Council), Specialization Economics, *Management*(from 2007); Expert - ACPART (National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with Economic and Social Environment) (from 2007).

**Areas of interest:** Economics, Microeconomics, Entrepreneurship, Tourism

**Scientific activity:** author and co-author of 12 books published in national prestigious publishing houses, more than 70 articles published in scientific journals and conference volumes, member in the research team of 18 grants, project manager in 7 international grants.



**Magdalena PICHLEROVA**  
 Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia  
 Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences  
 E-mail: [mpichler@vsld.tuzvo.sk](mailto:mpichler@vsld.tuzvo.sk), [magi1.pichler@gmail.com](mailto:magi1.pichler@gmail.com)

#### **Position**

- *Vice-dean for foreign relations*, Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences
- *faculty ERASMUS coordinator*
- *Lecturer, doctor*, Technical University in Zvolen, Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Department of Landscape Planning and Design
- *Executive Editor of Ecological Section*, Acta Facultatis Ecologiae, Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences, scientific peer-reviewed Journal, ISSN code 1336-300X

#### **Current activity**

At present focused on tourism and landscape development and interactions; interest specialized in the advancements in the scientific and interpretative tourism and its relationship with natural, cultural and industrial heritage; participation on the inscription of the Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians on the World Heritage List in 2007 by developing schemes for soft tourism utilization of the properties inscribed; took part in a project funded by the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) for the dynamic visualization of landscapes' natural history;

Since 2000 a project manager with the Center for Scientific Tourism in Slovakia (abbr. CVTS, more on [www.ecosystems.sk](http://www.ecosystems.sk)) where had a chance to participate in its cooperation with the Yorkshire Dales National Park based on the Dales Millennium Trust activities.

**Areas of interest**

Tourism potential and landscape use for tourism, forms of tourism, world cultural and natural heritage as well as one of Slovakia, management of sites on the list of UNESCO world heritage, advanced methods used to determine recreational potential of the area, hydrogeology

**Other information**

A graduate from the Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences at Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia, PhD. in the field of hydrogeology, completed 1-year study stay at the University of North Wales in Bangor, at the School of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences where she was mainly concerned with ecological studies. Since graduation she has been an assistant professor at the Department of Landscape Planning and Design at the Faculty of Ecology and Environmental Sciences of the Technical University in Zvolen. Her favourite leisure time activities are travelling, hiking, reading and taking pictures. She brings up her 7 years old daughter Eva Magdalena with her husband, Viliam.



**Daniel HALAJ**  
 Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia, Faculty of Forestry  
 E-mail: [halaj@tuzvo.sk](mailto:halaj@tuzvo.sk)

Daniel Halaj, PhD. is an assistant professor at the Department of Forest Economics and Management, Faculty of Forestry, Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia. He gives lectures of following subjects: Market research and Marketing, Business techniques and Economy of Natural Resources in which he is involved also in area of science and research. In given research areas he attended foreign research study stays (Germany, Finland) as a scholar researcher where he participated in international projects which results he published in several monographs.

He is responsible solutionist of foreign mobility projects in area of support and entrepreneurship development in the rural area and utilization of renewable natural resources.



**Matteo FAVERO**  
 University of Padova, Italy  
 Land, Environment, Agriculture and Forestry Department  
 E-mail: [matteo.favero86@gmail.com](mailto:matteo.favero86@gmail.com)

Graduated in Forestry and Environmental Sciences, he is currently a Ph.D. student in 1st year at the L.E.R.H. (Land, Environment, Resources and Health) Doctoral School. His research activities are focused on the comparison between different institutional arrangements (Common properties, Municipalities and Municipalities with customary rights recognized by law), aiming to define what is the most efficient and effective institutional structure in satisfying forestry-related needs of the local population.

He is currently involved in the INTEGRAL Project, funded under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (website: [www.integral-project.eu](http://www.integral-project.eu)) and targeted to analyse the future-oriented integrated management of European forest landscapes.

Finally, another field of interest concerns woody biomasses for energy use.

**Field of interests:** Integrated Forest Management at landscape level; institutional arrangements and forest governance; woody biomasses for energy use.



**Vladimir STOJANOVSKI**

University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Austria

E-mail: [vlatko\\_5@hotmail.com](mailto:vlatko_5@hotmail.com)

Dealing in the field of Forest policy and economics. I had finished the FOPER Master Program – Master Program in the field of Forest policy and economics. At the moment I'm PhD student in 2nd year on BOKU University. Topic of my PhD thesis is 'Forest related start-ups and Innovation in Forestry in Macedonia'. Through my research I would like to find what the obstacles/barriers are for innovation in Macedonia and to propose some idea for improvement.

Beside Forest policy and economics I'm also interested in organization in forestry, entrepreneurship, eco-systems services, nature based tourism services, sport activities like (hiking, football, fishing, hunting, mountaineering and etc).



**Gerhard WEISS**

Central-East European Regional Office of the European Forest Institute  
EFICEEC

c/o University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria

E-mail: [gerhard.weiss@boku.ac.at](mailto:gerhard.weiss@boku.ac.at)

**Current activity**

- *Leader of Work Area 1 "Forest policy and economics", EFICEEC*
- *Chair of COST Action E51 on Innovation policies in the forest sector*

**Areas of interest**

Forest, environmental and innovation policy, innovation in forestry and the wood industry, bio-energy, nature-based tourism, nature conservation, climate mitigation, financing mechanisms for forest ecosystem services.



**Angela ALBU**

“Stefan cel Mare” University, Suceava, Romania

Faculty of Economics and Public Administration

E-mail: [angelaa@seap.usv.ro](mailto:angelaa@seap.usv.ro), [albuang@gmail.com](mailto:albuang@gmail.com)

**Current activity:**

- *Associate Professor PhD.*, responsible with international relationships of the faculty, member of the University Senate, member of the University Commission for the Assessment and Assurance of the Quality (CEAC)
- Certification for Quality manager/Service, CERTQUA Management Bonn (2006); Certification for Auditor/Service, CERTQUA Management Bonn (2007); Certification for Project Manager (2009)

**Areas of interest:** Quality of products and services, Quality Management, Culinary tourism

**Scientific activity:** author and co-author at 8 books, published in national prestigious publishing houses, more than 40 articles published in scientific journals and conference volumes, member in the research team of 9 grants



**Laura BOURIAUD**

Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania

Faculty of Forestry

E-mail: [bouriaud@usv.ro](mailto:bouriaud@usv.ro)

**Current activity**

- *Associate professor, PhD*, University of Suceava, Faculty of Forestry
- *Scientific Secretary*, Faculty of Forestry

Project manager for partner USV in FP7 MOTIVE (Models for adaptative forest management in Europe); coordinator for USV contribution to the European Forest Institute Regional Office Vienna (EFICEEC); reviewer for Small scale forestry journal (Springer), Forest Policy and Economics (Elsevier); reviewer and member of the scientific committee of Annals of Forest Research (CNCSIS B+) and Spanish Journal of Rural Development (Universitatea Santiago de Compostela, Spain); teaching in Forest law and Forest policy (Bachelor level) and Particularities of management in forest sector and Management of human resources (Master level).

**Areas of interest**

Policy formulation, innovation and research policy, forest contractors and entrepreneurship in forest sector, property rights on forests, illegal logging, science/police interface, private forestry, public regulation, governance, forest law.


**Mihai POPESCU**

„Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania  
 Faculty of Economics and Public Administration  
 E-mail: [mihaip@seap.usv.ro](mailto:mihaip@seap.usv.ro)

Ph.D. in Economics, specialization Management, title obtained at the University of Craiova in 2005. He has a Master’s degree in Management at the University of Suceava, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Public Administration, 2005. One of his bachelor’s degree in Administrative Sciences was obtained in 2002 at the University ‘Stefan cel Mare’ of Suceava, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Public Administration and the other, in Economics, was obtained in 1998 at the same University of Suceava.

Specializations made abroad: He is continuously preoccupied by his self professional development and thus he attended three trainings, two in Finland (Oulu, 2009 and Iisami, 2011 ) and one in Zvolen, Slovakia (2010).

Scientific activity: He is collaborator, co-author of 5 books and 9 university courses. Mihai Popescu published more than 35 studies in specialized journals or presented them at various scientific conferences and published in theirs volumes. One of these studies is ISI, 15 showed up in CNCSIS B+ publications and 6 are indexed in international databases.

He is also member in the research team of 7 grants and research contracts, member of The General Agency of Romanian Economists, branch of Suceava and member of The Romanian Society of Statistics, branch of Suceava.


**Carmen BOGHEAN**

„Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania  
 Faculty of Economics and Public Administration  
 E-mail: [carmenb@seap.usv.ro](mailto:carmenb@seap.usv.ro)

**Current activity**

- *Lecturer Ph.D.* at "Ștefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, Economics, Business Administration and Tourism Department

**Scientific activity:**

- co-author of 4 books published in national prestigious publishing houses,
- more than 50 articles published in scientific journals and conference volumes
- member in the research team of 5 grants

**Specializations:**

- 2010, Lifelong Learning Programme, IP Innovation in Rural Development Part 3, Programme Erasmus, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- 2009, **Trainer** courses, organized by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, according to graduation certificate series E, no. 0034279.
- 2009, **Project Manager** courses, organized by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research, according to Certificate Graduation series E, no. 0036289.
- 2007, **expert evaluator** *CECCAR*, according to Certificate Graduation no. 000108.

- 2007, training course "**Business Tools - Fit in the EU, business tools and their ordering**", organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Suceava.

PhD. in Economics - October 2010

**Areas of interest:** Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Tourism Economics, Marketing in Tourism and Services.



**Alina LEȘAN**  
Technical College "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Suceava, Romania  
E-mail: [hodoroaba.alina@yahoo.com](mailto:hodoroaba.alina@yahoo.com)

**Current activity:**

- *Highschool teacher* of Economics and Entrepreneurial Education at Technical College "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" from Suceava
- *Manager Assistant* in the programme Erasmus IP INNO NATOUR – Innovation in Nature Based Tourism Services, Life Learning Programme

**Areas of interest:** Economics, Entrepreneurship, Tourism



**Adrian Liviu SCUTARIU**  
„Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania  
Faculty of Economics and Public Administration  
E-mail: [livius@seap.usv.ro](mailto:livius@seap.usv.ro)  
Web: [www.seap.usv.ro/~livius](http://www.seap.usv.ro/~livius)

**Current activity**

- *Teaching Assistant PhD. Student*, "Ștefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, Department of Economics, Business Administration and Tourism
- *General Editorial Secretary*, The USV Annals of Economics and Public Administration, scientific journal indexed in international databases ([www.seap.usv.ro/annals](http://www.seap.usv.ro/annals))

**Scientific activity:**

- author and co-author of 4 books published in national prestigious publishing houses,
- more than 50 articles published in scientific journals and conference volumes (25 indexed in international databases)
- member in the research team of 5 grants
- mobilities abroad:
  - SOCRATES - ERASMUS INTENSIVE PROGRAMME IP „*INNO-FOREST: Integrating innovation and entrepreneurship in higher forestry education*”, Coordinating institution Technical University in Zvolen, SLOVAKIA, (2006)
  - Mobilities Programme LEONARDO DA VINCI II "*Developing of skills and competencies for trainers in the field of formal and informal entrepreneurship training programmes for local community*", Strasbourg, FRANCE (2006)



- SOCRATES - ERASMUS INTENSIVE PROGRAMME IP „*INNOVATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT*”, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Oulu, FINLAND (2010).

**Areas of interest:** Economics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Tourism, Regional Development



**Otilia BORDEIANU**

„Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania

Faculty of Economics and Public Administration

E-mail: [otilia@seap.usv.ro](mailto:otilia@seap.usv.ro), [otilia.bordeianu@gmail.com](mailto:otilia.bordeianu@gmail.com)

**Current activity**

- *Teaching Assistant* at the Department of Economics, Business Management and Tourism, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava

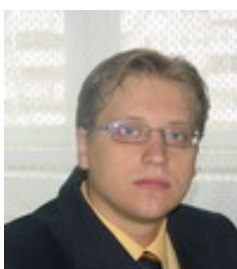
*Experience in developing training modules on business management, project management and human resources management. Involved in NGO’s activity of students (CASt) and in tourism activity – Bucovina Tourism Association (Project manager).*

Certificated as Quality Manager by CERTQUA Berlin (2006); Certificated as Quality Auditor by CERTQUA Berlin (2007).

**Areas of interest:** Management, Human Resources Management, Project Management, Entrepreneurship, Management in Tourism

**Scientific activity:** co-author of 2 books published in national prestigious publishing houses, more than 15 articles published in scientific journals and conference volumes.

*Experience in project management (being involved in the project teams in 2 PHARE programmes, 4 Leonardo da Vinci – Lifelong Learning Programme and Transfer of Innovation), participation within ERASMUS exchange programs in England – Plymouth (Workexperience, 2007), Finland (Oulu University, 2010) and Germany - Berlin (staff training, 2011), UK – Walsall College (2012).*



**Iulian CONDRATOV**

„Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava,

Faculty of Economics and Public Administration

E-mail: [iulianc@seap.usv.ro](mailto:iulianc@seap.usv.ro)

Web: [www.seap.usv.ro/eaat](http://www.seap.usv.ro/eaat)

**Current activity**

- *University Assistant* at the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava
- *Editorial secretary* - Revista de turism – studii si cercetari in turism (Journal of Tourism - Studies and research in tourism), journal indexed in international databases.

**Areas of interest:** Statistics, Tourism

**Scientific activity:**

- co-author of volume: “Selective research – case studies, projects”,

- over 20 published studies and articles,
- collaborator in 2 research contracts,
- mobility abroad: SOCRATES - ERASMUS INTENSIVE PROGRAMME IP „*INNOVATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT*”, Oulu University of Applied Sciences, Oulu, FINLAND (2010).



**Ruxandra BEJINARU**

„Stefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Romania

Faculty of Economics and Public Administration

E-mail: [ruxandrab@seap.usv.ro](mailto:ruxandrab@seap.usv.ro)

**Current activity**

- *Teaching Assistant PhD.*, within the Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava.
- *English language reviewer*, Journal of Tourism – Research and Studies in Tourism, [www.revistadetourism.ro](http://www.revistadetourism.ro), scientific journal indexed in international databases.

**Areas of interest:** Knowledge management, Strategic management, Entrepreneurship.

**Scientific activity:** author and co-author of more than 20 articles published in scientific journals and conference volumes.

Scholarship stage at G. D’Anunzio University in Pescara, Italy, Oct-Dec. 2011.

RESULTS OF THE ERASMUS IP  
INNO NATOUR 2011-2012

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# FINAL REPORTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS

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## **Bucovina Tourism Association**

### **WG1 - Innovation in Business Tourism Services**

Andrea Uherková - Slovakia

Anna Schoepfer - Austria

Ivelina Velkova - Bulgaria

Rosa Pietikäinen - Finland

Eleonora Giuliadori - Italy

Remo Curalet - Romania

Alina Morosan - Romania

Matteo Favero - Italy

Otilia Bordeianu - Romania

#### **Introduction**

Bucovina Tourism Association (hereafter: BTA or Association) was established in the end of 2001 at the initiative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Suceava County, the Romanian Ministry of Tourism, all the travel agencies of Bucovina and a German project – called IBD/GTZ, which was the program of the German government for economical promotion and labor force development. BTA is a non-governmental and a not-for-profit organization. At first, after the establishment of the association, there were no clear goals to be achieved; nevertheless, as the years passed, the aims began to be clearer and new visions and plans for future activities were developed. The association will celebrate in 2012 10 years of activity and, therefore, they are planning to held celebration.

First activities mainly consisted in printing and marketing tourist leaflets and information materials, initially only in Romanian language. After a couple of years association started to reach international markets by providing brochures also in other languages and by participating in foreign international fairs. Nowadays the association has many aims but developing touristic strategies and promoting Bucovina as a tourist destination are still the most important tasks. Furthermore, the association developed and updates the database of the touristic sites of Bucovina, tries to foster programs aimed at increasing accessibility in Bucovina, holds workshops, seminars, conferences etc. Moreover, the association aims at linking and joining together the stakeholders of tourism in Bucovina area and establishing networks among hotels, travel agencies, craftsmen, etc. Finally, the Association encourages the cooperation between public and private sectors, also not forgetting to provide training courses for the tourism personnel and for the members of the association.

The association has several members which consist of hotels, pensions, guest houses, camping sites, restaurants, travel agencies, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, craftsmen and typographies. Most of the members are hotels because of the financial opportunity offered by the association (better “integrated” advertisement) and hotels are also those who usually want to improve the quality of their services. BTP provides its members tourist and information material concerning Bucovina area. Other advantages that members receive are: “integrated” representation and promotion during tourism fairs and exhibitions, regular briefings and advices on national and international tourism fairs and tourism events and the possibility to ask for help by the experts from IBD/GTZ in promoting tourist products and preparing promotional materials, e.g. how to appear and present themselves on the webpage of the association.

Partnerships are very important opportunities for the association and the most helpful partner is maybe the Stefan cel Mare University because the association doesn't have much money to hire employees, while students can work as volunteers or as part-timers in return of learning by experience in “real life-projects”. Other partnerships are established with the

Chamber of Commerce, various Majors, Suceava Brewery, volunteers and also with neighbouring Moldova and Ukraine.

Association has few fundings, mainly from the European Social Fund, Leonardo da Vinci Programme, that is part of the European Commission's Life Long Learning Programme and whose funds target at practical projects in the field of vocational education and training. Moreover, the Association receives money by offering services in economic sector (on demand) and, of course, fees are paid by the members, according to the accommodation capacity of each member: member fee ranges from 120€ to 250€ per year. Anyway, the money that the association receives usually come from successful projects.

### ***The working group: aims, phases and methodology***

The aim of our working group, as a part of the INNO NATOUR project, is to improve and innovate the BTA organization and to give them some advices. Our group consists of students from the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, Slovakia.

In order to accomplish our task, we followed some steps and we used different tools and methods. At the begining we receive some basic information about the Association by Otilia Bordeainu, from the Stefan cel Mare University. Then, we had a meeting with Lăcrămioara Beilic –the coordinator of BTA, in the Chamber of Commerce, where the Association is based. There we found out and discussed about the current situation of the organisation and how it used to be in the past. We also received information about the company, ongoing and planned acivities, main goals, projects and expectations. In order to help them, we were supposed to suggest some innovations.

During the process of our group work, we were attending different lectures dedicated to management, innovations and tourism services, taken by specialists in this field of interest, coming from different countries.

We started our work with a SWOT analysis as the basic strategic planning method to have an overview about the Strengths, Weaknessess, Opportunities and Threats of the association. In the meanwhile, we searched for further information about BTA and Bukovina region on Internet. In the meantime, we discussed about our ideas of „innovation” and we also wrote down the first draft of our proposals and suggestions. During the second meeting with Lăcrămioara Beilic we showed her our intermediate analysis and discussed with her about problems detected and our ideas. After that we realized the main points of innovation which we intended to focus on. Finally, we implemented them.

### ***SWOT analysis***

The SWOT-analysis is a strategic planning method for the evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats occuring during the implementation of a project or in an enterprise. The strengths are of internal origin and describe the characteristics that are advantages for the project or enterprise. The weaknesses are also internal, but state the competitve disadvantages. On the contrary, threats and opportunities are both of external origin, which means that they describe changes in the environment that could either improve the performance of the enterprise (opportunities) or affect it negatively (threats). Jyothi *et al.* (2008) state that the SWOT analysis should be performed before the enterprise sets its objectives. SWOT analysis for Bukovina Tourism Association (BTA) is presented in the following page.

### ***Problem definition***

The main problem of the Association is the lack of financial means. As they get no financial support from the Government, they depend only on membership fees and funding by the European Union. Because they are short of money, the association has only two employees and problems to finance the optimization of their materials and offers. Also their possibilities of implementing a regular cultural event in the Bucovina region are limited. Another main problem

is the bad accessibility of the region but since this is of external origin, our innovation suggestions concentrate on the first point.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strenghts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of the members (quality requirements)</li> <li>• Willingness</li> <li>• Well-established</li> <li>• Monopoly</li> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Qualified staff</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Weaknessess</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of money, uncertainties about future funding</li> <li>• Web Pages just in Romanian</li> <li>• No governmental support</li> <li>• Info-material not well distributed</li> <li>• Outdoor activities not well promoted</li> <li>• Just two employees</li> <li>• Logo not well known</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote nature-based activities</li> <li>• To promote traditions, e.g. events and products</li> <li>• Religious and cultural tourism</li> <li>• Social Network and Forums</li> <li>• To provide accurate, correct and updated information</li> <li>• European funding</li> <li>• Sponsors</li> <li>• To create and promote a new logo</li> <li>• To take part in touristic fairs</li> <li>• To develop international cooperation</li> <li>• To improve web-pages</li> <li>• Competition</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties in accessibility</li> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Economical crisis: loss of membership fees</li> <li>• Political changes</li> <li>• Prejudices</li> </ul>

### ***Economical crisis***

According to Lăcrămioara Beilic, the current economical crisis caused a decrease in the number of visitors in the Bucovina region. Because of the lower annual turnover some of the association's members had to close their hotels, guesthouses and restaurants. The decrease in the member number goes hand in hand with the decrease in the association's financial means, since the association depends also on the membership fees. In 2005 the association had 60 members and lost over the last years almost a third of its member, with 48 remaining members in the association in 2012.

### ***Innovation plan***

#### Webpage and promotion material

The webpage is only offered in Romanian and the promotional material is not always well translated. So we suggest that foreigners could get discounts for accommodation etc. in exchange of refining or translating *ex-novo* the material and the web pages.

#### Logo of Bucovina region

BTA could organize a competition/contest where creative and willing people get the chance to realize a representative logo and slogan for Bucovina region. This contest should focus on representative symbols of Bucovina region and expose them through a sign/symbol/logo. The organizers could give some prizes or awards for the best creations.

Even before the contest, BTA should do a research about how people perceive the image of Bucovina, what they have in mind when hear the first time of Bucovina region, in order to evaluate what the logo of Bucovina could contain: monasteries, the face of Stefan cel Mare, painted eggs, Voronet blue, mountains, forests, etc. These words, symbols, colours could form a representative logo for Bucovina region. After identifying the representative symbols of Bucovina region, all the results from the research must be evaluated and the next step is creating a press release that informs people about this design competition by BTA and the way people could sign up.

BTA should collaborate with other institutions and organizations for realizing this contest and form the jury with specialists in tourism marketing.

We think that this kind of event could be an opportunity to create a logo that represents Bucovina region in the tourist minds.

#### Medieval festival

According to Lăcrămioara Beilic the association would like to establish a regular cultural event. The main problem is the lack of financial means.

The fortress in Suceava has already been the location of a medieval festival several times. As there is a big medieval community in European countries such as Italy, Spain and Austria, the long-term implementation and European-wide promotion of the medieval festival, could establish Suceava as a tourist destination for this European subculture.

The medieval festival strives to showcase all aspects of medieval life: art, craftsmanship, music, market life, daily task and traditions. Especially welcome are authentic craftsmen practicing crafts that were part of the heritage of the Middle Ages, such as calligraphy, book binding, leather work, jewellery, pottery, glasswork, woodworkers, painting, etc.

Visiting Medieval Festivals provides us with a background about what happened in the Middle Age without the need to read the history about it: it's all visual effects, music, market with middle age products, fights between different knights and many more.

The first step would be the creation of a proper web-page through which people can find information, buy tickets with a special discount and, if they are interested in participating as artist, craftsmen etc. they can fill an application form.

We suggest the possibility NOT to use plastic cups, but handmade ceramic medieval cups (from local potters). The ceramic cups could be bought for a low price or to be distributed at the



entrance. People also could have the possibility to decorate them. The offered food should be local and traditional dishes only.

Other offered activities could be:

- Falconry, medieval games for kids, fire-spitting;
- Some kind of representation of any historical events, typical for the Bucovina region;
- For the visitors: possibility to participate to a photographic contest. Who participates should pay something more but at the same time they could have some discounts for the entrance or eating etc. and at the same time this activity results in having more photographic documentation to be loaded and displayed on the website, flyers, brochures etc. (for the winner: a ticket for the next year and some typical souvenirs).

All of the local members of the BTA would be partners and collaborate with the festival. As they would get the possibility to accommodate the visitors, they should provide financial support to the organization management in return.

One of the most important points is the creation of an European network with other medieval festival, spread all over Europe (Italy, Spain, France, Northern Europe and many more), in order to have more visibility.

### Eco-centre

We know that it is not simple to establish a centre to be in service at any time. But it is a big challenge and it could bring a good results and new tourists to the region, because nowadays a lot of people are interested in green tourism and traditional crafts. If the organisation would be able to find some sponsors for this, it could offer a lot of possibilities for them to promote the region.

The eco-centre could be located in an old traditional building, which has a good connection to the public transport and is supplied by renewable energy sources, if possible. It should include accommodation for 15-20 guests at least and moreover a restaurant which serves local dishes and where the guests could have breakfast, lunch and dinner (e.g. between weekend programmes). Possible sponsors could be various regional producers of food such as vegetables, eggs, meat, alcohol (Suceava beer).

The centre could offer mainly some weekend workshops, conducted by local craftsmen in cooperation with people who know how to organize such events. It would be great if physical activities would be supported by some mental activities (meditation, painting, singing local songs, listening music etc.). To promote them it is necessary to improve and regularly update the respective web pages and Facebook pages and to send invitations to followers.

Workshops would not be for free: the participants would have to pay a fee (for accommodation, material and food). We think that the target group would be mainly people from cities who are losing the contact with nature and the traditional way of life.

Except of weekend workshops, the eco-centre could provide also short-time activities (during afternoons or evenings) or trips for pupils, what can be considered as an environmental education.

### ***Applicability***

In chapter the authors investigate if the innovations proposed in this paper could also be realized in Finland, Italy, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Austria.

**Finland:** There is a well-established tourism association in Finland. There are also several eco-centres in Finland, but they are mostly specialized camps or courses such as meditation, but it is also possible to rent rural cottages. For example, Kuopio has a tourism association called “VisitLakeland” which corresponds with the BTA.

**Italy:** All of this innovations are already well-established, because Italy has a long and successful tradition of tourism. A partnership between Suceava medieval festival and an Italian festival could be the starting point for the creation of an European network..

**Slovakia:** There are some critical point for what concern tourism promotion, so these kind of innovation would have probably the same problem that we have recognized for this case study. Starting with cooperation between different countries would be a good strategy. Slovakia has popular and well-promoted eco-centres.

**Bulgaria:** Also Bulgaria has eco-centres and medieval festivals. Some regions also have tourism associations like the BTA.

**Austria:** Similar to the Italian situation, Austria has a long tradition of tourism. Eco-centres and medieval festivals are already realized, but could surley be optimized. There is also the possibility to establish patnerships between Austrian and Romanian medieval fesitvals and eco-centres.

Tourism associations like the Romanian BTA exist for every Austrian region. The Austrian federal state Tyrol managed to establish itself very suceeddfully as a brand.

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# ODN Pension

## WG2 - Land Based Business

Natascha Debes - Austria

Anna Bortolazzi - Italy

Marieta Litarska - Bulgaria

Zuzana Matusova - Slovakia

Ancuta Cotoara - Romania

Sorina Puiu – Romania

Carmen Boghean - Romania

### Abstract

The following paper will discuss ODN pension, concerning its current situation as well as an innovation plan for promoting it as an agritourism business. It will contain a description of the enterprise and a SWOT analysis, which defines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the company. Moreover it will define the problems, which we noticed after assembling all the information and based on that our group created an innovation plan to be implemented by the enterprise. In addition to that a short review of the working process is part of the report.

### Description of the case study

Our group case study is focused on the ODN Pension from Șcheia, nearby Suceava city. It is a family business as the name shows: O – Oil; D – De; N – Negru (Surname)

It was established in 2002 as a Public Limited Company and at the beginning the main activity was Retail sale of automotive fuel in specialized stores (Romanian classification of business activity), but starting with 2004 they diversified their field of activity by opening the tourist pension. The accommodation structure keeps the name of the enterprises but with a different connotation: O experiență De Neuitat (An unforgettable experience).

So, the firm tried to develop in the tourism sector and, taking into account the profile of the main customers, it is working in the business tourism.

The pension is located at Calea Humorului, No. 55, Șcheia, Suceava, Romania, and other ways of contacting it are:

Website: [www.pensiunea-odn.ro](http://www.pensiunea-odn.ro)

Phone: 0230526653, Fax: 0230526653

E-mail: [oildnegru@yahoo.com](mailto:oildnegru@yahoo.com)

It is classified at 3 stars (daisies). The facilities offered are 9 standard double rooms and 4 king size bed rooms, and at demand they can offer a triple room by adding an extra bed. All the rooms have phone, TV and bathroom.

The restaurant has a capacity up to 30 seats and it is opened to all the people, not just to the pension's guests. During summer, they have a covered terrace and a barbeque area.

The main customers are Romanian workers within Suceava region, that is why the highest occupancy rate is on Wednesdays and Thursdays. The company has an important number of loyal customers. They are mainly workers within the area, they have long stays and come back weekly. To encourage their loyalty the firm adopted a specific marketing policy by offering them discounts for repeated visits.

It is operating with a number of four employees, during the main season or for especial occasions they hire additional personnel. The main partners are:

- the pension that is located in the same yard, owned by another family member: the guests can use the swimming pool and the sauna for an additional charge;
- rent-a-car agency: the guests can book a car through the pension for their staying;

- “Eurolines” travel agency: the guests can buy tour packages, accompanied by tour guides, to visit Bucovina region.

The managers consider that they have their own niche, because the competition is not strong and is aiming towards different sectors of the market.

Within the area the main competitors are:

- Conacul Domnesc 4\* - it is a complex structure (it offers accommodation, conferences room, bar, restaurant, winery, SPA center, a park and sport field) classified at 4 stars, having higher prices which are not attractive for workers;
- Ambiance Pension – the main target group of it is represented by leisure tourists.

### **Description of the case process**

Our group was defined as the green team, therefore we did some team building activities in the beginning. We are six group members from five different countries, which are Romania, Italy, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Germany. We all are intended in different study programs, such as environmental studies, ecology, landscape architecture or tourism. The varying scientific background was very helpful during the working process, because each group member could participate with the knowledge from their field.

The first step was to check the homepage of the enterprise to get the basic information about it. One issue which appeared was that the information in the internet was available only in Romanian. Luckily we have two Romanian group members who translated for the rest of the group. Afterwards we prepared for the meeting with the owner of the enterprise by noting some interview questions to get the missing information. Unfortunately the owner was not available at that time, but we still got all of the needed information from the owners son. The last contact with the owner was an interview by telephone.

After having completed all the information about our case enterprise, we started to work with during the time for group work. We used a SWOT analysis to organize all the information and to define our innovation case.

Methodology:

- web research
- field research
- interview with the owner
- SWOT analysis

### **SWOT analysis**

#### **Strengths**

- Traditional organic food
- Family business
- Loyal clients
- Accessible prices

#### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of motivation
- Accessibility
- Few customers
- Promoting issues (web page not available in other languages)

#### **Opportunities**

- Future partnerships
- Extend the target clients
- Trips for customers

## Threats

- Infrastructure
- Unemployment
- Future competition
- Innovation causes higher prices
- Loss of clients

### Problem definition

The main issue which we defined for ODN pension is the missing „image“ of the enterprise. We recognized some aspects, which are essential for agritourism such as the supply of traditional or homemade food. With the corresponding marketing, ODN pension could define a clear image as a agritourism based pension. Furthermore ODN pension has only a small number of customers which are mainly loyal ones from Romania. These loyal customers are business people who visit the pension on working days, but on the weekends the pension is rarely booked. The strategy mentioned above would also help to attract new guests, maybe even tourists from foreign countries. To attract foreign tourists there is a need to provide the information about the pension in other languages, especially in English.

Since the pension is not the main business of the family, it can be said that there is a lack of motivation for development. According to the owners son there is no interest in expanding and developing the enterprise into a four star pension, because it would higher the price and this would risk losing some of the loyal customers. The enterprise is a family business and since they have no previous experience with tourism, there exists a need for professional stuff that could help with a matching marketing strategy.

### Innovation plan

The innovation plan that we create contains 3 ideas for development. They are connected whit a new image for the company, ways to introduce the organic food that they produce and how to improve their advertisement.

**The first idea** is to introduce the agritourism activities for future clients and this to be the new image. The new guest will know that all the food that they are going to eat on their stay is homemade and it's not fill whit chemicals. The owners have all of the needed staff to do this task. They just need to show this on the proper way to the clients of the pension.

A lot of the resources are there like the farmers food, the professional cooking staff and a professional hunter as a family member. Whit these conditions it's easy to implement activities in the area of hunting tourism. For example – organized trips in the forest for receiving some experience in the field of hunting. Moreover they could provide trips to the farm where the customers can gain same knowledge about how the food is produced.

Another suggestion for the pension are the cooking courses which could show the guest how to cook in the traditional Romanian way.

A simple proposal is to serve a cookies whit homemade jam in the morning for breakfast.

**The second idea** is connected whit the promotion and advertising. To reach also foreign customers is necessary to provide the information on the web-page and the flayers in another languages. Another advice is to do same marketing connected to the family internal petrol station such as signs or special offers for the clients (e.g. facilities for the clients that came with their own cars – free service, gas discounts)

**The third** and last idea is to collaborate with a travel agency which organizes trips and provides information about possible activities in the region in every room as a flayer.

## Applicability to group members` home country

### GERMANY

In my opinion there is a high potential also for German pensions, which are located close to

the rural area, to become an agritourism business by providing typical German dishes or homemade food. What amazed me about ODN pension and Romanian pensions in general is that they provide organic food from the farmers. I think this implies a high potential for promoting those pensions in the name of agritourism with the idea of an ecology friendly and sustainable image. This would attract many tourists from around the world, because for more and more people it is becoming a trend to travel in an eco friendly way. Furthermore I noticed a difference in the standard of the pensions, comparing a 3 star hotel in Germany with a 3 star hotel in Romania. Therefore it is very important to give potential guests the opportunity to have a look at the rooms and the other facilities so that he or she knows what to expect.

### **ITALY**

In my opinion, the Italian situation is different from the Romanian one: being Italy a very touristic nation, there are a lot of hotels and touristic structures: so there is no lack of guests, but the problem is the competition in every sector. Therefore Bucovina is the area that needs more innovation than Italy. Since the problems are different from Bucovina to Italy, the proposed innovations aren't suitable to the Italian activities.

### **BULGARIA**

We have a lot little family hotels, hostels and pensions in the villages near to the big towns like the ODN pension. But they don't have a stars or daisies, only the hotels have. They have a big backyard where they produce the food for the kitchen and a special area for the animals. Everybody who wants to try to milk a cow or collect the production from the field is free to do it. The guest can try also to cook something whit the products that grow in front of them.

### **SLOVAKIA**

We have quite a lot of pensions with 3 stars located in villages and I think they can offer better services than ODN pension. Firstly they have a web page working at least in 2 languages and completely presenting themselves. In Slovakia it is common that pensions are kind of family business but accommodation almost always plays the main role, so they have enough motivation and connection with agritourism is more visible. Also they can satisfy wider range of customers. But what I would like to recommend them is to orientate their restaurant more on traditional food and collaborate more with enterprises offering many kinds of services.

### **ROMANIA**

The proposed study case it is generally applicable for Romanian pensions classified with 3 daisies. Of course there are some very well equipped accommodation structures that follow strictly the European standards.

Firstly, most agritouristic pensions should hire professional personnel because usually they are family business and consequently the members of the family work in the structure. The main inconvenient about this state is that not all the members have the necessary studies and trainings to activate in this field.

Secondly, we thought about introducing some agritourist activities such as hunting, cooking and visit the farms from which the organic products are provided for the clients. It is not a general idea for all Romanian pensions but it is applicable to our study case and to a certain extent to other pensions in this area.

Thirdly, we took into account the promoting methods. As far as it concerns the virtual area, not only that the ODN Pension has no website in other languages, but it also should improve the Romanian version of the site. The general tendency of the potential clients is to use the internet when it comes to find a place for accommodation, and if the webpage is not provided at least in one alternative language this might led to fewer clients. Moreover, there are too few promoting materials founded at the destination. That is why we have considered that improving

the actual promotion and add further activities in this area will be in the pension advantage, raising its competitiveness.

### **Sources of information**

We collected part of the information about the company from their web-page. The other part was taken by an interview with a family member- Mircea Negru. He gave us some information about how the business developed in the time and what is the management now. The final piece for the full report was given us by his mother, the main manager of ODN pension.

## Hilde´s Residence

### WG 3 - Environmental–Nature and Environment, National Parks, Reservation

Helmut Haller - Austria

Valeria Cardeli - Italy

Anna Bohacova - Slovakia

Marius Visan - Romania

Adriana Terzieva - Bulgaria

Johanna Laitinen – Finland

Vladimir Stojanovski - Austria

Alina Lesan - Romania

#### *Introduction*

The idea for founding Hilde´s residence start from childhood desires, mixed with mature and very well prepared plans. Built on the place of birth house of the owner Hilde, the Hilde´s Residence appear as small but very innovative, peaceful and friendly residence located in the heart of beautiful Romanian region of Bucovina - „Maybe only for the sake of the **beech tree** woods that shadow your path. It is there where you can lose your way and be happy like a child. The woods will make you come back to the basic joys of your existence“.



The name Bucovina derives from the Austro-Hungarian empire. Bucovina means a Beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*) or in German “Buchenland” -“Land of the Beech Trees” or *die Bukowina*. Total territory of the Bucovina region spreads from Romania to Ukraine.

Located 500m from downtown of Gura Humorului city the Hylde´s Residence was established in 1997. From the beginning the residence has been relaying on the Ecotourism principles which are noticeable from the first visit of the residence. The natural aspect, bio-organic vegetable garden and bio-chicken farm located in the backyard of the residence gives sense of very environmental friendly and natural. The hotel was awarded the Eco-Romania certificate by Discover Eco-Romania an Initiative of the Association of Ecotourism. This underlines the company´s willingness to accept ecological standards and to promote eco-tourism and services connected with it.

With BOUTIQUE hotel concept, the residence can provide the guests comfort, relaxation, delight and good friendly ambience. The residence is consisting of 3 buildings (houses) – 1st



Vila, 2nd Big House and 3rd Rustik house. The difference between Hilde's residence and other hotels and pensions is that the rooms have a name, not a number. 13 rooms with different names spread in the 3 buildings. Calispera, Calimera, De Luxe, Love Story, Belvedere, Romantica, Bamboo, Yang, Idile, Terra, Cameron, Rustik and Traditional are enough attractive to satisfy different guests needs. The last two rooms Rustik and Traditional are located in the third building Cottage arranged on traditional Bukovina life style. Rooms have a living room, kitchen, bathroom and inner stairs which lead to the sleeping area under the roof. The difference between these two rooms and the others is that the two rooms have different architecture which is specific for Bukovina area. The furniture has been made with traditional style mainly from oak, spruce or Douglas fire wood. Although the rooms have an ancient design they still provide comfort for the guests. The view and ambience are very beautiful and pleasant. The Apple orchard and the beautiful landscape can be noticed from the windows.

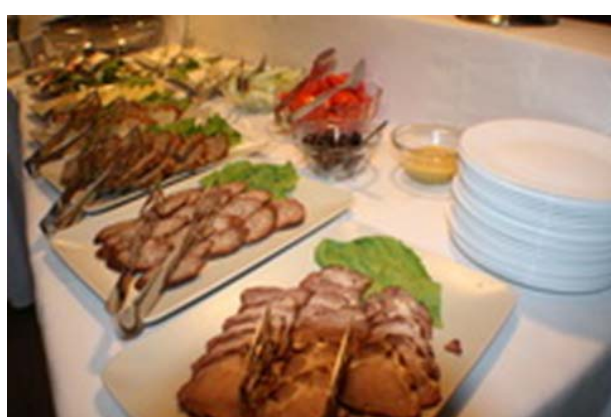
The Hilde's Residence in order to satisfy guests consists of five elements:

- Hotel
- Restaurant
- Garden and Orchard
- SPA centre
- Souvenir Shop

*Hotel:* The capacities of the residence is to accommodate up to 30-35 guests by offering them double rooms, spacious apartments and junior suites.



*Restaurant:* The capacity of the restaurant is for 50 people. The restaurant is small but can offer very comfortable atmosphere. The restaurants can be used for guests but also other people are welcomed. The food is mainly from own production (garden, plastic house, orchard and farm) – the concept of Bio-Agriculture. Restaurant is suitable for different kind of celebrations: **Family events** (birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, etc.), **Corporate events** (seminars, presentations, meetings) or **Rustic parties** in genuine rustic space in the orchard, with barbecue, camp fire and traditional live music. Groups of 20 people, receive preferential rates, bonuses, gratuities.



*Garden and Orchard:* The most important part of the garden and the orchard are the flower garden and apple trees orchard. In this environment the guests have opportunity to relax in the middle of the nature on the territory of 5,000m<sup>2</sup>. The guest can use the garden for reading, painting, knitting, cooking, playing backgammon, chess, playing cards, while they enjoy a glass of wine. During the winter the orchard is the children's favourite area because it turns into a fun slide. Snowmen are the most common snow figures that can be found from the garden.



*SPA centre:* The SPA centre is the place where guests can enjoy special massage techniques in order to help them to prevent, alleviate or treat various issues. In the SPA centres the qualified staff uses non-invasive methods for prophylaxis and treatment. The techniques that are used in SPA center: Infrared sauna, Medical massage, Reflexology, Facial Shiatsu, General Shiatsu + Combination of Discount packages.



*Souvenir Shop:* The main ideas are: „Souvenirs are drops of soul offered to the loved ones or a very inspired way of showing our affection“ or Souvenir - Object, gift that represents or evokes a memory. The souvenir shop offer products such as: store handicraft, toys, postcards, albums, and BIO delicacies prepared in Hilde's kitchen.



**Problem statement:**

The Hilde's Residence is small enterprise which is focusing on offering quality services. The customers are treated as guests not as clients, producing family atmosphere. By offering accommodation the residence help quests to satisfy their needs. They are focusing on older people by offering them quiet and peaceful space.

In order to provide diverse selection of services the Residence is co/operating with local businesses. The local companies focusing on activity tourism provide the guests possibilities to go hiking, biking, skiing, rafting, Nordic walking. It is possible to rent a car or take a guided tour to visit the local monasteries and churches.

Interesting is the fact in all Hilde's residence elements: hotel; restaurant; garden and orchard; SPA centre and souvenir shop exist some **forms of innovation**. Mainly they can be categorized in **product (service)** innovation, **marketing** innovation and **process** innovation.

### **SWOT – Analysis**

In order to understand and to analyse the Hilde's working environment the SWOT analysis approach was used. The residence capacities and activities were analysed through this approach. The reason for using SWOT analysis is because on that way can be much simple to understand which are strengths and weakness from inside environment (inter) and which are the **Error! Not a valid link.** from outside environment (intra).

#### **STRENGTHS**

- Hilde's Residence has a **well-defined target group**
- **Organic products** - On the property there is a big garden where fruits and vegetables are grown, as well a chicken farm. With this production it has a large amount of organic products for the restaurant and souvenir shop.
- **Sustainability** – see further explanation in category 'Sustainability'
- There is a **home- and family-like atmosphere** in the residence.
- Many **cooperations** with other local businesses are undertaken (e.g. transport, outdoor activities).
- "**Hilde's-history**"- The name *Hilde* is a German name and already takes reference to the times when Romania was part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Although we do not want to glorify the past by any means, the historic past of the region offers many opportunities for tourism.
- **Traditional Bucovina**- feel: The hotel offers a traditional ambience. Also the receptionists wear traditional Bucovinean costumes and the hotel blends in nicely with the surrounding area.
- **Boutique hotel** → Hilde's Residence is a Boutique Hotel. The concept means that every room has its own theme of furnishing and decoration.
- **Beautiful surrounding area/environment**: The hotel is located in a beautiful region of Romania with many historical (e.g. monasteries, salt mine etc), as well as environmental (e.g. beautiful landscape, skiing slopes etc.) attractions.

#### **WEAKNESSES**

##### **Possible weaknesses might be;**

- **Public transportation** (bus): The hotel is not connected to a public bus system, although it has to be stressed that there is a train station in walking distance.
- The **low season**: There are two very weak months of business, namely November and March, where the maintaining costs of the hotel are not covered. Again it has to be stressed that this 'low season' is used to make structural and organizational improvements.
- Limited **restaurant capacity** – the limited capacity might be a weakness for making bigger celebrations like for example weddings, but might be an advantage to keep the 'family-like-atmosphere'.
- Not enough **road signs** to the hotel – there could be more road signs showing the way to the hotel.

- **Energy system** – the energy system of the house relies heavily on non-renewable energy sources. For a sustainable future it should be tried to further increase the use of renewable energy sources (e.g. solar systems).
- Problems how to reach **older customers** who don't use internet – Hilde's Residence is very present on international booking sites in the internet. People who do not use the internet or have no access (e.g. older guests) might sometimes not be reached by the advertisement.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Renewable energy** – renewable energy systems are the way of the future. As the prices of fossil fuels will eventually rise, as resources get scarcer and environmental effects will show more strongly, there is need for a change in energy systems. Hilde's Residence should take this into consideration. Being an 'Eco-certified' hotel, this might offer ways to save money, as well as for environmental protection and customer groups.
- Offering special **packages** for low season months (e.g. 8<sup>th</sup> of March Women Day). Especially local tourists could be attracted.
- **E-shop** to offer souvenirs worldwide.
- **Customer survey** – customer surveys and customer questionnaires could be conducted to further improve on customer critiques. Through the customer survey the management team of Hilde's Residence can follow the what are the customer's needs and trends.
- Possibilities for guests to **take part in garden activities** – guests could be invited to actively take part in the hotel's horticultural activities as well as learn about the chicken farm. This would add another offer.
- To be a **leader of ecological tourism** in the region – Hilde's Residence puts a lot of emphasis on ecological aspects already. This could further be used and promoted as an engine of ecological tourism for the whole region.
- **Hilde's village** – Hilde's Village are two traditional little houses to rent about 50 meter away from the main buildings. They are just being finished and offer great potential for further improvement of the hotel's offers.

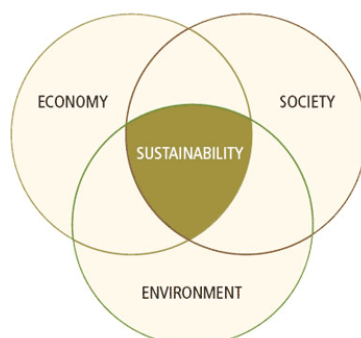
## THREATS

### Possible threats could be the

- Focus on very **specific customer groups**
- Strong **dependence on out-door services**
- Strong **dependence on internet** as advertisement platform
- Family business with no defined **successor**

### Sustainability

Following the classic approach we define three dimensions of sustainability: ecologic, social and economic. Where all this aspects are considered and met, actions are considered sustainable (see figure no. 1).



**Figure no. 1**

The figure shows the three dimensions of sustainability: ecologic, social and economic. In the middle of the picture where all the criteria meet, actions are considered sustainable.

Hilde's residence acts responsibly in terms of:

**Ecology:** As mentioned above, there is a large quantity of organic products produced on the property. The organic farming helps to save a lot of energy by not using inorganic fertilizer as well as lowers the impact on the surrounding environment and watershed. On the negative side or room for improvement, we have to mention that heating is done with gas. Further improvement might be reached by the use of solar systems to increase the share of non-renewable energy sources. Although we are aware that under current energy prices the investments might not pay off in economic terms.

**Social:** Hilde's residence provides about 20 permanent jobs for employees in the region. By maintaining agricultural production instead of buying external goods, additional jobs are created. The Hotel provides a friendly work environment and has many long-term partnerships with other regional businesses offering outdoor activities and etc. Furthermore the hotel puts a lot of emphasis on a family-like environment and very personal feel in the hotel. (e.g. everybody knows Lucy the founder and general manager).

**Economic:** Hilde's Residence maintains a strong niche position in the region. Being placed in the middle- to upper class price segment the hotel had a continuously high booking rate throughout most months over the last years. The annual turnover from 2010 to 2011 increased (see effects of the economic crisis). The hotel has many partnerships and seems to be well established in the region for offering all kinds of activities. All in all the business can be seen as very stable and sustainable for the future in economic terms under our point of view.

#### **References:**

All photos of Hilde's residence were taken from the homepage of Hilde's Residence at [www.en.lucy.ro](http://www.en.lucy.ro)

## Hotel Sonnenhof

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### WG 4 - Urban and Rural Development

Ossi Taavitsainen - Finland

Kata Tolvanen - Finland

Birgit Wagner - Austria

Elisa Pittura - Italy

Natalia Kubicova - Slovakia

Anca Ursescu - Romania

Mihai Popescu – Romania

Daniel Halaj – Slovakia

#### **Description of Hotel Sonnenhof \* \* \* \***

The hotel is located on the edge of Suceava City and was opened on 15 February 2012. The legal form of the enterprise is “Limited Liability Company”.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Sonnenhof offers air-conditioned rooms and free Wi-Fi throughout the property. There are 48 rooms (36 twins, 12 doubles) with 24 m<sup>2</sup>, which is more than standard size. Rooms are all decorated in natural tones and with plant motifs and offer LCD TV and a minibar. A desk and a safety deposit box are also available. In private bathrooms are provided a bath tub and free toiletries.

**Services:** A summer garden and a restaurant are located on site. The restaurant is named Mosaik and has 80 seats. Part of the restaurant is a terrace/garden with 100 seats. They also have a big conference room with another 80/90 seats. Breakfast buffet is served every day and room service is available. The summer garden provides a perfect oasis to enjoy outdoor meals or relax while sipping a drink.

Hotel Sonnenhof offers free private parking places for customers.

**Owner:** Ionel Maftai

#### **Employees:**

Housekeepers ~6

Receptionists ~4

Waiters ~7

Kitchen Staff ~8

Accounting Officers ~2

Hotel Manager ~1

**Public Transport:** The Bus Station is located 500 metres from the hotel and the Main Railway Station is 9 km away. Suceava Airport can be reached within 17 km.

**Sights:** Hagigadar Monastery is located 500 metres from the property. Suceava Fortress can be reached within 6 km. Other tips for trips: Museum Satului (5 km), Hanul Domnesc's ethnographic museum (4 km), Monastery Dragomirna (14 km).

**Location/Business address:** Bd. Sofia Vicoveanca Nr. 68, Suceava, cod postal 270284

**Contact information: Telephone:** (+4) 0230 22 00 33 (hotel)

(+4) 0230 22 00 99 (restaurant)

**Fax:** (+4) 0230 22 00 39 (hotel)

**Email:** [contact@hotelsonnenhof.ro](mailto:contact@hotelsonnenhof.ro)

**Homepage:** [www.hotelsonnenhof.ro](http://www.hotelsonnenhof.ro)

#### **Prices:**

Double room standard for single use: 197 ron

Double room premier for single use: 240 ron

Double room standard: 240 ron

Double room premier: 284 ron

**Market and competition situation:** Hotel Sonnenhof offers good services. The main target group is business guests. It has a good price-quality ratio. The hotel is a competitor for three other similar \*\*\*\* hotels and two \*\*\*\* pensions in Suceava.

By acting in the same market, they enter into a competition with them. Competition is a fight for conquering the market, each competitor trying to satisfy the needs of its clients in terms of higher supply. Just like the Sonnenhof Hotel, \*\*\*\* hotels address primarily businessmen arriving in delegations, or attending some conferences, meetings or congresses and offer a wide and diverse range of services.

The \*\*\*\* hotels direct competing with Sonnenhof hotel are:

- **Imperium Hotel** – located on the edge of Suceava, near Sonnenhof hotel. The hotel has a capacity of 78 rooms arranged in 40 double rooms for 159 RON, 30 single rooms for 129 RON and 8 suites for 259 RON. The prices do not include breakfast. Each room has Internet access, telephone, digital television, room service, mini bar, Jacuzzi, leather sofas, air conditioning and plasma TV with a DVD player.
- Mini hotel **Santa FE** - is just a few minutes away from the busy and crowded Suceava downtown. The main services are: Accommodation, Restaurant, SPA, business facilities and more. The price for a single room is 120 RON and for a double room is 190 RON. The prices include breakfast and access to the spa.
- **Conacul Domnesc** – although it is a \*\*\* resort, the manager of Sonnenhof considers it the most important competitor. It is a hotel complex which includes a hotel, a restaurant, a wine cellar, a summer garden/terrace, a health SPA and a multi-purpose hall. All this assembly occupies a surface of more than 10 hectares, within an arboretum, which also has a private lake.

#### **Description of the case process**

Organization of the group:

We are a group of 6 students from 5 different countries.

- **Ossi Taavitsainen, Finland** (International business, Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus)
- **Kata Tolvanen, Finland** (International business, Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Varkaus)
- **Anca Ursescu, Romania** (Economics and Public Administration, Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava)
- **Birgit Wagner, Austria** (Management of Environmental and Bio Resources, University of Life Sciences, Vienna)
- **Elisa Pittura, Italy** (Forest and Environmental Sciences, University of Padua)
- **Natalia Kubicova, Slovakia** (Technical University in Zvolen)

The leader of our group is Ossi Taavitsainen.

We started this case study by visiting the target enterprise, Hotel Sonnenhof. We had a conversation with the hotel manager Ana Budu, who told us about the hotel in general. After that we asked some questions to get more information, for example considering the SWOT analysis. Then we were shown around the hotel by a receptionist and saw one of the rooms, the garden and the restaurant.

The next step was to do the intermediate presentation using power point. For finalizing this presentation we had four meetings. We used brainstorming to find new innovation ideas. We shared our information and ideas between all group members. The presentation included the description of the hotel, the SWOT analysis, the problem definition and our drafts of innovation. We sent the presentation to the manager by email, together with some questions to get additional information. We also made some internet research about the competitors, in order to define the competition situation better. When all the information was available, we put it all together in this final report.

**SWOT analysis**

The SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective.

- **Strengths:** internal characteristics of the business or team that give it an advantage over others in the industry.
- **Weaknesses:** internal characteristics that are a disadvantage for the firm relative to others.
- **Opportunities:** external chances to make greater sales or profit.
- **Threats:** external elements that could cause trouble for the business.

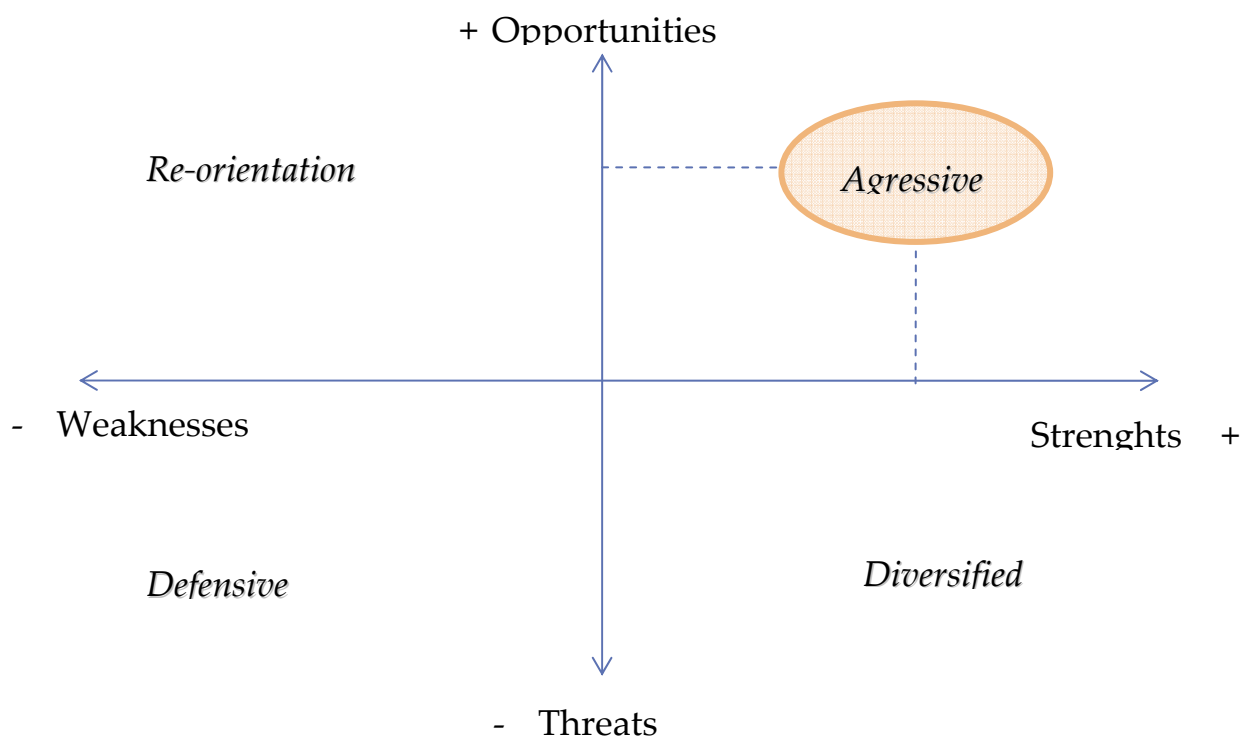
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good price-quality ratio</li> <li>- Very good service</li> <li>- New building with friendly architecture</li> <li>- International cuisine</li> <li>- Young people get chance to gain experience</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No English web site and menu</li> <li>- Location (Non-attractive landscape, bad public transport connection)</li> <li>- Lack of hotel activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New luxury suites are under construction</li> <li>- Spa (swimming pool and sauna)</li> <li>- Cosy areas for smokers</li> <li>- Gym and outdoor activities</li> <li>- Analysis of the first year experience</li> <li>- Unexperienced employees (training them by their own way)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Similar hotel with better location (center)</li> <li>- Season changes</li> <li>- Effects of economical crisis</li> </ul>

**Table no. 1. SWOT analysis of Hotel Sonnenhof**

**SWOT analysis chart**

We used the SWOT chart to define the marketing strategy to be used. Therefore we had to look if there are more strengths than weaknesses and more opportunities than threats.





**Figure no. 1: Proposal of marketing strategy for Hotel Sonnenhof Ltd.**

The SWOT analysis shows us, that hotel Sonnenhof \*\*\*\* has more opportunities than threats and more strengths than weaknesses. It follows that the marketing strategy in our case is aggressive, which means that the hotel is competitive. Hotel is also able to increase its market share, expand customer portfolio and portfolio of services. In this type of strategy, investment is the way to improve its position in the market.

### **Problem Definition**

We want to find some nature based affordable activities which Hotel Sonnenhof can offer in order to gain additional guests during weekends and make it also more attractive for families.

### **Influence of the present economical crisis**

Because the hotel is so new, the influence of the present economical crisis cannot be seen yet. But according to the hotel manager, the crisis has an effect on the hotel business in general.

### **Innovation plan**

#### ***The herb spiral***

Our first innovation idea is to create a herb spiral in the hotels garden. The aim is to make the garden more attractive. The herbs can be used for the restaurant's needs. The customers can get information about the herbs from informative signs next to every herb. Each sign tells the name of the herb, possibilities of use and other general information. The herb spiral is beautiful to look at, and also activates the senses of smell and taste. The diameter of the herb spiral could be approximately 2 meters. It's not too expensive or complicated to build. It can build by the hotel staff or the service bought from a specialized company. The kitchen staff has power to choose, what herbs to plant in the spiral.

#### ***Improvement of the landscape***

At the moment the landscape and surroundings are not very attractive, but they have a lot of potential. By planting trees and creating a hedge beside the road, the view from the hotel could be more enjoyable. The trees could be different species, which change the color by each season. They can also have noise reducing effect, which would make the hotel more peaceful. By

co-operation with local farmers, the surroundings could be made more interesting. For example, a mini zoo could be great tourist attraction for families with children. The animals in the zoo should be able to live there all year round. It should also be located near the hotel, so it would be easy for the customers to get there. Another example could be a garden plot near the hotel, where the kitchen could get fresh vegetables and fruits.

### ***Outdoor Fitness Park with personal trainer***

Across the street of the Sonnenhof hotel there could be arranged an Outdoor Fitness Park with a personal trainer. The goal of this innovation is to attract more costumers by offering some workout for example for the main target group, the business guests. So they can do some exercise without the need of going somewhere else. This service contributes to the health of the guests which is an important request nowadays. Such a Outdoor Fitness Park would be a “Unique Selling Proposition” because nobody else provides this in the area of Suceava.

The first step is to choose an option how to gain access to the land. Either there is a possibility to buy the land, to rent it or to cooperate with the owner. This could be a “Win-Win-Situation” for both partners, because the hotel would have more activities to offer and encounter the weakness “Lack of activities” with the recommended aggressive strategy. For the land owner it would be a source of income too as a shareholder.

As a next step there could be arranged a park landscape with some trees, bushes, flowers and maybe a fountain where the exercise equipment can be placed in between. The personal trainer should offer some fitness programs according to the individual needs of the customers. But in general there should be offered a schedule with different lessons like “Yoga”, “Aerobics” or “Spine exercise” which would give the customers motivation for doing actively something for their health.

### ***Shop with homemade souvenirs***

This innovation also could make the hotel more attractive as a whole. It would have a double function (source of income through selling products and offering the service to provide cultural knowledge). If there could be put into practice the idea of the vegetable and fruit garden there could be done various home made souvenirs like for example marmalades. From the mini farm the chicken eggs could be used to paint them traditionally and sale them there too.

A condition which is needed is an appropriate room for this shop. Additionally there must be somebody who can pain the eggs properly.

There could be sold also other souvenirs like postcards or the traditional black pottery from the Bucovina region to offer more different kinds of products.

If there is an interest in these innovation ideas, there should be a feasibility study done beforehand.

### ***Applicability to group members’ home country***

**Romania** is a small country, but the landscape and opportunities have a great potential. It has a great heterogeneity of environments, a lot of culture and traditions. The ideas in our innovation case study and our final report, can be perfectly applied for Sonnenhof hotel.

In **Austria**, mini zoos are quite commonly offered together with accommodation, also herb spirals are not rare. The same can be said about souvenir shops with homemade products made out of self-grown vegetables and fruits. So these wouldn’t be actually real innovations in Austria. But the Outdoor Fitness Park with a personal fitness trainer might be a good idea to apply also to Austrian hotels.

In **Italy**, the tourism has already developed for many years. The landscape is peaceful and enjoyable to admire, because we have always looked after it.

There are a lot of places, where people can taste homemade products and buy them (e.g. shops, farmhouses, country houses, Bed and Breakfast, etc.).

In some farmhouses, children with their families can learn how the farmer works and what animals they can find.

All the innovations we had suggested can be applied for Italian tourism, because it is a country that offers a lot of services. There are a lot of places to go on holiday and many enterprises that can satisfy the guests' expectations.

In **Slovakia**, there are similar hotels and services than in Romania. It depends on the city, where hotel is located. In our capital or other big cities, there are similar hotels like hotel Sonnenhof is (business hotels). There are also smaller hostels for tourists with friendly price. But in some regions, especially in the north part of Slovakia there are accommodation in traditional cottages situated in the countryside.

In **Finland**, there are pet zoos in some accommodations in the countryside. The weather varies quite a lot all year-round and that makes it a bit challenging to have a mini zoo, because the animals of the zoo should also have some place indoors. Finland is a Nordic country, so the animals of the zoo should represent species which would endure with the varying weather.

Herbs are not rare in Finland, but it's not common for hotels to have their own herb gardens.

Souvenir shops in hotels are less common in Finland than in other countries. In Finland, there are usually different kinds of shops close to the hotels. It's easy to buy souvenirs from those shops and the prices there are usually more friendly than in hotel's own souvenir boutiques.

The outdoor fitness park with a personal fitness trainer would be hard to put in use in Finland, because of the varying weather conditions. On the other hand, this kind of innovation could work in summer time, if the equipment tolerated rain.

### **Conclusion**

In our opinion, hotel Sonnenhof is doing quite well with gaining a good position on the market.

With our ideas of innovations it might be even more successful. Their potential should be taken in use, in order to reach the target market share and keep it.

### **Sources of information**

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- <http://hotelsonnenhof.ro/>
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- <http://www.ibis-tours.ro/index.php>

# INDIVIDUAL POST CASE STUDIES OF THE STUDENTS

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# The Donau-Auen Nationalpark

## a recreational area between two European capitals

**Anna Schöpfer**

Austria

### Abstract

This case study gives an overview of the tourism services and organisation of the Donau-Auen Nationalpark, an Austrian national park, and deals with the innovation policy of the national park including a SWOT-analysis of the policy.

In the course of the study one case of innovation, the national park boat providing transfer between Vienna and a visitors centre is examined more closely.

### Introduction

The Donau-Auen Nationalpark is situated between Vienna and Bratislava along the Danube River and protects over 9,300 hectares of wetland landscape. From Vienna to the mouth of March River, the Danube flows freely with alternating water levels creating habitats for a diverse fauna and flora.

One part of the national park is situated in the federal state of Lower-Austria, the other in the one of Vienna. The Viennese part of the national park is called „Lobau“ and is a major recreational area for the Viennese. The national park is visited by over 1 million each year and regarding the development of the Vienna-Bratislava region, the importance as a recreational area between this two European capitals increasing. The director of the National Park, Stefan Manzano, describes the national park as a centre for environmental education as the Donau-Auen National park offers various guided excursions. National park camps and facilities for the information of the visitors such as the schlossORTH Nationalparkcentre and the Nationalparkhaus Lobau.

The national park has cooperation and partnerships as well on the national level with Austria national parks as internationally, especially with the protected areas along the Danube river.

### Case study description

The following chapters give an overview of the national park society of the Donau-Auen Nationalpark and analyse the innovation policy of the GmbH.

### The organisation

The national park is administrated by the „Nationalpark Donau-Auen GmbH“ (the national park society), a non-profit organisation formed by the Austrian federation and the provinces of Vienna and Lower-Austria in 1996. A GmbH is a company with limited liability and a type of legal entity, where the owners of the entity are not personally liable for the company's debts.

The managing director of the society is the national park director Carl Manzano. As managing director, Manzano is also member of the management board which holds regular sessions in which yearly programmes, projects and activities are agreed upon. The other members of the management board are the head of the forest administration Eckertsau in Lower-Austria and the head of the forest administration Lobau in Vienna.

The „Nationalpark Donau-Auen GmbH“ engages 42 employees, which have three main tasks: the organisation of the national park, visitors and region and science and nature (Donau-Auen Nationalpark GmbH a, 2012).

### **Legality**

On 27 October 1996, the minister of the environment Martin Bartenstein, Vienna mayor Michael Häupl, and Lower Austria provincial governor Erwin Pröll signed a treaty on the establishment and maintenance of a Donau-Auen National Park in accordance with Article 15a of the federal constitution.

As the national park is partly situated in Vienna and partly in Lower-Austria, the statutory foundations of the Donau-Auen Nationalpark can be found in the federal law of these federal states (Donau-Auen Nationalpark GmbH a, 2012).

### **Corporate partners**

The Donau-Auen National Park has three partners from the business world: „Ströck BROT“ participates in joint projects. For the bakery chain has created a product called „BIO-Auwaldbrötchen“ (literally, "organic bread of the wetlands"), an organic bread loaf in the shape of a turtle to support a conservation project for the European Pond Turtle. The other two partners, the Vienna Innsurance Group Donau versicherung) and Swarovski Optik provide financial support, and participate in joint projects. Except of these partnerships the national park is funded by public means (Donau-Auen Nationalpark GmbH a, 2012).

### **Innovation goals**

The national park society set three main innovation goals. The first is to improve the optical and personal presence of the national park in the region. For example the national park society tries to increase the partnerships (e.g. joint promotion material and exhibitions) with cultural institutions in the region such as the Archaeological Park Carnuntum and the “Schloss Hof”, a historical palace which is the location of cultural events (e.g. Grand Baroque Festival). Further, they want to raise visitor numbers in the SchlossOrth National Park Centre, which was reopened 2005 and offers a underwater observatory, a lookout point and a multimedia exhibition about the national park.

The last innovation goals is the optimization the quality of the environmental education programmes and the guided tour programmes (Donau-Auen Nationalpark GmbH b, 2012) .

### **Innovation case: National Park Boat**

Every day from 2nd May to 26th December the national park and the city of Vienna offer a special transfer service with a MS Skorpion boat from the centre of Vienna to one of the national park’s visitor facilities, the „Nationalparkhaus Lobau“ and back again. The transfer service costs between 4€ for under aged and 10 for adults and includes a one hour tour guided by a ranger of the national park through the Lobau (Wien GV, s.a.).

According to Markus Breuer (2012), the deputy head of the forest administration Lobau, around 4,000 visitors use this transfer service each year (2012).

The innovative project was first installed in 1999 due to the imitative of the city council for environment and is financially supported by the city of Vienna. Another project partner of the national park is Johannes Litschinger, owner of „1. Wiener Bootstaxi“, who provides the transport with his MS-Skorpion. Markus Breuer (2012) of the forest administration states that the project faced various challenges and problems during the process of implementation such as the establishment of landing stages for the national park boat, the search for an entrepreneur providing the boat for the transport, the arrangement of the guided tour (route, information) and the setting of the price for the offer.

### **Influence of the economical world crisis**

According to Ursula Grabner, working for the visitors&information department of the national park, the national park society has not experienced negative impacts of the economical crisis so far.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT-analysis is a strategic planning method for the evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats occurring during the implementation of a project or in an enterprise. The strengths are of internal origin and describe the characteristics that are advantages for the project or enterprise. The weaknesses are also internal, but state the competitive disadvantages. On the contrary, threats and opportunities are both of external origin, which means that they describe changes in the environment that could either improve the performance of the enterprise (opportunities) or affect it negatively (threats). Jyothi et al. (2008) state that the SWOT analysis should be performed before the enterprise sets its objectives.

### SWOT- analysis of the Donau-Auen Nationalpark:

#### Strengths:

- Cooperation with cultural institutions of the region (e.g. Carnuntum)
- Diverse management board (director, head of forest administration Lobau, head of forest administration Eckertsau)
- Public means
- Non profit organisation -> focus on environment protection without commercial restraints
- Environmental education (e.g. visitor facilities, guided tours)
- Cooperate partners (e.g. Ströck BROT)
- Partnerships with other national parks

#### Weaknesses:

- Very close to Vienna, but still difficult accessibility with public transport
- Dependency of many different institutions (Austrian government, federal government of Lower-Austria and Vienna) which could follow different policies

#### Opportunities:

- Optimization of the accessibility from Bratislava and Vienna
- Developing the partnerships with other national parks along the Danube river

#### Threats:

- Sinking water level of the Danube -> loss of biodiversity
- Hydro-electric power plant in or close to the national park
- Increasing ship traffic along the Danube -> affecting the eco system of the wetlands

### Conclusions

The national park boat has several specific innovative features. First of all it connects the centre of Vienna with the protected nature of the Donau-Auen Nationalpark. It is in comparison with other modes of transports (e.g. car, public transport) a simple and, considering the boat trip along the Danube river, entertaining way to get to the national park.

Moreover the service includes a guided tour and is therefore a contribution to environmental education. The small size of the boat (MS Skorpion) has a lower impact on the river's eco system than the common ferries and can be therefore be labelled as "soft boat tourism".

As the Donau-Auen Nationalpark has an increasing importance as a recreational area for the Vienna-Bratislava region, the national park boat is one innovative tool to draw city and nature closer together.

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3. Wien GV, s.a. Nationalparkboot Lobau. Available at: <http://www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/wald/erholung/nationalpark/freizeit/boot.html>

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4. Interview via e-mail with Markus Breuer, deputy head of the forest administration Lobau
5. Interview via telephone with Ursula Grabner, visitors and communication Nationalpark Doanu-Auen.



# Environmental Education Vienna

## – Green Island

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Birgit Wagner  
Austria

### Abstract

The association Environmental Education Vienna as an independent Non Profit Organization is an innovative enterprise in general and is regularly coming up with new ideas also in the field of free time activities in nature. This report is on the one hand describing and on the other hand trying to analyze the association.

### Introduction

The mission of Environmental Education Vienna is to enable people to experience nature and learn about natural habitats, especially the National Park “Danube floodplains“. They want to do that in order to make especially children, but more and more also older persons, to enjoy, appreciate and, as a kind of result, take care of the natural environment. With innovative holistic methods the organization tries to make use of a Unique selling proposition. It is a sign of proof that they are reaching their goals, that the association and their main partner, the department of the Vienna city administration for forestry was awarded from UNESCO Austria the UNESCO seal of quality for the project “Education for a sustainable development“.

### Case study description

First of all, Environmental Education Vienna is a Non profit organization above all party lines. The legal form of this enterprise is an association. It was established in 1987 from a committed team of environmental pedagogues. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all offered services are in the field of Environmental education and around  $\frac{1}{4}$  are free time activities. The organization hosts approximately 13.000 guests per year. Environmental Education Vienna’s human resources are about ten all-season employees plus around 40 in the main season, which is May, June and September. The staff is organized in a flat hierarchy and the managers are hired. Over the years more and more attractive events like camps and pedagogical programs were developed and numerous environmental educational- and free time facilities at near nature sites have been established. The association is located at the edge of the National Park „Donau-Auen“ (Danube floodplains) in Vienna with it’s main facility the “National Park Camp Lobau“. “Lobau” means the Viennese part of the National Park Danube flood plains.

Environmental Education Vienna has been offering various innovative services mainly in the field of education as the name of the organization says but also free time activities. Numerous workshops, excursions and camps are on the program. Topics like life in water, weather, bees and much more are prepared in an appropriate way for the individual target groups.

Because of the topic of this Erasmus Intensive Program I want to focus here on the free time activities in particular:

Beginning with the so called “Green holidays“, which are especially offered for pupils during the summer time. In five days they can visit every day another near nature site of the Environmental Education Vienna and may attend professionally guided joyful workshops or excursions.

The title “Green weekend“ stands for an offer targeting families to experience camping at the National Park Camp Lobau.

Another possibility for guests is to come to a so called “GreenIslandCamp“, which is one week camping at the edge of the National Park with exciting programs as campfires and walks through the forest at night for example.

At the “EnglishAdventureCamp“ additionally English is spoken all day and all night long. Therefore are also native speakers at the camp.

Another category of innovation is the initiative “Young European Solidarity (Y.E.S.)”, which has enabled thousands of young people from 34 different countries of Europe to encounter at NationalparkCampLobau since 1998.

The main goals of this initiative are on the one hand holistic nature experiences and intensive debates about environmental themes but on the other hand especially appreciation of the cultural diversity of Europe and democracy.

The pedagogical innovation of Environmental Education Vienna is the „Fresh AIR concept“. The three letters of the word “AIR” stand for firstly “Animate”, which means that the participants are made curious and full of suspense about the topic of the program at first. The next step and the main part is to “Intensify”, in the sense of approaching the topic with different methods and in different social forms with the aim of really getting into it. At last the part “Reflect“, in which nothing new should come up, is rounding up the program. All in all, every offer of the Environmental Education Vienna has a well prepared arc of suspense, like a film or a theatre play, where the climax of the program also is the focal point.

The main innovations like the Y.E.S. initiative and the Fresh AIR concept are ideas of the director of Environmental Education Vienna.

The main target groups are children, who are coming as pupils in their school classes with their teachers, kindergarten groups, after school clubs and families. But also adults in the role of students, staff or seniors are upcoming target groups.

The needs of costumers are quite different because of all the different age groups of course. Anyway they are searching for nature experiences, adventure, information and recreation.

There are many competitors on the market in the field of outdoor and nature pedagogy. For example the Viennese forest school, the Nationalpark association, the Naturefriends, the Environmental good noses, the Austrian alps club, the scouts, the Childrens company and many more. Especially free offers are very hard to compete with.

Although, there was not a market observation done in particular, according to the manager I interviewed, Environmental Education Vienna is the market leader. Pedagogical professionalism is their way to encounter competition.

The main motto in the organization is: “Don’t focus on problems, but on solutions!” Another important point is the orientation at the requirements of the target groups. Additionally there are new target groups to find, especially if some of the old ones are getting weaker. For every innovative idea of a new offer an attractive title has to be created.

Environmental Education Vienna works together with the departments of city administration Vienna for Forestry, Waters and Spas. Further more the Pedagogical Academy, the Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics and the Vienna School Board are partners.

The association creates regularly new folders and posters and sends newsletters via e-mail to its regular customers. In addition there is a direct mailing system to the Vienna School Board, who hand the PR material on to their school principals, who finally give the folders to their teachers.

For the future there is planned that the Environmental Education Austria, which already exists, develops further in the other provinces. Also in Vienna there are currently many new action fields like a camp especially for overweight children or a wilderness playground.

**Influence of the present economical world crisis**

According to the interviewed manager, the crisis did not affect the organization because they were just establishing two new EU projects in these times. The prices could be hold. The crisis was leading them to more innovation. But on the other hand I have heard from the director, that ten years ago there was much more money available for the Y.E.S. initiative and that is why they had more guests before.

**SWOT analysis of the organization’s innovation ability**

The SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective.

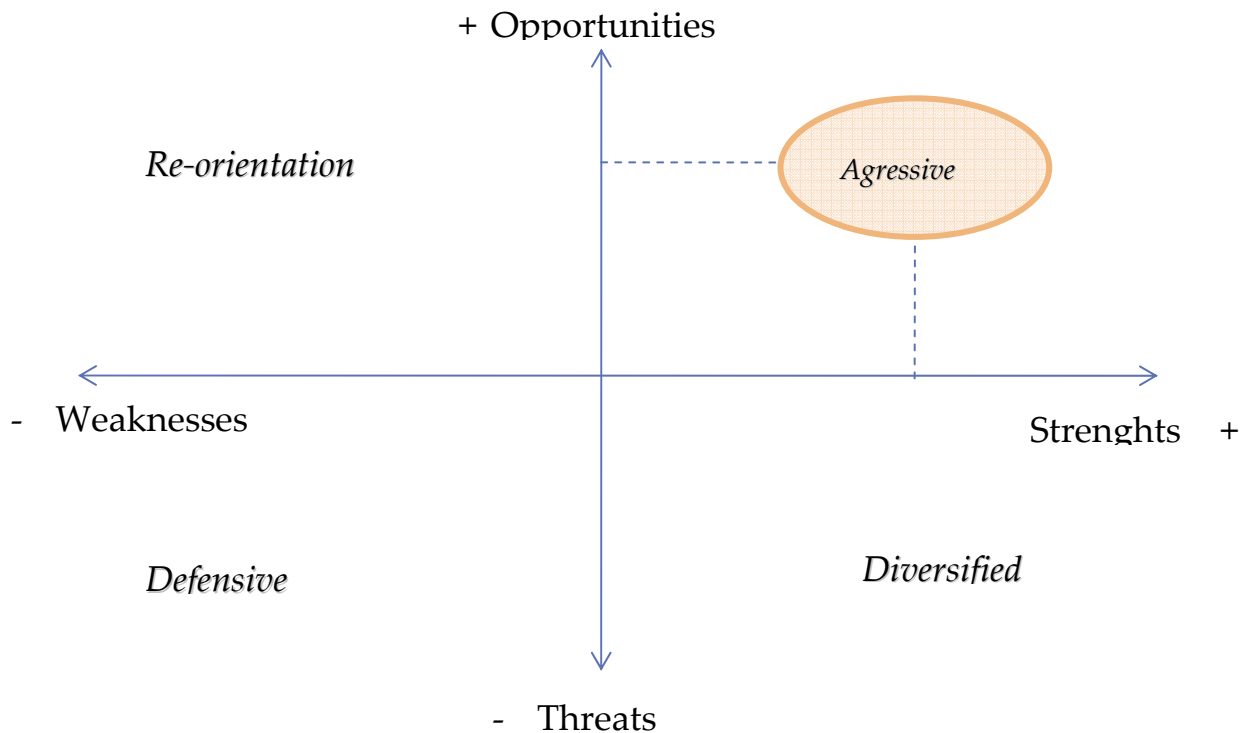
- **Strengths:** internal characteristics of the business or team that give it an advantage over others in the branch.
- **Weaknesses:** internal characteristics that are a disadvantage for the firm relative to others.
- **Opportunities:** external chances to make greater succes.
- **Threats:** external elements that could cause trouble for the organization.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location (National Park + Vienna)</li> <li>- Good price-quality ratio</li> <li>- Very professional and individually adjusted services</li> <li>- New building with friendly architecture</li> <li>- Mainly organic cuisine</li> <li>- Committed staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bad public transport connection</li> <li>- Little bookings in the side seasons</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New action field of the EU projects</li> <li>- Analysis of the previous years experiences</li> <li>- Hiring inexperienced employees (training them by their own way)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- free offer with a more central location</li> <li>- Lack of customers and money because of the economical crisis</li> </ul>

**Table no. 1. SWOT analysis of Environmental Education Vienna**

**SWOT analysis chart**

The SWOT chart defines the marketing strategy to be used. Therefore it is necessary to look if there are more strengths than weaknesses and more opportunities than threats or the other way round.



**Figure no. 1. Proposal of marketing strategy for Environmental Education Vienna**

The SWOT analysis and the SWOT chart show us, that Environmental Education Vienna has more opportunities than threats and more strengths than weaknesses. It follows that the marketing strategy in this case is aggressive, which means that the association is competitive. The organization is also able to increase its market share, expand the customer portfolio and the portfolio of services. In this type of strategy, investment is the way to improve its position in the market.

### **Conclusion**

The lessons learnt from this case study are mainly that Environmental Education Vienna is basically on the right way with its concept. They should make use of their potentials and make the best out of their opportunities. I think that all the diversifications, which are going on at the moment will be a great chance for the organization. The challenge will be finding the appropriate way of marketing for so many different offers. Maybe a helpful idea could be to create an online booking tool, which is by the way not dependent on the opening hours of the service center. My imagination says that there should be possibilities to ask for some requirements and then the system gives you suggestions which programs or events could be suitable.

### **Sources of information**

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- b. PR material of Environmental Education Vienna
- c. Interview with one manager of the organization
- d. Internal information because I am a part time member of staff

# Weltweitwandern

**Helmut Haller**

Austria

## Abstract

In this report I will present shortly the travel company Weltweitwandern

GmbH (for logo see figure 1). As one of the leaders in the segment of hiking trips in the higher price segment in the German speaking area, they maintain a niche position in the soft tourism market by offering travel tours with a strong emphasis on sustainability and cultural exchange. The company operates in many countries, has many local partners and is aware of the strong influence tourism can have on regions, in a negative, but also in a positive sense.

Weltweitwandern wants to use this power to advance sustainable development. With a project called FairReisen (Engl.: reisen = traveling), in which 5% of their revenue goes into, the company conducts several environmental and social ventures in partner countries. I will be conducting a SWOT Analysis to give some possible ideas of innovation.



Figure 1: Logo Weltweitwandern

## Company Details

### Weltweitwandern GmbH

Gaswerkstraße 99

8020 Graz, Austria

Legal form: Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (GmbH)

Private company limited by shares (Ltd.)

Turnover 2010/11 : 4.469.956,- Euro

People - Nights 2009/2010: 21.325

Established in 2003 by Georg Hlade - Georg Hlade's *blogglobal thinking* gives insights in the philosophy of the business.

Market: whole German speaking area

Goal: to be one of the leading operators in this field

Weltweitwandern (WWW) is German and could be translated to English as *World Wide Hiking*. The firm offers packaged trekking and hiking tours, where in hiking trips overnight stays in tents are intended. Packages include travels to around 50 countries worldwide in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania and are offered in the German speaking area of Europe, where the company is one of the market leader's in this kind of travel segment. The company's specialization aims at people interested in nature and culture, who want to discover countries under the motto „Gehen und Erleben – Reisen für alle Sinne“, Engl. “Walking and experiencing – Traveling with all senses”. Since 2011 WWW also offers family- and roundtrips, as well as from 2012 Active- and Spiritual travels. In all offers WWW follows their philosophy of soft and sustainable tourism.

WWW is an active member of Forum Anders Reisen e. V. (Engl. Anders = different, Reisen = travel) an international network for tour operators with around 130 members and the Austrian CSR-network respACT.

Weltweitwandern GmbH formed out of the Georg Hlade's one man business “NatureTrek” offering travel tours in the Indian Himalayas, mostly aiming at financing his project of building a solar school in Lingshed, Ladakh ([www.solarschule.org](http://www.solarschule.org)). In 2003 Weltweitwandern GmbH was established as professional tour operator, distancing itself from the purpose of financing the

project, employing on additional person. The company grew steadily with currently 14 staff members, nine women and 5 men, including the business manager and founder Georg Hlade.

### **Partners**

The respectful and personal interaction with employees and partners on-site is very important. That is one strategy to guarantee quality, security and a special travel experience. A lot is invested in cooperation and further training.

### **Team**

A good and friendly working environment is very important for the company. They moved into a new office building in fall 2010, which is constructed not only to be environmentally friendly, but also to be socially friendly. It offers a good working environment with a lot of common space and kitchen, family members and customers are welcome to stop by. Further education is very important. WWW was awarded some prizes concerning their work environment, such as the Styrian Health at work prize *Fit im Job - der steirische Gesundheitspreis* to premier excellent health encouragement at the workspace. Furthermore it was awarded a price for the most “women and family friendly” business in Styria (Frauen- und Familienfreundlichster Betrieb der Steiermark).

### **Management**

The management style is built upon a flat hierarchy and respectful interaction in the teams. This contains transparent decision making with the involvement of all stakeholders, as well as constant communication of all topics on the company’s agenda so everybody is able to take part in the discussion.

This style is also tried to implement on partner companies. Contracts closed with others contain the obligations for compliance with certain international guidelines and codes of conduct such as;

- Trekking ethics of the IPPG – International Porter Protection Group
- ECPAT Code of Conduct
- ILO guidelines
- UN WTO Global Code of Conduct

The contractors are usually obliged to protect the local environment. They have the obligation to inform the guests about environmental regulations, as well as to use local products, garbage prevention and empowerment of the local economy.

To apply standards the company calls for customer replies.

Since 2011 WWW also offers family- and roundtrip packages and since 2012 active- and spiritual travel packages, their principles of sustainability are still followed.

### **FairReisen**

FairReisen (Engl. Reisen = Traveling) is a project by WWW and recently an own non-profit legal body to achieve some of the company’s self-set goals (for logo see figure 2.)

WWW is aware of the power tourism can have on regions and countries in a positive as well as in a negative sense. The company’s aim is to maintain cultural- and biodiversity and at the same time use tourism as a means of economic development.



**Figure no. 2. The logo of FairReisen.at is shown as well as the homepage.**

On way of achieving the company's way of sustainability is to insist on the strict social and environmental principles and guidelines the firm has, also for partners worldwide.

To use its activities as such an engine, 5% of WWW's revenue are invested in environmental- and social projects to have a positive impact in operating countries.

Some projects include:

- The "bottle house" - the construction of an orphanage in Nepal made mostly out of old glass bottles to use recycled materials.
- The *Munsel-School*, a school for children with special needs in Ladakh.
- The Nomad library is a library for Mongolian nomads.
- Sahara meets Himalaya, an exchange program for guides in of partner countries, so they can feel how it is to be a tourist in another part of the world.
- And many more.



**Figure no. 3. The figure shows the logo of the CSR Tourism certificate.**

### CSR

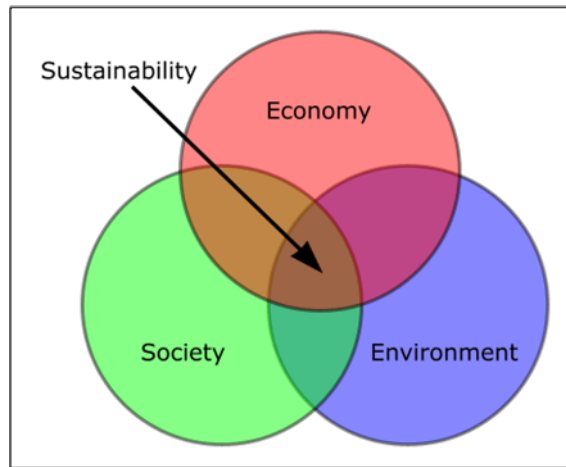
In 2009 Welweitwandern was awarded the CSR Tourism certificate (see figure as first and only company in Austria so far. It was renewed in 2011. The certification is granted by a non-profit organization called toucert ([www.tourcert.com](http://www.tourcert.com)) and is a way of measuring and ensuring strict guidelines of CSR and sustainability in tourism organizations. Part of this certification is the publication of a very detailed sustainability report. The report of Weltweitwandern is available for download on their homepage;

<http://www.welweitwandern.at/downloads?parent=service>.

WWW was awarded many other prices in the categories of Tourism, *family- and women friendly employer, fitness at the workspace*. All prices can be viewed on the homepage.

### Sustainability

Following the classic approach we define three dimensions of sustainability: ecologic, social and economic. Where all these aspects are considered and met, actions are considered sustainable (see figure 4).



**Figure no. 4**

The figure shows the three dimensions of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. In the middle of the picture where all the criteria meet, actions are considered sustainable. (<http://www.synergyconsulting.co/public/expertise/sustainability/sustainability1.png>)

Weltweitwandern acts sustainably in the following ways:

**Ecology:** Weltweitwandern acts ecologically responsible in many ways. The company aims at making low impact tourism by educating partners and clients, as well as employees to make them aware of the impact tourism can have on regions and countries. Guides and guests are obliged not to leave waste in the nature and to consume responsibly. Food on tours is supposed to be traditional and regional which can also have an ecological impact. For transportation planes are usually avoided unless not otherwise possible or too far. If planes are taken as means of traveling stays are usually tried to be as long as possible. Also customers are offered the opportunity for CO<sub>2</sub> compensation in partnership with *atmosfair.de*.

**Social:** Weltweitwandern takes into account the social effects of their actions very strongly. The company's motto "walking and experiencing" aims at having as little ecological impact on the environment as possible, while at the same time getting the most out of the interaction with the environment in this "slow" sense of traveling. Strong emphasis is put on cultural exchange between travelers and locals including guides. Cultural customs such as food and traditions are appreciated and the exchange is trying to be enforced. Weltweitwandern provides about 14 permanent jobs for local employees in the headquarters and maintains many long-time partnerships in partner countries. The company provides a friendly work environment with family members welcome, as well as guests and customers.

**Economic:** Weltweitwandern maintains a strong niche position. Being placed in the middle- to upper class price segment the hotel had a continuously high booking rate throughout most months over the last years. The annual turnover grew largely in the last measuring period (see effects of the economic crisis). The firm has many partnerships and seems to be well established linked in the region and internationally. 5% of the revenue goes into social and environmental projects hosted by their newly founded association *fairReisen.at* (Engl. Reisen = traveling). The goal of investing 10% of their revenue in non-profit projects is pursued, but still



pursuing reasonable profit. All in all the business can be seen as very stable and sustainable for the future in economic terms under my point of view. It is a great example of an eco-business.

### How the present economical world crisis affected the enterprise

While in the period of a growth of 2007/2008 to 2008/2009 a growth rate of 12,7% was achieved, this rate sank in the period of the height of the economic crisis from 2008/2009 auf 2009/2010 to 1,78%. In the period 2009/2010 to 2010/2011 the growth rate has risen to 11,5% again. WWW felt the economic crisis in their growth rate, but returned to pre-crisis growth soon.

## SWOT ANALYSIS



**Figure no. 5. A schematic Swot analysis is shown**  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SWOT\\_en.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SWOT_en.svg))

### Strengths

- Very strong **transparency**. Weltweitwandern publishes a CSR - report which can be viewed publically on the firm's homepage. The report contains a lot of information concerning financial and other data as well as aims and missions.
- **Participation** of customers and partners via questionnaires leads to improvement and surveys of customer demands.
- The company has a very distinct **philosophy** and tries to act responsibly in every aspect. This means fair payment for all partners and employees, as well as profit sharing. Awareness of the power of their business on development and social and environmental impact in operating countries, this means every operation has to take into account sustainability factors.
- A very strong locally based **core team** in good working atmosphere.

### Weaknesses (Limitations)

- The **limited customer range** compared to well established companies. Although I am aware that networks take time to being built.

### Opportunities

- Weltweitwandern is a leader and pioneer in sustainable tourism in Austria. The company conducts many impressive projects. There are very likely still many people not reached who would be interested in this kind of traveling. By **improving the marketing** the market share could be increased.

- To **use the company's strengths to further improve their leading** position in the sector of ecological and sustainable tourism in Europe.
- By **further communicating its achievements and projects**, the company could become a role model for other people and businesses and achieve goals of its philosophical aims on a larger scale through a snowball effect.

### Threats

- **Other companies that follow a similar business concept.** While it might be good for the idea and philosophy of WWW to spread it to as many companies as possible, there might be market saturation at some point and might have a negative impact at least in economic terms.
- Possible political unrests in operating countries and regions. Although this option does not present an immediate threat, due to the presence in many different countries all over the world, it might present a factor of instability for the company and their partners in the possibly affected regions.

### Conclusion

Weltweitwandern is a leading enterprise and tour operator in Austria and the German speaking area of Europe in the field of sustainable tourism services. By offering hiking and trekking trips, the company not only pursues a low impact way of tourism, but also wants to convey communication and cultural exchange between the clients and the local population. The business has a code of conduct and philosophy of using sustainable tourism as an engine to push forward positive development in partner countries. The company is profit oriented, but invests 5% of the revenue in self-organized social and environmental projects in operating countries. Weltweitwandern is planning to increase this share from 5% to 10% in 2012, so customers can actively donate money by traveling with this company, which is an interesting and powerful approach. Lessons learnt from InnoNatour include that innovation usually accompanied by a marketing plan is very powerful in ensuring long-term success of companies and other organizations. Weltweitwandern GmbH in my opinion has a very strong market position. The company offers high quality travel packages in a medium to high price segment, but with very high standards of social and environmental issues. Customer satisfaction is very important and replies are taken seriously. Questionnaires can also be found online on the homepage and outcomes of satisfaction are published. I think there will be a growing for the kind of travel tours WWW offers, because ever more and more people in Europe will demand proof of fair payment and environmental standards also in foreign countries. To further improve their market share the company probably needs to further increase their communication and marketing to reach a broader target group. With an already very high growth rate of 11,5% in the last measuring period, the firm certainly moves in the right direction. However, growth has its benefits and downturns. There will be a limit of growth for the enterprise in this way of organization. The company is a very personal travel organization, with flat hierarchy and with around 14 fix staff members it does not necessarily aim at a huge main stream market. On the other hand, with the company's claim of being a kind of "eco-social business", as usually in the sustainability sector, concerns are supposed to reach the mainstream to really have an impact. As mentioned above Georg Hlade has a blog where you can get insight about topics of related concerns, a lot of side information and links are found over the company's homepage. The company's internal *program for improvement* (included in the sustainability report), which states the plans to improve all sectors. Also planned is an international network a "Fair Travel Tour Operator Network" for better communication without competition with other actors in this sector. This might open new markets and create synergies, as well as accelerate innovation processes of the company.

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# Vila Vita Pannonia

**Natascha Debes**  
Austria

## Introduction

The intensive program *Innovations in nature based tourism services*, dealt with several kinds of innovation in nature based tourism. There can be technical innovation, innovation in services, innovation in the style of management or social innovation. By presenting the *Vila Vita Pannonia*, I will focus on its achievement regarding technical innovation, but innovations in services will be briefly mentioned as well, especially regarding my personal recommendations for the hotel.

## Description of the case enterprise

Situated at the Lake Neusiedl in the middle east of Austria, and only 80 km away from Vienna, the *Vila Vita Pannonia* is a quite attractive tourism destination. It is a vacation resort, which offers a hotel, bungalows, conference rooms as well as different restaurants, a bar and a wide range of activities. The standard is on a four star level, which indicates high quality of the equipment and the services offered.

Now some words regarding the history of the hotel. Pannonia was established in 1981 and belonged to the hotel group Norica until 1990. In June 1986 it had to suffer from a fire, which destroyed the main building. One year later the new building was reopened. Since November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1992, Pannonia is part of the limited liability company Vila Vita, which briefly explains the name *Vila Vita Pannonia*. Since then, there have always been developments such as new constructions or enlargements. Today the resort is situated on 200 ha and has a lot to offer:

### Living:

- ♣ 8 suites, 27 double rooms, 5 apartments, 126 bungalows in two villages with different style

### Culinary:

- ♣ 4 restaurants, 3 bars, a wine cellar, a fruit garden, *Brennstüberl* (barbecue, self made bred, lectures about schnapps distillery) and a big hall for banquets, weddings etc.

### Wellness:

- ♣ wellness and sauna park, beauty farm and massage institute, fitness center and wellness bistro

### Events:

- ♣ business and conferences (8 conference rooms for 100 people, 1 hall for 600 people, WLAN, ecotourism energy center with a seminar room for 60 people with view point and terrace)
- ♣ sport (bicycle loan, riding stable, jogging, parcours, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, mini golf, soccer field, beach volleyball, table tennis, inline skating, pedal boat loan)
- ♣ incentives (team building in the climbing garden, archery, coach riding, solar fun car, day trips to Hungary, creative workshops in the painting studio, fruit garden, herbes, castle Esterhazy)
- ♣ kids (Villa "Kunterbunt", playground, petting zoo, pony riding, water park)
- ♣ extras (marrying in the chapel, celebrating marriages in the hall, musicals, concerts, events, village shop with products from Vila Vita production)

What is interesting is the mix of nature based services on the one hand, such as horse riding, picnics, the natural pond, the reeds village, bicycle loan and of course the closeness to the

national park Lake Neusiedl. On the other hand, the hotel offers luxury and modernity with very high standard and modern conference rooms and the modern designed energy center, which will be explained later on within the innovation chapter. With this strategy, *Vila Vita Pannonia* attracts guests who are looking for recreation, wellness and nature as well as those who like luxury, modernity and a high standard. By combining these two elements, there can be interactions and new views on nature and modernity can be developed. This can also be seen as an innovative strategy.

The manager of the hotel is Mr Engelbert Jandl. He is the one, to whom the innovations in environment protection aspects is due to. Within others, the hotel has received the Austrian Certificate for Environment and the Austrian National Price for Tourism in 2009 for achievements in energy saving and the conversion to renewable energies. In order to manage the hotel, it is organized in several departments. Precisely kitchen, service, housekeeping, technique, banquet, sales & marketing, reception, accounting, external firms (beauty, massage, hairstylist), coaching, other administration. The style of management is a democratic one, in which the employees and the heads of departments participate with their own ideas. The owner of *Vila Vita Pannonia* is Dr. Reinfried Pohl and it is being supported by a German investor.

The hotel has no problem with competing enterprises, because there is nothing comparable with *Vila Vita Pannonia* to be found in the area around Lake Neusiedl, since they offer a bungalow village and a 4\*hotel in one place. Moreover the energy strategy is still a unique one in Austria. So far there is only one other hotel, located in Vienna, which produces all of the energy by itself.

### **Influence of the economic crisis**

To what extent did the economic financial crisis influence the enterprise? According to the head of marketing, Mrs Marion Hutter, the financial crisis had no effects on the enterprise so far. Nevertheless, the management decided to expand financing activities in marketing as a strategy in advance.

### **SWOT analysis**

#### **Strengths:**

- ⤴ location – the Lake Neusiedl with its national park is an attractive and well known tourism destination, especially for Austrians and Hungarians
- ⤴ high quality and high standard in services – by being a four star resort, *Vila Vita Pannonia* offers its guest a high quality of furnishings in the rooms and bungalows, as well as good services and cleanliness
- ⤴ high fashion – the hotel offers very modern locations, such as conference rooms and bars in a modern and aesthetic stile
- ⤴ nature based activities – the hotel has included the national park next door in its activities offered
- ⤴ wide range of guests – based on the aspects mentioned before, the visitors are young couples, families but also business people and conference groups
- ⤴ mix of wellness & beauty, sport & leisure, business & conferences
- ⤴ promotion – very good promotion strategy by creating a “Pannonia World” and offering nicely designed and informative brochures
- ⤴ energy center – produces 80% of the thermal energy with renewable energy sources, offers technical education for kids and others

#### **Weaknesses:**

- ⤴ high level of prices – during high season, a single room costs 137€ pp, a double room 127€ pp and a suite with double room 172€ pp, half board included
- ⤴ web page – although available in several languages, the web page of the Vila Vita hotels

could be arranged more clearly

### **Opportunities:**

- ⤴ special offers in prices – such as one week booking, half board or full board
- ⤴ further activities in combination with Lake Neusiedl – such as training courses in sailing, diving, nordic walking etc.

### **Threats:**

- ⤴ loss of investment with the energy center - difficulty of managing the amount of energy needed, since they have to estimate the amount of guest for the future, which is very difficult
- ⤴ financial crisis – did not influence the hotel directly, but was the reason why the management decided to increase the financial sources for marketing and to increase activities in marketing

### **Description of the Innovation**

#### 1. The combination of nature and modernity

It is a structural innovation to offer a natural surrounding with natural styled bungalows, a pond, reeds, a chapel, horse and bicycle loan in combination with a very modern looking energy center, conference rooms and modern bars. The combination of luxury and nature is a very innovative strategy which, if it goes well, can attract many different types of guests. But the balance has to be taken care of and the *Vila Vita Pannonia* does this by combining the modern with the nature based. The following part will give further explanation with the example of the energy center, which is situated on the property of the hotel and produces energy only out of renewable sources.

#### 2. The energy center

The *Anneliese Pohl Energy Center* is considered as the “jewel of the house”. The constructions finished in 2010. Especially an ecological interest led to the idea of building it and was mainly supported by the manager Bert Jandl. Another interest was a financial one by saving energy costs, when producing it on their own. The investment cost about 3,2 million €. The project was invented and implemented by engineers of the European Center for Renewable Energies Güssing in Austria.

The building shows a very modern architecture with linear lines, simplicity and complexity combined. It was built right in the center of the Pannonia Village, to be the main attraction. The energy is being produced with solar collectors, photovoltaic and biomass. For the construction of the biomass plant the law prescribes a 25m high chimney, which is why the architect came up with the idea of building a congress room with windows and a nice view on top of the tower. So it came out to be an aesthetic building in the center of *Vila Vita Pannonia*. The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were reduced at 797 tons per year. The center is able to deliver 85% of the thermal energy needed and the aim for the future is reaching self-sufficiency in energy.

For the guests it offers extra activities, such as tours to the inside of the center to see how the energy is produced. Furthermore there are some things for kids at the outside of the center, in the so called energy park, where they can learn something about energy production and functioning.

### **Ideas for further development**

Since the prices are on a high level and therefore some guests who would like to visit *Vila Vita Pannonia* cannot effort it, the idea is to provide special offers for those guests, who would like to stay for one or two weeks or longer. The packages would be booked for the whole week, including either half or full board and some other chosen activities. Because booking for a longer time period, the prices per night would be lower than paying each night separate.

Another idea is to widen the spectrum of nature based activities, since Lake Neusiedl is so close and there is so much the hotel could offer. Examples would be training courses in sailing or diving, trips to the national park with explanations about flora and fauna and including a nice picnic. Up to now there are many activities offered which the guests can do on their own, but it would be something new to establish group activities.

### **Conclusions**

The example of the *Vila Vita Pannonia* shows that it is possible to run a hotel in ecological sustainable ways, even on a large scale. Combining the natural and rural with modern aspects is an innovative strategy which goes with today's trends. Producing their own energy with renewable energy sources has several advantages. The hotel is neither dependent on any energy supplier nor on price variations. Moreover it is useful for marketing and for attracting new customers. It should be an example for other enterprises, who are thinking about switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

### **Sources of information**

- ♣ Interview via email with the head of marketing, Mrs Marion Hutter
- ♣ Web page
- ♣ Brochures

## Direction.Com

IvelinaVelkova  
Bulgaria

### “Direction.Com”

Posoka.com (Posoka is the Bulgarian word for “direction”, so we will write it as “Direction Com” later instead of “Posoka Com” in order to be easier to understand) is Bulgaria's first online travel agency and it is owned by the "Direction Com" LTD. The company works in tourism since 2000. It was established in Sofia. For these 12 years by now they have managed to promote the market as an aggressive and rapidly growing company. Now they have four offices in Sofia, twenty other offices in some bigger cities in the country, and also one office in London, UK. The agency provides 24/7 call center available to their customers' needs and concerns at any time.

“Direction Com” Ltd. has the following licenses:

- Licensed Travel agent activity № 04364 issued by the Ministry of economy;
- License for tour operator № PKK-01-05874 from the State Agency for Tourism;
- IATA license for selling tickets № 09211020.

"Direction Com" Ltd. is a company, established and existing, to support and facilitate effective choice for travelling to its clients - on business trips, holidays or interests.

They say that every their client is special –with their own, individual needs, desires, motives and preferences for travelling and you have to do your best in order to satisfy the needs of the clients.

“Direction Com” also believes that in this way they contribute to the cultural and spiritual development of the customers. The motto of the organization is "Travelling - it means to live”.

The main objective of “Direction Com” is to implement effective intermediation between endclients (recipients of tourism products and services) and suppliers of these products and services (Bulgarian and foreign tour operators, airlines, bus operators, hotels and etc.). To achieve this goal, "Direction Com" Ltd. develops, maintains and improves tourism website [www.posoka.com](http://www.posoka.com), which are published:

- Search in real time booking of air tickets;
- Special offers for traveling in Bulgaria and leading Bulgarian and foreign tour operators;
- Search for hotels worldwide;
- Search for hotels in Bulgaria;
- Schedules of licensed bus operators for Europe;
- Last-minute section;
- Section "Specials".

### Business model

The business model of “Direction Com” achieves the following advantages:

1. Due to a highly competitive environment in the industry, tour operators and carriers will significantly improve their offers in different aspects - some would bet the money, others will bet a lower price, some will specialize in certain destinations, others will specialize in certain product;
2. The price for customers overall decrease because thus eliminating cost time and money that customers spend time in the search for appropriate they offer a travel trip or holiday, circling and/or telephoned several agencies;
3. Tour operators and carriers can reduce the overall price of their various offers the potential for reduced costs for advertising and customer survey needs;
4. Customer satisfaction with travel will increase, because each customer will may choose, book and pay by personal computer service that meets his/her needs best.



This will facilitate and increase travel forabroad because they will eliminate one of the main obstacles to travelling for clients -uncertainty on the quality of tourist product;

5. www.posoka.com will significantly boost popular in the West offers' lastminutes (Last-minute), which enable suppliers of tourism products to realize their full capacity, while the majority of customers use the product at a symbolic price.
6. The biggest advantage in using the web site www.posoka.com is saving time, nerves and money;
7. The site is extremely rich in daily updated information and supplements.Information is well structured and organized as well;
8. It is easy to search and book forreceipt of reports, to compare different offers for credit and debit cards;

Www.posoka.com is the most visited tourist site in Bulgaria. Software sitedeveloped for 9 years constantly modernized and it is a very high leveled. As an evidence of this are a number of awards won:

- 3-rd place in the contest for "Best Young Entrepreneur" of BAIF (Bulgarian-American Enterprise Fund) for 2003;
- 1-st prize for best website in the category "Real Estate" in a contest organized by the Bulgarian Web Association, 2005;
- 1-st prize for best website in the category "Real Estate" in a contest organized by the Bulgarian Web Association, 2006;
- Award "AlekoKonstantinov" Best website of the Association of Bulgarian tour operators and travel agents for 2010;

Www.posoka.com is composed of two parts: the reservation system and information.

### **Advantages**

There is a unique for Bulgaria travel reservation system for travelling abroad. The individual consumer book and pay everything they need for the traveling from their own computer at home. There is no need to go to offices, to collect catalogs and brochures and so on.

In the rich data basedinformation there are many offers available for travel abroad by leading Bulgarian tour operators, airlines, bus operators in Europe andmany foreign tour operators as well, which "Direction Com" Ltd. has signed contracts with.

Consumers are looking for a set of these criteria and then compare and choose from all search results. In the reservation system they can also find:

- Over 1000 routes for trips and vacations;
- Over 120 000 hotels worldwide and in Bulgaria;
- Schedules of licensed Europe bus operators;
- Airline promotions.

There is a help system. It is built from modules:

- Destinations;
- News and
- Blog

Help system provides detailed information about worldwide destinations. The aim is to allow each traveler to be informed of the details of their destination before setting off from Bulgaria.

Blog www.posoka.com an integral part of the Help system where there is information "from the source." Here travelers tell others about their experiences, impressions, share opinions, ask questions and so on.The published content www.posoka.com fully supervised and guaranteed by the team of travel agency "Direction Com" LTD. This is a guarantee to consumers that information is up to date, offers are high quality. Servicesprovided before departure and after returning back are also high quality. A team of more over 40 renowned specialists in the field of tourism care for the complete satisfaction of customer needs at any time.

### Market and competition situation

There are many competing agencies in the industry for the last years. Some of the most popular and competitive are: “Bohemia”, “On travel”, “Astral Holidays” etc.;

- Variety of packages, last minute offers, personal offers for its clients;
- Real-time search for booking up tickets and hotels.

### The present economic crisis

Bulgaria is in the 48<sup>th</sup> place in the countries that have the most attractive climate for development of the tourism industry out of 139 countries compared.

The impact of the world economic crisis on the Bulgarian economy has become more apparent from the beginning of 2009. Then the demand for tourism sharply decreased.

But now three years later according to the last edition of International Tourism Exchange crises doesn't pose critical mark on the industry.

The government also takes care of tourism sector last years. As an example of these words for more effective advertising this year are provided 4 million levs more than in 2011. So the Bulgarian tourism industry slowly and gradually emerges from the crisis now.

#### Main customers

Who are the users of [www.posoka.com](http://www.posoka.com)?

Here are the results from surveys module [www.posoka.com](http://www.posoka.com).

- Users of the “Direction Com” are all young and educated;
- For the most part work or managers in private companies;
- Receive incomes above the national average;
- Use debit and credit cards;
- They tend to book and pay online travel
- [www.posoka.com](http://www.posoka.com) has approximately 5,800 average daily visits;
- 90% of traffic is generated from Monday to Friday during the hours from 9:00 to 19:00. This strongly suggests that consumers use the site mainly on weekdays, during office hours.

#### A. Age:

- 36% of the consumers of “Direction Com” are aged 26 years; these are mainly students or recent graduates; work and live in Bulgaria and abroad;
- 46% are aged between 26 and 36 years; young and educated people in the beginning of his career;
- 12% are aged between 36 and 50 years; mainly people who work or own the foodservice trade; with good financial condition;
- 6% are aged over 50 years; people of this age using the Internet are characterized by good physical condition and specifics of the work - access to computers and the Internet.

#### B. Education:

- 68% of users towards a higher education;
- 17% are students;
- 14% have secondary education;
- 1% had primary

#### C. Family status and sex:

- 25% of the “Direction Com” customers were married;
- 75% were unmarried.

#### D. This is logical, given the age distribution of consumers:

- 60% were male and
- 40% women.

#### E. Geographical distribution:

- 36% live in Sofia - and here it is logical distribution;
  - 11% in Plovdiv;
  - 12% Varna;
  - 5% live in Burgas, Stara Zagora, Rousse and Veliko Turnovo;
  - other users live in smaller towns in the country;
- F. Social status:
- 25% of consumers towards students in Bulgaria and abroad;
  - 10% are managers in private companies or executives in state and municipal offices;
  - 27% work in private companies;
  - 20% are state or municipal employment.
- G. Payment and attitudes:
- 92% of consumer direction would make your reservation online;
  - 22% paid up to now with a debit card;
  - 15% paid by credit;
  - 35% demonstrated attitudes to pay by debit card;
  - 17% credit;
  - 12% by bank transfer.
- H. What benefits have users of direction?
- 21% of consumer direction have income up to 250 lev per month;
  - 30% from 250 to 500 lev;
  - 20% from 500 to 750 lev;
  - 9% of 750 to 1000 lev;
  - 20% over 1000 lev.

### **Method for analyze**

#### **SWOT**

The SWOT analysis is an extremely useful tool for understanding and decision-making for all sorts of situations in business and organizations. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Information about the origins and inventors of SWOT analysis is below. The SWOT analysis headings provide a good framework for reviewing strategy, position and direction of a company or business proposition, or any other idea.

Completing a SWOT analysis is very simple, and is a good subject for workshop sessions. SWOT analysis also works well in brainstorming meetings.

SWOT analysis is very useful for business planning, strategic planning, competitor evaluation, marketing, business and product development and research reports. It can also be used for team building games.

SWOT analysis is often interpreted and used as a SWOT Analysis 2x2 Matrix, especially in business and marketing planning.

In addition to this 2x2 matrix method, SWOT analysis is also a widely recognized method for gathering, structuring, presenting and reviewing extensive planning data within a larger business or project planning process.

When we use SWOT Analysis as a 2x2 matrix method, then technically Strengths and Weaknesses are internal factors (generally the case anyway), whereas Opportunities and Threats are external factors (this can be more difficult, since it requires you to ignore internal threats and opportunities). The SWOT 2x2 'internal/external' matrix method thus only considers external threats and opportunities.

A SWOT analysis is a subjective assessment of data which is organized by the SWOT format into a logical order that helps understanding, presentation, discussion and decision-making. The four dimensions are a useful extension of a basic two heading list of pro's and con's.

SWOT analysis can be used for all sorts of decision-making.

To enable this to happen cleanly and clearly, and from a logical point of view anyway when completing a SWOT analysis in most business and marketing situations, Strengths and

Weaknesses are regarded distinctly as internal factors, whereas Opportunities and Threats are regarded distinctly as external factors.

SWOT analysis is a very flexible tool. Its use is not restricted to business and marketing. When SWOT is used in situations outside of business and marketing, strict categorization of the SWOT dimensions (according to 'internal' and 'external' factors) can be limiting, and so a more open interpretation of the model can be helpful in such circumstances, especially when assessing Opportunities and Threats.

Be mindful therefore that the 'simplified' SWOT 2x2 matrix 'internal/external' method is not a reliable tool alone for identifying all threats and opportunities within organizations, or indeed any other situation.

SWOT analysis is a powerful model for many different situations. The SWOT tool is not just for business and marketing. Here are some examples of what a SWOT analysis can be used to assess:

- a company (its position in the market, commercial viability, etc);
- a method of sales distribution;
- a product or brand;
- a business idea;
- a strategic option, such as entering a new market or launching a new product;
- an opportunity to make an acquisition;
- a potential partnership;
- changing a supplier;
- outsourcing a service, activity or resource;
- project planning and project management;
- an investment opportunity;
- personal financial planning;
- personal career development - direction, choice, change, etc.;
- education and qualifications planning and decision-making;
- life-change - downshifting, relocation;
- relationships, perhaps even family planning.

Whatever the application, be sure to describe the subject (or purpose or question) for the SWOT analysis clearly so you remain focused on the central issue. This is especially crucial when others are involved in the process. People contributing to the analysis and seeing the finished SWOT analysis must be able to understand properly the purpose of the SWOT assessment and the implications arising.

History - the origins of the SWOT analysis model

This remarkable piece of history as to the origins of SWOT analysis was provided by Albert S Humphrey, one of the founding fathers of what we know today as SWOT analysis. Albert Humphrey died on 31 October 2005.

SWOT analysis came from the research conducted at Stanford Research Institute from 1960-1970. The background to SWOT stemmed from the need to find out why corporate planning failed. The research was funded by the fortune 500 companies to find out what could be done about this failure. The Research Team were Marion Doshier, Dr Otis Benepe, Albert Humphrey, Robert Stewart, Birger Lie.

It all began with the corporate planning trend, which seemed to appear first at Du Pont in 1949. By 1960 every Fortune 500 company had a 'corporate planning manager' (or equivalent) and 'associations of long range corporate planners' had sprung up in both the USA and the UK.

### **SWOT analysis**

In this case-study the SWOT analysis about "Direction Com" is as follows:

1. Strengths:
  - The first Bulgarian online travel agency;

- There are offices all over the country and one office in London as well;
- Actual and updated information available on their web site;
- Real time search and blog in the web page;
- Non-stop call center in favor of clients;

2. Weaknesses:

- Not well promoted activities;
- Bad advertisement;
- No cooperation with local authorities and organizations;

3. Opportunities:

- To find different ways to attract more customers and potential travelers;
- To develop their main activities;

4. Threats:

- Economic crisis – lack of money;
- Competitors;

**Innovations (applied)**

- An unique for Bulgaria travel reservation system for travelling abroad;
- Book and pay everything from your own computer;
- No need to go to offices, to collect catalogues and brochures;
- Rich data based information;
- Available offers for traveling abroad leading Bulgarian tour operators, airlines, bus operators in Europe and many foreign tour operators.

**Innovation case (supposed):**

- Make price reduction;
- Added value to the service – some kind of bonus over the bought travel package;
- Presents and greeting cards for loyal clients (to feel themselves special and appreciated);
- Promote traditional food, customs, traditions (ability to taste and cook some typical food, to dance traditional dance, or play national song etc.);
- To cooperate with local hotels, restaurants, attractions;
- Provide “Bulgarian tour package” (which will include some churches, museums, monuments, typical house and “touch” to the local way of life) in lower price in order to attract more and more tourists in Bulgaria;
- Use social networks to advertise their activities;
- Print advertising materials (not only Internet ads), such as brochures, catalogues, calendars and send them to all the people who has been travelled anywhere using “Direction Com” services;
- Take part in fairies, exhibitions and competitions to make their activities more popular;

**Conclusions**

In conclusion it should be added that it still has much to be done to improve market position and competitive advantages of the company.

Although this is the first travel agency in Bulgaria and most popular to this moment, "Posoka.com" should proceed to look for innovations in order to be constantly updated, giving competitive advantages.

The main innovation changes proposed which can be implemented in the company are to low the prices and to offer price packages; to add value to the service; to promote traditional food, customs and traditions; to cooperation with local hotels, restaurants, and different attractions; to provide "Bulgarian tour package" in lower price; to use the social networks to advertise the activities; to print and send advertising materials; to take active part in fairs, exhibitions and competitions.

The recommendations to "Posoka.com" are to apply all these proposed innovations.

**Sources of information:**

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

# Knitex 96 Inc.

**Adriyana Terzieva**  
Bulgaria

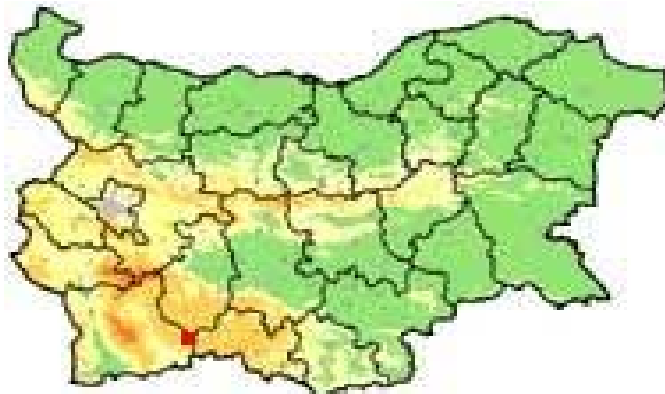
## **Abstract:**

This case study is going to present the way economical world crisis is affecting Bulgarian textile business, especially Knitex 96, and the solutions it is looking for. It will be used the SWAT analysis in order to understand the company's intern and global situation. It will be resumed the tactical and business solutions the company is taking and which are planned to be taken.

Finally some short conclusions will be offered to the reader in order resume the main ideas.

## **Introduction:**

Dospat is a small town located in Rodopi Mountain in south-western Bulgaria. There are several stories about the name of the town. Some people say that the name derives from two words "dos" which means a friend and "pat" – a road, in other words Dospat means "a friend on the road". According to other people the name of the town derives from the title of the medieval Bulgarian despot Aleksii Slav. The third story says that the name comes from the name of a Greek village called Doksat.



The town is 80 km far away from Smolyan and 40 km from Gotse Delchev. Dospat is administrative centre of Dospat municipality. Near the town is located Dospat reservoir that is 18 km in length. The unique combination of mountainous relief with centuries coniferous forests and the large dam gives the opportunity for development of the tourism in the region. The Dospat dam is preferable place form many tourists and fishers. That is why there are a lot of family hotels that provide excellent service and at the same time low prices. Within the reservoir there is diversity of fish such as trout, carp, rudd etc.



It can be said that there is no person who has visited the town and leaving it without buying an item from the store of “Knitex 96” which is located in downtown. The company has its own brand that is called Choice. Therefore, people from the region associate the word choice with Knitex 96.



Knitex 96 is specialized in the knitting industry. It produces a lot of different kinds of clothes. The main products are sweaters, cardigans, skirts, dresses, T-shirts ect. In the Knitex’ stores there is something for everyone: women, men, kids. Each season the company has different collection.



**Case study description:**

**Name of the organization:** “*Knitex 96*” Inc.

**Location:** Dospat, Bulgaria

**Business address:** Katia Vancheva str. N°35; 4831 Dospat, Bulgaria

**Contact information:**

**Tel:** +359 3045 2346

**Mob:**0889 440172

**Fax:**+359 32627030

**Year of establishment:** 1969

**Size of company:** 800 employers

The high quality of the products of Knitex 96 is result of three things.

First all, the quality of the materials that are used in the producing process. 100% worsted – and fine merino wool, 100% cotton, all combinations of wool/acrylic and cotton/acrylic, viscose with lycra, jersey and other fancy yarns as chenille, linen ect. Second, the company uses advanced machinery such as Soll, Universal and Shima Seiki, 5-7-8-10-12 Gauge in Fully-fashion. 10whole garment machines and circuit machines. The production area is split up in 7 knitting-and 12 confection groups, in order to keep production separated, client by client. We have own washing department, embroidery and print machine. Third, the company distinguishes itself with the high professionalism of the personnel. The company has its own designer staff.





The Enterprise has decided that the solution of the economical crisis hides behind the manipulation of the 4'P strategy (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion):

- **The product:** looking for high quality materials and trying to use the newest manufacturer machinery will result in high quality products which will be appreciate and create long term relationship with clients. The use of the latest machinery includes continues qualification of the personal. They think that qualified personal will mark the differentiation from others.
- **Place:** This day with the advances of transport sector distribution is not a huge problem any more. The transport costs are very low, which permits to produces in one part of the world and sell it in the other one. That's why Knitex 96 is looking for Chinese partner in order to place another manufactory in China, combining low transport costs and low labour costs.
- **Price:** Because of the crisis, the company thinks there will be a tendency of disappearing of the middle class in society, reinforcing the difference between poor and rich people. That means that there will be a market in the very high quality and expensive production and the low quality cheap production. Their purpose is to have product in both markets, tending to the high level, as there the benefit is higher.
- **Promotion:** promotion will be the part where the company will bet on the moth to moth strategy, which means that they will not invest

### **Challenges and Problems which the company is facing in their strategy of the 4'P:**

#### **With The Product:**

- High continues investment in personal training.
- Trained personal is very difficult to be hold in the company. Looking for higher salary and better conditions in other companies.
- No differentiation of the products from competitors?.

#### **Place: create manufactory in China,**

- takes a lot of time
- Need a Chinese partner but it is very difficult to find the correct person. Personal relations needed.

**Price:** try to offer high prices and stay as rigid as possible. In global crisis, clients look for cheaper products.

**Promotion:** try to make the customer perceive the added value of the products. Standard tools are used (TV, magazines, internet, etc...)

### **How did influence the present economical world crisis the enterprise?**

As a result of the crisis "Knitex 96" has changed its export plan. A few years ago the company mainly exported its production to the western market. The main export countries are Italy, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Hungary, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Russia and Scandinavia. Due to the crisis, however, it is trying to redirect its exports and production to Russia, China and Asian Countries as growing economies.

### **SWOT analysis of the enterprise's innovation ability**

#### **STRENGTHS:**

- Perfectly working system for providing control of the quality;
- Attractive prices;
- Permanent contract relationships with partners;
- Enough financial resources;
- Excellent competitive advantages;

- Loyalty of the competitors;
- Approved leading positions;
- Well-determined and shaped strategy;
- Technological leadership;
- Using of modern and productive equipment;
- Price advantages;
- Using of high quality of materials;
- Good financial relations;
- The firm possesses patent and license;
- Own funding and buildings;

**WEAKNESSES:**

- Strong internal competition;
- Lack of marketing specialists’
- Excess production capacity;

**OPPORTUNITIES:**

- Increasing the number of clients;
- Servicing new consumer groups;
- Broaden the product line
- Establishment of new technologies;
- Increasing the foreign investments;

**THREATS:**

- Input of new competitors;
- Increasing the number of substitute products;
- Decreasing the number of consumers and clients;

**Conclusions**

This company is showing us that the solution of the crisis is trying a lot of different strategies. According to them in times of crisis is where the opportunities appears, just one must be open to see them.

What the company is doing is not easy, as it needs a huge amount of investment and there is high level of risk of failing. But diversification of the risk, give some security but it is difficult to calculate if it will be enough for the surviving of the company.

Knitex 96 has to options: not do anything, which means that in a long term the company will disappear for sure. Or risk with investing in expanding strategy where if they succeed will have long turn success but if they failed they will disappear in very fast.

They have good strategy in mind, we will see if they could implement that strategy correctly.

**Sources of information**

The information of the case study has been taken from the following sources:

- The web page of the Company: <http://www.knitex-96.com/>
- Meetings with personal of Knitex 96.

# Agrix Bulgaria

## Marieta Litarska Bulgaria

### Abstract

In the following report you will find information and description of Agrix LTD Bulgaria. It will contain SWOT analysis of the enterprise's innovation ability. The the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the company's innovation plan which is based on agritourism services.

### Introduction

The main activities are related to trade in products for plant protection, seeds for field crops, different type's fertilizers for agricultural production, consultations in Agriculture and trade with plant products.

Their purpose is to serve the farmers, to help them produce more and better quality products, that achieve adequate according to market prices as the efforts of all that is to realize profits. They established a trust between the customers, suppliers and partners.

"Agrix Bulgaria" strives and works hard in the direction for expansion and provision of new products and services to its current and future customers in the agricultural production.

### Description of the case study

The company was established in 2009. The firm's office is located at 35 "Maria Luisa" bul, Varna, 9000, Bulgaria. But the commercial activities are carried out by the personal contact with the customers / Direct Marketing / and the easiest way to contact them is to call them or visit the website.

<http://agrix.bg/>

logistic@agrix.bg

+359 52 735 000

+359 886510068

The innovation case is to introduce the process of growing a plant, take a part in the process, and drive a harvester with a specialist.

The clients will try to plant seeds and then try to sell the production. They will be introduce in the process from the begging to the end- seed, plant, ready production, product on the market and product used in industry.

The main customers are the people who never worked in the sphere of agriculture, young people and children.

The market and competition situation is limited by the other companies dealing with the same activity. The company is different from the others in that it relies on personal contact, giving advice on site, 24 hours is customer service. The main actors are F+S Agro – Rousse, Panayotov and Shterev – Varna, Agros -98 – Varna, Ekofol- Sofya, BG Agro- Odesos- Varna, Agronom and many others.. Innovation Strateg- developing new markets.

The main activities are related to trade in products for plant protection, seeds for field crops, different types, fertilizers for agricultural production, consultations in Agriculture and trade with plant products. Currently 11 people work there.

My proposal to the company is to develop a new sector in their activities. They have all of the needed technical equipment, the highly qualified staff and young team members open to new and innovated ideas. They already have a lot of partners that will work with them if they develop the agritourism sector and activities.

In Bulgaria we don't have a lot of that kind of services and even the idea of that is much innovated. We have little villages where the customers can buy organic food, plant seeds or participate in the harvest. They pay for that kind of adventures and in the end they can have some of the production.

But the idea to drive the harvester or tractor is new and undeveloped. And this is the main reason that I choose this sort of activities and services for the enterprise. I don't know what is going to be the reaction of the managers, but I think that it's a good opportunity for evolution and a new way to the market environment.

In a time of an economical world crisis you don't know which sector will be most reflected. The enterprise managers beside this company they have 2 others. One of them is for advertising and P.R., and the second is a construction company. If they combine them with the agritourism services they will have more profits and new customers.

### **How did influence the present economical world crisis the enterprise**

Agriculture was barely affected by the economic crisis and that why many companies dealing with it wasn't hurt. The annual turnover didn't change too much. The enterprise managed to retain its loyal customers.

### **SWOT analysis**

#### **Strengths**

- Trust between the customers, suppliers and partners
- Qualified staff
- Loyal clients
- Motivated team

#### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of motivation form the menagers
- Accessibility
- Enough information about the volunteers
- Technical equipment

#### **Opportunities**

- Distributing the information in local areas
- Buying or renting the needed equipment
- Education for the employees
- New clients

#### **Threats**

- Infrastructure
- Future competition
- Lack of interest from the clients
- Not enough clients

### **Sources of information**

Most of the information I received from the main presentation for the enterprise that they have to their partners. Also from a conversation with an employee in the company.

# Antifest

Johanna Laitinen  
Finland

## Abstract

This report discusses e-business, social media and especially the mobile services such as mobile guides, how they have become more important part of the daily life and why companies need to develop these services in order to be competitive. The main focus is on the mobile services and on mobile guides which is a fairly new innovation in this field and useful tool for interaction between customers and for sharing information in real-time. Innovations are needed when developing these services.

The case study is contemporary art festival Antifest which already uses social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter to share information, for marketing and interaction with the visitors. They would like to complete these services with a mobile guide that would give the visitors useful information, help to find their way to the festival sites and around the city and possibly have some other useful functions. This report's goal is to consider the advantages and challenges this kind of mobile guide service might create. Some statistics have been used to support the importance of the social media and internet in our times. SWOT - analysis brings out different features about the festival's innovation ability.

## Introduction

In order to stay competitive a company needs to continuously improve and develop its services. New strategies and business plans are needed to reach the consumers. Innovations, service design and customer and user-centered approach is needed for survival and success of the company.

When starting to create a new product the customer's needs have to be measured and taken into consideration before further planning. Otherwise why to create something that the customers do not want or need. When the needs and motives of the customers have been defined the service and product design can start.

So what are the needs of a modern consumer? Nowadays the experiences define customer behaviour and what they look for from the services and products. In modern world the customers become members of communities that these experiences create. These experiences are shared in various channels in social media for example people with same interests share experiences in discussion forums. Also, companies can utilize social media to connect with their customers. This way they can create added value to the products and services by interacting and engaging with the customers. Unique and creative way to do so makes the company to stand out from the others and helps the company to be competitive in the market.

## Social media and mobile services

Social media and the modern technology is part of our daily lives. Last year in Finland 89 per cent of the 16-74 used internet and three out of four used it daily. 45 per cent have followed some social media channel. In global scale there are 2,3 billion internet users in the world. Most of them (about 1 billion) can be found from Asia, half billion from Europe and another half billion from North- and South America. (Newmediatrendwatch 2012.)

The latest growing inventions on the this field are the mobile services created for the smart phones. New applications have been and are constantly created mainly for the use of the service industry. The basic mobile services such as mobile maps and guides give the users ability to get basic information such as time tables and contact information so that it can be easily read from

the mobile's screen. Also tickets for trains, hotel rooms and other services can be booked with different mobile applications.

These applications can be useful in daily life and help to save the time when the information and help is easily found. One does not have to spend time to find the way in a new town or city when the map on the mobile shows the way to the destination. Services are more easily reached and this way they give more added value for the customer. They are more likely to appreciate companies that can offer these kind of services and applications and make their life a bit more easier. Therefore it can be useful for companies to be able to offer these services.

For small companies with lower budgets it can be challenging and they need to consider more carefully what kind of services are most profitable and essential. However, smart phones are becoming more and more common and part of everyday life. In Finland 44 per cent of the population own a smart phone (Kauppalehti 2012).

### **Antifestival in short**

Antifest is a contemporary art festival with a unique concept. It is organised once in a year during a week in October in the town of Kuopio in Finland. Several artists from different countries perform site-specific art in different locations around the city. The locations are outside traditional art spaces such as museums or theaters. (Antifest 2012.)

The festival is free of charge for the audience. The festival's finance comes mainly from EU's art finance program A Space for Live Art, the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education and from the city of Kuopio. So the main purpose of the festival is not to gain.



The mobile service systems such as mobile guides are starting to become more common for the visitors in the field of tourism and festival production. They help the visitors to find their way in the city, find the restaurants and other local services, as well as enable them check the programmes. Also, many of them have real-time functions which help to find out what is happening right at the moment and informs the audience of any delays in the schedule. They are a useful tool to share information and help to communicate with the visitors.

### **How the economic crises affected the company?**

The economic crises did not affect the festival. The festival is free of charge for the audience and does not financial situation did not affect in peoples interest in art and for the festival.

### **The innovation case**

#### **Why should Antifest have a mobile guide?**

Needless to say mobile guide would be excellent for the festival such as Antifestival. It would help the visitors as well as the artists to find their way in the city and to different sites

where the performances take place. The guide would give basic information about the performances and artists and contact information. Some of the performances require booking beforehand and would be ideal if the visitors would be able to do it with the application.

### **The Visitors**

The festival visitors can be divided into three different groups: the first group consists of professional artists who can be from Finland or foreign visitors, the second group are the local festival visitors who are familiar with the festival already or have read or heard about it and the third group are the local people who do not know about the festival, do not have interest in art but just happen to be around on the site and notice there is something strange happening and stop to watch. (Antifest 2012).

How would the festival be able to attract more visitors? More active role in social media could be one solution. For example if the visitors would be able to share their experiences and create discussion on social media and mobile guide could be useful and help to make interaction to happen more at the moment. This could increase the consciousness about the festival maybe not on large scale but still. Also, the artists could be involved in some creating way in the interaction. The festival already has homepages, Facebook page and Twitter account and the mobile guide would complete and support the other channels.

### **SWOT Analysis**

#### Strenghts

- long 10 year history and stable position
- unique concept
- continuous development and openness for innovations
- new innovations go well together with the festivals image to stir up the city in a positive way and make people see and feel things in a new way and from new point of view
- the people working on the festival have passion for art and strive to make the festival as good as they can ( making money is not their motive)

#### Weaknesses

- Has not used its full marketing potentiality (could attract more for example international art enthusiasts and art professionals)

#### Opportunities

- ⤴ Has ability to grow into year-around event with program, seminars, exhibitions...
- ⤴ engage art enthusiasts and artists in active discussion and interaction in social media and in this way attract new people to come to the Festival ( and Kuopio)

#### Threats

- ⤴ Finance → the festival is partly financed at the moment by Eu's project A Space for Live Art which ends in 2013 → where the festival will get the finance in the future?

### **Conclusions**

Antifestival has a stable and recognised position in Finland as a unique art festival but it still could attract more people who are interested in art both in Finland and outside the country. One way to attract new people could be to take an active role in social media and to create interaction and get more attention among art enthusiasts for example in online communities, Facebook. Network with other contemporary art festivals or other operators on the field might be useful as well. But for the people who already have come to the festival more added value can be given by creating a mobile guide which would help the visitors to get information and find their way easily around the city and possibly have other innovative functions which make the

festival stand out as a innovative art festival. However, the festivals willingness to develop help it to continue going on in years to come.

### **Sources of information**

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# Developing travel services in the industrial city of Varkaus

Ossi Taavitsainen  
Kata Tolvanen  
Finland

## Description of the case study

Our group's case study enterprise is Navitas Kehitys Ltd. Our goal is to help the enterprise to find new, innovative ideas to develop their travelling services in the industrial city of Varkaus. We used our own opinions and knowledge. We think that our proposed innovations are feasible and they could make Varkaus appear more interesting as a travelling destination. These new services and happenings could also attract new tourists.

We have shared our innovation viewpoints to two separated parts; Ossi focuses on activities and Kata focuses on happenings.

## Description of Navitas Kehitys Ltd

Navitas Kehitys Ltd's business idea is to speed up and support the placing of companies and their action in the Varkaus area and to actively search new contacts and actors to renovate the industry structure of the area.

Navitas Kehitys Ltd and its multi-sector personnel are building a new future.

**Services:** Navitas Kehitys Ltd develops areas economic life and offers company specific counseling, developing and innovating services, financing counseling and help to find the funding, project activities and training and recruiting services.

### Owners:

The city of Varkaus 80%  
Northern Savo Cooperative bank 8%  
Stora Enso 8%  
Other 4%

**Location/Business address:** Wredenkatu 2, Navitas 1, Box 1, 78201 Varkaus, Finland

### Contact information:

**Telephone:** +358 40 506 8290 (Tarja Koskimaa)

**Email:** tarja.koskimaa(a)navitaskehitys.fi

**Homepage:** <http://www.navitaskehitys.fi/kehitys/default.asp?siteid=fi&id=Etusivu>

## Market and competition situation

Competition is tough on travel sector. People travel more and more nowadays. They are spending a lot of money for activities, accommodation, shopping and other services. Every city and the local entrepreneurs want to get visitors and the income, what they bring. The cities like Varkaus are in difficult position, because of the industrial image for example, and they have to work harder to get tourists. Customers are very demanding and it sets challenges for the entrepreneurs. They have to keep on sustainable development and find new innovations all the time to keep themselves in competition.

In Varkaus, the competition is not very aggressive. They pay attention to co-operation with the other communes nearby. The cities and communes are relatively small. By co-operating with each other, they can create a wholeness, which serves the tourists the best possible way. A good example of this is the travel guide brochure, which includes the main services and specialties of 5 different communes.

**Description of the case process**

We started our case study by visiting the enterprise, Navitas Kehitys Ltd. We had a discussion with the travel sector manager, Tarja Koskimaa. At first meeting we spoke about general things in Varkaus, the present situation and recent activities. Then we started to think about the approach for this case study. At the second meeting we had our instructor, Miika Kajanus with us. We used the forge method to define the present situation, some goals where to aim, and different ways to reach those goals. After that we divided our innovation viewpoints in activities and happenings.

Before the trip to Suceava, we prepared a power point presentation in order to introduce our case study to the other participants. During the course we had several lectures about innovations and other things related to it. In small groups, we did same kind of case studies for local enterprises in Suceava.

After the trip we started to prepare the final report about our own case study. We decided to use the same kind of formula and structure in our work that we used in groups during the course. We shared the responsibilities and made the drafts of our own innovations. Finally we put all the information together and this final report was ready.

**SWOT analysis**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good location</li> <li>- Lots of lakes</li> <li>- Beautiful landscapes</li> <li>- Many activities</li> <li>- Local specialties</li> <li>- Interesting happenings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Image as an industrial city</li> <li>- Noise and smell from the mills and factories</li> <li>- Factories ruin the landscape</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More effective marketing</li> <li>- Foreign tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effects of economical crisis</li> </ul>

**Strengths**

Varkaus is located in the crossroads of two main roads and it's also surrounded by water. This makes it easy to travel there in many ways; by car, by train, by boat or by plane. There are lots of activities whole year round. Caviar and sturgeon, and the biggest mechanical music museum in Nordic countries are examples of local specialties. There are also many interesting happenings, especially on summer time.

**Weaknesses**

The main weakness in Varkaus is the industry. Noise, smell and landscape damage can be crucial factors for some people.

**Opportunities**

With better advertising, more positive media coverage and other marketing, Varkaus can become more attractive travel destination. Foreign tourists are a great opportunity. They bring income and spread the word all around the world. In Varkaus, there are many things, what foreigners appreciate and experience worth to see.

**Threats**

The world economical crisis affects everywhere. On travel sector, the influence may be seen in a difference in income and the amount of tourists. In local companies, the crisis can have effects in production, profitability and staff. These changes are usually visible in long time period.

### **Problem definition**

Because Varkaus has a long history in industry, people don't usually think it as a travel destination. So, in other words, the image is the main problem. People are not so willing to travel to a city, where they think to see only factories and mills, which ruin the landscape and make noise and bad smell. The media coverage has not usually been very positive, due to bad news from industrial sector. Because the first impression is not so positive, it needs more work and something special to be able to stand out among the others. That's what makes it challenging. Varkaus' geographical location is good and it offers great potential and opportunities for travel services. With our innovations, we want to offer new ideas to develop these services. Travel services are beneficial not only for the tourists, but also the people living in Varkaus.

### **Influence of the present economical crisis**

Economical crisis has an effect on the travelling business. During economical crisis people try to spend less money and they travel less than usually. Travelling companies have to eliminate their costs, including advertising costs.

### **Innovation plan**

#### ***Developing Taulumäki market square area***

Taulumäki market square is a central place in the center of the city of Varkaus. In summer it is an important meeting place for both local people and tourists. For these reasons it is important that Taulumäki market square would be cosy and attractive place.

The cafeteria buildings could look more charming. They could for example be made of wood and painted colorfully. The furniture could be wooden or rattan. Plentiful plantings would make the market square more cosy. There could also be more plantings near the stage. That would make it look nicer. There should be public toilets on the market square.

It would be good if there were some kind of happenings arranged on the Taulumäki market square. Local organizations and companies could present their activities. For example the theatre of Varkaus could advertise its activities by performing a show. Different kind of music performances and open-air dances would be great happenings every once in a while and they could interest people of all ages. For children there could be arranged some kind of activities for example once a week. These activities could include face painting, pony riding and some kind of games like mölkky.

This summer during 25.6.-10.8. there are lots of different kinds of happenings in Varkaus especially in Hertunranta. It is important to collect information about how these happenings have worked out. This will help when starting to plan programme for next summer.

#### ***Airsoft and paintball combat area***

Stora Enso mills cover quite a big area in Varkaus city. In today's world, Finland is not any cheapest place to produce paper and Stora Enso in Varkaus has already had to relocate one part of paper manufacturing to another country. In the future, there can be a situation that the mill area is left without use. The location of that area in the heart of the city is very unique. This opens possibilities for new innovations.

In Finland, airsoft and paintball games are usually practiced in the forests. A wide industrial area would offer an interesting and different alternative for this kind of activity. This kind of built-up area for these games is rare in Finland and there's a demand for it. The area together with these activities could create very attractive tourist destination. One target group could be companies, who want to find some group activities for their employees.

There should be a rental for the paintball equipment. Airsoft players are usually so serious with their hobby that they have own guns and other stuff. The location so near the city center makes also a risk. The bullets can fly sometimes very far away. Some kind of protection walls should be built to ensure safety of the outside area.

### ***Building and marking mountain bike trails***

Varkaus area and its surroundings offer great possibilities for different outdoor activities. Mountain biking is becoming more and more popular in Varkaus and in whole Finland. However, elsewhere in Europe for example, mountain biking a very popular and big sport. Varkausmäki area has good potential for skiing on winter and mountain biking on summer. The skiing tracks are good for everyone's use, no matter the methods of movement. Mountain bikers need still narrow paths in forest (single tracks) and technically challenging trails. These kinds of things need some building at the beginning, but when the trail is in riding condition, the riders improve and maintain it just by using it. Marking of the trails is very important, especially for tourists. It's also good to color code the routes in different categories sort the difficulty of each trail. Varkausmäki could be also a possible place to organize some mountain bike competitions in the future.

### ***Vattuvuori Bike Park***

Vattuvuori is the name of local skiing center in Varkaus. It has 4 slopes and 1 ski lift for downhill skiing, and well maintained network for cross country skiing. At the moment, it has action only on winter time. Due to the hill's small size, the potential for real downhill mountain biking is quite poor. Some kind of free ride park could still be an option. One slope is on very low use nowadays. There I would see possible to do some digging and trail building in order to make a track with berms and jumps. North Shore style wooden structures and platforms for riding are also popular today. They are not too expensive and difficult to build, but offer variety and challenge for riding. There are also other possible places for a free ride/downhill track. This kind of action would require use of the ski lift on summer also.

Free ride mountain biking requires some special equipment. A good helmet, spine protector and knee/shin guards are the most important protective gear. It's good to have a full-suspension bike with durable structure and quality components. The bike park should have at least a small rental capacity for these equipment. They could also have more basic and lightweight mountain bikes to rent for cross country riding. A small pro shop selling bikes and gear is also one idea.

### ***Guided MTB tours and MTB school***

There are several nice trails with different level of difficulty all over Varkaus. For non-local person it can be hard to find them all. With a guide, it would be safe to go to discover the city and the trails behind the handlebar. There are several options for short or long routes. Some of them can be suitable for families with children and other for faster and more advanced riders. The customers could use their own bikes or rent one from the bike park's rental.

MTB school could be an interesting activity for youngsters and why not for older people also. Only one or few days is enough to learn the basic skills of mountain biking. After that the rider can develop his skills just by riding and taking the learned skills into practice. The course could be held in different languages (Finnish, English, and Russian).

### **Conclusion**

Navitas kehitys is doing good job for travelling in Varkaus. With this case study, we aimed to give some new innovation ideas from a viewpoint of young people. We think that all our ideas are possible to take into practice. Right now they are just words on paper, but in the future they can become real inventions. It takes time, money and other resources to take them further. Still our main point was just to think new ideas. We believe that with these innovations, Varkaus could become more interesting and attractive travel destination.

### **Sources of information**

- Tarja Koskimaa, Sector Manager, Tourism and Service Business  
Navitas kehitys web site <http://www.navitaskehitys.fi/kehitys/default.asp?siteid=en&id=etusivu>

# Kuopio's Adventure Center

**Anna Schöpfer**

Austria

## **Introduction of Kuopio's adventure center**

Kuopio's adventure center is located in North Savo in the middle of Finland, the company has its business premises in Kuopio but domain for this company is the whole North Savo. Furthermore the company has cooperation partners in Egypt and in Thailand whereto the company sells trips. Fulltime action that company is focusing is in selling diving equipment, diving courses and diving trips. Besides that Kuopio's adventure center offers around the year program services which from some of those services are nature based tourism services mostly only offered in North Savo. Program services consist of a game and play programs, rock climbing, paintball fields, steering and paddling a canoe rental. The biggest groups of customers that use these kind of service programs are corporate customers. Corporate is also training regarding to program services for service-related skills in the field of vocational education institutions. In addition, the company is offers safety planning training, first aid training and small group counseling in education.

## ***A piece of the Kuopio's adventure center's history***

Kuopio Adventure Centre Ltd was established in 2000 and has been operating as a limited company since then. It employs two persons all year round. During the tourist season in the spring and summer the company employs a full-time employees in addition to 2 to 5 part-time employees to perform different tasks. The owners are themselves involved in the daily work. The company has annual revenue growth of about 20% level. The last fiscal year net sales were approximately 160 000 euros, which formed a significant part of the sale of services.

## ***Partners***

Kuopio's Adventure Center has many partners from very different fields. First partner is Kuopio's diving center, which helps them to arrange diving programs. PADI holds scuba diving courses and is also Adventure Center's official partner, PADI is known all around world. Outdoor Action Finland OY is importer and manufacturer of outdoor and sport equipment's. Adventure Center is selling these products in their store. They also sell products of VAUDE, which offers sport clothes, tents, outdoor equipment's and everything what you need when traveling in the nature. EDELRID is part of the VAUDE group. EDELRID has been producing technical mountaineering gear since the 1950s. In 2001 the family owners sold the company and for a few years EDELRID took a back seat in the climbing market. The change of ownership means they are now an independent technical climbing company within the VAUDE group setting a new course for the future. EDELRID is also partner for Adventure Center. Black diamond is also selling all the special equipment's you need when climbing, skiing or mountain climbing. Kuopio's climbing association and Kuopio's sport divers cooperate with the company when offering these kinds of program services. Ursuit (Ursuk) is a Finnish manufacturer of safety and diving dry suits. Last partner is Alias Studios. Alias Studios take product and company photos. They offer a comprehensive service package which will strengthen your brand and image. All in all Adventure Center has many international partners and partners that are well-known all over the world in this specialized field of nature tourism.

## ***Future prospects and innovation***

Over the past two years, the company's lines of business travel sales have increased significantly. Destinations for trips are in Thailand and Egypt, the most popular dive sites. They

are planning to increase in selling travel journeys for canoeing and climbing sides. At the moment suitable sites as for canoeing and climbing destinations are being sought. The company has set up an aim to provide a tourism's program based services as in a franchise chain in Finland. Program services are based on easy copying products and ready-program complexes. At the initial stage services require as little equipment as possible for play and game programs. Pilot's skill level is not required to be very high in order to regulate the program services. The system offers its entrepreneurs the following: Instructor Training in play and game programs for drawing, Upper-Savo Vocational College offers training in the theoretical side.

The aim of the participants is to accomplish program service examination in a one year, and entrepreneur's examination in the same time. Kuopio Adventure Centre Ltd offers programs regarding to guiding and sales-training. All education-related degree displays are intended to practice in Adventure Center's real life customer situations. The education-related practical training can be completed in Adventure Centre or in your own company. Aim of the training program is to create program service companies all around Finland.

Adventure Centre has tested and it has game sets ready for sale. However, these same simple events can be used across the country and supply is being developed more and more. For ready products, there are brochures and reports, which are free to participants' use. Product brochures will change seasonally for summer and winter seasons. Those who enjoy Adventure Centre's sales program can buy cheaper equipment packages. The package includes all the necessary to carry out program services in any environment. There are several different kinds of packages for different kinds of programs.

Also accounting office has been come to mind when planning franchising chain. Invoicing and monitoring services would be taking care through Trust – collecting company. Every unit in Adventure Center would establish sole trader which helps to solve invoicing problem. For the invoicing there would be ready-made layouts in internet service in the web page.

#### **Customer and customer's needs**

Typical customer for Adventure Center is being engaged in a hobby like diving but still the biggest customer group is companies. Companies want's to arrange TYHY- days for those who work in a company. This TYHY means work wellbeing, that the company is interested of employee's health and mental strength by offering besides occupational health care but also the opportunity to do something with your coworkers out from the office. Properly implemented employee wellness activities will redevelop working capacity and health and functionality of the workplace, atmosphere at work and motivation for the work. Due to this companies find something how to spend free time together and Adventure Center can offer tailored packets for each company who will reach them.

Also birthday parties and bachelor parties create one customer group. Adventure center offers kind of special service programs that you do not want to experience by yourself, that is why the groups who are celebrating something wants to do something special as a group. From the webpage customer can find several ready tailored packets to choose from or send e-mail to ask some combination of program services.

**SWOT –analysis of the Adventure Center**

Below you can find SWOT –analysis of the enterprise, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Hardest one was to think about weaknesses because for my point of view the enterprise has well planned products and services, and they have all the tools to be very successful enterprise, however maybe its lack of advertising that they don't have more customers and by that more employee.

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specialized program services and products</li> <li>• in eastern Finland leading company in its own sector</li> <li>• desire to improve and educate oneself</li> <li>• versatility of services</li> <li>• some information also in English on the webpages</li> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• offers a club for adventurers</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• usually only groups are interested of the services -&gt; lack of individual customers</li> <li>• lack of employee</li> <li>• location of store not well known</li> <li>• limited amount of equipment</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can offer services regardless of sex and has big age distribution</li> <li>• can find cooperation partners around the world</li> <li>• cooperation</li> <li>• strengthening image and brand of the company</li> <li>• networking</li> <li>• quality of the services</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• services will become too specialized and will interest less people</li> <li>• competition between companies who offers “free time services”</li> <li>• increase of expenses</li> <li>• decline of security</li> </ul>

**SWOT –analysis of tourism service programs in Finland**

This SWOT –analysis helps to understand strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a field of Tourism especially in a field that offers service programs. There is some similarity with the analysis of the enterprise but also some new points of view. This analysis considers Finland's prospects, what is dominant at the moment.

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finnish nature is a pull factor</li> <li>• Finland is modern, safe and tidy</li> <li>• Finland as a congress country is being noticed</li> <li>• regional networking in some places advanced</li> <li>• supply of activities year around</li> <li>• top service program companies has good international competitiveness</li> <li>• winter tourism centers has good level of service</li> <li>• tourist attractions are close to the potential customers</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited amount of financial resources undermines development of opportunities</li> <li>• profitability is not sufficient to recurrence</li> <li>• lack of marketing-, sales- and networking knowledge</li> <li>• narrow scope of products</li> <li>• seasonal activity</li> <li>• lack of business know-how</li> <li>• the accessibility problems</li> <li>• fragmentation of the industry</li> </ul>
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OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• competitiveness with quality and with conviction</li> <li>• a positive environmental image</li> <li>• innovations</li> <li>• specialization</li> <li>• management of security risks</li> <li>• business ideas requires a little investment</li> <li>• affordability of long-haul holidays to Finland</li> <li>• more effective cooperation between enterprises and among the actors</li> <li>• productization of local traditions and stories</li> <li>• productization of water based services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the economic downturn</li> <li>• development of energy, fuel and flight prices</li> <li>• increased competition due to EU's enlargement</li> <li>• traveling fear caused by terrorism</li> <li>• new international destinations</li> <li>• environmental disasters</li> <li>• environmental issues relating to the negative publicity</li> <li>• negative publicity of an uncontrollable adventure accident</li> <li>• distorted price competition among same products</li> <li>• a new tourist trend to displace nature-based tourism</li> </ul>

**Influences of present economical world crisis**

The present economical world crisis has not influenced Kuopio's Adventure centers' activity any significantly when comparing to the past. During economical world crisis there might be less foreign tourists using the services but more local customers because they don't want to leave anywhere far away like abroad because it is so expensive so they decide to spend their money on local services and they favor local traveling and services. So it is possible that the company has found some benefit from economical world crisis. At least they have managed to avoid bankruptcy.

**Conclusions**

I think that the company has great opportunities to expand their business through franchising. In Finland I don't come up with any company that would offer tourism's service programs as a franchising company. Franchising is more common in a field where you can see the product that is not a service, but off course it is possible to copy service model. I recommend that Kuopio's adventure center keeps continuing with educating them and I think that they have plenty of new ideas what kind of products they want to produce and the employees are really innovative, looking always some new way to achieve more customers. By trying they know for what kind of program services customers are seeking but also I think that Adventure Center knows how to reach desired customer group. Facebook helps them to reach younger people while company customers might find information from the webpage.

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# Agritourism “La Perlara”

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**Anna Bortolazzi**

Italy

## **Abstract**

This report is the result of what I learnt during the attending of the IP Inno Natour in Suceava. It will contain an analysis of the agritourism “La Perlara”, a farm that offers restaurant services and hospitality: it will talk about the current situation, the positive and negative aspects, and the effects of the present economical crisis. Then a SWOT analysis will define the strong points and the weaknesses, the opportunities for a future innovation and the threats that the enterprise could have. At the end of the report a theoretic innovation plan is suggested.

## **Introduction**

In Suceava in May 2012, from 7<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> I attended to Inno Natour, a Intensive Programme focused on Innovation in Nature Based Tourism Service. The three key words were: Innovation, Tourism and Nature.

**Innovation** is the way for an enterprise to improve and to reach other markets through new products or different processes.

The first day we presented a pre case study about an enterprise that offers nature based touristic service. During the project, we attended to lectures taken by teachers about tourism, innovation, nature services and we worked in groups. I learnt how to do a whole picture of a enterprise, through SWOT analysis, how to identify problems and difficulties, and to suggest realistic proposals.

My pre case study was about the agritourism “La Perlara”, located in the nearby of Verona city. I choose it because this form of enterprise is present in whole Italian territory and it is one of the main ways in which most of the tourists can have contact with nature. For that there is strong competition between the activities.

An agritourism is a farm that could offer restaurant services and/or hospitality. The farm has to be the main economical activity for the managers, the restaurant has to be strongly linked to it and to be collocated close to it.

## **Description of the case study**

The agritourism “La Perlara” is located in Trezzolano, nearby Verona city. The name of the enterprise comes from the local dialect name, “perlar”, of the 250-year-old tree that is in the garden of the farm: the Latin name of the tree is *Celtis australis*, the English one is European hackberry.

The contact informations are:

- phone: +39 045 988121
- e-mail: laperlara@agriturismolaperlara.com
- web site: www.agriturismolaperlara.com

The farm was established in 1906 by the grandfather of the present managers. Then in 1990 they began to sale the products in their own shop, in 1995 they opened the restaurant and at the end in 2002 they built the rooms. Now in the activity the engaged people are 3, in special occasions other 2 family members help in the activity.

The **facilities** of the agritourism are 8 rooms (each with a different theme), the restaurant, a swimming pool (built last year to reach more guests), and the farm spaces (fields, stable).

The restaurant is opened to all, not just for the guests, and has a capacity of 50 seats at most. The customers are from the Verona's region and they are about 5000 people/year.

The room guests are from all over the world, most of them from North Europe. Most of them come to visit Verona city, others come for business, above all thanks to international fairs in Verona fair center.

Into the farm the managers produce fruit, vegetables and meat that are used to prepare the restaurant meals. The 80% of meal ingredients are produced into the farm and it assure guests about the food's origin and quality. In particular they produce:

- ▲ **olives:** with which oil is produced;
- ▲ **grapes:** with which wine is produced;
- ▲ **fruit:** cherries, apricots, plums, with which they prepare jam and home-made cakes;
- ▲ **vegetables;**
- ▲ **meat:** rabbit, chicken, pigs.

The main **partner** is Terra Nostra: it is an association for the promotion of the agritourist activities and of the rural environment. It belongs to Coldiretti, the principal national agricultural association in Italy. The members of this association guarantee their guests the quality of their services and the real link with the nature.

### **Market and competition situation**

The agritourism “La Perlara” has **competitors**, because the Verona hills are rich of this type of activity. The other agritourisms, that are located nearby, offer the same restaurant service (typical cooking, homemade meals, organic food, familiar climate), but fortunately they have different service about the hospitality. So the competition is strong in part.

The main competitor in the neighborhood are:

- ▲ “Viticcio dei Ronchi Relais”: in addition to rooms with kitchenette, it offers a solarium area with hydromassage bath-tube spa. The price is three times more.
- ▲ “Le Lucette”: it offers only restaurant services, with organic food and homemade meals.
- ▲ “Corte Maccini”: it offers both restaurant services with organic food and hospitality in two rooms and a little apartment. It is also a didactic farm.

Once they used to propose to guests to be involved in agricultural works: especially the children used to accept this proposal, because they are curious and they love living close the nature and being in contact with animals. Now it is no more possible to involve guests in these activities because of a law about the security on work places: before this law, the farm was considered a family space, thus no-workers could enter into it without conditions. Now it is considered a work place: no-workers can not enter into it for assurance matters. This activity was able to distinguish “La Perlara” from the other agritourisms, but now they have nothing particular that can make the difference.

### **How did influence the present economical world crisis the enterprise**

Recently, words like sustainability, organic or 0-km food (with ingredients that are not been carried from far), are fashion and the customers ask for activities that are able to offer them. For this reason, this sort of enterprise is a niche and the crisis didn't hit as violent as other economical sectors.

Another good aspect is the relation between price and quality: the prices are not high and the quality is very good. In addition, the fact that meals are home-made add value to food, because its ingredients don't contain preservative or colouring, the fruit is fresh and has not been chilled for the transport, the meat is safe and controlled for the animals were breed into the farm itself.

In conclusion, the quality of the agritourisms has preserved them from the negative effects of the crisis.

**SWOT analysis**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Organic food.</li> <li>⤴ Family management.</li> <li>⤴ Good advertising: web page available in more languages.</li> <li>⤴ Accessible prices.</li> <li>⤴ There are customers every season (for the restaurant).</li> <li>⤴ No economical crisis' effects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Accessibly: it is not so close to the city.</li> <li>⤴ Not competitive: they have no tools to be winner in the competition.</li> <li>⤴ The room guests stay just for 2-3 days.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ It is close to Lessinia Regional Park.</li> <li>⤴ Strong motivation in keeping a link between clients and farm.</li> <li>⤴ Role in environmental education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⤴ Competition.</li> <li>⤴ Unemployment.</li> <li>⤴ No answer from the clients to innovation.</li> </ul>

**Innovation plan**

I propose a theoretic innovation plan, focused on making the agritourism more multifunctional, keeping their rural image and taking advantage of it.

For they used to involve guests in agricultural works, the **first proposal** is to create an equipped area: in this area the managers can create a didactic farm, especially for the school-children of the zone, but for the guests, too. In this area there could be activities to help people in discovering the nature and the farm animals and to educate it to respect the environment. Among the activities, the managers could:

- ⤴ show the transformation of some products, for example of the milk, of the grapes and of the olives;
- ⤴ organize trips with the horses, with a carriage, and create a place where horse-therapy could be done.

The defect of this proposal is the competition: Corte Maccini is already a didactic farm.

The **second idea** is to organize events linked to the the agricultural seasonal works. These events could be on the occasion of:

- ⤴ begin of the spring;
- ⤴ harvest of the wheat;
- ⤴ harvest of the grapes;
- ⤴ harvest of the olives.

In this events the restaurant would offer meals with particular discount, people could buy farm products and so more clients could hear about this agritourism.

The **third proposal** is to create a partnership with the Lessinia Regional Park and other associations that offer guided tours through the park: for this partnership, the agritourism guests would have a discount in the tour price. Moreover the managers could buy some bikes to rent to their guests, so they would enjoy the park landscape doing sport.

The **fourth idea** is to propose to the guests a weekly plan, in which there is an organized activity each day, especially for the weekdays. Thus some guests could prolong their stay.

The defect of these proposals is that each of them requires more employees, in some cases qualified ones (for example: horse-therapy). The managers could have no intention to improve their holiday farm, for they have enough customers, and they could be frightened on spending to much energy and money in not so profitable activities. In fact my proposal has not the intention to increase the number of the clients, but to make it a multifunctional farm.

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# Forestalp Cooperative: sustainable tourism in Marche Region

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**Eleonora Giuliadori**  
Italy

## **Abstract**

We all know that innovation is necessary, in every field. In the market, it is necessary to be competitive and to be sure to offer the best product, the best service and it is and warranty of development.

This report focuses on the case of Forestalp Cooperative, an enterprise located in the centre of Italy which works on nature-based tourism. All the aspect related to economical situation, competitiveness, partners, innovation and management have been analysed. At the end some new proposals have been suggested.

## **Introduction**

The aim of this report is to understand what *innovation processes* are and, in particular, to focus on innovation process management and innovation tools of the chosen enterprise.

This work has been articulated in three main parts:

- Collecting information about the chosen enterprise, such as company background, persons engaged in managing, market and competition situation, ideas and innovation... in order to have a clear picture of the current situation. The information has been reached through web sources and also with a meeting with the proprietor of the enterprise.
- Presentation of the pre-case study on the first day of the Inno Natour. During the other days, several lectures taken by specialists in this field of interest, coming from different countries, about different arguments related to tourism innovations (in particular nature-based innovations) have been attended and discussed between the participants.
- Post- case study analysis, implemented with the issues given in the intensive course.

The chosen enterprise is Forestalp Cooperative. It is located in Italy, it works in promoting the eco-sustainable tourism in Marche Region of Italy and different activities related to, since 1984. They know that the territory is a big resource and they bring it to be “productive” by organizing initiatives that link together nature, education and the discovery of the place from an environmental but also cultural point of view.

## **Case study description**

Forestalp cooperative society is a good reality for a Region of Italy such as Marche, whose economy is mainly based on tourism. At the beginning, they worked just in promoting tourism services, such as touristic and naturalistic guides, in collaboration with regional tour operators. Little by little they improved their way of work, starting to organize several excursions, field-trips, education-days for children of elementary schools and many other activities related to nature and to the discovering of the beautiful Marche region. They had success not only between tourists from other region or foreigners, but also between people who live nearby.

Eight years ago they reached the “turning point”, deciding to *innovate* their enterprise. Simply, they added the word “*sustainable*” to all of their activities, catching the interest of huge amount of people who believe in this philosophy and way of live. This, joined with a new interest in fitness outdoor activities and cultural activities. Recently, they also improve the “educational side” of the enterprise, extending the lectures not only to children but also to adults and starting to provide training course for people and entrepreneurs interested in working in nature-based tourism as tour operators, naturalistic guides and so on.

People who work in Forestalp Cooperative are extremely competent and specialists in their job, they are touristic guides who perfectly know the place to visit; naturalists, researchers and PhDs mainly of Polytechnic Marche University, school teachers, special trainers, for all the sporty activities like Nordic walking, trekking, hiking, mountain biking.

There is a main coordinator for each sector, but in general every person inside the enterprise has the same “value” of the others, they take decisions together.

There are two centres from which they coordinates works, and they are strategically located in two beautiful cities within two natural parks: Sirolo in Conero Regional Natural Park, and Arquata del Tronto in Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park.

### Partners

The enterprise now benefits of the collaboration of several partners. The synergy between all of them is a very strength point, starting from sharing of money and resources.



**Promotes eno-gastronomic culture**



**Conero Natural Park**



**Tour operator**



**Monti Sibillini National Park**



**Italian Academy of Nordic Walking**



**Marche Region**



**Gran Sasso e  
Monti della  
Laga  
National  
Park**

### **Market and competition situation**

When the Cooperative began to work, during the first years of the last decade, there were not in this part of Italy other organization involved in tourism development, offering educational and environmental activities for youngs as this cooperative has done. They were the firsts to create outdoor activities funny, “green” and healthy for different ages and needs, the firsts to promote tourism in the beautiful area of Conero Natural Park, otherwise unknown. They found the opportunity to extend their work to another important touristic point of Marche Region, placed in between National Park of Monti Sibillini and National Park of Monti della Laga.

Now, the competition situation is influenced by the presence of other companies interested in the same field, but they have been established recently and have not the same level of experiences of Forestal Cooperative, which for this reason, could be defined as a leader in its sector. Anyway, the presence of competition between enterprises is good because forces them to improve and to develop in order to give the best product.

### **How did the economical crisis influences the enterprise**

Despite of the economical crisis, Forestalp Cooperative is showing its strength and ability to stay in the market thanks to always new ideas, activities, educational and training possibilities that also help them to overcome the problem of the seasonal tourism.

Economical crisis is a problem mainly for what concern lack of money, but they have established a good network of partners and collaborators in order to overcome this situation and probably this would be the best strategy.

Unfortunately, cuts on the funds planned by the Region authorities and by both of Natural Parks to finance projects will affect the economical situation of the enterprise. In addition, the total amount of tourists is decreasing as well.

So they decided also to focus the attention on “local tourists”, trying to catch the interest of the nearby people who has less problems in travelling and can spend less, mainly with outdoor and fitness activities.

### **SWOT analysis**

The SWOT-analysis is a strategic planning method for the evaluation of the strenghts, weaknesses, opportunities and threats occuring during the implementation of a project or in an enterprise. The strenghts are of internal origin and describe the characteristics that are advantages for the project or enterprise. The weaknesses are also internal, but state the competitve disadvantages. On the contrary, threats and opportunities are both of external origin, it means that they describe changes in the environment that could either improve the performance of the enterprise (opportunities) or affect it negatively (threats).



<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Strenght</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synergy with partner enterprises;</li> <li>• High experience and competence of operators.</li> <li>• Active role in the education of children and young people</li> <li>• Well established enterprise.</li> <li>• Web-pages well defined and clear</li> <li>• Aptitude to be creative proposing even more different kind of activities</li> <li>• Ability to provide work for the whole year</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Weaknesses</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High costs</li> <li>• Not already well known (developing situation)</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Opportunities</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economical crisis, people begin to discover better the place where they live instead going abroad;</li> <li>• Concept as wellness, training and sustainability are becoming a fashion;</li> <li>• Working areas at high touristic value ;</li> <li>• Involvement of children who can drag their parents along nature and outdoor activities</li> <li>• Proposal of some free services, depending on the possibility for the Cooperative to be supported by some sponsor</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Threats</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economical Crisis</li> <li>• Competitiveness with tour operators</li> <li>• Low strength of political strategies</li> </ul>

## **Conclusions**

### ***Future development***

As it has been written in the SWOT analysis, there would be many opportunities for this enterprise, from the fact that it is really well established, from their huge experiences in promoting activities always new, and it is becoming little by little more known in the whole region.

For development purpose, the main thing I would like to suggest as innovation is the creation of a brand that should be applied on the advertisements of every activities they organized, partners web-pages and so on. It would improve their image and people would recognize them as a brand of quality.

In addition, a strong cooperation between other cooperatives or enterprises is necessary, in order to face the recent and big problem of the economical crisis. I also suggest the possibility to create some “natural network” with other parks of other regions of Italy, and also other protected areas of Europe, in order to enhance a new kind of tourism, always based on sustainability , nature-based knowledge, discovering of the place where we live . A starting point would be the already existent “ Natura 2000” network of protected areas, that come from a European Directive. Such areas are spread all over the Europe and are also present in Marche Region.

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# Bed & Breakfast Campo del Mare

**Elisa Pittura**

Austria

## Abstract

The document focus on the study of a Bed & Breakfast located in the Marche region in Italy, called Campo del mare. The case study presented comes from a young couple's dream of starting a new business, this is a very small company, which aims to offer an acceptance that only a family can give.

Owners do not aim to be the first market, they do not have an organized business plan, because they love simple and genuine things, they just offer the products themselves made. However, they are conscious of having different opportunities, which can be used and that can implement an innovative process that will take them a considerable improvement in the market.

## Introduction

Tourism is certainly a strength of Italy. Many companies have developed over the last few years, especially if nature is the basis of their activities. The most common structures are the cottages, which have rooms where accommodate tourists; also from their vineyards or orchards produce offers for customers and other visitors.

Some variants of these structures may be Bed & Breakfast, which can offer the same things but at prices more affordable and educational farms where there are also farm animals, and guests can learn the work of the farmer, have the opportunity to participate or just to spend some free time on horseback.

Usually who runs this type of structures are families who can keep for themselves all the revenue, without having to have other external costs for labor, except in the case of educational farms, which are most in need of maintenance.

This is possible because in most cases the families decide to convert their properties (country house and countryside) into an opportunity for gain, in other cases, as in the case of Campo del Mare, the family decided to open a new business, choosing to pursue it in the family.

The reason why many people choose to spend their holidays in this type of structure is precisely their close contact with nature. For many people these are places where you can live through a bit of time relaxing and recovering the experience of simple and intense things, even during simple weekend. Also very important is the relationship established with the owners, thanks to whom it is possible to appreciate a different kind of hospitality, more genuine and direct. In fact, the main spirit of the family of Campo del Mare case study is just the hospitality: it's nice to discover new places, landscapes, people and even themselves.

## Case study description:

Location Bed & Breakfast Campo del Mare is located in Massignano, a village located inside the Natural Park of Monte Conero, near Ancona, in Marche region in central Italy.

The company has stabilized in 2008 and the managers are a married couple, who have decided to open this new activity, together with their maternal parents.

The house is a traditional farmhouse in stone of the Conero and the name "Campo del Mare" is the local name of a bay along the coast nearby Portonovo, another village. Managers have chosen this name because of its territoriality and also because the house is inside the Conero Park between nature and the countryside: it is already on the Park path number 15 called Anello della Pecorara, three kilometers from the sea.

Also located at the crossroads of different places (Sirolo 3km, 5km Numana, Portonovo 8km, 5km Massignano, Camerano 6km, 18km Ancona, Osimo 15km, 20 km Loreto, Recanati 30Km) it is easy to reach places and different attractions.

*Services*

The cottage offers two double bedrooms, which have a personal name:

- "the Separola" takes its name from an old system of local squid fishery. The room has shades of blue and maritime ambience, decorated with shells and great-grandfather's old separola fisherman stands proudly on the wall.
- "L'Erbolario" is inspired from the garden of medicinal herbs and aromatic plants at the property. In shades of green overlooking a beautiful rose garden that emerges among the lavender garden.

This is the table with the prices, that are different depending on time of year (Table no. 1):

	LOW SEASON October - March	MEDIUM SEASON September, winter holidays	MEDIUM HIGH SEASON June, Easter, spring holidays	HIGH SEASON July and August
PRICES	€ 50,00	€ 60,00	€ 70,00	€ 80,00

**Table no. 1. Prices are per room per night**

The services offered by the Bed & Breakfast are refrigerator, microwave, barbeque, library, mountain bike, parking, equipment for small children, free excursions in collaboration with the project Discover the Conero.

There are also a biological vegetable garden and a biological orchard from which the family obtains organic products that they offer or sell to guests.

Near the house can be found horse riding, golf, scuba diving centers and visitor center Park of Conero.

Even on holiday can be enjoyable to spend time learning something again, to perfect a skill you already own and investigate issues that we intrigued. For this reason the owners want to link the holiday in Campo del Mare with the chance to follow a course in a way adapted to the guests and costs agreement. It is an issue still in evolution, because it wants teachers with right spirit and that they do this with seriousness and passion.

Are currently organized painting courses aimed at those who want to have an educational experience and to those who already have the basics and want to gain more skills. In collaboration with the artist Sivia Ridolfi you can learn more or to combine the techniques of portraiture, life drawing, watercolor painting, renaissance painting, oil painting, decorative ceramics, drawing, gold foil, cardboard, decoupage.

*Offers*

Campo del Mare organizes special offers at low prices to entice greater influx of tourists:

- 7 days + DINNER IN CAVE: if you book seven days in July the opportunity to dine in a unique setting and unrepeatabe made from freshly caught mussels, an ancient refuge of fishermen handed down from father to son dug in the rock just below the city of Ancona.
- 2 NIGHTS + 1 PIC-NIC: if you book two nights midweek (Mon-Thu) in April or May you can relax with a picnic on the beach or on a beautiful lawn offered by Campo del Mare (wicker basket, with the typical local dishes and groceries).
- VOUCHER SURPRISE: you can give a voucher for a stay in Bed & Breakfast! It is an original gift for someone special. For a birthday, an anniversary, a holiday. The gift

voucher will be delivered with a dedication to the recipient via email the day that will be shown who gives it and the surprise is guaranteed.

### *Partners*

Campo del Mare at every stage of the work process engages towards increasing energy savings and respect for the environment. This results in the use of energy saving lamps, in careful sorting of waste for the guest rooms, in the collection and use of rainwater through a special system of gutters and cistern. At breakfast are offered genuine products prepared by the owners as the jams from the fruits of the orchard trees which are not administered chemical pesticides, or organic local products of known origin.

Campo del Mare actually is part of a GAS (Group Purchase Solidarity) which has as its purpose a conscious and sustainable consumption. A purchasing group is comprised of a set of people who decide to meet in order buy wholesale food or commonly used. The group respects the environment by choosing organic and local products to minimize the environmental impact caused by packaging, transport and waste. It helps producers, through direct and transparent relationships that enhance their work, in order to preserve the agricultural heritage and environmental.

For all the personal and home cleaning products are used by Piero Manzotti, owner of TEA, a small company with eco detergent formulas designed and built by Piero himself. A line of natural products, able to perform adequately its duties, which would cut in the shortest possible way that respected the natural resources and the welfare of the person at the time of their use. Natural Tea Products was founded in Ancona in March 2003 and started from the basic cosmetics, care products made from hair or skin, soaps and shaving products, this production is carried out both in an environmentally friendly way, then low environmental impact, and for the end user.

The products were created with the help of experts in the field natural, herbalists, and pharmacists. In addition to natural cosmetics are also produced the incense as the primary means of distributing the incense that could be called "natural". Not were in fact considered incense with more attractive aroma, but without any guarantee of the components, and incense that use as perfumes, oils derived from synthetic and "certified" as a non-toxic. Their incense present on the label the words "the incense without chemicals."

Campo del Mare collaborates the initiatives proposed in the area as the Project Discover the Conero, offering guests the chance to free our load and a different timetable hiking. It was created with the purpose of testing new forms of tourism in terms of sustainability in order to discover the unique natural heritage of our area. Discover Conero Project it's born with a collaboration between the Cooperative Forestalp, the Board Park of the Conero, the Province Ancona and tour operators in the territory. It offers a calendar hiking, designed to provide the opportunity to choose some activities as like excursions, mountain bike, trekking during the night, cultural tours, activities for children and special events.

### *Innovation system*

In 2003 the farmhouse has been completely renovated in green building. Tthe materials used are environmentally friendly, producing no toxic waste, respect the human health and promote energy saving:

- The cement is breathable;
- The steel used is made of harmonic steel, which prevents the formation of magnetic fields;
- The sleeping area is equipped with a circuit breaker that takes away the electricity when the last light turns off and when the first light comes on, it reactivates automatically, avoiding wastage of energy during the night.

**Market and competition situation**

Current economic crisis prevents new enterprise to succeed in the market, especially for the fact that throughout the whole municipality, there are other structures. Even if they do not offer the same services (nearby there are not other Bed & Breakfast), they have many more years of experience compared to Campo del Mare. How the economical crisis influences the enterprise

There are two problems: the first is due to the fact that local people do not choose to spend holidays in a place like Campo del Mare, because since the radius of 50 km people prefer to go and return home the same day, while in the most wide – ranging, people may rely to other facilities closest to them. The second problem remains the lack of money: now more and more people fail to go on holidays, however, if they could, they would choose the cheapest structure.

**Swot analysis**

The SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve that objective (Table 2).

- **Strengths:** internal characteristics of the business or team that give it an advantage over others in the industry.
- **Weaknesses:** internal characteristics that are a disadvantage for the firm relative to others.
- **Opportunities:** external chances to make greater sales or profit.
- **Threats:** external elements that could cause trouble for the business.

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location;</li> <li>• Biological products;</li> <li>• Good prices;</li> <li>• Natural products for personal and home cleaning;</li> <li>• Green building.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No English web site;</li> <li>• Not present on the sites that promote tourism;</li> <li>• Few rooms.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming pool;</li> <li>• Kitchen in rooms;</li> <li>• On – site tastings of typical products in collaboration with other producers or professionals</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects of economical crisis;</li> <li>• Few requests;</li> <li>• Season changes.</li> </ul>

**Table no. 2. S.W.O.T. analysis**

### **Problem definition**

Campo del Mare faithfully reflects the stereotype of the Bed & Breakfast: guests can relax on site, but at the same time, helped by its geographical position, can enjoy the surroundings and enjoy all the services nearby. There are other Bed & Breakfast in the region, but none so close to so many activities, attractions and leisure venues, different but so close together, surrounded by the nature. Since has no upcoming competitors (as already said), has the opportunity to expand their properties, increasing its bid for the guests: the rooms are too few, limiting the choice only for couples or small families. Moreover, the property offers only a microwave and a barbecue, preventing guests to cook themselves: should always be looking for another restaurant to eat.

### **Problem solution**

Drafts of innovation The first thing that can be done is the extension of the house, perhaps by building rooms in detached bungalows, in order to maintain privacy for those who will benefit: in this way even larger groups might choose as a vacation destination Campo del Mare.

Relax could be further fueled by building a swimming pool, many tourists, especially from abroad, from countries in northern Europe, greatly appreciate the comfort of the structure in which they choose to spend their holidays, although it gives the possibility to know the surroundings, at the same time, they are very eager to participate in activities within the structure, then you could look for other collaborations with other professionals, for example for cooking classes, or arrange tastings with other neighboring producers. Would be interesting to join, or if none exists, create a enogastronomic tours through the territory in which to direct guests.

The enogastronomic tours offer trips to discover the local traditions related to the civilization of the table. There are two reasons why this activity is common: it's now gained the discovery that food and drinks are an important part of everyday culture, when people produce when they prepare and when they consume. There is a popular phrase that refers to: "the country where you go, you finds its food", indicating the richness of traditions and customs near and far. The other reason is the enhancement of rural areas, and agricultural production, which is a very topical issue. It invests more in the tourism sector because of the many synergies activated, also as a result of the growing market interest in the tourism products of culinary connotation.

### **Conclusions**

During the intensive course we had the opportunity to know and learn the concept of innovation: innovating themselves to find new ideas, innovate their ideas to develop themselves, use new ideas to innovate businesses, because it can stimulate greater interest in the public and attract new tourists. As mentioned before, the main theme was nature, this is because in recent years has been investing a lot of it, especially for the benefits that nature can offer, both from a production standpoint and rewarding, both views of people who perceive him as a landscape, a place of relax and wellness and recreation. during the group work we have tried to bring both of these concepts as goals for the innovation case study that had been given. Also, do not forget that you also consider innovation when one evolves along with others pursuing the same objectives. for this very important are the partnerships that can be created between different companies, to bring forward the same ideas. During this time of economic crisis is difficult to bring out his own image, above all in the presence of other competitors, but the key to success is innovation that puts the owner in his business, because today people are always trying something new, which may tell others, which in their turn will leave to feel the same experience.

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# Farmhouse "The North Laga"

**Valeria Cardelli**

Italy

## **Abstract**

*The case study*

Farmhouses are a different way to do tourism. My case study is about a typical Italian farmhouse, called "The North Laga". The aim of this report is analyze, after a brief description, the structure, the innovation system (activities), the problems of this enterprise with a SWOT analysis and suggest some innovative solutions try to integrate the knowledge learnt during the INNO Natour program.

## **Introduction**

What is a farmhouse?

With the term "Farmhouse" we mean an activities of a businessman who offers to tourist, in his holding, food and accommodation, using own products and organizing cultural and recreational events.

In Italy, agritourism, is exclusively allowed only in accordance with some rules and law. The name "Farmhouse" is reserved for those farms which respect this norms.

The main activities of a farmhouse are:

- hospitality in open spaces for camper;
- give typical food and drink to guests, preferring those with DOP, IGP, DOC and DOCG quality brands;
- organization of tasting of own products;
- organization of cultural, educational, sports and hiking activities.

According to recent ISTAT statistic (2010), in Italy the farmhouse are 19.973, of which 16.504 offer:

- 206.14 with accommodations;
- 9.914 catering;
- 11.421 cultural, recreational and educational activities.

This type of vacation satisfied who want to stay in contact with nature without renounce to the comfort.

## ***The Farmhouse***

### Location

The enterprise is located in Umito, a small village with only 29 inhabitants, in the Marche region. It is 137 Km from Rome and 9 Km from Acqua Santa Terme, the biggest nearby city. This city is very important for the economy of the area because is a famous thermal center.

In addition, Umito, is included in the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park. This park covers a surface area of 150,000 hectares. It is one of the largest parks in Italy. It offers a number of proposals, itineraries and visits for every season thanks to the richness of its habitats, its massifs, and thanks to the charming historical-architectonical evidences it preserves. The Park consists of three mountain groups: Gran Sasso of Italy chain, Laga massif, and Gemelli Mountains. The Park is also characterized by the presence of the highest peak of the Apennines, Corno Grande (2,912 meters).

## **Brief history and structure**

The "North Laga" was founded in the 2002 when the Santoni's family decided to extend their property buying an old house farm and some lands.

Thanks to the renovation the house farm was transformed in to a farm holiday with six rooms, bar and dining room with a big fireplace. Nowadays the ownership includes also 12 ha of which:

- 8 ha for chestnuts;
- 2 ha for forestry;
- the remaining is used to grow vegetables, legume, etc. used for the restaurant. The cuisine use only biological product. Indeed the farmhouse even has poultry and other farm animals use also for the educational farm.

### **The activities**

The strong point of this enterprise are its activities. These are original and well adapted on the contest of the area and they have been thought for every kind of target.

### **Educational farm**

The farmhouse is one of the educational farm of the region. Their activities are aimed at fostering communication between farmers and citizens, especially children.

Educational farms open their doors to schools and visitors by offering them a wide range of opportunities. Young visitors, who will be future consumers, are actively involved in several activities that help farmers build with them a stronger and long lasting relationship. Moreover, the activities organized at the farm aim to strengthen the link between city and countryside, raising awareness of the agricultural environment, the origins of food products and the animals' life. Educational farms offer young people a unique chance to discover the importance of farmers' work and also how our ancestor worked the fields.

There is a growing interest around educational farms as they provide people with opportunities to improve their understanding of various environmental aspects: social, economical, technical, political and cultural ones. Educational farms perfectly match local cultural policies with innovative educational activities carried out at school. Besides this, quality land education is very important and must be developed starting from local communities where schools are located. School trips to farms represent for children outstanding learning opportunities, provided that they are suitably prepared by teachers and well integrated in the educational offer.

The farm is a place where children can learn at first-hand, understand the origin and use of farming products and, not least, learn more about nutrition. The farm is also a meeting place, where farmers exchange their views with children, teachers, adults, etc. Each farm is unique as it witnesses local agricultural and land diversity, promotes local products and, most of all, raise awareness of the role of farmers. Farmers, on the other hand, play a crucial role as they pass on their knowledge and passion for this work.

### **The chain saw course**

Participants will learn to perform the following skills:

- Cut trees up to guide bar length
- Cross-cutting
- Split-level cuts
- Taking down of hung-up trees
- General chainsaw maintenance
- Chain sharpening
- A free lesson about using biological fuel

The ideal number of participants is 6. The prize, including accommodation and meal, is 300€. It is an important experience for those people interested in forest management and this type of course is not so common in this region.

### Chestnut Picking up

The guest, in autumn, have the possibility to pick up the chestnut in the wood properties. If you want you can choose a day-trip. In this case, the farmhouse proposes lunch at reduced price. The cost for the collection is 2,00 €/Kg of chestnuts.

### Trekking

The owners offer trips in this amazing place. The nature is incredibly luxuriant and from the farmhouse start a lot of different paths like Pilato Lake path, Monte Sibilla path and Patriarch path. Walking in the forest you can admire the river Graffo and the many caves dig by sulphureous water. The area is also characterized by a particular vegetation: wood of beech and local fir trees, effortless blueberry and grassland over 2000 above sea level, make this area unique.

### SWOT analysis

#### Strength

- They serve in the restaurant their **biological products**, and this means good quality.
- Another important aspect is the **forest property**. Indeed, the most part of mountain areas of Italy have been abandoned in this last decades. Without a correct management of the forest problems like geological instability are increased. "The North Laga", with its management, helps to prevent this type of phenomenon.
- The farmhouse is one of the main **educational farms** of Marche region. It has many contact with elementary school and it could be good publicity because if children are enthusiastic maybe they want return with their family.
- The family management contribute to an **intimate atmosphere**. The guests are received as a good friend and the hospitality is excellent.
- In months of low season the business organizes packages **for picking chestnuts**. This type of solution allow to cover lower takings.
- The **chain saw courses** is an innovative activities that attract group of people interested in it.

#### Weaknesses

- It is a small farmhouse, but a good **restaurant capacity** is important to organize events like birthday, weddings or other ceremonies. In this case there isn't enough space for this type of events.
- The **web site** isn't well done. Very few information about the farmhouse. Even they haven't the prices of the rooms on the web site. It seems also incomplete, with few photos and with some links that are working in progress. There isn't the English version.
- The **small village** where the farmhouse is collocated could be a problem, because, with few inhabitants, there aren't business activities like supermarket, bar, postal service etc.
- The place is in the hinterland of Marche region, it could be difficult to arrive. The **road signs** are not well placed.
- **No partnership** with local association.

#### Opportunities

- A **partnership with thermal center**, maybe with a little bus of farmhouse property which carries the guests.
- The **Location** is important because has a great potential: beautiful landscape, with green wood and marvelous waterfalls. The perfect scenery for a relaxing holiday. The location is important also because it is included in the Gran Sasso and Monti Laga Park.
- **Attend to fairs** to sell own products e to be known as farmhouse. They could participate to evens like Herbaria, the most important ecologic fairs of Marche region.

- Creation of a personal **logo** to be more easily recognizable.
- Register the farmhouse on the **main web site for tourism**, like booking.com or tripadvisor etc. or on the web site of the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park. This could be also a new partnership.

**Threats**

- Not well know
- High competition, many types of accommodations in that area which has already strong partnerships.
- The new partnership could be not interested in this new link.



**The financial crisis**

Obviously, the analysis of the weaknesses and threats are the most important part in these years of economical uncertainties. The crisis has affected also this enterprise, because it is small, not well know and it is based on tourism services, and now, families, prefer to use resources for essential service. They have some difficulties also because they have a lot of different cost (the forest, the farmhouse, the animals, etc.) and sometimes the takings aren't enough. They are trying to amplified their target selling the innovative activities describe before

## Conclusions

"The North Laga" offers a particular type of tourism that we can define "eco-tourism". This means that the enterprise want to promote a responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that those who implement and participate in ecotourism activities should follow the following ecotourism principles:

- Minimize impact.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate.

All this aspects are followed by the farmhouse.

The main problem in this enterprise is the promotion. The farmhouse offers a lot of interesting and innovative solution for an alternative vacancy but it remains a sort of tourism niche. In this period of economical crisis, where people and family are careful to save money, it must be ready to do some changes on the business management and investing on new type of activities, as we have learnt in the INNO NATOUR program.

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## Wellness Kováčová s.r.o. (Spa)

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**Andrea Uherková**  
Slovakia

### **Abstract**

In this post-case study I am trying to suggest innovations in nature-based tourism services, exactly in the enterprise Wellness Kováčová (spa), in Zvolen, Slovakia. Because of the situation, when a lot of spas exist in Slovakia, the innovation should attract as many tourists as possible. I bear in mind that this enterprise does not have a lot of money but I am sure that the innovations can be applied step by step.

At the beginning of every innovation there should be good promotion. Otherwise the potential clients will not come at all. Other suggested innovation focuses on the eco- image of the enterprise because ECO is considered like a “brand” nowadays. Restaurant in spa could also profit from the fact the Farm Roziak exists in Zvolen and offer local foodstuff. Other innovations are connected with children of quests and also with Aquapark, which is supposed to be built here.

### **Introduction**

On the east side of the valley of the Hron river, on the foothills of the Kremnické vrchy Mts. is Wellness Kováčová specialised in therapy of locomotion apparatus and neurology. Kováčová is one of the youngest spas in Slovakia.

The origin of the spa is directly linked with the Union factory (fabrication of metal plates and iron). The firm needed a coal to make a lot of energy so it was trying to find new coal bed in the surrounding, also in the village Kováčová. In 1898 the first hot spring was found in Kováčová during he bore. People from the factory wanted to find coal, but instead of this, they found a 45°C hot spring, 405 m under the ground. Villagers used to take a bath in small hot lake near the spring. In order to set up spa in Kováčová, big investments were necessary. This came true after the hydrogeological survey in 1964, when new spring with yield 50l/s was discovered. It was used till 1982. After that, in 1939 spa began to use other spring, which is used till nowadays. After it's cooling to 39°C bathtubs and basin in spa are replenished with this water, which is moderately mineralised sulphur-hydrogen-carbonate, calcium-magnesium one.

Company used to be in the property of state, later it belonged to Spa Sliač, which is in the village nearby, and since 2005 Wellness Kováčová is in a private property of Advisors group s.r.o. Director of the company is Juraj Balucha.

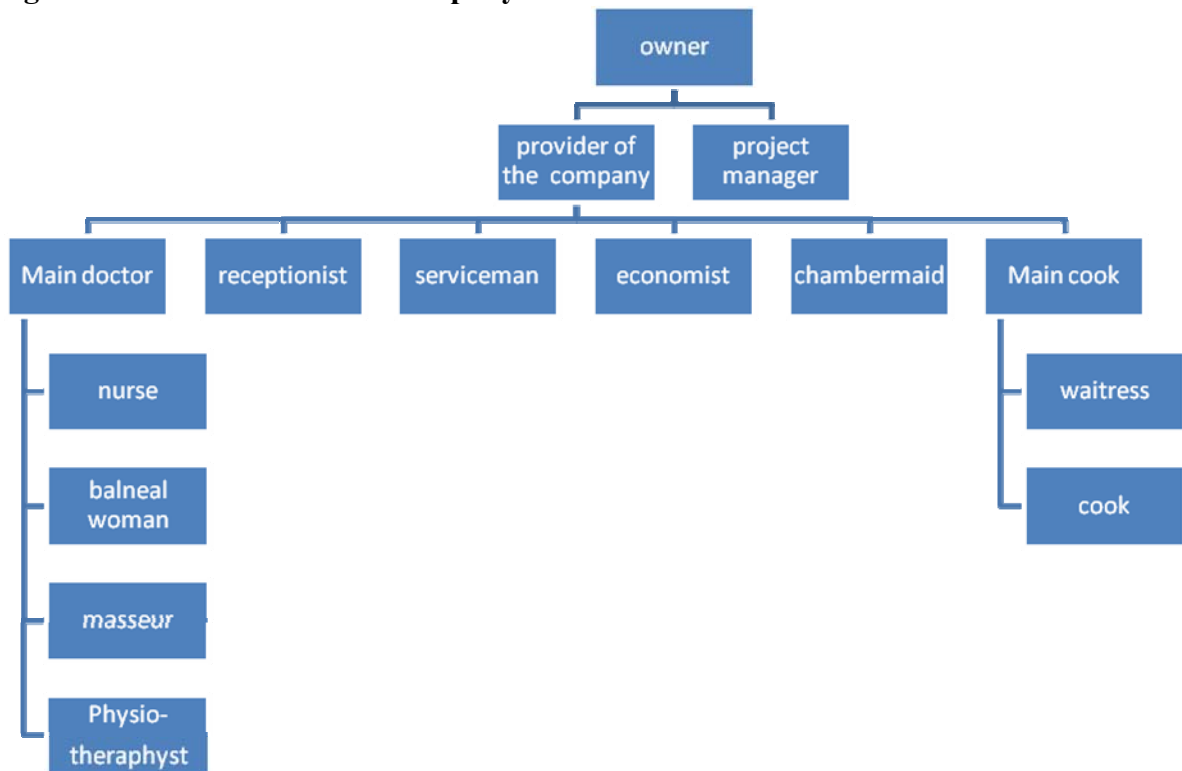
Wellness Kováčová offers treatments to different kinds of illnesses: digestive system diseases (stomach, liver), endocrine diseases, neural disorders (neuropathy, sciatica, Parkinson), locomotive organs diseases (joints, spine), kidney and urinary system diseases, women/gynecological diseases. All procedures are performed by the specialists. Hydrotherapeutic procedures include bathing in pools or tubs, paraffin wrapping, various classes of massage and complete physio-rehabilitating therapy. Spa provides ambulance (short-term) or constitutional (long-term) treatments. During the long-term procedures, adult patients are accommodated in hotel Detvan. Hotel consists of single or double-bed rooms, each of them has own bathroom, radio, TV. Its capacity is 40 people.

Patients are divided into 2 categories: category A- after operations, injuries- patients don't pay for treatment, health insurance does. Category B- patients have to pay for accommodation and food. Number of B patients is still increasing (more in the chapter Influence of economical crisis).

The spring with its yield 50l/s belongs to the most abundant ones in Slovakia and supplies all spa and recreational facilities. Spa is opened for treatment all the year.

According to the company's economist, annual turnover was 753 308 € in 2010 and 754 810 € in 2011.

### Organization structure of the company:



### Problem definition

In my study I have defined some problems linked to the company.

The name of enterprise is WELLNESS Kováčová s.r.o., which means that a lot of customers should be from public, people who are not after injuries and operations, but those, who just want to have a massage, take a relax and are able to pay for it. But still the most of customers are those ones, who are sent here from doctors, as for medical treatment.

Secondly, hotel and accommodation for guests are not attractive. Hotel Detvan has only 2 stars and equipment could be also better and more guest-friendly.

### Influence of economical crisis

Company says that they did not feel the big impact of economical crisis. In spite of this, some changes already exist, because of the health insurance companies' impact during last years. That want to save money, that is why they give more proposals for patients in B category, instead of A category. That means more patients have to pay for food and accommodation by themselves, and not everyone has money for doing this. So the number of patients is little bit decreasing. In the past, only 1% of patients was in B category, nowadays it is 13%. Company predict that situation will be worse in 2012.

### SWOT analysis

The SWOT-analysis is a strategic planning method for the evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats occurring during the implementation of a project or in an enterprise. The strengths are of internal origin and describe the characteristics that are advantages for the project or enterprise. The weaknesses are also internal, but state the competitive disadvantages. On the contrary, threats and opportunities are both of external origin, which means that they describe changes in the environment that could either improve the performance of the enterprise (opportunities) or affect it negatively (threats).

SWOT for the Wellness Kováčová, s.r.o.:

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknessess</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-established</li> <li>• Qualified staff</li> <li>• Location</li> <li>• Continuing guarantee of clients</li> <li>• Hotel and restaurant included</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of money</li> <li>• Web pages just in slovak language</li> <li>• Info-material not well distributed</li> <li>• Hotel Detvan has only 2 stars</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social network and forums</li> <li>• To provide accurate, correct and updated information</li> <li>• Sponsors</li> <li>• To improve web-pages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition- better services provided by other SPAs</li> <li>• Economical crisis</li> <li>• Problems with health insurance companies- loss of clients</li> </ul>

**Market and competition situation**

Slovakia is renowned worldwide for its reputable specialised curative spas. Their thermal springs healing mud and unique climatic conditions have an amazing curative effect . SPA as an enterprise is quite common type of business in Slovakia. Totally there is 30 different SPA resorts in the country, e.g. Spa Rajecké Teplice, Trenčianske Teplice, Bardejov, Číž, Piešťany, Dudince, Brusno. Nearby Kováčová there is also Spa Sliach in the town with the same name. This one can be considered like the biggest competitor. However, not in every spa the same illnesses like in Kováčová are cured. Spa are specialized to different type of illness. It depends mainly on type of mineral water , thermal springs, used in spa during treatment.

In Kováčová there are also 2 different spas- Wellness KOVÁČOVÁ, s.r.o with medical centre Detvan (private enterprise) and Specialised medical institution Marina (state enterprise).

It means the competition is big and enterprise Wellness KOVÁČOVÁ, s.r.o has to put effort to innovations and promotion in order to have as many clients as possible.

**Innovation environment**

Environment for innovations in enterprise is connected with financial possibilities. Unfortunately they are not very good. As economist of the enterprise mentioned, enterprise do not have a lot of money to put them into innovations.

During last years, they were trying to do some small inovations in Hotel Detvan, e.g. savers in showers. However it is hot enough and these ones were done in order to save money to enterprise, not primarily for clients.

I can see big possibilities for innovation in Aquapark, which is supposed to be built near the Spa. Aquapark will be mainly for ordinary people, not for clients of Spa, but as the economist of the enterprise mentioned, threated clients will have free entrance to Aquapark and the owner of it is the same one.

**Innovations**

Promotion & web-pages

First of all, the enterprise needs better promotion. The main webpage of Wellness Kováčová is only in slovak language, which is the bigger weakness. Moreover, information in slovak language is not sufficient, it offres only brief overview of spa and its offes. Information about travelling to this destination or some discussions of its clients (like a feedback) are missing here.



Enterprise is missing on the social networks like Facebook. In order to have more ordinary clients, they should set-up the facebook page and promote its services, upload some photos from the enterprise, procedures and surroundings etc. Nowadays, when almost everyone is on social networks, it would be a useful tool. According to webpage and the list of prices, prices of procedures for ordinary clients are not so expensive as people could predict. The biggest problem according to me is bad promotion. Promotion could be also better if enterprise would be a sponsor of some events in the region.

#### Eco-friendly Hotel Detvan and restaurant

As it has been already mentioned, Hotel Detvan, as the accommodation place for guests (sent here by doctors), has only 2 stars. To improve this is important to have better equipment of rooms and services in hotel. Moreover, I would like to focus on green innovations. Bins for separation of waste do not exist in and in front of the hotel for example. This should be normal nowadays and enterprise could also derive profit from this, because a lot of clients is searching for enterprises and tourism with „eco-friendly” image. Some other small steps could help to achieve this aim. Bulbs in rooms could be replaced by the fluorescent lamps, which save the energy. Toilet paper could be recycled, soaps could be handmade and natural (the Farm Roziak in Zvolen is the producer e.g.), pillow cases could be made from bio-cotton. Chambermaids could use eco-washing liquids to washerboxes.

The Restaurant for hotel's guests is also located in the hotel. In order to get the eco-image, restaurant could offer to its guests mainly dishes from local foods. The fact is, thanks to location near Zvolen, great conditions exist. Farm Roziak is located in Zvolen (approximately 4 km from Kováčová) and during the season it offers local food. Although Farm is not certificated as an „Ecofarm”, the most of food and production, like fruit, vegetable, meat, grain, is healthy and in bio-quality. Long-term cooperation with the farm and offering its food could be profitable both for customers and for enterprise. If the restaurant would buy food in big amounts, the prices would be comparable with that ones from ordinary shops.

#### Kid's corner in Spa

In order to have more ordinary clients, who are paying for the procedures on their own and who are coming mainly only for one day (short-time procedures) some kid's corner could help. Thanks to this, parents would solve the problem with babysitting, because it would not exist anymore. They could come to have a procedure with their children and to leave them in special „corner” in which some employee would take care of them. This time could be used also effectively, with some games connected with environmental education, mainly about the thermal water. In front of the hotel and also place where the procedures are taken is fountain with thermal water and tropical fish in it so it could also be the part of spending time with children here.

#### Aquapark

Finally, Aquapark is going to be built nearby Wellness Kováčová. I think the Aquapark itself is big innovation, but anyway, in order to have big amount of clients some other innovative ideas are necessary. Because of nowadays' situation, when I do not know the exact equipment of the aquapark and its offer, because it does not exist yet, it is difficult to suggest something. That is why my innovation's proposal will be dedicated only to entrance.

Clients of spa, and not only that ones who are coming to treat for a long time and are sent from the doctors, but also the ordinary, short-time clients should profit from the situation they are clients of the Wellness Kováčová and have some discount, some extra entrance fee to Aquapark. For example, common clients would gain a discount for every procedure. The more procedures they buy and undergo, the bigger discount they receive.

### **Conclusions**

All these innovation are also connected with the fact, the name of the enterprise, and mainly the word „wellness”, means, that it should be considered like a place where common people are coming to take a rest and to undergo some procedures when they don't feel good and to improve their condition of body and soul.

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# Management of National Park Malá Fatra

Anna Boháčová  
Slovakia

## Abstract

The main aim of this case study is to find out what kind of innovations we can do in National Park Malá Fatra. Also if there is any influence of world economic crisis and what we are able to do to minimize its impact and also improve position of Management of National Park Malá Fatra as an enterprise.

## Introduction

National park Malá Fatra is situated in north-western part of Western Carpathians. Area of national park covers orographic unit Krivánska Malá Fatra.

National park has 22 630 ha and its protective zone has 23 262 ha and 130 km of hiking paths that tourists can use.

There are 14 national nature reserves and 9 nature reserves the area. Twenty-six types of biotopes, 6 plant species of European conservation concern and 29 animal species of European conservation concern were found in the national park. It is home of many species, for example brown bear, lynx, wolf, otter, golden eagle, eagle owl, grouse, capercaillie, wallcreeper, etc.

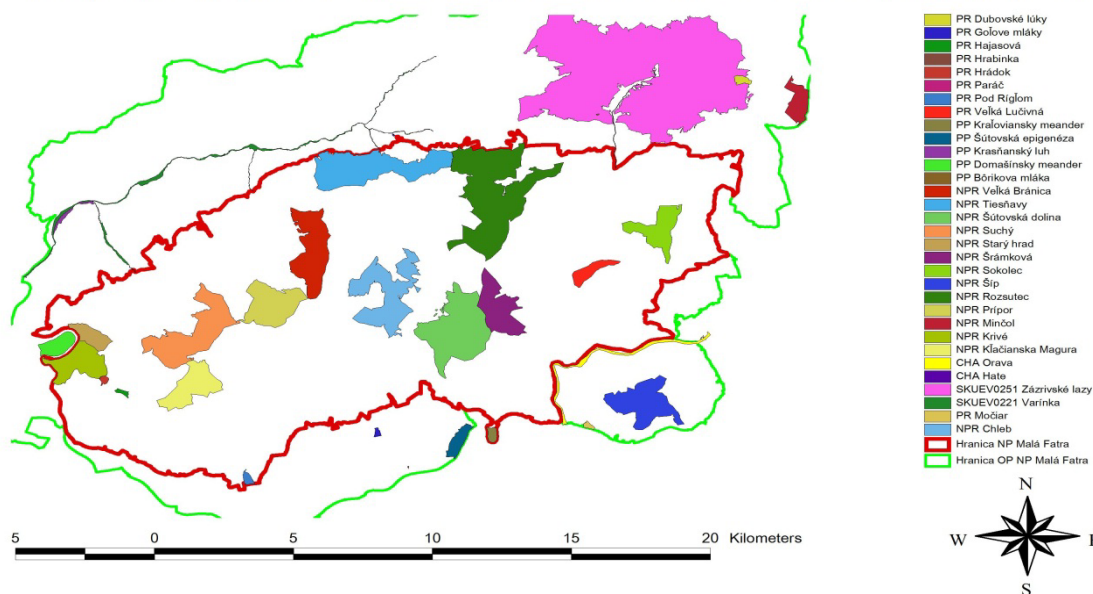


Figure no. 1. Map of the National Park Malá Fatra

## Management of National Park Malá Fatra – brief history

First management was established on 1st April 1968. It had seat in Castle in Gbeľany till 1997. From 1997, you can find them in Varín.

1972 – Opening of Field Station in Štefanová

1984 – Environmental school and Information centre in Štefanová are opened

1988 – Malá Fatra was transformed from “Protected area” to “National park”

1992 - Uniting of Management of NP MF and Environmental School in to one organization- it is independent subject that belongs to Ministry of Environment.

- New management organizational structure consisting of four sections.
- 2003 – Project “Varín Environmental Educational Centre“

**Management organizational structure**

There are 4 departments at all:

- Management (director, technical-administrative assistant)
- Department of Protected Areas (2 zoologists, botanist, expert on forest, landscape specialist, agriculture specialist)
- Rangers (5 employees)
- Environmental Educational Centre (3 employees for environmental education)

Number of employees did not change since 2009.

<b>Year</b>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2012
<b>Nr. Of Employees</b>	22	17	17	16	16

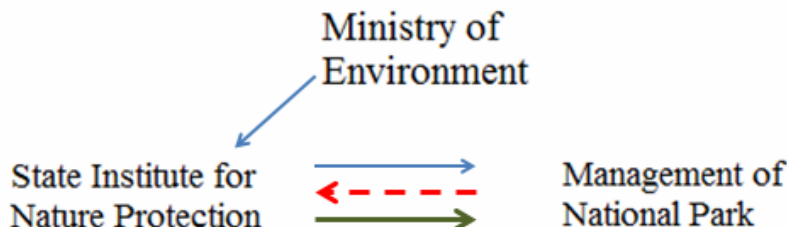
**Figure no. 2. Development of number of employees**

The Environmental Educational Centre and the Ranger Department take main role in this case study. The Centre has various environmental educational programmes for schools. It also offers accommodation, professional escort through the national park.

Rangers are there to check observance of law. They participate on research and environmental monitoring. And they also cooperate with Rescue station in Zázriváon rescuing injured and ill animals and play role as informants for visitors moving in territory of national park.

**Financing**

Management of National Park was entirely funding from state budget from 1968 to the end 2007. In 2008 the management changed to allowance organization and state funds it only partially. And here is how it works:



**Figure no. 3. Financing of National Park**

Money from the state budget comes to State Institute for Nature Protection. It is distributed by the institute to all protected areas. As I mentioned, the funding is partial, so every management has to earn money also on their own. Proceeds is sent to the State Institute for Nature Protection and reallocated back to managements. (Pogányová, 2009)

**Market and competition situation, economic crisis**

They don't have competitors in the area. There are no other enterprises with employees educated and experienced in the same area. But people are not interested probably because they don't know about services Environmental Educational Centre offers.

In these days there is a new project, similar as bird-watching except a detail that customers are not watching birds but bears. This way they will learn more about their way of life and it could change negative public opinion of this big animal.

Number of employees decreased from 22 in 2002 to 16 in 2012. Most of them receive only minimal salary (370€) and that is not very inspirational. It is caused by political unconcern about

environmental issues in Slovakia and also by world economic crisis in last years. The crisis caused nullification of Ministry of Environment in 2010.

### **SWOT analysis**

#### Strengths

- Educated and experienced employees
- Tradition in environmental education (first environmental school in Slovakia)
- Protected area (National park as trademark)
- Cooperation with foreign national parks
- High attendance of national park

#### Weaknesses

- Low salary – low motivation
- Services are not known enough for public
- Web page is only in Slovak language

#### Opportunities

- increasing interest of ecological topics
- to build a new field station open for tourists promotion

#### Threats

- economic crisis - dependence on state budget
- political unconcern about environmental issues
- financing through State Institute for Nature Protection

### **Innovations**

First thing that is needed to do, is to inform people about services they do offer. They already use social network (Facebook), but the ones who are not in their group, can't see updates. National park has web page, but it should be available also in foreign language (at least in English). The great opportunity how to inform people would be a new field station in saddleback Medzirozsutce, which is destination of many tourists or at least lot of them pass through.

As the Environmental Educational Centre is aimed only on specific group clients, there is need scale up offers for various age groups.

There is one problem which can't be influenced by Management of national park. Changes in financing system are viable only through amendatory act.

### **Conclusion**

Malá Fatra is a beautiful place where lot of people spend their leisure time so it needs to be managed. As everywhere, also in national parks are opportunities how to improve services.

By using the SWOT analysis, there were found some weaknesses and threats. These can be eliminated by themselves except the one with financing through State Institute for Nature Protection.

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<http://www.npmalafatra.sk/>

**Contact information:**

E-mail: [skopvarin@sopsr.sk](mailto:skopvarin@sopsr.sk)

Location/Address: Hrnčiarska 197, Varín013 03

Phone:

Management of National Park Malá Fatra: 00421415071411

Environmental Educational Centre: 00421415071413

Information Centre Štefanová: 00421415695338

# Hotel Garni Elenka \*\*\*

**Natália Kubicová**

Slovakia

## Abstract

This case study contains about our family hotel Garni Elenka \*\*\*. The goal is to find optimal solutions for some problems in this enterprise using new methods and trends of innovations in tourism. Hotel Elenka is a young hotel established in 2009, located in a very competitive area near to Thermal swimming pools. There are a lot of similar hotels offering similar services, so I would like to find some innovations which can help the hotel to be the best on the market.

## Introduction

Satisfaction of our customers is a priority for us. That is why we try to do everything to have only positive feedback from them. But we always try to encourage our employees that also negative feedback is good. In fact, we would not know what we are doing badly without negative feedback. We want our employees to understand our customer's needs and feelings, also the negative ones. As Nigell Hill, the well-known authority on the measurement of customer's satisfaction says: "Customer satisfaction is key to business success in the hotel industry and should be a principal consideration when compiling business strategy." (2006). We agree with him and that is why we also consider our customers' satisfaction to be the biggest goal we can achieve.

## Location

- The hotel is situated in the south of Slovakia in Veľký Meder, near to Hungary border
- This place is one of the favorite places with thermal swimming pools in Slovakia.
- The most common customers are seniors, because this water has healing effects
- Also this area is very frequently visited by families with children for the great recreational potential.

## Contact

Reception: +421(0) 650 440 180

Mobile contact: +421(0) 915 813 833

Web page: [www.medos.sk](http://www.medos.sk)

E-mail: [medos@medos.sk](mailto:medos@medos.sk)

## History

Hotel Elenka\*\*\* is a family hotel. The hotel was established in 2009. Owners of this hotel are František Varga and his wife Elena Vargová (my father's sister) and my aunt Mária Kubicová is a hotel manager.

## Employees

- Mária Kubicová- manager, receptionist
- Renáta Zemyová- receptionist
- Zlatka Balintová- maid
- When the restaurant will be finished we'll hire another three employees (two cooks and one waiter) and during the main season we'll hire some students also for part-time jobs.

### **Accommodation**

Hotel Elenka is air conditioned one-storey building. It's situated 80 m from the thermal swimming pools. All rooms have spacious balconies and all hotels are enclosed. Behind the hotel is sandpit, slide and swings (suitable for families with small children).

The hotel has 31 rooms, 19 rooms are double-bed and 12 rooms have extra bed (comfortable sofa). Each room has own bathroom (toilet and shower). All rooms are equipped with TV with full Czech and Slovak programs and also a separate cable internet connection

### **Services**

At the reception is the dayroom with small kitchen, where customers can prepare their own meals. Each room is equipped with a fridge

When the hotel was opened, my uncle owned also restaurant directly in the area of swimming pools, where they offered food for hotel guests and another visitor of swimming pools (lunch, diner). So it wasn't problem with services and food offer. It was great because all people spent the whole day on swimming pools and it was more comfortable for them to eat right in the swimming pools area. But one year ago, the rental of this place was increase and it was impossible to pay so much for rent. This year was very hard for our hotel, because all visitors preferred completely services not just accomodation. Fortunately Hotel Elenka\*\*\* is connected with neighboring hotel named Thermal, which belongs to the owners sister and this hotel has big restaurant. Using this restaurant for our own customers was temporary solution. But everybody wants to be independent and this is the reason why we decided to built our own restaurant. In this time the restaurant is almost completed and next week we expect the first guests.

### **Relax**

- Swimming polls with healing thermal water
- Attraction for children (slides, jungle gym, fun park, water world, water castle)
- Different types of massages
- Spa
- Saunas
- Aqua aerobic
- Golf
- Bike rentals
- A lot of music clubs and restaurations

### **Market and competition situation**

Competition in this area is strong. The reason is attractive recreational center with thermal water and swimming pools. There are a lot of similar enterprises. Some hotels offer more interesting services (massages, spa, wellness...). Another hotels are willing offer their services for customers from hotel Elenka but this way they risk loss of customers, because they'll possibly choose the competition next time.

### **Innovations**

Hotel Elenka is our family bussines and I hope my ideas can be helpfull for hotel. I identified 3 the most crucial problems in hotel Elenka and I try to find some solutions also.

#### **Problem 1: Limited and charged parking places**

##### **Solution to problem 1**

We have two solutions for our problem with parking places. Both solutions we propose are in line with our core values: customers are crucial for us and always be ahead of the competition. We connected our solutions with these core values and we were able to come up with ideal solution. First solution is cheaper but we suggest it should be just short term solution. Second



solution offers more sophisticated idea which is on the other side more expensive and requires much more time and effort from our side.

From short term point of view we suggest to make a deal with our city about their parking lot. Best would be if we could rent a few needed parking places just for our customers. Those parking places would be rented ahead of time for the entire year, so we would not have further problems with parking. Positive thing about this is that we could rent parking lot in front of our hotel permanently and it would never again be occupied with noncustomers cars when our customers need them.

Second solution which I think would be better for hotel from long term perspective. I think it would be best for hotel to buy adjusted plain area and build own parking places.

## **Problem 2: Competition is expanding**

### **Solution to problem 2**

Hotel Elenka is quite new therefore and still do not have steady reputation among visitors of our city. This is a positive for hotel because we still just gain new customers and we can still change many things. We should definitely build restaurant because it would help us in many ways. First of all, it would be very important for us because we will be able to offer full services to our customers. We would be finally independent hotel and it would increase also our options in catering. We will be able to organize plenty of various events in the restaurant such as business meetings, birthday parties, anniversaries and others. The initial costs are always problem but we have asked the bank to make sure they would give us a loan. They checked our record and said there is no problem for us to take a loan. We have calculated and subsequently many times recalculated that if we borrow all money we need to build the restaurant and will have the same amount of customers as now, we will be able to repay the whole debt in two years. This is short period of time if we compare it with positives it will bring us. Also we suggest that amount of our customers will increase incrementally, therefore it will help us to repay the loan faster.

Customers do not like to pay for their meal additionally because they somehow feel deceived that we want too many different payments from them. This is why restaurant would have also positive effect on our prices because we will be able to include meal within the price per night. We think building restaurant will be big positive for us also while making “packages”. That way we can offer our customers variety of different kinds of dinners such as smorgasbord, Easter dinner and we can also organize variety of animations to entertain our customers. “Packages” make people more willing to come because they feel they get everything they want all in one payment. All our customers consider price as one of the most important information for them. Our receptionist told us customers always ask if there is also meal or other services included in the price we have per night. It is understandable because price is always important for all of us.

We cannot change price per night because we also need to earn money and have some profit from what we do. But it does not mean we cannot “play” with the price. Common way how to somehow convince our potential customers to buy their stay with us is to offer them more for one price only. That way they feel that they pay just one amount and they get more things and services for it. The more services we offer together for one price, the more willing are they to come. This is common practice in hotels and they implement it by offering “packages”. These packages include all services the hotel can offer. We propose we should offer as many packages as we can come up with to widen the range of options for our customers to choose from. Packages are brilliant psychological and also business move and they are best way how to attract customers. People want to rest and relax during their stay and not to worry about organizing their time. That is why they prefer packages and have all the things already arranged and paid for. We should participate with other companies in the city like spas, thermal swimming pools or fitness centers to provide customers with even better experience. This all would be in the “packages” the hotel would offer to customers. There are plenty of services we can offer them this way, such

as sauna, spas, massages, salt cave, wellness, hot tubs, variety of sports and other events our city has to offer. Main idea of packages is to offer as many things as possible. The more we offer the better. That is why we can offer our guests not just services but also gifts such as cake for the room, mead, champagne, reminder gifts and other presents. As you can see, restaurant connected with creating variety of packages would help us to increase our services to highest possible level in a short period of time. As we have already mentioned, they are best way how to attract customers. It will help us to organize various events, animations and move us higher on the rankings and in the eyes of our customers. Packages and other actions would mean huge step forward for us.

### **Problem 3: Inappropriate behavior of employees**

#### **Solution to problem 3:**

Following three possible scenarios or ways how to increase and improve customers' satisfaction and perception of the hotel and its services, mostly concerning behavior of the employees. These proposed actions would be great if implemented to this hotel.

First of all, there is the need to improve our staffing policy. We should make it more imperative and base our success on it. Use psychology tests, tests of endurance, mood assessment questionnaires if necessary and many more to pick the right candidates for the job. There is one mood assessment questionnaire available on the internet that we should test our potential employees on (AstraZeneca, 2011). Actually they can test themselves and find out if they have so called bipolar disorder which symptoms are maniacal shifts in mood and behavior. We should really want to avoid such people to get in direct contact with our customers mostly when the level of psychology endurance is decreased in their cases. It would not help them or our hotel status (HelpGuide, 2011). We cannot hire just anyone with experiences without taking into account their psychology and attitude tests results, like it happened with the previously mentioned receptionist and risk loss of potential customers, our reputation, or both. Of course the employees even with bipolar disease or some minor psychology disorder might be effective in certain tasks we think that direct dealing with clients and their problems might only make their diagnose worse. So we would highly encourage using various types of psychology tests during staffing process to find out if potential employee is psychically suitable for dealing with other people.

If the employee is on all levels behaving good but made just one mistake or their nerves cracked at some point it would be wise to discuss it with them through and through, maybe best way would be one-on-one. Manager should sit down with employees, ask them about their work, their experiences and talk to them about their feedback received from customers through surveys and questionnaires. Manager should remind them the saying that "customer is the lord" and if not for customers there would not be any job itself for them. Then he should encourage or push them to create friendly environment where people would feel happy to be, better than at home, once again welcomed.

Of course, manager should provide employees with specific courses or trainings how to handle various stress situations most effectively and to the benefits of the hotel. Employees that have the worst feedback from customers should be sent to these courses and later see how they improved and if it helped them. If no improvement is noticed or recorded than the employee, and it is the last option, should be laid-off. We cannot afford to keep employees that scare our clients away and make unfriendly environment. We see the hotel and its personnel as one big family. Employees will also be granted certain benefits, either cash or by other meanings, to encourage good feedback and good behavior from their side toward customers but also toward their co-workers. Last but not least, supervisor should encourage employees to work hard, work good, be open with any problem that occurs, show proper behavior, show pride in the hotel and provide customers with all these values as well. Another way how to get information from clients is to implement book of suggestions in every room in the hotel and keep reminding employees to

encourage the customers to spend some of their time to write their impression on our hotel and experiences during their stay.

**Another innovating ideas:**

- universal chip card for all services
- animations to entertain customers (international evenings, program for children)
- souvenir shop (handmade stuffs)
- workshops for customers (traditional folk practices, beauty courses, courses in flower arranging...)
- fitness activities with trainer (joga, zumba, Tai Chi...)

**How did influence the present economical world crisis the enterprise**

In 2009 world economical crisis was already exists, so we can't compare experiences in this case before crisis and now.

Last few months our profits and satisfaction from customers stopped and started to decrease but the reason isn't economic crisis but increasing competition.

**SWOT analysis of the enterprise's innovation ability**

**S – Strengths**

- suitable location (near swimming pools)
- communication with customers
- focus mainly on large groups (seniors, families with childrens)
- group discounts
- friendly area and family atmosphere
- playground
- good relationships with competitors (supplement the services that the hotel is unable to provide)
- other activities (trips, little excursions...)

**W- Weaknesses**

- limited parking places
- occupancy has seasonal character (summer)
- lack of advertising
- no english website
- strong competition

**O- Opportunities**

- willing, qualified and motivated employees
- located close to Hungarian and Austrian border (possibility of sightseeing trips)
- universal chip card for all services
- animations to entertain customers (international evenings, program for children)
- souvenir shop (handmade stuffs)
- workshops for customers (traditional folk practices, beauty courses, courses in flower arranging...)
- fitness activities with trainer (joga, zumba, Tai Chi...)
- beautify exterior of hotel (herb spiral, fountain, plants and trees...)
- cooperate with farmers and offer organic food
- after opening the restaurant hotels gets one more star

## **T- Threats**

- seasonal weather changes
- higher raw material prices which may reflect on the cost of meals
- new competition on the market with better services
- changes in legislation
- higher value-added tax for businesses
- Inappropriate behavior of employees

## **Conclusions**

The SWOT analysis of the hotel shows us, that there are more opportunities than threats. The needs of customers will be on the higher standard after opening our own restaurant and it also provides more options how to entertain hotel customers. If we apply some of mentioned innovations it could make hotel more competitive. Nowadays we know a lot of trends in tourism, it's important to choose right way how to do this kind of business. And the most important thing in this sector is never forget, that „CUSTOMER IS A LORD“.

## **Sources of information**

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# Rescue & Rehabilitation Station Zázrivá

**Zuzana Matúšová**  
Slovakia

## Abstract

This post case study is about Rescue and Rehabilitation Station in Zázrivá village. The station is an enterprise, which helps animals by providing them first aid and standard care, and educates people by information materials, eco-centre and nature trail. So it represents an interesting connection between animal rescuing, enviro-education and tourism.

In this study I tried, after an introduction of this enterprise, to find its problems, analyze them and suggest some innovations, the possibilities “how to make it better”.

As the biggest problem I consider the fact, that there is only 1 constant worker in the station and it is the man which established the enterprise. There are also some volunteers near him, but their help is not regular. The rescue station has financial problems as well and that could lead to loss of motivation and at the end it can mean the stop of station function.

I think that the activities providing by station should be divided between more employees, high – educated in ecological field. A person to keep financial situation under control is important as well. I think these changes could leads to state of station, when it could offer good quality services, couldn't be so often attacked by lack of finance, have the bigger motivation and consequently have more satisfied visitors.

## Introduction

The Rescue and rehabilitation station is an enterprise, which helps injured animals and educates people by an eco-centre and nature trail. The station is situated in the North part of Slovak republic in village called Zázrivá. It exists since 2001 when it was established by man called Metod Macek. It saved over 400 animals during its existence. Most of them were birds. The station cares about animals from whole country but mostly from north region. The rescue station takes care of the wild animals that are injured, ill or of the young ones that lost their parents. The station tries to help them by providing them first aid and comfortable conditions to heal. After rehabilitation they are returned back to the nature and they are monitored.

An important part of rescue station is an eco-centre whose most important function is to educate the visitors in ecological field, while visitors from whole country and many others countries are coming there. It also prepares environmental educational programs for children, provides information about activities of station, nature protection and also information about what to do when an injured or leaved animal was found.

There exists also a nature trail near the station. It is approximately 2 km long and the visitors can absolve it on foot or by bike. They can meet a place with roof and fire and 8 info-boards during walking the nature trail, thus it represents the connection of environmental education and tourism.

There is also an eco-garden near the rescue and rehabilitation station with many plant species, trees, lake for amphibians, boxes and nests for birds, spaces for reptiles such as groups of rocks, old trees and also flowers for insects. The eco-garden is actually a place for environmental education and for relax, of course.

The station works on a base of volunteers. There don't work employees in rescue station. Only one man, which established the enterprise is doing the all services of station. But he is considered as a volunteer and the other volunteers help him. When an injured or ill animal is brought, a veterinary surgeon is called but he is not a constant employee. The station cooperates with other rescue stations from Slovak and Czech republic, with protectionist organisations, i.e. Ekopolis.

This rescue station is non-profit enterprise, educational activities that it offers are for free. It obtains finance by various grants and occasional sponsors. It isn't big enterprise but this financial sources are not regular, thus sometimes station has the financial problems.

**Problem definition**

I think that rescue and rehabilitation station doesn't have a lot of problems. I think that the idea of connection of animals rescuing, enviro-education and tourism is very interesting for many people and I think that this enterprise is quite attractive for them. It also has good promotion by web page in two languages and by promoting materials, that are at disposal in enterprises of nature protection, green schools and tourist information offices around all country, so many visitors know it and they are coming there. The man who established this enterprise is very smart and able to bring new ideas, manage the station and obtain money. I believe that he is, but on the other hand I think that one person for all enterprise is not enough. The other volunteers are not coming regularly, only when they have free time so he is often the one person, that has to look after animals, welcome the visitors, guide them around the station, nature trail, and spend the time with them in garden, in eco-centre by providing them information. This fact could be dangerous, because he could get overworked and lost motivation and there will be nobody else to save the station.

**SWOT analysis**

I use the SWOT analysis to analyse some strenghts, weaknesses, opportunities and threats regarding the enterprise and I puted them into following chart.

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• great idea</li> <li>• good promotion</li> <li>• attractive location</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• only 1 employee</li> <li>• lack of many</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to get more employees</li> <li>• to get more many</li> <li>• to make station more modern</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lost of motivation</li> <li>• establisher will be getting overworked, and because there is nobody else, it will mean the end of station function</li> </ul>

I consider as strength, that it is a great idea to connect animal rescue and rehabilitation station with eco-centre and nature trial. I think this connection is very attractive for wide spectrum of visitors. The station is situated in pretty countryside in often – visited region Orava and Malá Fatra mountains. I putted to strengths also good promotion, because the enterprises operates well designed web page and also offers many information materials.

In opposite of strengths I can see some weaknesses. In my opinion the main weakness is the fact, that there is only 1 employee for all activities of the station. This enterprise is not very big, but in spite of it I don't consider it as enough. There is quite a lot of work with animals – it is necessary to provide them first aid and standard care, to feed them etc., after putting them back to the nature to monitor them, the owner is also supposed to welcome the visitors, guide them around station, eco-garden, and provide them the adequate information. He is also supposed to obtain many for station existence. That all is too much work for 1 person and although he is very skillful, it could happen that he will be getting overworked and he will lost motivation and there will be nobody to keep the function of the station. I must write that there are some volunteers helping him, but their help is not regular, it is only occasional. And this fact represents big threat as well. Another weakness is lack of many, because there is no the special person securing obtaining of finance.

To opportunities I have putted, that the owner could find more employees and divide the activities between them, consequently they could obtain more many and thanks them to reconstruct the station, make it bigger and nicer.

### **Market and competition situation**

In Slovak republic there are not many enterprises similar to Rescue and rehabilitation station in Zázrivá, anyway, we can't consider them as competitors, and we can't tell about market, because this enterprises are non-profit. Thus, we can consider them all opposite as the competitors.

And that is the reason why the present economical world crisis didn't influence the station as well - because it is non-profit enterprise, as I have already mentioned. The all fees for visit the station are traffic fees. The location of the station is in the often-visited region of Orava and Malá Fatra mountains, so people often spend time in the station because they are travelling around the region, so it is very cheap to visit it.

### **Innovations**

After I had found the main problem of rescue and rehabilitation station, I tried to suggest some possibilities how to delete it and make the situation better. I think that the activities providing by station should be divided between more employees. There should be one person for taking care of animals, feeding them, clearing their "houses" and at least the another one for guiding visitors around station, spending time with them in eco-garden and providing them the information from ecological field. It should be people with high education in ecological field, professionals that will be real employees becoming salary. It will be necessary to have one person for dealing with money, maybe an accountant, whose job will be to keep financial situation under control, to find sponsors, check grant challenges, write the projects according them and generally try to obtain more many for existence of station.

When there will be more many, station could make its spaces wider, reconstruct animal's "houses" and make them bigger and nicer, prepare more educational materials, programs, activities and events for visitors.

So what I could suggest as an innovation is at first to find more employees and to divide work between them and secondly to try obtain more money for existence and function of station.

### **Conclusions**

As I have already mentioned - in my opinion the idea of rescue and rehabilitation station connecting with enviro-education and tourism is great. But it is a pity that there is not more people to keep it in more effective function. There is too much of various work for 1 person and occasional volunteers. This is the biggest problem of enterprise. I suggest to find more people able to work in the station on professional level, as the real employees. The result will be the enterprise with good quality services. It will be easier to obtain more many for station as well, because there will be the special person to do it. Consequently, thanks to many, the station could get bigger, nicer, with first-rate services, it could design more materials, programs and events for visitors and I believe that it all will be reflecting in bigger number of visitors. That could be reason for bigger motivation of establisher of station and his employees as well.

### **Sources of information**

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## “Perla Brazilor” Pension

Anca Ursescu  
Romania

### Abstract

The main goal of this case study was to find optimal solutions for a tourism enterprise in order to increase the number of customers or, why not, to have unique services in the area.

### Introduction

I have chosen for my case study the Pension “Perla Brazilor” located in Frumosu village (central part of Bukovina).

Bukovina, cradle of old civilization, where history combines with legend, is known from a tourist point of view especially for the famous churches with outdoor frescoes - UNESCO patrimony: Moldovita, Sucevita, Voronet, Humor. The monasteries of Putna, Neamt, and Dragomirna have a similar importance from an architectural and historic point of view. All these architectural jewels fit perfectly into an exceptional landscape. The Rarau massif, the Suceava valley, the Moldova valley with its affluent, the Moldovita valley, the pass of Bistrita Aurie, the Secular Forests of Slatioara, these are only a few points of maximum tourist interest.

**Contact : Phone:** +40 720 274 323 / +40 762 522 583 / +40 753 648 045

**Fax:** 0330.080.626

**E-mail:** [ciocan62@yahoo.com](mailto:ciocan62@yahoo.com)

### Location

The Pension Perla Brazilor is placed approximately 57 km away from Suceava, on DN 17 Suceava - Gura Humorului - Vama - Frumosu; it is placed in a marvelous environment, surrounded by wonderful landscapes and by objectives accessible due to the various tourist routs.



Figure no 1. Suceava county

When passing through the "Upper Land", immediately after leaving Gura Hunorului town, heading towards Campulung Moldovenesc, you will meet Vama locality. When entering this commune, towards the West, you will discover Frumosu locality and the boarding house Perla Brazilor, placed 6 km away from Moldovita monastery. The tourist facility is placed on the county road linking Vama locality to Moldovita commune.

Placed in a fairytale landscape, with large shapes, giving the impression of solemnity accentuated by the deep rumble of the fir-tree forest, where sometimes it seems that you can still hear the impressive roaring of bison, with hardworking and welcoming people, the boarding house Perla Brazilor offers all over the year lodging, boarding and entertainment specific to Bukovina.

### Accommodation

The boarding house Perla Brazilor offers 49 places arranged in 12 double rooms, 5 triple rooms and 2 apartments, all with their own bathrooms.



The pensions structure is the following:

*Ground floor*

- Restaurant with a capacity of minimum 80 seats, maximum 200 seats.
- Covered terrace
- Kitchen
- Swimming pool
- Sauna

*First floor:*

- 2 apartments with communicating rooms.
- 5 double rooms with matrimonial bed.
- Conference room
- Covered terrace

*Second floor:*

- Double rooms with matrimonial bed
- 5 rooms with 3 beds

*Third floor:*

- 4 Double rooms

**Services:**

Currently the main activity in the pension is to provide accommodation and meals for tourists.

Other services offered by the hosts are:

- Minimum number of lodging places in double, triple rooms, studios, apartments - 39
- Restaurant - capacity of 80 to 200 persons, ideal for parties, festive meals, weddings, baptism feasts

• Multifunctional room - meetings, seminars, conferences, special events - capacity 30 - 35 persons

- 2 terraces, one covered and one uncovered
- Grill, access to fax, internet
- Society games: rummy, playing cards, monopoly, backgammon
- Organizing different folk programs
- Bikes, Pool and sauna

Also if there is a demand the hosts can organize for the tourists some special programs like:

- *Wedding of Bukovina* - program offered by approximately 20-30 persons from the village dressed in traditional folk costumes (characters: horse riders, bridesmaids, best men, bridal couple, godparents).

- *Sewing bee* - a group of 8-10 women (old and young) dressed in the national costume, who spin, comb the wool, crochet, embroider, wind it, sing, tell riddles, gossip the village, make jokes, wait for the young men to come and give them a glass of drink and in the end they start dancing a Romanian folk ring dance.

- *Folk dances* - Program offered by a group of 6-7 pairs of children dressed in folk costumes who will present dances specific to Bukovina.

- *Easter folk tradition* - a ride with the narrow-gauge train and lessons for the ornamentation of Easter eggs at Vatra Moldovitei.

- *Sleigh rides or carriage rides* (depending of the season)

- *Pilgrimage at the monasteries* included in the UNESCO patrimony

**Customers**

Given the discount rates applied, Perla Brazilor has a very diverse clientele, from individuals with modest incomes and a lower educational level, to families of teachers, lawyers, judges, business executives and other business people, both Romanian and foreign tourists. However, the highest proportion are old clients who already know the area and the mansion. The relationship established between them and the owners is not one of a kind: tourists - Payment -

hosting - services, but the type: Tourist (friend, relative, recommended) - Payment + gifts (souvenirs, carvings, paintings, traditional articles, etc..) + emotional involvement .

The location is also available for organizing various events like weddings, christenings, parties, and for the moment the incomes from this kind of activity exceed those from tourism activities.

### **Management background**

The enterprise is a family business, that involves two owners, husband and wife, which founded the enterprise ten years ago. They are also the managers of the pension. The motel's name was inspired from the surrounding landscape (in Romanian "brad" means fir tree).

The pension currently has 13 employees:

- bar: two persons
- restaurant: one executive chef, one sous chef; four expeditors
- reception: one person
- room-maid: four persons

### **Market situation**

The competition on accommodation market in this area is very tight one because of the cultural and religious tourism.

The direct competitors are the pensions located in the nearby villages, Vama and Moldovita like: Pension Casa Elvira, Pension Crizantema, Pension Lucia, Pension Casa Vero, Bukovina Lodge Pension, Pension Casa Aurora, Pension Lidana Bucovina, Pension Cabana Ionela etc.

### **Influence of the present economical world crisis**

For Perla Brazilor, crisis was felt strongly, the number of tourist decreased drastically because the mainly customers were foreign tourists, who cut their budget for vacations abroad.

On the other hand, it has increased the request for various events (parties, festive meals, weddings), which allowed the enterprise to maintain a balanced economical situation.

### **Description of the case process**

Firstly I have met the stakeholder and I had an interview with him about Perla Brazilor pension. I tried to get some information about the pension (offered services, today status, employees, history and development, elements of innovation, hops and ideas for the future), then we try to find some solutions about the future of the enterprise.

After interview I've prepared SWOT analysis and I've tried to find innovations for Perla Brazilor pension.

### **Methods and tools used**

- Web site vision
- Interview with the stakeholder
- SWOT analysis
- making the innovation plan

### **SWOT analysis**

#### **Strengths**

- location (beautiful landscape and near Moldovita Monastery)
- good quality of the services
- well done web site with English version, with virtual tour and the possibility to make online booking
- the location is also available for other kind of activities (weddings, parties, conferences etc.)

### **Weaknesses**

- small budget: the enterprise has a short budget because it is a family business
- the enterprise does not provide meals with home -made products (the enterprise does not practice agro tourism)
- insufficient promotion

### **Opportunities**

- the Governmental Projects “Christmas in Bucovina” and “Easter in Bucovina” could increase the number of tourists in the area;
- the possibility to access some EU funds for expanding the business

### **Threats**

- tight competition in the area
- bad infrastructure in the area
- global crisis

### **Innovation**

My innovation idea for Perla Brazilor Pension is to build a fish (trout) farm. I think this is an ideal way to improve the services of the pension because fishing can be an entertainment for tourists, and the enterprise can make some extra profits by selling fish in the area.

To establish a trout farm it must be consider a number of technical conditions, commercial and topographical, water supply, food supply and quality, guaranteed sales, corresponding land, favorable climatic conditions for trout development. Frumosu village has favorable conditions for the establishment of fish farms, covering the breeding of trout, because the land is located at an altitude of 504 meters, near the River Moldavia. The shape of the depression favors channeling air masses, and many aquatic areas introduces some changes in the normal course of meteorological elements. The average annual temperature is 12 °C, the average precipitation is 643, 6 mm, the area has a moderate continental temperate climate. From the hydrological point of view, this spot of land is located in the Moldova River basin.

Trout farm will be exploited to sell more than some traders and companies in the country. Also the fishery will be used for tourism purposes as entertainment for tourists with the opportunity to personally cook the "captured prey. " It is also intended to establish a festival of trout in the summer, because during this period many tourists are in transit to the monasteries in the area, this festival could become an interesting attraction. There are prospects for this business expansion abroad.

*Short term goals.* The company aims for the first year the following:

- creating a new clientele and maintaining the current one;
- achieve a high-capacity utilization of 100% production;
- getting high quality products and safe disposal;
- creating a local advertising and national levels.

Fish market in Romania is relatively low compared with the EU countries, the sector's total turnover amount is only 30-40 million, but to that should be added the black market, which is about 25-30 percent of the total amount. Annual consumption of fish in Romania is 10 times lower than in EU countries, which only 4.5 kg per person. Suceava county has an increase over the average annual consumption figure with 4.8 kilograms / person. Annual consumption has also a positive trend indicating an increase in production and demand.

The reason that I have chosen a trout firm and not other kind of fish is because its economical importance: is a species with less demanding environmental conditions than other species; gives an excellent response from breeding in captivity; can be grown with other species; has a good degree of feed assimilation; spectacular growth performance; disease resistance; obtaining steady production at any time of year; high percentage of carcass meat.

For Romanians trout is a delicacy and our customers come from all social categories regardless of their income. Production from trout will be easy to put on the local market:

- food markets;
- grocery stores or fishermen;
- supermarkets - restaurants - the hostels in the area;

Production for sale is 80%, the remaining percentage being used as their own popular material for other producers. We will try to attract customers from among tourists for fishing or who are staying in the guest house or passing cultural sites, but also from local residents. There are no risks as the country's fish production decreased 10 times the last 13 years and currently demand for fish is greater than supply. Traders who are not also producers place a high sale price and therefore we propose an increase in fish production by applying the combined approach of over intensive and intensive growth.

The main ways that promotion will be made are as following: the existing web site of the pension, fliers, brochures, trout fair organized in the summer time.

### **Conclusions**

Tourism is a key factor for the overall economic progress, with contribution to the growth of the domestic production, with potential trimming of the balance of payments and improving the quality of life.

Romania is a country with a great willingness for travel and this is confirmed by the wide variety of natural and human resources allocated in a balanced way. There is the possibility of practicing tourism during all the year round and at the same time the flora, fauna, the weather and many historical and architectural monuments can meet the most demanding tourist demands, Romanian or foreign.

The implementation of a fish firm can help increase the number of tourists because fishing is an ideal form of entertainment. The main goals for this business are to offer high quality services that meet the customers demands, to help eco-tourism in local rural area and to make profit in the process.

### **Source of Information:**

- Interview with the owner
- The website of pension
- Wikipedia

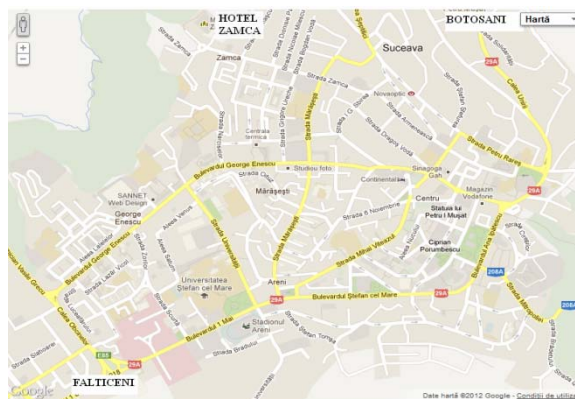
# The Zamca Complex

## Ancuța Cotoară Romania

**Name of the enterprise:** SC MER-DUM SRL

**Location:**

ZAMCA HOTEL SUCEAVA is situated in Romania, Suceava City, Street name: Zamca No. 28 A, Zipcode: 720214, hotel coordinates: 47.6514 and 26.2427. Zamca Complex is located in the neighborhood of the Zamca Citadel, an old historical monument of Suceava, at 20 minutes from the cultural and economic city centre.



*Useful distances:*

- Maxi – taxi or taxi Stations – 0,05 km
- Train Station North Suceava – 3,00 km
- Train Station Suceava- 4,00 km
- Salcea Airport – 15,00 km

**Business address:** Suceava City, Street name: Zamca No. 28 A, Romania

**Contact information:** E-mail: [hotelzamca@suceava.rdsnet.ro](mailto:hotelzamca@suceava.rdsnet.ro) or [hotelzamca@yahoo.com](mailto:hotelzamca@yahoo.com),  
Telephone: +40-230-521008, Fax: +40-230-520985.

Website: <http://www.hotelzamca.ro>

**Year established:** 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 1998 (Last ANAF Registration: 3<sup>rd</sup> of January, 2011)

**Company background:** 1st Top in the Small Business Area in Romania, SUCEAVA County, domain 55: hotels and other accommodation facilities:

The main scope of company is to provide tourist accommodation services along with food & beverage services. The average number of employees for the year of 2010 is of 40 employees. The subscribed and paid Capital ranges 1.453.860 lei.

**Legal form of enterprise:** Limited Liability Company (or Private Company Limited by Shares).

**Persons engaged in managing the enterprise:** family business

**Annual turnover:** 830.000 Euro

**Market and competition situation**

The hotel is recently refurbished to European standards and offers a wide range of services. The entire material basis stretches over an area of approximately 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

**The updated rates in 2012**

Room type / Category 3 *	Price / room / night
Single	124.80 Lei
Double	158.16 Lei
Double Superior	194.12 Lei
Apartament Junior	196.18 Lei
Apartament	307.16 Lei

**Zamca Complex Structure:**

**Two complexes:**

**BI COM Pension**

- 12 double Rooms
- 6 single Rooms
- 3 Apartments

**Hotel Zamca**

- 17 double Rooms
- 17 single Rooms
- 2 Apartments

**Zamca Complex Facilities:**

- **1 Classic Restaurant, 4 ★** : 450 seats capacity.
- **1 Restaurant/pizzeria 4 ★** : 130 seats capacity.
- **1 Classic Restaurant 3 ★** : 90 seats capacity.
- **2 Conference Rooms:** 150 seats, respectively 35 seats (the rooms are equipped with video projectors, screens, flipcharts, mobile microphones, sound systems, air conditioning, internet access).
- **Bowling Club, billiards, snookers, darts.**  
*What can clients do here?*
  - clients can play bowling on one of the 4 tracks very modern QUBICA-AMF, mark;
  - can play snooker or even organize competitions;
  - there are 6 tables for billiards, which are also fit for competitions;
  - two tailored tracks for children;
  - there is arranged a playground outdoors, designed for children;
  - clients can serve beverage from the very well equipped bar;

- Customers benefit from the latest generation of furniture.
- **Summer Garden** (space of over 1500 square feet, with grass, flowers and shrubs, plus 140 seats for consumers)
- **Summer terrace:** 120 seats capacity
- **Sports field with synthetic turf and Nocturne:** football, tennis, volleyball.

Filed facilities:

- land completely covered with metal structure;
- synthetic turf, recently mounted on a base with soft layers which do not affect the participants joints and ligaments
- nocturne installation
- there are offered free equipment and balls during the game
- season spring-summer-autumn prices are between 80-100 lei/hour
- the side walls are completely detachable and there can remain only the dome for protection of rain
- season winter prices are between 120-150 lei/hour
- subscriptions have discounts
- availability of organizing sporting competitions. 2 Private parking spaces, 120 and respectively 30 places, free and guarded.

#### **Zamca Hotel's structure:**

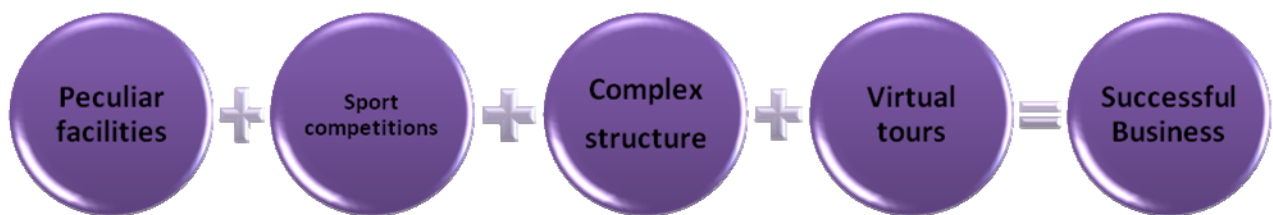
-17 double Rooms (6 rooms are equipped with air conditioning, internet access, TV cable, and refrigerator).

-17 single rooms (4 rooms are equipped with air conditioning, internet access, TV cable, and refrigerator).

-2 Apartments (are equipped with air conditioning, internet access, minibar, TV cable, and hair dryer).

The rooms are entirely renovated to Western standards, served by its own heating system, with their own sanitary groups, international telephone access, TVs, room service, minibar.

Considering all these aspects presented above, the innovation of this structure resumes to:



To sum up, the company holds not only the hotel with the related facilities, but it also has another accommodation structure, a pension called BICOM which is situated nearby the main complex. The advantages are that if there are situations of overbooking or the client prefer a space more intimate there is the possibility of change between them.

Moreover, the Complex of Zamca is the only one that offers some facilities like the Sports field, the bowling alleys or snookers.

For these reasons the company holds a competitive advantage on the local market.

## Partners



[www.e-tour.ro](http://www.e-tour.ro)

RoTouring

[www.rotouring.com](http://www.rotouring.com)



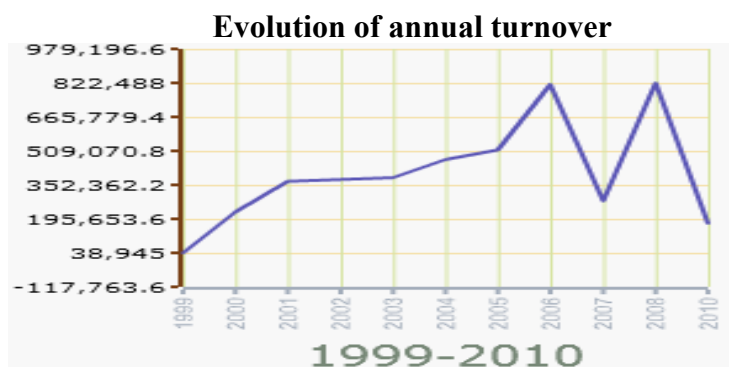
[www.turistinfo.ro](http://www.turistinfo.ro)

## Innovation case: Ideas of Improvements

- Organize tourist circuits in the area
- Participate at the international fairs
- Constant reorganize the offers and tourist packages
- Improve internal communication
- Specialized training for the stuff
- Sign different partnerships in order to personalize the offers

### The present economical crisis

It is a natural fact that the present crisis to affect the outcome of this complex. But, being having an innovative management has greatly helped the company. During this phenomenon the Zamca Complex has been entirely refurbished & reorganized. That is why the company remains competitive up to nowadays. In the figure below it can be observed the course of the annual turnover during the years.



Source: <http://www.firme.info/mer-dum-srl-cui10298460/>



### Lessons learnt: problems and challenges, fostering and impeding factors

In order to be more precise about the actual situation and challenges, there is proposed a SWOT analysis of this enterprise. This way, it is easily to observe what it is good or needs improving, or what are the future factors to look into:

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well developed technical and material structure</li> <li>- Facilities owned place the company high enough in the preferences of youths , especially due to the sport field</li> <li>- Qualified personnel</li> <li>- The uniqueness of the summer garden</li> <li>- Club Fireballs</li> <li>- Modern Management</li> <li>- Special attention given to consumer needs</li> <li>- Car parking space for buses and cars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positioning (does not have a good location, the hotel is situated in a secluded area of the city)</li> <li>- Lack of guidance signs</li> <li>- Lack of rooms with facilities for disabled people</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partnerships with national stakeholders</li> <li>- Negotiation of suppliers and distributors in order to lead to more attractive prices;</li> <li>- Quick recovery and sustainable tourism with special attention to tourism placement in the national economy;</li> <li>- Promote the development of an area where the main activity is tourism;</li> <li>- Develop partnerships with economic and administrative territorial units (like or similar) local and foreign</li> <li>- Accessing some structural funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local and regional infrastructure</li> <li>- Growing pressure of competition;</li> <li>- Population's low interest for urban tourism</li> <li>- Reducing the share of the active population</li> </ul>

### Sources of information

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3. Stavrostiu S., *Ospitalitatea în turismul românesc. Secolele XIX-XX-XXI*, Constanța, 2010
4. <http://www.hotelzamca.ro>
5. <http://www.firme.info/mer-dum-srl-cui10298460/>
6. <http://www.listafirme.ro/mer-dum-srl-10298460/>
7. <http://www.bizoo.ro/firma/hotelzamca>

# Bradul-Călimani Complex

**Sorina Camelia Puiul**  
Romania

## Abstract

Health and wellness tourism refers to trips taken by tourists with the main goal to improve health. The development of this sector in recent years and that this trend is expected to continue and expand is an area of interest to stakeholders and is particularly challenging for SPA industry as SPA centers can offer services to the sector stakeholders wellness and medical.

Bradul-Calimani Complex is a tourist complex in Vatra Dornei resort that offers accommodation and has a SPA center equipped with modern treatment facilities but to be competitive in national and international market requires a change of image. In this paper I propose a different optic, namely the transition from the treatment center and health tourism into SPA center and wellness tourism.

## Description of the case study

S.C. DORNA TURISM S.A. is a representative company for the tourism in Buovina area which was founded in the year 1991 by overtaking the patrimony and the activity object of Balneo – Climaterica Vatra Dornei enterprise.

## Contact information:

Name of the enterprise: S.C. DORNA TURISM S.A. - Bradul-Calimani Hotel

Location: Vatra Dornei, jud. Suceava

Business address: Str. Republicii nr. 5, Vatra Dornei, Suceava

Website: [www.dornaturism.ro](http://www.dornaturism.ro)

Phone: Phone: 0230/ 375314, 374525, 374526, 371150

E-mail: [info@dornaturism.ro](mailto:info@dornaturism.ro)

[rezervari@dornaturism.ro](mailto:rezervari@dornaturism.ro)

[office@dornaturism.ro](mailto:office@dornaturism.ro)

## Facilities:

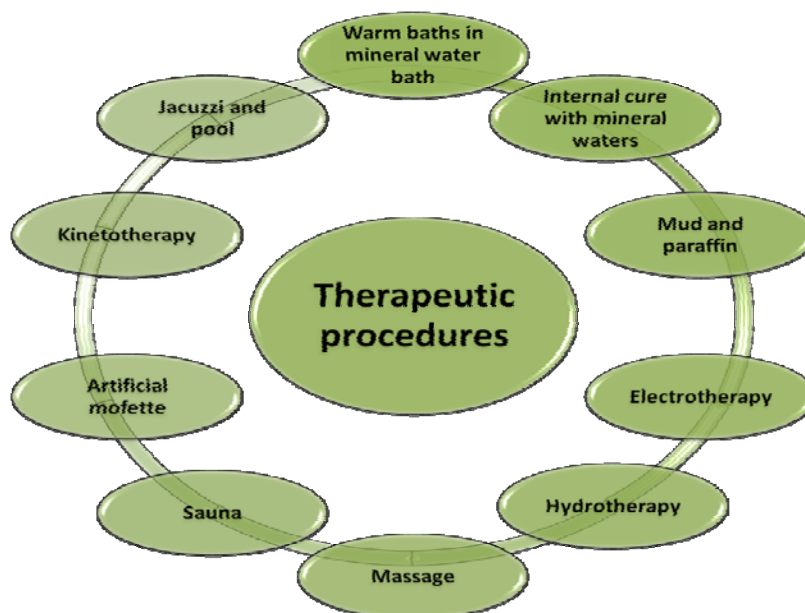
The company is composed by two units of accommodation classified with 3 stars: Bradul Hotel and Calimani Hotel where 145 employees are working:

- 116 directly productive;
- 15 indirectly productive;
- 14 TESA (technical, economic, scientific and administrative personnel).

**Table no. 1. Facilities offered by Bradul Călimani Complex**

Bradul Hotel 3*	Călimani Hotel 3*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 apartaments</li> <li>• 30 king size bed DBL</li> <li>• 120 standard DBL</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 apartaments</li> <li>• 20 king size bed DBL</li> <li>• 69 standard DBL</li> </ul>
Restaurant (380 - 400 seats)	Restaurant (400 seats)
Conference room (120 seats)	Conference room (100 seats)
	Bar & terrace
	SPA center

It is functioning like an accommodation structure but also like a balneotherapy center. The treatment base has a daily capacity of over 4000 therapeutic procedures with a basis in the following natural resources: carbonated water, alkaline, chlorine and ferruginous, vegetable mud, balsamic and ferruginous waters, negatively ionized air rich in reisin aerosol, peat mud (brought from Poiana Stampei).



**Figure no. 1. Therapeutic procedures offered by Bradul Calimani Complex**

#### **Legal and financial aspects**

Legal form of enterprise is Public Limited Company. The capital stock is divided into 1.423.717 shares owned by 2425 entities. The main structure is presented in the following table.

**Table no. 2. The ownership structure of S.C. Dorna Turism S.A.**

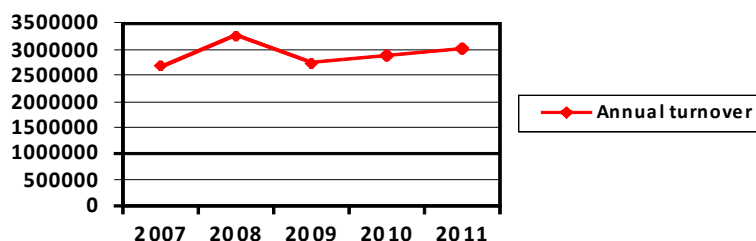
<b>Owner</b>	<b>Shares (%)</b>
Vezeteu Gheorghe	49,9950
S.I.F. Transilvania	32,0143
Legal entities	9,6898
Individuals	8,3008
Total	100 %

Vezeteu Gheorghe, the owner of almost half of the shares, is the president of the administrative board.

The company has 4 managers: general, economic, commercial and medical managers are working together for the best use of the resources.

Annual turnover: net turnover in 2011 – 13.154.634 RON. From the following chart, that presents the evolution in the past 5 years, we can notice that it reached the highest point in 2008 and that in present it has a growing tendency.

**Figure 2. Evolution of the annual turnover  
(expressed in euro)**



### **Market and competition situation**

Vatra Dornei was in the past year the most visited city in Bucovina region. It has plenty of natural attractions and it is possible to develop there different types of tourism. Bradul-Calimani Complex is already recognized like one of the most important units of accommodation and treatment within the area, but had a difficult period to adapt to the new requirements of the market. The needs of the consumers of health tourism have changed so they are searching for an adapted offer.

The accommodation market in Vatra Dornei has developed very much in the past years: in the city and all around it many pensions have appeared and they

Dorna Hotel represents the principle concurrent – the 4 stars hotel has the benefit of being located near one of the ski slopes, has big accommodation capacity, a modern SPA center, but it hasn't the same qualitative treatment procedures.

### **Adjusting to customer needs and trends of development**

Trying to compete on the tourism market, between 2000 and 2006 massive investments were done to assure a higher qualitative standard for the accommodation space and the restaurant. The greatest achievement in the investment plan was the new treatment base, commissioned in the spring of 2006, and that is the most modern in the country.

The investment plan aimed at both expanding and modernizing the treatment of the resort complex and completely replacing the medical equipment and the acquisition of additional high performance devices.

Even if it is possible to have an relaxing holiday in a SPA center, more tourists expect when choosing a wellness trip a life changing experience.

According to ISPA 2007 Consumer Trends and Reports, the main tourist motivations are:

- lowering stress;
- lowering muscular stress;
- improving self image;
- getting beauty;
- wellness.

While the population in the out going tourism markets gets older, the search of “eternal youth” keeps to grow having as a background the changing attitude towards own health and caring about it. Consequently the request for health and wellness programmes will grow.

Developing this kind of programmes has to be in line with the new customer – who is more and more experienced, has higher expectations and desires services of good quality.

## SWOT analysis

### Strengths

- Accessible prices
- The variety of natural resources
- High standard equipment
- Qualified medical staff
- Friendly employees
- Combining natural and medical treatments
- Good positioning

### Weaknesses

- They address to a small market segment
- The general atmosphere is like in a hospital
- Just a small part of the personnel knows a foreign language
- Grammar mistakes in the promotion materials in other languages
- The quality level is not equal for all departments
- Weak marketing strategies

### Opportunities

- Future partnerships
- Existing trends on the market
- Extend the target clients

### Threats

- Changes in the national health system
- Unemployment
- Future competition
- Innovation causes higher prices

### Innovation plan

In my opinion the tourist complex has a good material base, but in order to be attractive it requires to change the image by converting from a balneotherapeutical hotel to a wellness hotel and from the treatment base to transform into a SPA center.

The main directions in which the company can achieve this and it can improve the activity are:

1. Changing the target market by expanding it towards young and second age possible customers;

The current offer of balneotherapy tourism is a product with restricted addressability. That is why it is necessary to change the image in the direction of increase the attractiveness, and to gain young customers – that is future will become loyal customers – because this is an important advantage of this kind of tourist products – helping to maintain or by improving the health of the clients – they tend to return year after year. Taking into account that the population is getting older, and that the retirement plan will leave people with less money for leisure activities or for recreational activities, having an important segment of clients of young customers will assure the profitability of the business on long term.

This thing is possible through the transformation or by reinventing the services or by innovation in the direction of offering new experiences and changing the general aspect – through interior design, creating a special atmosphere – things that have crucial importance in this department not like in other divisions of the hotel.

2. Wellness tourism helps the client to discover his own personality, accordingly to individualization trends. That is why, I recommend not just the medical counseling (which is offered at the beginning of the programme), but also a psychotherapeutical session, for a better understanding of the need of the customer in order to offer personalized packages.

3. Regional cooperation – developing an unique strategy and vision, that could have a stronger impact;

4. Specialized training for the personnel in order to improve customer oriented services and to organize language courses – to achieve the necessary knowledge to interact with foreign tourists;

5. Attracting foreign investors – the extra monetary funds will help modernize the treatment center – more accurately transforming it into a SPA center, additional it could represent a extra know-how for the business that will increase the competitiveness on the international market, and it can be a useful and cheap and effective promotion tool;

6. . Better promoting and sign posting within the city – information boards posted at the city border about the wellness and SPA offer;

7. Developing new application for the travel mobile systems;

### **Conclusion**

The tourist market is in continuing development – the tourist trends are changing – the clients are more experienced and sophisticated, they have more options and traveling outside of the country is becoming easier and easier so is important to operate at an European standard in order to be competitive.

Bradul-Calimani Complex has a very modern treatment base with up to date equipment but it lacks an attractive imagine, and the positioning on the market is not achieving the best occupancy rate.

In order to adapt to the new requirements of the market it is needed to develop also the online services for travel mobile systems and to improve the promotion and communication with international clients and partners by working at the knowledge level of foreign languages and interaction skills of the staff.

### **Sources of information**

The information was collected, besides the following listed books, articles and websites, from direct observation during a info tour of the tourist complex at which I have participated in March 2012, and also from the conversations that I had with the staff.

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7. [www.experienceispa.com](http://www.experienceispa.com)

# Monny Travel Agency

**Remo Curalet**  
Romania

## Abstract

One of the important sector in the economy of a country is tourism. I chose to present the case study of a business that operates in this field, more precisely a tour operator travel agency from Suceava. I think that tourism is essential for economic development in this area because of the potential and natural resources. Bucovina is known for its beauty and richness of local culture and history.

My case study is focused on the travel agency called "Monny Travel". This business has relatively good experience on the field because it started a few years ago. In the end I have elaborated some ideas that could help grow the business locally. These could be considered as suggestions in order to help the economic development of the business.

## Introduction

Located on route George Enescu, a prosperous business street in Suceava, the travel agency is easily noticed with its logo. The enterprise is a small business, an individual enterprise that involves one owner, as the director and travel agent as well and one more employee, another travel agent. The enterprise was founded in 2007. The travel agency's name is the English version of the owner name: Monica – Monny.

**Contact:** Adress: B-dul George Enescu, Nr. 44, Bl. T94, Suceava, 720247  
Tel/fax: 0230.212.020  
Mobile: 0740.193.963  
E-mail: [office@monnytravel.ro](mailto:office@monnytravel.ro)  
Webpage: <http://www.monnytravel.ro/>

## Description of organisation

The main activities of Monny Travel agency are focused on planning, organizing and coordinating of touristic programs (trips, circuits, individual or group programs, monastery tours) in Bucovina, and international destinations trips as well.

Monny Travel agency, based on contracts, works with service providers like tour operators travel agencies from Romania, pensions, hotels, hostels, transport companies and restaurants.

## Partners

Travel agencies: Paralela 45, Christian Tour, Kartago, Calibra, Kusadasi  
Airlines companies: Wizz Air, Tarom, Blue Air  
Rent-a-car: SC Autonom

## Competition

The main competitors on the local market, regarding the travel agencies, are:

Iason Turism, Bilco Travel, Instant Travel, Sind Romania, Eximtur, Best Travel, Unita Turism, Iakius Turism, Gigi Turism, Euromeridian Turism, Deea Turism, General Turism, Central Turism, Icar Tours, Juventus Travel, Mara Travel, Millennium Tour, Novatouring Turism, Rural Travel, Totem Tourism, Travel and Tours, West Travel.

Even if these agencies are focused mainly on different international destinations every year, there are quite a few travel agencies on the market, so we can say that competition is big.

### Customer needs

The main two types of local tourists, according to the destination chosen are family-oriented sun and sea lovers and rest-seekers. They choose either Romanian seaside destinations, like Black Sea or other international destinations. The third type is the nature viewers, tourists that are interested in activities connected to nature trips. This kind of tourists are eco-tourists, active sport lovers (bicycle tours, river rafting), and history and culture-oriented people.

Regarding type of tourists from abroad, they can be divided into two types. First consists of people who visit cultural events (festivals, concerts) and who come to the region for this specific purpose. Second is formed by people who are interested in historical connections, they prefer excursions, tours with a guide, visiting museums.

### SWOT analysis of the enterprise

Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good location on prosperous business street</li> <li>• showcase presentation offers</li> <li>• special programs for: retirees, middle-age, last-minutes</li> <li>• participation in fairs and exhibitions</li> <li>• annual employee improval</li> <li>• Provide accurate, correct and updated informations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited space of the location</li> <li>• no special offers for students</li> <li>• lack of corporate offers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• corporate offers (team-building)</li> <li>• finding foreign partners for promoting Bucovina region and Maramures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• competition</li> <li>• big number of travel agencies on the local market</li> <li>• financial crisis</li> <li>• poor training of the tour guids that have recently graduated</li> </ul>

### Innovations

#### *Attracting foreigners*

Develop and create tourism products that meet costumers' needs and wants

- A new tourist program to experience local life
- Create itineraries featuring neighborhoods
- Creating brochures and web page to introduce local, regional attractions
- Negotiating with airlines and foreign travel companies for special excursion fares from abroad to our important touristic locations

Get local people involved

Successful destination marketing depends heavily on whether you can get people on the front line involved:

- Local government, managers of tourism service suppliers, they have direct contact with customers and know their needs
- They know the destination much better than the government officers in the Capital City
- Without their commitment and cooperation, tourism products to attract world travelers cannot be created, information on tourist web-site hardly be updated.

'Sizzle and smell of BBQ' is the first way to communicate to your customers if you want to attract them:

- Leisure travelers first think which destination to visit on their vacation



- This decision is primarily based on the quality of information available to them
- The Internet is an excellent medium to communicate destination information to tourists at a relatively low cost
- So, the webpage must have at least an English version, besides the Romanian one
- Try first to get the attention of your future customers and motivate them to visit your area

Promoting the town and the region as a brand:

- Large events should be organized (such as medieval festival at the Fortress of Suceava, traditional dances, pottery workshops, painted eggs festival and much many)
- New bicycle routes to be designed
- Promoting active lifestyle, especially for sport lovers
- Presenting well-known activities in a modern way, like special shows based on the historical facts that are shown from another perspective

### SWOT analysis of the enterprise's innovation ability



### Conclusions

Tourism is one of the most promising areas of growth for the world economy. The managers should improve their skills in tourism and hospitality and develop new innovative products, services and keep a contact with outsiders in order to maintain themselves on the market. Also the employers should be better prepared in this type of services.

### Source of Information

- The travel agency website
- The owner
- <http://www.latviatourism.info>
- <http://www.tourism.jp>

## La Roata

Marius Vişan  
Romania

### Introduction:

Located 500m from downtown Humorului Gura, the pension has 48 beds in five homes. Ramona and Nelly in the boxes are double rooms with 6 rooms each, 8 rooms have mini kitchens. Olga House has 6 double rooms with twin beds. Anna House has 2 apartments. Zenovia House is an apartment Rustic 100%. All rooms have private bathroom, cable TV.

### Other facilities:

- A rustic restaurant with two halls for 40 seats and a wine cellar for 25 seats, located in the main building, where we spoil our guests with the Bukovina's food. The restaurant is closed circuit, because we want to spoil our guests.



On request the wine cellar turns into a conference room with all facilities.

- A souvenir shops with traditional Romanian objects and not only;



- An outdoor terrace for 40 people;



- A ping pong table, backgammon, rummy all its guests;

- A playground for children and not only;



- Uncovered for 20-25 car-parking, shuttle to the airport;
- Wireless Internet throughout the complex and computer available to guests;

This pension is made with heart for people with heart, inspire a family atmosphere of relaxation and of course comfort. English and German speaking personnel. Credit cards are accepted for payment.

### **S.W.O.T. Analysis**

#### Strengths

- Low competition
- Bucovina is a region rich in culture ( monastery, old houses etc.)
- Traditional cuisine
- Partnership with tourism agencies and tourism associations of other regions
- Boutique hotel
- Beautiful surrounding area / environment

#### Weaknesses

- Public transportation
- Low season
- Restaurant too small
- Not a well-defined target

#### Opportunities

- The region is rich of living traditions and historic building
- National and international tourism fairs and festivals
- Renewable energy
- Offering all inclusive or other types of packages
- E-shop

#### Threats

- Depending on other agencies
- Bad condition of Bucovina roads
- Bad condition of Suceava airport
- Natural hazards

### **Economical World Crisis**

As other companies, La Roata was also influenced by the world economical crisis, mainly because of general travel decrease. This decreasing trend of tourists coming to Bucovina influenced the booking of rooms in the pension, so their turnover was lower than used to be before so they could not pay the fees for advertising and promoting their business.

### Innovation plan

- Photo collection
- Museum
- Internships with forestry students

We suggest cooperation with the University Stefan cel Mare to improve students practical experience, e.g. organizing internships for designing touristic trails

- Pilgrimage

Proposing trails connection with the nearest monasteries, starting from the pension.

- Opening new section of cabana

It's necessary to increase accommodation capacity to improve the business

- Involve visitors in the pensions day to day activity
- Garden design
- Sauna, spa center
- Organize events
- Summer camp for children

### Conclusion

My ideas can help this tourism product to participate with success in the local development of Suceava area. Due to the hospitality and its location near a natural environment I consider important the fact that this touristic product has a high degree of new things for a number of tourists, especially the foreign ones.

### References

All photos were taken from La Roata's website [la-roata.ro/galerie\\_foto](http://la-roata.ro/galerie_foto)

# CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

## 1. The role of education in leading and implementing change

The development of modern economies, especially in the area of those three “poles of power”, EU, USA and Japan, has determined the reconsideration of the educational politics and the extension of the different “schooling” forms beyond universities lectures. In EU, next to the communitarian institutions, the national authorities and diverse international organizations / organisms (OECD, World Bank, WTO etc.) give more importance to the sector of education and is offering assistance in order to assure the quality of the educational processes for being a factor of human development, sustainable economical growth and social cohesion.

The individuals’ knowledge and abilities are determinant for the growth of a country economy and standards of living because the results of the educational process are materializing, finally, in goods and services, increased institutional capacities, a public sector more efficient, a stronger civil society and a better place for investments. The quality, the equity, the efficient superior education, the activity of research-development s.o. is essential in this process both for the developed countries and for those in the course of developing. Essentially, can be said that the world countries become established in global competition by *education and science*; especially *the science* is translating in general economic growth by multiple and complex ways, and in the USA case, the estimations shows that the science itself has represented half of the American economic growth in the last five decades(Toffler, 2006).

The major changes that influence the conditions in which in the present is unrolling the educational process in the entire world, changes that has to be considered even by EU includes(An Overview of Higher Education and GATS):

*The globalization* is emphasizing leading to an increment of the persons’ mobility, of the access to knowledge out of the national borders, to the growth of demand for education, including *e-learning*, to the growth of the adults needs for continuation of their education, to the increasing of investments etc. As a result the opportunities for the increasing and diversification of the superior education “market” are growing.

*The information technology and communications* are rapidly extended in entire world concomitant with their application possibilities in the education field. In many parts of the world the information technology can assure the access to education for the persons that cannot be served by the traditional institutions.

*The competition in superior education* has grown significantly in the last years in USA, Europe and Asia; the competition in this field will put face to face the European universities and the American ones, in connection with public politics from other fields, such as research, innovations, and the new technologies etc.

One of the objectives mentioned in March 2000 at Lisbon is that EU should become *the most competitive and dynamic economy* of the world, based on knowledge, capable to assure a sustainable economic growth and many better work places and a bigger social cohesion. The European Council has underlined the determinant role of the educational system in reaching this goal and in promotion of the humanist values of the European society. The Council appreciates that the purposes which the society attributed to the education and professional formation are (Report from Educational Council to the European Council):

- the individual development and implicit the development of his entire potential;
- the society development and the enforcement of social cohesion;
- The economy development by correlation between the work force aptitudes and abilities and the economic and technologic evolution.

The challenges to which the educational system, and other systems, is confronting with are, among others (Report from Educational Council to the European Council):

- the continue modification of the work nature (for example: the development of the products based intensively on knowledge, the amplification of activities in the third sector etc.) that make necessary a continue education;
- the changes of the demographic structure referring to ageing population and reducing the young workforce;
- the amplification of the migration phenomena which leads to a diversity of languages and cultures; especially in the field of education the Europe “of the 27” remains definite by the phrase „unity in diversity”.

In this context the ministries of education from the member states has adopted the following strategic goals for this decade (Report from Educational Council to the European Council):

1. the growth of quality and efficiency of the educational system in EU;
2. the facilitation of the access to the diverse forms of education and professional formation for all the Union citizens;
3. The opening of the educational system to entire world.

In European Union, each member state assumes the entire responsibility for the educational systems and for the content of educative programs, based on the subsidiary principle. The EU role is to contribute to the development of a qualitative education by encouraging the cooperation between member states and, if is necessary, by completing their actions for the porpoise of developing the European educational dimension, by favoring the mobility and by promoting the European cooperation between educational institutions.

## **2. Methodological approach - Case study INNONATOUR Project**

In this brochure we’ve analyzed the project lead by the University Stefan cel Mare of Suceava – Innovation in Nature Based Tourism Services INNONATOUR (2011 – 2012). The project involved another five European countries (Finland, Italy, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Austria). The countries were selected according to their innovation level, so within this project it is pursued the knowledge transfer and the experience exchange between countries with different levels regarding innovation. In this context, the project will allow members of the teaching staff to exchange views on teaching content and new curricula approaches.

The courses of the project will also contribute to interactive planning process by using software tools based on internet connection. It means that not only the coordinator and co-partner which have incidentally created and prepared the IP course by means of interactive process but also the students will be regularly a part of this online interaction. They have opportunity to work on their projects and to know each other before starting the course, to be online in touch with their case enterprises, to complete their final reports and to give a feedback about the evaluation their projects in case enterprises after the IP course.

The University Stefan cel Mare is one of the most important institutions in the higher educational field in the North – East of Romania. The university is offering a modern educational-curriculum, following the example of modern universities of Europe, but, in the same time, keeping her own traditions.

The University Stefan cel Mare is a public institution educating in total 12000 students in nine faculties, with a number of 315 staff, teachers and researchers (2009). The main contributions of University in local context are to be located in: research activities; educating skilled labor force for local industries, namely forest industry, food industry, machineries and equipment; improving education and continuous education for practitioners, managers, namely in tourism-related issues, forest investment construction; partnership with different institutions and firms.

**The main aim** of this project is to transfer the knowledge on innovation, innovation management and entrepreneurship straight from research into the education by means of organizing a practical educational course, and by working with real world cases. The transfer will target tourism enterprises sector and it will constitute a positive input to the improvement of regional innovation processes in tourism based services.

Also the main aim of the project is to improve the multilateral cooperation between higher education institution, to increase the volume of student and teaching staff mobility and on the other hand to transfer the knowledge on innovation, innovation management and entrepreneurship straight from research into the education by means of organizing a practical educational course, and by working with real world cases.

**The secondary aim** of the project is to develop and test new curriculum and teaching materials in the topic of Innovations and entrepreneurship in nature based tourism services in Europe, addressing therefore the need of improving educational supply on the topic.

**Objectives:**

- better knowledge on competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship processes in nature based tourism services in Europe;
- overview on best practice cases for innovation and entrepreneurship in nature based tourism services in Europe;
- built up a practical toolbox for innovation, adapted for areas, sectors and enterprises which usually do not have a leading role in innovation processes ;
- develop students' competences to deal with innovation and entrepreneurship in their own working environment
- strength the networking between the partners;
- develop students' ability to think and work in an international context and to learn from others experience.

**The pedagogical approach** is following the Mintzberg's (2002) prescriptions on what the training on management should be. The method is interactive-reflective, centred on the interaction between teaching process and student's own reflection on case studies with three embedded processes:

- teaching theoretical and analytical concepts useful for approaching innovation issue;
- enhancing the expression of students' personal perception of the problem;
- re-analysing the problem in the light of theoretical concept learned.

Problem based learning focuses on student's experience on innovation or entrepreneurship and/or on student's own research on case study. Pedagogically this course is mainly based on **problem based learning** with real world cases. During the course the student will relate theoretical, conceptual and methodical aspects that he/she learned in the course back to his/her own case. This should enable a better link and an awareness of the need to link abstract teaching and concrete situations and to transfer theory into applicable approaches in practice. Each student is asked to research a particularly successful or promising innovation by a enterprise from his her own country or even from his/her own work environment. Teachers will provide guidance in searching for real work case studies in the pre-task phase. Lectures in key topics are given by the best experts from the participating universities, and excursions are applied to support students work and ideas. At the end, students will elaborate a plan for the innovation project of their case enterprises. The whole work process is facilitated by means of e-Learning platform. At the end of the IP, the students should have common theoretical background from the experts and then be able to learn from the good practices presented in the common cases. After the IP course, the students should be able to start innovation processes, manage them, and finally improve their own working environments.

**CEFE method** (Competency-based Economies, Formation of Enterprise) has evolved over the years from an approach training individuals who want to start their own enterprise to a comprehensive training methodology based on the model presented is designed to involve enterprising behavior and competence in a wide variety of situations.

The IP will bring together in-field experience and empirical data that will constitute a high quality input for new research topics. In particular, it will be interesting to use the IP networking to develop a new research programme on innovation in nature based tourism.

A number of blockages referred to lessons learnt from this Erasmus Intensive Programme can be removed with the object of improving the innovative nature of the tourism industry. There is some way for action by the public authorities, and also for all stakeholders in the tourism cluster. Steps need to be taken to:

- Improve the internal dynamics of innovation: pushing firms to adopt a proactive attitude towards innovation, notably thanks to an ambitious shift from simple technology watch to economic intelligence.
- Improve the efficiency of the national system of innovation: improve the training of operators, staff; develop the role of public and private agents; stimulate research
- Improve incentive systems for operators and employees.
- Maintain the coherence of the tourism industry and its linkage with society as a whole. It is in fact not possible to think about innovation in tourism without acknowledging the need to mobilise the population which must, in particular, be prompted to cultivate the fundamental values of warmth and hospitality.

The main results of the project was:

- To develop a model for integrating overall market knowledge on nature based tourism in order to inform product development and further marketing activities;
- To strengthen the quality and environmental attributes of the nature based tourism product in some European countries area and thereby contribute to sustainable product development;
- To develop knowledge, build networks, and encourage innovation, best practice, business development and a sustainable ethic in nature-based tourism.



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INNO NATOUR

“Innovation in Nature Based Tourism Services”

INNO NATOUR



Natascha DEBES  
Austria



Ossi TAAVITSAINEN  
Finland



Ancuta COTOARA  
Romania



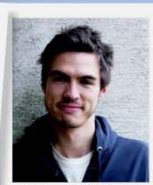
Andrea UHERCOVA  
Slovakia



Anna BORTOLAZZI  
Italy



Eleonora GIULIODORI  
Italy



Helmut HALLER  
Austria



Remo CURALEI  
Romania



Rosa PIETIKAINEN  
Finland



Valeria CARDELLI  
Italy



Sorina PUTUL  
Romania



Elisa PIETURA  
Italy



Ivelina VELKOVA  
Bulgaria



Anna BOHACOVA  
Slovakia



Anca URSESCU  
Romania



Zuzana MATUSOVA  
Slovakia



Marius VISAN  
Romania



Adriana TERZEVA  
Bulgaria



Johanna LAITINEN  
Finland



Birgit WAGNER  
Austria



Marieta LITARSKA  
Bulgaria



Kata TOLVANEN  
Finland



Anna SCHOEPFER  
Austria



Natalia KUBICOVA  
Slovakia

Suceava

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