



**Erasmus+ KA2 project STORIE**

**Development of capacities of rural businesses to design and promote sustainable tourism products based on intangible cultural heritage**

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**Intellectual Output 1: STORIE Learning Programme**

**SUMMARY**

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## 1. Introduction

The Erasmus+ project STORIE (2018-2020) aims to improve the competitiveness of small rural companies by developing their skills and capacities to design and promote sustainable tourism products based on intangible cultural heritage. The project will introduce an innovative Learning Programme and an online Learning Tool, will facilitate the development of local business communities and testing pilot tourist experiences in partner regions.

The primary target group of the project consists of small rural companies in or related to tourism sector. Other potential beneficiaries of the project include rural companies that could consider getting involved in tourism sector or cooperate with the primary target group in developing tourism products: The stakeholders of the project include associations, business support and consulting organisations, education institutions and policy makers.

The project will develop 3 Intellectual Outputs:

- O1 - STORIE Learning Programme
- O2 - STORIE Learning Tool
- O3 - STORIE Insights and Experiences

The activities leading to Output 1 aim to:

- Identify and exchange the best practices and methodologies for the development of skills and capacities of small rural businesses in the area of tourism product design and promotion, and cooperation,
- Analyse the training programmes previously developed by project partners,
- Adapt existing programmes to create a new, tailored programme specifically and directly aimed at filling the skills gaps of rural businesses.

This document presents a summary of Output 1. The full version of Output 1 is available on the project website [www.projectstorie.eu](http://www.projectstorie.eu).

## 2. Skills needs analysis

### 2.1. Methodology

Preliminary needs analysis has been accomplished at the stage of project application. An additional analysis - a questionnaire survey and interviews with representatives of the target group and stakeholders - was performed in each partner country, to make sure that any updates and recent needs are captured and provide meaningful input to the development of STORIE Learning Programme.

The fieldwork in each project country followed common guidelines developed for this purpose. The fieldwork consisted of a questionnaire survey and interviews. Questionnaire survey (112 respondents) took place in January-February and interviews (66 participants) in February-March 2019.

### 2.1. Defined skills needs

The survey and interviews in STORIE partner countries have confirmed the main findings of the desk research: the partner countries of STORIE are rich in intangible cultural heritage, small rural companies are willing to learn and want to improve their marketing knowledge, they prefer very practical learning programmes/ resources as their time is limited, online learning is acceptable and sometimes preferred but face-to-face contact is also important aiming to provide practical support and encourage networking and cooperation of local companies.

Many examples of integration of intangible cultural heritage in tourism products came up in the interviews, showing that the target group is quite familiar with the concept of intangible cultural heritage in tourism. These examples could also be used in developing the project case studies.

The themes that could be included STORIE Learning Programme, based on the questionnaire survey, are (in the order of interest – from the one that raises most interest):

1. E-marketing and social media
2. Marketing budget
3. Consumer behaviour
4. Marketing Mix
5. Cooperation techniques
6. Intangible cultural heritage in tourism
7. Marketing Strategy
8. Market segmentation
9. Tourism product design and management
10. Pricing strategies and approaches
11. Creativity techniques

However, the difference in the level of interest in different subjects is very small – the one that attracted most interest was selected by 57% of respondents, and the one with the lowest level of interest – 45%.

The representatives of the target group in different partner countries that took part in the questionnaire survey, chose different subjects as most interesting to them:

- **Hungary: Tourism product design and management;** Marketing strategy; Consumer behaviour, Marketing Mix, Creativity techniques; E-marketing and social media
- **Croatia: Marketing budget,** E-marketing and social media
- **Cyprus: E-marketing and social media,** Marketing strategy
- **Lithuania: Marketing Mix,** Consumer behaviour, Market segmentation, Intangible cultural heritage in tourism, E-marketing and social media and Marketing budget
- **Spain: Creativity techniques,** Consumer behaviour and Marketing Mix

The interviews didn't affect the choice of subjects much. The participants of interviews in Hungary and Croatia have expressed the same preferences as in the survey. The interviewees in Cyprus showed more interest in "Tourism product design and management" as well as in the ways to integrate intangible cultural heritage in tourism products, than when they were completing the survey. The Lithuanian participants of interviews showed some more interest in Marketing Strategy, but agreed with the other subjects chosen in the survey. The Spanish participants would like to learn to understand the clients and how to communicate with them, which also got higher level of interest in the questionnaire survey (Consumer behaviour, Marketing Mix).

The STORIE learning programme is expected to be practical, modular, with sufficient examples and useful tools, that could be easily applied in practice. The potential participants of the learning programme are ready to allocate several hours per week to improve their marketing knowledge.

The STORIE learning platform should be attractive and user-friendly, so that also people with less experience in online learning would be able/ would be encouraged to use it. In most partner regions is it advisable to combine online learning with face-to-face interaction, i.e. blended learning would be the type of learning that mostly meets the needs of the target group.

The research performed by the consortium in partner countries has showed that there is a need for such type of training, as well as a need to increase the level of cooperation of local companies, which the STORIE project can help achieve.

## 2. Curriculum

### 2.1. Goals of STORIE Learning Programme

The main goals of STORIE Learning Programme are:

- Provide a comprehensive view about cultural tourism product development, and competencies and tasks required for effective and sustainable product design,
- Help small rural businesses to develop skills and capacities to design and market sustainable tourism products based on responsible use of intangible cultural heritage (handicrafts, culinary practices, music, stories, customs, etc.),
- Achieve a real and long-term change in the thinking and attitude of the participants,
- Encourage cooperation among small rural companies and facilitate development of local business communities,
- Help small rural businesses improve and grow by exchanging experiences and combining and expanding the results of the project,
- Promote the responsible use of intangible cultural heritage to enrich local tourism products,
- Give immediately applicable practical advices, methodological guides, sufficient examples, practical solutions and useful tools, up-to-date information about develop and market cultural tourism products and about tourism trends independent of level of prior knowledge and entrepreneurial experience,
- Ensure flexibility to learning needs of potential participants, provide them interesting, useful learning platform and sustainable knowledge.

### 2.2. Learning outcomes

Expected learning outcomes on general level:

- Improved product design, promotion and cooperation skills and capacities of small companies involved in or related to rural tourism sector,
- Improved communication and increased cooperation among rural companies,
- Enhanced awareness, understanding and promotion of intangible cultural heritage of the partner regions, through tourism sector,
- Improved knowledge on correct presentation of intangible cultural heritage as part of the tourism product, applying reasonable level of commodification with respect to local communities,
- Establishment/ improvement of relationship among rural businesses and local communities - bearers of intangible cultural heritage - seeking mutual benefits.

Learning outcomes on personal level:

- Recognizing and understanding the role, importance and potential of intangible cultural heritage in tourism sector and in product development,
- Getting an overview and practical experience about different methods and process of product design and market in tourism,
- Getting ideas for collaboration and creating ideas with creativity techniques for product development using intangible cultural heritage,
- Realization of importance of marketing in tourism and getting immediately usable practical tools for their own marketing plan and marketing actions,
- Becoming more conscious by using marketing mix elements,
- Getting up-to-date knowledge about tourism in their country and region and have an opportunity to cooperate with other enterprises in design and sales new competitive products.

### 2.3. Themes of STORIE Learning Programme

The Learning Programme will consist of 4 major themes. Each theme will be divided into 5-6 smaller units - "knowledge snacks". The whole learning programme will consist of about 20 short learning units (about 20 hours of study time).

Foreseen themes of STORIE Learning Programme are the following:

1. **Intangible cultural heritage in tourism**
2. **Marketing basics**
3. **E-marketing and social media**
4. **Creativity techniques**

Each theme has specific educational goals:

1. Intangible cultural heritage in tourism: to give support for participants in learning about the concept, types, environment, characteristics of the target group in cultural tourism and possible products from intangible cultural heritage in tourism; sharing and adapting best practices; getting ideas for collaboration and product development using intangible cultural heritage.
2. Marketing basics: learn about steps of planning tourism marketing activities from defining marketing strategy to the marketing action plan and marketing budgeting. After completing this theme participants will be able to select the appropriate and most effective and cost-efficient marketing tools for their strategic- and communication purposes.
3. E-marketing and social media: learn about the online marketing communication tools currently available on the market, the advantages and challenges of using some online tools, and give support and advise them to be able to design and measure the effectiveness of an online marketing campaign.
4. Creativity techniques: get to know and practice important and useful creativity techniques for envisaging the tourism product (ideation techniques), designing the product (needs and client definition), implementing the product (co-operation and co-working techniques).

## 3. Pedagogical approach

### 3.1. Concepts behind the pedagogical approach

People learn in different ways, and STORIE learning programme aims to cater for their needs.

The learning theories presented below and the results of needs analysis define the pedagogical approach that will be used in STORIE.

#### **Learning by doing**

David A. Kolb pioneered the idea of experiential learning, which is learning by reflection on doing. Experiential learning's focus is the individual learning process. Kolb suggests that learning is a circular process, and that the best learning is achieved when going through the whole circle repeatedly.

#### **VARK model**

This model argues that people have a "preferred" sense among the five senses – in most cases visual, auditory or kinaesthetic – one that they also engage in learning. The suggestion is that people who prefer visual, need especially visual cues for learning. The same goes for people with an auditory and kinaesthetic (feeling) preference. And a fourth category is added for those who prefer internal dialogue and words. Therefore, the learning programme should be a mix of these four.

#### **Learning Pyramid**

The pyramid presents the effectiveness of different types of learning and shows that teaching which combines "hearing" and "seeing" achieves better results, but that the most effective teaching methods include "seeing and writing" as in workshops, and "doing" as in going through the steps one by one.

#### **Needs analysis**

The survey and interviews in STORIE partner countries have confirmed that the target group prefers very practical learning programmes/ resources as their time is limited, online learning is acceptable and sometimes preferred but face-to-face contact is also important aiming to provide practical support and encourage networking and cooperation of local companies.

Based on needs analysis the STORIE learning programme is expected to be practical, modular, with sufficient examples and useful tools, to apply easily in practice. The potential participants of the learning programme are ready to allocate several hours per week to improve their marketing knowledge.

The STORIE learning platform should be attractive and user-friendly, so that also people with less experience in online learning would be able/ would be encouraged to use it. In most partner regions it is advised to combine online learning with face-to-face interaction, i.e. blended learning would be the type of learning that mostly meets the needs of the target group.

Several concepts will be integrated in the STORIE pedagogical approach.

#### **Blended learning**

Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some elements of student control over time, place, path, or pace.

### Thin slicing

An innovative concept to be employed is the so-called single-concept learning or “thin slicing”, which focuses on one behaviour change, one narrow concept and one slim goal at a time. The STORIE learning programme will thus be made of small e-learning "snacks" that demonstrate how specific concept works in different situations. Then the learning experience will be integrated into a blended learning intervention, which will provide multiple paths for participants to get the message.

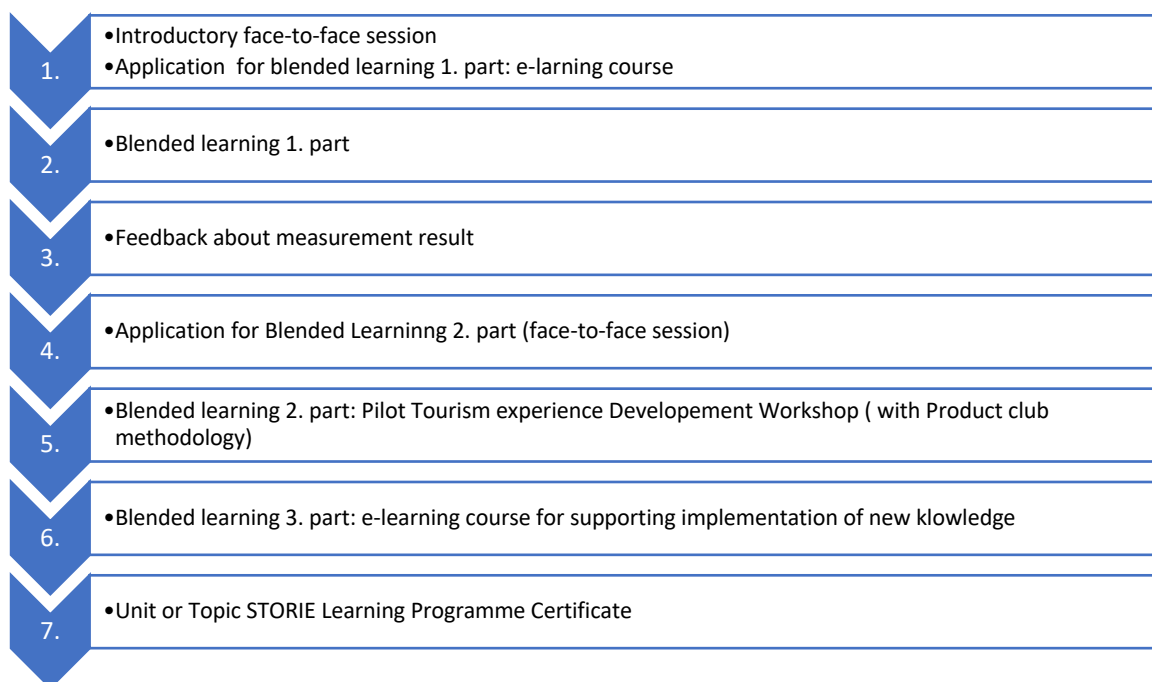
### Product club methodology

A Product Club is a management and planning tool that allows a group of organizations and companies work in collaboration, either to develop new products or to add value to the existing ones in a particular market segment. Tourist product clubs are built around a common idea or product and try to promote the destination by using as base specific products which have been clearly identified and defined previously.

Training methodology can be very successful if the participants get a mix of experiences, practices and theoretical knowledge that will enable them to develop short and long term also. We believe in the strength of the workshop, the joy of mutual creation, respect for creativity and thinking. Practice-oriented STORIE Learning programme will be built on these principles.

### 3.2. Learning path from participant’s view

STORIE offers a flexible learning structure. The large themes can be chosen and finish independently. Learners can choose as many units from one topic as are relevant to their knowledge or interest.



### 3.3. E-learning space

The e-learning system that will be used in STORIE is an educational tool for mobile devices (both for mobile phones and tablets). The software enables teachers or educators to easily prepare lessons with editable games and quizzes through custom templates. The users will be able to use (play) the games on their devices in groups or individually.



The e-learning system is designed to handle wide range of media. The e-learning material will consist the following file formats:

- **.txt**, **.docx** and **.pdf** for text format,
- **.pptx** for presentation and
- **.mov** or **.avi** for video.

**An example of an e-learning block:**



The learning material will be divided into small blocks, i.e. a short .ppt presentation, .pdf text or a video should be followed by 5-10 edugames (questions) to deepen the lessons learned.

## 4. Evaluation and assessment

Meaningful assessment and accompanying evaluation are critical parts of the learning cycle. The most effective evaluation is that which encourages and rewards effective teaching practices on the basis of learning outcomes. Clear learning objectives (outcomes) allow the development of learning activities and provide the basis for evaluation tests.

The STORIE Curriculum defines the expected learning outcomes for the specific modules. Relevant tests will be created at a later stage, when learning materials will be ready.

The learning programme is aimed at adult learners coming from small rural enterprises, that are mostly interested in increasing their knowledge and applying it in practice. To meet their needs, to encourage participation and to make the course more accessible, evaluation will mainly focus on self-assessment. The participants will be encouraged to take tests after completing the learning units, however this will be optional and aimed at the participants that would like to receive unit/ course certificates.

The tests will be available online. The participants will be asked to take a test after completing the online learning units. As the learning programme is flexible, some participants will be able to opt to attend the first part of the programme only (online learning and optional face-to-face introduction session), and if they succeed in completing the test, learning unit certificate will be issued.

The participants that will join face-to-face session and will participate in the development of pilot tourism experiences, will be asked to submit a “homework” (best practice about one of their developed tourism product/ a case study). To prepare the case study, the learners will get a plan - logbook, according to which the work will be prepared and uploaded in the system. Training expert from project partner organisations will check this document and provide their evaluation/ feedback. Evaluation criteria based on the strategical questions will indicate the level of achievement of expected learning outcomes on personal level. The participants will then receive a STORIE Learning Programme Certificate.