



*We wish you a
Happy 2007*

Workshop for the Pilot Actions – Sustainable Rural Tourism Development in Ukraine

PROJECT TITLE

**DEVELOPING
SUSTAINABLE RURAL
TOURISM – CAPACITY
BUILDING FOR RURAL
DEVELOPMENT LEADERS**

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Workshop for the Pilot Actions

Workshop Report

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The Project Partners

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Project please visit :

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Successful conclusion of the Workshop, Lviv 5-8 November 2006

Background to the Workshop

The Workshop for the Pilot Actions was jointly organised by the Carpathian Foundation (Uzhgorod, Ukraine) and the Euracademy Association (Athens, Greece), under the EuropeAid – Tacis IBPP programme, as a follow up activity to the 10-day Summer School held in Yaremche, in May 2006, in the context of the project.

We remind our readers that during the Summer School in May 2006, each student was assigned the task of preparing a proposal for a real “pilot project”, aiming to develop sustainable rural tourism in their areas and provide good practice examples to other residents, officials and entrepreneurs. Through these pilot projects, the Summer School students were expected to become “animators” of sustainable tourism in their regions. Euracademy Association and Carpathian Foundation had offered to provide support in the form of advice by experts and networking assistance for the implementation of these pilot projects. All pilot project applicants secured their participating in the November Workshop, to present their ideas, discuss them with experts and plan their implementation. 21 project proposals were submitted by Summer School participants prior to the Workshop and 16 participants took part in the workshop in person. A small number of pilot project authors were not able to travel to Lviv, either due to adverse weather conditions or personal problems.

It was worth it!

The Workshop attracted great interest and stimulated the active involvement of all participants, including the pilot project applicants, the experts and the project staff and facilitators. All participants agreed that the Workshop had been very productive and successful in meeting its aims. It was agreed at the end of it that all pilot projects that will show tangible results by the end of the overall project, will be presented at the end-of-project conference to be organized in Kiev. A small number of projects that will demonstrate a high degree of feasibility and will have achieved considerable progress by the time of the conference, will be given plenary time for presentation by their leaders. Additional support will be given for this purpose by the Euracademy experts and by the Carpathian Foundation staff.

We all left the workshop with our expectations raised, willing to double our efforts and achieve really good results, showing the way to all those who believe in developing sustainable rural tourism in Ukraine and are willing to work for it!



Preparation for the Workshop

On arrival of the Euracademy experts on 5th November, a meeting was held among the experts and other local and international project staff and facilitators. Organizational issues, responsibilities and the Workshop structure were discussed, and the methodology for approaching the pilot projects and offering support was agreed. The aims of the workshop were also clearly set, including an attitude change, which would encourage participants to proceed with their pilot projects largely on the basis of their own resources, rather than depend on external financial help, which would be difficult to ensure. The argument that external funding can be more easily attracted when concrete results of a project can be presented, was central in this approach, leading to adopting two phases for the implementation of pilot projects: a **“minimum external funding project phase”** to be materialized largely by the participants with little or no external help; and an **“external funding-dependent project phase”** which might follow, if necessary.

The Euracademy experts participating in the Workshop included:

- Professor Michael Dower, (Great Britain)
- Klaus Erlich (Spain/Germany) President of EuroGites-European Federation of Farm and Village Tourism,
- Dr Marco Koscak (Slovenia), Project Manager of the Dolenjska and Bela krajina Heritage Trails Partnership in SE Slovenia,
- Dr Fouli Papageorgiou (Greece), President of the Euracademy Association and Managing Director of PRISMA Centre for Development Studies
- Dr Elzbieta Strzelecka (Poland), Faculty member and researcher at the Technical University of Łódź.



With the exception of Professor Dower all other experts had participated as lecturers in the Summer School in Yaremche, in May 2006. The team of experts was assisted by a group of four facilitators/project staff, as follows:

- Vassilis Tshipidis (Euracademy Association)
- Ruslan Zhylenko, Tanya Pashchenko, Natalia Ilchenko, Nataliya Beley (Carpathian Foundation)
- Mariya Kovaliv, (Association of Economic Development of Ivano-Frankivsk)

And our interpreters:

Halyna Solohub, Olena Feshovets, Lyudmila Chernyaha and Yuriy Melnyk.

1st Day Report

The first day of the Workshop (6th November) began with a welcoming speech by Sokolova Olha Volodymyrivna, from the Department of Tourism of the Ivano-Frankivsk regional state administration, followed by Fouli Papageorgiou, president of Euracademy Association and Project Coordinator, and Ruslan Zhylenko country director of the Carpathian Foundation, Ukraine office. Professor Michael Dower gave a brief presentation of all pilot projects, highlighting interesting features, followed by comments from the other experts. Soon after, the participants were divided into four groups according to the theme of their project. Each group was led by an expert and had its own meeting room and interpreter.



Experts worked throughout the day with their groups, allowing enough time to all participants to present and discuss their pilot projects, including issues of project planning. From the discussions it became evident that most project proposals would not be viable if implemented as they were presented, as many factors crucial to project success had not been taken into consideration by the applicants. Such vital questions as the following had not been answered by most:

- who are the clients of the planned products/services?
- what human and financial resources does the project need?
- is the necessary know-how available?
- how will financial viability be ensured?
- does the current legislative framework of rural tourism in Ukraine allow to set up and operate the project

Thus, it became evident that a well-planned framework, which would organise the proposed activities in a step by step process and would introduce a firm timetable, was necessary. This would be the “action plan” that every participant was asked to prepare during the workshop. Through the action plans, the participants had the opportunity to organize their ideas better and revise their initial proposals accordingly. The experts offered advice on various issues concerning project planning and implementation, including financial viability, sound project management, marketing of pilot projects to potential funding agencies, marketing of project products and services to potential clients and effective utilization of what could be considered “minimal resources” to start implementation.

By the end of the day every participant had created a new draft action plan, including a clear set of feasible ‘no cost’ activities which can be implemented almost immediately on the basis of the participant’s or his/her organisation’s own resources.

2nd Day Report

The second day of the Workshop (7th November) started with short presentations by the experts on pertinent issues regarding both project planning and project content, expanding on topics raised during the group sessions. Marko Koscak gave a presentation on sustainable tourism development focused on heritage trails, a popular theme of pilot projects. Klaus Ehrlich presented principles of economic viability and described a set of easy steps to formulate a business model, which can highlight accurately enough the financial needs of a project. Klaus also stressed the need to adapt all project plans to the legislative framework of Ukraine and to the regulatory framework of the pilot project areas. Fouli Papageorgiou gave a talk on strategic planning and issues that all participants should take into consideration while making progress with their projects, most notably their ability to work and think at two different levels: firstly with the Authorities who will finance/provide assistance for the project and secondly with the people, clients and stakeholders who are linked to the project. Elzbieta Strzelecka gave a brief talk on tourism impacts and sustainability indicators.



The participants were then left to finalize the draft action plans and create posters which would assist them in presenting their revised pilot project proposals to the experts later that day. Each poster was translated in English by the interpreters. The main aim of these presentations was to help the experts evaluate the progress made through the short period of the workshop and identify the projects that could provide concrete results in the next 7- 8 months. It was also a constructive experience for the participants, as they had the chance to present their projects for the first time in front of a demanding audience. Under the critical

eyes of experts the participants answered various questions regarding their new action plans for their projects, a process they will have to go through when seeking funding in the future.



3rd Day Report

At the third and final day of the workshop the participants had the chance of getting a first glimpse of the distance learning platform which is being developed to host the distance learning course on sustainable rural tourism development and will soon be available. All workshop participants will be eligible to enroll to the course and also have access to a reserved forum area where they can discuss project issues with course teachers, the Euracademy experts and each other. Then, it was time for what proved to be the high point of the workshop; a very constructive discussion with participants and experts exchanging ideas on subjects ranging from follow-up activities and monitoring of the pilot projects, to evaluation of the workshop. Also, the content and format of the International end-of-project conference in Kiev were discussed and all agreed that at least three more months were necessary to achieve results from the pilot projects, in order to hold successful presentations at the conference. The best time for the conference was suggested to be September 2007.

All Euracademy experts and project staff pledged their continuing support to the participants, through the distance learning forum and through visits on-location to provide further advice. The language problem will be taken care of by Carpathian Foundation, whose staff undertook to provide translations of participants' and experts' exchanges.

REFLECTIONS

by Professor Michael Dower

Fouli Papageorgiou, President of Euracademy Association, asks me to reflect on the event. I do so, as one who is ignorant about Ukraine and who did not attend the Summers School in May 2006.

My impression, first, is that there is a good cadre of mid-career people from regional and local authorities, NGOs, universities and elsewhere in Ukraine who wish to improve their understanding of how tourism works, and who are ready to play an active part in the development of rural tourism. They include both men and women; have a good average level of education;

and (very important) **they know what they do not know and are willing to learn.**

Second, it is clear that Euracademy Association, with the crucial help of the Carpathian Foundation, has managed to connect effectively with a good number of these people. 100 applied for the first workshop; 40 took part in the Summer School; 21 of these put forward a project; and 16 of these 21 came to the Workshop for the Pilot Actions in Lviv.

A key **first conclusion** is that we should concentrate the effort for the rest of the present project on the 21, but we should not

forget the rest of the 40, nor indeed the other 60 who originally applied. Moreover, since the 100 responded to fairly slim publicity, we may well (in thinking about the future) assume that there are more 'waiting in the wings', ready to take interest as the rural tourism process evolves.

Third, it is clear that the training so far - the Summer School, the process of preparing project proposals and the Lviv Workshop - has sharply advanced the thinking of many of the participants. Some of them clearly had, when they applied, a quite naive view of how tourism development works, and of how to make new things happen. Their view was, inevitably, coloured by the centralist mode of the country, by the past dependence on government initiative and central funds, and by rosy expectations of what the European Union might offer through TACIS or elsehow. The first event gave them some feeling for what rural tourism is and can be; and their absorption of this is shown in the project proposals. But most of the proposals were either vague or grandiose or narrow, lacking focus, and soft about money. For that reason, we were obliged at Lviv to administer a shock to the system, in the form of insistence on hard-headed thinking about the shape of projects and the application of resources. It is a real credit to the participants that they reacted well to that shock; took it in the positive spirit which we intended; and (in most, but I suspect not all, cases) will greatly improve their projects as a result.

Fourth, from our perspective of trying (through this project) to raise the level of thinking and action in rural tourism throughout Ukraine, it is very helpful that:

- the participants and their projects are quite well spread through the regions of the country
- the participants include officials of regional and local authorities, NGOs, private entrepreneurs and others
- the projects vary in type, from regional and sub-regional strategies, through wide projects such as trails, to specific local initiatives.

This diversity will enable us to support and publicise a variety of projects. It also increases the chances of a multiplier effect, as the participants themselves hand on what they have gained. We

need to think through how to gain the most benefit from this diversity.

But the immediate challenge, on which we and the participants must focus, is to turn the proposals - and particularly those which we have provisionally chosen as pilot projects - into real action, with visible results by say June 2007. I think that this will demand some very deliberate and persistent nurturing by the Carpathian Foundation, pushed by the Euracademy Association and supported by us when necessary.

Looking ahead, it is clear that further thought is needed about the finale to this project, and about how to sustain the impetus that it will have given to thinking and action about rural tourism in Ukraine. The focus for the finale will presumably be the national conference, in June or September 2007, in Kiev. But I suggest that the Conference be seen not a closure, but as an opener to the next phase. I hope that Euracademy and the Carpathian Foundation will start thinking now about how a further phase might be shaped and funded.

The aim of the further phase might be:

- to offer continuing support to those existing participants whose projects are not completed in the first phase
- to ensure that training in rural tourism development is offered to a wider group
- to support networking among all who are involved in rural tourism in Ukraine.

Some part of this aims might be achieved by the un-aided action of the participants, who do begin to see themselves as trainers or ambassadors. But, in truth, their skill in that role will be variable and in some cases quite limited: they will need support. In particular, I think that there is a strong case for supplying them with first-class training material.

As to the networking, I confirm that I will be recommending to my colleagues in the PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe that we should offer support to rural NGOs in Ukraine if they are interested to create a network similar to those that exist in the neighbour countries of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary.

Michael Dower

For a full report of the Workshop and more photos from the event please visit <http://www.euracademy-urti.org>

! Visit our website for the latest news from our Pilot Projects.

Distance Learning Course on Developing Sustainable Rural Tourism.

Please visit our website for more information. Lessons are held in Ukrainian and English.

! Enrolment has already started



The Euracademy Association is a pioneering European organisation which draws together corporate members, mainly higher educational institutions, and over 100 individual members with a professional and perennial commitment to rural development, aiming to promote capacity building in rural areas and mobilise animators and managers of rural development. The website of the Euracademy Association, <http://www.euracademy.org/>, is a rich informational resource on a variety of issues related to capacity building in rural areas, including the activities of the Association.



The Carpathian Foundation promotes good relations, social stability, and economic progress in the bordering regions of [Hungary](#), [Poland](#), [Romania](#), [Slovakia](#) and [Ukraine](#). It does so by providing financial and technical assistance to projects which will result in tangible benefits to the communities on both sides of national borders and which will improve the quality of life of the people in the cities and small towns of the Carpathian Mountains. <http://www.carpathianfoundation.org>



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