



# “Eco-tourism Innovations for Rural Development”

## TRANSNATIONAL REPORT 1

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## Project Overview

The "Eco-tourism Innovations for Rural Development" project, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, aims to foster sustainable tourism in rural areas across Italy, Cyprus, Denmark, and Romania. The project's focus on minimizing environmental impact, building local tourism capacity, and educating tourists and communities contributes to responsible and eco-friendly tourism development. With the project still underway, set to conclude in October 2024, this initial report covers:

- ✓ The project's background and objectives
- ✓ Partner organizations
- ✓ An overview of Activities 1, 2, and 3.

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## Project Context and Objectives

Tourism has grown substantially over the past decades, bringing economic benefits but also significant environmental challenges. This project, Eco-tourism Innovations for Rural Development, addresses these challenges by targeting rural areas that are rich in cultural and natural heritage but are vulnerable to the negative impacts of mass tourism.

The project's **objectives** are as follows:

1. **Promote eco-friendly tourism practices:** The project aims to showcase at least three unique natural or cultural resources from the rural communities involved, emphasizing sustainable development and responsible tourism through experiential learning.
2. **Enhance knowledge and skills:** By providing training to at least 15 representatives from rural tourism organizations, the project aims to improve participants' ability to adopt sustainable tourism practices and develop eco-friendly tourism businesses.
3. **Raise awareness:** The project seeks to increase awareness among at least 500 tourists and 100 local community members about the benefits of sustainable tourism, encouraging eco-conscious behavior.

In addition to these, the project will support the development of a sustainable tourism strategy that is implemented by at least 50% of participating tourism organizations, with 80% of training participants reporting improved knowledge and skills.

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## Partner Organizations

- **Synthesis Srl (Italy):** A training organization with extensive experience in managing vocational education projects, Synthesis leads the project, contributing to the development of sustainable tourism practices in Italy's UNESCO-listed Prosecco Hills.
- **C.F. Elite Tutors Ltd (Cyprus):** Based in rural Larnaca, this organization focuses on supporting the local community through sustainable tourism and educational activities, integrating tourism with cultural heritage preservation.



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- **The Common Ones (Denmark):** A non-profit organization focused on sustainability and entrepreneurship, The Common Ones promotes collaborative projects that foster climate action and sustainable development in rural areas.
  - **INCDT (Romania):** The National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism, INCDT specializes in sustainable tourism research, providing key insights into developing eco-friendly strategies for rural tourism businesses in Bucovina, Romania.
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## Activities Overview

The project is organized into five main activities:

1. **A1 - Project Management (October 2023 - December 2024):**
    - Synthesis Srl leads the project, ensuring smooth coordination among the partners. Regular meetings, both online and in-person, were held to monitor progress and address challenges.
  2. **A2 - Research and Handbook Development (January 2024 – March 2024)**
    - Each partner conducted research to identify best practices for sustainable rural tourism in their respective regions. Interviews were held with local tourism operators, community leaders, and stakeholders to gather insights and inform the project's handbook on green tourism strategies.
    - Total interviews conducted: 91 (24 by Synthesis, 14 by C.F. Elite Tutors, 30 by INCDT, and 23 by The Common Ones).
    - The resulting handbook provides guidelines on minimizing environmental impact, celebrating local culture, and advancing sustainable rural tourism.
  3. **A3 - Pilot Implementation (April 2024 - June 2024)**
    - Five online training sessions were organized by each partner, reaching a total of 65 rural tourism operators across the four countries (17 from C.F. Elite Tutors, 15 from The Common Ones, 17 from INCDT, and 16 from Synthesis Srl).
    - These sessions covered practical sustainable tourism applications, including waste management, energy efficiency, and the promotion of local products.
    - Training materials were translated into Italian, Danish, Romanian, and Greek to improve accessibility.
  4. **A4 - Online Training Sessions (May 2024 - October 2024).**
  5. **A5 - Final Conference and Dissemination (October 24-26, 2024).**
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## Continuation

The second transnational report will focus on the continuation of activities 4 and 5, providing detailed insights on the implementation of the online training sessions and the final conference. Additionally, it will present the final data and conclusions, highlighting the overall impact of the project and its lasting effects on local communities and tourism operators.



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