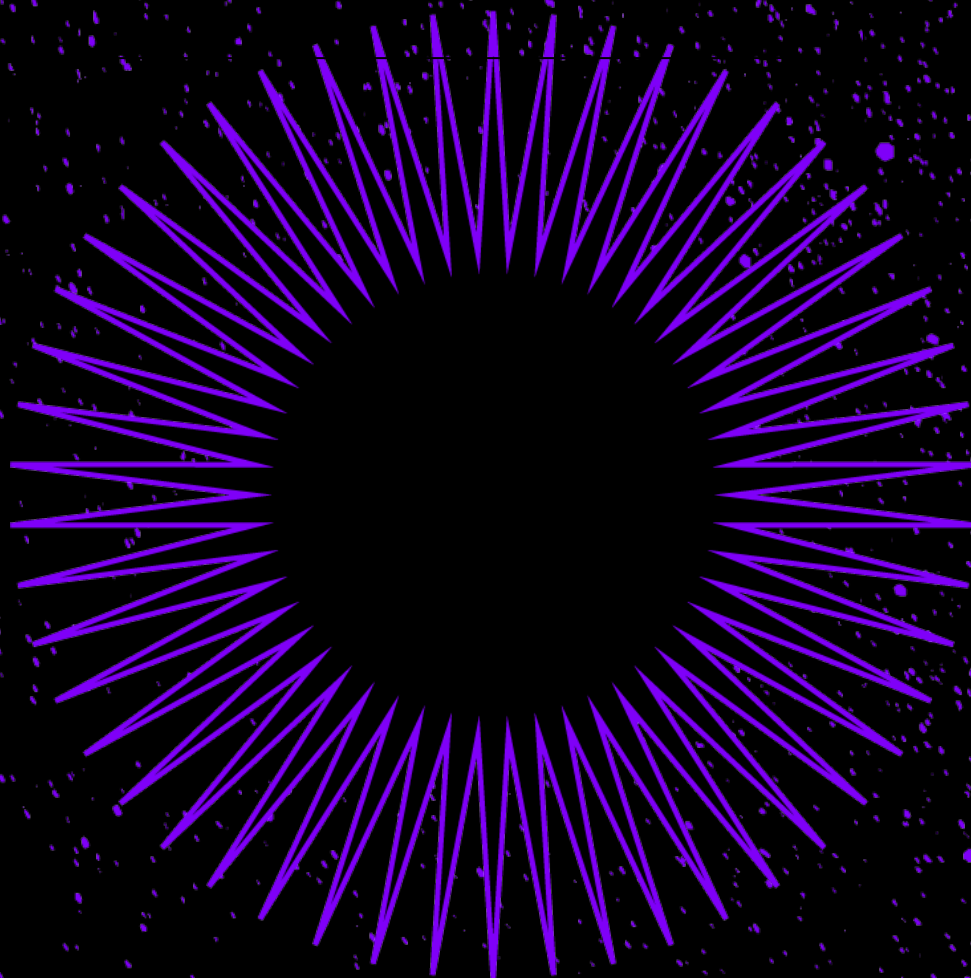


lookUp

# Compendium of Best Practices

Window 2



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# 1 Summary and introduction

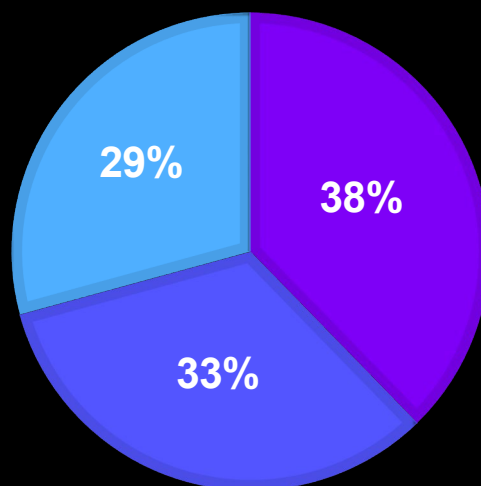
This report compiles the best practices identified through the LookUP Sustainable Business Transformation Programme – Window 2, a European initiative aimed at empowering Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism sector by fostering sustainability, resilience, and digitalisation. The objective of this compendium is to highlight exemplary practices that can serve as models for other SMEs in their transformation journey.

A total of 112 tourism SMEs participated in the Sustainable Business Transformation Programme, structured into two main windows: **Window 1** and **Window 2**.

- **Window 1 (sustainability)** included 106 SMEs - 40 from Finland, 35 from Spain, and 31 from Romania - selected through two calls (70 in the first and 36 in the second).

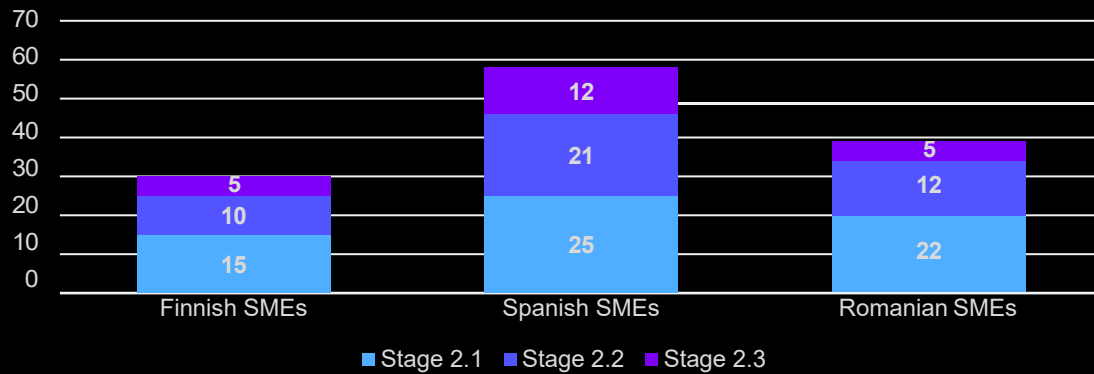
## WINDOW 1 - SME DISTRIBUTION

■ Finnish SMEs ■ Spanish SMEs ■ Romanian SMEs



- **Window 2 (innovation)** engaged 62 SMEs, distributed across three stages:
  - **Stage 2.1:** 15 SMEs from Finland, 25 from Spain, and 22 from Romania.
  - **Stage 2.2:** 10 SMEs from Finland, 21 from Spain, and 12 from Romania.
  - **Stage 2.3:** 5 SMEs from Finland, 12 from Spain, and 5 from Romania.

## Window 2 - SME Distribution



The Sustainable Business Transformation Programme provided tailored support to SMEs across participating countries, including Spain, Finland, and Romania. Each SME's participation included phases of evaluation, mentorship, and the implementation of innovative practices. The selection process prioritised enterprises demonstrating potential for replicable, scalable, and impactful outcomes in their respective regions.

The compendium captures diverse practices and insights from across the programme's operational regions (Spain, Romania and Finland), leading to the development of sky tourism in the three regions.

## 2 Best practices

### BEST PRACTICE 1 – Wild Out avoin yhtiö

## BEST PRACTICE 1

### Wild Out avoin yhtiö (Finland)

Tomasz and Theresa, the founders of Wild Out, are committed to creating sustainable and regenerative tourism experiences that connect visitors with nature while emphasizing conservation and eco-friendly practices. Our mission is to offer unique, adventurous experiences with nature in authentic and impactful ways.



#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

Wild Out offers regenerative tourism experiences designed to educate visitors on conservation and sustainability. Key activities include guided birdhouse building workshop, mindful walk in the forest and wilderness lunch featuring wild foods gathered in local forest. We believe that this helps our guests rebuild their bond with their natural habitat and appreciation for what nature has to offer.

During activities guests learn about local ecosystem, maintain traditional craft which is birdhouse building, support local forest biodiversity with their own hands and maintain local economy. After a day spent with Wild Out, guests can follow their positive impact on "Birdhouse Map" (placed on wildout.fi) developed during LookUP project.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Educational and Experiential Focus

We prioritise immersive, educational experiences that allow guests to connect deeply with the local environment and wildlife.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Enhanced Connection to Nature:** Through our locally led tours and activities, guests experience the natural environment while learning about its preservation.
- **Eco-Education:** Each activity aims to inspire respect for natural resources and promote sustainable practices.

##### 2. Collaboration with Local Experts and Sustainable Partners

For Wild Out, partnering with local vendors and experts is essential to maintaining quality while supporting the local economy.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Community Support:** By working with local providers, we enhance authenticity and ensure economic benefits reach the community.
- **Sustainable Partnerships:** Collaborating with eco-certified businesses reinforces a commitment to responsible tourism.

### 3. Sustainability as a Core Principle

We have built strong relationships with local businesses and public authorities, creating a Sustainability is at the heart of Wild Out, guiding practices such as resource conservation, waste reduction, and cultural preservation.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Environmentally Responsible Operations:** Our focus on sustainable tourism supports the preservation of local ecosystems and cultural heritage.
- **Cultural and Environmental Stewardship:** Eco-friendly practices are prioritised to protect biodiversity and promote local experiences.

### 4. Targeted Marketing and Customer Engagement

We use digital marketing and partnerships to reach eco-conscious travellers, increasing visibility for Wild Out and its mission.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Audience-Specific Outreach:** Our marketing is designed to align with values that emphasise nature conservation and cultural tourism.
- **Expansive Reach:** By engaging a variety of customers - from families to solo adventurers – we broaden the appeal and market reach of Wild Out.

### 5. Growth and Scalability

We have designed Wild Out to be scalable, allowing for expansion into additional regions and seasonal offerings.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Adaptable Growth Model:** The flexible structure of Wild Out allows for expansion, ensuring high quality and sustainability across new locations.
- **Regional Development:** Adding new areas and partnerships helps reach a wider audience, positioning Wild Out as a leader in sustainable, adventure-based tourism.

## Conclusion

With Wild Out, our vision is to provide transformative, sustainable experiences that deepen visitors' appreciation for nature, encourage responsible tourism, and support local communities. We also want encourage people to participate more in regenerative tourism activities in the future and make own positive impact initiatives in their home area. Through a tourism model that prioritises conservation, cultural appreciation, and community engagement, we aim to create lasting value for both the environment and the people who call this area home.

## BEST PRACTICE 2

### Aventurex (Spain)

Aventurex is a family-owned ecotourism company based in the Tajo International Biosphere Reserve, led by Juan José González Núñez and Maria Dolores Ramajo Muñoz. We specialise in eco-adventures, with a unique experiential offering that combines hiking, cycling, stargazing, and culinary experiences within the natural beauty of the biosphere reserve. Our flagship project, *Under the Cross-border Skies of the International Tajo*, includes innovative tours centered around the solar system, megalithic sites, and local traditions. Committed to sustainability and responsible tourism, Aventurex aims to connect visitors with both the ecological and cultural heritage of Extremadura, promoting immersive, family-friendly experiences that benefit the local community.



#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the Look Up Programme, Aventurex offers immersive, eco-friendly tourism experiences that combine education, adventure, and cultural exploration. Key activities include guided cycling and hiking tours modeled after the solar system, stargazing sessions led by certified guides, and culinary events featuring local products. Guests can also enjoy archaeological excursions to prehistoric dolmens and explore cultural landmarks connected to local history, such as smuggling routes. These activities foster a deeper understanding of the Tajo International Biosphere Reserve while promoting sustainable tourism and respect for the local environment.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Regenerative Tourism and Education

Aventurex emphasises regenerative tourism, where visitors actively contribute to environmental conservation and cultural preservation. Through educational experiences like stargazing, archaeological tours, and workshops on local history, we teach visitors the value of protecting the unique landscapes and heritage of the Tajo Biosphere Reserve. This approach goes beyond passive tourism, as guests participate in meaningful activities that leave a positive legacy, fostering a deeper connection between tourists and the local environment.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Building Ecological Awareness:** Each activity is designed to increase visitors' understanding of the region's rich biodiversity, encouraging them to become advocates for conservation.
- **Engaging Guests in Preservation Efforts:** Interactive workshops allow guests to participate directly in conservation actions, creating a personal connection with the region's ecology and cultural heritage.



## 2. Collaboration with Local Producers

Collaboration with local producers is essential to Aventurex's approach, creating authentic, community-centered experiences that benefit the local economy. By working with local farmers, artisans, and food producers, we offer guests unique, locally sourced products and immersive culinary experiences. These partnerships not only support sustainable tourism but also reinforce cultural preservation, allowing visitors to experience the region's traditions and culinary heritage in a meaningful way.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Boosting Regional Economy:** Every collaboration directly contributes to local growth, creating economic resilience in rural communities.
- **Highlighting Local Flavor and Heritage:** Using locally sourced products allows guests to enjoy authentic culinary and artisanal experiences that deepen their connection to the Tajo Biosphere's unique culture.

## 3. Sustainability as a Core Value

Sustainability is foundational to Aventurex, with every aspect of operations designed to minimise environmental impact and support the conservation of the Tajo International Biosphere Reserve. By focusing on eco-friendly practices such as limiting group sizes, reducing waste, and sourcing locally, we ensure that our activities align with the preservation of the area's natural beauty and resources. This commitment to sustainability not only appeals to eco-conscious travelers but also establishes Aventurex as a leader in responsible tourism, creating a long-lasting positive impact on the region.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Resource-Conscious Operations:** Our practices, such as waste reduction and small-group sizes, actively help maintain the area's ecological integrity, offering guests a sustainable way to explore.
- **Strengthening Brand Identity in Sustainable Tourism:** By setting high standards in conservation, we attract eco-conscious visitors who appreciate a deeply responsible and immersive travel experience.

## 4. Targeted Market Segmentation

Aventurex carefully targets eco-tourists, families, and astro-tourism enthusiasts interested in cultural heritage and natural experiences. By focusing on niche markets such as stargazing, birdwatching, and archaeological tourism, the company designs highly personalised tours that resonate with guests' values. This approach allows our company to attract engaged, loyal visitors who seek meaningful, eco-friendly experiences, fostering a community of travelers who support responsible tourism and contribute to sustainable growth.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Enhancing Guest Loyalty:** By catering specifically to eco-conscious travelers, we build a loyal customer base invested in sustainable tourism.
- **Offering Unique, Themed Packages:** Themed activities like stargazing and archaeology tours attract specific visitor profiles, enriching guest experiences and broadening the company's appeal.

## 5. Growth and Scalability

Aventurex's business model is designed to support sustainable growth, allowing for the introduction of new experiences and the potential expansion into additional regions. By partnering with local businesses and investing in digital tools, we plan to broaden our reach without compromising the quality or sustainability of our offerings. Expansion plans include themed retreats, seasonal activities, and collaborations across the border with Portugal, further enriching the guest experience while reinforcing Aventurex's commitment to responsible, scalable tourism.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Flexible Expansion Across Regions:** Collaborating across the Portugal-Spain border allows us to scale operations sustainably and attract diverse tourists.
- **Broadening Market Reach Through Innovation:** Investments in digital tools and cross-border partnerships position ourselves to engage with new demographics while staying true to its eco-friendly mission.

## Conclusion

With Aventurex, we bring together eco-tourism, cultural heritage, and outdoor adventure, making the Tajo International Biosphere Reserve a premier destination for sustainable tourism. By focusing on immersive experiences, community collaboration, and regenerative tourism, Aventurex positions itself as a leader in responsible travel, ensuring a lasting positive impact on both visitors and the local environment. Through innovation and a commitment to sustainability, Aventurex continues to set the standard for ecotourism in Extremadura and beyond.

## BEST PRACTICE 3 – Pago Las Encomiendas

## BEST PRACTICE 3

## Pago Las Encomiendas (Spain)

María Isabel Carrillo García, leads the operations at Pago de las Encomiendas, a winery that combines eco-tourism with a deep respect for wine and nature. Located in Extremadura, we offer a unique blend of wine tourism, eco-tourism, and astronomy. Our main product, the Celestial Rocamador Experience, connects wine culture with the stars, integrating a guided visit to the biodynamic vineyards, a historical tour of the 16th-century Rocamador Monastery, and an astronomical observation complemented by a tasting of local wines and products. Our aim is to create an immersive experience where guests can explore history, enjoy fine wines, and connect with the natural beauty and tranquility of our region.



## Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Program, we have enhanced our offerings by incorporating astrotourism. Through the program, we've worked with local experts in astronomy, allowing us to provide guided stargazing sessions that enrich the Celestial Rocamador Experience. Additionally, the program has supported us in developing educational materials on light pollution and biodiversity conservation, which we share with visitors to raise awareness on the impact of sustainable tourism in preserving natural landscapes.

## Best Practices from the Business Plan

## 1. Eco-Friendly Operations and Biodynamic Wine Production

Our winery practices biodynamic viticulture, integrating organic farming principles with a unique approach to winemaking that takes cues from the lunar calendar. Our biodynamic practices emphasize the importance of working with the natural rhythms of the earth, leading to more resilient vineyards and higher-quality wines.

## Key Takeaways:

- **Sustainability Commitment:** Our biodynamic practices support both wine quality and environmental health.
- **Connection to Nature:** We offer a unique perspective by aligning our winemaking process with natural cycles.

## 2. Community Collaboration and Local Sourcing

Our products and services highlight regional culture by incorporating local ingredients and artisanal goods, such as Iberian ham and cheese, alongside our wines. We work with nearby producers to support the local economy, showcasing authentic Extremaduran flavours in our wine pairings.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Supporting Local Producers:** Collaborating with local suppliers enriches our offerings and sustains the regional economy.
- **Authentic Experiences:** Using local products enhances the cultural authenticity of our tours and tastings.

## 3. Educational Experiences and Eco-Tourism

Our Celestial Rocamador Experience combines wine tourism with eco-education. Visitors learn about biodynamic farming, the historical roots of the monastery, and astronomical observations. These activities serve to deepen guests' understanding of both our winemaking processes and the surrounding ecosystem.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Educational Approach:** Our tours are designed to provide valuable knowledge on wine and eco-tourism.
- **Sustainable Tourism:** By focusing on eco-education, we promote sustainable practices to visitors.

## 4. Market Segmentation and Customization

Our services target wine lovers, eco-tourists, and astro-tourists, allowing us to tailor our experiences to various interests. From astronomy enthusiasts to cultural tourists, our offerings are customised to meet diverse guest preferences, ensuring an immersive, personalized experience.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Broad Audience Appeal:** Customisable experiences allow us to cater to different segments of the tourism market.
- **Tailored Services:** Personalising tours enhances guest satisfaction and engagement.

## 5. Scalability and Regional Growth Potential

Our business model is designed for scalability, with plans to expand offerings and reach new audiences. We envision additional experiences that leverage our biodynamic practices, historical tours, and educational programs, maintaining high-quality, sustainable tourism practices as we grow.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable Model:** Our approach supports growth while upholding our commitment to sustainability.
- **Future Expansion:** New experiences and broader reach will allow us to make a greater impact on eco-tourism.

## Conclusion

At Pago de las Encomiendas, our mission is to provide meaningful, sustainable tourism experiences that celebrate the region's natural and cultural heritage. Through our partnership with the LookUP Programme and collaboration with local artisans, we offer guests an enriching, eco-friendly journey that connects them with the beauty of Extremadura. Our dedication to quality, sustainability, and community ensures that Pago de las Encomiendas will continue to be a leader in sustainable wine tourism and a respected ambassador of the region's unique heritage.

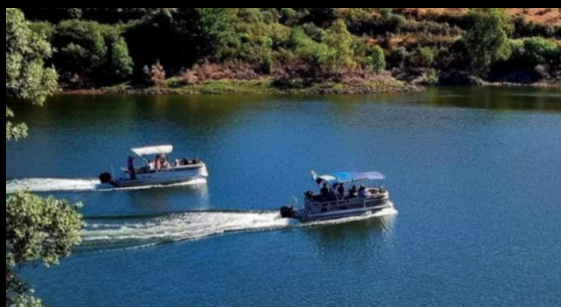


## BEST PRACTICE 4 – PANTHOS, DEPORTE Y OCIO INCLUSIVO EN ESPACIOS NATURALES, SL

### BEST PRACTICE 4

## PANTHOS, DEPORTE Y OCIO INCLUSIVO EN ESPACIOS NATURALES, SL (Spain)

Panthos, located in northern Extremadura, Spain, specialises in inclusive and sustainable outdoor experiences that offer unique access to both aquatic environments and stargazing activities. Founded in 2017, Panthos has pioneered eco-conscious tourism in the region, becoming renowned for its nautical activities on the Gabriel y Galán and Valdecañas reservoirs. Our offerings, including a Blue Flag certified boat, promote accessible, immersive, and environmentally respectful tourism experiences. Panthos is particularly noted for being the only company in Spain authorised to conduct nighttime sailing and astronomy observations on inland waters, leveraging Extremadura's clear skies and pristine natural setting.



### Activities within the LookUP Programme

In collaboration with the LookUP programme, Panthos has expanded its focus on enhancing inclusive tourism. We have actively engaged with LookUP to bolster our sustainable practices, leverage digital solutions, and improve the resilience of their services. Through the program, we have integrated best practices and training to support the local ecosystem, optimize water-based experiences, and elevate visitor engagement, especially in eco-tourism.

### Best Practices from the Business Plan

#### 1. Inclusive and Accessible Tourism

Panthos is committed to inclusivity, creating experiences suitable for individuals of all abilities. Our accessible equipment and focus on customized services make nature-based tourism attainable for everyone, encouraging a more diverse audience to connect with Extremadura's natural beauty.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Accessibility:** We put strong emphasis on equipment and activities that cater to individuals with varying mobility needs.
- **Sustainability:** We have an inclusive approach promoting equal access, while supporting the social sustainability of rural tourism.

## 2. Sustainable Environmental Practices

Panthos operates with a profound commitment to environmental stewardship, reducing the ecological impact through energy-efficient equipment and water-saving measures. Our adherence to eco-friendly practices ensures minimal disruption to natural habitats while enhancing visitor awareness of sustainable tourism.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Eco-Conscious Operations:** Our adoption of eco-friendly tools and low-impact procedures aligns with our mission of environmental protection.
- **Visitor Awareness:** Educating visitors on sustainability enhances the experience and fosters broader ecological responsibility.

## 3. Strategic Partnerships

By working with regional tourism boards and local businesses, we amplify our reach and strengthen our operational effectiveness. These collaborations enable us to provide richer, multifaceted experiences, drawing on local resources to boost community involvement and economic growth.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Community Integration:** Our partnerships with local entities enrich the visitor experience while supporting the regional economy.
- **Enhanced Services:** Joint efforts enable us to diversify our offerings and remain competitive within the eco-tourism market.

## 4. Experiential Focus

Panthos emphasizes experiential tourism, offering unique interactions like nighttime astronomy observations and guided eco-tours. This approach not only engages visitors emotionally but also solidifies our position as a premier choice for adventure tourism.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Distinctive Experiences:** Memorable, immersive activities like stargazing from a boat sets us apart in the competitive tourism landscape.
- **Customer Engagement:** The sensory and emotional connections created by these experiences boost customer satisfaction and retention.

## 5. Growth and Scalability

Panthos envisions growth through geographic expansion, development of new tourism packages, and increased collaboration. Key growth strategies include leveraging digital marketing, enhancing customer loyalty programs, and diversifying into other eco-tourism niches to attract broader demographics. These efforts are supported by continuous staff training and partnerships to maintain service quality and operational resilience.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable Model:** A focus on strategic expansion allows us to grow without compromising service quality.

- **Enhanced Customer Loyalty:** Ongoing efforts to engage and retain customers underscore our commitment to sustainable, long-term growth.

## Conclusion

Through our commitment to inclusive, sustainable, and experiential tourism, we serve as an exemplary model for eco-conscious travel that prioritises both environmental stewardship and community engagement. Our participation in the LookUP Programme has furthered these values, reinforcing our mission to provide enriching, accessible, and ecologically responsible tourism experiences.



## BEST PRACTICE 5 – Arturo Domínguez García

### BEST PRACTICE 5

#### Arturo Domínguez García (Spain)



Visitas Guiadas Extremadura, founded by historian and archaeologist Arturo Domínguez, specializes in cultural and heritage tours throughout Extremadura, Spain. The company focuses on creating immersive tourism experiences that combine historical and natural wonders, with its latest initiative, “Arqueo-Birding.” This unique offering merges archaeology and birdwatching within Monfragüe National Park, where Arturo’s extensive

knowledge and official guide authorization bring guests closer to both the natural and cultural richness of the area. The company’s commitment to sustainable, educational, and responsible tourism not only enhances visitors’ experiences but also supports local heritage conservation.

#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, Visitas Guiadas Extremadura offers tourism experiences that focus on blending historical exploration with natural immersion. Key activities include guided birdwatching tours to observe unique species in Monfragüe National Park, educational visits to Monfragüe Castle, and archaeological explorations of prehistoric rock art. These activities allow visitors to enjoy an eco-friendly, culturally rich experience that connects them with both the natural beauty and historic legacy of the area. Through these offerings, Visitas Guiadas Extremadura promotes sustainable tourism that supports environmental conservation and cultural appreciation.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Regenerative Tourism and Education

Visitas Guiadas Extremadura emphasises regenerative tourism, where visitors actively engage in preserving both the environment and cultural heritage. Through educational tours and hands-on conservation activities, visitors gain a deeper appreciation for the ecology and history of Monfragüe National Park. This approach goes beyond simply reducing impact - it aims to restore and enhance the region’s natural and cultural resources. By involving visitors in conservation efforts, Visitas Guiadas Extremadura ensures that tourism contributes positively to the community, leaving a lasting legacy.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Educational Focus:** Guided tours and conservation activities educate guests on the region’s natural and historical significance, fostering respect and appreciation.

- **Visitors' engagement:** Engaging visitors in conservation allows them to make meaningful contributions, enhancing their connection to the park and its heritage.

## 2. Collaboration with Local Producers

Collaboration with local producers is a core strategy for Visitas Guiadas Extremadura, allowing the company to create authentic, community-focused experiences. By partnering with local artisans, food producers, and other small businesses, Arturo ensures that tourism benefits the local economy and promotes cultural preservation. Experiences like locally sourced meals, artisan workshops, and farm-to-table tastings connect visitors to the community, offering an enriched, culturally immersive experience. This approach not only enhances the quality of visitor experiences but also fosters economic resilience and cultural pride within the region.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Community Support:** Partnerships with local producers strengthen the local economy and ensure tourism directly benefits the community.
- **Sustainable Sourcing:** Using locally sourced materials and services reduces environmental impact and enriches the visitor experience, enhancing authenticity and cultural connection.

## 3. Sustainability as a Core Principle

Sustainability is central to Visitas Guiadas Extremadura, with eco-friendly practices embedded in all operations to protect the natural and cultural heritage of Monfragüe National Park. Arturo prioritizes environmentally responsible tourism, balancing visitor engagement with preservation efforts. Initiatives like limiting tour group sizes, promoting waste reduction, and using locally sourced materials reduce environmental impact and preserve the integrity of historical sites and natural habitats. By integrating sustainability as a core value, Visitas Guiadas Extremadura not only appeals to eco-conscious visitors but also reinforces its role as a protector of Extremadura's heritage.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Eco-Conscious Operations:** Responsible practices like waste reduction and group size limits minimise the ecological footprint, aligning with the foundation's sustainable goals.
- **Sustainability Recognition:** This commitment strengthens the company's reputation, attracting travelers who prioritise eco-friendly, responsible travel experiences.

## 4. Targeted Market Segmentation

Visitas Guiadas Extremadura carefully targets travelers who value historical and natural experiences, such as eco-tourists, birdwatchers, and cultural heritage enthusiasts. By focusing on niche markets interested in archaeology, history, and nature, the company provides highly customised tours that resonate with visitor interests. This targeted approach allows Arturo to attract high-value, engaged visitors who seek meaningful experiences that respect both the environment and local culture, creating a loyal customer base aligned with the values of responsible tourism.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Customer-Centric Approach:** By focusing on eco-conscious travelers and cultural enthusiasts, it is important to craft experiences that deeply connect with visitors' values.
- **Personalised Offerings:** Tailored packages provide memorable and immersive experiences for diverse interests, from archaeology and history to birdwatching and eco-tourism.

## 5. Scalability and Growth Potential

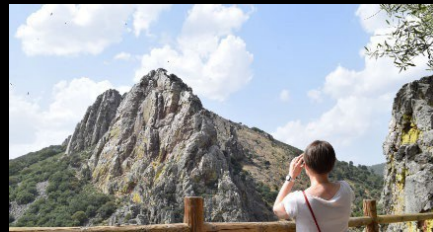
The scalable model of Visitas Guiadas Extremadura supports expansion while upholding the principles of sustainable tourism. Arturo's growth strategy includes offering new tours and diversifying activities, like adding themed trails or expanding services to other natural areas in Extremadura with rich historical and ecological assets. This model allows the business to grow responsibly, with a focus on collaboration with local entities and digital engagement to reach broader audiences without compromising on quality. The scalability of the offerings ensures sustainable growth and solidifies Visitas Guiadas Extremadura as a leader in eco-tourism in Extremadura.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Adaptable Model:** The business structure enables expansion into additional regions and seasons, maintaining high standards of quality and environmental responsibility.
- **Innovation:** Introducing digital tools, themed retreats, and strategic partnerships broadens Visitas Guiadas Extremadura's reach, enhancing visitor engagement and supporting sustainable growth.

## Conclusion

With Visitas Guiadas Extremadura, Arturo Domínguez combines his expertise in archaeology and history with a commitment to sustainable tourism. By blending cultural heritage and ecological conservation, Arturo offers unique, immersive experiences in Monfragüe National Park that benefit both the local community and the environment.



Through innovative approaches and best practices, Visitas Guiadas Extremadura positions itself as a leader in responsible tourism in Extremadura, fostering a lasting impact on both guests and the region.

## BEST PRACTICE 6 – SITY, TURISMO E INNOVACIÓN, S.L. [Vivemociones.es]

### BEST PRACTICE 6

## SITY, TURISMO E INNOVACIÓN, S.L. [Vivemociones.es] (Spain)

Vivemociones, a platform dedicated to creating, marketing, and distributing authentic and sustainable tourism experiences across Extremadura, Spain. Since 2018, our mission has been to offer visitors unique, high-quality experiences that capture the natural, cultural, and gastronomic richness of our region. With a focus on responsible tourism, our platform caters to individuals, families, and groups seeking memorable, eco-friendly adventures, from nature excursions to stargazing and culinary tours. Vivemociones is recognized as a Tourist Booking Centre by the Directorate General for Tourism of the Regional Government of Extremadura.



#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, we have expanded our platform to include sustainable tourism initiatives. The program has allowed us to create a digital hub for certified sustainable tourism experiences, featuring local suppliers who share our commitment to environmental and social responsibility. Through LookUP we have collaborated with local guides and suppliers, incorporating tools that support eco-friendly practices and enhance our offerings with experiences that promote awareness of light pollution and biodiversity.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Innovative, Sustainable Offerings

Vivemociones is dedicated to creating experiences that are not only memorable but also sustainable. We collaborate with certified local suppliers to ensure each experience respects the natural environment and cultural heritage of Extremadura, fostering an authentic connection between visitors and the places they explore.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Eco-Friendly Focus:** By prioritizing sustainable practices, we provide experiences that benefit both visitors and the local environment.
- **Authenticity and Impact:** Collaborating with local suppliers ensures that each experience is both genuine and impactful.

## 2. User-Centric Digital Platform

Our platform simplifies the booking process for users, making it easy to find, book, and share experiences across Extremadura. With an intuitive and responsive design, it ensures accessibility for a broad audience, from eco-tourists to casual travellers looking for unique experiences.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Ease of Access:** Our user-friendly platform enhances the customer experience, facilitating seamless booking and exploration.
- **Broad Appeal:** The platform's design allows us to attract a diverse range of travellers interested in sustainable and experiential tourism.

## 3. Community Collaboration and Local Engagement

Vivemociones is built on partnerships with local suppliers who share our commitment to sustainable tourism. By supporting these suppliers with digital tools and guidance on best practices, we strengthen the regional tourism ecosystem and ensure a high standard of quality and responsibility.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Supporting Local Economies:** Our partnerships help sustain regional economies and promote local talent.
- **Cultural Integrity:** Collaborating with local providers ensures that our experiences remain true to Extremadura's cultural heritage.

## 4. Targeted Market Strategy

We focus on responsible and eco-conscious travellers, tailoring our marketing to highlight our commitment to sustainability and unique experiences. Collaborations with eco-tourism agencies and rural accommodations further enhance our reach, attracting tourists looking for meaningful travel experiences.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Niche Market Alignment:** Targeting eco-conscious travellers helps us attract an audience that values sustainable tourism.
- **Enhanced Visibility:** Collaborations with tourism agencies increase our visibility among travellers interested in responsible tourism.

## 5. Growth and Scalability

Vivemociones is designed for scalability, with plans to expand our offerings and reach more eco-conscious travellers. By continually integrating new sustainable experiences, we can increase our impact while maintaining our commitment to quality and responsibility.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable Model:** Our business model supports growth without compromising our focus on sustainability.
- **Future Potential:** Expanding our offerings allows us to further promote sustainable tourism in Extremadura and beyond.

## Conclusion

At Vivemociones, we are committed to leading the way in sustainable, experiential tourism in Extremadura. Through the LookUp Program and our partnerships with local suppliers, we offer a diverse range of eco-friendly experiences that highlight the natural beauty and cultural heritage of our region. Our dedication to quality, sustainability, and community engagement ensures that Vivemociones remains a trusted and innovative platform for responsible tourism in Spain.

## BEST PRACTICE 7 – Hacienda Nava del Rey

### BEST PRACTICE 7

#### Hacienda Nava del Rey (Spain)

Hacienda Nava del Rey S.L. is a company based in the Sierra de Gata region of Extremadura, Spain. Through our brand, Trevejo Celeste, we specialise in astro-tourism while also offering a combination of cultural, gastronomic, and nature-based experiences. Our mission is to create a comprehensive tourism destination that integrates accommodation, local gastronomy, and sustainability, all while offering a unique connection to the stunning night skies of our region.

#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

At Trevejo Celeste, we offer guided astronomical observations in exceptional locations such as the historic Trevejo Castle, which provides a perfect setting due to its lack of light pollution. Our sky observation events are often combined with local food, wine, and live music, offering visitors a truly immersive cultural and cosmic experience.

In addition to astro-tourism, we have developed the Sky School, where visitors of all ages can learn about the history and science of astronomy. This includes educational courses on astronomy and cosmology, designed to enhance our guests' knowledge while making their visit even more memorable.

We also launched a digital platform to streamline the visitor experience. This platform allows guests to book a full range of activities, including accommodation, local products, and experiences like nature hikes, wine tastings, and historical tours. This integration helps promote local businesses and facilitates cross-selling opportunities between our partners.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Astro-tourism and Educational Outreach

Our primary focus is on providing a unique astro-tourism experience that is both educational and immersive. Through Trevejo Celeste, we combine sky observations with local cultural offerings such as regional food and music, creating a memorable and multifaceted experience for visitors. Additionally, our Sky School brings the science of astronomy to life with interactive courses and workshops.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Combining education with tourism:** Offering astronomy courses and hands-on learning experiences makes tourism more engaging and educational.
- **Creating an immersive experience:** Combining astronomy with local culture, gastronomy, and live events creates a richer, more memorable experience for visitors.

## 2. Collaboration with Local Businesses

Our success is built on collaboration with local businesses, allowing us to offer a seamless and integrated tourism experience. Our digital platform connects various services such as accommodation, gastronomic experiences, and activities, offering visitors a one-stop-shop for their trip to the Sierra de Gata.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Cross-selling and partnerships:** By partnering with local businesses, we create mutual benefits, supporting the local economy while providing a more complete experience for tourists.
- **Digital integration:** Our platform simplifies booking and ensures visibility for local businesses, promoting a connected and collaborative tourism ecosystem.

## 3. Sustainability and Environmental Awareness

We have a strong commitment to sustainability, evident through our annual Sustainability Fair in Sierra de Gata. This event promotes environmental education, local products, and sustainable practices. Additionally, our business is Starlight Certified, recognizing our dedication to protecting the night skies from light pollution.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Sustainability at the core:** Promoting eco-friendly tourism and local products aligns our business with sustainable values and helps conserve natural resources.
- **Environmental leadership:** Organizing events like the Sustainability Fair raises awareness and educates both locals and tourists about the importance of environmental conservation.

## 4. Targeting Specific Market Segments

We cater to diverse tourist profiles, including eco-tourists, nature lovers, and astronomy enthusiasts, tailoring our offerings to suit the needs of each segment. By providing customized experiences, such as family-friendly astronomy activities or more technical sky observations for enthusiasts, we attract a broad range of visitors.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Targeted market segmentation:** Offering tailored experiences allows us to engage a variety of tourists, increasing satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits.
- **Diverse offerings:** By providing a mix of activities - from astronomy to local gastronomy - we can appeal to a wider audience.

## 5. Scalability and Growth Potential

Our business model is designed for **scalability**, allowing us to expand the range of services we offer both within and beyond Sierra de Gata. The **collaborative platform** and our partnerships with other businesses ensure that we can grow while maintaining the quality of the visitor experience.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable business model:** The integration of digital services and collaboration with local businesses positions us for future growth and expansion.
- **Cross-border collaborations:** By working with other astro-tourism destinations, we have the potential to expand and create a larger network of experiences.



## Conclusion

At Hacienda Nava del Rey S.L., our Trevejo Celeste project represents a new frontier in sustainable and educational tourism. By combining astro-tourism with local culture and a deep commitment to the environment, we have created a unique and enriching experience for our visitors. Our integrated digital platform and collaborative approach with local businesses ensure that we support the local economy while offering a seamless and engaging experience for our guests. With a focus on sustainability, innovation, and education, we are well-positioned for future growth and continued success in the eco-tourism market.

## BEST PRACTICE 8 – HORECA LAND ROMANIA SRL

### BEST PRACTICE 8

#### HORECA LAND ROMANIA SRL (Romania)

Horeca Land Romania SRL was founded by Stelian Burduhos and initially focused on hospitality solutions like kitchen equipment and event management. Evolving through the years, the business has shifted towards creating transformative tourism experiences that promote wellness, sustainability, and cultural immersion, now known as Yoga in Transylvania, a partnership with his spouse, the yoga teacher Anca Branovici-Burduhos. With offerings ranging from yoga and Ayurvedic retreats to eco-friendly accommodations and cultural activities, we provide guests with authentic and impactful experiences that support both personal well-being and local communities.



#### Activities within the LookUP Program

Horeca Land offers experiences that connect guests with wellness, culture, and nature. Key activities include yoga and Ayurveda workshops for mental and physical balance, cultural and nature tours exploring Transylvanian heritage, farm-to-table dining with local organic ingredients, and stargazing and moon rituals that celebrate the beauty of the natural surroundings. These activities create a holistic and sustainable tourism model that enhances both guest experiences and community well-being.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Regenerative Tourism and Education

Horeca Land emphasises regenerative tourism, where guests actively participate in preserving the environment and culture.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Environmental Education:** Our activities such as forest walks and stargazing educate guests about conservation.
- **Hands-on Experiences:** Workshops and guided tours allow our guests to engage deeply with the region's natural and cultural heritage.

##### 2. Collaboration with Local Producers

Horeca Land collaborates with local businesses and artisans to deliver authentic, sustainable experiences.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Strengthening Local Economy:** Our partnerships with local artisans and producers contribute to a circular economy that directly supports the community, creating economic resilience for both Horeca Land and its partners.

- **Culturally Rich Partnerships:** Collaborations with local suppliers allow our business to create eco-friendly, culturally authentic experiences that appeal travellers seeking unique, mindful experiences.

### 3. Sustainability as a Core Principle

Sustainability is at the heart of Horeca Land's operations, with eco-friendly practices embedded in every aspect of the business.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Environmentally Responsible Operations:** We prioritise initiatives such as waste reduction, local sourcing, and biodiversity conservation, ensuring our activities maintain a minimal environmental footprint.
- **Reputation in Sustainable Tourism:** This commitment reinforces our position as a trusted destination for eco-conscious travelers, enhancing our image as a leader in sustainable tourism.

### 4. Targeted Market Segmentation

Horeca Land attracts travelers who value wellness, cultural immersion, and sustainability.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Focused Guest Experiences:** By tailoring our offerings to eco-conscious travelers, we ensure that our activities resonate with visitors' values and interests in wellness and cultural depth.
- **Tailored Packages for Diverse Interests:** With flexible options ranging from wellness retreats to cultural tours, we provide personalised experiences that cater to various interests, ensuring each guest's visit is memorable and impactful.

### 5. Scalability and Growth Potential

Horeca Land's scalable business model allows for growth while maintaining its commitment to sustainable tourism.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Flexible Growth Structure:** Our adaptable business model supports expansion into new regions and the addition of seasonal activities without compromising the quality or sustainability of the experiences.
- **Expanding Reach Through Innovation:** Plans to integrate digital tools, themed retreats, and partnerships with wellness brands increase our visibility and engagement with target audiences, setting the foundation for sustained, long-term success.

## Conclusion

With Yoga in Transylvania by Horeca Land, we are leading the way in sustainable wellness tourism. By merging eco-friendly practices, cultural immersion, and strong community partnerships, we offer transformative experiences that benefit guests, local communities, and the environment. Our commitment to responsible tourism and continuous innovation positions Horeca Land for long-term growth and impact in the wellness tourism sector.



## BEST PRACTICE 9 – Arctic Stargazing Tours

### BEST PRACTICE 9

#### Arctic Stargazing Tours (Finland)

Arctic Stargazing Tours, is a tourism company dedicated to creating unique, immersive stargazing experiences in the Arctic region. Our mission is to connect visitors with the wonders of the Arctic night sky through carefully curated experiences that blend science, nature, and local culture. We offer a range of activities, including aurora borealis observations, astrophotography workshops, and guided tours, all designed to provide guests with a memorable journey into the Arctic wilderness under the stars.



#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, Arctic Stargazing Tours has expanded its offerings to include enhanced educational components and collaborations with local scientists and astronomers. Through LookUP, we have been able to integrate topics such as light pollution awareness, environmental impact reduction, and local folklore related to the stars. This programme has allowed us to improve our offerings, providing guests with a richer experience that includes both scientific insights and cultural narratives, adding depth and perspective to each stargazing event.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Educational Focus and Experiential Learning

Arctic Stargazing Tours emphasizes the importance of education through experiential learning. Our tours are structured to offer not only stargazing but also information on celestial phenomena, the effects of light pollution, and the unique Arctic ecosystem. By doing so, we aim to provide a deeper, more meaningful experience for our guests.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Immersive Learning:** We engage guests in scientific learning to enhance their understanding and appreciation of the Arctic night sky.
- **Awareness of Light Pollution:** We raise awareness about the impact of light pollution to foster a greater commitment to environmental conservation.

##### 2. Partnerships with Local Experts and Indigenous Guides

We collaborate with local scientists, astronomers, and indigenous guides to ensure that our guests receive accurate information and cultural context about the Arctic skies. This collaboration also supports local communities by providing economic opportunities and preserving indigenous knowledge.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Community Involvement:** Partnering with local experts enriches our tours and strengthens our relationship with the community.
- **Cultural Authenticity:** Indigenous guides provide cultural insights that make each experience unique and respectful of local heritage.

**3. Commitment to Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship**

Our operations are rooted in sustainability, with practices designed to minimise our ecological footprint. We use eco-friendly materials, limit group sizes to reduce impact, and educate guests on preserving the Arctic environment, ensuring our tours align with environmental protection efforts.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Eco-Friendly Practices:** By implementing sustainable measures, we set a high standard for responsible tourism.
- **Environmental Education:** Informing guests about Arctic conservation enhances the long-term impact of our tours.

**4. Tailored Experiences for Diverse Audiences**

We offer tailored experiences that cater to a variety of interests, from astrophotography workshops for photographers to aurora chases for adventure seekers. This customisation ensures that each guest has an experience that aligns with their interests and level of knowledge about the Arctic and astronomy.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Audience Engagement:** Customised tours appeal to a wide range of guests, increasing satisfaction and engagement.
- **Flexible Offerings:** Tailored experiences provide flexibility, allowing us to meet the unique needs of our diverse clientele.

**5. Growth and Scalability**

Arctic Stargazing Tours is structured for growth, with a focus on expanding our reach and diversifying our offerings. Our scalable model includes plans to add new destinations within the Arctic region and offer seasonal experiences that attract both returning and new guests. By maintaining high standards of quality and sustainability, we aim to increase our impact while preserving the pristine Arctic environment.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Scalable Model:** Our business model supports sustainable growth while upholding environmental responsibilities.
- **Future Expansion:** Adding new destinations and seasonal experiences will allow us to broaden our audience and enhance our offerings.

## Conclusion

Through Arctic Stargazing Tours, we are dedicated to offering transformative, educational, and sustainable tourism experiences that connect people to the wonders of the Arctic night sky. With support from the LookUP Programme and a strong commitment to local collaboration, we provide guests with an experience that is both enriching and respectful of the unique Arctic environment. By focusing on growth and sustainability, Arctic Stargazing Tours is poised to become a leader in Arctic ecotourism, inspiring visitors to cherish and protect this extraordinary region.

## BEST PRACTICE 10 – Viendo Verde

## BEST PRACTICE 10

## Viendo Verde (Spain)

Viendo Verde, led by Alejandro Palomo, is a company dedicated to promoting sustainable and educational tourism in Extremadura, particularly focused on the region's rich biodiversity, especially birds. We aim to offer responsible and immersive tourism experiences that showcase natural resources and local culture. Our flagship project, the QR BIRD EXPERIENCE, allows visitors to Monfragüe National Park to enjoy a unique birdwatching experience enhanced by QR technology. This integration enables tourists to access interactive digital content about the bird species they encounter, deepening their connection to and understanding of the natural environment.



## Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, we have expanded our mission to raise awareness about light pollution and its effects on wildlife, particularly nocturnal species and birds. We have organised various activities that combine astrotourism with birdwatching, offering participants the opportunity to learn how light pollution affects ecosystems. These experiences, along with educational tours and workshops, help participants gain a deeper understanding of the importance of sustainable tourism and environmental conservation.

Additionally, we work closely with local businesses and authorities to support community-centered tourism, promoting zero-kilometer products. This approach ensures that tourism remains eco-friendly while benefiting the local economy and supporting the residents of the region.

## Best Practices from the Business Plan

## 1. Integration of Technology and Tourism

Through the QR BIRD EXPERIENCE, we have successfully integrated QR code technology into traditional birdwatching, offering a digital experience that enhances user engagement. By scanning QR codes, visitors can access detailed information about bird species, sounds, and videos, enriching their educational experience.

## Key Takeaways:

- **Leveraging technology:** The use of QR codes enables interactive and personalized content, improving the overall visitor experience and reducing the need for printed materials.
- **Increased user engagement:** Digital tools provide an immersive and educational experience, making nature tourism both enjoyable and informative.

## 2. Focus on Sustainable Tourism

At Viendo Verde, sustainability is at the core of our operations. We promote eco-tourism and encourage the use of zero-kilometer products, supporting the local economy. Additionally, by digitising experiences through QR codes, we reduce our environmental impact and ensure a more sustainable approach to tourism.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Sustainability as a value proposition:** The focus on reducing printed materials, supporting local economies, and protecting natural resources positions us as a leader in eco-tourism.
- **Environmental conservation:** Through education and awareness, we foster a deeper appreciation for nature and the environment, contributing to its long-term protection.

## 3. Collaboration with Local Entities

We have built strong relationships with local businesses and public authorities, creating a network of cooperation that enhances tourism services. By forming strategic alliances with SMEs and local suppliers, we have boosted the local economy while improving the tourist experience.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Building strategic partnerships:** Collaborating with local accommodations, restaurants, and service providers allows us to offer more comprehensive and appealing tourism packages.
- **Synergies with competitors:** Rather than viewing competitors as threats, we have formed collaborations that allowed us to share resources and promote tourism together.

## 4. Targeted Market Segmentation

At Viendo Verde, we have focused on specific market segments such as ecotourists, birdwatchers, and cultural tourists. This has allowed us to tailor our offerings to meet the specific needs of each group, maximising customer satisfaction and ensuring a relevant experience.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Deep customer profiling:** Understanding the motivations and behaviours of different tourists has enabled us to personalise our offerings, resulting in greater loyalty and satisfaction.
- **Diversification of offerings:** By offering different experiences tailored to visitors' interests, we ensure that our services appeal to a broad audience.

## 5. Effective Marketing and Distribution

The success of the QR BIRD EXPERIENCE has been supported by an effective digital marketing strategy, including social media, SEO, and collaborations with influencers in sustainable tourism. This approach has allowed us to reach a wide audience that aligns with our values.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Content marketing:** Blogs, videos, and social media engagement have been key to raising awareness about conservation and eco-tourism, positioning Viendo Verde as a thought leader in the industry.



- **Collaborative marketing:** Partnering with influencers and experts in sustainable tourism has helped us reach new audiences and enhance our visibility.

## 6. Scalability and Financial Sustainability

Our business model is scalable, as QR technology can be implemented in other regions and tourism services. Additionally, our financial projections show steady growth and viability over time.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable model:** The QR technology we use can be easily replicated in other regions, offering high growth potential with minimal additional investment.
- **Financial sustainability:** Our financial plan demonstrates solid economic viability, ensuring sustained growth over the long term.

## Conclusion

At Viendo Verde, our QR BIRD EXPERIENCE has become a pioneering example of sustainable tourism in Extremadura. Through the LookUP Program, we not only educate visitors about biodiversity and light pollution, but also promote responsible tourism that benefits the entire community. By maintaining a focus on digital engagement, sustainability, and collaborative partnerships, we are well-positioned for long-term growth and success in the eco-tourism market.



## BEST PRACTICE 11

### Casa el Pui (Spain)

Ana Lozano and Alexander Hick are the founders of Casa el Pui, an eco-tourism retreat in the Catalan Pyrenees dedicated to sustainable living and environmental education. We designed Casa el Pui as a self-sufficient, off-grid sanctuary where guests can immerse themselves in nature while learning about sustainability. Powered entirely by renewable energy, Casa el Pui combines Nature-based experiences and hands-on eco-practices to offer a unique, responsible tourism experience. Thanks to LookUP, we are now on track to incorporate activities such as birdwatching and stargazing, all connected with our mission to promote sustainability through immersive educational experiences.



#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

Through the LookUP Programme, we have expanded our offerings to integrate astrotourism and birdwatching with educational programs on biodiversity and environmental preservation. This collaboration has enabled us to bring in local astronomers and naturalists, who guide guests through stargazing and birdwatching sessions with added insight into the importance of light pollution reduction and species conservation.

Additionally, we have enhanced our educational workshops on renewable energy and organic gardening, providing guests with more ways to engage in sustainable practices. This focus on awareness and conservation aligns with the goals of LookUP, helping us contribute to the preservation of the Pyrenean ecosystem and the promotion of eco-friendly tourism.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Educational Workshops and Sustainability Training

Casa el Pui offers a series of workshops on renewable energy, permaculture, and organic gardening, equipping guests with practical skills to adopt eco-friendly practices. These workshops emphasize the importance of sustainable living and empower guests to incorporate these principles into their lives beyond their stay.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Educational Impact:** Our workshops provide valuable, hands-on education, making sustainability accessible and relatable.

- **Eco-Responsibility:** By sharing knowledge, we encourage guests to adopt eco-friendly habits, reinforcing our commitment to sustainability.

## 2. Collaboration with Local Experts and the LookUp Program

We collaborate closely with **local guides, astronomers, and ecologists** to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Pyrenean environment. Through LookUP, we have been able to expand these collaborations, bringing in specialists who enhance our stargazing and birdwatching sessions with expert insight.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Community Engagement:** By partnering with local experts, we enrich the guest experience while supporting local talent.
- **Enhanced Learning:** The LookUP Program has strengthened our educational offerings, allowing guests to gain a deeper understanding of the environment.

## 3. Commitment to Sustainability

Sustainability is at the core of Casa el Pui. From solar-powered facilities to locally sourced food, every aspect of our operation is designed to reduce environmental impact. Our practices include waste reduction, water conservation, and the use of organic, local ingredients.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Eco-Friendly Operations:** We prioritize sustainable practices in all aspects of our business, setting an example for responsible tourism.
- **Support for Local Agriculture:** By sourcing ingredients locally, we support the regional economy and promote sustainable food practices.

## 4. Tailored Experiences and Market Segmentation

Our eco-retreat offers customized experiences for nature lovers, families, and eco-conscious travellers. By segmenting our activities, such as stargazing nights, birdwatching hikes, and gardening workshops, we cater to specific interests and needs, enhancing the overall guest experience.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Diverse Audience Appeal:** Our varied offerings attract a broad range of guests, from eco-tourists to families and educational groups.
- **Personalization:** By tailoring our experiences, we ensure that each guest has an engaging and memorable stay.

## 5. Scalability and Growth Potential

Casa el Pui's model is designed for growth, with a focus on maintaining high-quality, eco-friendly services as we expand. Our workshops and nature-based experiences are scalable, allowing us to reach new audiences while staying true to our mission of sustainability.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Scalable Model:** Our sustainable model allows us to grow responsibly, expanding our impact without compromising quality.
- **Future Vision:** We aim to continue leading in eco-tourism by offering more workshops and eco-friendly experiences.

## Conclusion

At Casa el Pui, our mission is to create a sustainable retreat that connects guests to nature and equips them with the knowledge to live more responsibly. Through the LookUP Programme and our partnerships with local experts, we offer meaningful, eco-friendly experiences that leave a lasting impact on our guests and contribute to the preservation of the Pyrenean environment. Our business model reflects a commitment to education, sustainability, and community, ensuring that Casa el Pui continues to serve as a beacon for responsible tourism.

## BEST PRACTICE 12

### Tambor del Llano (Spain)



Tambor del Llano, is a unique ecotourism destination located in the heart of Grazalema Natural Park, Spain. Our mission is to provide immersive nature experiences, balancing tourism with sustainability through activities such as stargazing, bird-watching, and horseback riding. We aim to raise environmental awareness and appreciation for our natural surroundings, promoting biodiversity and supporting the local economy through responsible tourism.

Our approach combines accommodations with conservation-focused activities that align with both our business model and environmental goals. We operate a small lodge with a limited number of rooms to reduce our ecological footprint while fostering a closer connection with our guests and our 32-hectare natural property. Additionally, we maintain orchards and grazing land for sustainable farming, supplying fresh produce to our on-site restaurant.

#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

Through the LookUP Programme, we have achieved several goals to enhance our ecotourism offerings. This includes acquiring a telescope for stargazing, organizing a 5-day training programme for residents as stargazing guides, and establishing partnerships with local astronomers and ecotourism professionals. These activities help us address knowledge gaps in astronomy, allowing us to offer richer stargazing experiences.

Furthermore, we are developing a bird-watching programme, facilitated by a new collaboration with a local bird-watching expert. This initiative involves the installation of a permanent bird hide, allowing visitors to observe local wildlife closely, enhancing our educational focus on nature conservation.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Sustainable Operations and Community Integration

Tambor del Llano prioritises sustainability and community engagement. We reduce environmental impact through eco-friendly farming that fosters biodiversity, while collaborating with local guides and businesses. This enriches our offerings, strengthens local jobs, and promotes knowledge exchange.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Community partnerships:** We foster strong community partnerships to enhance service offerings sustainably.

- **Local talent engagement:** We engage local talent and experts to diversify and enrich tourism experiences.

## 2. Developing Skills and Awareness in Astronomy and Nature Conservation

Tambor del Llano focuses on building local expertise through training in astronomy and bird-watching, creating a knowledgeable guide team. Our stargazing and bird-watching activities also foster appreciation for dark skies and biodiversity, linking ecotourism with environmental stewardship.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Build local talent with training:** We use structured training to develop specialised local talent.
- **Promote awareness via educational tourism:** We integrate educational elements into tourism to enhance environmental awareness.

## 3. Targeted Market Segmentation

Our programmes cater to ecotourists and nature enthusiasts by offering tailored experiences that foster a personal connection with nature. While we attract international tourists, we also engage local visitors to cultivate a dedicated community of astronomy enthusiasts and conservation advocates. This dual approach strengthens our outreach and promotes ecological awareness within the community.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Niche market focus:** We concentrate on segments that prioritise sustainability and personalised experiences.
- **Diverse outreach strategy:** We balance local and international efforts to create a varied customer base.

## 4. Growth and Scalability

To drive growth and scalability, we plan to expand our eco-conscious activities by partnering with nearby lodges to replicate our successful model. We are also investing in infrastructure, such as a dedicated observatory building, to enhance visitor experiences. Additionally, leveraging online marketing will help us reach a broader audience, raise awareness, and establish our brand as a leader in sustainable tourism. This combined approach will foster long-term growth while promoting eco-friendly practices.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Investing in sustainable infrastructure:** We invest in infrastructure that aligns with growth objectives while preserving the natural environment.
- **Harnessing technology and partnerships:** We leverage technology and partnerships for greater market reach and operational scalability.

## Conclusion

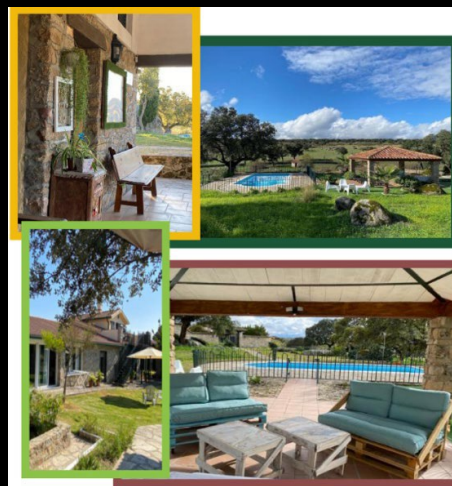
At Tambor del Llano, we are committed to delivering meaningful and sustainable nature-based experiences. Our collaboration with LookUP has allowed us to enhance our operations, expanding our stargazing and bird-watching programs to offer a more educational and eco-friendly tourism model. By continuing to integrate local partnerships, sustainable practices, and market-focused initiatives, we aim to grow our influence within ecotourism while preserving our environment.

## BEST PRACTICE 13 – Lidenex

## BEST PRACTICE 13

## Lidenex, Lugar Ideal de Descanso en Extremadura (Spain)

María Teresa Pérez is the founder of Lidenex, a tourism company based in the heart of the Dehesa ecosystem in Extremadura, Spain. Our focus is on regenerative tourism, where we aim to provide authentic, meaningful experiences that allow travelers to connect with nature, while actively contributing to environmental preservation. At Lidenex, we offer accommodation and various eco-friendly activities such as reforestation, birdwatching, and stargazing. Our business model is grounded in sustainability and the principles of responsible tourism, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the beauty and tranquility of the Dehesa while supporting local biodiversity and cultural heritage.



## Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, we have developed regenerative tourism experiences that aim to educate visitors about the importance of environmental conservation. Our activities include guided star and bird observation tours, which take place in the pure natural surroundings of the Dehesa. Guests can participate in reforestation projects, learn about sustainable farming practices, and enjoy the clear, unpolluted night skies.

One of our major achievements is creating an integrated, sustainable tourism model that balances ecological preservation with tourism development. By fostering local partnerships and engaging with the community, we ensure that our business positively impacts both the environment and the regional economy. We continue to innovate through digital platforms and collaborations with local artisans and businesses, promoting eco-friendly practices and products.

## Best Practices from the Business Plan

## 1. Regenerative Tourism and Education

At Lidenex, we are deeply committed to regenerative tourism, which means giving back to the environment and local communities through tourism. Our guests are not only observers but active participants in activities like reforestation, ecological workshops, and sustainable agriculture.



**Key Takeaways:**

- **Environmental education:** By incorporating educational elements into our tours, we ensure that visitors leave with a better understanding of the Dehesa ecosystem and the importance of conservation.
- **Hands-on activities:** Offering activities such as tree planting and birdwatching connects visitors with nature in a meaningful way, deepening their experience.

**2. Collaboration with Local Communities**

We work closely with local businesses and suppliers to offer authentic experiences to our visitors. This collaborative approach allows us to support the local economy while ensuring our operations remain sustainable.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Community engagement:** By involving local artisans and producers, we create a circular economy that benefits everyone involved.
- **Local partnerships:** Collaboration with local businesses helps create unique, sustainable experiences that attract eco-conscious travelers.

**3. Sustainability as a Core Value**

Sustainability is at the heart of everything we do at Lidenex. From the way we manage our accommodations to our day-to-day operations, we strive to minimise our environmental impact and promote eco-friendly tourism. We also run the annual Sustainability Fair, which highlights the importance of eco-tourism and promotes environmental conservation.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Sustainable practices:** We use renewable energy, manage waste responsibly, and work to preserve the local biodiversity through our activities.
- **Ecological certifications:** Our commitment to sustainability has earned us recognition in the field, enhancing our reputation as an eco-conscious business.

**4. Targeted Market Segmentation**

Our business is designed to attract conscious travelers—people who seek meaningful, transformative experiences and care about minimizing their environmental footprint. We target tourists who value authenticity, nature, and sustainability.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Customer focus:** We attract visitors who prioritise eco-friendly tourism and seek immersive experiences in nature.
- **Tailored experiences:** By offering personalised packages, we cater to a wide range of travelers, from nature enthusiasts to those interested in wellness and sustainability.

## 5. Growth and Scalability

Our business model is designed to scale, allowing us to expand our tourism offerings while maintaining our commitment to sustainability. We plan to introduce new experiences, such as themed retreats and gamified tourism, to attract diverse tourist profiles.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable model:** The flexibility of our offerings allows us to expand without compromising on sustainability.
- **Innovation:** We plan to incorporate technology and gamification into our experiences, enhancing visitor engagement and encouraging return visits.

## Conclusion

At Lidenex, we are pioneers in regenerative tourism, focusing on delivering authentic, nature-based experiences that support environmental conservation and local communities. By combining eco-friendly practices with strong community partnerships and innovative tourism models, we are well-positioned for future growth in the sustainable tourism sector. Our goal is to continue expanding our offerings, creating a lasting impact on both our guests and the environment, while maintaining our commitment to responsible tourism.



## BEST PRACTICE 14 – Rural Xtreme

## BEST PRACTICE 14

## Rural Xtreme (Spain)

Nicolás Alonso, is the founder of Rural Xtreme, an active tourism company that showcases the natural and cultural wealth of Extremadura. Along with Jorge Díaz, we have designed a variety of experiences, from climbing and kayaking routes to wine tasting and cultural tours of medieval castles. Rural Xtreme was founded with a mission to create immersive experiences that combine adventure with the rich heritage and gastronomy of Extremadura. Our flagship experience, Astrotourism in Medellín: A Multisensory Encounter with History and the Universe, merges heritage with stargazing and gourmet tastings, appealing to both adults and families with children.



## Activities within the LookUP Programme

Through our participation in the LookUP Programme, we have enhanced our offerings to include astrotourism alongside our adventure tourism experiences. This programme has provided us with tools and resources to improve stargazing sessions and incorporate educational elements on light pollution and astronomy into our tours. Additionally, LookUP has facilitated collaborations with local astronomers and cultural experts, enabling us to elevate the quality and impact of our experiences.

## Best Practices from the Business Plan

## 1. Diverse Eco-Tourism Experiences and Educational Focus

Rural Xtreme combines adventure, heritage, and gastronomy to create unique experiences. Our activities, including kayaking, hiking, and cultural tours, emphasise interaction with the natural and historical environment. By educating guests about the local heritage and ecosystem, we provide a meaningful, informative experience that fosters a deeper appreciation for Extremadura's cultural and environmental treasures.

## Key Takeaways:

- **Unique Adventure and Education:** By combining nature exploration with education, we offer a comprehensive eco-tourism experience.
- **Promotion of Local Heritage:** Through our tours, we aim to showcase the region's rich cultural and historical heritage.

## 2. Strategic Partnerships with Local Experts and Providers

Rural Xtreme collaborates with local **astrotourism, gastronomy, and cultural tourism** providers to create immersive experiences. These partnerships ensure that our services are both authentic and beneficial to the local economy, promoting a responsible tourism model that supports local businesses.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Community-Centric Tourism:** Collaborating with local businesses allows us to offer culturally rich and community-oriented experiences.
- **Support for Regional Economy:** By partnering with local producers, we strengthen the regional economy and offer guests a true taste of Extremaduran culture.

## 3. Commitment to Sustainability and Environmental Awareness

Environmental conservation is integral to our operations at Rural Xtreme. Our tours emphasize eco-friendly practices and respect for the natural landscape, including efforts to reduce waste and promote awareness of sustainable tourism practices among guests.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Sustainable Operations:** Our commitment to eco-friendly tourism sets a high standard for responsible travel in the region.
- **Environmental Education:** We use each tour as an opportunity to educate guests on the importance of protecting natural and historical resources.

## 4. Flexible and Customizable Experiences

We tailor our experiences to the needs and preferences of our guests, offering both family-friendly and adult-oriented options. This flexibility allows us to reach a broader audience, including families, young adventurers, and culture enthusiasts.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Broad Appeal:** Our ability to adapt activities to different audience segments ensures a personalized and engaging experience.
- **Customization for Satisfaction:** Tailored activities make each experience memorable and fulfilling for our guests.

## 5. Scalability and Growth Potential

The Rural Xtreme model is designed to be scalable, with plans to replicate our astrotourism and cultural experiences in additional heritage sites across Extremadura. We aim to expand our reach while preserving our commitment to high-quality, sustainable tourism practices.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable Business Model:** Our model supports growth while maintaining a focus on sustainable, high-quality services.
- **Potential for Regional Expansion:** By expanding to other heritage sites, we can increase our impact on eco-tourism in Extremadura.

## Conclusion

Through Rural Xtreme, my goal is to provide tourists with an adventure-rich experience that celebrates the beauty, history, and culture of Extremadura. Our involvement in the LookUP Programme has enabled us to expand our offerings and foster partnerships that strengthen our connection to the community. With a focus on sustainability, education, and collaboration, Rural Xtreme is dedicated to showcasing the best of Extremadura in a way that respects and uplifts the local environment and culture.

## BEST PRACTICE 15 – Dadu Adela Persoana Fizica Autorizata

### BEST PRACTICE 15

#### Dadu Adela Persoana Fizica Autorizata (Romania)



Adela Dadu is the founder of Dadu Adela Persoana Fizica Autorizata, a Romanian business based in Sibiu, Romania. Our focus is on mindful and sustainable tourism, providing visitors with unique, meaningful experiences that highlight Romania's cultural heritage and natural landscapes. We see tourism in a holistic way with a focus on our travelers' wellbeing.

We offer multisensory experiences inspiring curiosity for self-discovery and improvement.

We craft moments to remember through the art of storytelling and nature immersion. We design sustainable experiences with a positive impact on local communities and the environment but, always bearing in mind our travelers' needs.

Also, we believe in the transformative power of travel with a deep positive impact on both our guests and our destination. We have the ability to listen and craft tours that perfectly fit our travelers. Due to our long expertise in tourism and mindfulness, we have learned that we must connect meaningfully with our guests, be emphatic and express ourselves authentically. We use evocative imagery, storytelling, and personal vulnerability to engage and inspire travelers.

#### Activities within the LookUP Programme



As part of the LookUP Programme, we have developed tourism experiences that educate visitors on environmental conservation and sustainability. Key activities include mindful hikes that combine forest bathing with wildlife observation, cultural tours of Transylvania's historic sites, and farm-to-table experiences featuring local cuisine and cooking workshops. Additionally, artisan collaborations offer hands-

on workshops in traditional crafts (cooking, baking, and pottery). These activities promote a tourism model that supports both environmental and cultural sustainability while fostering community partnerships.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Regenerative Tourism and Education

We are dedicated to regenerative, experiential tourism, encouraging visitors to actively contribute to the environment and local communities.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Environmental Education:** our guests leave with a better understanding of the local ecosystem and conservation needs. Experience is the most valuable source of knowledge.
- **Interactive Activities:** our hands-on experiences, like hiking and wildlife observation, deepen our visitors' connection to nature.

**2. Collaboration with Local Producers**

By collaborating with local businesses and suppliers, we ensure that tourism operations support the small local economy.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Community Engagement:** we involve artisans and producers trying, thus, to strengthen the local economy.
- **Authentic Experiences:** our partnerships with locals help create unique experiences that attract mindful travellers.

**3. Sustainability as a Core Value**

Sustainability and positive impact are central to our approach, with eco-friendly practices woven into all aspects of our tourism business. From the way we manage tours to the partnerships we build, each decision reflects a commitment to minimising environmental impact and promoting a respectful relationship with nature.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Eco-Friendly Operations:** initiatives such as minimising waste and supporting local biodiversity are core to our activities.
- **Sustainability Recognition:** our commitment to eco-friendly practices enhances our reputation as a responsible tourism provider.

**4. Targeted Market Segmentation**

The business is tailored to attract mindful travelers - those who value authentic, meaningful travel experiences with an emphasis on sustainability. We cater to individuals and groups who are interested in connecting deeply with the culture, nature, and traditions of the Sibiu region. We target visitors who practice slow travel, appreciate mindful activities and enjoy their journey consciously.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Customer-Centric Approach:** we focus on eco-conscious travelers seeking immersive cultural experiences.
- **Personalized Offerings:** our tailored packages cater diverse groups, from nature lovers to wellness enthusiasts.

**5. Scalability and Growth Potential**

We have developed a flexible, scalable business model that allows for the expansion of our tourism offerings while maintaining a strong commitment to sustainability. This structure enables us to grow the business by introducing new activities and destinations while preserving the core values of responsible tourism.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Adaptable Model:** our flexibility allows for growth without compromising on sustainability.
- **Innovation:** our future plans include expanding with digital AI tools and themed retreats enhancing visitor engagement.

### Conclusion

Dadu Adela Persoana Fizica Autorizata is a pioneer of mindful tourism business in Romania, dedicated to creating nature-based experiences that support environmental and cultural conservation. By merging eco-friendly practices with strong local partnerships and innovative tourism models, our business is well-positioned for future growth in sustainable tourism, aiming to leave a lasting positive impact on visitors and the environment alike.





## BEST PRACTICE 16 – Step by Step Travel SRL

### BEST PRACTICE 16

#### Step by Step Travel SRL (Romania)

At Step by Step Travel SRL, Claudia Popelca and Magda Ienci lead Romania's tourism sector in offering meaningful, sustainable travel experiences. By combining astronomy, cultural immersion, and eco-friendly practices, we provide transformative experiences that connect visitors with Romania's natural beauty and heritage. This commitment to responsible tourism and innovation positions **Step by Step Travel** for lasting growth and positive impact in the sustainable travel industry.



#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, we offer sustainable, experience-driven tourism that educates visitors on astronomy, conservation, and local culture. Guests participate in guided stargazing tours led by professional astronomers, gaining educational insights into celestial events and Romanian folklore related to the stars. Additionally, astrophotography workshops provide hands-on training, allowing guests to capture the beauty of the night sky. Cultural tours introduce visitors to Transylvanian history and heritage sites, blending Romania's rich cultural background with its astronomical significance. Eco-friendly accommodations and responsible travel packages further enhance the experience, with local, farm-to-table dining and educational sessions on sustainability. These offerings create a tourism model that promotes environmental responsibility and cultural preservation, making **Step by Step Travel SRL** a pioneer in sustainable tourism.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Regenerative Tourism and Education

Step by Step Travel focuses on regenerative tourism, encouraging visitors to contribute actively to environmental and cultural preservation. Educational components - such as stargazing workshops, wildlife observation, and hands-on conservation activities - deepen our guests' understanding and connection to Romania's ecosystems and cultural heritage.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Enriched Environmental Understanding:** Our tours offer insights into local ecosystems, promoting the importance of preservation for future generations.
- **Active Conservation Involvement:** Our interactive activities ensure visitors connect with the region, leaving a meaningful impact.

## 2. Collaboration with Local Producers

Local partnerships are core to Step by Step Travel SRL's approach, enriching guest experiences and supporting the regional economy. Our collaborations with farms, artisans, and food producers highlight the quality of Transylvanian products and crafts while reducing environmental impact.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Strengthened Local Economy:** By sourcing locally, we keep revenue within the community and bolster small businesses.
- **Authentic Cultural Immersion:** Our guests experience true Romanian culture through local food and craft, enhancing their journey.
- **Commitment to Sustainable Sourcing:** Our locally sourced products lower the carbon footprint and align with responsible tourism.

## 3. Sustainability as a Core Value

Sustainability is integral to Step by Step Travel's operations, with practices like waste reduction, local sourcing, and biodiversity support. This commitment ensures a minimal environmental footprint while appealing to eco-conscious travelers.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Environmentally Responsible Operations:** Our practices like local sourcing and waste reduction meet our eco-conscious guests' expectations.
- **Leader in Responsible Tourism:** Our sustainability efforts enhance **Step by Step Travel's** reputation, attracting eco-minded visitors.

## 4. Targeted Market Segmentation

Step by Step Travel targets travelers seeking unique, meaningful experiences, especially those interested in astronomy, culture, and eco-friendly travel. This focus on niche interests creates personalised tours that resonate with guests' values.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Guest-Centric Approach:** Our experiences are crafted to align with the values of eco-conscious and culturally curious travelers.
- **Tailored Offerings:** Specialized packages, from stargazing to cultural immersions, create memorable, highly engaging experiences.

## 5. Scalability and Growth Potential

Step by Step Travel's model has growth potential. Planned expansions include digital engagement tools, themed retreats, and collaborations with wellness and eco-tourism brands.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Flexible Expansion:** Our adaptable structure supports growth into new regions and seasons without sacrificing quality.
- **Enhanced Market Reach Through Innovation:** Digital tools, retreats, and partnerships broaden our appeal, positioning it as a sustainable travel leader.

## Conclusion

At Step by Step Travel, Claudia Popelca and Magda Ienci lead Romania's tourism sector in offering meaningful, sustainable travel experiences. By combining astronomy, cultural immersion, and eco-friendly practices, we provide transformative experiences that connect visitors with Romania's natural beauty and heritage. This commitment to responsible tourism and innovation positions Step by Step Travel for lasting growth and positive impact in the sustainable travel industry.

## BEST PRACTICE 17

### Barbo Natura, SL (Spain)

Barbo Natura, is a company dedicated to eco-fluvial tourism in the Alagón River's Special Protection Area (ZEPA). Our mission is to provide immersive experiences that allow visitors to connect with the natural environment through sustainable tourism practices, mainly focusing on birdwatching and nautical tours. With our main offering, Guardians of the Sky and Water, we lead visitors on educational journeys, highlighting the importance of conservation in this protected area. Our unique approach combines the beauty of the river and its wildlife with a focus on ecological awareness, offering a "floating observatory" that respects the natural landscape.



#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

Through the LookUP Programme, we have expanded our tourism offerings to include stargazing in addition to our birdwatching tours. This addition allows us to create a 360° experience, where visitors can observe both the daytime skies filled with birdlife and the star-filled night sky. With the support of LookUP, we have enhanced our educational programming to cover topics like light pollution and species conservation, working with local experts to enrich our offerings and foster a deeper appreciation for the natural world among our guests.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Educational and Immersive Nature Experiences

Our eco-fluvial tours are designed to immerse guests in the natural environment while educating them on the unique flora and fauna of the region. We offer guided birdwatching tours where visitors can observe rare species, like the black stork and Spanish imperial eagle, from the safety of our eco-friendly boats.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Educational Approach:** our tours focus on biodiversity conservation, helping guests learn about the region's ecological significance.
- **Eco-Friendly Practices:** We prioritise sustainability by operating environmentally friendly boats and reducing our ecological footprint.

## 2. Community Collaboration and Local Sourcing

We collaborate closely with local producers to offer authentic culinary experiences onboard, using products from nearby farms and artisan makers. This partnership strengthens the local economy and ensures that guests enjoy fresh, high-quality ingredients during their journey.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Supporting Local Economy:** By sourcing locally, we help sustain regional agriculture and promote traditional products.
- **Authentic Experiences:** The use of local ingredients enhances the cultural authenticity of our tours.

## 3. Sustainability Focus in Operations

At Barbo Natura, we are committed to implementing sustainable practices at all levels, from minimising waste to using renewable energy sources for operations. Our tours aim to reduce environmental impact, promoting conservation and sustainable tourism practices.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Sustainable Tourism Model:** By reducing waste and using renewable energy, we aim to set a high standard for eco-tourism.
- **Environmental Awareness:** Each tour is an opportunity to educate guests on the importance of preserving natural habitats.

## 4. Targeted Audience Engagement

Our eco-fluvial tours are designed for a range of guests, from eco-tourists and families to educational groups. We offer customised experiences to ensure that each tour meets the unique interests and needs of our visitors.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Broad Audience Appeal:** Our variety of activities, from birdwatching to stargazing, attracts a diverse group of eco-conscious visitors.
- **Tailored Experiences:** Each tour is designed to be adaptable, providing a personalised experience that resonates with each participant.

## 5. Growth and Scalability

Barbo Natura's business model is structured for scalability, with plans to expand offerings to other nearby natural areas and to diversify activities over time. We aim to grow while staying true to our eco-friendly mission, ensuring that all expansions maintain the integrity of our sustainable tourism model.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable Model:** Our sustainable business model allows for expansion without compromising environmental integrity.
- **Future Growth Potential:** By broadening our reach and adding new experiences, we can increase our impact on eco-tourism.

## Conclusion

Through Barbo Natura, our goal is to inspire visitors to appreciate and protect the natural world while providing a meaningful, sustainable travel experience. With the support of the LookUP Program, we continue to expand our impact on environmental education and conservation in the Alagón River region, fostering a deeper connection between our guests and the extraordinary biodiversity of this protected area.

## BEST PRACTICE 18 – Vaikon Loma ja Lohi

### BEST PRACTICE 18

#### Vaikon Loma ja Lohi (Finland)

Vaikon Loma ja Lohi is a sustainable and ecological family-owned exclusive nature travel destination nestled in the pristine natural surroundings of Finland's clean waterways and forests. Located in the serene Savonian-Karelian region along the Vaikko River, approximately an hour's drive northeast of Kuopio - a vibrant city in Finland's lake district – we offer high-quality travel experiences, services, and boutique cabin accommodations.



#### Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, Vaikon Loma ja Lohi, researched on the rising demand for eco-luxury travel, focusing on unique winter experiences such as Northern Lights viewing and wellness retreats. By examining competitor offerings, we emphasise our private access and VIP services to differentiate Vaikon Loma ja Lohi in the luxury winter tourism market.

Through customer profiling and segmentation, we target high-end international tourists, families, and eco-conscious travelers who value intimate, premium nature experiences. This approach allows us to design exclusive, tailored experiences that align with customer preferences for privacy, luxury, and immersion in nature.

Our strengths include certified sustainability practices and private scenic accommodation. Additionally, we map available resources in the Savonian-Karelian region to ensure consistent, eco-friendly service delivery, even in challenging winter conditions, with a focus on managing seasonal fluctuations and maintaining high standards.

These activities collectively position Vaikon Loma ja Lohi as a leader in luxury eco-tourism, offering exclusive, sustainable experiences that cater to discerning winter travelers.

#### Best Practices from the Business Plan

##### 1. Educational and Experiential Focus

Our approach is rooted in educating guests about Finland's natural beauty and ecological value, with each experience enhancing their connection to the landscape.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Unique Nature Connection:** Offering experiences that merge relaxation and discovery, we create an immersive retreat that encourages guests to appreciate the environment.
- **Luxury in Education:** Emphasizing sustainable practices throughout the experience adds value, reinforcing the importance of ecological stewardship.

**2. Collaboration with Local Experts and Sustainable Partners**

Working with local, certified partners ensures authenticity and high service quality while supporting the regional economy.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Enhanced Service Quality:** Our local partnerships ensure that each guest receives an authentic, high-quality experience.
- **Commitment to Sustainability:** Collaborating with eco-certified businesses strengthens the appeal of our offerings and reinforces sustainable values.

**3. Sustainability as a Core Principle**

Sustainability is central to Vaikon Loma ja Lohi's mission, from energy-efficient cabins to waste reduction initiatives that minimise our environmental impact.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Eco-Friendly Operations:** Our sustainable practices support the preservation of Finland's natural landscapes, contributing to eco-conscious tourism.
- **Cultural and Environmental Responsibility:** Our activities promote an appreciation of local traditions, complementing our dedication to ecological integrity.

**4. Targeted Marketing and Customer Engagement**

We utilise targeted marketing to reach high-end travelers, focusing on digital platforms, influencer collaborations, and sustainable travel networks.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Customer-Specific Outreach:** Engaging high-end, eco-conscious travelers through targeted marketing strategies increases market relevance and appeal.
- **Broad Market Reach:** My approach attracts a diverse audience, from wellness enthusiasts to nature lovers, by emphasizing luxurious and environmentally responsible experiences.

**5. Growth and Scalability**

The business model's activity selection is scalable, allowing expansion into new regions with similar natural beauty, such as additional lake and forest locations. We also plan to offer seasonal retreats, wellness programmes, and corporate retreats to broaden our service range.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Flexible Model:** Our scalable activity selection approach allows for growth in new locations while maintaining our focus on quality and sustainability.



- **Regional Development:** Expanding services across Finland's lake district positions Vaikon Loma ja Lohi one of the premier destinations for luxury eco-tourism.

## Conclusion

At **Vaikon Loma ja Lohi**, our goal is to provide an exclusive, sustainable nature experience that transforms Finland's winter into a **luxurious, enriching retreat**. This approach ensures long-term value for our guests, the local community, and the environment.

## BEST PRACTICE 19 – MunPolku MyTrail

# BEST PRACTICE 19

## MunPolku MyTrail (Finland)

At MunPolku MyTrail, based in Kuusamo, Finland, we specialise in creating nature-based experiences focused on the Arctic night sky and local cultural heritage. Through the LookUP Programme, we explore market dynamics, audience preferences, and sustainable practices to design unique, immersive stargazing tours in Kuusamo's pristine landscapes.

### Activities within the LookUP programme

As part of the LookUP programme, we conduct market research to assess demand for stargazing and nature-based tourism, focusing on trends in ecotourism, adventure, and wellness travel. Competitor benchmarking highlights how our culturally enriched stargazing tours in prime dark sky locations stand out among Northern Lights experiences. Audience segmentation targets eco-conscious travelers, nature enthusiasts, and photographers, enabling us to tailor experiences that foster a deep connection with nature. Resource mapping in the Kuusamo region helps select ideal stargazing sites, while our SWOT analysis emphasises the unique northern landscape and low light pollution, addressing challenges like weather dependency and seasonality.

### Best Practices from the Business Plan

#### 1. Educational and Experiential Focus

Our stargazing tours are designed to educate and engage visitors, offering cultural storytelling combined with natural beauty for an unforgettable experience.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Deep Connection to Nature:** By sharing local myths and astronomy insights, we enhance visitor appreciation for the Arctic night.
- **Memorable Learning Experiences:** Each tour promotes environmental awareness and cultural respect, adding depth to the visitor experience.

#### 2. Collaboration with Local Experts and Businesses

Working closely with local guides, accommodation providers, and transport services ensures a smooth, authentic experience while supporting the local economy.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Strengthening Local Ties:** By partnering with local providers we enrich the experience and foster community growth.
- **Supporting Local Expertise:** Leveraging regional expertise in ecology and culture enhances each tour's educational value.

### 3. Sustainability as a Core Principle

Sustainability is central to MunPolku MyTrail, with practices like waste reduction, minimal environmental impact, and the use of existing natural resources and facilities.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Environmentally Responsible Tourism:** Our sustainable operations ensure the preservation of Kuusamo's landscapes.
- **Cultural and Environmental Stewardship:** We promote local heritage and biodiversity conservation, following responsible tourism principles.

### 4. Targeted Marketing and Customer Engagement

We tailor marketing efforts towards eco-conscious and experience-seeking tourists, focusing on digital channels, influencer collaborations, and targeted partnerships to enhance reach.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Audience-Specific Marketing:** Directing efforts to eco-tourists and adventure travelers increases market relevance and client satisfaction.
- **Diverse Appeal:** Catering to varied interests - from wellness and education to photography - broadens our customer base.

### 5. Growth and Scalability

The business model is scalable, with plans to expand into complementary experiences and seasonal offerings, such as the Midnight Sun tours, enabling growth while maintaining the core values of sustainability and cultural integrity.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Flexible and Scalable Model:** Adapting stargazing experiences to different seasons and themes allows for regional expansion without compromising sustainability.
- **Strategic Growth:** Expanding partnerships across northern Finland and developing digital engagement strategies support future scalability.

## Conclusion

At MunPolku MyTrail, our goal is to offer unique, sustainable stargazing experiences that immerse visitors in the beauty of Kuusamo's night sky while promoting responsible tourism and supporting the local community.

## BEST PRACTICE 20 – Oulangan Taika Oy

# BEST PRACTICE 20

## Oulangan Taika Oy (Finland)

Oulangan Taika Oy aims to offer unique, nature-centered experiences through the new concept, Oulanka Adventures, tailored for international visitors in the pristine Kuusamo area. This LookUP Programme allows us to identify market trends, customer needs, and sustainable practices that will differentiate Oulanka Adventures by blending physical activity with the cultural and natural wonders of the Finnish wilderness.



### Activities within the LookUP Programme

Within the LookUP programme, we analyse the demand for adventure and nature-based tourism in Finland, particularly in Kuusamo, with a focus on eco-friendly travel. Observing competitor offerings refines our services to highlight locally guided experiences that blend stargazing, snowshoeing, and cultural heritage. Customer profiling and segmentation target eco-conscious tourists, families, and groups, enabling us to tailor experiences that meet their needs for intimate, high-quality nature immersion. Our local partnerships and sustainability certifications, help us create a flexible, private, and high-quality nature-based product.

### Best Practices from the Business Plan

#### 1. Educational and experiential focus

Our concept centers on immersive, educational experiences that highlight the culture, biodiversity, and tranquility of Kuusamo through locally led activities.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Enhanced Cultural Connection:** By incorporating local stories, traditions, and landscapes, we deepen visitor engagement.
- **Eco-Education:** Our activities encourage appreciation for Finland's natural resources and sustainable tourism practices.

#### 2. Collaboration with Local Experts and Sustainable Partners

Our collaboration with certified local vendors, from accommodation to transport services, ensures consistent quality and supports the local economy.

##### Key Takeaways:

- **Community Support:** By working with local providers, we enhance the authenticity of the experience while fostering economic resilience.

- **Sustainable Partnerships:** Selecting partners with shared eco-certifications ensures a seamless and responsible approach to tourism.

### 3. Sustainability as a Core Value

Sustainability is at the heart of Oulangan Taika Oy, with practices such as using local resources, minimizing waste, and promoting cultural preservation.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Environmentally Responsible Operations:** Our focus on sustainable tourism helps preserve Kuusamo's pristine environment and cultural assets.
- **Cultural and Environmental Stewardship:** We prioritise eco-friendly practices that protect biodiversity and honour the region's traditions.

### 4. Targeted Marketing and Customer Engagement

Our targeted digital marketing strategies, social media, and influencer partnerships engage eco-conscious travelers and enhance visibility.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Audience-Specific Outreach:** Aligning marketing with the values of nature and cultural tourism has maximised Oulangan Taika Oy's appeal.
- **Diverse Reach:** By engaging various customer types - from families to solo travelers – we have broadened our market base.

### 5. Growth and Scalability

The business model is designed for scalability, allowing expansion to nearby regions and new seasonal offerings. Plans include adding locations such as Salla and Hossa National Parks and extending activities to encompass themes like the Midnight Sun and seasonal wildlife experiences.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **Flexible Expansion:** The adaptable structure of Oulanka Adventures enables growth across regions and varying seasonal demands.
- **Regional Development:** Introducing new parks and partnerships allows me to reach a wider audience while maintaining high-quality, sustainable tourism.

## Conclusion

At Oulangan Taika Oy, our mission is to offer transformative and sustainable nature experiences that deepen appreciation for Kuusamo's natural beauty, promote responsible tourism, and support local communities.

## BEST PRACTICE 21 – Green Man Foundation

## BEST PRACTICE 21

## Green Man Foundation (Romania)



Green Man Foundation, led by Francesco Tacconi, is a non-profit organization based in Richiș, Transylvania, Romania, dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism and preserving the region's cultural heritage. With a focus on eco-friendly practices, we offer immersive tourism experiences that highlight the local culture and history while supporting the local community and environment. Our services

include guided tours, stargazing activities, culinary experiences, and adventure packages such as hiking and bike tours along Via Transilvanica. Through these offerings, Green Man Foundation fosters environmental stewardship and cultural appreciation, making Richiș an ideal destination for sustainable travel.

## Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, **Green Man Foundation** provides tourism experiences that focus on cultural immersion and environmental responsibility. Key activities include guided heritage tours of the Richiș fortified church, educational stargazing and astronomy workshops, and culinary experiences featuring local farm-to-table dining. Adventure options, such as hiking and biking on Via Transilvanica, allow visitors to explore the region sustainably. Additionally, the annual “Green Man of Richiș Festival” celebrates local culture, fostering community engagement and supporting cultural preservation.

## Best Practices from the Business Plan

## 1. Regenerative Tourism and Education

**Green Man Foundation** is dedicated to regenerative tourism that goes beyond conservation, actively enriching the natural and cultural landscapes of Richiș. Educational tours and workshops immerse guests in the region's history, ecology, and unique night skies, allowing them to directly support and engage in the preservation of Richiș's heritage and environment.

## Key Takeaways:

- **Deep Environmental Education:** Each activity is crafted to provide guests with a deeper understanding of Richiș's ecosystem, instilling a commitment to its preservation.
- **Hands-On Cultural Engagement:** Our conservation projects and workshops offer guests a chance to contribute to the region's legacy, creating a lasting bond with both the land and its people.

## 2. Collaboration with Local Producers

Collaborating with local farmers, artisans, and small businesses is central to Green Man Foundation's mission, as it enriches guest experiences while directly supporting the Richiș community. This partnership approach not only brings authentic, locally sourced crafts and products to visitors but also sustains the cultural and economic vitality of the area.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Community-Driven Economic Growth:** Our partnerships with local producers channel tourism revenue directly into Richiș, fostering economic sustainability and resilience for small businesses.
- **Showcasing Authentic Local Heritage:** Through farm-to-table dining, wine tastings, and artisan workshops, guests gain a genuine taste of Richiș's culinary and craft traditions, enhancing cultural appreciation and connection.

## 3. Sustainability as a Core Value

Sustainability guides every aspect of Green Man Foundation's operations, with a focus on eco-friendly practices that protect and enhance Richiș's environment. By minimizing waste, conserving resources, and supporting biodiversity, the foundation maintains a balance between tourism and preservation, offering guests an experience rooted in responsible stewardship.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Eco-Driven Operations:** Our initiatives like waste reduction, resource conservation, and biodiversity support demonstrate Green Man Foundation's commitment to low-impact, sustainable tourism.
- **Leader in Sustainable Tourism:** Green Man Foundation's dedication to sustainability positions it as a model for eco-conscious tourism, attracting visitors who seek environmentally respectful and enriching travel experiences.

## 4. Targeted Market Segmentation

Green Man Foundation carefully tailors its offerings to appeal to eco-conscious travelers, cultural explorers, and astronomy enthusiasts. This targeted focus enables the design of memorable experiences that resonate with the values and interests of our guests, fostering loyalty among visitors who are passionate about heritage and sustainable tourism.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Creating Value for Eco-Conscious Guests:** By focusing on culturally and environmentally conscious travelers, we attract visitors who appreciate the blend of history, conservation, and astronomy.
- **Unique, Customized Experiences:** From stargazing to cultural workshops, tailored packages meet the varied interests of guests, from heritage enthusiasts to wellness seekers, creating a lasting impact on each visitor.

## 5. Scalability and Growth Potential

With a scalable model that prioritises responsible growth, Green Man Foundation is set to expand its offerings and reach. By introducing new activities, leveraging digital tools, and building regional partnerships, we increase our capacity and influence while maintaining a strong commitment to our eco-friendly values and mission.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Adaptable Growth with Local Roots:** The scalable approach allows Green Man Foundation to expand in a way that continues to benefit the Richiș community and environment.
- **Innovative Reach:** Digital tools, cross-promotions with local partners, and themed events enhance our guests' engagement, ensuring Green Man Foundation remains a cornerstone of responsible tourism in Transylvania.

## Conclusion

With a focus on cultural preservation and sustainable tourism, **Green Man Foundation** offers unique, eco-friendly travel experiences in Richiș, Romania. By combining cultural immersion, environmental education, and community engagement, we positively impact visitors and the local community. This commitment to responsible tourism and innovative growth positions **Green Man Foundation** as a leader in sustainable travel in Transylvania.



## BEST PRACTICE 22 – Vecinătate SRL

## BEST PRACTICE 22

## Vecinătate SRL (Romania)

Iuliana Maria Labo, is the founder and sole associate of Vecinătate SRL, a company based in Sibiel, Romania, specialising in organising private gastronomic events and culinary experiences. Our goal is to promote and elevate local gastronomy by offering traditional culinary experiences that use seasonal, local ingredients. We have over 18 years of experience in the field, and this has been instrumental in developing innovative ways to share our expertise with others in the gastronomy sector.

At Vecinătate SRL, we organise events for small groups in a renovated traditional barn that can accommodate up to 30 people for meals or 14 for culinary workshops. Our offerings aim to provide immersive experiences that connect people with the local culture and cuisine of Transylvania.



## Activities within the LookUP Programme

As part of the LookUP Programme, we have taken steps to create a gastronomy manual, which serves as a training tool for operators in rural tourism and gastronomy. This manual is designed to guide users on how to use local and seasonal resources to offer high-quality gastronomic events and services. It is a valuable resource for local producers, event organizers, and those interested in rural tourism.

We also focus on sustainability, incorporating practices that reduce food waste, encourage the use of fresh local products, and minimize the environmental impact of gastronomic events. This manual supports the cultural and ecological landscape of the region by promoting small-scale agricultural production and the use of endemic varieties and traditional breeds of plants and animals.

## Best Practices from the Business Plan

## 1. Training and Education through a Gastronomy Manual

At Vecinătate SRL, one of our core innovations is the creation of a gastronomy manual aimed at training rural tourism operators and small-scale producers. This manual helps them improve their culinary offerings by using sustainable, local resources. It is not just a tool for education, but a practical guide for creating memorable gastronomic events.

## Key Takeaways:

- **Educational focus:** The manual offers valuable training, equipping operators with the knowledge and tools needed to enhance their services.
- **Sustainability through education:** By encouraging the use of local, seasonal products, we help operators contribute to a sustainable gastronomy model.

## 2. Collaboration with Local Producers

We place great emphasis on working with local producers, ensuring that our events feature the best seasonal and local ingredients. These collaborations not only enhance the authenticity of our events but also support the local economy.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Strengthening local partnerships:** Collaborating with local producers ensures access to high-quality ingredients and strengthens the local economy.
- **Sustainable sourcing:** Using locally sourced products helps reduce the carbon footprint of events and promotes regional biodiversity.

## 3. Sustainability as a Core Principle

Our approach to gastronomy is rooted in sustainability. This means reducing food waste, using eco-friendly practices in event organisation, and promoting the use of fresh, nutrient-dense local products. We also emphasize the preservation of the cultural landscape through the continued use of traditional farming methods.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Eco-conscious operations:** Implementing sustainable practices, such as minimizing food waste and using local ingredients, reduces our environmental impact.
- **Cultural preservation:** Supporting small-scale agriculture helps preserve the traditional cultural landscape, benefiting both biodiversity and the local economy.

## 4. Targeted Market Segmentation

We tailor our services to meet the needs of local producers, gastronomic event organizers, and tourism operators. Our clients range from individuals passionate about rural gastronomy to NGOs and local producers looking to enhance their culinary offerings.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Customized training:** We provide tailored training solutions that address the unique needs of small-scale producers and operators in the rural gastronomy sector.
- **Diverse audience:** By offering services to a wide range of stakeholders - from individual enthusiasts to larger producers - we ensure broad market appeal.

## 5. Scalability and Growth Potential

Our business model is designed for scalability, with plans to expand our training offerings to other regions of Transylvania. By adapting the manual and training programs to different markets, we aim to grow our business while maintaining personalised services for our clients.

### Key Takeaways:

- **Scalable model:** The manual and associated training programs can be expanded to other regions, allowing us to grow while maintaining high-quality, tailored services.
- **Regional growth:** Expanding into neighboring counties will enable us to reach more clients and have a greater impact on rural gastronomy in Transylvania.

## Conclusion

At Vecinătate SRL, we are committed to promoting local gastronomy through a combination of education, sustainability, and community engagement. Our gastronomy manual serves as a key tool in this mission, helping local operators improve their offerings while supporting sustainable practices. By fostering collaborations with local producers and focusing on the preservation of traditional agricultural methods, we contribute to the cultural and ecological health of our region. Our approach ensures that we can scale our services while maintaining personalized, high-quality experiences for our clients.



## 3 Key Takeaways and Highlights

The LookUP Sustainable Business Transformation Programme and the active participation of SMEs provided invaluable insights into the potential for innovation, resilience, and sustainability within the tourism sector. This section summarises the key lessons learnt and the impact generated through the programme.

### 3.1 Innovative Solutions

SMEs participating in the programme showcased remarkable creativity in integrating advanced technologies and sustainable practices into their operations. Highlights include:

- Adoption of circular economy models, where waste reduction and resource efficiency became central to business strategies.
- Utilisation of digital tools and platforms to enhance customer engagement.
- Exploration of nature-based solutions, which leverage local landscapes to promote sustainable tourism experiences.

### 3.2 Community Impact

Social inclusion and community support emerged as common themes across SMEs. The SMEs demonstrated a commitment to:

- Supporting local economies by sourcing goods and services locally, creating jobs, and investing in community development.
- Cultural preservation, emphasising authentic cultural immersion experiences.
- Educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness of sustainable tourism among visitors and local communities. These efforts not only enhance the visitor experience but also create long-term benefits for the destinations.

### 3.3 Challenges Addressed

The programme also highlighted common challenges that SMEs face in the tourism sector, including:

- Access to funding: Many SMEs struggled with securing financial resources to implement sustainable practices or expand their operations.
- Balancing profitability with sustainability: While sustainability initiatives are critical, SMEs often face difficulties in maintaining financial viability during the transition.
- Digital transformation: Adopting and mastering new technologies remains a hurdle for many, particularly those with limited resources or expertise.

These challenges highlight the need for continued support, not only through funding and training but also through creating an ecosystem that fosters collaboration and shared learning among SMEs. The insights gained from this programme highlight the innovative spirit, resilience, and potential for transformation within the tourism sector. The SMEs' efforts underscore the importance of combining sustainability, community engagement, and technological advancement to create a thriving and responsible tourism industry.

## 4 Conclusion

The LookUP Sustainable Business Transformation Programme has proven to be a catalyst for meaningful change among SMEs in the tourism sector, showcasing their ability to adapt in a rapidly evolving market. Through the analysis of best practices, several conclusions emerge:

1. **Sustainability as a driver of competitiveness:** SMEs implementing sustainable practices have demonstrated increased customer engagement and loyalty, contributing to long-term business resilience.
2. **Digitalisation as an enabler:** Adopting digital tools and technologies has streamlined operations, enhanced marketing strategies, and opened new paths for revenue generation.
3. **Resilience through collaboration:** Many SMEs have strengthened their resilience by collaborating with local communities, stakeholders, and other businesses, creating ecosystems of mutual support.

This report highlights the diversity of approaches taken by SMEs across Spain, Finland, and Romania. While the representation of best practices may vary by country, the lessons learnt are universally applicable and provide a roadmap for other SMEs aiming to transform their operations, leading the way in building a more sustainable and resilient tourism sector.

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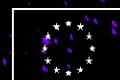
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