

# INTERNATIONAL BENCHMARKING STUDY

about inspiring income-generating activities along  
hiking trails



June 2024

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**AGEG Tourism for Sustainability** · [www.ageg-tourism.de](http://www.ageg-tourism.de)

for the

Emergence of the first trails network from the Mediterranean AFD  
project



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## ACRONYMS

<b>AA</b>	Ammergauer Alps
<b>AAT</b>	Alpe Adria Trail
<b>AGEG TFS</b>	AGEG Tourism for Sustainability
<b>DAV</b>	German Alpine Federation (Deutscher Alpenverein)
<b>DMO</b>	Destination Management/ Marketing Organisation
<b>EM</b>	Explore Marlboro
<b>ERA</b>	European Ramblers Association
<b>GIZ</b>	German International Cooperation
<b>GR</b>	Golden Road
<b>GSTC</b>	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
<b>IGA</b>	Incoming Generating Activity
<b>LQT</b>	Leading Quality Trails
<b>MED Region</b>	Mediterranean Region
<b>MT</b>	Meditation Trail
<b>PoB</b>	Peaks of the Balkans
<b>RV</b>	Rota Vincentina
<b>TCT</b>	Trans Canada Trail
<b>TK</b>	Trail Keepers
<b>TMO</b>	Trail Management Organisation
<b>TT</b>	Transcarioca Trail
<b>USP</b>	Unique selling proposition
<b>WHW</b>	Wild Highland Way
<b>WWF</b>	Worldwide Fund for Nature

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## INTRODUCTION

### About the project.

The Mediterranean is one of the world's leading tourists destinations but is still not well-known on the international tourism market as an established sustainable hiking tourism destination.

Home to some of the world's **most ancient civilizations**, a hub for **trade** and **transport**, **and a unique hotspot** for **biodiversity**, it features a variety of different landscapes, history and living traditions, and unspoiled nature. The best scenario for the development of successful sustainable hiking tourism.

**New target groups** with different interests (e.g., cultural and culinary experiences, outdoors, hiking in nature etc.) need to be reached by innovative sustainable tourism quality products, unique accommodation and quality services along the hiking trails, and self-sufficient trail management organizations.

Against this backdrop, the project "**Emergence of the first trails network from the Mediterranean**" was initiated with the overall goal of creating a common tool at Euro-Mediterranean Regional level to address the challenges of managing, structuring, promoting and animating long-distance hiking trails. It aims to promote the economic development of rural areas through hiking tourism.

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The overall goal of the project is to develop a common model and practical tools for the sustainable and efficient development of hiking tourism as a driver for rural development.

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The challenge now is to develop (1) sustainable, viable trail models and (2) innovative and inspiring income-generating activities (IGA) along trails that bring economic benefits to local rural communities and become the driver for local development. In addition, monitoring tools are needed to check the economic impact. Against this background, AGEG Tourism for Sustainability ([www.ageg-tourism.de](http://www.ageg-tourism.de)), an experienced German company specialising in sustainable tourism development and marketing with a special focus on hiking tourism, was commissioned to carry out a **Benchmarking Study** on **Inspiring Income Generating Activities** (IGA) along hiking trails.

The project is supported by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and brings together a broad network of partners from 4 countries: (1) Lebanon, (2) Palestine, (3) Jordan and (4) France.

**These are the partners** representing the 4 countries on the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean:

- 1) **AFRAT**, a pioneering organization in the Vercors region for the development of rural tourism. The projects supported by AFRAT mainly affect rural and mountain areas and their inhabitants. AFRAD mainly works in France but also internationally.

- 2) **Tétraktys**, a French NGO based in Grenoble, founded to share the Alpine experience internationally in terms of heritage, preservation and enhancement, sustainable tourism development and shared governance and thus improving the livelihoods of rural and mountain communities around the world.
- 3) **Palestinian Heritage Trail**, a long-distance cultural hiking route in Palestine of 500 km, passing through more than 60 Palestinian cities. The trail is much more than a simple hiking trail, it's the connection and meeting point for hikers from around the globe and local Palestinians.
- 4) **Jordan Trail Association (JTA)**, 675 kilometres of hiking trail, passing through 75 villages crossing all different types of landscape in Jordan. The Jordan Trail is a cultural experience, and the trail model foresees cultural encounters with hikers hosted by local families. The trail is run by a trail association.
- 5) **Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA)**, a 600 km long trail that crosses more than 76 towns and villages at an altitude ranging from 570 meters to 2,073 meters above sea level. The Lebanon mountain trail is maintained by the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA), a non-profit organization.

### Objective & approach of the Benchmark Study

The **focus** of the Benchmark Study is to identify the most sustainable practices generating benefits for tourism value chain stakeholders: TMOs, DMOs, service providers, local communities and local businesses along hiking trails.

It should serve as an **inspirational and practical guideline** for the Trail Management Organizations (TMOs) involved and should therefore be:

- Practice-oriented.
- Follow a “hands-on” approach, illustrated.
- Easy to read, easy to understand and therefore **easy to follow, replicate and implement**.

It shall guide and support the **trail management organizations** to be more efficient in their trail management, to find better business models, good practices and innovative ways to support the local communities in rural areas to become profitable and successful entrepreneurs. For example, in the creation of new tourism products, sustainable practices and innovative marketing practices.

### What you will find in the Benchmarks Study.

This benchmark study aims to provide insights on successful hiking tourism development, practical know-how and tools for successful trail management (e.g. checklist and monitoring tools). A profile of each of the three trail partner organizations from Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan gives an overview of their USPs, opportunities and areas for improvement.

**The core of the Benchmark Study are the 48 case studies** from the three trail partner countries Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan and from all around the globe.

- Well-chosen **international case studies** providing good practice from trail management organisations and destination management organisations on how they are successfully generating income for their organisations. In addition, suitable income generating case studies that generate benefits for local communities are featured.
- Well-chosen **local case studies** from local communities along the trails of the 3 project destinations, demonstrating innovative and creative income-generating practices. In addition, a series of case studies from the 3 trail organisations of the project will provide inspiration for the income generation.
- A conclusion of practical recommendations for profitable trail management practices, innovative product development for their local communities sums up the outcome of the benchmarked case studies. These are complemented by tools and checklists, which should support the trail organisations in their practical implementation.

Checklists, useful documents and tools can be accessed and downloaded from the file [BENCHMARK STUDY DOCUMENTS](#).

### How the Benchmark study has been developed

To identify and elaborate the local case studies in the 3 project destinations Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan, three local consultants have been chosen by each trail management organisations and contracted and managed by AGEG Tourism for Sustainability. Their task was to identify most suitable income generating community practices along the hiking trails, visit and describe them. They were also tasked with identifying and describing the most recognizable income generating activities of the 3 local trail management organisations. For all these tasks they were supported by the local trail management organisations and the AGEG TFS team.

To develop the international case studies, the AGEG TFS team contacted numerous international trail management organisations and DMOs to request exchange meetings or, if this was not possible, to obtain information in writing. This was quite a challenging process as these organisations are always very busy, some didn't respond at all, and other suitable case studies had to be selected and contacted. But in the end the result shows an impressive geographical spread (from Japan to Brazil to the Faroe Islands) and a variety of IGAs.

## 1. THE HIKING TRAILS OF THE PROJECT PARTNERS

In the following the three project partners (1) Palestinian Heritage Trail (2) the Jordan Trail Association and (3) the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association and their trails are briefly profiled. Their unique assets are identified, opportunities spotted, and potential fields of improvement described.

## 1.1. Lebanon Mountain Trail



### DESCRIPTION



**The Lebanon Mountain Trail** is Lebanon's first long-distance hiking trail. It stretches from Andqet Akkar in northern Lebanon to Marjeyoun in the south, a **600 km long trail** (covering the main linear trail along with the side trails and network trails) that crosses **more than 76 towns and villages** at an altitude ranging from 570 meters to 2,073 meters above sea level.

It is mainly dedicated to:

- Maintaining and protecting the Lebanon Mountain Trail (LMT) and its side trails
- Promote the LMT as a destination for rural tourism and well-being
- Conserve the natural resources and protect the cultural heritage on the LMT
- Advance economic opportunities on the LMT through responsible tourism
- Encourage responsible behaviour through targeted education, community mobilization & outreach



**Communication channels:** Instagramm, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, LMT Magazine

### KEY FACTS

<https://www.lebanontrail.org>

- Organizational set-up: NGO
- Initiated in 2007
- No. of employees: 12
- **Trail facts**
  - Length: 600 km
  - No. of stages 27
  - Altitude ranging from 570 m to 2,073 m
  - No. of accommodation 48
  - No. of guides 40
- **Communities along the trail**
  - 76 towns and villages
- **Financing model**
  - Ambassador programme
  - Events
  - Merchandising
  - Projects
  - Consultancy under development
  - Sponsorships
  - Membership fees

## ASSETS AND USP OF THE LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL

LMT showcases the natural beauty and cultural wealth of Lebanon's mountains and demonstrates the determination of the people of Lebanon to conserve this unique heritage. The trail brings communities closer together and expands economic opportunities in rural areas through environmentally and socially responsible tourism.

- 1) Rich biodiversity:** The trail serves as a vital corridor for biodiversity, crossing through 2 Biosphere Reserves, 5 Natures Reserves, 5 Protected Areas and 6 Important Bird Areas.
- 2) Authentic local rural experiences:** food trails, walk with a shepherd, wild edible plants harvesting, handicrafts workshops.
- 3) Rich cultural heritage:** ancient cities, with architecture going back to the Romans, Phoenicians, Ottomans, and French, as well as post-independence developments.
- 4) Culinary experiences:** Lebanese food is considered one of the most popular Middle Eastern cuisines – the sophistication and finesse of European cuisine with the exotic aromas of Middle Eastern spices.
- 5) Traditional handicrafts** still practised today - glass blowing, ceramics, jewellery, delicately embroidered textiles, and garments woven with gold and silver thread.
- 6) Good hiking offer** for individual experienced hikers: a well-designed LMT trail with signposting and waymarking throughout the trail, info panels at the start of each section.
- 7) Interactive, hands-on educational programmes** for schools and young people make a great foundation for community engagement in LMT since the early age.
- 8) Great engagement** of the active Lebanese diaspora in supporting the Lebanon Mountain trail.

### Lebanon Mountain Trail: Opportunities

- Creating hiking offers for local tourists to spend money, such as weekend hiking itineraries, thematic tourism itineraries, experiences, all including an overnight stay.
- **Reaching the international market of individual hikers**, promoting hiking with authentic local experiences along the trail, local cuisine and culture.
- **International volunteers** could be a valuable source in aiding in different trail management aspects and would indirectly promote the trail abroad.
- **Expanding fundraising campaigns** to social media, also co-organizing fundraising and marketing events with international partners from LMT Friendship Trails.
- **Providing local communities with flagship models** of successful and inspirational local businesses that others could follow. **Promoting the trail to international tour operators** specialized in sustainable travel, hiking and cultural experiences.

## 1.2.Palestinian Heritage Trail



### DESCRIPTION



Palestinian Heritage Trail is a long-distance cultural hiking route in Palestine. The trail is about 500 km long and extends from the village of Rummana northwest of Jenin to Beit Mirsim southwest of Hebron back to Artas in Bethlehem, in addition to the newly developed Jerusalem segment that starts in Eizariya through the Old City of Jerusalem towards the villages in the Northwest (Beit Suriq to Beit Duqqa). The trail passes through more than 60 Palestinian cities, villages, and local communities where travellers can experience and enjoy the authentic Palestinian Hospitality. The Palestinian Heritage Trail is more than just a hiking trail. It is a means of meeting and making connections with local Palestinians and hikers from all over the world. You can explore Bedouin communities and experience the traditional Palestinian dishes, which is one of Palestine's most fundamental traditions. The Trail does not only invite hikers to experience nature but also to change their perspectives by recognizing shared common values and creating friendships along the way.



#### Communication channels: |

Facebook, Messenger, Instagram, in, Youtube, APP

#### KEY FACTS

<https://phtrail.org/>

- Organizational set-up: NGO
- Initiated in 2013
- No. of employees: 14
- **Trail facts**
  - Length: 500 km
  - No. of stages 29
  - No. of accommodation 80
  - Women cooperatives: 35
  - No. of guides and local ambassadors: 59
- **Communities along the trail**
  - 60 villages and cities
- **Financing model**
  - Projects
  - Local events
  - Passport programme
  - Planned: Business model for local providers & tour operators via APP and webpage
  - Visitors centre

## ASSETS AND USP OF THE PALESTINIAN HERITAGE TRAIL

- 1) **Diverse landscapes:** a cultural landscape in Battir – land of olives and vines, on UNESCO World Heritage List, stunning valleys and meadows, rugged wadis, canyons, mountains, the wilderness of the Jordan Valley, the desert, the Dead Sea.
- 2) **Cultural cities:** the old cities of Hebron and Nablus, Jericho, Bethlehem with many historical and sacred sites.
- 3) **Historical cultural heritage:** historic monuments from different periods, including the Bronze Age, the Romans, the Byzantine, the Ottoman periods – ancient monasteries and caves, mosques, churches, mosaics, impressive ruins of shrines, presses and cisterns and more; Tell es-Sultan – an archaeological site of the remains of the oldest fortified city in the world, one of four UNESCO World Heritage sites in Palestine.
- 4) **Local products, handicrafts and culture:** local Bedouin culture, various handicrafts embellished with traditional Palestinian embroidery, delicious local cuisine and products such as award-winning olive oils, almonds, grapes, dried herbs.
- 5) **Rich biodiversity:** Around 500 million birds present in Palestine each year– around 20% of them breed and reproduce in Palestine, and 50 % migratory birds; 130 species of mammals, among which leopards, wolves, vultures, desert hedgehogs; flora including Palestine Oak, the aromatic wild thyme (Za'atar).
- 6) **Strong team of the union of the Palestinian Heritage Trail:** a dedicated team of 14, mostly women, recognized for their work and creative capacity building among its local communities and working in line with Palestine's tourism strategy and the vision of Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, trying to strengthen the image of Palestine as a sustainable tourism destination.
- 7) **There is a great interest** for the trail on international level, many supporters internationally.
- 8) **National guides licensing system:** 39 Hiking trail guides are licensed currently.
- 9) **A great hiking offer for individual travellers of all ages:** PHT signposting and marking systems in place and the stages of walking are usually moderate and not too long, around 10-20 kilometres per day.

### Palestinian Heritage Trail: Opportunities

- **Attracting higher spending, sophisticated target groups:** they could spend more, stay longer and even repeat visits to the destination. Retirees could be an interesting target group.
- **Providing high-end accommodation and diverse experiences:** establishing accommodation options tailored to international high spending hikers, e.g., quality heritage accommodation in historic buildings, small scale boutique guesthouses. Also to develop more sustainable tourism attractions within local communities along the trail to make hikers spend there more time (e.g., horseback riding, birdwatching, handicrafts workshops).
- **Offers for the local market:** the trail is better known among the internationals, so creating some special offers for the locals (cultural tours, tours for families, thematic trails) could increase trail's sustainability.
- **International volunteer programme:** organizing again shorter or longer international volunteer programmes, where volunteers could help with e.g., trail maintenance, and using it for awareness raising of the trail and its communities internationally.
- **Promotion of local products internationally:** selling local quality products of PHT service providers for international markets on online platforms or through partners abroad could provide an additional source of income for local communities.
- **Different opportunities for income generation for the union of PHT:** there are many opportunities and tangible ideas, like establishing a visitor's centre on the first floor of the office and to sell merchandise there, also selling the Trail guide book, hiker's passport and the local recipes booklet, maps; institutionalizing the cooperation with the accommodation providers on the trail where they should pay a fee to be listed on the App and website.

## 1.3 Jordan Trail



### DESCRIPTION



The Jordan Trail Association (JTA) is a long-distance hiking trail in Jordan linking Um Qais in the north to Aqaba in the south. It provides 40 days of hiking over 675 kilometers of trails and passes through 75 villages. The trail crosses a large variety of landscapes: from the forested hills of the north, through the rugged wadis, the cliffs overlooking the Jordan Valley, the pink rock of Petra, the sandy deserts, and mountains of Wadi Rum, to the crystal-clear waters of the Red Sea. The Jordan Trail also runs through Jordan's history and culture. The JTA model allows you to taste Jordan's varied cuisines, meet the locals, and sleep in local homes. The trail also passes through the main historical sites of the region such as Um Qais, Jerash and Petra.



**Communication channels:** |  
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest  
Youtube, Newsletter

### KEY FACTS

<https://www.jordantrail.org/>

- Organizational set-up: NGO
- Initiated in 2015
- No. of employees:
- **Trail facts**
  - Length: 675 km
  - No. of stages 35
  - 40 day hikes
  - No. of local service providers 106
  - No. of guides 48 licensed, 106 escorts
- **Communities along the trail**
  - 8 regions and 75 villages
- **Financing model**
  - Projects
  - True hike sponsoring programme
  - Passport programme
  - Adopt a trail programme
  - Membership fees

## ASSETS AND USP OF THE JORDAN TRAIL

- 1) **Diverse landscapes:** impressive desert landscapes with oasis, evergreen oak forests of Ajloun Forest reserve, valleys and mountain ridges, such as in Dana biosphere reserve, canyons, the rugged wadis and coastline.
- 2) **Jordan has a strong system of 13 protected areas** and other nature reserves with ecotourism infrastructure, managed by a well-established The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) and financed by its business ventures in nature reserves under registered trademark Wild Jordan.
- 3) **A great variety of adventure outdoor experiences:** besides hiking, also climbing, canyoning with professional adventure guides, mountain biking, camping.
- 4) **Rich cultural heritage:** Many religious sites (e.g., Mount Nebo, Sea of Galilee), Medieval Arab architecture, and Petra, the ancient city of the Nabataeans – a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.
- 5) **Local products and living traditions:** Bedouin tribes, traditional handicrafts with new designs – silver crafts, pottery, textiles, goat leather products, olive oil soaps.
- 6) **Immersive and authentic local experiences** in rural Jordan: shepherding, Bedouin culture experiences, foraging, traditional cooking and culinary classes, stone masonry, beekeeping, basket weaving, Hadab making and more.
- 7) **A great offer of local guides:** a national programme for professional training of adventure tourism guides, a pool of certified guides, plus local escorts – local guides with local knowledge.
- 8) **Jordan Trail has a great reputation and an established image** in the international market: in 2018 Jordan Trail Association JTA has won the World Tourism Award, and the Jordan Trail has been ranked by National Geographic as one of the top 21 global tourism destinations. It has been covered by international media, such as Lonely Planet, BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, National Geographic magazine etc.
- 9) **Great marketing materials of Jordan Trail**, including a very professional website, a series of professional videos; a strong cooperation with Jordan Tourism Board (JTB).
- 10) **Strong capacity building system for local service providers** by Jordan Trail Association: multiple standards, criteria, guidelines for guest houses, guides, F&B services provided on the field, at camp sites or in remote areas, plus Leave No Trace Training, Trainings on creating 'experiential tourism' products and more.
- 11) **Great hikers engagement offers:** a mobile Jordan Trail app and a Jordan Trail passport as an achievement log for travellers that can be stamped with unique stamps for each area.

### Jordan Trail: Opportunities

- **Improving Jordan Trail's establishment in the local market:** offering a local market and its different target groups a variety of options of experiencing the trail, including shorter hiking options closer to the cities and hikes combined with local experiences.
- **Creating more of the innovative hiking products along the trail:** hiking experiences designed for various purposes, such as the photography tours, the historical hikes focused on specific eras, wildlife watching hikes, night hikes with stargazing and camping experience.
- **Volunteer programs:** creating programs for both national and international hikers to volunteer in trail maintenance could aid JTA with trail maintenance and could provide indirect marketing.
- **Collaboration with a handicrafts sector:** handicrafts sector is very strong in Jordan and would be an asset for a tourism experience and promoting it would bring a great economic contribution for local communities.
- **A visitor's office:** an inviting visitor's office or several ones at strategic points of the trail (e.g., start/finish) would contribute to hikers' experience and would be valuable information and engagement point, would be helpful for monitoring purposes, and could generate additional income for the trail association e.g., through the sale of merchandising, passports, food and beverage on site.

## 2. SUSTAINABLE HIKING TOURISM

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide and especially adventure tourism, outdoor tourism and cultural experiences are booming markets within the tourism economy. There is a growing competition among hiking tourism destinations, since more and more destinations worldwide have discovered that hiking tourism is not only a very attractive sustainable practice to gain interesting target groups but also to generate income for communities in remote rural regions.

There are **several factors** making long-distance trails a **positive visitor experience** and thus generating positive economic impact on the destination:

1. Positive visitor experience and high level of visitor satisfaction
2. Professionally organised visitors' services (including information & booking services)
3. Professional and complete sign posting and marking system.
4. A well designed and maintained trail structure.
5. Quality services along and around the trail (guiding, transport etc.)
6. Several levels of quality accommodation along the hiking trail
7. Authentic experiences and local products available along the trail

These factors mainly determine (1) the number of visitors; (2) the type of visitors and the (3) length of their stay and are the key parameters for the economic impact of the hiking trail. The economic impact stimulated by tourist expenditure is what causes changes in the income of the local communities and generates revenue for local tourism stakeholders (accommodation, taxi drivers, shops etc.). Chapter 2.2. describes these success factors in more detail, while chapter 2.3. gives a brief insight into profitable target groups looking for quality services along hiking trails. But first, let's have a look at the positive and negative impacts of hiking trails.

### 2.1. Socio-economic impact of long-distance hiking trails

Long distance hiking trails can become a driving force for sustainable development in rural areas, if they are developed in a professional and sustainable way. Several of our international case studies show how long-distance trails have contributed to the sustainable development of the region, prevented remote communities from migrating, and even helped to preserve natural and cultural heritage. Thus, hiking trails can definitely generate positive impact on the destination and the local communities, but they can also cause negative impact on the destination whenever they are not professionally managed and insufficient attention is paid to visitor information and control, the protection of conservation areas, and community participation at all levels of development. Positive impacts can generate direct economic benefits, but also indirect ones e.g. more income generation as a result of more visibility as a tourism destination, which results in more visitors spending more money in local businesses.

## POTENTIAL POSITIVE IMPACT OF LONG-DISTANCE HIKING TRAILS

- **Job creation.** The development of hiking trails can create new jobs and help local communities to become micro-entrepreneurs. A good example is our case study **No. 5, the Rota Vincentina**, where the less developed coastal area of the Algarve, a typical fishing and traditional craft area, has experienced a sustainable 'boom' in the area since the creation of the NGO Rota Vincentina, which has been managing the long-distance hiking trail since 2013. Since then, more than 1400 direct and indirect jobs have been created.
- **Repopulation of abandoned remote mountain areas.** The set up of a long-distance hiking trail can also be an instrument to repopulate abandoned rural areas. Case study **No.10, the Peaks of the Balkans Trail**, demonstrates how completely abandoned mountain villages and valleys could be repopulated through the setting-up of a trans-national hiking trail crossing the mountain areas of 3 countries. Youngsters were prevented from migrating and returned to their villages to open up small businesses (guesthouses, restaurants etc.)
- **Revitalisation of tourism areas.** But also, tourism destinations that run out of business can attract new target groups and revitalize their existing tourism infrastructure through the set-up of a long-distance hiking trail infrastructure. A good example is the case study **No. 11 the Alpe Adria Trail**, through which, the former successful Austrian destination `Kärnten 'was revitalized.
- **Economic benefits for local businesses.** Trails can boost spending at local businesses. Communities along trails benefit from the influx of visitors going to restaurants, snack shops and other retail establishments. On longer trails, hotels, bed and breakfasts, local tour operators, and outdoor outfitters benefit.
- **Improvement local infrastructure.** Trails can make communities more attractive places to live. Increased visitor numbers can bring prosperity to the regions, which can be reflected in improvements to local transport or other infrastructure. Some examples can be seen in local case studies, like in **Palestine, case study No. 39** where a successful initiative Tal Al-Qamar which boomed especially after the Palestinian heritage trail establishment led to the improved infrastructure in their area.
- **Attraction of more businesses.** Trails can make communities attractive to businesses looking to expand or relocate both because of the amenities they offer to employees and the opportunities they offer to cater to trail visitors. Like in an case study example from **Lebanon No. 45**, where establishment of trails revitalized a village, and attracted new local businesses opening a guest house and a campsite.
- **Low-cost recreation for locals.** Trails provide low or no-cost recreation to families, youngsters, or other local target groups. A good example is the **case study No.17, the TransCanada**, the biggest recreational trail worldwide. It has been created for the recreation of all Canadian people and crosses the entire country.
- **Awareness-raising and educational tool.** A long-distance trail in rural or remote areas can raise the awareness of the local population living in towns and cities to get to know better the cultural and natural heritage and living traditions of their home destination.

- **Contributing to conservation.** Trail building can also contribute to nature conservation and the valorisation of fragile ecosystems. A good example of this is the case study **No: 9, the Brazilian Transcarioca Trail**, where the trail is built to connect protected areas and the conservation approach is used to finance the trail infrastructure.
- **Flagship tourism product for the destination.** A long-distance hiking trail can turn into the flagship tourism product of a destination. Flagship tourism products are those with such strong market appeal that they determine the travel decision and choice of destination for a certain target group. A good example is case study **No. 12, the Meditation Trail**, which draws the attention of hikers to the destination Ammergauer Alps, which is more known as a cultural destination.
- **Increasing visibility for the destination & image changer.** A long-distance trail can certainly lead to a stronger visibility for the destination and change its image in a positive manner. This happened to the destination of the **Peaks of the Balkans Trail** after setting up and promoting the trail, case study **No.10**, Albanian, Kosovo and Montenegro were all of a sudden seen as an adventurous trekking destination and not as the conflicted Balkan region, as they were known for years.
- **Community driving force.** Local communities along hiking trails can definitely highly benefit from trail development. Whenever the community is part of the trail development and decision-making process, the power goes back to the people and the local community turn into microentrepreneurs and driving force. A good example is case study **No 19**, the community driven tourism model of the **Kumano Koto Pilgrims Route**.
- **Positive economic impact on the region.** Hiking trails can become a real driving force for rural destinations and create a strong positive impact on the region.

The Rota Vincentina long distance coastal trail in Portugal evaluated in its economic impact study a direct revenue from hiking tourism of **14.722 million Euros** from hiking tourism.

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These benefits represent a huge economic return on the money invested into trail projects.  
The costs of land acquisition for trails, trail construction and maintenance are far outweighed by the economic benefits generated by trails.

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But a hiking trail can also cause negative impacts such as:

### POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF LONG-DISTANCE HIKING TRAILS

- **Resistance of local communities against tourism in remote areas.** There is always a risk of resistance against hiking trail development from local communities. If communities feel disturbed by hikers in their home territory. That's why awareness raising, communication and integration of local communities is crucial from the very beginning, to make communities feel like they are owners and beneficiaries of the trail.
- **Territorial conflicts along the trail route.** A classic conflict that arises with hiking trail development is always territorial issues. Landowners doesn't want foreigners to cross their properties. The only way forward is turning the landowners into beneficiaries of the trail.

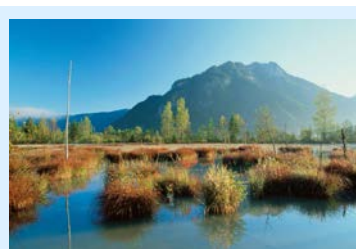
- **Risk of accidents & loss of reputation.** Badly maintained hiking trail routes always carry the risk of causing accidents to hikers, which leads to bad reputation.
- **Risk of overtourism.** Also, too many visitors at the same time in the same place can cause problems and lead to overtourism. Typical symptoms of overtourism are polluted nature, stressed local populations and stressed hikers and, in the worst-case scenario, the degradation of fragile ecosystems along the trail. That's why a monitoring system to monitor the visitor management can be necessary.

## 2.2.The product hiking tourism

**Hiking** is definitely a **growing outdoor trend**, what is demonstrated in figures of the hiking destinations Germany and Switzerland:

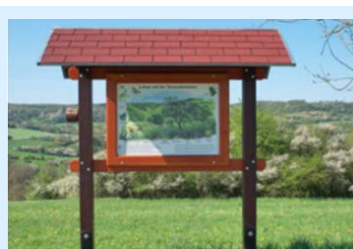
- (Self-guided) **hiking** is one of **most popular leisure activities** in Germany for a targeted audience of all ages
- Youngsters, seniors, individuals and families – more than **37 million Germans** hike (source <https://www.alpen-guide.de>)
- Hikers spend about **7.5 billion EUR** per year during their hikes and hiking vacation in Germany; 3.6 billion EUR total value added; about **144 000 jobs** are generated (source <https://www.wanderverband.de>)
- Switzerland – **70%** of all **Swiss tourists hike during** their vacation and come mainly for this outdoor activity.

Hiking is much more than a simple outdoor activity. Professionally developed, it turns into a competitive tourism product that is relatively low in investment, easy to implement and offering lots of potential for further development into more hiking related tourism products e.g. thematic trails, educational trails or long-distance trails.



### Thematic trails

Cultural themes, regional products, landscapes or natural highlights



### Nature & learning experience

Educational trails provide specific knowledge of the local flora and fauna



### Long distance trails and trail routes

Transnational trails, coastal trails, Alpine trail routes

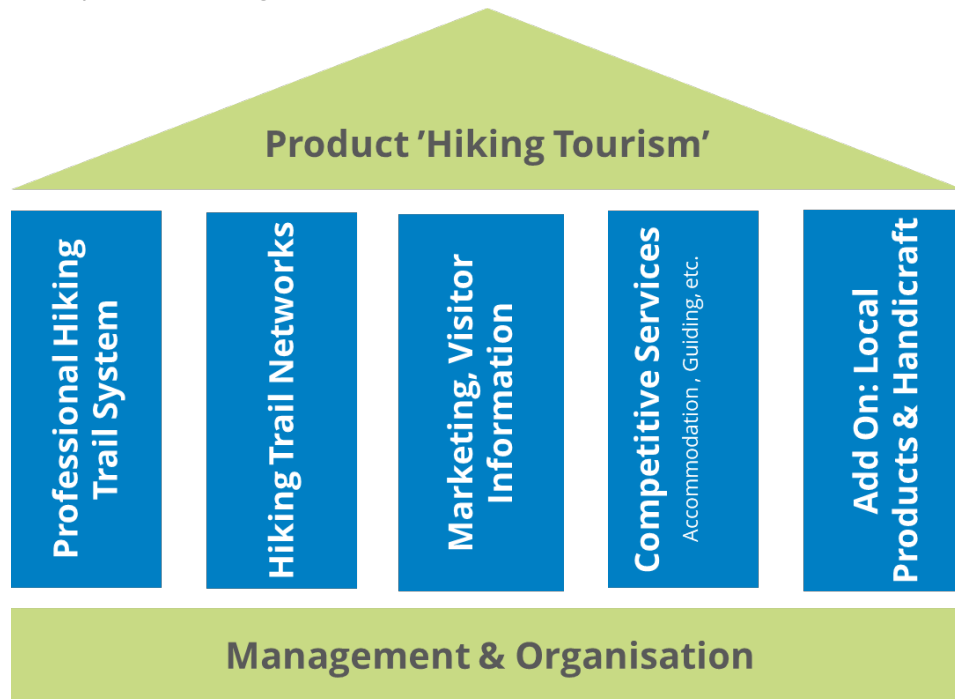
To develop a **competitive hiking tourism product**, far more than **just a set of trails and trail standards is needed**. Solid planning and design are required, as are standards for trail design, authentic and high-quality accommodation to host groups and individual travellers, and a range of complimentary services, such as mountain guiding services and production

and purchase of local or luggage transport. All of these areas should be considered for development.

Additionally, solid management and marketing structures should be in place to assure professional target group-oriented marketing and information management, provision of standards, and capacity building.

The following chart shows the key elements of the **Product Hiking Tourism**.

Figure 1: the product "hiking" tourism



### PROFESSIONAL HIKING TRAIL SYSTEM

A (national) Hiking Trail System consists of much more than just some trails and a hiking signposting standard. It is quite a complex system of various elements allowing the further development, promotion and quality assurance of hiking trails and also defines the mandate and responsibility for their maintenance.

The following chart shows the key elements of such a (national) hiking trail system and how they interact with each other.

Figure 2: Professional hiking trail system



On the long its highly recommended to establish one hiking trail system in a destination which is oriented at international standards. This requires a certain framework. The framework can differ from country to country and depends on the structure (e.g. the existence of a strong hiking association), a country's needs and its legal framework. Worldwide, Switzerland is the country with the most professionalized hiking system and often serves as a role model for the establishment of national hiking systems.

But leading role models for hiking trail standards and systems can also be found in the "godfathers" of all hiking destinations: Switzerland, Germany and Austria.

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It would be recommendable to develop a basic quality standard for signposting and marketing for the Mediterranean region!

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### Hiking & Mountain Trail System in Germany and Austria

<https://www.alpenverein.de/>



- German and Austrian Mountain Areas use a common hiking trail system
- **55,000 km** of hiking and mountain trails and alpine routes
- Alpine clubs active for **150 years**, operating mainly through volunteers
- **Marketing of the hiking trails** is the shared responsibility of the tourism destinations/regions, the national tourism authorities and the Alpine Clubs
- Basic framework of the German-Austrian mountain trail system incorporates (1) standardized signage and (2) signposting; trail building and maintenance guidelines (3) marking of trails (4) trail categories and a classification of trails (4) trail networks and registration

## 2.3. Marketing & visitor information

### TARGET GROUPS

The key question for all marketing activities should be: What is the target group we want to attract? To raise the economic impact of a long-distance hiking trail, the desired target group should be:

- Profitable, which means willing and able to spend good money on quality services on the trail.
- Focused on sustainable travel practices and interested in outdoor activities
- Interested in local culture, authentic experiences and in interaction and exchange with local communities.
- Travel in small groups or as individuals
- Have a certain level of education
- Be interested in the local flora and fauna of the destination
- Slow travelers that like to “experience” the destination and therefore extend their stay.
- Generally, the target group can be divided into two groups of origin: (1) individual adventure and culturally interested hikers and trekkers, and (2) specialist tour operators. Once standards, services and tourism infrastructure have been improved, the target group can certainly be enlarged, for example to include families with children going on farm holidays or hiking vacations.

Figure 3: Target groups

Specialist International Tour Operators	Individual Hikers & Trekkers
Specialist tour operators (e.g. Forum Anders Reisen) offering higher priced packages and interested in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sustainability, culture, authenticity, nature and hiking               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adventure</li> </ul> </li> <li>•Mountain hiking &amp; trekking</li> </ul>	Interested in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adventure</li> <li>•The outdoors, hiking, biking, and trekking               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Culture, living traditions</li> </ul> </li> <li>•Local authentic experiences and encounters with the local community</li> <li>•Biodiversity of flora and fauna</li> </ul>

**Forum Anders Reisen (FAR)** <https://forumandersreisen.de> is “the” umbrella association and **sustainable travel portal** for the German travel sector, and the perfect target group for the German-speaking tourism market in terms of specialist tour operators. It counts more than **130 sustainability certified members** (sustainable tour operators).

## TARGET MARKETS

The target markets for outdoor and adventure tourism in the Med region be defined as follows:

Geographically	Socio – demographically	Travel Behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>German-speaking travel market: Germany, Switzerland, Austria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups of young individuals or hiking, biking, or trekking clubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adventure tourist</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other European countries                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- France</li> <li>- Norway</li> <li>- United Kingdom</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young domestic travellers (average age: 18-30 years)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sporty, interested in local traditions, culture and nature, sustainability-oriented and looking for authenticity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic markets in the Med countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young travellers, hikers, adventurers (average age 18-30)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mediterranean lovers with hiking, biking and trekking interest</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overseas markets:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- USA</li> <li>- Australia</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-educated and financially well-positioned (average age 35-65 ) European traveller</li> <li>Active seniors 50-70</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International hikers, bikers and trekkers always looking for new destinations and challenges</li> </ul>

Source: Marketing Strategy MEDUSA- EU funded project Development and Promotion of Mediterranean Sustainable Adventure Tourism

The German-speaking market (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland) especially is a very interesting target market for the product authentic culture, nature, and adventure tourism.

What needs to be **EMPHASIZED** is that the two essential needs of international **TRAVELERS** are good sleep and good food. These are the two services along the trail that need to be taken care of first. Clean, quality accommodation and a variety of fresh local dishes (including vegetarian).

## VISITORS INFORMATION

To attract the target group of **individual travellers**, professional visitor information services are essential. Therefore, the following two key measures are recommended:

- Detailed information on website about:
  - Trail structure length, level of difficulty, hiking trail network
  - Ideally a hiking trail APP to download
  - Information on accommodation and trail services – ideally with booking form

- Information material e.g. map available on site
- Service contacts for any questions and booking support
- Relevant travel information
- Emergency contacts
- Visitor information system on the trail
  - Professional signposting and marking system in place
  - Information boards at strategic points and crossings etc.
  - Guest houses, restaurants and shops indicated by signposting on the trail
- Add on: **Visitors information centre**, booking centre or welcome centre on site where the hiker can directly address his needs and receives personal attention.

## 2.4. High quality & competitive tourism offer & services

To attract profitable target groups a quality tourism, offer and services should be in place along the trail route.

- **Competitive accommodation services** related to hiking and trekking. Authentic quality accommodation is actually a key element to attract a higher segment target group. Tastefully designed in the local authentic style, using material from the region and authentic cultural elements with double rooms and equipped according to the hikers needs.
- Therefore, the standards of the small-scale accommodation sector (B&Bs, small guesthouses, pensions, and small hotels) in rural areas, along trail routes, and in potential hiking destinations should be raised and communities motivated and trained to open small-scale accommodation businesses and become entrepreneurs.

It is highly recommended to develop tailor-made sustainable quality & service criteria for the hiking trail accommodations and to train the local business in their application.

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[It's highly recommended to develop tailor-made sustainable quality & service criteria for the accommodation businesses on long-distance hiking trails in the Med region!](#)

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Combined with a trail partner system, it's the perfect match and will turn into an asset for the trail. View case studies **No. 5,10, 11 and 21**.

- **Certified hiking and mountain guides** are a key tool for enhancing hiking tourism and increasing the number of individual hikers. But capable, knowledgeable, certified guides provide more than just a service, they can ensure the safety of hikers, for example in difficult hiking areas or in areas without signposting and other guiding systems.
- **Transport services.** Another service that attracts broader target groups is a luggage service that brings the luggage to the next accommodation while the visitor is hiking. In this way, the long-distance trail also becomes interesting for a target group with lower physical fitness.

## 2.5. Quality trail performance

As already mentioned in the beginning of chapter 2 there are **several factors** making long-distance trails a **positive visitor experience** and thus generating positive economic impact on the destination:

1. Positive visitor experience and high level of visitor satisfaction
2. Professionally organised visitors' services (including information & booking services)
3. Professional and complete sign posting and marking system.
4. A well designed and maintained trail structure.
5. Quality services along and around the trail (guiding, transport etc.)
6. Several levels of quality accommodation along the hiking trail
7. Authentic experiences and local products available along the trail

Stable economic success of long of long-distance hiking trails can only be guaranteed if a set of certain quality criteria are fulfilled. Quality trails turn into quality sustainable tourism products that can stand up the strong competition on the market. To quickly check the status of your trail a tailor-made **Quality Trail Performance** checklist has been designed. The use of the checklist is further explained in chapter 5.1.1. The checklist can be downloaded from the dropbox of the project here: [BENCHMARK STUDY DOCUMENTS](#).

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It might be recommendable to develop specific quality standards for long-distance trails in the Med region.

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### 3. GOOD PRACTICES AROUND THE GLOBE

To learn more about the income generating activities of TMO/DMO and communities, **48 case studies** have been identified and elaborated.

For **23 of the case studies, international hiking trails** and thematically interesting concepts have been screened, analysed and elaborated. We looked at interesting and successful trail and DMO management models and innovative and/ or creative community driven IGAs alongside the trails.

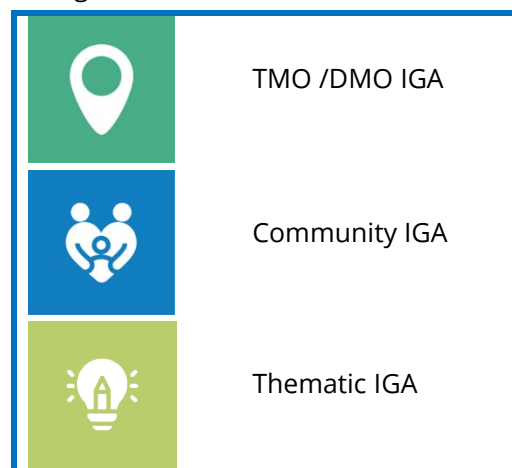
The **25 local case studies** target destinations and trails of the project partners of Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan. 8 case studies were elaborated for each destination. 3 of these focus on successful IGAs of the respective trail organisation while the remaining 5 identified successful and creative/innovative IGAs managed and driven by local community members.

#### 3.1. The Benchmarking Model

To benchmark the income generating activities the selected case studies are evaluated around the following criteria:

1. Trail/DMO benefits
2. Innovation/ creativity
3. Community benefits
4. Financial sustainability
5. Economic impact

All case studies are categorized and visualised as a (1) TMO/ DMO IGA (2) Community IGA or as a (3) Thematic IGA. The category Thematic IGA has been included for thematically interesting case studies that have been considered important to complete the picture. For example, a case study on theme trails, quality standards for European long-distance hiking trails, or the concept of the "Albergo Diffuso" - an interesting concept for revitalising and repopulating remote, rich villages.



The socio-economic performance will be briefly assessed, and the main outstanding practices will be highlighted in a short socio-economic performance check.

BENCHMARKING				
	Trail/DMO-ORG-Benefits	Community-Benefits	Financial Sustainability	Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product West Highland Way.</li> <li>Attracts more visitors to the WHW through easy-to-find and organize services.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community-driven businesses along the trail directly benefit from this marketplace and reach international target groups they could never reach on their own.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Proud Supporter System contributes to the financial sustainability of the TMO by generating a small yearly budget that can be reinvested for marketing or website maintenance.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WHW generates high economic impact to the rural communities along the trail: <b>13.92 million EUR p.a.</b></li> </ul>				X

The conclusion will be summarized in a small assessment box at the end of the 2-pages factsheet of each practice.

**NOTE**

- Clear valid system. Easy to use for the business and easy to manage for the Trail Organization.
- Replicability in the Mediterranean region**  
It could be definitely replicated in the Med region but pricing needs to be adapted to the local conditions.
- USP Innovative concept etc.**
- Proud Supporters System**. The system benefits both the TMO by generating additional income and the local businesses by providing a market platform and visibility.
- Overall performance**  
A listing on the accommodation and services page offers a great opportunity to reach thousands of visitors from across the world who are preparing to walk the Way each year. All businesses are also located on the digital map and each business has its own portfolio listing. The system is clear, easy and user friendly and the fees are quite moderate and acceptable for rural businesses.

## 3.2. International case studies

In the following **23** well-chosen international case studies for innovative, creative and successful IGAs are presented from the following countries **16 and** from **15 long-distance trails or routes**.

- Germany
- Denmark
- Canada
- Turkey
- Albania
- New Zealand
- Austria
- Island
- Japan
- France
- Portugal
- Montenegro
- Slovenia
- Norway
- Italy
- Kosovo

Having the following categories:



10 TMO



10 Community



3 Thematic



CASE STUDY NO: 1

## Proud Supporter System / West Highland Trail

**Country:** Scotland

**Destination:** Highlands

**Webpage:** <https://www.westhighlandway.org>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Management Group public organizations.

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 1980
- Lenth: 154 km
- Stages 8

- Part of Scotland ´s Great Trails
- Around 200 SMEs along the trail
- The WHW contributes at least £12M to the local economy each year.

### Target Group/s

- Local Hikers, but mainly international hikers
- Individuals and through international specialized tour operators
- **45,000 hikers every year**

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The West Highland Way (WHW) is an incredibly scenic long-distance trail covering 154km of the Scottish Highlands. From Milngavie to Fort William, it takes in a huge variety of scenery, from country parks to loch shores and open moorland to rugged mountains. It's part of Scotland's Great Trails and generates high levels of income for the rural communities along the way.

**Description of the IGA:** The Trail Management Organization has developed a very sophisticated business model for the service providers along the trail called ´ **Proud Supporters System** ´. The system benefits both the TMO by generating additional income and the local businesses by providing a market platform and visibility ( <https://www.westhighlandway.org/business-listings/>)

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Proud Supporters Business Listings

A listing on the [accommodation and services page](#) offers a great opportunity to reach thousands of visitors from across the world who are preparing to walk the Way each year. All businesses are also located on the digital map and each business has its own portfolio listing. The system is clear, easy and user-friendly and the fees are quite moderate and acceptable for rural businesses.

#### Different listing levels

- **A – Small business** (e.g. small café, B&B/self-catering (up to 3 rooms), small publisher, small retailer, not-for-profit; non-VAT registered)
- **B – Medium business** (e.g. bar/restaurant, medium/large café, guest house/small inn, larger retailers, baggage handlers, booking services, transport provider, small-medium attractions, medium-large publisher)
- **C – Large business** (e.g. hotels/hostels/other accommodation with 6+ bedrooms, larger visitor attractions, campsites, activity providers, tour operators)

#### Benefits for the businesses





- **Showing support** by taking out one of our packages whilst gaining benefits for your business at the same time!
- Become a Member of the Official **WHW Business Community**, including access to advice, newsletter updates and networking opportunities;
- Option to be an Official WHW **Passport Point** (includes stamp, ink pad & window stickers\*);
- Reshares and/or **Social media** mentions on WHW official channels;
- Permission to use a digital version of the **WHW official logo** on your website to promote your business in line with brand guidelines\*\*.

#### Business model & Cost structure

- There are 3 categories, depending on the size and type of business:
  - (1) Small – accommodation 0-3 rooms; small cafe/retailer etc: **EUR 139 p.a.**
  - (2) Medium – accommodation 4–6 rooms; restaurant/bar/cafe; service providers: booking, transport, baggage: **EUR 290 p.a.**
  - (3) Large – accommodation 6+ rooms, campsite, visitor attractions: **EUR 533 p.a.**

## Proud Supporter System / West Highland Trail

### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product West Highland Way</li> <li>Attracts more visitors to the WHW through easy to find and organize services.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community-driven businesses along the trail directly benefit from this marketplace and reach international target groups they could never reach on their own.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Proud Supporter System contributes to the financial sustainability of the TMO by generating a small yearly budget that can be reinvested for marketing or website maintenance.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WHW generates high economic impact to the rural communities along the trail: <b>13.92 million EUR p.a.</b></li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

- Clear valid system. Easy to use for the business and easy to manage for the Trail Organization.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

It could be definitely replicated in the Med region, but pricing needs to be adapted to the local conditions.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Proud Supporters System**. The system benefits both the TMO by generating additional income and the local businesses by providing a market platform and visibility.

#### Overall performance

- A listing on the accommodation and services page offers a great opportunity to reach thousands of visitors from across the world who are preparing to walk the Way each year.
- All businesses are also located on the digital map and each business has its own portfolio listing.
- The system is clear, easy and user-friendly and the fees are quite moderate and acceptable for rural businesses.



CASE STUDY NO: 2

# Passport Package / West Highland Trail

**Country:** Scotland

**Destination:** Highlands

**Webpage:** <https://www.westhighlandway.org>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

Key Facts	Target Group/s
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<p><b>Type of Organization:</b> Management Group public organizations.</p> <p><b>Type of Trail:</b> Long distance trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiated in 1980</li> <li>• Lenth: 154 km</li> <li>• Stages 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of Scotland ´s Great Trails</li> <li>• Around 200 SMEs along the trail</li> <li>• The WHW contributes at least 13.92 M EUR to the local economy each year.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Hikers, but mainly international hikers</li> <li>• Individuals and through international specialized tour operators</li> <li>• <b>45,000 hikers every year</b></li> </ul>

## Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The West Highland Way is an incredible scenic long distance hiking trail stretching 154 km from and crossing Scotland’s Highlands, Milngavie to Fort William, taking in a huge variety of scenery along the way, from countryside parks to loch-shores and open moorlands to steep mountains. It’s part of Scotland Great Trails and generates a high level of income for the rural communities along the trail.

**Description of the IGA:** Thousands of feet over 96 miles of path - plus all the bridges, gates, signage, drainage and so on - means there is a huge amount of work involved in keeping the Way in good condition. To compensate for the high labour-intensive maintenance costs, the **WHW Passport Package** has been initiated ( <https://www.westhighlandway.org/support>).

Impressions of the Trail	Operational & Performance Model
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### Passport Package

The WHW Passport has been created to support the maintenance of the trail Hikers are encouraged to buy the passport to support the trail and have it stamped at ‘Passport Points’ along the way. Passport Points are local businesses.

#### Feature of the Passport

- The Passport comes with lanyard (made from recycled materials) and waterproof pouch along with an official passport. Every passport sold helps support the maintenance of the West Highland Way.
- The Passport Points are marked in the digital map.

#### Benefits for the businesses & hikers

- The [listed accommodations and services](#) can be easily identified as Passport Points on the map and receive additional marketing.
- Incentive and motivation tool for hikers
- Visitors can find information such as opening hours in the accommodation listings, in addition to the business information.

#### Business model & Cost structure





- The WHW Passport Package costs **9.86 EUR**
- Businesses along the trail that have purchased a listing have the opportunity to become a Passport Point free of charge.
- Listings: There are 3 categories, depending on the size and type of business:
  - (1) Small – accommodation 0-3 rooms; small cafe/retailer etc: **EUR 139 p.a.**
  - (2) Medium – accommodation 4–6 rooms; restaurant/bar/cafe; service providers: booking, transport, baggage: **EUR 290 p.a.**
  - (3) Large – accommodation 6+ rooms, campsite, visitor attractions: **EUR 533 p.a.**

#### Marketing & Sales

- The WHW Pass can be purchased directly online from the WHW web shop or alternatively from a number of designated shops and businesses along the trail.

## Passport Package / West Highland Trail

### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product West Highland Way</li> <li>Incentive &amp; motivation tool for hikers</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community businesses along the trail benefit directly from the passport as a marketing tool, as hikers are encouraged to visit the Passport Points.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WHW Passport Package contributes to the financial sustainability of the TMO by generating a small yearly budget that can be reinvested for trail maintenance.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Passport is a small but efficient tool to support the local economy.</li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

Clear valid system. Easy to use and easy to implement.

**Replicability in the Mediterranean region**

- It could be definitely replicated in the Med Region including in terms of pricing.

**USP Innovative concept etc.**

- Very practical and handy format.

**Overall performance**

- It is an easy to implement motivational and inspirational tool for hikers and helps to promote local businesses.
- The format is very easy to use and it's a good idea to use a number of local businesses along the trail where the passport can be purchased, in addition to the online shop.
- What makes the concept even more effective is that the Passport points are allocated on the digital map and on the overview map in the Passport flyer that accompanies the purchase of the Passport.



CASE STUDY NO: 3

## Merchandise System / West Highland Trail

**Country:** Scotland

**Destination:** Highlands

**Webpage:** <https://www.westhighlandway.org>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Management Group public organizations.

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 1980
- Lenth: 154 km
- Stages 8

- Part of Scotland ´s Great Trails
- Around 200 SMEs along the trail
- The WHW contributes at least 13,92 M EUR to the local economy each year.

### Target Group/s

- Local Hikers, but mainly international hikers
- Individuals and through international specialized tour operators
- **45,000 hikers every year**

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The West Highland Way (WHW) is an incredibly scenic long-distance trail covering 154km of the Scottish Highlands. From Milngavie to Fort William, it takes in a huge variety of scenery, from country parks to loch shores and open moorland to rugged mountains. It's part of Scotland's Great Trails and generates high levels of income for the rural communities along the way.

**Description of the IGA:** The WHW has created a well-chosen and branded system of merchandising products which generate a small additional income for the Trail Management, add to the brand value of the Trail and are very good marketing tools

(<https://www.westhighlandwayshop.org/>).

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### WHW Merchandising Concept

The WHW has a well-chosen range of merchandising products. Licensed producers are in charge of the production, every year new articles are designed to keep the shop interesting, including for repeaters.

#### Product Offer

The shop offers quite a large range of **sustainable articles** e.g.

- Cool organic cotton shirts with innovative designs
- PFC free re-usable branded travel mugs and bags apply fewer packaging principles.

The offers ranges from:

- T-shirt, Hoodies
- Outerwear
- Kids ware
- Hats & Beanies
- Scarves & Gloves
- Badges & Keyrings
- Drinkware
- Bags & backpacks
- Homeware
- Cards & Stationary

All products come in **high quality** and are **well-chosen** and well-designed.

- The creative Finisher Collection is remarkable:

<https://www.westhighlandwayshop.org/collections/finisher-range>

#### Business Model & Cost structure

- Prices are affordable and the items are well selected, easy to carry and mainly useful for hikers.
- The TMO generates income through the sale of products.





#### Marketing & Sales

- The products can be purchased directly online from the WHW webshop or in designated businesses along the trail.

## Merchandise System / West Highland Trail



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product West Highland Way</li> <li>Incentive &amp; motivation tool for hikers</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The WHW merchandising concept contributes to the financial sustainability of the TMO by generating a small yearly budget that can be reinvested.</li> </ul>			X	



### NOTE

Very well thought out and professionally designed products that are high quality but still affordable.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could certainly be replicated in the Mediterranean region.
- Pricing and supply would need to be adapted to local conditions and the range could include more sustainable products with a local, authentic touch.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- The merchandising products are well thought out.
- They are either practical and easy to use, such as the travel mugs and other drinkware, or innovative and stylish, such as the organic cotton shirts.
- Small, easy-to-carry products that can be used as souvenirs, such as the bags and key rings, are also a good idea as they are easy to carry and not very expensive. The Finishers collection is also a creative product idea for enthusiastic hikers.

#### Overall performance

- This merchandising shop is a good example of how creative and thoughtful merchandising can be and how a professional branding system can turn the merchandising products into pure promotion, marketing and brand building for the trail.
- Attention should always be paid to good quality, variety of products and a different range each year.



CASE STUDY NO: 4

## Closed for Maintenance / Faroe Islands

**Country:** Denmark

**Destination:** Self-governing under the external sovereignty of Denmark

**Webpage:** <https://visitfaroeislands.com>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn; Pinterest

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** DMO

**Type of Trail:** Network of hiking trails

- Local population: 55 000
- Total land area: 1,399 square km
- A sea area of 274,000
- Initiated: 2018

- Hiking trails on 18 islands
- Around 220 km of hiking trails
- 80 nationalities and 70.000 sheep's living on the islands.
- Traditional accommodation
- Strong living traditions

### Target Group/s

- Participants come from 25 countries all over Europe, Africa, USA and Australia
- 5000 applicants each year
- Only 100 participants chosen from 18-70 years

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The **Faroe Islands** are a rather new destination for sustainable walking tourism. Halfway between Scotland and Iceland in the north-east Atlantic, the Faroe Islands are an archipelago of 18 mountainous islands and one of the most isolated places in the world. Rugged and wild landscapes, mountains and cliffs, wild sea and living local traditions make the Faroe Islands an outstanding hiking destination. The hiking trail network on the 18 islands is based on old historic village and shepherd paths and takes hikers off the beaten track.

**Description of the IGA:** Every year, the Faroe Islands close their islands to tourists for 3 days to maintain their trails and trail infrastructure. Visit Faroe Islands invites volunteers from all over the world to join forces with local community volunteers. The whole activity is called **Closed for Maintenance**. What may sound a bit strange has become a huge marketing success and promotion for the islands, attracting more and more walking tourists every year.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Story & History of the IGA

- In 2018, the Faroe Islands DMO launched the **Closed for Maintenance** campaign for the first time, inviting volunteers from around the world to support the annual maintenance of the trails.
- At that time, the Faroe Islands were not well known as a sustainable tourism destination. For the first time, a promotional agency helped to launch the campaign and spread the message around the world.
- The press all over the world liked the idea and started writing about it. This was the first step in a great marketing success story.

#### The concept of Closed for Maintenance

- International volunteers must apply, with over 5000 applications received each year, and only 100 participants aged 18-70 are selected by the local DMO.
- Approximately 30% of those selected have special skills, such as trail maintenance.
- All municipalities along the trail can participate and propose a trail project (e.g. infrastructure along the trail). The best proposals are selected, and the municipalities also cooperate with materials and manpower.
- - International volunteers work alongside local community volunteers and municipal staff. In this way, the campaign also helps to open up local communities to foreigners on their islands.
- The maintenance tasks range from rebuilding paths to signposting and building and repairing infrastructure along the trails.





#### Business Model

- The international volunteers are provided with food and accommodation but aren't paid.
- The local DMO's investment is relatively small in terms of accommodation, food and materials, but the return in terms of marketing and increased visitor numbers is amazing.

## Closed for Maintenance / Faroe Islands



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The campaign is helping the DMO achieve its marketing goals while maintaining its walking infrastructure.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community benefits indirectly from the campaign.</li> <li>They have the opportunity to get to know future tourists on a different level - as co-workers - and gradually open up to tourism.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The campaign does not generate direct income, but indirectly by attracting more visitors to the islands.</li> <li>Huge marketing budgets and maintenance costs can be saved.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of businesses on the islands are community businesses, of which all benefit significantly from the increased number of tourists generated by the campaign.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Great and clever marketing idea that saves maintenance costs and draws attention to the island every year without investing in a large marketing budget.

**Replicability in the Mediterranean region**

- Perhaps not 1:1, but the approach could be replicated with a clever approach adapted to local conditions.

**USP Innovative concept etc.**

- Very unique marketing and volunteering approach.

**Overall performance**

- Very impressive and well performed marketing move bringing international recognition and attraction to the islands.



CASE STUDY NO: 5

## Sustainable Partner Network/ Rota Vicentina

**Country:** Portugal

**Destination:** Southwest Coast of Portugal

**Webpage:** <https://rotavicentina.com/en/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Non-profit association.

**Type of Trail:** Long distance coastal trail

- Initiated in 2013
- Length: 226.5 km
- No of Stages: 13

- 13 one day trails of 22.5 km
- More than 200 local service providers
- European certification "Leading Quality Trails-Best of Europe"

### Target Group/s

- Domestic and international hikers, over 70% from European Union.
- Typical profile – a German couple, 45-65 years old, hikes for 6 days, uses local accommodation.
- 24,000 hikers

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The **Rota Vicentina** (also called the Fishermen's trail) in Southwest Portugal is one of the **most popular and beautiful coastal trails in the world**. It is always by the sea and has been extended with an official network of off-road bike trails, following the marked paths used by local fishermen to access the coast. It goes along the cliffs, with lots of sand (60%- 70% sandy trails), making it demanding from a physical point of view and putting it in the 'somewhat difficult' category.

**Description of the IGA:** The Fisherman's trail can be seen as 'the **success model** ' for a **profitable trail management** organization involving more than 200 local services providers and partner organizations. It is well-known on the international sustainable travel market.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### The concept of the Fisherman's Trail

- The USP of the Rota Vicentina is the experience of the authentic local fishermen's culture through encounters with the locals, staying in guesthouses and small hotels in fishermen's villages, and eating at local seafood restaurants.

#### Rota Vicentina branded partner network

- More than 200 service providers and local businesses (accommodation, car rental, taxis and luggage transfer, restaurants, local commerce, activities, agencies and operators) support the Rota Vicentina association and promote sustainability and quality standards in their businesses.
- RV Partners pay a yearly fee to carry the Rota Vicentina Label so as to be recognized by tourists as a quality partner
- They can be booked directly on the RV website
- As RV partners they receive a consulting session, a promotion package, including branded material, and will be constantly updated by the TMO on news, events etc.

#### Other services from the Rota Vicentina Trail Organization

- **Individual bookable packages** are provided for hikers: Hikers receive maps & information on the hiking route, accommodation and luggage transfer and an itinerary is organized on an individual basis.
- **Packages and programmes** are also offered around the trail: (1) multi-day itinerary programs throughout the region (2) thematic programs for several days (3) programs of activities for a few hours, a full day or a week. These can all be booked through the booking office.
- **Consulting services** for the design of hiking trails, design of trail management models, the role of local identity in responsible tourism etc. are also provided.





#### Business Model

- The trail is co-financed by the national tourism authority. The TMO generates income through (1) network of labelled partners; (2) their booking services and the organization of small tours; (3) consulting services; (4) donations; (5) memberships.

## Sustainable Tourism Network/ Rota Vicentina



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The successful business model enabled the organization to create a strong organizational set-up.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community-driven businesses along the trail directly benefit from the booking system and reach international target groups they could never reach on their own. <b>1400 jobs</b> have been created since the trail has been founded.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RV TMO reached a <b>high level of sustainability</b> through: (1) Excellent links to European specialized in sustainable travel; (2) RV Partner Network yearly fees 240 EUR per business; (3) Provision from booking services; (4) Consulting fees; (5) Donations; (6) Support from EU projects; (7) Support of the regional DMO</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Rota Vincentina generates high economic impact to the rural communities along the trail and for the entire region: <b>Gross added value of 8 million</b> (the value staying in the region) so far.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

The Rota Vicentina is a true success story of hiking trail management that combines: (1) High level of financial sustainability of the trail organization; (2) sustainability and local authenticity approach; (3) a high level of community benefits; (4) positive economic impact on the region; and (5) a high level of international recognition.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

The branded sustainable partner network is definitely replicable in the Med Region. Also, all the other components are doable. Only the support of a regional or national tourism authority will be not feasible in most cases.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- The USP is definitely the combination of the authentic cultural approach and a well-defined business model with direct booking facilities and the individual package sale of hiking trips.

#### Overall performance

The Rota Vicentina is one of the most recognized and booked hiking trails on the European sustainable tourism market and very well linked to the individual travel market. It is definitely one of the flagship models on the hiking trail sector.



CASE STUDY NO: 6

## Traditional Tile Painting / La Rota Vicentina

**Country:** Portugal

**Destination:** Southwest Coast of Portugal/ Algarve

**Webpage:** <https://algarvianroots.com/courses/workshop-portuguese-tile-painting>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Tour Operator

**Type of Trail:** Long distance coastal trail

- Theme: Experience
- Other services: Hiking excursions,
- Flora & fauna excursions
- Local Gastronomy tastings

- RV partner since 2023
- Birdwatching
- Guided hikes through fisherman villages
- Other local experiences

### Target Group/s

- Domestic and international hikers, mainly from the Rota Vicentina

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The **Rota Vicentina**, also in south-west Portugal, is one of the most popular and beautiful coastal trails in the world. Always by the sea, it has been extended to include an official network of off-road cycling trails, following the marked paths used by local fishermen to access the coast. It runs along the cliffs and coastline of the Algarve coast, and the local culture and biodiversity are an integral part of the trail's attractions.

**Description of the IGA:** **Algarvian Roots** is an **ecotourism tour operator** based in the Algarve in Portugal and an official network partner of the Rota Vicentina, offering guided tours to visitors to the Rota Vicentina who want to take a short break from hiking and get to know the natural and cultural heritage of the region and connect with local communities. In this context, they **offer various workshops** organised in small traditional community workshops along the trail. One of these workshops is a traditional local tile painting workshop. **The experience is a win-win for all involved.**

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Concept of the experience

- Tile painting is a very old tradition on the Algarve and the handmade product famous for the region. The RV network partner offers this local experience to culturally interested visitors from the RV who have the chance to dive into this local experience for a few hours and learn from an old Portuguese family who have been running this traditional business for generations.

#### Benefits of this cultural experience

- For the visitor, it is an opportunity to experience local living traditions and interact with community members.
- The local community business receives additional income and can open up to international markets.
- Algarvian Roots earns money on every booking
- The Rota Vicentina has an attractive additional offer for its visitors and earns membership fees from Algarvian Roots. **Marketing**
- Marketing is done through the Webpage of the Rota Vicentina where Algarvian Roots has his own page: <https://rotavicentina.com/en/actividades/algarvian-roots-ecotourism-experiences/>

#### Business Model

- Price per person 65 EUR for the 2-hour workshop - approximately 30% goes to Algarve Roots and 70% to the tile workshop. Algarve Roots pays an annual membership fee of approximately 240 EUR to Rota Vicentina.

#### Financial Sustainability

- For the local tile production business, the workshop is an add to their regular income
- Algarvian Roots benefits from its partnership with RV and gains additional income


#### Economic impact

- The local experience concept is a win-win for the entire tourism value chain involved and brings benefits to the region.

## Traditional Tile Painting / La Rota Vicentina



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product Rota Vicentina</li> <li>It's a creative and easy to implement approach</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community-led businesses along the trail benefit directly from this experience concept and reach international customers they would not reach on their own.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The experience concept brings additional income and sales to the local business and to the local tour operator.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RV definitely brings more business to the local economy, communities and businesses, and the experience concept is a win-win for the entire tourism value chain.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

The tile painting workshop is a creative and easy-to-implement approach that touches on ancient living traditions and cultural values, generates income for the entire tourism value chain involved, and gives visitors the opportunity to interact with the local community.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of an experience linked to the production of local handicrafts and traditional arts can certainly be replicated in the Mediterranean region.

#### Innovative concept

- It is a creative approach that focuses on the authenticity and USP of the region.

#### Overall performance

- A well-designed, well-marketed and easy-to-implement approach



CASE STUDY NO: 7

## The Wool Route / La Rota Vicentina

Country: Portugal

Destination: Southwest Coast of Portugal/ Algarve

Webpage: <https://rotavicentina.com/en/programas/the-wool-route/>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Community business

**Theme:** Cultural Experience

- Service included: guide & meals
- Duration: 1 day
- No. of participants min 2 max 8 people

- Part of the local ID initiative
- Price 50 EUR per person
- Community members involved:
- Shepherd, local guide, local wool production business, local house offering gastronomy.

### Target Group/s

- Domestic and international hikers, mainly from the Rota Vicentina

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The **Rota Vicentina**, also in south-west Portugal, is one of the most popular and beautiful coastal trails in the world. Always by the sea, it has been extended to include an official network of off-road cycling trails, following the marked paths used by local fishermen to access the coast. It runs along the cliffs and coastline of the Algarve coast, and the local culture and biodiversity are an integral part of the trail's attractions.

**Description of the IGA:** Right in the north of the municipality of Odemira, in the small village of Vale da Santiago, Casa da Lua - Alentejo, a small local guesthouse, promotes the opportunity to **walk the Wool Route**. It starts with the shepherd and his staff, the flock and the sheepdog and covers all the steps of traditional wool production: carding, felting, spinning, weaving and knitting. **A full day of local cultural and traditional experience around the topic of wool.** A learning experience generating income for several community members.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Concept of the experience

- A small local business and a small local guesthouse had the idea of marketing the entire traditional wool production process, from sheep to pullover, as a local experience called the Wool Route.
- Visitors can join the shepherd and try out some of the steps in the local wool production process. Starting with carding, then felting, not forgetting spinning, weaving and knitting.
- During the day, a typical local meal with fresh local ingredients is offered by a member of the community.

#### Benefits of this cultural learning experience

- For the visitor, it is an opportunity to experience local living traditions, interact with community members and learn all about local wool production.
- The local community business receives additional income and can open up to international markets.
- Other community members involved (shepherds, cooks) gain additional income.
- The Rota Vicentina has an attractive additional offer for its visitors and earns a small commission for the booking.
- Local living cultures are preserved and valued.

#### Marketing

- Marketing is done through the Rota Vicentina webpage where the cultural learning experience can be directly booked.

#### Business Model

- The price per person is 50 EUR for the day - the income is shared between the shepherd, the wool producer and the cook. A small commission goes to Rota Vicentina for booking and to Casa da Lua for organising.





#### Financial Sustainability

- This cultural experience is certainly not a huge money maker, but it spreads additional income to several stakeholders in the local community value chain.

## The Wool Route / La Rota Vicentina



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's a creative highlight for the tourist and at the same time values an ancient local tradition.</li> <li>• Enriches the offer of the Rota Vicentina</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community-led businesses along the trail benefit directly from this experience concept and reach international customers they would not reach on their own.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -The experience provides additional income and contributes to the financial sustainability of the community members involved. Community members less involved in tourism, such as the shepherd, also benefit from this tourism concept.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RV definitely brings more business to the local economy, communities and businesses, and the experience concept is a win-win for the entire tourism value chain.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

The Wool Route Learning Experience is a creative approach to valorising and preserving an ancient local tradition, generating income for local community members and creating a unique local learning experience for visitors who can interact directly with local communities.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of an experience linked to the production of local handicrafts and traditional arts can certainly be replicated in the Mediterranean region.

#### USP, Innovative concept

- It is a creative approach that focuses on the authenticity and USP of the region.

#### Overall performance

- What makes the concept very valuable is the combination of learning, preserving & valorising, and generating income for local communities while adding to the offer of the Rota Vicentina. A win-win concept.



CASE STUDY NO: 8

## Discover medicinal & aromatic plants / La RV

Country: Portugal

Destination: Southwest Coast of Portugal/ Algarve

Webpage: <https://rotavicentina.com/en/programas/a-tour-to-discover-medicinal-and-aromatic-plants/>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Community business

**Theme:** Guided Hiking Experience

- Service included: guide.
- Duration: 2 hours
- No. of participants min 4 max 8 people

- Guided by a biologist.
- Price 15 EUR per person
- Pet-friendly excursion
- Community members involved:
- Very low in investment costs

### Target Group/s

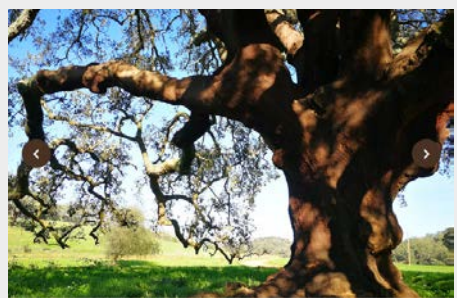
- Domestic and international hikers, mainly from the Rota Vicentina

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The **Rota Vicentina**, also in south-west Portugal, is one of the most popular and beautiful coastal trails in the world. Always by the sea, it has been extended to include an official network of off-road cycling trails, following the marked paths used by local fishermen to access the coast. It runs along the cliffs and coastline of the Algarve coast, and the local culture and biodiversity are an integral part of the trail's attractions.

**Description of the IGA:** Visitors to the Rota Vicentina can take a break from their hike, stay in one of the local accommodations along the trail and book a guided hike with a biologist through the Rota Vicentina booking platform to learn about and **discover the medicinal and aromatic plants along the Algarve's coastline**. This **guided experience** is an interesting IGA as it generates income with almost no investment costs and is easy to replicate.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Concept of the experience

- A small local company specialises in themed walks. One of these walks is called "Plants and Legends of a Paradise" and takes you through the unique ecosystem of the "Ribeira Torgal", where you can discover all kinds of medicinal and aromatic plants.
- The plants range from "weeds" to medicinal and culinary plants. The tour is guided by a biologist who explains the plants and legends of the region.
- During the tour, visitors have the opportunity to learn how to use plants in the preparation of home remedies and cooking dishes.

#### Benefits of this cultural learning experience

- For the visitor, it is an opportunity to learn about local medicinal and aromatic plants, while enjoying beautiful panoramic views.
- The local community business receives additional income without major investment through this sustainable tourism practice.

#### Marketing

- Marketing is done through the Rota Vicentina webpage where this hiking experience can be directly booked.

#### Business Model

- The price per person is only 15 EUR for 2 hours, but the concept could easily be extended into a full day programme, including a local meal prepared with the local aromatic plants collected, and a small workshop on making soap or home remedies with the local medicinal plants.

#### Financial Sustainability

- This hiking experience is certainly not a huge money maker, but it's an interesting opportunity for community members that are familiar with local plants to gain additional income without having to make major investments.

## Discover medicinal & aromatic plants / La RV



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's an interesting learning experience for the tourist. Unique for the region.</li> <li>Enriches the offer of the Rota Vincentina</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limiting the tour to 2 hours does not bring much income to the local communities, but enriching it with a day program including a workshop makes it an interesting IGA without major investment.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The experience provides additional income and contributes to the financial sustainability of the community member involved.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RV definitely brings more business to the local economy, communities and businesses, and the experience concept is a win-win for the entire tourism value chain.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Very interesting IGA because it is easy to replicate and can generate income for community members without major investment or risk and is very sustainable and valorises the biodiversity of the region.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of medical and aromatic plants is definitely replicable all over the Med region.
- It is a creative approach that focuses on the authenticity and USP of the region.

#### Overall performance

- What makes the concept very valuable is the combination of learning, preserving & valorising, and generating income for the local communities while adding to the offer of the Rota Vincentina. And all in all, without major investment. A win-win concept.



CASE STUDY NO: 9

## Conservation Approach / Transcarioca Trail

**Country:** Brazil

**Destination:** Rio de Janeiro

**Webpage:** <https://trilhaatranscarioca.com.br/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, Wikiloc, App

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Local institutions and civil society movement

**Type of Trail:** Long distance city trail

- Initiated in 1995
- Length: 183 km
- 25 sections

- 7 conservation units crossed.
- 5 municipalities included.
- 45 entry points
- 8000 meters altitude difference
- About 800 meters altitude difference per day

### Target Group/s

- Mainly the inhabitants of Rio di Janeiro
- More than **300 000 visitors** per year

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** Transcarioca Trail (TT) is Brazil's first ever long-distance hiking trail and leads its visitors through natural, historical, and cultural attractions of 7 conservation units surrounding the metropolitan area of Rio di Janeiro. It offers a variety of landscapes including wild beaches, as well as the city mountains, such as Corcovado and Sugar Loaf. It's a very tough trail with more than 800 metres of altitude difference per day hike.

**Description of the IGA:** Besides tourism and recreation, the **trail** is considered a **powerful tool for nature conservation** and is financed through enthusiastic volunteer work and national and international conservation funds.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### History of the Transcarioca Trail (TT)

- The TT was initially deigned to create a long-a-distance trail that connects all 7 IUCN recognized conservation units of the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro, functioning as an ecological corridor between them.

#### Concept of the Transcarioca Trail (TT)

- The Transcarioca Trail Movement (MTT) is an initiative that brings together people, civil society and institutions committed to nature conservation. The initiative works with volunteers only and has no strong organisational structure.
- The conservation of nature and the outstanding biodiversity is the main focus of the trail.
- Another objective of the trail, besides the conservation of flora and fauna, is to make the inhabitants of Rio di Janeiro aware of the unique biodiversity of their surroundings.

#### Volunteering system

- More than 1000 volunteers have already contributed to the implementation of the trail. Community members and institutions collaborate in signposting, maintenance and even administrative tasks for the trail.
- Approximately 10,000 hours of volunteer work is donated to the TT trail per year.
- The motivation of the volunteers is to part of a huge conservation initiative.

#### Business Model

- As nature conservation is the main focus of the TT, the business model is organized around this theme. The conservation of nature and biodiversity offers a wide range of founding opportunities from national and international organizations such as WWF Brazil, Conservation International Brazil, IUCN, etc.
- In addition, the TT initiative has a wide range of supporters, sponsors and adopters who contribute.





#### Financial Sustainability

- Although the TT is not completely self-sustaining, it achieves a degree of self-sustainability through its funding conservation approach.

## Conservation Approach / Transcarioca Trail



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The TMO strongly benefits from the volunteering approach of the trail and financially from the conservation approach.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community of Rio di Janeiro has a huge natural conservation area surrounding it and people can go for great day hikes to the trail (45 entry points). Strong recreational value and awareness raising for the local flora and fauna.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the TT is not completely self-sustaining, it achieves a degree of self-sustainability through its funding conservation approach.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since the trail does not provide any additional services, such as guiding, shop and accommodation, there is no direct economic impact on the region.</li> </ul>				



### NOTE

Although the TT is not completely self-sustaining, it achieves a degree of self-sustainability through its funding conservation approach. It has been chosen as a case study to illustrate that a conservation approach can also be an additional funding approach, provided that the trail crosses any type of conservation unit.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of nature conservation can easily be repeated in the Mediterranean region if the trail crosses or includes a conservation unit or is home to rare indigenous flora and fauna.

#### USP, Innovative concept

- The concept is not new, but still a valid approach.

#### Overall performance

- What is remarkable about this case study is how a trail can only be managed and maintained by volunteers, and how nature conservation can be an additional source of funding.



CASE STUDY NO: 10

## Repopulation of Remote Villages / Peaks of the Balkans

**Country:** Albania, Montenegro, and Kosovo

**Trail & Destination:** Peaks of the Balkans Trail, Dinaric Alps

**Webpage:** [www.peaksofthebalkans.com](http://www.peaksofthebalkans.com)

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, You Tube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USFKqGAvkA8>

### Key Facts

**Type:** Transnational Mountain Trail

**Theme:** Guest houses with local services

- Initiated in 2010
- 192 km
- 10 stages
- Accessible from 3 countries

- Cross-border trekking
- **10 communities along the trail**
- Winner of the **tourism for tomorrow destination** stewardship award (World Tourism Council)

### Target Group/s

- Extremely international target group in 2023 from **67 countries**
- The top 10 are: (1) Germany, (2) Belgium (3) Netherlands, (4) France (5) United Kingdom (6) Isale (7) USA (8) Austria (9) Poland (10) Australia.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study:** The **Peaks of the Balkans (PoB) Trail** runs through the remote and wild mountainous regions of the **Western Balkans** (Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania). This area of the Dinaric Alps is one of the least known regions of Southeastern Europe and has remained virtually untouched. In order to **create income** for the **local population**, end **abandonment**, prevent further emigration of the young population and revitalise the region, the **Transnational Trail** was developed. The trail has become a **flagship product** and a **lighthouse model** for the entire region.

**Description:** The PoB Trail is a good example of how a hiking trail can repopulate and revitalise an abandoned mountain area. Tailor-made quality and sustainability standards and training have successfully created a community-driven sustainable tourism infrastructure along the trail (quality accommodation, restaurants, guides, local transport).

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Quality tourism services along the trail

- The biggest challenge at the start of the PoB was the lack of quality accommodation and services along the trail. The very basic dormitory-style homestays were only attractive to backpackers and pure adventurers.
- A PPP project between the GIZ and the DAV Summit Club of the German Alpine Association, under the technical leadership of AGEK TFS, developed, trained and piloted quality and sustainability standards for local B&Bs, huts and culinary businesses.
- In addition, mountain guides received tailor-made training based on the German Alpine Association's training structure for mountain guides.
- These efforts supported the local communities in successfully establishing a simple quality infrastructure on the trail.

#### Services provided:

- -The accommodation has been renovated using authentic materials and local designs, with double rooms, following a manual of criteria and examples.
- In addition to accommodation, the people offer culinary experiences, luggage transport by horse and guide services.

#### Marketing

- Success factor: Two tailor-made press trips with the AGEK press network resulted in 4 years of press coverage. Very strong presence in the international press and media (German TV).
- A tailor-made fam trip with 10 tour operators from [Forum Anders Reisen](#) was the link to the international travel market and resulted in direct bookings.

#### Business Model

- Mixed business model between direct bookings from individual hikers and commission-based income from tour operators.





#### Financial Sustainability

- It's estimated that the average visitor spends 7 and 55 EUR per day on the day, what creates and income of **2 Mio EUR** for the **10 communities** along the trail.

## Repopulation of Remote Villages / Peaks of the Balkans



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PoB is one of the world's first transnational trails.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community driven businesses along the trail directly benefit from the trail and reach international target groups there could never reach on their own.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PoB Trail is the main source of income for the 10 communities along the trail and contributes significantly to their financial sustainability.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PoB generates high economic impact to the rural communities along the trail: <b>Mio 2 EUR p.a.</b> and is strong driver for local development.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

The PoB Trail is a very good example of how a long-distance trail can repopulate an entire region and become its economic driving force. The introduction of tailor-made quality and sustainability criteria, as well as press and fam trips, have certainly contributed significantly to this success.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- Community-driven quality tourism infrastructure along long-distance trails is certainly applicable in the Mediterranean region.
- Provided that quality and sustainability standards are developed, trained and introduced to local communities.

#### USP Innovative concept

- The development of cross-border long-distance hiking trail is certainly innovative for the entire region.

#### Overall performance

- The community benefits strongly from this approach. A major disadvantage of the trail model is the lack of a coordination and management structure for the trail. The 3 countries couldn't agree on a common structure and now the quality of the trail suffers at some sections.



## CASE STUDY NO: 11

# Alpe Adria Trail

**Country:** Austria, Slovenia, Italy

**Destination:** Carinthia, Friuli, Slovenia

**Webpage:** <https://www.alpe-adria-trail.com/en/the-trail/>

**Communication:** Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, X; APP

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Public Private Partnership

**Type of Trail:** Cross border trail

- Initiated in 2013
- Length: 750 km
- No. of stages 43

- 3 countries crossed
- Nature installations along the trail
- Special programmes and seasonal offers via booking centres
- More than **5000 visitors** per day in peak times.

### Target Group/s

- High class segment of “enjoy hikers” from German-speaking markets, European neighbouring countries
- Hiking with dogs is an additional target group. Specialized tour operators.

## Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** This **cross-border hiking trail** stretches from the **glacier to the sea**. It connects the three regions of Carinthia (Austria), Slovenia, and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy) and leads from the foot of the highest mountain in Austria, the Grossglockner, through the most beautiful mountain and lake regions in Carinthia, and without any major detours close to the point where the three countries of Austria, Italy and Slovenia intersect and then on towards Muggia (the Adriatic Sea in Italy).

**Description of the IGA:** The Alpe Adria Trail (AAT), one of the **most successfully managed long-distance trails**, has a well-developed trail model, including a professional business model, with booking offices and welcome centres in all three countries.

## Impressions of the Trail



## Operational & Performance Model

### The management model of the Alpe Adria Trail

- The Alpe Adria Trail is a public-private partnership between the 3 marketing authorities of Slovenia, Carinthia (Austria) and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy).
- All 3 marketing authorities provide an annual marketing budget for the trail.
- Each of the Trail regions operates its own booking and welcome centre as a profit centre (B2B and B2C).
- -The Welcome Centres provide and display information about the region and have a booking desk where hikers can obtain information. The same booking centre also manages tour operator bookings.

### Marketing

- Strong marketing and promotional channels through regional tourist boards, all relevant trade fairs (ITB etc.), tailor-made press trips for selected magazines, strong press and communication strategy.
- AAT has a strong network of official Alpe Adria Partners (service and accommodation providers), recognisable by the Alpe Adria brand.
- Special tools for hikers: free Alpe Adria app, free map, free Alpe Adria guide, free route description.

### Business Model

- The USP product: The bookable stage (client can start anytime and anywhere). Packages are also available for individuals.
- The TMO generates income through a commission on all product components (accommodation, transport, guides, etc.).
- This commission is added to the final price of all services and products, so that visitors pay the commission at the end.
- There are no membership fees for the Alpe Adria Trail Partners.

### Financial Sustainability

- Highly profitable business model.
- Through marketing partnerships with regional tourism authorities, e.g. Austria has an annual budget of 300-400,000 EUR (including sales activities).





### Economic impact

- Extremely positive economic impact on all 3 regions.

## Welcome & Booking Centre / Alpe Adria Trail



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Welcome and Booking Centres are the core element of the AAT TMO.</li> <li>They generate direct revenue for the TMO.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The AAT is a driving force for local communities along the trail and has contributed to the revitalization of the region in Austria, Slovenia and Italy.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The marketing partnerships and professionally managed booking centres make the Alpe Adria Trail a model of success among long-distance hiking trails.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAT has a strong positive economic impact on the region. More than <b>EUR 2 million</b> annual turnover in its beginnings in 2015.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

The AAT is one of the "they" models of success among long-distance trails. Professional, very strong marketing, thanks to strong marketing partnerships with NTO's and very good links with the European travel market (specialist tour operators); plus, a booking centre run like a travel agency and a strong network of labelled AAT partners make it so successful.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- Certain components of the AAT, such as the booking or welcome centre and a strong network of trail partners, can certainly be replicated in the Mediterranean region if the right conditions are in place.

#### USP Innovative concept

- On the product side, the USP is the bookable stage, where hikers can book their individual hiking experience, consisting of accommodation, specific stages (information material) and luggage transfer from accommodation to accommodation.

#### Overall performance

- In terms of a profitable managed long-distance trail, the Alpe Adria Trail is certainly a flagship project.



CASE STUDY NO: 12

## Meditation Path

**Country:** Germany

**Destination:** The Ammergauer Alps

**Webpage:** <https://www.ammergauer-alpen.de/en/meditationsweg>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Regional DMO Ammergauer Alps.

**Type of Trail:** Multi day trail

- Initiated in 2007 (DMO)
- Length: around 85 km
- No of Stages: 5

- 15 stop overs
- Leads through the Nature Park Ammergauer Alps
- 225 km protected area
- 6 villages form part of the DMO Ammergauer Alps

### Target Group/s

- Mainly Germans with a growing request from international markets such as the UK, Europe and the overseas markets Australia and USA
- Growing number of individuals hiking the trail. ?

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The Meditation Path is located in the nature park Ammergauer Alps (AA) in the south of Bavaria, and offers its visitors an 85 km hiking route and the opportunity for a **spiritual journey – a pilgrimage** to oneself. The path includes 15 varied stops - from world-famous buildings and lonely chapels to unique natural monuments and leads through the six municipalities of the Ammergauer Alps.

**Description of the IGA:** The Meditation Trail is a great example of an innovative **theme trail** and **flagship hiking product** for the Ammergauer Alps that attracts more culturally interested hikers to the region. It generates income for the regional DMO but at the same time for a variety of community owned small guesthouse, private B&Bs, tour guides and shops on the way

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### The concept of the Meditation Trail (MT)

- The Ammergauer Alps is a well-established cultural destination that could also establish itself as a hiking destination through the meditation trail.
- The region and the tourism sector is dominated by community run businesses (90% of all accommodation businesses are run by community members).
- The MT is divided into **5-day stages** of around **17 km** and each days **has 5 stop overs** on cultural, natural or spiritual highlights.

#### Programmes & packages

- Two types of packages can be booked directly through the AA
- Individually organised packages
- Group programmes and packages.

#### Marketing

- The Ammergauer Alps markets and sells the MT packages and markets the MT via its own promotion channels (webpage, social media, fairs, brochures etc)

#### Business Model

- The individual package for 2 persons costs **1698.00 EUR** for 5 nights including breakfast, accommodation, luggage transfer and information materials.
- Guided package for up to 12 persons costs **1168.00 EUR** per person, including 5 overnights in local guest houses, breakfast, guiding, luggage transfer and information materials.

- The AA generates income through a sales commission between 15-30 %.

#### Financial Sustainability

- The Ammergauer Alps is a self-sustained DMO, working in a private public partnership model.
- The MT trail is a growing business, and the MT is good marketing and additionally attracts hiking interested target groups to the AA.





#### Economic impact

- This theme trail with booking features on the webpage has a very positive economic impact on the AA region.
- Several local tourism stakeholders benefit directly from the trail (AA DMO, accommodation guides) and several indirectly (e.g. local shops or food producers etc.)

## Mediation Path



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product Naturepark Ammergau Alps.</li> <li>Generates additional income for the DMO</li> <li>Is a flagship hiking product for the AA region.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community driven businesses, accommodation, restaurants, shops, transport service etc. along the trail directly benefit from this MT and receive additional business.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MT adds to the financial sustainability of the DMO and other community businesses involved.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This theme trail with booking features on the webpage has a very positive economic impact on the AA region.</li> <li>Several local tourism stakeholders benefit directly from the trail (AA DMO, accommodation guides) and several indirectly (e.g. local shops or food producers etc.)</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Innovative and profitable theme trail concept, bringing benefits to the local communities and income to the DMO.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of a bookable theme trail can certainly be replicated in the Med region. Also, the idea of a spiritual path could be implemented in some regions with a spiritual side and natural monuments that carry a special energy.

#### USP Innovative concept

- The Meditation Trail is a great example of an innovative **theme trail** and **flagship hiking product** for the Ammergau Alps that attracts more culturally interested hikers to the region and generates good income for the regional DMO and other local businesses.

#### Overall performance

- Well-designed profitable theme trail concept.



CASE STUDY NO: 13

## Biking Wine Tours / Marlborough Wine Route

Country: New Zealand

Trail & Destination: Classic New Zealand Wine Trail, Marlborough

Webpage: <https://www.exploremarlborough.co.nz/>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor

### Key Facts

**Type:** Local operator for biking wine tours.

**Theme:** Outdoor activities

- Initiated in 2012
- A local operator
- No. of employees: 9 guides

- TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards
- Part of the **Classic New Zealand wine Trail 485 km**
- 130 wineries, 30 open their doors for visitors

### Target Group/s

- Mainly the European Market, UK and Australia
- Visitors from cruise ships
- More than **5500 visitors** that purchase a packages.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study:** Marlborough is New Zealand's largest wine growing region with more than 130 wineries, mostly known for the world-famous Sauvignon Blanc wine. **Explore Marlborough** is a local tour operator that is based in the heart of the Marlborough wine region, at The Vines Village. They have designed several cycling routes connecting the vineyards and offer bicycles hire, self-guided biking wine tours and fully guided biking wine tours.

**Description of the IGA:** **Explore Marlborough** is the only company in Marlborough region that offers guided wine tours on bicycle. Their offer combines a unique experience of visiting wineries on a bicycle and enjoying quality local products with soft mobility, local guides expertise, and convenient bookable service including the pick-up and drop off at the accommodation, which makes it into a great product idea with low investment. An entire local value chain (wineries, local food producers, local guide and local tour-operators) economically benefits from this sustainable tourism practise.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### The concept of Explore Marlborough (EM)

- EM has a growing demand for the offered programs to explore the local wineries, learn about the wine culture of New Zealand and taste local products.
- On the **cycling wine trail**, local family-owned wineries or a boutique, organic and biodynamic winery offering their own wine and local products, can be visited for wine tastings or **dining experiences** in their winery restaurants.
- Currently only daily packages are offered but for the future a 200 km route of cycling tracks between several wineries and multi-day tours are planned.
- The tours that are currently arranged include around 15 wineries out of 130 from the region.

#### How are the packages designed?

- The offered tours are day trips by bicycle and around 4-5 wineries are included to be visited in one tour with a distance of 12 km. The individual package comprises the bicycle, information material, a cycling map and reservation in the respective wineries. The group package includes a local guide.

#### Local products

- Local products are offered in all participating wineries. A small **wine village** on the way gives information on the history of New Zealand's wine and has several local attractions such as a small chocolate factory.

#### Business Model





- The self-guided tours cost around 60 EUR per day per person. The guided tours cost 150 EUR per person and day, while the private tours with guide go up to 500 EUR per person and per day and there is growing demand.

#### Economic impact

- An entire local value chain (wineries, local food producers, local guides and local tour-operators) economically benefits from this sustainable tourism practise.

## Biking Wine Tours / Marlborough Wine Route

### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product West Highland Way</li> <li>Attracts more visitors to the WHW through easy to find and organize services.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community-driven wineries and local producers are directly benefitting from this IGA.</li> <li>Besides the IGA they also receive free promotion and direct sales channels to new customers.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore Marlborough is a growing business, that is self-sustained and can expand every year.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The yearly turnover of EM is around <b>1.1million</b> EUR and an entire tourism value chain and whole wine region is benefitting.</li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

Good example for a very profitable community driven business in a wine area.

**Replicability in the Mediterranean region**

- The basic concept could be repeated, also as a hiking program in a wine region of the Mediterranean.

**USP Innovative concept**

- Explore Marlborough was actually the first tour operator in New Zealand offering this wine tasting & cycling concept.

**Overall performance**

- An interesting and very profitable concept, which several local tourism and non-tourism stakeholders (local product producers) can benefit from.



CASE STUDY NO: 14

## Hike with a donkey /Robert Louis Stevenson Trail GR70

Country: France

Destination: From the Massif Central to the Cévennes valleys

Webpage: <https://www.chemin-stevenson.org/>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, You Tube: <https://youtu.be/FAfPaWvnPul>

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Association.

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 1994
- Length: 220 km
- No of Stages: 12 days
- European Cultural Route

- 4 departments crossed
- More than 200 service providers on the trail
- Average per day: 21.9 km
- Operators for hike & luggage transfer with a donkey

### Target Group/s

- Mostly domestic hikers
- Typical hiker 57-year-old female
- Mostly retirees, traveling in a group.
- Families with children
- Growing international market
- Europe & Overseas

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** This trail in the south of France follows the **footsteps of the Scottish writer Robert Lewis Stevenson** and his **donkey Modestine**. The 220km trail links the southern Massif Central with the deep Cévennes, crossing the areas of Velay, Gévaudan, Mont Lozère and the Cévennes, each with a different landscape, from small volcanic reliefs to wild forests and authentic villages.

**Description of the IGA:** To travel the path as **authentically as Stevenson and his donkey Modestine**, local farmers who are part of the Stevenson Path Association rent out donkeys to hikers to carry their luggage, but more importantly to keep them company and be their trail buddy. Individual hikers and families with children love this way of travelling. **Donkey hiking** has become the **trail's USP**, making it famous and providing an additional source of income for local farmers along the trail.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

**Concept: discover the path accompanied by a donkey**

- While hiking the hiker is responsible for the donkey and has to take of him.
- Before hikers leave with the donkey they get instructed how to handle and treat the sensitive and intelligent animal.
- There is even a small booklet given to the hikers: "Advice for driving a donkey on a hike".

**How the farmers are organised**

- The donkey rentals have turned in small, good organized local enterprises offering additional services to the hikers such as: accommodation, guided tours, a small shop etc.
- Around 10 farmers run their own donkey rental businesses.
- Farmers receive special training from the association. Accommodation providers are also trained if they want to host guests with donkeys and have to fulfil certain requirements to properly host the donkeys.

**Marketing**

- The website of the trail directly markets the hiking with the donkey option and donkey rental is featured on the webpage.

**Business Model**

- It's a profitable and growing business model. To rent a donkey costs between 55 - 70 EUR per day and around 350.00 EUR per week.

Additionally

**Financial Sustainability**

- What started as a side job for local farmers has turned into a profitable business model. They are self-sustained with growing demand each year.





**Economic impact**

- A study showed that hikers spend an average of 56.8 EUR per day per person on the trails. The costs are split as follows: Accommodation 32.00 EUR; food & beverages 19.6 EUR; others such as transport etc. 5.3 EUR per person.
- Average expenditure for one person hiking the trail : 1294.00 EUR
- These figures show that several stakeholders along the trail benefit from the hikers

## Hike with a donkey /Robert Louis Stevenson Trail GR70



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hike with a donkey becomes the USP of the Stevenson Trail</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community-driven donkey rentals along the trail directly benefit from this concept, but also other community stakeholders like accommodation rental or shops are benefitting.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The donkey rentals turned into small family-run companies offering additional services to the hikers and being self-sustained with this business model.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A study showed that the average expenditure for one person hiking the trail is: 1294.00 EUR.</li> <li>This amount is split among different members of the tourism value chain.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Creative and unique slow hiking approach.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The hike with a donkey concept is definitely replicable in the Med region, but it needs to be understood that the donkey is much more than a simple way of transport, he is a friend, a guide and a travel buddy.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Very unique concept that has made the Stevenson Path famous. Without the story of the writer travelling with his donkey and the donkey rental, the path would just be one of many trails.

#### Overall performance

- Very nice conceptual approach that also reaches different target groups such as families with children that normally don't hike that much on long distance trails or individuals hiking by themselves that like to have company.



CASE STUDY NO: 15

## Quality Hosts / Wilderness Trail

**Country:** Eifel National Park

**Destination:** Germany

**Webpage:** <https://www.nationalpark-eifel.de/en/experience-national-park/wilderness-trail/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram

Key Facts	Target Group/s
<p><b>Type of Organization:</b> Nature Park Authority</p> <p><b>Type of Trail:</b> Conservation trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiated in 2004</li> <li>• Length: 85 km</li> <li>• Daily stages between 18-25 km</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor monitoring in place</li> <li>• No of certified hosts 40</li> <li>• Set of strict sustainability criteria</li> <li>• Certification and re-certification</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly individual hikers or small organized groups and families from Germany</li> <li>• Hikers interested in conservation and flora and fauna</li> </ul>

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** Four stages, **85 kilometres:** a trail shaped by the wild cats, that's the **Wilderness Trail (WT)** in the "Eifel" National Park featuring all the park's different landscapes in one trail leading through the entire park. The Wilderness Trail spans four daily stages and covers a total of 85 kilometres, passing through the wild beauty of the Eifel National Park.

**Description of the IGA:** Hikers on the **Wilderness Trail (WT)** can stay in one of the **40 Quality Certified National Park Hosts**. They adhere to very high sustainability and quality standards and offer locally produced food and beverages. This quality certification scheme is a **win-win model** for all hikers who can easily identify quality accommodation, the hosts who are part of a great marketplace and the National Park Authority who benefit from sustainable tourism businesses in their park area.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

**Concept of the Quality Hosts**

- Local guesthouses, apartments, small hotels, guesthouses and campsites are quality National Park hosts.
- All National Park accommodation providers must adhere to the objectives of the National Park and provide qualified information about the Park and the Wilderness Trail. This includes the do's and don'ts.
- The owner or manager of the accommodation must undergo quality management training.

**Criteria and certification**

- 15 key sustainability and quality criteria must be met to become a Certified National Park Host.
- Once the business has passed certification, it is allowed to use the official brand to be recognised by visitors as a quality accommodation.
- Re-certification every 3 years with on-site quality control
- Each host must complete a quality host training course

**Marketing**

- Quality Hosts must commit to marketing the park and WT.
- They must link to the Park and the WT on the landing page of their website.
- The Quality Host will be promoted through the communication channels of the National Park and the WT Trail and will be promoted through the regional DMO.

**Business Model**

- Hosts pay an annual membership fee of between €150 and €300 and a registration fee of between €300 and €600 to the park management and receive a range of promotional, training and advisory services.

**Financial Sustainability**

- It's a small source of income for the park and trail management.
- But they benefit from the market multiplier effect of the Quality Hosts.


**Economic impact**

- The Wilderness Trail is a flagship product for the region, attracting visitors and generating interest in the region.

## Quality Hosts / Wilderness Trail



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Quality Host enriches the Wilderness Trail product</li> <li>Quality Hosts promote the Trail and raise awareness of the do's and don'ts on the Trail and in the Park.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community driven businesses along the trail directly benefit from this marketplace and reach new conservation interested target groups</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Quality Hosts programme contributes directly to the financial sustainability of the trail and park organisation.</li> <li>The marketing approach indirectly supports the financial sustainability.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The destination benefits from the flagship product Wilderness Trail and several members of the local tourism value chain benefit from the Quality Host concept (local framers, shops etc.)</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Very solid approach with certification and re-certification every 3 years. The Quality Hosts develop a strong and become real cooperation and marketing partners for the trail and the National Park.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of Quality Host is replicable in the Med region

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- The concept of a quality product offer with certification is not new, but the approach to that for a national park is a new approach in Germany.

#### Overall performance

- Very professional and high-quality approach.



CASE STUDY NO: 16

## Cooperative of local businesses/The Golden Road

Country: Norway

Trail & Destination: Innherred

Webpage: <https://dgo.no/>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram

### Key Facts

**Type:** Authentic local experience

**Theme:** Local Services (local products)

- Initiated in 1998
- A cooperative- a group of local businesses
- 17 members businesses

- 2 associations are members
- Strict criteria for joining a cooperative with focus on quality at all levels.
- Cooperation with national tourism organization Visit Norway.

### Target Group/s

- Mainly domestic tourists.
- Families and groups of friends seeking weekend trips, banqueting for celebrations and weddings, businesses looking for team building.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study:** The **Golden Road** is a peaceful rural area in the **middle of Norway, 100 km north** of the city of Trondheim, surrounded by the scenery of the Trondheim Fjord. The Golden Road is a **cooperative** and common brand of more than **20 small local businesses** that offer **quality culinary and cultural experiences** and services along the Golden Road.

**Description of the IGA:** The USP of the **Golden Road** is a strong and **trustworthy brand for first-class locally produced food**, cultural experiences, local quality and even award-winning food products (like cheese) and handicrafts, as well as exceptional quality services and all that allocated closed to each other on the Golden Road. It's an excellent example for community driven IGA, based on local products and services.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Concept of the Golden Road (GR)

- The Golden Road is a co-operative of selected local businesses who have joined together to form 'The Golden Road', selling and tasting their products.
- Members of the cooperative include farm shops, accommodation, restaurants, cafes, a thrift shop, small farm shops, a butcher, a gift shop, art workshops and galleries.
- The experiential concept is part of the Golden Route: authentic and culinary or creative experiences. Artisans can be visited in their workshops, producers of farm products in their shops, historical monuments, an art gallery and museum, a sculpture park - and the visitor can eat and sleep in the beautiful natural surroundings of the Golden Road. Quality and branding
- All members of the cooperative adhere to certain quality and sustainability criteria.
- A joint brand stands for local quality- cooperation members only sell locally produced products.

#### Marketing

- The local businesses are presented on the cooperation's website and can be contacted directly (<https://dgo.no/opplevelse/selsethloftet/>).
- The Golden Route does its own marketing and runs a marketing cooperation with Visit Norway.

#### Business Model

- It's the principle of direct marketing. The best business model for small local businesses. All revenue stays directly with the business and no commissions need to be paid to distributors.
- Golden Road members all benefit greatly from the joint marketing and branding approach.
- Financial Sustainability
- Very healthy business model and the local businesses are all self-sustaining.



#### Economic impact

- Positive impact on the entire region.

## Cooperative of local businesses/The Golden Road



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative brand and sustainable tourism product</li> <li>• Attracts more visitors to the region. Easy to understand concept and easy for visitors to identify.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community driven businesses along the Golden Route directly benefit from this marketplace and strong joint branding approach.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The direct sales principle is a very healthy business model that generates a high level of financial sustainability.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GR attracts many visitors to the area who that stay and spend their money not only with the GR members but also into other shops and services. This makes the GR a driving force for the local economy.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Very sound business concept and sustainable tourism approach, supporting local production, local authenticity, culture and strengthening the local identity of the people.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of a local cooperation promoting their own local products is very suitable for the rural destinations in the Med region

#### • USP, Innovative concept

- Innovative, creative approach, focusing on the destination's assets.

#### Overall performance

- Well thought-out-approach, clever marketing cooperation with Visit Norway. The only criticism is the lack of translations on the website.



CASE STUDY NO: 17

## National Trail Partner / Trans Canada Trail

**Country:** Canada

**Destination:** Multiple destinations across Canada

**Webpage:** <https://tctrail.ca/>

**Communication:** Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, X, LinkedIn

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** A registered charity.

**Type of Trail:** Multi-use trails network

- Initiated in 1992
- Length: over 28,000 km on land and water

- 15,000 rural, urban and Indigenous communities.
- Connecting Pacific, Arctic, Atlantic oceans

### Target Group/s

- Mainly Canadians using the trail for recreational purposes.
- Millions of visitors each year
- 80% of Canadians live just 30 minutes away from a Trail section.

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The Trans Canada Trail (TTC) is Canada's **national trail** that crosses every province and territory, connecting **15,000 communities** over **28,000 kilometres** and reaches all three of Canada's coastlines. It is the **longest multi-use trail** in the world and continues to grow. Each section of the Trans Canada Trail is managed locally and supports different activities and community needs.

**Description of the IGA:** The Trail has an extensive funding programme. One of these funding opportunities is **Corporate Partnerships**, where leading companies across Canada support the development and programming of the Trail. A special type of corporate partnership is the **National Trail Partner**. A leading Canadian private sector company, in this case Toyota Canada Inc, acts as the National Trail Partner for the TCT.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Concept of National Supporter

- The partnership supports programs that develop and maintain Canada's 28,000-kilometre national Trail, including strategic tree planting, climate emergency funding, ongoing trail care and climate-smart trails.
- As a National Trail Partner, **Toyota's \$100,000 investment** will support key programs that develop and maintain Canada's 28,000-kilometre national Trail.

#### What will be supported by the partnership?

- To kick-off the partnership, Toyota is supporting [Trail Care](#), Trans Canada Trail's annual grant programme that offers funding to local groups to help repair, maintain and celebrate their trail sections.
- Outside of the Trail Care program, Toyota's investment will support ecological restoration through strategic tree planting, restoration of trails damaged by severe weather or climate, ongoing trail maintenance, and pioneering research to build climate-smart trails with strengthened resilience.

#### Qualification of Toyota as a national partner

- Toyota has a longstanding history of environmental leadership in the automotive industry, including the first-ever mass-produced hybrid vehicle, the Toyota Prius. This leadership has since expanded far beyond products through the [Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050](#), a comprehensive environmental strategy with an overarching global goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Partnering with Trans Canada Trail supports the company's aim to address critical environmental concerns and engages Canadians in efforts for a cleaner future.

#### Marketing

- It's a win-win approach. Toyota receives national recognition for its environmental efforts and is prominently featured on the TCT website for a year.





#### Business Model

- It's a classic marketing partnership approach.

## National Trail Partner / Trans Canada Trail



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional funding for the TCT to be reinvested in climate projects, maintenance grants and other trail-related projects.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirect benefits to local communities along the trail, as they are all closed to the trail and benefit from the recreational value of the TCT.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Partner Programme has a direct positive impact on the financial sustainability of the TCT organisation.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no direct economic impact on the regions. Indirectly, however, all destinations closed to the TCT benefit from hikers and their spending.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

A solid marketing partnership that brings direct financial benefits to the TMO.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of corporate partnerships can be replicated in the Mediterranean region. It is important to choose a partner that fits the philosophy of the trail and is somehow related to the trail's objective.

#### USP Innovative concept

- Corporate partnerships are a very well-known and established marketing tool that is still valid and effective.

#### Overall performance

- Professional performed marketing partnership.



CASE STUDY NO: 18

# Trail Keepers Programme / Trans Canada Trail

**Country:** Canada

**Destination:** Multiple destinations across Canada

**Webpage:** <https://tctrail.ca/>

**Communication:** Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, X, LinkedIn

Key Facts	Target Group/s
<p><b>Type of Organization:</b> A registered charity.</p> <p><b>Type of Trail:</b> Multi-use trails network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiated in 1992</li> <li>• Length: over 28,000 km on land and water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly Canadians using the trail for their recreation.</li> <li>• No. of visitors: several millions per year.</li> </ul>

## Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail:** The Trans Canada Trail (TTC) is Canada's **national trail** that crosses every province and territory, connecting **15,000 communities** over **28,000 kilometres** and reaches all three of Canada's coastlines. It is the **longest multi-use trail** in the world and continues to grow. Each section of the Trans Canada Trail is managed locally and supports different activities and community needs.

**Description of the IGA:** The Trail has an extensive funding programme. One of these funding opportunities is the **Trail Keepers** programme. Trail Keepers (TK) are a dedicated group of people committed to the protection and enhancement of the Trans Canada Trail who make a monthly donation to provide ongoing financial support for the maintenance of the trail.

## Impressions of the Trail | Operational & Performance Model



### Concept of Trail Keepers

- Trail Keepers are enthusiastic supporters of the TCT who are involved with the trail in some way and donate a fixed amount per month to the TMO.
- The monthly amount varies from \$25 to \$100 and can be changed at any time.
- It's considered a donation, and the TK receives a consolidated receipt for its annual contribution.
- Donations can be made directly through the TCT's website: <https://tctrail.ca/trail-keepers/>

### Motivation & incentive for Trail Keepers

- As the TCT crosses Canada and reaches almost every community in the Canada, there is a huge potential for Trail Keepers.
- The TCT website features testimonials from Trail Keepers and their motivations. (<https://tctrail.ca/stories/growing-up-and-growing-healthy-habits-along-the-trans-canada-trail/>).

### Other similar donation formats

- A number of other donation formats are also displayed on the TCT website and can be booked/donated directly through the website.
- **Donate Today** - the request for a one-off donation.
- **Start a Fundraiser** - people are asked to host an event, do a birthday fundraiser, etc. The TCT website provides a direct link to a fundraising platform where people can set up their fundraising campaign directly. Testimonial stories are shared on the TCT website.
- **Gift in your Will:** People can donate to TCT by making a gift in their will. Further instructions can be found on the TCT website: <https://give.willfora.com/charities/trans-canada-trail>.
- **Donate in honour:** People can honour a loved one by making a one-off gift to TCT to commemorate and celebrate a special occasion such as a birthday, graduation or anniversary.

### Business model

- The structure is creative donation approach.





### Financial sustainability

- The wide range of support programmes helps to sustain the TCT.

## Trail Keepers Programme / Trans Canada Trail



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional funding for the TCT to be reinvested in trail maintenance and management.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indirect benefits to local communities along the trail, as they are all closed to the trail and benefit from the recreational value of the TCT.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The donation programmes has a direct positive impact on the financial sustainability of the TCT organisation.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no direct economic impact on the regions. Indirectly, however, all destinations closed to the TCT benefit from hikers and their spending.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

An outstandingly creative and comprehensive donation programme, which can be processed directly via the TCT website, making it more even more efficient.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept of donations can be replicated in the Mediterranean region. It depends on the objectives of the trail (e.g. support for local communities, local recreation, preservation of cultural heritage or nature conservation) and the cultural behaviour which type of donation programme would be appropriate.

#### USP Innovative concept

- Donation programmes are a very well-known and established marketing tool that is still valid and effective.

#### Overall performance

- Professionally run donation programmes.



CASE STUDY NO: 19

## Community Driven Tourism Modell / Kumano Kodo Routes

Country: Japan

Trail & Destination: Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage Routes, Kumano region

Webpage: <https://www.tb-kumano.jp/en/kumano-kodo/>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Blogger

### Key Facts

**Type:** Community operated tour operator

**Theme:** Local services

- "KUMANO TRAVEL" is a division of the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau, a General Incorporated Association

- Established in June 2010
- Japan's Tourism award in 2019
- Sustainable Travel Award 2023

### Target Group/s

- Domestic and international travellers
- 50% are international travellers

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** The Kumano Kodo is one of only two pilgrimage World Heritage Sites globally. Its history stretches back over a thousand years and is a network of scenic pilgrim's routes leading through sparsely settled mountains with dramatic waterfalls, impressive megaliths and awe-inspiring landscapes. Kumano, is called the spiritual heartland of Japan. For millennia the mountainous region of Kumano has been thought to be the mythical.

**Description of the IGA:** The Kumano Travel Official Community Reservation System (**grassroots system**) was established to support visitors interested in walking the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes, and to connect visitors with the local community and support local communities. The official community reservation system and inclusive platform for the region for local businesses was the starting point for the development of the locally owned and operated community business, Kumano Travel.: <https://www.kumano-travel.com/en/about>

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### What is the objective of Kumano Travel?

- Kumano Travel is supported by the local tourism authority with the aim of making the community's tourism infrastructure economically self-sufficient. This will reduce economic leakage and increase the ability to sustain a healthy local economy.

#### Onsite Travel Support Centre

- Additionally, Kumano Travel runs an Onsite Travel Support Centre which is dedicated to support visitors on site and features a shop with indoor gear and local souvenirs.
- Other services are luggage storage and reservation.

#### The grassroots system of Kumano Travel

- Community members are actively involved in the entire (tourism development) process," from creating a tourism vision, implementing booking systems, improving infrastructure, even creating branding, marketing and sales initiatives, according to the tourism officer.
- This tourism model gives local tools to control their own future, shapes the way communities are affected by tourism and gives the power back to the people.
- Every business along the pilgrim's route can be a member.

#### Business Model

- By packing all local businesses on one site the profits go back to the local communities instead of local travel agencies in big cities.

#### Financial Sustainability





- This grassroots tourism model generates a high level of financial sustainability for the local business along the pilgrims' routes.

#### Economic impact

- This tourism model has an extremely positive impact on the wellbeing of the local community and strengthens the local infrastructure.

## Community Driven Tourism Modell / Kumano Kodo Routes

### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-It is the first community-led tourism model in Japan and quite unique for the country.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local communities are "the" driving force of this model.</li> <li>The credo is to give power back to the people.</li> <li>The community benefits greatly from this model as all income stays within the community and no commission is given to tour operators.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly profitable and very stable business model through extremely strong and stable local networks.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extremely positive economic impact for all local stakeholders in the tourism value chain along the pilgrim route. Estimated annual revenue (\$1,200,000).</li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

A very unique and professionally managed community tourism model. A community run tour operator manages the bookings on the pilgrimage route. Community enterprises are the main service providers. Everything is managed by the community and all income stays with the community.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The model could be partially replicated. Depending on the objectives of the local TMO, the organisational set-up and local needs.

#### USP, Innovative concept

- Unique and award-winning sustainable tourism model in Japan.

#### Overall performance

- Flagship model for a grassroots tourism model for the entire Asian region.



CASE STUDY NO: 20

## Farm Trail in Ulten Valley

Country: Italy

Trail & Destination: South Tirol/ Ultental Valley

Webpage: <https://www.merano-suedtirol.it/en/ultental-valley/mountain-holidays/hiking-mountain-tours/hiking-trails/121154511-farm-trail-in-ulten-valley.html>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

### Key Facts

**Type:** Theme trail

**Theme:** Local living traditions

- Length: 17,4 km
- Meters of high: 378
- 1467 highest point

- 6 hours hike
- Old traditional farmhouses along the hiking route.

### Target Group/s

- Hikers from the German speaking countries (Germany, Switzerland, Austria).
- Families and moderate, cultural interested hikers.

## Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** The **Ulten Valley** is one of the most unique valleys in South Tyrol, bordering the Stilfser Joch National Park. The valley is fascinating for its unspoilt nature, steep meadows, lush forests and crystal-clear mountain lakes. The lush green valley is home to ancient mountain farms. People here treat nature with great respect. Traditional mountain huts and farmhouses serve regional dishes made from fresh local ingredients.

**Description of the IGA.** The **Farm Trail in the Ulten Valley** takes you past **old farmhouses** with fantastic views of the surrounding mountains. Hiking the Farmers' Trail is like walking through the living past of the region. The traditional way of life and the traditional farmhouses are the focus of the trail. Farmers sell local products along the way and hikers can stay in local guesthouses, small pensions and apartments. **The Farm Trail is a good example of a theme trail and how local heritage, and traditions can be enhanced and turned into a community IGA.**

## Impressions of the IGA



## Operational & Performance Model

### What is the concept of the trail?

- The Farm Trails run along existing old farm tracks that have been used for centuries.
- Along the trail you can find old traditional farmhouses built in the very old traditional way.
- In addition, old relics of traditional farming and workshops can be found along the trail.
- It is like a hike through the "old traditional way of farming" and the traditional way of farming.
- People still live there and produce local farm products (milk, cheese, bread, etc.) which are offered to hikers.

### Marketing

- - The trail is marketed by the regional and national tourist boards, as well as by small accommodation providers along the way.

### Business Model

- The business model is based on the valorisation of cultural heritage and ancient traditions.
- The trail was built on existing infrastructure - no major investment was required (only signposting and mapping).
- Community members along the trail generate income through the direct sale of local products and the provision of accommodation.

### Financial Sustainability

- This themed trail generates additional income for local farmers and guesthouses without any mayoral investment.





### Economic impact

- -This small theme trail is a small investment with a remarkable positive impact on the community in the valley.

## Farm Trail in Ulten Valley



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple but creative concept of a theme trail.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community-based businesses along the trail benefit directly from the theme trail approach, reaching audiences they would otherwise never reach.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Farm Trail is not a huge money machine, but compared to the investment, it is a very profitable long-term concept that contributes to the financial sustainability of the local community in this remote valley.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This small theme trail is a small investment with a remarkable positive impact on the community in the entire valley.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

An excellent example of how a theme trail can enhance local cultural and lifestyle traditions and generate income for remote rural communities.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- A theme trail focusing on local culture, the authentic way of life or specific products famous in the region would be perfect for the Mediterranean.

#### USP, Innovative concept

- Simple, but creative theme trail.

#### Overall performance

- A themed trail that attracts culturally interested walkers to this remote village every year, generating additional income for the local framing communities without any major investment.



CASE STUDY NO: 21

## Authentic Accommodation / Lycian Way

Country: Turkey

Destination: Hoyran/Demre/Antalya

Webpage: <https://www.hoyran.com/en/>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, You Tube

### Key Facts

**Type:** Authentic guest house

**Theme:** Local production

- Initiated in 2006
- Family Business
- At the Lycian Way

- Rated excellent on Trip Advisor
- Rated the score 9,9 by booking.com
- Official sustainable tourism certification of Turkey (202

### Target Group/s

- **95 % of all visitors** hike the Lycian Way.
- Mainly individuals from all over Europe, the UK and overseas markets (mainly Australians).

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** The **authentic accommodation Hoyran Wedre** is located in the quiet village of Hoyran, which lies at the foot of the Taurus Mountains at an altitude of 500 metres above sea level. It overlooks the turquoise waters of the Mediterranean. **It is a local accommodation provider along the Lycian Way.** The Lycian Way is Turkey's first long-distance hiking trail of 760 km. The 35-day route along the coast of Lycia in southern Turkey from Fethiye to Antalya, cultural and historical sites and mainly follows the coastline.

**Description of the IGA:** Horan Wedre is located in a very **small rural mountain village on the Lycian Way.** It consists of a number of typical local stone cottages, a restaurant and a large, beautifully landscaped outdoor area with resting facilities and a swimming pool. The whole property has been rebuilt from old stone houses from the surrounding villages, and the sustainability concept of the local business includes offering local produce and typical local dishes. **It's a perfect example of a very successful authentic traditional accommodation run by a local couple.**

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### The concept

- Staying at Horan Wedre is like living in one of the ancient mountain villages of southern Turkey.
- -The concept is quality combined with authenticity, local style and design, and creative cuisine using local ingredients.
- Hoyran Wedre has 16 rooms and suites in traditional style (wattle and daub plastered walls).
- All rooms, suites and the restaurant are carefully furnished and decorated with well-chosen traditional furniture from nearby villages and antiques from Istanbul's flea markets.
- The swimming pool is in the shape of traditional cattle and is built with stones quarried from the nearby mountains.
- The resting facilities and natural installations are all made with local products (wood and stone).
- - Breakfast and dinner with set menu are served to the guests.

#### Local products & cultural component

- The Turkish couples also cook and prepare all the creative, vegetarian dishes themselves. Guests can pick seasonal fruit on the property.
- Breakfast also includes a wide variety of homemade local dishes.
- All products used come from the local farmers. Over the years, Hoyran Wedre has built up a solid network of local producers in the area.
- -In addition, all the workers needed for repair work come from the surrounding villages, and when traditional furniture is needed, it is made in one of the nearby wood workshops.

#### Business Model

- Mainly direct bookings via the website, promoted through the Lycian Way.





#### Financial Sustainability

- Prices for one night from a double room to a suite range from 155.00 EUR to 240.00 EUR for a small cottage for 4 people. All additional services are extra.
- Highly profitable concept of the well-booked property.

## Authentic Accommodation / Lycian Way



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The successful concept is quality combined with authenticity, local style and design, and creative cuisine using local ingredients.</li> <li>Designed and created according to sustainable tourism criteria</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It's a perfect community-led IGA. Where not only one couple benefits, but also other local stakeholders (e.g. local producers) nearby.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A highly profitable business that is completely self-sustaining, has capital to reinvest and could at least triple its prices since its launch in 2006.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-High economic impact on the surrounding remote mountain villages near Horan Wedre.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

It's an excellent example how a quality accommodation, based on authenticity and sustainability can turn into a highly profitable business. Crucial is the service quality, the carefully designed rooms and houses, the creative local kitchen with local ingredients and innovative, creative (vegetarian) dishes.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The concept is completely replicable in the Med region and could always be adapted to the local framework conditions.

#### USP, Innovative concept

- Once Hoyran Wedre has been initiated in 2006 it was a flagship project and quite new for the region.

#### Overall performance

- It's an excellent example of how quality accommodation based on authenticity and sustainability can be a highly profitable business.
- The quality of the service, the carefully designed rooms and houses, the creative local cuisine using local ingredients and innovative, creative with local ingredients and innovative, creative (vegetarian) dishes.



CASE STUDY NO: 22

## The Albergo Diffuso Concept

**Country:** Calabria, Italy

**Destination:** Historic centre of Belmonte Calabro

**Webpage:** <http://ecovacanzebelmonte.it/en/home-2/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram

### Key Facts

**Theme:** Repopulation of abundant villages

**Type of Services:** Innovative accommodation

- Initiated in 2015

- More than 100 Albergo Diffuso projects all over the places.
- 13 small little houses
- Shops and restaurant in the scattered hotel

### Target Group/s

- Culturally interested visitors from Germany, Italy, Spain, UK and overseas
- Interested in outdoors and local products

### Description of Theme and the IGA

**General description of theme:** In Italy, the 'albergo diffuso' concept represents a new alternative to traditional tourist accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs or farmhouses. **Romantic, mostly abandoned villages in rural areas are being revitalised** and transformed into small, authentic holiday homes. The "albergo diffuso" also represents an approach to sustainable economic development in many tourist destinations because of its very limited impact on the environment.

**Description of the IGA:** **Abundant, remote villages are revitalised and repopulated and transformed into a hotel spread throughout a village.** Small local shops and restaurants complete the picture. Albergo diffuso literally means "scattered hotel". -The village of Belmonte, where the Albergo Difuso Ecobelmonte is located, is situated on a hill shaped like a "donkey's back" on the Mediterranean coast, with typical Mediterranean vegetation. It's an excellent example of a successful community-run IGA.

### Impressions of the Theme



### Operational & Performance Model

#### The concept of Ecobelmonte

- EcoBelmonte is the brainchild of a group of young people who wanted to stay in their hometown, promote local traditions and generate income.
- -The houses of Albergo Diffuso EcoBelmonte have been completely restored using ecological materials and are located along the narrow streets that are typical of this small Calabrian village.
- -The traditional buildings, narrow streets, squares, colours and designs make you feel the traditional village life of ancient times.
- -13 small local stone houses have been completely restored by local artisans using traditional materials, applying the original features of the interiors of Cambrian houses, applying sustainability criteria of bioconstruction and bio-architecture.
- In addition, small local shops and restaurants have been created, offering local products and authentic dishes using local ingredients.
- The principle is to transform the small village into a "scattered" hotel with the characteristics and management of a hotel.

#### Business Model

- . The rooms or small apartments can be booked directly through the website and cost between €833 and €1190 per week for 2 people without additional services.
- Additional income comes from the sale of local produce, handicrafts and the restaurant.

#### Financial Sustainability





- -Profitable business model for remote, abundant villages; no third-party commissions due to direct bookings.

#### Economic impact

- -High economic impact on local communities and destinations as all revenue stays in the local communities.

## The Albergo Diffuso Concept

### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-When EcoBelmonte started, it was a completely innovative and creative approach for the region.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community in the village of Belmonte are the beneficiaries of this innovative, community-led tourism concept.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High level of financial sustainability of the profitable business concept.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-High economic impact on local communities and destinations as all revenue stays in the local communities.</li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

The "Albergo Diffuso" concept of revitalising an abandoned village in an authentic and traditional style and running it like a hotel is a very valuable IGA when, as in our Ecobelmonte example, it operates as a fully community-run business.

**Replicability in the Mediterranean region**

- It's a perfect concept for the remote villages along the long-distance hiking trails of the Med region.

**USP, innovative concept**

- When Ecoelmonte was launched, it was a completely innovative and creative approach for the region.

**Overall performance**

- Highly successful sustainable community-driven tourism model for remote, abandoned rural villages.



CASE STUDY NO: 23

# Leading Trails / Best of Europe

Country: Scotland

Destination: Highlands

Webpage: [www.leading-quality-trail.eu](http://www.leading-quality-trail.eu)

Communication: Facebook, Twitter

## Key Facts

**Theme:** Leading quality Trails

**Type of Trails:** World class hiking trails

- Set of quality criteria for long-distance trails
- Certification lasts for 3 years
- Re-certification

- Currently 22 certified trails in Europe
- Leading Quality Trails Magazine

## Target Group/s

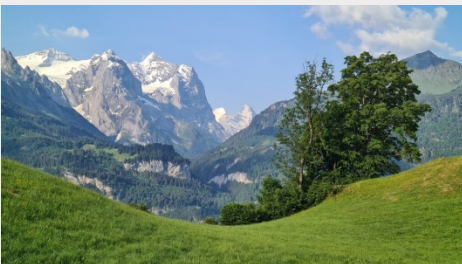
- **Long- distance hiking trails** all over Europe

## Description of Theme

**General description of the trail.** Are the best walking routes in Europe as they are certified after high standards set by the European Ramblers Association. All Leading Quality Trails are certified after the same strict standards by experienced walkers from ERA. With the certification you are ensured to walk along trails of world class standards.

**Description of the theme:** The Leading Trails / Best of Europe have been chosen to give an orientation on the criteria and a European quality scheme of long- distance hiking trails. The use of the criteria system 'Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe' renders the attractiveness of routes measurable and guarantees a high-quality hiking experience. Further information on the criteria and the process can be found in the Benchmark Study Document Dropbox.

## Impressions of the Trails



## Operational & Performance Model

### The System of the LQT

- The special quality certificate of 'Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe' offers a transparent system of criteria for the improvement of trail quality throughout Europe.
- The rating/grading as 'Leading Quality Trails- Best of Europe' is an award as well as a transparent method to optimise the overall route infrastructure.
- The criteria can be used as a checklist and help countries that have to build up their walking route network. In countries that already have a functioning route network, such a system can strengthen walking tourism further.

### Application mode

- The logo 'Leading Quality Trails- Best of Europe' is used on national as well as international trails.
- Certification is only available for complete trails.
- Prerequisite is a distance of at least 50km with three daily stages. Exceptions to the rule are the European Long-Distance routes.
- They can be certified in part, as long as the minimum length is given.

### Certification

- When the route fulfils the 'Quality route' criteria, an application for certification can be applied for with the ERA.
- When the results of the checks are positive, the route gets the certification 'Leading Quality Trails' for the period of 3 years.
- After this time, the quality of the route has to be tested again.
- The quality mark can be used in printed matter and on the internet to market the walking route.

### Leading Quality Trails – Best of Europe – benefits

- Giving the hiking tourist an overview and decision aid
- Giving regard to ecology and nature preservation
- Involvement of all affected/interest parties in the quality process
- Trained and competent trail experts in the area e.g. from walking groups, wildlife reserves and tourism
- Competitive edge for the walking region in marketing.

### 3.3. Case studies from the project destinations

In the following chapter **25 selected IGAs** from the **project partner countries** of **Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan** and from **15 destinations** are presented. From each destination, 3 successful IGAs are featured from the respective trail organizations of the (1) Lebanon Mountain Trail, (2) Palestinian Heritage Trail and (3) Jordan Trail.

In addition, a series of **5-6 community-driven case studies** of IGAs from which the local communities along the trails benefit most, are presented.

The first part of case studies is from **Jordan (no. 24-31)**, the second part- from **Palestine (no.32-40)** and the third part – from Lebanon (**no.41-48**).

Regarding Palestine' trail management organization's IGAs, currently the Palestinian Heritage Trail relies on project funding. However, the PHT union has a few ambitious plans for income generating activities that would contribute to enhancing the financial sustainability of the PHT. Unfortunately, because of the current crisis and since COVID-19, it has been difficult to implement these plans. Therefore, please note that the **two examples of PHT IGAs (no 32 and no. 33) are planned**, but not realized yet.

These are the categories:



**9 TMO examples**



**16 Community examples**



CASE STUDY NO: 24

## Sponsorship programme/ Jordan Trail Association (JTA)

**Country:** Jordan

**Destination:** Jordan

**Webpage:** <https://www.jordantrail.org/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, Pinterest

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** NGO

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 2015
- Length: 675 km
- 35 sections
- 41 days of trekking

- 8 regions and 75 villages crossed.
- 105 service providers along the trail
- Around 48 licensed adventure guides

### Target Group/s

- Mostly individuals, adventurers.
- Mostly international hikers (USA; UK, Australia, Canada, European Union countries, also UAE, Qatar etc.)
- **Around 450 hikers in 2023 Thru Hike** (18 doing the full Thru Hike).

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** The Jordan Trail is a walking trail crossing and connecting the length of the country of Jordan from Um Qais in the north to Aqaba and the Red Sea in the south. It traverses the diverse landscapes of Jordan, including the rolling wooded hills, the rugged wadis and cliffs, the dramatic sands and towering mountains in Wadi Rum, the colorful corals of the Red Sea. It also offers the encounter with the country's people and their cultures, traditions, and cuisine.

**Description of the IGA:** The Trail Management Organization has developed a **sponsorship model for their annual Thru Hike event**. This model provides income for the Jordan Trail Association and offers brand exposure and targeted marketing for the sponsors who are particularly interested in tourism, adventure tourism, hiking, sports, or national projects. JTA offers **different sponsorship tiers** with varying costs and benefits for the potential sponsors.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Story & History of the IGA

The sponsorship and ticketing Thru Hikes activities were established with support from USAID BEST project grant in 2016.

#### Marketing: Thru Hike and Sponsorship programme

- Thru hike marketed and bookable directly on JTA website.
- Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Jordan Tourism Board are JTA's strategic partners that promote their programmes and initiatives inside and outside Jordan, including the Thru hike.
- JTA has a sponsorship page on their official website with information about the programme, advantages of each tier, as well as a gallery of previous sponsors.
- Various tools and channels to market the Thru-hike sponsorship programme - brochures, direct communication with target companies, email marketing, collaboration with media organizations, press releases, media kits.

#### Business Model & Multiple Tiers

- JTA follows a **tiered sponsorship model** with multiple tiers – the higher costs generate higher benefits for sponsors – **Bronze JOD 5,000, Silver JOD 12,000, Gold JOD 25,000, Platinum JOD 35,000, Diamond JOD 50,000.**
- Sponsors gain promotion (through print/online/PR/on-site branding campaigns), plus the Thru-Hike engagement: the ability to interact directly with thru-hikers, for example, discounts and branded gear offered.

#### Investment - time and human resources

- Preparation for the Thru-hikes programme takes around 4-6 months, plus around 2 months for the coordination of the event and finalizing.
- Human resources: for 2023 Thru-hike programme JTA hired an additional employee and utilized 3 contractors, plus the guiding services were needed and provided by 2 professional guides, with 4 support escorts.





#### Financial Sustainability

- 55,1% of the total yearly JTA's income comes from the Thru hike event and sponsorship – 22% for the Thru Hike and 33,1% from the sponsorship (2023).

## Sponsorship programme / Jordan Trail Association (JTA)



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a significant part of revenue and sustainability for the TMO.</li> <li>The Thru hike attracts international media attention and provides international promotion.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community driven businesses along the trail directly benefit from this event and promotion.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JTA gains income that can be used for maintaining, promoting, and developing the trail and investing in communities.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct economic impact through the Thru hikes for the local communities.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

- Attractive event and offer for potential sponsors with a clear multiple tiers system for sponsorship.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be replicated by other trail organizations in the Med region that organize Thru Hikes already.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Thru Hike and Sponsorship programme benefits the JTA by generating a significant income, provides local and international exposure both for the trail and the association.

#### Overall performance

- Sponsorship offer provides different sponsorship opportunities, including the Bronze to Diamond tiers, but also daily hikes sponsor package JOD 500, targeting a various group of sponsors.



CASE STUDY NO: 25

## Adapt A Trail/ Jordan Trail Association (JTA)

Country: Jordan

Destination: Jordan

Webpage: <https://www.jordantrail.org/>

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, Pinterest

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** NGO

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 2015
- Length: 675 km
- 35 sections
- 41 days of trekking

- 8 regions and 75 villages crossed.
- 105 service providers along the trail
- Around 48 licensed adventure guides

### Target Group/s

- Mostly individuals, adventurers.
- Mostly international hikers (USA; UK, Australia, Canada, European Union countries, also UAE, Qatar etc.)
- **10% Local and 90% international hikers**

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** The Jordan Trail is a walking trail crossing and connecting the length of the country of Jordan from Um Qais in the north to Aqaba and the Red Sea in the south. It traverses the diverse landscapes of Jordan, including the rolling wooded hills, the rugged wadis and cliffs, the dramatic sands and towering mountains in Wadi Rum, the colorful corals of the Red Sea. It also offers the encounter with the country's people and their cultures, traditions, and cuisine.

**Description of the IGA:** Jordan Trail Association issued an exciting **collaboration opportunity called "Adopt A Trail"** in 2020. Individuals, donors, and corporations can adopt areas on the Jordan Trail starting from one meter up to sections and regions, if interested. This concept is aimed at creating a sense of societal fulfilment for those who adopt and a sense of ownership for the local communities (<https://www.jordantrail.org/adopt-a-trail/>).

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Story & History of the IGA

The idea of adopting a trail was initiated in the 2017 JTA business plan. This programme would allow individuals, private companies, and supporters to contribute to Jordanian product by adopting some sections in the trail.

#### Marketing

- Interested clients can reach "Adopt a Trail" programme through a dedicated page on JTA website and then select the region to adopt.
- JTA's social media platforms are used for promoting the programme and providing information on regions, areas, community. Example of the partnership promotional video ([https://fb.watch/sci\\_1Qk7DK/](https://fb.watch/sci_1Qk7DK/)).
- JTA board members promote it to potential sponsors via direct contact.

#### Target Groups

- At the moment, the programme is targeting local companies and individuals.
- Adopters include banks, telecommunication companies, hotels, pharmaceutical and other big companies.
- Around 1-2 companies participate in the programme every year.

#### Business Model

- The model is based on **the community investment programme**: interested companies or individuals can adopt a section and the **generated money is reinvested in the trail and the community** – on waymarking, trail blazing, community awareness and cleaning campaigns.
- **The minimum price for each adopted meter is 1 JOD.** E.g., a section As-Salt-Iraq Al-Amir (region 3) is 22.200 km so when adopted, it generates 22,200 JOD.
- Currently the adoption works on a one-year commitment basis.
- Also, the employees of companies contribute with volunteer work for the trail maintenance.
- The adopter's name will be associated with the adopted section and will be announced on the JTA website & social media platforms as well as on the physical signage on the trail.





#### Financial Sustainability

- 14% of the total yearly JTA income comes from the Adopt a Trail programme.

## Adapt A Trail/ Jordan Trail Association (JTA)



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programme helps to increase the financial resources of the association needed to maintain and develop the trail.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generated income is reinvested in community engagement.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a Trail programme generates a steady income that can be reinvested in the trail development and volunteers provide help with trail maintenance saving some costs.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programme helps to maintain a high standard Trail to ensure a quality tourism offer for the hikers which is a basis when planning for higher economic impact.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

An innovative idea on generating income for the trail maintenance– adopted sections generate income and during the adopted period JTA uses it to work on waymarking, trail blazing, community awareness and cleaning campaigns.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be easily replicated in the Med region, as no big economic resources are required to start it, except allocating human resources.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- An innovative idea with a minimum economic investment and promoting the trail nationally.

#### Overall performance

- Currently 12% of the trail is adopted, which provides a high potential for further upscaling and increasing this type of income.



CASE STUDY NO: 26

## Jordan Trail Passport/ Jordan Trail Association (JTA)

**Country:** Jordan

**Destination:** Jordan

**Webpage:** <https://www.jordantrail.org/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, Pinterest

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** NGO

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 2015
- Length: 675 km
- 35 sections
- 41 days of trekking

- 8 regions and 75 villages crossed.
- 105 service providers along the trail
- Around 48 licensed adventure guides

### Target Group/s

- Mostly individuals, adventurers.
- Mostly international hikers (USA; UK, Canada, European Union countries, also UAE, Qatar etc.)
- **10% Local and 90% international hikers**

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** The Jordan Trail is a walking trail crossing and connecting the length of the country of Jordan from Um Qais in the north to Aqaba and the Red Sea in the south. It traverses the diverse landscapes of Jordan, including the rolling wooded hills, the rugged wadis and cliffs, the dramatic sands and towering mountains in Wadi Rum, the colorful corals of the Red Sea. It also offers the encounter with the country's people and their cultures, traditions, and cuisine.

**Description of the IGA:** In the end of 2020 the Jordan Trail Association successfully issued **the 60-page Jordan Trail passport**, which serves tourists and hikers as an official lifetime trail pass, hiking log, and achievement recorder. It was inspired by the Camino de Santiago Pilgrim pass. Jordan Trail's local service providers can stamp hikers' passes in their designated sections. When completed all sections, hikers earn an official certificate from JTA (see the picture below).

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Visitors' information

- The Trail Pass holders get useful information including a map and trail difficulty levels, description and the things to see on every region/section.

#### Marketing

- Promotion on JTA website, promotional YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuFzaAa79nI>).
- Mention of the passport in their article on National Geographic (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/paid-content-hiking-jordan-trail>).
- Shared on social media by Jordan tour operators, and hikers who use/used the pass.

#### Target Groups

- The passport is mostly popular among the people who are interested in completing all the sections of Jordan Trail as well as people who come to do a Thru hike.

#### Business Model

- The income is generated through the sales of the passport (it costs **20 JOD** (around 28 USD)).
- Interested people can buy it online on the website (<https://products.jordantrail.org/en/trail-pass>) and JTA ships it (also abroad). Around 30-40 Pass every year are sold.
- The Jordan Trail Pass (as well as promotion video, and mobile application) was funded by partnership programme of 2019-2020 with the Embassy of the Netherlands.
- A consulting firm was contracted to design the passport. The whole JTA team of 4 is handling all administrative and marketing work.





#### Financial Sustainability

- Currently it is a small amount of income, but a great investment for hikers' engagement.

## Jordan Trail Passport/ Jordan Trail Association (JTA)



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the experience of the Jordan Trail and engages hikers to do the whole trail.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficial for local businesses that provide stamps as they get more exposure to visitors.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The passport contributes to the financial sustainability of the JTA by generating a small yearly budget and provides an extra marketing of the trail - it is a great tool for digital word of mouth marketing.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It serves as an indirect tool for economic impact on local rural communities, incentivizing hikers to visit all the villages along the trail.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

It is a great quality tool that encourages the exploration of Jordan Trail and serves as an official recognition for the hiker.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be easily replicated in the Med Region, suitable for the long-distance trails. For replicating, one should consider the needed initial investment for conceptualizing and designing the passport by an external agency.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- A great concept for national and international hiker engagement.
- It also serves to engage local communities to meet and welcome hikers of the Jordan Trail.

#### Overall performance

- Although currently it generates a modest income, it serves as a great marketing and hikers engagement tool.
- It also has a potential for upscaling with the trail becoming more popular and the passport becoming a 'must have' for the hikers (as it is in the Camino de Santiago case).



CASE STUDY NO: 27

## Authentic local experience / Baraka destinations

**Country:** Jordan

**Trail & Destination:** Jordan Trail, Um Qais

**Webpage:** <https://barakadestinations.com/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp

### Key Facts

**Type:** Experiences & accommodation  
**Theme:** Capacity building / Cultural activities

- Initiated in 2016
- Social enterprise
- No of Employees: 15

- Offer guests information about the Jordan Trail; offer hikes on the Jordan Trail.

### Target Group/s

- 30% local guests, 70% international guests from all around the world.
- Conscious travelers, looking for meaningful local experiences.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Baraka destinations is a social enterprise of local and international tourism professionals who seek to show a different side of Jordan. They are based in Amman but work with local rural communities by providing them the capacity building on tourism product development and offer tourists bookable authentic cultural experiences with local communities as well as quality accommodation in Um Qais (where Jordan Trail passes) and Pella.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Baraka destinations work in areas often forgotten by tourists, or visited for an hour or two, and together with local people they create memorable and high-quality travel experiences. They are bridging the gap for local communities to access the travel market and for tourists to enjoy unique off the beaten path experiences. (Short documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i71vpUTWfpY&t=11s>)

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Criteria for destinations they choose:

- Important archaeological site, important history
- Very welcoming hospitable local culture & incredible food experience
- Landscapes and important natural area

#### Marketing

- Accommodation is directly bookable on their website (<https://barakadestinations.com/destinations/um-qais/>), on AirBnB (4.92/5 rating), Booking.com (8.8/10 rating), Luxury hotels guide.
- All their experiences are available in an illustrated informative booklet online.

#### Business Model: methodology

- Identifying unique experiences and training the local community to meet the expectations of local and foreign travellers (e.g., English, tourism product creation, business & financial management, marketing).
- Marketing these experiences and services as a cluster within the local destination.
- Facilitating the process of booking and providing packaged itineraries.

#### Investment

- A grant from the USAID Jordan Local Enterprise Support Project (LENS) supported Baraka Destinations initiation in Um Qais (training & resources).

#### Income generation activities:

- **Accommodation** at Pella (a private studio apartment and a private villa) and Um Qais (five double rooms & a family room).
- **Experiences** such as Olive picking (and taking home a bottle of one's own pressed olive oil), Beekeeping and Honey harvest, Hadab making, Stone masonry, Seed bombs making, Basket weaving, cooking class experience, Cheese making, Foraging and Shepherd's experience.
- **Adventure experiences:** such as Gadara cycling, Philodemus hike, Archaeological site tour, Tal Sartaba hike, Himit abu Dableh hike. (9 hiking routes, 3 camping sites, 6 biking routes in Um Qais).





#### Economic impact

- Baraka destinations model has led to the creation of **153 jobs, 67% of which empower women and youth.**

## Authentic local experience design/ Baraka destinations



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focusing on the 'off the beaten track' destinations that are usually overlooked by tourists and designing unique authentic quality experiences.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They work with <b>over 20 local businesses</b> and provide training and attract tourists that would otherwise not stay the destinations (now they stay around 3 days).</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All the salaries and costs of the team are covered, and the local <b>communities receive 44% higher than national average income.</b></li> <li>Upscaling in process - more experiences added.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They ensure maximum local economy benefit by localizing supply chains and offering meals that are farm-to-table.</li> <li>Attracting high spending tourists.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Baraka destinations offer unique products, experiences and accommodation choices for tourists who are looking for rich and authentic cultural experience and are keen to hear the story of the people and the history of the place. On the other hand, the locals get a chance to generate income using skills that they already have but are often neglected and non-monetized.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could be replicated in the Mediterranean region, focusing on little-known authentic destinations that adhere to quality criteria mentioned above. A dedicated team of sustainable tourism professionals should be curating such projects, and an initial investment has to be taken into account.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Successfully created products of locally owned businesses integrated within a localised supply chain, promoting minimal environmental impact and amplifying benefits for local communities.

#### Overall performance

- A lighthouse model for the region on creating quality experiences in the rural destinations and bringing benefits to local communities.
- Upscaling has been done over time – their services were launched back in 2016 in Um Qais as a pilot with a Bed and Breakfast and 5 Community-led experiences. Three additional experiences were added in 2018 as well as localizing the supply chain for the Bed and Breakfast. Later, in 2019 they launched Pella as a second destination with a Bed and Breakfast along with four Community-led experiences (Cheesemaking, Shepherding, Hiking and Local guiding at the archaeological site). Further upscaling possible by creating other destinations.



CASE STUDY NO: 28

## Hike Jordan! Hiking, Homestay, Camping with Eisa

**Country:** Jordan

**Trail & Destination:** Jordan Trail, Ajloun governorate

**Webpage:** <https://hike-jordan.com/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram

### Key Facts

**Type:** Adventure tourism guide and a guest house

**Theme:** Outdoor Activities

- Initiated in 2001
- Family Business
- No. of Employees: 5 part-time

- JTA board member
- Works with inbound travel agencies

### Target Group/s

- Groups (40-70 years old) – 30% of visitors and individuals (18-60 years old) – 70% of all guests.
- **90% internationals** mainly France, Italy, Germany, Spain, UK, USA.
- **Around 4000-5000** guests per year.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Hike Jordan! is a local tourism business offering hiking, homestay and camping services and located in Rasoun village in the northern part of Jordan. It is run by Eisa Mahmoud Dwekat who is the main service provider – he is an accredited adventure tourism guide and offers guided mountain walks mostly in the northern region of Jordan and Jordan Trail (Um Quais, Ajloun, Irbid), and runs food and beverage and homestay services with his wife.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Eisa is a dedicated guide and the Jordan trail expert not only in his area, but on the whole trail. He is one of the few tourism entrepreneurs around Ajloun and has been on a market already for more than 20 years. It is also a good example illustrating how a guide expanded his services to have a full touristic offer including F&B service, accommodation, cultural exchange programmes, camping adventures.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Quality of hiking tourism offer and services

- Official certified guide, certification by ENSM (l'Ecole Nationale des Sports de Montagne in France).
- Actively participates in Jordan Trail Association trainings, including Safety and Hygiene Procedures Amidst COVID-19, Hospitality and Housekeeping & Service provision, Trail Navigation.

#### Marketing

- Collaboration with the JTA: JTA reaches out to Eisa Dwekat when they need specific experiences for VIP guests.
- To reach different target markets, he also collaborates with Jordan's international schools and universities, has special packages for embassies and international NGOs, a one-day trip packages for local companies.
- Encourages guests to leave Google reviews, <https://rb.gy/m7w6dq>

#### Business Model: different packages

- Eisa offers different types of packages - guided mountain walks and selected itineraries from 1 to 5 days.
- **One-day trip** including hike and F&B service.
- **Two-day hiking trip** with an overnight at their accommodation including local traditional food prepared by his wife.
- **Multiple days trip** that additionally includes cultural exchange programme.
- There are usually around 6 tours done every week, with around 30-80 guests per week.

#### Cultural component in his offer/Cultural exchange programmes

- Storytelling
- Cooking and tasting Jordanian and Arabic dishes.
- Introduction to the local language and society


#### Financial Sustainability

- All costs and salaries are fully covered.

## Hike Jordan! Hiking, Homestay, Camping with Eisa



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of additional services established next to the main guiding activity, including the cultural exchange programmes.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Jordanian Arabic cuisine ingredients offered at the guesthouse are sourced locally.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Long-term financial sustainability - operates all year round for more than 20 years already.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of the few tourism businesses in the area that brings visitors throughout the year, contributing to the local economy.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Hike Jordan! is an example of a strong local small family business with a targeted offer for hikers and a close collaboration with the Jordan Trail Association.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be easily replicated in the Mediterranean region, by focusing on hiking and traditional food and culture experiences of a specific local destination.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- The offer of different packages and reaching a wide range of hikers through different types of collaborations.

#### Overall performance

- Long-term financial sustainability proven over 20+ years of experience and operating throughout the year.



CASE STUDY NO: 29

## Iraq Al-Amir Women's Co-Operative

**Country:** Jordan

**Trail & Destination:** Jordan Trail, Amman area

**Webpage:** NA

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram

### Key Facts

**Type:** Handicrafts, restaurant

**Theme:** Local services/Service provider

- Initiated in 1993
- Social enterprise
- No of Employees: 21

- Close cooperation with Jordan Trail, holder of the Jordan Trail Association badge.

### Target Group/s

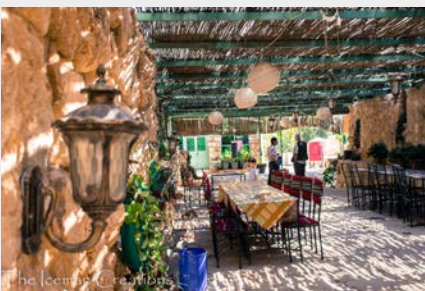
- 90% international guests, mostly French (around 70%), 10% locals.
- Mostly groups through accredited travel agencies, 20-60 years old.
- **Around 15,000 guests/ year.**

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Located in the outskirts of Amman, the Iraq Al-Amir Women's Co-Operative is a popular place to eat, serving tourists diverse dishes of traditional Jordanian cuisine, such as musakhan (spiced chicken) and magloubet zahra (chicken, rice, and cauliflower). They also have a great offer of locally made beautiful handicrafts in their gift shop and run ceramic, paper and soap making and cloth weaving workshops for visitors, and additionally run two guest rooms.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Iraq Al-Amir is Jordan's oldest women's co-operative and a crucial place for young women from the surrounding villages to get job opportunities and valuable skills, as well as preserving the craft heritage and offering high quality hand-made high quality local souvenirs and local food in charming historical houses.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### How was the creation? How did it start?

- It was established in 1993 by Noor Al Hussein Foundation and went fully independent in 2001.

#### Marketing

- Past cooperation with not-for-profit TreadWright Foundation (2018) resulted in numerous international articles in media as well as the TreadRight Storytellers video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zciCUPo4-4M>).

#### Business Model

- Most income (80%) comes from the restaurant – it has a capacity of hosting 150 people, serves breakfast, lunch or dinner; price range 5-20 JOD.
- The handicrafts sales (20% of total income)- guests spend between 15-100 JOD. Besides the gift shop, they are also sold online (e.g., <https://souqfann.com/ar/sellers/Iraq-Al-ameer-Women-Association?order=s>)
- Training workshops on all types of crafts (reservation is required). Capacity varies per activity from 5-20. Children ages 5+ can participate in workshops with their parents.
- **90% of guests come through mostly local tour operators** focused on cultural, adventure and eco experiences, such as UTA, Discovery Circle, Dakkak, Al-Thuraya, Experience Jordan, Bright Star.
- The TreadRight grant, delivered in partnership with Tourism Cares, aided completing a build-out of the gift shop, expanding their food services and merchandising expertise.

#### Financial Sustainability

- All expenses and monthly wages are covered throughout the year.





#### Economic impact

- Positive impact on the local community: supporting young women from the region and encouraging them to develop and create their own ideas to become independent and create their own businesses in the future.
- The co-operative also provides community with a "knowledge station" - various services, including printing, photocopying, internet access, and computer courses.

## Iraq Al-Amir Women's Co-Operative



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative handicrafts preserve local heritage and are made in the original way, e.g., making organic paper from plant materials or paper bowls from recycled paper.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local women benefit greatly from this co-operative since they are trained to weave fabrics, craft pottery and soap at a fair wage and gain practical experience and skills.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The revenues are reinvested in training the young women.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Over 150 women were trained</b> who have since gone on to establish their own businesses – including food establishments, further creating a positive economic impact for the region.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

It is a great example of an initiative that offers quality service and the opportunity for tourists to authentically explore Jordanian culture in a way that directly benefits the local community.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be replicated in the Med region, but a significant investment has to be foreseen to set it up.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Offer of delicious traditional food and high-quality handicrafts, both made locally by women.

#### Overall performance

- The oldest co-operative, a lighthouse model for other similar initiatives providing opportunities for local women as well as creating local entrepreneurs who establish new businesses in the region thus creating a high local economic impact.
- The business model includes numerous marketplaces of promotion of their products and a long-term cooperation with travel agencies.



CASE STUDY NO: 30

## Culinary experience / Beit Al-Jameed

Country: Jordan

Trail & Destination: Jordan Trail, Karak area

Webpage: NA

Communication: Facebook, Instagram

### Key Facts

**Type:** Culinary experience, homestay

**Theme:** Cultural activities

- Initiated in 2017
- Family Business
- No of Employees: 15

- Cooperation with Jordan Trail Association, holder of JTA badge.

### Target Group/s

- Individuals and groups.
- Half of visitors are local Jordanians.
- Among international visitors – mostly French - 30% and Germans -15%.
- Age mostly between 40-80 years old.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Beit Al-Jameed is a family business, run by two sisters Amani and Ayat with support from three sisters and one brother. It is located in Al-Karak area, next to Al-Karak castle, in the middle of Jordan's Trail. They run a small 3-room homestay, introduce visitors to Karak's history, customs and culture, and offer authentic local culinary experience of Jordanian cuisine and its specialty Jameed.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** This business run by local women is offering an authentic experience to its visitors of learning about local culture mainly through the local cuisine. Their specialty is a traditional dairy product Jameed - they make it in a traditional way and offer visitors a complete Jameed experience, from its traditional preparation inviting visitors to enjoy a meal together.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Local products & cultural component

- Jameed preparation workshops teach visitors the whole process of preparation and includes a brief demonstration of the production, from the goat milking, boiling and soaring the milk, to the shaping of the Jameed into a rock.
- It also includes tasting Jameed and tasting herbs used for the production process.
- Cooking classes of traditional dishes - preparing with visitors a traditional lunch dish like Mansaf using Jameed.

#### Business Model: a variety of services

- Accommodation service including all homemade meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner).
- Selling of local handmade products from natural materials (wool and soaps).
- Cultural experiences, cultural culinary experiences.
- Renting the space for educational and training courses.
- Homestay and experience created through the support of JTA.

#### Culinary experience packages

- They offer culinary experiences packages, like Mansaf making lunch with an overnight stay in their homestay, bookable on Viavii platform.
- 'Jameed fans' tour combined with hiking Jordan Trail, available on Jordan Trail Association's website.





#### Marketing

- Cooperation with local tour operators, like Paneast Tours.
- Listed on a local accommodation booking platform allbooked (<https://karak-jordan11520.albooked.com/>).
- Listed on Viavii, an online community marketplace for booking and hosting in-person and online experiences from all around the world (<https://viavii.com/experience/mansaf-makinglunch-and-overnight>).
- Cooperation with JTA – 'Jameed fans' tour, promoted on JTA website (<https://www.jordantrail.org/for-jameed-fans/#>); promotional video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1s8U4iigOU>)

## Culinary experience / Beit Al-Jameed



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design of a local experience 'living like a local', with a focus on cultural food experience, tailored for 'foodies'.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for local producers of the area - Beit Al Jameed provides a space in their guesthouse for promoting local products - guests can purchase local food products and handcrafted souvenirs.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is quite a young business that still faces some difficulties in covering all costs and salaries depending on a year and the general tourism situation in Jordan.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beit Al-Jameed is the first tourism service provider/ guesthouse in Karak governorate, bringing visitors to the area and thus contributing to the local economy.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

A cultural experience of Jordan through food – Beit Al-Jameed has found its USP and created an attractive tourism product for local and international tourists looking for local food experiences and a possibility to participate in the age-old process of making Jameed.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be easily replicated in the Mediterranean region, focusing on the local regional cuisine and specialty.
- This example received initial support through a project curated by JTA – the support included full reconstruction and furnishing of the basement floor to assure transforming it into an accommodation/homestay facility; Beit Al Jameed was provided with all cooking appliances and preparation material and tools needed for Jameed making and Mansaf cooking experiences; also promotional video.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Beit Al-Jameed is very known in Jordan for making Jameed, the main ingredient for Jordan's national dish mansaf, in a traditional way. In Jordan, they are getting popular and already have some appearances on TV.
- An example of how one can adapt the local culinary heritage and turn it into a tourism product.

#### Overall performance

- It is a crucial business for the area where no other accommodation businesses exist and important for promoting the local culinary heritage.



CASE STUDY NO: 31

## Feynan Ecolodge

**Country:** Jordan

**Trail & Destination:** Jordan Trail, Dana Biosphere reserve

**Webpage:** <https://ecohotels.me/Feynan>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, TripAdvisor

### Key Facts

**Type:** Ecolodge & local experiences

**Theme:** Service provider

- Initiated in 2005
- Social Enterprise
- No of Employees: 25

- CEO is a member of the Jordan Trail Association.
- Jordan Tourism Board (JTB) assists in bringing FAM trips to the lodge.

### Target Group/s

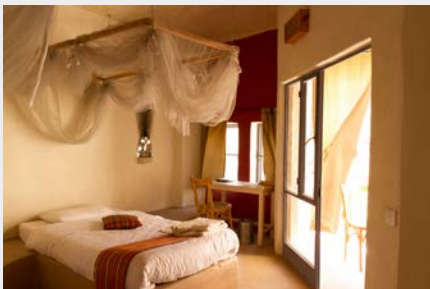
- Nature lovers, visitors seeking unique and authentic experiences.
- Around 80% of guests are internationals, mostly from Europe and North America.
- Around **5,000-7,000** guests annually.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Feynan Ecolodge is a 26-room environmentally friendly lodge located at the South-Western edge of the Dana Biosphere Reserve. It is a unique place in Jordan; it is completely off the grid and is lit by candles and stars at night. The ecolodge offers guests the opportunity to stay in a remote part of Jordan and enjoy breathtaking scenery, local hospitality and exciting activities and locally inspired vegetarian menu.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Feynan Ecolodge's ethos is based on harmony with its local environment: it is completely solar-powered, employees are 100% from the local communities around the Dana Biosphere Reserve, and the lodge generates revenue that helps conservation efforts and the protection of endangered species around the reserve. Feynan Ecolodge is also listed as **one of the best 25 ecolodges in the world** by National Geographic Traveler Magazine.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### How was the creation?

- Feynan Ecolodge was constructed in 2005 by **the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature** and in September 2009, **EcoHotels** took over the management and operation of the lodge.

#### Marketing

- Besides direct booking, Feynan is also offered as part of the travel programs of many tour operators in Jordan, and their overseas counterparts.

#### Business Model

- Feynan generates revenue for the conservation of nature in Dana Biosphere Reserve and the benefit of the local communities surrounding the Reserve.
- Feynan is sold as an all-inclusive package: Accommodation, meals and activities (a schedule of guided activities is included in the price of a stay at Feynan).
- There is a supplement for local community services (transportation), local community experiences and mountain biking rental. 100% of the fees for the services offered by the community goes to the community members offering the experiences.
- Guests can book and pay directly through the online booking portal on their website.

#### Financial Sustainability

- In 2010, 2014, 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023, the lodge was able to cover the costs and make money to reinvest.





#### Economic impact

- **100% of what the guest pays stays in Jordan, with over 50% in the immediate local community**, and a significant additional portion goes to the conservation of Dana Biosphere Reserve.
- Feynan purchases most of its food supplies locally from the nearby villages, 45 local community drivers shuttle guests to/from the lodge, 17 families provide the Bedouin experience.

## Feynan Ecolodge



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of activities for guests: from hikes, guided stargazing tours to learning Bedouin traditions in a goat-haired tent.</li> <li>Original concept and design of Feynan Ecolodge – it was inspired by the historical caravanserai.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ecolodge provides needed employment for this area - all employees are locals, plus community micro businesses and artisans are supported via a localized supply chain.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial sustainability depends on a year. In stable years Feynan is able to also reinvest.</li> <li>Attracts high spending tourists to the area.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feynan Ecolodge generates significant economic impact for local communities of Dana Biosphere reserve and aids for local nature conservation.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Feynan Ecolodge provides a unique quality experience for its guests and is an example of a social enterprise successfully working with local communities and generating income for nature conservation.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- This is quite a unique, culturally authentic concept, inspiration from it could be used in some areas of the Mediterranean region; high investment would be required.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Staying at the lodge is an experience in itself – each of the individually designed rooms is candlelit and the lodge is designed to inspire the feeling of the ancient caravanserai.

#### Overall performance

- It is a unique example with an original concept and design, carefully designed for the high-quality experience of visitors and providing the authenticity of the area in facilitating authentic local encounters.



CASE STUDY NO: 32

## Visitors center/Palestinian Heritage Trail (PHT)

**Country:** Palestine

**Destination:** Beit Sahur, West Bank

**Webpage:** <https://phtrail.org/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Not-for-profit community-based tourism organization

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 2013
- Length: 500 km
- Stages 29

- More than 60 Palestinian cities, villages, and local communities crossed
- 80 accommodations on the trail
- 35 women's cooperatives
- 50 guides and local ambassadors

### Target Group/s

- French tourists coming through French tour operators.
- Thru Hikers coming through the local tour operator Walk Palestine.

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** Palestinian Heritage Trail is a long-distance cultural hiking route in Palestine. The trail is about 500 km long and extends from the village of Rummana northwest of Jenin to Beit Mirsim southwest of Hebron back to Artas in Bethlehem, in addition to the newly developed Jerusalem segment that starts in Eizariya through the Old City of Jerusalem towards the villages in the Northwest (Beit Suriq to Beit Duqqa).

**Description of the IGA:** In the beginning of 2020 Palestinian Heritage Trail union moved to the new location at the Old city of Beit Sahour, a beautiful part of traditional Palestinian Housh with genuine architectural characteristics. PHT union wants to take advantage of the ground floor and the front yard of the new location to establish **a space that includes a visitors' center, a gift shop and a coffee shop for travellers and guests.**

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Palestinian Traditional Housh

It is a traditional building whose dwelling units are surrounding the public open square for a purpose of sharing activities. Housh can explain the Palestinian social cohesion and the Palestinian family, the architectural design being adaptable with the expansion of the family.

#### Visitors' information

A wide collection of Palestinian Heritage Trail publications is planned to be available for visitors, some for free, such as different brochures and other material for purchase, thus generating income for the trail organization, such as:

- Brochure maps
- Recipe booklets with local recipes from different regions along the trail
- PHT passports
- PHT Atlas (visitor information guide)

#### Gift shop

A range of products for sale, including:

- Local handicrafts (e.g., embroidery) from partner women's centers
- Local food products from partner women's centers
- Professional trekking gear, since there is a demand for it in Palestine (e.g., for trekking guides)
- PHT merchandising materials

#### Café

A small café is planned serving Palestinian food and beverages.

#### Target Groups





- Before the current crisis, the old city of Beit Sahour was attracting numerous international tourists, who together with PHT hikers would be the main target group for the Visitors' center.

#### Challenges

- Lack of tourists since Covid-19
- Lack of funding sources
- The humidity of the whole floor requires significant investment
- Disputes over the ownership of the front yard

## Visitors centre/Palestinian Heritage Trail

### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It would enrich the Palestinian Heritage Trail product and would generate some income for the trail management organization.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct benefits because of the promotion of the local communities' services, plus the gift shop would work as a marketplace for local products from the PHT women centers.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sales of PHT publications and commissions from the gift shop materials would contribute to the financial sustainability of the TMO by generating a small yearly budget that could be reinvested for the needs of the trail and the union.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is difficult to estimate a possible economic impact, but it would add greatly to promoting the trail and the numerous local businesses along the trail.</li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

Physical visitors centre is a great asset for a trail organization and hikers, serving as an important information point for visitors for planning their trip on the trail and seeking professional advice or even help with booking local services, plus it is a great promotional space of local communities and their products.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The visitors' centre idea can be replicated in the Mediterranean region; however, the investment has to be considered, plus a range of services and products have to be adapted to the local destination/trail organization.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- The location of the planned visitors center is a great asset, the old city of Beit Sahur being an attractive historical place with great potential.

#### Overall performance

- A great idea that also requires a significant investment but has a potential of providing numerous income generating activities for the PHT union as well as for its local communities and a potential for further upscaling of services.



CASE STUDY NO: 33

## APP & Partner system/ Palestinian Heritage Trail

**Country:** Palestine

**Destination:** West Bank

**Webpage:** <https://phtrail.org/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Not-for-profit community-based tourism organization

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 2013
- Length: 500 km
- Stages 29

- More than 60 Palestinian cities, villages, and local communities crossed
- 80 accommodations on the trail
- 35 women's cooperatives
- 50 guides and local ambassadors

### Target Group/s

- French tourists coming through French tour operators
- Thru Hikers coming through the local tour operator Walk Palestine

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** Palestinian Heritage Trail is a long-distance cultural hiking route in Palestine. The trail is about 500 km long and extends from the village of Rummana northwest of Jenin to Beit Mirsim southwest of Hebron back to Artas in Bethlehem, in addition to the newly developed Jerusalem segment that starts in Eizariya through the Old City of Jerusalem towards the villages in the Northwest (Beit Suriq to Beit Duqqa).

**Description of the IGA:** The Palestinian Heritage Trail union has developed a **user-friendly application** for tourists including all the needed information about the trail (maps, elevation profiles, walking notes, GPX points, photos etc.) and about its 250 services along the trail (local tour operators, trekking guides, accommodation, meals, attractions, adventure, souvenir, and other community initiatives). The app is currently in a testing phase and its pilot version will be launched later in 2024.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Investment

- Human resources: the App is being developed by a local app development company in collaboration with PHT employees.
- This application is funded through a PHT implemented project "Increase Economic Opportunities and Improve Livelihood for Fragile Communities along the Palestinian Heritage Trail in the West Bank."
- The funding for this project is provided by the Government of Japan and facilitated through the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) and the World Bank.

#### Partner System Model

- Any tourism service provider can be listed on the application by signing a partnership agreement with PHT.
- Partner benefits would include promotion through the App and the PHT network, regular trainings and events organized by PHT.
- Partner service providers will have access to their space on the App with an interactive interface, where they will be able to upload data that they want to share with PHT visitors.
- Guests will be able to connect to service providers instantly by connecting with them on WhatsApp through the App.





#### Business model & Expected income

- The first year of the partnership would be free; the partnership fees will be charged starting from the second year.
- The suggested annual subscription fee from service providers is **\$10 per month**, totaling to \$120 per year.
- Considering **250 service providers becoming partners**, the total yearly income could be **around \$30,000 per year**, starting from the second year after launching.
- There is also an idea of offering different annual fees depending on the category/classification of the service provider.

## APP & Partner system/ Palestinian Heritage Trail



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This service would directly generate income for the TMO and would formalize the collaboration with its service providers.</li> <li>The App would enrich the PHT product.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community driven businesses along the trail would directly benefit from this marketing channel and their services could be booked in an easier way.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The App and Partner System would generate a steady small yearly budget that can be reinvested in further marketing or other PHT needs.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The App with direct booking options for visitors will be a great asset for attracting individual international travelers which will result in a higher PHT economic impact.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

The App will be a great asset enriching the PHT product, since it will be providing all the necessary information to the hikers and allowing them to directly connect and book services from the local service providers. It is also a great tool for service providers to promote their services, which is currently a challenging part, especially for women centers.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The App and partner system idea could be replicated in the Mediterranean region; however, the investment for the App development has to be considered as well as time and human resources needed for setting up and managing the partner system.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Quite an innovative approach of using the App as the tool to directly connect hikers with service providers through WhatsApp and generate income for the TMO.
- The App will also be a great monitoring tool for the TMO seeing how many people are using the services along the trail.

#### Overall performance

- A great idea when having a great offer of local services to be listed on the App.
- Some challenges have to be considered, like several service providers do not want to share actual data on the number of guests they receive due to tax reasons.



CASE STUDY NO: 34

## Capacity Building for Women Centers/ PHT

**Country:** Palestine

**Destination:** West Bank

**Webpage:** <https://phtrail.org/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, WhatsApp

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Not-for-profit community-based tourism organization

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 2013
- Length: 500 km
- Stages 29

- More than 60 Palestinian cities, villages, and local communities crossed
- 80 accommodations on the trail
- 35 women's cooperatives
- 50 guides and local ambassadors

### Target Group/s

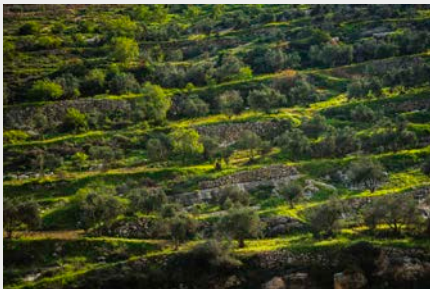
- French tourists coming through French tour operators
- Thru Hikers coming through the local tour operator Walk Palestine

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** Palestinian Heritage Trail is a long-distance cultural hiking route in Palestine. The trail is about 500 km long and extends from the village of Rummana northwest of Jenin to Beit Mirsim southwest of Hebron back to Artas in Bethlehem, in addition to the newly developed Jerusalem segment that starts in Eizariya through the Old City of Jerusalem towards the villages in the Northwest (Beit Suriq to Beit Duqqa).

**Description of the IGA:** The **Palestinian Heritage Trail has an extensive experience on designing and implementing creative and efficient capacity building programmes** for the numerous women centers along the trail, that are essential for local women to have jobs and receive income. From The Palestinian Heritage Trail's northernmost point in Jenin through the seven governorates to Hebron, the women's cooperatives along the trail provide both food products—such as shadeah, za'atar, yogurt, butter, pickles, and jams—and handcrafts embellished with traditional Palestinian embroidery.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Recipe Booklet

- PHT produced the first edition of a **56-page recipe booklet** "Palestinian Culinary art experience on the Palestinian Heritage Trail"
- The booklet introduces the Palestinian cuisine – its main ingredients, dishes and drinks and provides recipes of **19 traditional dishes prepared by 19 partner women cooperatives**.
- Each recipe is illustrated with high-quality photos of the dishes and products, also some photos of women from women centers.
- Available in the digital [Benchmark study folder](#).

#### Beit Emwwas Cooperative

- One of exemplary projects of PHT capacity building.
- Cooperative since 2018 in the Jerusalem district in Qbeieh town, it started with 18 members and currently counts 25 women.
- Successfully operating and now providing training to other women associations.

#### Capacity building

- The Palestinian Heritage Trail organization supports the women's centers by strengthening their skills in cooking, hygiene and food processing, management of co-operatives, marketing, foreign languages.
- PHT also provided new kitchen supply for the Beit Emwwas women cooperative.

#### Local products

PHT and women centers promote Palestinian cultural heritage and local products.





For example, Beit Emwwas, besides serving hot meals, also produce:

- Green Mellow - frozen/dried
- Green Thyme - frozen/dried
- Sumac
- Shushbarak
- Kubbeh

## Capacity Building for Women Centers/ PHT



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product Palestinian Heritage Trail.</li> <li>Ensures culinary heritage preservation and the offer of local culinary products for PHT visitors.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct benefits for local women communities providing them the tools to build their own income generating activities.</li> <li>Creative promotion through the Recipe booklet.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income comes through projects, but its investment in women centers creates the long-term sustainability for the trail.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no numbers for the economic impact, however, these capacity building programmes greatly contribute to more resilient communities.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

One of the core activities of PHT, work with local communities, especially women centers, facilitates numerous local employment opportunities, not only through direct beneficiaries, but also because the trained women centers once established offer training and coaching services in food production, marketing, and business planning to other women's associations.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The capacity building concept could be replicated but needs to be adapted to the local needs in terms of cultural products that can be offered.
- Recipe booklet is a great idea that could be replicated with local recipes and local actors.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Recipe booklet idea is very creative, serving not only for promotion of culinary heritage and women centers, but also a great engagement tool and offer for hikers, motivating them to visit different women centers to try different meals.

#### Overall performance

- Great work, showing the success in terms of growth of the number of employees in established women centers. Great way to preserve and promote Palestinian cuisine.



CASE STUDY NO: 35

## Cycling Palestine

Country: Palestine

Trail & Destination: Palestinian Heritage Trail, Ramallah

Webpage: NA

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, LinkedIn, TripAdvisor

### Key Facts

Type: Cycling tours

Theme: Outdoor activities

- Initiated in 2015
- Sports club
- No of Employees: 16

- PHT partner
- Cooperation with Siraj center

### Target Group/s

- Local Palestinians, both females and males.
- Around 80% of their clients are young people under 30 years old.
- Around **8400 people per year**.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Cycling Palestine, an association located in the city of Ramallah, organizes cycling tours across the entire West Bank from the north to the south, a unique journey through diverse landscapes, from historic villages to stunning natural terrain, providing an immersive experience in Palestinian culture and scenery. Furthermore, the initiative is involved in the establishment of biking waymarking for enhanced navigation and safety.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Cycling Palestine is run by enthusiastic and dedicated young people who made it into a financially sustainable initiative that does not rely on any external funding and is one of the main cycling experiences providers across the West Bank. Moreover, they successfully promote bicycle as a leisure activity to Palestinians and already count around **25000 bikers** who joined their tours since their launch in 2015.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Team of Cycling Palestine

Composed of mostly young, dedicated people, the team consists of (before October 2023 events):

- Manager and guide, owner Sohaib Samarah
- A coordinator and guide for each part of West Bank - the northern part, the middle part and the southern part.
- A communications person doing photography and social media, plus other two part-time employees for media relations and translation.
- 2 maintenance technicians, operating Cycling Palestine workshop
- Drivers, a couple of other part-time guides

#### Cycling tours offer

- They organize weekly one-day biking tours every Friday and Saturday, around 20 km distance.
- Participants can sign up on a dedicated Google Form.
- Promotion on social media, see example [here](#).
- Tours usually host between 50-70 people
- Bikes are included in the price as well as the transportation to the start/finish of the trip by bus. A local guide begins the trip already in a bus with sharing historical information on the locations to be visited.
- Lunch can be organized for an extra fee.
- Also, private biking tours are available for booking.

#### Partnership with Siraj

- They also have a partnership with a local tour operator offering an 8-day cycling tour from Jenin to Jerusalem for international visitors. The tour includes visits to cultural sites along the route, meals at local restaurants and stays in local guest houses and hotels.  
(<https://www.sirajcenter.org/index.php/en/programs/bike-palestine>)





#### Other services

- Bicycle rental for individuals and groups & maintenance services
- Selling secondhand bikes and e-bikes, spare bicycle parts, accessories, and safety equipment
- Training activities on teaching bicycling

## Cycling Palestine



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enriches the product Palestinian Heritage Trail for tourists who want to have cycling experience.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A great initiative enabling Palestinian youth to connect and promoting healthy and environmentally friendly way of transportation.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The initiative began with 10 bikes and has since expanded its fleet to <b>250 bikes</b>.</li> <li>This growth has enabled them to cover all costs, including salaries, while also advancing their business operations.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since most of their tours are one-day, it does not generate a huge economic impact.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

A pioneering initiative in Palestine introducing cycling with nearly 10 years of experience organizing multiple tours every month through the entire West Bank.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be replicated in the Mediterranean region, in urban destinations as well as rural destinations, preferably in cycling safe areas with moderate elevation.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Introducing and promoting a new outdoor activity product in Palestine.

#### Overall performance

- Successful initiative, fully self-sustaining and steadily growing & having great social benefits for engaging Palestinian youth in cycling scene.



CASE STUDY NO: 36

## Guest house & Local products/ Al-Mardawi

**Country:** Palestine

**Trail & Destination:** Palestinian Heritage Trail, Jenin region

**Webpage:** NA

**Communication:** Facebook, X, TripAdvisor

### Key Facts

**Type:** Guest house & meals

**Theme:** Service provider

- Initiated in 2013
- Family Business
- No of Employees: 5

- PHT partner, listed on the website as a partner accommodation

### Target Group/s

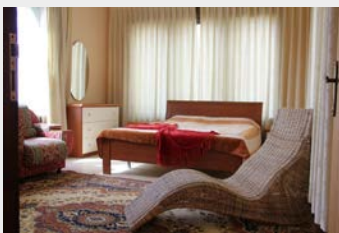
- Mostly international guests (90%) from France, Canada, the USA, Austria, Germany
- 90% through tour operators' groups
- Mostly above 35 years old

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Al-Mardawi guest house-homestay is run by Mustafa and Ayat Mardawi, located in a picturesque village of Arraba, which dates to the Canaanite period (2nd millennium BC) and preserves an archaeological site (Tal Dothan) of that period. They offer guest rooms on the second floor of their villa and homemade delicious Palestinian specialties.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP? One of the best cooks in region, Ayat Mardawi offers authentic Palestinian dishes,** all cooked from fresh produce from their own organic farm, including olive products, but also lentils, tomatoes, cucumbers, beans and fruits and dairy products. Furthermore, their guesthouse is situated in a beautiful location with guestroom windows overlooking lush olive groves, some of which belong to the Mardawis.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Homestay accommodation

- Refurbished second floor of their villa is used for their guests
- Individual, double rooms and a dormitory room, accommodating up to 30 guests in total
- Amenities include free WIFI, lounge area with TV, private parking, laundry & dry cleaning (for extra cost)
- **45 USD per day** including breakfast and dinner
- Around **25-35% of their total income**
- Around 250 stays per year

#### Local products

- Olive-based products from their own harvest: olive oil, pickled olives, olive butter, olive salad
- Awarded for their organic olive oil production in the Golden Olive Oil Competition by Palestine Standards Institutions
- Sheep dairy products: milk, yoghurt, white cheese
- Product samples purchased by guests make up **around 10% of their income**

#### Meals

- Offer homemade meals to hikers, heritage-cultural events and their guests, including vegetarian and vegan options
- Ayat's specialty is the Maqlubeh (the "upside down" dish) prepared with rice, vegetables, meat and herbs – all cooked in a single pot and then turned over
- Around **55-65% of their total income**
- Around 2500 meals provided per year

#### Marketing

- Reservations can be made through their Facebook page, via email, or by phone.
- Partnerships with six local tour operators, local guides, associations of PHT, Al-Rozana Association, and Siraj
- Listed and bookable on a Palestinian booking platform PalStays <https://palstays.ps/profile.php?homestayID=61>.

## Guest house & Local products / Al-Mardawi

### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative culinary offer with their own award-winning olive products.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local small businesses benefit from the influx of international visitors in the village.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A self-sustaining family business, that is able to reinvest and expand their services over time (from olive oil, to meals, to guesthouse).</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The influx of international travelers encouraged other small businesses to open, adding to higher economic impact in the area (after the establishment of Al-Mardawi Guest House, 2 other guest houses and a café opened in Arraba).</li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

Al-Mardawi is a great example of a successful homestay model, offering cozy guest rooms on a separate floor to their guests, providing them with an opportunity to interact more with the family or relax after the demanding hike, as well homemade meals.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be easily replicated in the Mediterranean region, given that the hosts have a nice comfortable separate space for the guests in their house. An asset here is the local fresh products used for the meals.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Local fresh produce and delicious homemade cuisine & comfortable rooms with a view over the olive groves create a quality homestay offer.

#### Overall performance

- A great family initiative that boosted tourism scene in the local village thus expanding the PHT offer and contributing positively to the local economy.



CASE STUDY NO: 37

## Local food products/ Dura Women Cooperative

**Country:** Palestine

**Trail & Destination:** Palestinian Heritage Trail, Hebron district

**Webpage:** NA

**Communication:** Facebook

### Key Facts

**Type:** Food production

**Theme:** Local services

- Initiated in 2005
- Cooperative association
- No of members: 38

- Palestinian Heritage Trail partner, listed on the PHT website and engaged in capacity building programmes and received funds from PHT.

### Target Group/s

- Local people, using their services and products.
- International visitors of the Palestinian Heritage trail.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Located close to Hebron city in the West Bank, Dura Cooperative Association for Agricultural Production operates a local market shop with all its locally made products of hand-rolled Maftoul (cous cous), labneh and dried yoghurt, as well as molasses, Za'tar, dried herbs and jams, along with other food products. They welcome PHT hikers, where they can purchase some typical products of the region, stamp their Hikers passport, and take a break in a nicely designed rest area for hikers.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Dura cooperative is an example of a resilient women run business that counts nearly 20 years and have withstood different challenges. They are well known for their quality food products, which is also proved by winning the 2019 Best Agri-Food product Made by Women Award in Palestine.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Local food products

- 22 types of food products produced
- Maftoul (cous cous)
- Yogurt products (labaneh, cheese, dried yogurt)
- Around 7 products made of grapes, typical to Hebron district: leaves, molasses, jam, malban (dried grape juice rollups), raisins, seeds, vinegar
- Dried herbs
- Za'tar
- Different freshly made Palestinian meals and bakery product are sold and prepared upon requests from the local community or PHT union.

#### Marketing

- Their produce is also sold in other shops around West Bank, for example, the Mawares Farmers Market in Ramallah, which sells over 300 products, 100% Palestinian. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=440028868012206>

#### Business Model

- Their income comes from selling their own produced and partly grown food directly in their own local market shop as well as other market shops and platforms in Palestine.
- They also run a childcare service and children's summer camps.
- Of the 38 members, 12 are employed and are responsible for day-to-day operations of their activities, for which they receive monthly payments – salaries.
- The annual profit is shared among all 38 members or is reinvested for the improvement of the cooperative, like constructing their four-story building in 2016.





#### Capacity building

- They have received training in food processing from Oxfam and the Economic and Social Development Center of Palestine.
- They participate in PHT capacity-building trainings on food production, management, and COVID-19 protocols.

## Local food products/ Dura Women Cooperative



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A successful model of a women cooperative.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct benefits for local women of the cooperative through profits as well as a savings and loan program for its members.</li> <li>Direct benefits for local farmers who sell their crops and dairy products to the cooperative.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To kickstart, the project was assisted by development organizations, but since 2010 they distribute profits or invest in their activities.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No concrete numbers, but it is an important activity in the area, providing direct job opportunities for local women, and empowering other women to start their own economic activities.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Dura cooperative is an example of how a group of local women who never participated in any trainings or have ventured in any economic activity before, have created a four-story building with activities ranging from agricultural production to selling their nationally awarded products in their own market and other big markets in West Bank.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could be replicated keeping in mind the women empowerment part and focusing on local quality food production depending on the region. High initial investment has to be considered.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Award winning food products, sold through their own local market that serves both locals as well as hikers of the Palestinian Heritage Trail.

#### Overall performance

- Upscaling is possible since the cooperative has the capacity to produce more and is interested in expanding to international markets, for which currently there is a lack of skills and needed networks.



CASE STUDY NO: 38

## Tourism capacity building/ Al-Rozana Association

**Country:** Palestine

**Trail & Destination:** Palestinian Heritage Trail, across all Palestinian territories

**Webpage:** <https://www.rozana.ps/?lang=en>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, LinkedIn

### Key Facts

**Type:** Association for sustainable development promotion

**Theme:** Capacity building

- Initiated in 2007
- An NGO
- No of Employees: 6, currently 3

- Co-Founding member of Palestinian Heritage Trail Union.
- Member of NEPTO (Network for Experiential Palestinian Tourism Organizations)

### Target Group/s

- They work with youth and women centers, artisans, activists in the cultural field.
- Municipalities and village councils.
- **250-300 trainees/ cycle** (1 cycle is 3 years)

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Main partner in PHTRAIL Union, Al-Rozana is a well-known association working to promote sustainable development in rural Palestine. Al Rozana implements a community-based, socially responsible approach that leverages existing resources and capacities to develop community competencies that can generate income and improve the quality of life in villages. Rozana's work is focused on five main areas: Architectural Heritage, Trails and Tours, Cultural Events, Community Capacity Building, and Networks and Partnerships.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Al-Rozana has an extensive experience in training local communities in the fields of tourism destination management, hospitality, cultural rights advocacy, local guides training, cultural heritage documentation, and artisans, which they design and implement together with experts of specific fields, the private sector and NGOs. **They are one of key players in Palestine in sustainable rural development**, creating the change in rural Palestine.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

The capacity building programs focus on the preservation of cultural heritage and the enhancement of community-based tourism, including the following.

#### Tourism destination management training

- Focus on reviving cultural heritage and providing needed infrastructure for visitors.
- For example, the association worked on restoring historic maqams (Sufri shrines) in three locations, Mukhmas, Burqin and Dair Ammar and establishing visitor infrastructure, like public toilets, cafes and playgrounds.
- It also ran a capacity-building programme to train selected local families to be the managers of these places.

#### Local guides trainings

- Providing training in numerous villages for local people, especially youth, to become tour guides, thus creating a needed service for villages.

#### Trainings for artisans

- The association works with artisans who practice various crafts, such as pottery, traditional carpet weaving, glassmaking.
- The capacity building includes training in networking, business model strategies, marketing, packaging, design and product development with the aim of increasing their sales and expanding to new markets.
- Additional support with sub-grants, raw materials.





#### Birzeit Heritage Week

- Al-Rozana organizes events to promote cultural heritage and local artisans, farmers, craftsmen and craftswomen, like Birzeit Heritage week.
- It is a free of charge 5-day event, held in the streets of the historic center of Birzeit. <https://www.facebook.com/BirzeitHeritageWeek/>
- It promotes handmade and local products – artisans and farmers have their stalls directly in the streets.
- A rich cultural programme includes performances of Palestinian artists, interactive workshops, storytelling, folk songs and more.

## Tourism capacity building/ Al-Rozana Association



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A holistic training approach for developing tourism destinations, from the renovation of touristic attractions and preservation of cultural heritage, to providing local tourism services.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local community members benefit directly from skills they gain that allow them to increase their income or start new careers in tourism.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The association is not self-sustaining, it is dependent on project funding.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established new tourism destinations with trained professionals and service providers attract local and international travelers that significantly contribute to the local economy.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

One of the key players in sustainable development in rural Palestine, with a solid experience in training numerous local communities and promoting cultural heritage of Palestine through creative initiatives, such as Birzeit Heritage Week.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- An example of an NGO, that could be inspiration for other Mediterranean region destinations looking into sustainable rural development.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Creative promotion of cultural heritage and local artisans and producers through such initiatives as Birzeit Heritage week.

#### Overall performance

- Creative organization in capacity building and other fields, however, not self-sustaining, but dependent on project funding.



CASE STUDY NO: 39

## Bedouin experience and stargazing/ Tal al-Qamar

**Country:** Palestine

**Trail & Destination:** Palestinian Heritage Trail, Bethlehem Governorate

**Webpage:** NA

**Communication:** Facebook, WhatsApp

### Key Facts

**Type:** Bedouin tent & cultural experience

**Theme:** Cultural activities

- Initiated in 2002
- Family Business
- No of Employees: 7

- PHT partner, listed as the trail service provider.
- Cooperation with Palestinian Astronomical Society, local tour operators.

### Target Group/s

- Mostly local visitors from all around Palestine (West Bank), young adults (18-35 years old), university students.
- International visitors, around 15-20%
- Mostly organized groups.

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Located in the Jerusalem Wilderness, in Bethlehem area, Tel al-Qamar provides a wide-range of tourism and cultural activities including astronomical camps- stargazing, traditional Bedouin cultural evenings in the Bedouin tent, along with the preparation of traditional Bedouin food, interactions with local Bedouin communities, accommodation (Bedouin tent and a five-room dormitory) and organizing tours, such as hiking.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Situated in a remote and authentic Bedouin landscape, in a natural environment distant from urban congestion providing the best conditions for stargazing, which is deeply embedded in the Bedouin culture. **An authentic offer of the Bedouin lifestyle experience** – from Bedouin style mattresses stuffed with sheep wool and set directly on the ground, to Bedouin dishes and music.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Business Model: a variety of services

- **The main income (40%)** comes from the organization of **hiking tours** along the Palestinian Heritage Trail, organized in collaboration with tour operators and trekking guides. Tal Al-Qamar generates income from the provision of the accommodation, food, baggage transportation and from extra activities upon guests' request, such as Bedouin cultural activities, jeep riding, rock climbing.
- **Stargazing camps represent 25% of total income.** They are organized by the Palestinian Astronomical Society, and Tal Al-Qamar charges for using the premises, and manages the food and beverage, accommodation, and organization of entertainment/social activities.

#### USP: Bedouin culture experience





- Guests can book Bedouin culture experience that is designed to provide an immersion in this authentic culture.
- Guests stay in a **traditionally furnished Bedouin tent**, a traditional **Bedouin dish Mansaf** cooked over open fire is served for dinner, guests enjoy the artistic performances from **Bedouin heritage** – music played with a traditional music instrument Rababa and traditional songs (Al-Samer, Al-Deheyah) or poems.
- Tel al-Qamar has strong relationship with six local Bedouin communities (each consisting of 3-4 families) and can organize a **night hike passing through these local Bedouin communities** - guests can meet the communities and have discussions for a couple of hours about local Bedouin lifestyle, customs, traditions.

#### Economic impact

- This initiative has **encouraged the development of numerous tourism-oriented ventures**, including hotel accommodations, swimming pools, horse stables, and agricultural projects, thus **improving the municipal infrastructure**, including road infrastructure and utility services such as electricity and water networks.

## Bedouin experience and stargazing/ Tal al-Qamar

### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A well-designed authentic Bedouin experience with attention to every small detail.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment opportunities for local trekking guides.</li> <li>Improved municipal infrastructure adds to a better quality of life for local communities.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project managed to cover its operational expenses and staff salaries, while maintaining a satisfactory profit margin.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The influx of visitors has played a pivotal role in the economic revitalization of local shops, businesses, and restaurants in the town.</li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

Tel al-Qamar can be regarded as a pioneering tourism project in the Jerusalem Wilderness area (Ubeidiya region) that offers a variety of interesting services, from accommodation, food and beverage to unique Bedouin cultural experience.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could be replicated in the destinations with living Bedouin culture and optimal stargazing opportunities.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- A remote Bedouin landscape, distant from urban congestion.
- A natural environment ideal for stargazing.
- Capacity to accommodate a significant number of guests (e.g., 150 people accommodated per Astronomical camp).

#### Overall performance

- Great economic impact on the region by being a pioneer of organizing tourism activities in the area.



CASE STUDY NO: 40

## Shop and Cook / Qandeel

Country: Palestine

Trail & Destination: Palestinian Heritage Trail, Bethlehem

Webpage: <https://qandeel.ps/>

Communication: Facebook, TripAdvisor

### Key Facts

**Type:** Culinary experience, a small guest house

**Theme:** Local services

- Initiated in 2019
- Family Business
- No of Employees: 2

- Participant in the Start Your Business – Bethlehem Business Incubator & YSBC project

### Target Group/s

- Normally mainly international individual travelers (Europe, North America)
- Solo, couples or families with children, and small groups

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Qandeel is a family run business offering unique and authentic culinary experience of Palestine in the heart of Bethlehem's Old City. Their offer "Shop & Cook" includes visit to Bethlehem's hundreds year-old markets where guests together with the owner Irene Botto buy local fresh ingredients that they later use in a Palestinian cooking class with Irene. They also offer a couple of guest rooms, designed in a warm authentic style.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP? Great concept that not only benefits the local community, but also provides a full authentic experience to guests** who can feel part of the close-knit community and discover Palestine through smells and tastes and sharing a meal. The owners put a lot of attention to details to offer a quality service (e.g., providing visitors with branded aprons) and the cooking takes place in a cosy and authentic Bethlehem's Old City building.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### The story of the business name Qandeel

When renovating their home, Irene and her husband found an old qandeel ("lantern"). Qandeels were placed at the entryways of homes in the old days to light the way for passers at night, but also the qandeel became a symbol of resilience during the 1948 war. Irene and her husband named their project Qandeel to symbolize resilience—the potential for light amidst darkness.

#### Product "Shop & Cook"

- Guests go with Irene to the Old City Open Air Market (souq) and buy local fresh vegetables, spices and other ingredients.
- Then they come to the authentic and professional home kitchen of Irene's family (a charming 10–15-minute walk through the Old City's cobblestone streets) and cook a Palestinian meal.
- Meals cooked are Makloubeh, Mansaf, Warak Enab and Musakhan. The Chef can plan the menu taking into account any allergies or dietary preferences.
- Later guests enjoy authentic homemade Palestinian cuisine together with a family.
- Length of the class: **4 hours**
- Price: **\$85 per person (up to 4 people)**
- Price: **\$65 per person (minimum 5 people)**
- **Directly bookable** through their website.

#### Dar Botto Guest house

- Located on Star Street, the Route of the Patriarchs in the historic core of Bethlehem, in an authentic traditional more than hundred years old building.
- **Price: \$90 per day (a double room, with a private bathroom)**
- **Price: \$160 per day (a family room, with a private bathroom)**
- **Directly bookable** through their website.





#### Marketing

- A couple of professional videos have been produced about this initiative.
- In framework of the Start Your Business – BBI & YSBC project <https://www.facebook.com/SYB.BBI.YSBC/videos/530953784763813/>
- Their own promo video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jObndsdsf9Y>

## Shop and Cook / Qandeeel



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A creative model of a culinary experience, allowing visitors to engage with local vendors at the historical markets.</li> <li>Creative design of the space, branded aprons for cooking class.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct benefits for local producers and vendors of the market from purchases as well as promotion.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outside of the crisis time, it has been a financially sustainable business, providing income for the family.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not a huge economic impact, but a great example to diversify the tourism offer of Bethlehem that focuses on religious tourism and thus attracts different target groups.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

A great experience designed in a creative way and bookable directly through the website, offering visitors the opportunity to discover Palestinian ingredients and cooking methods, as well as to learn firsthand about daily life in a Palestinian home.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could be easily replicated in the Mediterranean region, with a focus on local traditional dishes and authentic local markets.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Very innovative and creative way to design half-a day experience for international visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences.

#### Overall performance

- A model that could be easily repeated and interesting in different locations with a rich culinary heritage.
- Few but very positive reviews on TripAdvisor confirm the success of this quality offer.



CASE STUDY NO: 41

## Thru Walk & Fall Trek / Lebanon Mountain Trail

**Country:** Lebanon

**Destination:** Lebanon Mountain Trail, from north to south of Lebanon

**Webpage:** <https://www.lebanontrail.org/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Non-governmental organization

**Type of Trail:** Long-distance trail

- Initiated in 2007
- Length: 450 km
- Stages 27

- 75 towns and villages crossed.
- 48 accommodations on the trail
- Around 40 local guides, trained and certified by LMTA

### Target Group/s

- Mostly local hikers.
- Around 30% internationals from Europe, North America, Australia.
- Middle aged hikers, long distance trail hikers, mountain hikers, thru-hikers, solo hikers.

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** The first long distance hiking trail in Lebanon and the Arab region, the Lebanon Mountain Trail stretches from Andqet in the north of Lebanon to Marjaayoun in the south at altitudes ranging from 570 to 2,073 meters above sea level. The trail crosses one World Heritage Site, two Biosphere Reserve, five nature reserves and five protected areas. It is a difficult trail in general, and the entire trail can be described as a very difficult long-distance trail.

**Description of the IGA:** Thru Walk & Fall Trek are annual long-distance hiking events organized by Lebanon Mountain Trail Association. Thru walk is a month-long trek traversing the whole Lebanon Mountain Trail (27 sections) organized every year in April since 2008. Fall trek is a 2-week trek of part of the LMT, organized every year in October since 2015. Both events provide an opportunity to promote LMT nationally and internationally and provide economic benefits for the local communities.

### Impressions of the Trail



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Marketing

- Newsletter to a mailing list of 3500 & LMTA Instagram page – 17000 followers.

#### Target Groups

- Age ranges from 20 to 76 years old, average age – 48 years old.
- **Around 200 participants every year** (for both Thru walk and Fall trek)
- **20 nationalities:** 50% Lebanese hikers, 50% internationals (in 2019)

#### Business Model: organized by LMTA (2008-2016 & 2024)

- LMTA organizes everything from preparation to coordination, promotion, marketing, and service delivery, including reservation and booking. **All net profits generated go to the LMTA.** The preparation of each event needs around 3 months before its implementation.
- The tour leader of these events is the LMTA trail manager, assisted by local guides on each section and other service providers hired by the LMTA, such as transportation companies. Accommodation and F&B services along the trail are provided by local service providers.
- Both hikes are **bookable on LMTA website** (<https://booking.lebanontrail.org/event/spring-hikes-2024>).
- In 2024, the Thru-Walk was replaced by the Spring Hikes consisting of two hiking weekends and a 10-day hike on the LMT.

#### Business Model: organized in collaboration with USEIL (2018-2023)

- LMTA organized the events in collaboration with USEIL (Union for Sustainable and Ecotourism Institutions in Lebanon) - reservations and bookings were managed by the LMTA, and all ground operations were done by tour operators. The net profits went to tour operators, who donated **20% of the net profit to the LMTA.**





#### Financial Sustainability

- The average of the last 3 years was the **total revenue of 90,000\$**, with **25,000\$ gross profit** to the LMTA (overhead & salaries of the LMTA team preparing the events are not included in the expenses and price structure to keep the participation fees affordable).
- Around 11% of the total income of LMTA comes from these events.

## Thru Walk & Fall Trek / Lebanon Mountain Trail



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes the LMT as a responsible rural tourism destination and provides a platform for awareness raising on the trail and its protection.</li> <li>Attracts media attention and visitors from around the world.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local tourism operators (local guides, guesthouses, accommodations, cooperatives etc.) along the trail receive direct income from the services they provide for these events.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both events contribute to the financial sustainability of the TMO by generating a budget that can be reinvested in the activities of the organization and to the trail.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Events inject much needed income into local villages with an estimated <b>\$65,000</b> per thru walk.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Both long-distance hiking events are important for the LMTA to keep the local, national, and international communities as well as the media informed and interested, and additionally generate a small yearly budget.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could be replicated in other long-distance trails, either by trail organizations provided they have the human resources for its management, or in collaboration with local eco tour operators.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- An important awareness raising tool - for several years, the Thru-Walk and the Fall Trek were organized under specific themes to raise awareness and advocate for the protection and valorization of Lebanon's mountain cultural and natural heritage. Themes included Walk for Birds, Walk for Cultural Heritage, Walk for Food Heritage, and Hike it - Protect it.

#### Overall performance

- Significant economic impact for the region, providing much needed income to the small local rural businesses along the trail.



CASE STUDY NO: 42

## Ambassadors programme/ LMT

**Country:** Lebanon

**Destination:** Lebanon Mountain Trail, from north to south of Lebanon

**Webpage:** <https://www.lebanontrail.org/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Non-Governmental Organization

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 2007
- Length: 450 km
- Stages 27

- 75 towns and villages crossed.
- 48 accommodations on the trail
- Around 40 local guides, trained and certified by LMTA

### Target Group/s

- Mostly hikers residing in Lebanon.
- Around 30% internationals from Europe, North America, Australia.
- Middle aged hikers, mountain hikers, thru-hikers, solo hikers, couples, small groups.

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** The first long distance hiking trail in Lebanon and the Arab region, the Lebanon Mountain Trail stretches from Andqet in the north of Lebanon to Marjaayoun in the south at altitudes ranging from 570 to 2,073 meters above sea level. The trail crosses one World Heritage Site, two Biosphere Reserve, five nature reserves and five protected areas. It is a difficult trail in general, and the entire trail can be described as a very difficult long-distance trail.

**Description of the IGA:** Lebanon Mountain Trail Association runs a **Lebanon Mountain Trail Ambassadors** programme with currently **14 ambassadors**, Lebanese in diaspora, also foreign enthusiasts, residing in different countries all around the world. Ambassadors help the association to promote the long-distance trail LMT as well as the association and they also raise funds, whether in-kind or cash, to support LMTA projects and programs. (<https://www.lebanontrail.org/lmt-ambassadors>)

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Ambassadors

Currently **14 ambassadors from 11 countries:** France, Belgium, Australia, the UK, Kuwait, Spain, USA, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, the Netherlands.

#### Promotion

- Ambassadors organize talks/presentations to present LMT and the work of LMTA, e.g., to local hiking clubs and associations.
- They attend local and international tourism fairs (e.g., World Travel Market in London) as well as more specialized, hiking fairs (e.g., Hiking and Cycling fair in Utrecht, the Netherlands).
- Some ambassadors also write articles for their local press.

#### Fundraising

- Ambassadors organize fundraising through special (VIP) events, like gala dinners, or through personal contacts.
- The fundraising is usually organized for a specific purpose and programme, e.g., the funds raised at the last fundraising event that took place in Australia was restricted for training of local LMT guides.

#### Investment

- The LMTA provides ambassadors with guidelines and resources, including videos, promotional items, comprehensive information about the LMTA's mission and programs, visibility on all LMTA social media platforms.
- In addition to the ambassador, the **human resources** include LMTA Director, LMTA Communication Specialist, LMTA Office Manager.
- The preparation of each event by the ambassadors requires **around 2 to 3 months** before its implementation.





#### Financial Sustainability

- Average yearly income for LMTA is \$40,000 (in-kind + cash); it makes up around **18% of yearly total LMTA income**.
- In 2023, three events by Ambassadors were organized throughout a year that generated around \$65,000.

## Ambassadors programme/ LMT



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct benefits for the LMTA through fundraising as well as indirect ones through 'free' promotion of LMT around the world.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local LMT communities directly benefit since the funds raised are focused on specific community programmes.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LMT Ambassadors programme contributes to the financial sustainability of the TMO by generating a yearly budget for specific trail management projects.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The LMT Ambassadors programme contributes to the LMTA work with local communities and ensuring the quality on the trail, thus contributing to the economic impact of the trail.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

A smart programme that generates both direct income and indirect benefits through promotion of LMT and LMTA abroad by LMT enthusiasts residing all around the world, from Europe to Canada and to Australia.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could be easily replicated in the Mediterranean region, with a rather small investment, using the current network or reaching out for new contacts (e.g., countries organizing the Thru hikes and similar could promote the programme among the enthusiastic thru hikers).

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- A great concept that promotes the trail and the trail organization abroad, where the promotion is done by people who know the trail very well and are dedicated to it.

#### Overall performance

- An exemplary model that could be replicated in other countries, with a potential for upscaling with the expansion of the number of Ambassadors and countries they represent.



CASE STUDY NO: 43

## Educational tool “Mountain Explorers” / LMT

**Country:** Lebanon

**Destination:** Lebanon Mountain Trail, from north to south of Lebanon

**Webpage:** <https://www.mountainexplorerslebanon.org>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube

### Key Facts

**Type of Organization:** Non-governmental Organization

**Type of Trail:** Long distance trail

- Initiated in 2007
- Length: 450 km
- Stages 27

- 75 towns and villages crossed.
- 48 accommodations on the trail
- Around 40 local guides, trained and certified by LMTA

### Target Group/s

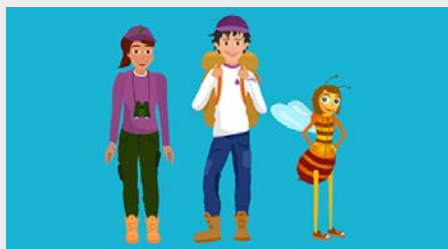
- Mostly hikers residing in Lebanon.
- Around 30% internationals from Europe, North America, Australia.
- Middle aged hikers, mountain hikers, thru-hikers, solo hikers, couples, small groups.

### Description of Trail and the IGA

**General description of the trail.** The first long distance hiking trail in Lebanon and the Arab region, the Lebanon Mountain Trail stretches from Andqet in the north of Lebanon to Marjaayoun in the south at altitudes ranging from 570 to 2,073 meters above sea level. The trail crosses one World Heritage Site, two Biosphere Reserve, five nature reserves and five protected areas. It is a difficult trail in general, and the entire trail can be described as a very difficult long-distance trail.

**Description of the IGA: Mountain Explorers is an interactive extracurricular educational tool for teachers, educators, parents and students.** It was developed by the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association (LMTA) and the Fondation pour le Développement Durable des régions de Montagne (FDDM) in Switzerland thanks mainly to a fund made available by the Swiss Cooperation Office of the Embassy of Switzerland. (<https://www.mountainexplorerslebanon.org>)

### Impressions of the Trail & IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Target Groups

- Children between 8 and 12 years old and their teachers and/or parents, the tool is aimed at helping children to understand the importance of the Lebanese mountains.

#### How does it work?

- Creating an online account, either by a class or an individual.
- Mountain Explorers allows participants to go on a **virtual journey** through the mountains, following different “Themes” (see the list below).
- Exploring various topics related to sustainable development using friendly games and **experiential learning** activities, such as interactive hands-on experiments.
- Each class receives a virtual **Green passport** and earns stamps for successfully undertaking creative games, exercises, tasks and activities.
- The journey ends when the Explorers’ green passport is filled.
- It is downloadable and printable at the end of the Mountain Explorers’ journey or when school year is finished as a souvenir.

#### Topics learned

- Natural resources and the value of the heritage which mountains provide.
- Main threats and challenges facing all mountainous regions today and the Lebanese mountains in particular.
- The game also proposes solutions and actions to help mitigate the environmental degradation which affects mountains and mountain regions.





#### Specific themes in the game

- Water
- Air
- Forests
- Biodiversity
- Agriculture
- Cultural heritage
- Landscape

## Educational tool “Mountain Explorers” / LMT



### BENCHMARKING

	 Trail/DMO ORG Benefits	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The tool is raising awareness about Lebanese mountains and man-made issues, encouraging environmentally responsible behavior of locals from an early age.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no direct benefit for communities, but they would benefit indirectly because of the protection of the mountains they live in.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It doesn't generate income but saves future costs for environmental awareness raising campaigns and contributes to mountain protection.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No direct economic impact, but indirectly contributes to the preservation of the Lebanon Mountain trail for future generations, thus having an indirect impact.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

- The Mountain Explorers educational tool is designed to instill in children a sense of eco-citizenship and to influence them into adopting environmentally conscious behavior and attitudes, thus contributing to the protection of Lebanon Mountain Trail in the long run.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could be replicated in the Mediterranean region for country/destination specific topics and issues related to nature and culture preservation, with the help of funding for creating this tool.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Innovative approach to educate children in a fun way about the mountains and the issues they are facing, where children also have to find solutions, which teaches children how the mountain environment can be preserved.

#### Overall performance

- This tool doesn't generate direct income, but it is a great environmental awareness raising tool which sensitizes children from an early age about the mountains and teaches them importance of the mountains and how they can help to safeguard them, which would benefit the Lebanon Mountain trail in the long run.



CASE STUDY NO: 44

## Ecotourism / Akkar Trail Association

**Country:** Lebanon

**Trail & Destination:** Lebanon Mountain Trail, Akkar area

**Webpage:** <https://akkartrail.com/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok

### Key Facts

**Type:** Nature protection, local guiding and tours, bakery

**Theme:** Capacity building

- Initiated in 2013
- An environmental NGO
- No of volunteers: up to 15

- A key partner of LMTA within Akkar region, doing trail maintenance for LMT in Akkar.
- Local municipalities, ministries

### Target Group/s

- 40% international guests from European countries, like France, Italy, Spain, and Arab region
- 60% local guests
- Solo hikers, groups
- In 2023 received 1200 guests

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Akkar Trail Association, based in Akkar, the northernmost region in Lebanon, raises awareness about its unique biodiversity and the threats it faces, especially wildfires, through the development of human and material infrastructure for ecotourism, based on mountain hiking trails. The association is fully run by a group of dedicated volunteers (local mountain guides, specialists, researchers, students) who work on a part-time basis.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Akkar Trail Association is an example of a dedicated community-based initiative that relies on science and action to develop the infrastructure for ecotourism (including 30 trails in the region), document biodiversity, and protect nature in Akkar from all threats, especially wildfires and land degradation. In collaboration with its partners, the association has successfully reduced the risk of wildfires by over 90%.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### How was the creation? How did it start?

It started as an environmental NGO by a group of young people from Meshmesh village in Akkar as response to increasing number of forest fires in the area. It was inspired by the Lebanon Mountain Trail.

#### Income generating activities of the association

- Professional guidance services on all the trails of Akkar
- Trip organization: coordinating and organizing trips for visitors in all aspects, conducting special trips, such as trips for experts and researchers
- Bakery run by a local family: selling local products
- Sales from their tree nursery for threatened forest trees
- Geological museum under development

#### Guided tours

- Run by local guides from Akkar region (trained by the association)
- A weekly hike open to everyone, promoted on social media channels
- Private groups, around 2-4 times/ week
- 10-30 people per hike

#### Forest fire management and funding

- The Association specializes in forest management and forest fire fighting - they receive funding for it, e.g., from international donors.
- Organize an annual donation campaign on the platform "GoFundMe" to support the Akkar Trail Team in their forest fire management and rescue operations.
- Capacity building: they transfer their experience to the local community and to other areas of Lebanon in terms of forest fire management.

#### Target Groups

- Besides hikers, also focused on experts from various environmental fields, including fauna and flora experts.





#### Economic impact

- Securing income for the local community: local guides, guest houses, and food production.

## Ecotourism / Akkar Trail Association



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecotourism for nature conservation model, raised by young local people.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local community directly benefits from the income from tourists they wouldn't reach otherwise.</li> <li>Indirect benefits for the nature preservation of the area as well hiking infrastructure.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not a self-sustaining initiative, where the core team works on a voluntary basis. However, they have an array of small IGAs that provide income to continue their conservation work.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No concrete numbers are available in terms of economic impact, but the number of tourists with an establishment of the association has significantly increased, contributing to the local economy.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

An initiative focused on nature conservation and training and awareness raising using ecotourism as a tool. A very important community-based initiative for both the local environment since it is the essential biodiversity area of Lebanon, which contains 70% of the plant species in Lebanon as well as for local people, creating job opportunities and bringing tourists.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It could be replicated in the Med region, as a community-based tourism initiative generating income through ecotourism for nature conservation needs of a specific area.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Very strong initiative for nature conservation, composed of environmental professionals including academia, who are also contributing to documenting new species of plants and insects for the first time and publishing these discoveries in international scientific publications and journals.
- Akkar trail has quickly become a model for environmental conservation in Lebanon.

#### Overall performance

- An important initiative for the area that suffers from forest fires and lack of job opportunities for its rural populations, and an important partner for Lebanon Mountain Trail Association that takes care of the protection and maintenance of the trails in Akkar area, as well as promoting new trails.



CASE STUDY NO: 45

## Hiking & local experiences/ Bchaaleh Trails Association

**Country:** Lebanon

**Trail & Destination:** Lebanon Mountain Trail, North Lebanon (Batroun district)

**Webpage:** <https://www.bchaalehtrails.com/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, WhatsApp Business

### Key Facts

**Type:** Local Experiences

**Theme:** Local Services

- Initiated in 2018
- NGO
- No. of Board members: 7

- LMTA partner - close collaboration for promotion, maintenance and capacity building.
- Partners with The Olive Routes of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

### Target Group/s

- Individuals and organized groups with tour operators.
- Singles, families, groups.
- Mostly local tourists (75%), and Lebanese diaspora (20%).
- **1500 visitors (2023)**

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Bchaaleh Trails Association is a village-based association in the charming Lebanese village Bchaaleh, in the North of Lebanon. The association manages their meticulously designed 28 km of trails catering to hikers of all levels, offers a service of the community kitchen and has created numerous experiential tourism activities with the local community focusing on culture, nature, crafts, culinary and agricultural experiences.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Bchaaleh Trails Association has developed a wide range of unique local community-based activities and experiences for hikers, that make visitors return or extend their stay to experience them all (e.g., fool moon hikes with campfire, olive harvesting experience, cherry picking experience). Experiences are built on natural and cultural heritage of the place, like Millennial Olive Tree Adventure, UNESCO recognized natural heritage. It is a great example for creating benefits for the local community through offering the quality rural tourism activities to visitors.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### How was the creation? How did it start?

- It started in July 2018 with the initiation of the Bchaaleh Hiking Trail Network Project funded by USAID under the LIVCD project in collaboration with Bchaaleh Municipality and Bchaaleh association for development.
- **In 2021, they connected their trails to the Lebanon Mountain Trails (LMT)** through the thematic side trail "Noah's Olive Trail".

#### Marketing

- Currently clients contact them directly through their WhatsApp business account, or via their website.
- The association cooperates with **7 Lebanese tour operators**.
- In the future marketing will be done through the regional DMO of Batroun district, which is currently under development and the association is a founding member of this DMO.

#### Target Groups

- In 2023, **75% of tourists came for hiking** only purposes and **25% came for experiences** (meals, picnic, fruit and olive picking events etc.).

#### Business Model

- The association coordinates the activities and events with village tourism stakeholders (12 local guides, a local bakery, around 10 farmers and others). Activities are organized by local community members, and the Bchaaleh association promotes them.
- The communal kitchen is managed by the association.
- The main income for the association comes from the profit margin of the events (such as cherry/olive/apple picking harvesting) as well as from the commission on the meals provided in the community kitchen. Guides do not pay any commission to the association but make voluntary contributions.





#### Economic impact

- Around **50 local tourism stakeholders** benefit from this initiative, 60% women.
- After establishing Bchaaleh trails, a camping site and a guesthouse were opened in the village.

## Hiking & local experiences / Bchaaleh Trails Association



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creatively designed experiences for hikers create a unique hiking tourism offer.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local farmers and producers benefit from this collaboration and receive income from tourism which they couldn't do otherwise.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The income helps the association to maintain the trail and to reinvest in local economic development initiatives like the new local products and souvenirs sales project.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the economic impact is still difficult to quantify, because of the varied sustainable tourism offer, the whole village benefits from becoming an important rural destination.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Creative rural initiative that works like a village DMO and that designed numerous unique authentic local experiences for visitors to extend their stay.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- It can be easily replicated in the Med region, by designing local experiences based on the character and uniqueness of each destination.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Very innovative products for groups of visitors, e.g., 20 to 100 people groups can participate in events such as fruit picking and harvesting.
- Interesting hiking products, such as fool moon hike, sunset hike.

#### Overall performance

- The initiative has the potential to be a lighthouse model. Even though it is a very young association, there has been a great work done in creating the unique product and it goes further in being one of the founding members of the district DMO.



CASE STUDY NO: 46

## Adventure Tourism operator / "Explorers"

Country: Lebanon

Trail & Destination: Lebanon Mountain Trail, Mount Lebanon

Webpage: NA

Communication: Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp business

### Key Facts

**Type:** Caving and other adventure activities

**Theme:** Outdoor activities

- Initiated in 2009
- Destination management company (DMC)
- No of Employees: 20

- Collaborates on different projects with LMTA.

### Target Group/s

- Mainly Lebanese, both residents and diaspora
- Tour operators for caving activities
- Scouts and schools, corporate clients for e.g., team building events
- **4000-5000 visitors** every year

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** "Explorers" is a DMC, providing all tourism services in Aqoura village and the surrounding region in the northern part of Lebanon. The company manages the second largest accessible cave in Lebanon, Rweiss Grotto, in addition to more than 15 other adventure and rural tourism activities: hiking, snowshoeing, camping, biking, jeep safari, horseback riding, climbing, lake kayak, stargazing, river cross, beekeeping, rural lunches, village cultural tours and more. They also organise for their clients a wide range of accommodation and local food experiences.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP? It is an example of a successful business run by a young local entrepreneur, relying on its strong community network,** and managing and strengthening the tourism ecosystem in the region. It is a well-known business for the local market, especially for caving activities, for which there is always a waiting list.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### How was the creation? How did it start?

It all started with the caving tours, since the family of a young entrepreneur Aala Al Hachem running the "Explorers" owns a land where the Rweiss Grotto cave is located. He expanded his activities to offer different rural tourism services and became a key player in rural and mountain tourism in his region.

#### Marketing

- Direct contact with Alaa El Hashem, the owner.
- **Collaboration with around 30 travel agencies and tours operators**, mostly Lebanese, like Ariane travel, Saad tours, Lebanese Adventure, discovery beyond border, Routes LB and others, but also foreign ones, like Wild discovery (UK).
- Listed on local travel planning Apps, such as Kazdarni and Jedo.
- Very active on Instagram, with promotion of outdoor tours and events.

#### Income generation from selling tourism packages:

- **Outdoor activities (around 60%**, mainly from caving and hiking)
- Outdoor events (around 30%)
- Local rural experiences (8%)
- Accommodation commission from outsourced services (around 2%)

#### Unique proposition

- Rweiss Grotto cave
- Unique outdoors activities, like lake kayaking, stargazing, rivercrossing hike in Rweis river to the waterfall
- Passionate local guides with profound knowledge about the region

#### Collaboration with LMTA

- Participate in most of the training and capacity building organized by LMTA
- Received a fund from LMTA to maintain a very old trail connecting Rweiss grotto to Saydet el Hebes church
- Participated in the LMTA project to create a geotrail in Aqoura highlands and were trained on geo-guiding





#### Financial Sustainability

- It is a financially successful business, covering all the operational costs and salaries throughout the year, and is reinvesting.

## Adventure Tourism operator / "Explorers"



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A varied and attractive offer including creative activities, like yoga, cave meditation, full moon &amp; sunrise hike.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local producers, guest houses and restaurants benefit from tourists they would not reach otherwise.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financially successful business, covering all the salaries and other expenses and is reinvesting.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to increase of accommodation businesses in the area (more than 8 guesthouses now), which adds to more overnight visitors making a positive impact on other services and higher spending in the area.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

An example of a successful local young entrepreneur who expanded his services and is now acting as a DMC for his village and offers a wide array of activities and has further plans of expansion that include accommodation and restaurant (under development).

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- The starting point and the succeed factor here is the Rweiss Grotto cave, so this example could be replicated in destinations with some unique adventure tourism assets.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- The business that expanded over time with numerous activities and that has a capacity for outdoor activities serving more than 400 people per day (different activities throughout the day).

#### Overall performance

- Great economic impact for the local area of Aquora, providing job opportunities and attracting tourists and thus providing perfect conditions for other tourism businesses to open.
- The owner participates in various capacity building programmes on tourism and sustainability and provides an array of soft adventures. However, also not sustainable jeep safari adventure activity is in the offer.



CASE STUDY NO: 47

## Ardoum Winery & Distillery

**Country:** Lebanon

**Trail & Destination:** Lebanon Mountain Trail, North Mten

**Webpage:** <https://ardoum.com/>

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, TripAdvisor, YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp business

### Key Facts

**Type:** Winery, Meals, guide, guest house

**Theme:** Service provider/ Local services

- Initiated in 2017
- Family Business
- No of Employees: 3 permanent, up to 8 seasonal

- The co-owner is a certified LMT guide
- Working with 10 Lebanese travel agencies and tour operators

### Target Group/s

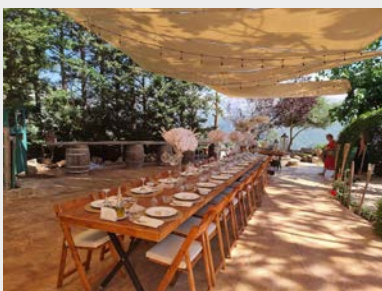
- Currently majority is the local market, but in previous years 60% visitors were international (Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, Africa).
- Individual travelers and tour operators

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Ardoum specializes in crafting wine and spirits while also pioneering rural tourism in Mtein village, a typical Lebanese mountain village at 1080 meters above sea level, located 40 km from Beirut. The tourism part of the business offers multiple services, including **winery visit and wine tasting, homemade lunch in the winery, guided hikes** and village tours and accommodation.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Ardoum offers quality services with great attention to every detail, including distinctive architecture and authentic decorations, e.g., the wine cellar is decorated with vintage family belongings as well as family artwork from 1990s. Furthermore, their **USP lies in the offer of competitive services and providing a full experience, for example, hike, a yoga session after the hike**, relaxing in the serene and green premises of Ardoum, having a meal from local products and wine tasting and staying in their cosy wooden chalets or bungalows.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### How was the creation? How did it start?

- The winery and distillery were founded by Joseph Khairallah in 1990, who started with Lebanese Arak (national spirit of Lebanon) and expanded to wines and spirits.
- In 2017, the wife of the winery owner Jacky Khairallah took LMTA guides training and became a successful hiking guide. She then started organizing wine tasting activities for her hikers at their winery, and later, together with her husband Christian, they developed a holistic tourism project offering multiple services for the winery and area visitors, as well as accommodation.

#### Local wines

- Winery has a reputation of excellence and produces a range of estate-grown white, rose, and red wines, as well as sweet and fruit-based wines, vodka, gin, and whiskey.

#### Business Model

- Most income comes from wine and spirits sales on the national market - around 50%.
- Another 50 % of income comes from direct wine and spirits sales at the winery, wine tasting, lunches and special events, guided tours, accommodation.



#### Target Groups & Marketing

- **Around 1,000 people** use Ardoum tourism services every year - mostly for hiking and winery visits. Around 10-20% of visitors take the accommodation service.
- They have a good network of clients from European Embassies, NGOs and corporate entities in Beirut who seek service of Ardoum for memorable hikes and experiences.
- In 2017 - 2020, around 80% of their clients came from the LMT because of guiding services. Later, it decreased to 40% since people were finding Ardoum by word of mouth and through social media pages.

## Ardoum Winery & Distillery



### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authentic design and decorations to create a special environment for their clients.</li> <li>Creative offer of a full day or weekend experience, adding such experience as yoga after the hike.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal job opportunities for the local community, plus attracting visitors that other small businesses in a village can benefit from.</li> <li>5 local food producers benefit directly.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normally it covers all the expenses, and they are able to reinvest - currently Ardoum is investing in the boutique hotel construction.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct economic impact for the local village and its tourism stakeholders.</li> <li>Tourism services were improved in a village (4 guest houses currently), also historical Mtein old square was renovated.</li> </ul>				X



### NOTE

Exemplary quality local and family-owned establishment, steeped in a rich heritage passed down through generations, dedicated to preserving and evolving this legacy for future descendants.

An example of a tourism business driven by a woman who started as a successful hiking guide.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- This could be replicated and be a model for reviving family heritage wineries or other distinctive local Mediterranean products.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- Specialized services include excellent hospitality, authenticity, and a variety of quality activities, interesting to higher spending target groups.
- Distinctive architecture is designed to captivate and allure visitors, including the artistic labels of the winery and the beautifully man-carved cellar.

#### Overall performance

- A great example of quality services in a serene mountain environment.
- It is an ambitious family business that aspires to become a renowned national and international destination, distinguished not only for its exceptional winery but also for its forthcoming boutique hotel that is anticipated to be completed in the next three years.



CASE STUDY NO: 48

## Local products & rural activities / Cezar's Projects

**Country:** Lebanon

**Trail & Destination:** Lebanon Mountain Trail, Shouf mountains

**Webpage:** NA

**Communication:** Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp business

### Key Facts

**Type:** Cultural and rural experiences, local products, accommodation

**Theme:** Cultural activities/ Local services

- Initiated in 2017
- Social enterprise
- No of Employees: 51 (72%women)

- Partnership with Lebanon Mountain Trail Association
- Work with Institut Français, Shouf Biosphere Reserve, eco tour operators, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

### Target Group/s

- Currently they are focused on local guests (85%)
- Mostly families, young city people aged 25-35 years old, backpackers, schools
- **6700 guests** in 2023

### Description of the Community IGA

**General description of the case study.** Cezar's Projects was started in 2017 by a young entrepreneur Cezar from Barouk village and the enterprise manages several rural initiatives in the Shouf Mountain of Lebanon. They run several guesthouses (located at an altitude of 1100 m), a donkey farm that offers education farming packages and activities, the first paragliding activity in the Shouf region, and immersive rural culinary and cultural experiences.

**What makes the practice unique, innovative, what's the USP?** Cezar's Projects creates an immersive rural experience for its guests where guests can feel like a part of a family due to warm personal interactions from the part of the team, and where they can experience rural lifestyle, interacting with animals, picking harvest and eating local freshly prepared food and staying in charming wooden houses as well as immersing in cultural activities.

### Impressions of the IGA



### Operational & Performance Model

#### Business Model

- The project's **physical assets** include the land, the farm, 4 guesthouses and 4 cabins, where they run tourism and cultural activities.
- Guests find them mostly on Instagram and book through a phone call. Then booking is handled and their policies shared via WhatsApp Business.
- Accommodation can also be booked on the Airbnb platform.
- The **main income** comes from accommodation services and food experiences, mainly breakfast (around 80% of income).
- In addition, they sell handmade local products and provide different experiences.

#### Farmville Barouk

- Farmville Barouk is the main accommodation complex, including 1 farmhouse, 1 guesthouse, 1 mini guesthouse and 4 cabins.
- They sell **a line of local food products** developed with 16 local families and farmers in collaboration with a dietitian, **under the Farmville Barouk brand**. They include – olive oil, local herbs, vine leaves, jams, orange blossom water, chickpeas powder, tomato paste, Keshek, apple vinegar and more.
- **Cultural activities:** screening nights of movies (e.g., in cooperation with Institut Français), storytelling events, local cuisine cooking classes.
- **Rural experiences:** lavender harvesting and distillation, farm activities for children – feeding animals, egg picking, fruit picking.
- Meeting and landing point for paragliding tours.

#### Immersive cultural experience





- Pottery workshops with a local elderly woman from Batloun village who dedicated her life to a **unique inherited craft The Kanoon making**. Experience is organized at her house, enriched with stories of the village's rich cultural history and the **taste of traditional yerba mate drink**.

#### Maasser Donkey farm

- An array of farm activities (harvesting, interacting with farm animals).
- Also offer walks with donkeys and interaction with donkeys for kids, adults, and special groups for therapeutic reasons.

## Local products & rural activities / Cezar's Projects

### BENCHMARKING

	 Creativity & Innovation	 Community Benefits	 Financial Sustainability	 Economic Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural and farm experiences, quality accommodation and delicious food provide a great offer for visitors to have an extended stay.</li> <li>A creative idea - a line of local food products.</li> </ul>	X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All products are sourced locally and the project partners with local suppliers, including farmers and artisans, especially those in the Shouf area.</li> </ul>		X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates sufficient income to cover all operational costs and employee salaries throughout the year, plus reinvest.</li> </ul>			X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great economic impact and revitalization for the local area.</li> <li>An example and inspiration for other sustainable projects in the area.</li> </ul>				X

### NOTE

An enterprise driven by a team of enthusiastic young people who created a full touristic offer for local and international visitors to the area, focusing on local culture, products, and food.

#### Replicability in the Mediterranean region

- Accommodation and farm activities could be replicated in other Mediterranean destinations. Promotion of food products could also be replicated, focusing on the local identity.

#### USP Innovative concept etc.

- A variety of activities in the countryside, from outdoor adventure to craft making.
- Strong marketing and activity on Instagram, providing attractive snapshots from their experiences to its 18000 followers.

#### Overall performance

- Potential to be a lighthouse model for the region – already inspiring and supporting other local entrepreneurs - they supported and promote several initiatives in the area with the sustainable projects concept creation, including Shouf Highland, a sunset bar in Ainzhalt village, and Dar Leila, a guest table in Ain w Zein village.

## 4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion of the interviews with the various international trail management organisations clearly showed that the majority of them face one or more of the following challenges:

- **Lack of consistent financial resources** for the management and promotion of the trail organisation and the ongoing maintenance of the trail.
- Problems with the **institutional set-up** of the trail management organisation
- **Lack of monitoring tools** and systems to monitor visitor flows and to identify the profile and needs of visitors hiking the trail.
- The **good news** is that each of our case studies selected has at least one good approach to address one of these challenges or had even developed a complete system to address these challenges.

And this is actually the main **outcome of the benchmarking of all our case studies**: There is no one solution or system that can be recommended to all trail organisations, but rather a mix of direct and indirect IGAs that make trail management successful and more self-sustaining.

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There is no one solution or system that can be recommended to all TMOs but rather a mix of direct and indirect IGAs that make a trail organisation successful and more self-sustained.

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Direct IGAs are activities that generate direct income, such as the sale of merchandising products, while indirect IGAs are activities that increase visitor numbers, such as certain marketing activities, or reduce staff costs, such as certain volunteer programmes.

It's therefore advisable to **choose the most appropriate recommendations** for your trail organisation and try not to rely on one IGA, but rather set up a mix of different IGAs, like the success stories in our case studies: **La Rota Vicentina No. 5**, the **Alpe Adria Trail No.11**, the **Kumano Koto Pilgrims Route No.19**, or the **Trans Canada Trail No.17** demonstrate.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRAIL MANAGEMENT

- 1) **Organisational set-up.** The organisational set up also depends on the local context and the legal framework in the destination. But in general, it's advisable to choose a set-up that allows the generation of income (no profit) and gives the opportunity to obtain funding from local and international organisations. An advisable option is the new, internationally recognized organisational structure of a social enterprise. The social enterprise is a non-profit organisation with a commercial arm. Another set-up could be a public private partnership model or an NGO as a mother organisation with a commercial daughter company.

- 2) **Booking system.** Several of our case studies show that an internal booking system where hikers have the opportunity to book various hiking and accommodation packages, authentic experiences, day trips, thematically guided hikes and other packages, are a solid income generator for the trail organisation and the local community businesses involved. Good examples are the **Alpe Adria Trail No. 11**, **Meditation Trail No.12** and the **Rota Vicentina No.5**.
- 3) **Booking & welcome centre.** A top-up to the online booking option on the webpage is a physical booking centre, combined with a welcome centre. A physical booking centre can handle all type of booking and can advise hikers on their booking decisions, support the planning process and provide all types of information. The best solution is if a booking centre is combined with a welcome centre where the hiker finds information on the trail structure, the trail´s, local culture and biodiversity, and branded merchandising articles. This model is implemented by the **Alpe Adria Trail No. 11** and has strongly contributed to the economic success of the Alpe Adria Trail. Palestine is also planning to have a visitor centre using the first floor of the building where PHT Union is based at, in a charming authentic building – **No. 32**.
- 4) **(Branded) Partner system/network.** A network of trail partners (accommodations, transports, restaurants, transport services etc.) branded or labelled with the logo of the trail organization visible for the hikers creates trust and reliability for the hiker and a strong commitment among the network partners. The partner network needs a structured approach of partner benefits and yearly fees to be paid to the TMO. Partners are marketed via the website of the TMO and should adhere to certain quality and sustainability criteria. An example for such a partner network is the Proud Supporters System of the **West Highland Trail No. 2** or the **Rota Vicentina No.5**.
- 5) **Specially tailored,** high quality & sustainable schemes. This approach can be strengthened even further through a professionally developed quality and sustainability system that trains and labels partners, and in the best case certifies and re-certifies its partners. This assures a high level of quality that generates a higher economic benefit (see chapter 2). Example that demonstrates this approach is the case study **Wilderness Trail No. 21**
- 6) **Sponsor programme.** Professionally designed sponsorship or supporter programmes can be a solid income generating source. This can be either programmes related to yearly events or challenges such as the **True Hike from the Jordans Trail Organisation No 24** or a sponsorship or supporter programme related to a marketing activity demonstrated by the case study **No. 17** the **National Partner Programme** of the **Trans Canada Trail**.
- 7) **Professional & creative merchandising.** A professional and creative merchandising system can create a bit of additional income, but it can also be a very efficient marketing and branding tool if the products are well thought through, designed in high quality, a creative approach and with a certain variety every year. Also, a good idea is a specially

tailored finisher concept. This approach is successfully featured by case study **No. 3** from the **West Highland Way**.

- 8) Well-designed passport programme.** A passport programme is an incentive for hikers and a marketing tool for businesses. It generates a small income for the TMOs. To make the programme more efficient, trail partners can become “passport points” that are featured on the digital map of the trail and the passport could come in a practical packed format. This is well demonstrated by case study **No. 1** from the **West Highland Way**. To create a stronger incentive for the hikers, the programme could be for example a lottery where hikers that buy the passport can win a free dinner along the trail. Another idea could be a particular challenge combined with the passport e.g. every hiker that has a certain number of passport stamps from passport points receives a small trail giveaway e.g. a branded trail patch.
- 9) Volunteering programmes.** Volunteering programmes are a typical form of indirect income generation by saving the costs of a workforce. We have several good examples of successful volunteering programmes among our case studies. For example, the Closed for Maintenance Programme of the **Faroe Islands No. 4**, which attracts volunteers from around the globe to support its yearly general maintenance, or the case study **No. 9 the Transcariorca Trail** in Brazil which is completely run on a voluntary basis. Here, volunteers are driven by their passion for nature conservation.
- 10) Ambassadors programme.** To motivate and assign immigrants living in the diaspora and foreign enthusiasts, to organize donorship and sponsorship events among their country folks to collect money to support the trail and the local community in their home country. A creative IGA that can considerably contribute to the management and maintenance costs for TMOs. Demonstrated by the case study of the **Lebanon Mountain Trail Association, No 42**.
- 11) Conservation approach.** Whenever the trail crosses or incorporates a protected area or if there are protected flora and fauna along the trail it's worth checking if there are any national or international funds for nature conservation available. The same funding approach applies for cultural or historic values along the trail. Case study **No. 9, the Transcarioca Trail**, surrounding the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro, demonstrates this approach well.
- 12) Creative marketing solutions.** Creative marketing solutions generate indirect income by creating positive attention and awareness for the trail and thus increasing the visitor flow. Ideally, marketing activities are low in costs and high impact. A good example are specially-tailored press and fam trips for special target groups and target markets. A good idea is to combine both create direct sale links to tour operators to certain target destinations. A good example how this was successfully done is case study **No. 10, The Peaks of the Balkans**, where a press trip was organized for the travel press in Germany combined with a fam trip for 10 selected members of the Forum Anders Reisen (<https://forumandersreisen.de>), the sustainable travel association for the German

speaking markets (139 members). The trip resulted in a huge press campaign and direct sales to the German market.

Another very good example for a very creative and high impact marketing solution is the case study No. 4 the Faroe Islands, where the international volunteering programme Closed for Maintenance attracts worldwide attention to the Island. The press loves the Closed for Maintenance campaign and keeps on writing about it, ensuring free worldwide marketing without any additional marketing budget. It is not a good idea to copy the same approach, but to think of a special event, activity unique for the region and invite volunteers from all over the world.

**13) Set up of monitoring systems.** Setting up professional monitoring systems is a must in the long-term to monitor your trail success and to get to know your hikers and their need. Chapter 5 will take a closer look at these monitoring tools.

**14) Professional trail performance.** A professional trail performance as described in chapter 2.3. is essential for a positive visitor experience, which leads to more visitors and more income at the end.

**15) Marketing Partnerships.** Marketing partnerships, e.g. with the national tourism board or regional tourism boards, can also be a very valuable tool to generate income and stabilise the budget. Typically, these marketing partnerships/collaborations involve some, but mainly direct, marketing support through the tourism boards' strong marketing channels. Several case studies illustrate this successful approach: **No. 11**, the Alpe Adria Trail; **No. 5**, the Rota Vincentina and **No. 16**, the Golden Road in Norway.

**16) Creative donation programmes.** Creative donation programmes can also be an additional way to generate income. Which donation programme is suitable for which destination depends very much on the conditions and culture of the destination. An inspiring example of creative donation programmes is the **Trans Canada Trail** case study **No. 18**.

The same is applicable to our community-driven IGAs. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for all trail communities, as it always depends on the local context and assets of the destination. However, the following patterns of success, where local communities or community stakeholders benefit strongly and where IGAs have a strong positive impact on the destination, was identified by benchmarking all our case studies:

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY- DRIVEN IGAS

**1) Authentic local products.** The offer of local products is a solid income generator for local trail communities. Local, authentic products of eco-quality can be offered in several ways: in the accommodations, restaurants, and shops along the trail. Other ways of offering are via small workshops or organized routes where local products and producers are the focus, or a theme trail with a local focus. An excellent example of an organized

local product approach is the case study from **Norway No.16** the Golden Route and the case study and from **Lebanon, No. 48**.

- 2) **Experiences related to local production.** This approach can be further developed to an experience related to local production so that the entire production process of an authentic local product can turn into a live experience for the hiker. A good example is the **case study No.7, the Wool Route**, where the visitor can experience the different production processes of local wool from the sheep to the sweater.
- 3) **Experiences related to local gastronomy.** Experiences around local gastronomy are also good business for local businesses. There are different ways to integrate the gastronomic approach into the experience. One example is the case study No. 13 Explore Marlboro from New Zealand where visitors cycle from one winery to the other and enjoy local gastronomy served there. Also, in Jordan, a local family business is offering an authentic experience of preparing a local special dairy product Jameed and a local dish Mansaf, **No. 30** Beit Al Jameed. Another example from Palestine, where experience is designed combining shopping in the local market and cooking local dishes, **No. 40**.
- 4) **Authentic local experiences based on the cultural heritage of the local community,** help to preserve the heritage, provide additional income for local people and is an interesting product for visitors. Such professionally developed products can become one of the main attractions and motivations to stay in often overlooked rural destinations, like in Jordan, case study **No. 27**. Or be a part of the bigger tourism offer, like in **Lebanon, No. 48**, a project by young entrepreneurs is working with a local elderly woman practicing the Kanoon making which became very popular among the young urban visitors, or immersing in the local culture, like through the experience of Bedouin culture in **Palestine, No. 39**.
- 5) **Thematic guided tours.** Another easy to implement approach is thematic guided half day hikes or tours. The tours could be organised around any natural or cultural asset of the destination. This IGA is not a huge money-making machine, but it is a very valid IGAs for community members to set up a small business without major investment. A good example is the case study **No.8**, the discovery tour for local herbs and medical plants. Ideally the tours are sold over the TMO's website so that the TMO also gains a small commission.
- 6) **Soft mobility practices.** Other soft mobility options such as cycling, horseback riding or being accompanied by a donkey add to the attractiveness of the trail and can turn into good business for local community members. A good example of such a slow mobility option is the case study **No.14 the Stevenson Path** in France or the case study **No. 35, cycling in Palestine**.
- 7) **Theme trails.** Are an excellent tool to integrate local communities along a trail. A theme trail could be designed around any authentic local asset of the local community. That could be for example a culinary speciality of the region (e.g. cheese trail); the flora or

fauna; local products or historic buildings and living traditions. A good example is the Ultentahler Farmerstrail in the Mountains of Italy, No.20. The trail leads visitors past very old traditional farmers houses of the region and the hiker can experience this way of life by staying or dining in one of the local farmhouses, and by trying and buying locally made products. Several local stakeholders benefit from this practice.

- 8) Competitive accommodation services related to hiking and trekking.** Authentic quality accommodation is actually a key element to attract a higher segment target group. Tastefully designed in the local authentic style, using material from the region and authentic cultural elements with double rooms and equipped according to the hikers needs. Good examples are actually the case study **No. 22 from Turkey** or the case studies or from **Jordan No. 27** and **No. 31**.

## 5. THE WAY FORWARD

This chapter gives practical recommendations and provides a set of practical tools on how to monitor the economic success of hiking trails, the condition of the hiking trail structure and to better understand the needs of the hiker. Furthermore, it provides information on trail funding opportunities.

### 5.1. Economic Monitoring Tools

Chapter 2. described the different factors influencing the economic impact of long-distance hiking trails. The question now is, how can the economic impact of trails be monitored and what are suitable monitoring tools?

To assure visitors have a positive experience while hiking the trail, the quality of the trail structure and its services needs to be constantly monitored. That's why, the first monitoring tool, the **(1) Trail Performance Checklist**, has been created.

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How can the economic impact of hiking trails be monitored?

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To monitor and evaluate the **economic success** of the long-distance hiking trail and its management, the following key figures need to be generated: Number of visitors, the average expenditure per visitor per day and average number of stays. To get these figures a **(2) Trail User Survey** needs to be implemented and processed.

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What is needed to monitor the economic success of your trail is: data, data, data!

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A profitable target group of satisfied hikers are the long-term key for economic success, therefore it is necessary to get to know the needs of your hikers, their level of satisfaction and potential areas of improvement. For that reason, the 3<sup>rd</sup> monitoring tool that will be developed is the **(3) Hikers Satisfaction Survey**.

The 3 monitoring tools that will be developed are:

1. The Trail Performance Checklist
2. The Trail User Survey
3. Hiker´s Satisfaction Survey

In the following section, the economic monitoring tools and their application and processing strategy will be described.

#### 5.1.1. Trail Performance Checklist

The Trail Performance Checklist can be found as annex 1 and can be downloaded from the project´s dropbox: [DOCUMENTS BENCHMARK STUDY](#). The checklist can be seen as a

performance indicator of your long-distance hiking trail. It gives you a brief overview on the level of quality of the trail and should indicate potential areas of improvement.

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The list represents the most important criteria for a successful long-distance trail, and if your trail scores 100%, it is of the highest quality.

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It should be applied around 4 times a year to check the quality of the trail structure. The checklist should also guide you on the key factors of successful trail development.

### STRATEGIC STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- It should be applied around **4 times a year** to check the quality of the trail structure.
- The check-up should be conducted at **5 spots** along the trail as random samples.
- The trail check-ups can either be conducted by the staff of the TMO or a team of at least **5 volunteers** need to be selected for this task.
- The aim is to **establish a fixed group** of volunteers who will be able to carry out this task over the coming years. E.g. through cooperation with a university.
- Before the start of the check, **a training session** needs to be held.



### OBJECT & FOCUS

- Giving key **performance indicators** for 100% quality trail design& management.
- Guiding list for better trail performance
- Quick tool to evaluate the status of your trail performance

### PROCESSING THE DATA

- The outcome of the check-up and potential fields of improvement e.g. visitor information should be integrated in the planning as tasks for the upcoming season.

## 5.1.2. Trail User Survey

The **Trail User Survey** represents the key instrument for monitoring the economic success of the trail. The research showed that this instrument is applied by all successful trail models to get the figures needed to evaluate the economic success of the trail.

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Trail users Survey is the key instrument for monitoring the economic success of your trail.

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This most common monitoring method (e.g. on the Rota Vincentia or the Stevenson Trail) is called the **Money Generation Model (MGM2)** originally developed by the US Park Service (2000). It has been adapted to the special needs of this study. The money generation model

estimates the direct and secondary effects of visitor spending. The direct effects are the income generated in sales, wages and jobs in businesses that initially receive the visitor spending (e.g. hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, souvenir shops, transportation services etc.).

The secondary effects are the changes in the economic activities within the region that result from the recirculation of the money spent by the visitors within the local economy. The total effects are the sum of direct and indirect effects.

Since the economic multipliers are very difficult to obtain, we adapted and simplified the formula to the following:

**Economic effects**= Number of visitor x Average expenditure per visitor per day x Average number of stays (days).

The completion of a user survey and economic impact analysis can provide a number of valuable benefits to trail organizations, local municipalities and state agencies, meaning that a complete picture of trail-user characteristics can be developed:

- who uses the trail
- where they come from,
- what they do on the trail
- how long they are on the trail and
- how much they spend each day on the trail
- any damage observed on the trail?
- Furthermore, the survey can document how users perceive the current condition of the trail and help to identify maintenance issues. The survey outcomes can help to identify if additional amenities would improve the trail-user experience.

Collecting current data on users, usage patterns and economic impact can serve as a powerful way to support the development of additional trails. Having current facts and figures can help other trail projects gain support from local municipalities, businesses, and adjacent property owners.

The Trail User Survey can be found in the annex (annex 2) and can be downloaded from the projects dropbox: [DOCUMENTS BENCHMARK STUDY](#). To apply the Trail User Survey the following strategic steps are recommended:

## STRATEGIC STEPS FOR COUNTING & TRAIL INTERVIEWS

As already mentioned, the important data that need to be re-collected are the estimated number of visitors, followed by the average spending on the trail per day and person and the length of their stay.

- Depending on the size of the trail a **team of volunteers** needs to set-up.
- At several **strategic positions** along the trail 2 volunteers should be positioned. One volunteer does the counting while the other one handles the questionnaires.
- The questionnaire needs to be clear and short, and the interviewer should be able to complete the interview with the hiker within around **5 -7 minutes**.
- The physical counts require the presence of **a large team** in the field.
- A minimum of **30 to 50 volunteers** will be needed for the for the survey per count day.
- **6 physical counting days** throughout the year should be selected to cover all seasons (March, May, July, September, October and December) and to be able to collect the data simultaneously at different spots along the trail.
- The aim is to **establish a fixed group** of volunteers who will be able to carry out this task over the coming years. E.g. through a cooperation with a university.
- Before the start of the counts, **a training session** needs to be held and a small training manual for the work in the field established.

#### Note:

- The data collection in these campaigns should be supplemented with data from the **online version of the survey**, which should be available on the webpage.



#### OBJECT & FOCUS

- Key tool for economic monitoring.
- Get to know the **target group currently** using the trail
- Identify the **most popular routes** and networks on the trail
- Analyse the average expenditure per person per day on the trail
- Identify **damages to the trail** and trail infrastructure
- **Gather evidence** on what hikers like most about the trail

#### PROCESSING THE DATA:

- For the further processing of the data on online system needs to be installed and the data entered and analysed. A simple way to do that is via excel.
- Other digital but cost-free available tools are SurveyMonkey or GoogleForms.

Remember that to calculate the economic effects the following formula needs to be applied:

**Economic effects**= Number of visitor x Average expenditure per visitor per day x Average number of stays (days).

### 5.1.3. Hiker Satisfaction Survey

To attract profitable target groups, it's crucial to create a positive visitor experience and to better understand the needs and level of satisfaction of the hikers on the trail. A tool to do this is the **Hiker Satisfaction Survey**.

The completion of a Hiker Satisfaction Survey can provide a number of valuable insights in regard to the needs of the hikers and the quality improvement needed to the TMO. It provides evidence on **level of satisfaction regarding the quality of services** provided on the trail.

- The Trail Hikers Satisfaction questionnaire can be found in the annex (annex 3) and can be downloaded from the projects dropbox: [DOCUMENTS BENCHMARK STUDY](#). To start with the Hiker Satisfaction Survey the following strategic steps are recommended:

#### STRATEGIC STEPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SURVEY

- **4 times a year** (March, June, October, December) the Hiker Satisfaction Survey will be conducted.
- **20 accommodation providers** along the trail are asked to handout the Hiker Satisfaction Questionnaire to their guests.
- The aim is to **establish a fixed group** of accommodation providers who will be able to carry out this task over the coming years. Ideally, these accommodation providers are network partners of the trail.
- The recollection of information could be either be done by a group of volunteers or by staff members of the trail organization.



#### Note:

- The data collection in this survey should be supplemented with data from the **online version of the survey**, which should be available on the webpage of the TMO.

#### OBJECT & FOCUS

- Attract **profitable target groups** and better **understand the needs** and level of satisfaction of the hikers on the trail.
- **Identify fields of improvement** in regard to the various level of service quality (transport, guiding, food & beverage, accommodation).

#### PROCESSING THE DATA

- For the further processing of the data on online system needs to be installed and the data entered and analysed. A simple way to do that is via excel.

- Other digital but cost-free available tools are SurveyMonkey or GoogleForms.

The outcome of the processed data should help the TMOs and local community service providers to increase their service quality and product offer on the trail and thus reach more profitable target groups.

### 5.1.4. Technical & digital monitoring systems

Alternatively, there are digital or technical solutions available on the market for monitoring hiking trails. The disadvantages of these technical solutions are that (1) they may not work well in the majority of rural destinations in the Mediterranean region because of the need for a permanent internet connection, (2) the systems are quite expensive and (3) they are prone to failure. So, they may not be the best choice for remote rural destinations.

These are the alternatives:

- Alternatively, **automatic hiker counting equipment** ([Accueil - Solutions de comptage piétons & cyclistes - Eco-Compteur.](#)) could be installed at strategic locations operating continuously throughout the year.
- Or another **very simple method** to obtain an overview of hikers using the trail is the offer of a free trail APP. The download figure also gives a rough indication of hikers using the trail.
- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> method is called geofencing.** Geofencing is a type of location-based marketing and advertising. A [mobile app](#) or software uses the Global Positioning System ([GPS](#)), radio frequency identification ([RFID](#)), [Wi-Fi](#) or cellular data to define a virtual geographical boundary and trigger a targeted marketing action when a device enters or exits that boundary. This boundary is known as a geofence.<sup>1</sup>

#### How does geofencing work?

- Geofencing requires communication technologies such as GPS, RFID, Wi-Fi or cellular data. Once a marketer sets up a geofence, a preprogrammed action is automatically triggered when a mobile device or RFID tag enters or exits the geofence. A virtual boundary can be created around a geographical location as small as a building, store or mall, and as large as a ZIP code, city or entire state.
- An administrator or developer first establishes a virtual boundary around a certain location in GPS- or RFID-enabled software. They can use polygonal geofencing software to identify points on a map. These points define the boundary where they want to capture people or devices.

Figure 4: Illustration geofencing

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/definition/geofencing>



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Geofencing creates a virtual geographical boundary that triggers a marketing action to a mobile device when a user enters or exits that boundary.

Geofencing is a fairly complex system that collects all sorts of data from trail users, such as the number of users, the most popular times of day on the trail, and the different seasons.

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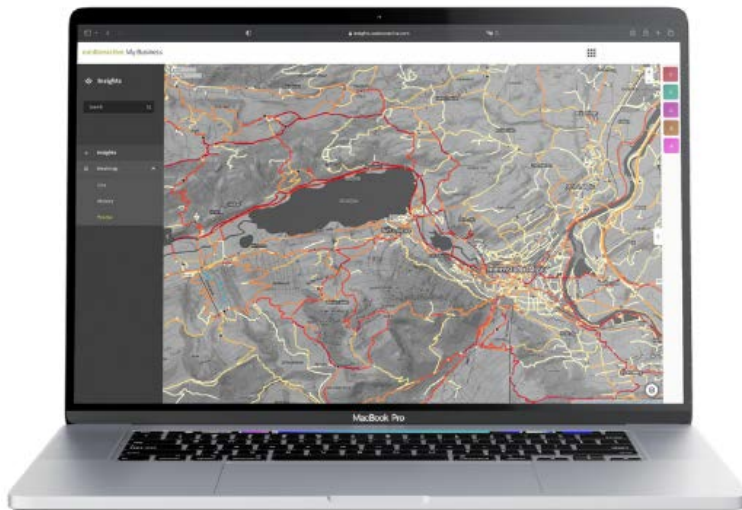
Currently the Trans Canada Trail has successfully implemented this system.

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Currently, the Trans Canada Trail has successfully implemented this system. But this trail has some outstanding features: it's the largest recreational trail in the world, it has a very strong governing body and a solid funding situation.

- Another interesting tool is the digital trail management system from outdoor active.
  - Outdooractive Business Trail Management:**  
<https://business.outdooractive.com/trail-manager>. With the following trail management options: <https://business.outdooractive.com/trail-manager-accounts>. Here is the contact person: [benjamin.karch@outdooractive.com](mailto:benjamin.karch@outdooractive.com).
- **What this digital trail management system can be used for:**
  - Damage, hazards and closures can be communicated in real time to all hikers of the digital map, directly viewable by the smartphone user.
  - Easy management complex outdoor and tourism content.
  - Edit and maintain routes and enter POIs on the digital map.
  - Digitalization and management of the entire infrastructure,
  - Up-to-date measurement of trail usage, trail managers can view the data in Analytics. The daily usage is displayed on the track heatmap as well as dashboards.

Figure 5: Outdoor active track heatmap and dashboard.




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Note: this system can't monitor exact numbers of visitors and requires a highly advanced status and availability of digital data of POIs, maps and all other relevant data.

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## 5.2. Potential funding opportunities for trail organisations

Besides national funding programmes and international donors like the French AFD or the German GIZ, there are other potential funding opportunities.

But there are also other funding opportunities that could be of interest:

**1) The Interreg NEXT MED Programme** (<https://www.enicbcmmed.eu/next-med/about-next-med>) that was recently initiated is a transnational cooperation programme which is the **third generation** of one of the largest cooperation initiatives implemented by the European Union across borders in the Mediterranean area. The Programme aims to **contribute to** smart, sustainable, fair development for all across the Mediterranean basin by supporting balanced, long-lasting, far-reaching cooperation and multilevel governance.

The **cooperation area**, home to over 200 million inhabitants, covers **15 countries**: 13 of which already participated in the previous editions of the programme - Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Jordan, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia - and two new members, namely Algeria and Türkiye (Turkey).

Cooperation covers the areas of economic and social development, environmental protection, public health services, safety and security measures, connectivity, support to small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurship.

**2) IUCN conservation grants.** IUCN supports conservation around the globe through various grants and other mechanisms.

<https://www.iucn.org/our-work/supporting-conservation-action>

- 3) **Community Fundraising:** Engage the local community through fundraising initiatives. Organize events, such as charity hikes, trail races, or outdoor festivals to raise funds. Utilize crowdfunding platforms or launch donation campaigns to reach a broader audience interested in supporting trails and outdoor activities.
  
- 4) **Corporate Social Responsibility Programs:** Approach companies with corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. Many corporations allocate funds for community development projects, environmental initiatives, or employee volunteer programs. Present your trail maintenance project as an opportunity for the company to support the local community and engage employees in meaningful activities.
  
- 5) **Philanthropic Foundations:** Research philanthropic foundations that focus on environmental conservation, outdoor recreation, or community development. Some foundations provide grants or funding opportunities specifically for trail maintenance projects. Review their guidelines and submit proposals that align with their funding priorities.
  
- 6) **Crowdfunding Platforms:** Utilize online crowdfunding platforms to raise funds for trail maintenance. Create compelling campaigns, share the story of your trails, and engage the public in supporting your cause. Leverage social media and online networks to reach a wide audience and encourage donations.
  
- 7) **Funding Databases and Directories**
  - **European Funding Guide** ([european-funding-guide.eu](http://european-funding-guide.eu)): Provides comprehensive information on funding opportunities available in Europe, including grants, scholarships, and loans.
  - **EU Funding and Tenders Portal** ([ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders](http://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders)): Offers a centralized platform to search and apply for EU funding programs, including those relevant to trail maintenance.
  - **Foundation Directory Online** ([foundationcenter.org](http://foundationcenter.org)): Offers a vast database of philanthropic foundations, their funding areas, and contact information.
  - **GlobalGiving** ([globalgiving.org](http://globalgiving.org)): An online crowdfunding platform that connects nonprofits and community projects with potential donors and funders worldwide.
  - **FundsforNGOs** ([fundsforngos.org](http://fundsforngos.org)): Provides information and resources on grant opportunities, fundraising, and capacity building for nonprofit organizations.
  - **GoFundMe** ([gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com)): A crowdfunding platform that enables individuals and organizations to raise funds for various causes, including trail maintenance projects.

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- AGEG Tourism for Sustainability (May 2019), Concept on Sustainable Development of Ecotourism in Azerbaijan (for the GIZ Private Sector Development and Technical Vocational Education and Training in the South Caucasus Programme)
- AGEG Tourism for Sustainability (August 2020), Study on Identification and Analysis of Sustainable Innovative Practices of Adventure Tourism (for the MEDUSA project)

- AGEG Tourism for Sustainability (2022), Marketing Strategy for the EU co-financed MEDUSA project (Development and promotion of Mediterranean Sustainable Adventure Tourism)
- Abraham Path Initiative (March 2019), Completion report “Masar Ibrahim/Abraham Path: Economic Development Across Fragile Communities”

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#### DOCUMENTS STORED IN THE DIGITAL **BENCHMARK STUDY FOLDER**

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- Economic monitoring tool No1.: Checklist quality trail performance
- Economic monitoring tool No2: Trail user survey
- Economic monitoring No3: Hikers' satisfaction survey
- Leading quality trails – best of Europe – an overview (2020)
- Leading Quality Trails Magazine (2017)
- Waymarking in Europe; 4<sup>th</sup> edition E-Book
- Baraka destinations brochure (2024)
- PHT Recipe Booklet “Palestinian Culinary Art Experience on the Palestinian Heritage trail”

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#### INTERESTING LINKS

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- National Trails UK: <https://www.nationaltrails.uk/>
- World Trails Network <https://worldtrailsnetwork.org>
- European Ramblers Association <https://www.era-ewv-ferp.org/lqt-be/>
- Leading Quality Trails <https://www.leading-quality-trail.eu>