



EXperiential **T**Ourism for sustainable **R**ural development

WP2: Success stories and needs mapping for VET renewal in rural tourism

A2.1: EU collection of success stories and analysis of national trends



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Analysis of the current national status of rural tourism and related VET offers

Individual Interviews National Report Center for Social Innovation

INTERVIEWS INFORMATION

Please add the main information about the interviews.

COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION: Cyprus

CITY OF IMPLEMENTATION: Most of the interviews took place online or by phone across rural Cyprus. Two rural tourism entrepreneurs, and two rural tourism professionals were interviewed at their business locations.

NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS: The total number of interviews was 21 (11 with rural tourism entrepreneurs and 10 with rural tourism professionals).

DATES OF THE INTERVIEWS: April - May 2024

VENUES OF THE INTERVIEWS: Almost all the interviews took place online or by phone. However, two rural tourism entrepreneurs, and two rural tourism professionals, were interviewed at their business locations. Additionally, in Agros village, a village rich in rural tourism, a mixed method was used. Interviewer visited the village to meet with business owners/workers, then provided them with links to online questionnaires.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (per interview): 1 participant per interview.

TARGET GROUP AND STAKEHOLDERS: Rural tourism entrepreneurs and professionals.

INTERVIEWS DESCRIPTION

Please provide a detailed description of the interviews.

- **Number of interview implementers and description of their background:**

The interviews were conducted by Foteini Papadopoulou, a project manager at CSI, with a background in psychology.

- **Number and description of the participants' background:**

The participants consisted of 11 entrepreneurs and 10 professionals working in the rural tourism sector. All participants own or work in a various type of rural tourism business across Cyprus. For instance, interviews were conducted with people who own/work at wineries, accommodation units, farms, offer

workshops/tours, offer nature-based activities etc. The screenshots in **Appendix 1** show the number of responses to both questionnaires.

- **Duration of the interviews:**

Participants filled out the online questionnaire at their own pace. Each phone or face-to-face interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes for entrepreneurs and about 30 minutes for professionals. According to Microsoft forms, the average time to complete the questionnaire for entrepreneurs was 22:07 minutes. For professionals, the average time it took to complete the questionnaire was 21:44 minutes. In the case of the four face-to-face interviews, however, the interviewer after completion used the link to the online questionnaire to record responses, resulting in a much faster response time. Thus, the average completion time was affected. The screenshots in **Appendix 1** show the average response time.

- **Main structure and agenda of the interviews:**

Rural Tourism Entrepreneurs & Rural Tourism Professionals:

For both rural tourism professionals and entrepreneurs, the structure and agenda of the **online interviews** was as follows: First, questionnaires were translated into Greek and converted into digital form in Microsoft Forms. The online questionnaires also included a disclaimer regarding personal data use. **Appendix 2** includes the links to the Greek questionnaires. Then, a phone call was made for the interviewer to introduce herself and the project and ask the participants if they are interested in taking part in the research. The response was mostly positive, so the next step involved sending an email with written information about the project and the research (aims, duration, data privacy issues), as well as the link to the online questionnaires. The email included links to both questionnaires with instructions to complete according to whether the person is the owner or a professional working in the business. In addition, a kind request was included for entrepreneurs to forward the professionals' questionnaire to their staff.

Phone interviews were also conducted to improve research efficiency. The structure was like online interviews. A phone call was made informing people about the project and research. It was also asked if they had time to respond to the questionnaire. The interviewer was asked the questions over the phone and noted the responses using the link to the online questionnaire.

In addition, **face-to-face interviews** took place, mostly when success stories from the businesses were also collected. In this case a telephone call was also used for the initial contact. Afterwards, an appointment was set to visit the business location, and the interview was conducted there. A printed form of the questionnaire was used for the in-person interviews. However, when the interview was completed, the interviewer used the link to the online questionnaire to record the responses, so all results are gathered. Upon completion of the face-to-face interviews, the consent form was signed.

A **mixed-method** approach was used for Agros village, a rural tourism business-rich village. A phone call was made to the village youth centre's responsible person, who in turn notified the entrepreneurs and an appointment was scheduled. The interviewer then visited the village and met with business owners/workers in person, then emailed links to online questionnaires.

A detailed description of the research method is as follows:

1. *Rural Tourism Entrepreneurs*: 5 online interviews, 4 phone interviews, and 2 in-person interviews.
2. *Rural Tourism Professionals*: 4 online interviews, 4 phone interviews, and 2 in-person interviews.

- **Description of any group and/or interactive activities:**

There were no interactive activities. However, when a personal contact was involved in the face-to-face and mixed method interviews, participants showed incredible hospitality, by giving tours of their businesses, offering their products to test, and giving gifts. In one case a short cheese making workshop was offered and in another one a tour and explanation about how rose products are produced.

- **Level of engagement of the participants:**

The participants were all very willing to participate in the research and expressed an interest in the project in general. Almost all the respondents expressed a desire to be informed about future project activities.

- **Any challenges faced during the interviews:**

During the interview process, no significant challenges were encountered. With the online method, there was initially a concern whether the participants would fill out the form, since the email was sent to many businesses, but there was still a low response rate. Therefore, it was decided to conduct in-person and phone interviews to increase research efficiency.

- **Main conclusions of the interviews:**

Rural Tourism Entrepreneurs

Q1: When did you start your rural tourism business?

It is clear from the responses to the first question that most rural tourism businesses are relatively new. Specifically, 6 participants reported starting their businesses in the last decade (now, 2022, 2017, two in 2015, 2014). Furthermore, two people started in 2013 and one in 2011, which is still close to the last decade. There was only one person who reported that the company has been operating for more than 20 years, specifically since 1983. The question was not answered by one participant.

Q2: What is the size of the business?

Ten out of 11 respondents (91%) own a microbusiness (0-9 employees). It was further explained during phone interviews, in-person interviews, and during contact with rural tourism entrepreneurs and professionals in Agros village that these businesses are mainly family businesses passed down from


generation to generation (in the case of the older established ones). There was only 1 participant (9%) who owned a small business (10-49 employees).

Q3: What is the sector of your business:

Three entrepreneurs said their business belongs only to a particular sector. Eight of them reported that their

2. Ποιο είναι το μέγεθος της επιχείρησής σας;

[More Details](#)

 Insights

- Πολύ Μικρή Επιχείρηση (0-9 υπ... 10
- Μικρή Επιχείρηση (10-49 υπάλ... 1
- Μεσαία Επιχείρηση (50-249 υπ... 0
- Μεγάλη Επιχείρηση (250 ή περι... 0

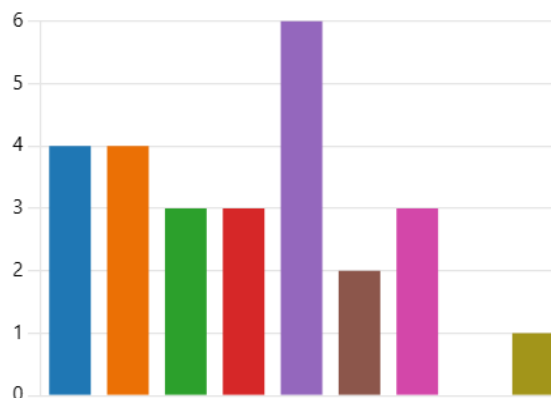


business covered more than one sector. In general, the most frequently mentioned sector was agrotourism and farm tourism with 6 mentions. Sustainable and experiential tourism followed with 4 mentions each. Ecotourism, rural tourism and cultural tourism are next, each being named 3 times. Sports and adventure tourism was the least popular choice, with 2 people mentioning that their business falls under this category. Finally, a participant selected 'other' among the other options without explaining further.

3. Σε ποιον τομέα ανήκει η επιχείρησή σας;

[More Details](#)

- Βιώσιμος τουρισμός (Sustainabl... 4
- Βιωματικός τουρισμός (Experie... 4
- Οικοτουρισμός (Ecotourism) 3
- Τουρισμός υπαίθρου 3
- Αγροτουρισμός & Γεωργικός τ... 6
- Αθλητικός τουρισμός & Τουρισ... 2
- Πολιτιστικός τουρισμός (Cultur... 3
- Αναγεννητικός τουρισμός (Reg... 0
- Other 1



Q4: What is the type of your business?

Like the previous question, only 3 participants stated that their business focused on just one type of service. Specifically, 2 people who own wineries and a person who owns an accommodation facility. Most

participants (8 people) offer a variety of services and activities, making their businesses fall into multiple categories. The most frequently selected choice was 'other,' with six people choosing this among their other selections. More specifically:

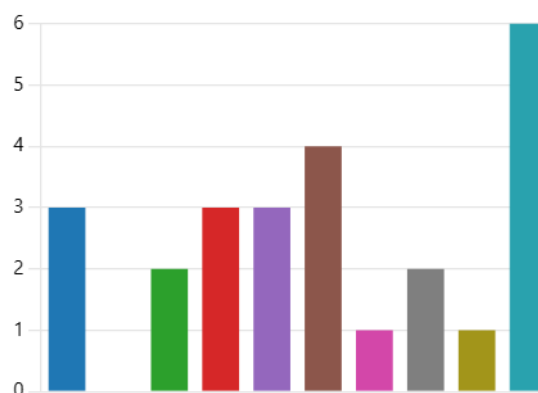
- Museum (2 people)
- Workshops (5 people). In particular: 2 culinary workshops, 1 just workshop, 1 experiential workshop on the preparation of traditional products, 1 basketry workshop.
- Traditional breakfast offer (1 person)
- Bee farm (1 person)
- Supporting people to choose activities or tourist accommodation (1 person)

Following that, arts and crafts were the most popular choice with 4 entrepreneurs selecting this option among others. Accommodation facility, winery, and store followed with 3 mentions each, while farm and sports/nature-related activities had 2 mentions each. Finally, water-related activities as well as tours to historical sites and cultural events received one mention each.

4. Ποιο είναι το είδος της επιχείρησής σας;

[More Details](#)

Υπηρεσία διαμονής (π.χ. ξενοδ...	3
Σπα και κέντρο ευεξίας	0
Αγρόκτημα (π.χ. προσφορά δια...	2
Οινοποιείο (π.χ. προσφορά ξεν...	3
Κατάστημα (π.χ. οικολογικά/βι...	3
Τέχνες και χειροτεχνία (π.χ. μα...	4
Ξεναγήσεις σε ιστορικά μνημεία...	1
Αθλήματα και δραστηριότητες ...	2
Δραστηριότητες που σχετίζοντ...	1
Other	6



Q5: What sources of funding did you use for starting the business?

Unlike the two previous questions, this time the majority (7 out of 11 people) chose only one option. Specifically, 4 out of 7 entrepreneurs said they relied on only personal funds, 2 reported that they only used bank loans, and 1 mentioned using a grant from the Department of Town Planning and Housing. The remaining 4 participants stated that they relied on more funding channels for starting their businesses. One interesting point is that all of them selected personal funding as one of their options. Besides personal funding, 2 participants reported also using EU funding, 1 received a bank loan, and the last participant took out a bank loan and national funding. In general, 8 people (50%) said that starting the business was a personal investment, 4 people (25%) mentioned taking a bank loan, 2 people (13%) mentioned taking a

European Union fund, and 1 person (6%) mentioned a national fund. There was one person (6%) who chose the 'other' option, where the exact grant was stated.

5. Ποιες πηγές χρηματοδότησης χρησιμοποιήσατε για να ξεκινήσετε την επιχείρησή;

[More Details](#)

Χρηματοδότηση από την ΕΕ	2
Εθνικά κονδύλια	1
Τραπεζικό δάνειο	4
Προσωπικό κεφάλαιο	8
Other	1



Q6: Are you aware of European or national funding opportunities?

Among the 11 entrepreneurs surveyed, 7 (64%) are aware of European and national funding opportunities. There are 3 respondents (27%) who are unsure, while only one (9%) responded that they do not know.

6. Γνωρίζετε αν υπάρχουν Ευρωπαϊκές ή κρατικές ευκαιρίες χρηματοδότησης;

[More Details](#)

 Insights

Όχι	1
Ναι	7
Δεν είμαι σίγουρος/η	3



Q7: Have you faced any challenges since you started your business? If so, what kind?

Among the 11 respondents, only 3 identified only one kind of difficulty, showing that rural tourism entrepreneurs face a wide range of challenges. The most frequently mentioned difficulty was financial challenges/lack of financial support with 9 people identifying this as a challenge. Seven people selected the option 'other' and explained their choice as follows:

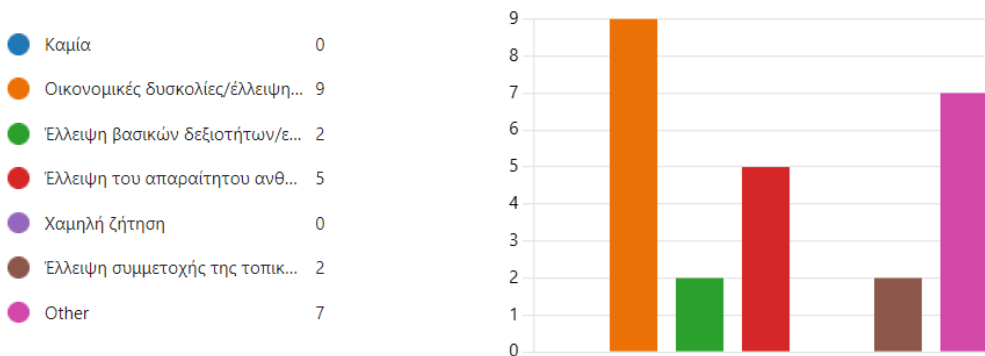
- Lack of qualified personnel (2 people).
- It is difficult to obtain necessary permits due to bureaucracy. Activities carried out by unlicensed individuals (1 person).
- Need for more seminars (1 person).

- Inadequate promotion by tourist offices (1 person).
- There is a need for winter tourism and more tourists in the countryside (1 person).
- There is a lack of infrastructure in the community, such as Internet access (1 person).
- Platform commissions are high, ranging from 15-20% (1 person).
- Insufficient government support (1 person).
- Financial difficulties during Covid-19 (1 person).
- People avoid visiting the company because of bee phobia (1 person).

Five entrepreneurs identified the lack of necessary human resources as a difficulty they faced. The lack of essential skills/education as well as the lack of local involvement options were also chosen by 2 people.

7. Αντιμετωπίσατε οποιοσδήποτε δυσκολίες από τότε που ξεκινήσατε την επιχείρησή σας; Αν ναι, τι είδους;

[More Details](#)



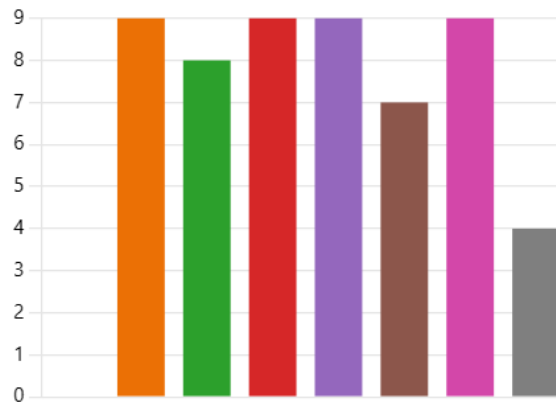
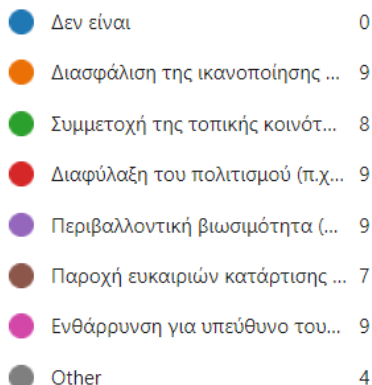
Q8: Is your business sustainable? If so, how do you ensure sustainability?

According to all interviewees, they take several measures to ensure sustainability. In more detail, 9 participants reported doing the following: Ensuring tourist satisfaction, culture preservation, environmental sustainability, and encouraging responsible tourism. Following that, 8 interviewees stated that they involve the community, while 7 stated that they provide training and skills development. Lastly, 4 interviewees also chose the 'other' option, explaining:

- A main focus on traditional products
- Continual search for funding
- Providing authentic experiences
- Recycling and clean-up days

8. Η επιχείρησή σας είναι βιώσιμη; Εάν ναι, πώς διασφαλίζετε τη βιωσιμότητα;

[More Details](#)




Q9: Have you ever participated in a VET program related to rural tourism or received any personal or professional development training? If yes, please specify.

Among 11 respondents, 6 (55%) said that they had participated in a VET program related to rural tourism, while 5 (45%) said they hadn't. Participants who said yes specified the following:

- Programs focused on hospitality, professional development, and how to add value. A long-hours program through the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) of Larnaca and an excursion to Italy and Greece to demonstrate best practices.
- We do it annually, but on our own initiative.
- The Cyprus Agrotourism Company offered a trip to Vienna to see agritourism examples. Agrotourism seminars with the Larnaca Development Authority and the Larnaca Rural Women's Association.
- Training on agritourism in Ireland and Vienna through the Synthesis organisation.
- Courses on oenology and wine lectures.
- I don't remember exactly. Some programs of the Cyprus Agrotourism Company.

9. Έχετε συμμετάσχει ποτέ σε κάποιο πρόγραμμα Επαγγελματικής Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης που σχετίζεται με τον αγροτικό τουρισμό ή έχετε λάβει κάποια κατάρτιση για την προσωπική ή επαγγελματική σας ανάπτυξη;

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 Insights




Q10: Have you ever provided personal or professional training to your employees?

Six out of 11 entrepreneurs (55%) reported that they had never provided personal or professional training to their employees, while 5 (45%) reported that they did.

11. Έχετε προσφέρει ποτέ στους εργαζομένους σας κάποιο πρόγραμμα κατάρτισης για προσωπική ή επαγγελματική ανάπτυξη;

[More Details](#)

 Insights



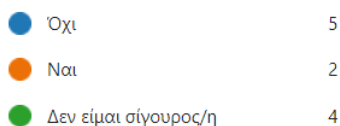
Q11: Are you aware of the VET programs or other professional training offered in Cyprus related to rural tourism?

Based on the responses to this question, it appears that most participants are unaware or unsure of the VET programs or other professional training offered in Cyprus related to rural tourism. There were five respondents (45%) who stated they were unaware, while four respondents (36%) stated they were uncertain. This question was answered positively by only 2 respondents (18%).

12. Γνωρίζετε ποια είναι τα προγράμματα επαγγελματικής εκπαίδευσης και κατάρτισης ή άλλα προγράμματα επαγγελματικής κατάρτισης που προσφέρονται στην Κύπρο σχετικά με τον αγροτικό τουρισμό;

[More Details](#)

 Insights



Q12: Do you think it would be useful to receive professional development training? If yes, in which of the following topics/areas?

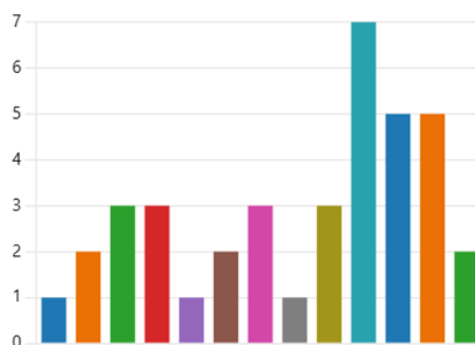
Ten out of 11 participants believe that professional development training would be useful, and only 1 said it wouldn't be. Among the options, 7 people selected digital marketing & e-commerce, followed by basic skills development on video making, and EU funding & norms for SMEs' opening and/or development, each of which received 5 votes. Sustainable tourism, rural tourism: key concepts & challenges at local/EU level, cultural tourism and ecotourism practices were chosen by 3 people each. There were 2 votes for experiential tourism, sports & adventure tourism, and 'other'. Among those who selected 'other', one

suggested training on correct/professional customer service and dealing with difficult customers. One person indicated that it would be useful to receive training on agritourism & farm tourism, and one other on regenerative tourism.

13. Πιστεύετε ότι θα ήταν χρήσιμο να λάβετε κάποια εκπαίδευση σε θέματα επαγγελματικής ανάπτυξης; Εάν ναι, σε ποια από τα ακόλουθα θέματα/τομείς;

[More Details](#)

Δεν θα ήταν χρήσιμο	1
Βιωματικός τουρισμός (Experie...	2
Βιώσιμος τουρισμός (Sustainabl...	3
Αγροτικός τουρισμός: βασικές έ...	3
Αγροτουρισμός & Γεωργικός τ...	1
Αθλητικός τουρισμός & Τουρισ...	2
Πολιτιστικός τουρισμός (Cultur...	3
Αναγεννητικός τουρισμός (Reg...	1
Πρακτικές Οικοτουρισμού	3
Ψηφιακό μάρκετινγκ & ηλεκτρ...	7
Ανάπτυξη βασικών δεξιοτήτων...	5
Ευρωπαϊκή χρηματοδότηση κα...	5
Other	2



Q13: In your opinion, are there any gaps regarding the rural tourism sector in Cyprus? If so, which of the following?

All respondents agreed that rural tourism in Cyprus has several gaps. Among them, 8 think infrastructure is lacking, and depopulation makes it difficult to find personnel. There are 7 participants who believe financial support is lacking. Furthermore, 6 participants pointed to a lack of promotion. The option 'other' received 6 votes as well, and participants further explained:

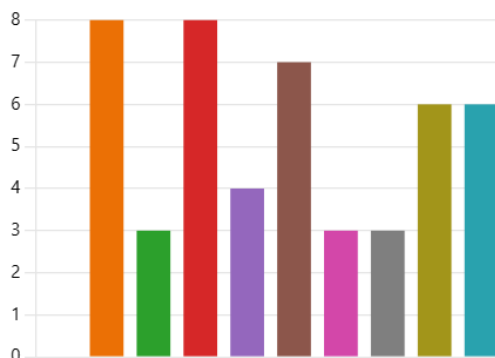
- There are many tours going to the occupied territories.
- On weekdays, there are no people, so more activities should be planned.
- It is more difficult for a business to receive funding if it falls into several categories.
- Nature trails and accommodations in nature are not well protected from hunters.
- Museum guides in villages must be well-educated.
- The all-inclusive hotels that are promoted are preferred by many tourists.

Further, 4 respondents believe that training programs/education are lacking. Finally, 3 participants selected insufficient support for the digital transition, insufficient support for the green transition, and having problems with basic services.

14. Κατά τη γνώμη σας, υπάρχουν ελλείψεις όσον αφορά τον τομέα του αγροτικού τουρισμού στην Κύπρο;
Εάν ναι, ποιες από τις ακόλουθες;

[More Details](#)

Δεν υπάρχουν ελλείψεις	0
Έλλειψη υποδομών (π.χ. περιορ...	8
Προβλήματα με βασικές υπηρε...	3
Μείωση του πληθυσμού στις α...	8
Έλλειψη προγραμμάτων κατάρ...	4
Έλλειψη οικονομικής υποστήρι...	7
Ανεπαρκής υποστήριξη για ψη...	3
Ανεπαρκής υποστήριξη για πρ...	3
Ανεπαρκής προώθηση	6
Other	6



Q14: Do you have any recommendations for improving the rural tourism sector in Cyprus?

Ten respondents offered recommendations for improving Cyprus' rural tourism sector. In one case, the participant said there are many recommendations, but didn't elaborate further. Also, another participant only mentioned that generally the stated needs to provide support. The recommendations of the other 8 participants are as follows:

- Promotion and information improvements (5 people suggested that).

Promotion by organizing organized routes in the countryside, promoting it in the media, or placing signs along the road with what each village has to offer. Signs, photographs, and information can be used to revive villages. Also, promotion of house renovations.

- Public transportation improvement (3 people).
- More infrastructure development by the government to allow people to stay or visit the villages. Support and incentives for young people to live in the countryside (2 people).
- Development of more tourism infrastructure (2 people).

Help villages in the creation of traditional taverns and cafes.

- Professionals with experience.
- Financial support.
- Better trekking infrastructure. Cyprus could be a trekkers paradise, but path signs are missing and there is no infrastructure for long trekking paths (1 person).
- Agricultural involvement and not just accommodation. Wrong concept of agrotourism in Cyprus. Local farmer's markets.
- As a result of the development and interest shown by the communities in creating festivals, the countryside has been revitalized, but some villages need more manpower. Villages that cannot

do some activities on their own can be supported by the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, and a team can be appointed to visit remote villages and organize events.

Q15: Is there any other kind of support that you would like to receive as a rural tourism entrepreneur?

All interviewees reported that they would like additional support. Like in the previous question one interviewee said yes but didn't elaborate further. The other 10 stated that they would like:

- Financial Support (3 people mentioned that).
- Government promotion of agritourism and microenterprises for easier access to credit (positive image from banks).
- Reducing the time it takes to enrol in a program. It's been difficult to enrol in a program because of the paperwork involved.
- Training in all areas.
- Support during the winter months.
- The opportunity for entrepreneurs to travel to countries that have succeeded or are at least on a better path in the agritourism sector than we are so that we can learn from them and expand our horizons. Alternatively, to bring in foreign companies involved in agritourism so that we can learn from them.
- Make it easier to find workers during critical periods, such as harvest. Create a few-day social security card for workers, for instance.
- Assistance that is available to all types of businesses, not just companies.
- Guidelines from the Deputy Ministry of Tourism for expanding isolated agritourism places.

Rural Tourism Professionals

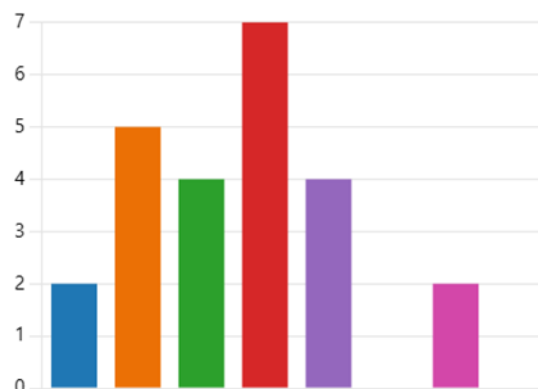
Q1: In what sector do you work?

Seven out of 10 respondents reported working in the rural tourism sector. Experiential tourism was selected by 5 respondents, while ecotourism and agrotourism & farm tourism were selected by 4 respondents each. Lastly sustainable tourism and cultural tourism were selected by 2 respondents each. Only 4 reported that the business they work in falls into one sector while the majority indicated 2 or more sectors.

1. Σε ποιον τομέα εργάζεστε;

[More Details](#)

● Βιώσιμος τουρισμός (Sustainabl...	2
● Βιωματικός τουρισμός (Experie...	5
● Οικοτουρισμός (Ecotourism)	4
● Τουρισμός υπαίθρου	7
● Αγροτουρισμός & Γεωργικός τ...	4
● Αθλητικός τουρισμός & Τουρισ...	0
● Πολιτιστικός τουρισμός (Cultur...	2
● Αναγεννητικός τουρισμός (Reg...	0



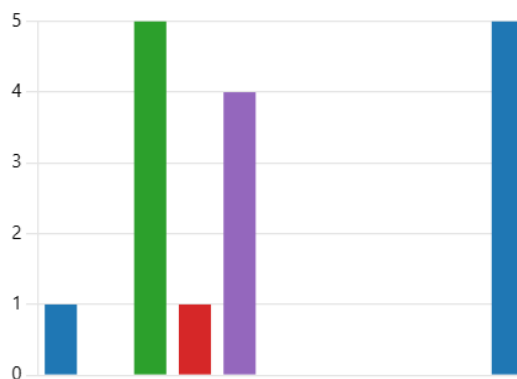
Q2: In what specific type of business do you work?

Half of the interviewees (5) indicated working on a farm. In addition, 5 selected the option 'other'. In their explanations, 4 stated that tours are available in the business they work for. One further explained that wine tourism tours are available for small groups. Further, 1 mentioned an open-air museum, 1 a bee theme park, and 1 olive groves where award-winning olive oil is produced. Following that was the option store, which was selected by 4 participants. Lastly, 1 person mentioned working in a winery, and another in an accommodation facility. As before, only 3 participants said that their work fell into just one category while the majority (7) selected two or more.

2. Ποιο είναι το συγκεκριμένο είδος δραστηριότητας της επιχείρησης στην οποία εργάζεστε;

[More Details](#)

● Υπηρεσία διαμονής (π.χ. ξενοδ...	1
● Spa και κέντρο ευεξίας	0
● Αγρόκτημα	5
● Οινοποιείο	1
● Κατάστημα	4
● Τέχνες και χειροτεχνία (π.χ. μα...	0
● Ξεναγήσεις σε ιστορικά μνημεία...	0
● Αθλήματα και δραστηριότητες ...	0
● Δραστηριότητες που σχετίζοντ...	0
● Εκπαίδευση (π.χ. καθηγητής/τρ...	0
● Other	5



Q3: What is your profession?

Participants include 3 are managers. Moreover, 1 stated that he/she is a winery manager, while another said he/she is a quality manager. Two out of 10 respondents work as coordinators. In addition, 2 others replied that they are farmers, one stating that he/she is an organic farmer while the other is also a beekeeper. In the last 3 responses, a chemist, consultant, and tourist companion were mentioned.

Q4: How long have you been working in rural tourism?

Eight people have been working in rural tourism for 10 years or less (2013, 2017, two since 2018, three since 2022, 2023). Other 2 participants have worked in rural tourism for 12 and 35 years, respectively.

Q5: In your role as a rural tourism professional, what challenges do you face?

The most frequently reported challenge was the lack of support for digital transition, with 4 respondents (29%) selecting that option. Afterwards, 3 selections (21%) were made for the options 'none' and 'other'. They further explained:

- Lack of resources and difficulty obtaining infrastructure permission.
- The area is natural, so infrastructure development is limited.
- The big agencies make it difficult to communicate your product.

Finally, 2 respondents (14%) mentioned insufficient training/education, and a lack of infrastructure, respectively.

5. Ποιές είναι οι δυσκολίες που αντιμετωπίζετε ως επαγγελματίας στον αγροτικό τουρισμό;

[More Details](#)

● Καμία	3
● Έλλειψη βασικών δεξιοτήτων/ε...	2
● Ανεπαρκής υποστήριξη για ψη...	4
● Έλλειψη υποδομών (π.χ. περιορ...	2
● Other	3



Q6: Have you ever participated in a VET program related to your profession or received any personal or professional development training? If yes, please specify.


Among the 10 participants, 6 (60%) reported taking a VET program related to their profession, as opposed to 4 (40%), who did not. Specifically, 5 of them noted:

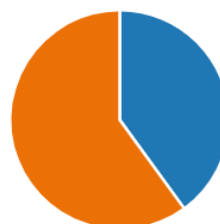
- For marketing, social media, quality control etc
- Conferences, research projects, knowledge from previous restaurant jobs, MBA master's degree
- European program on agritourism in Florence, before we went, we did some seminars on tourism.
- Agri-tourism company seminars
- Various seminars

The sixth participant didn't provide any details.

6. Έχετε συμμετάσχει ποτέ σε κάποιο πρόγραμμα επαγγελματικής εκπαίδευσης και κατάρτισης σχετικό με το επάγγελμά σας ή έχετε λάβει κάποια κατάρτιση για την προσωπική ή επαγγελματική σας ανάπτυξη;

[More Details](#)

 Insights



7. Εάν ναι παρακαλώ διευκρινίστε

[More Details](#)

6
Responses

Latest Responses
"διάφορα σεμινάρια"
"Σεμινάρια της εταιρίας αγροτουρισμού "

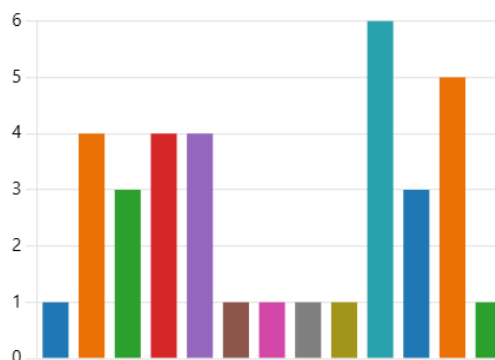
Q7: Do you think it would be useful to receive professional development training? If yes, in which of the following topics/areas?

Seven participants expressed interest in receiving training in more than two of the topics/areas provided. With 6 people selecting digital marketing & e-commerce, it was the most popular option. There were 5 people who picked EU Funding & norms for SMEs' opening and/or development. Four people selected each of the following topics: Experiential tourism, Rural tourism concepts & challenges at the local/EU level, and Agritourism & Farm tourism. Sustainable tourism and basic skills development in video making were followed with 3 votes each. The remaining options were chosen by 1 person each and were the following: It wouldn't be useful, Sport & Adventure tourism, Cultural tourism, Regenerative tourism, Ecotourism practices, and 'other'. The person who chose 'other' specified that what they are doing is unique in the world and there is no training available.

8. Πιστεύετε ότι θα ήταν χρήσιμο να λάβετε κάποια εκπαίδευση σε θέματα επαγγελματικής ανάπτυξης; Εάν ναι, σε ποια από τα ακόλουθα θέματα/τομείς;

[More Details](#)

Δεν θα ήταν χρήσιμο	1
Βιωματικός τουρισμός (Experie...	4
Βιώσιμος τουρισμός (Sustainabl...	3
Αγροτικός τουρισμός: βασικές έ...	4
Αγροτουρισμός & Γεωργικός τ...	4
Αθλητικός τουρισμός & Τουρισ...	1
Πολιτιστικός τουρισμός (Cultur...	1
Αναγεννητικός τουρισμός (Reg...	1
Πρακτικές Οικοτουρισμού	1
Ψηφιακό μάρκετινγκ & ηλεκτρ...	6
Ανάπτυξη βασικών δεξιοτήτων...	3
Ευρωπαϊκή χρηματοδότηση κα...	5
Other	1



Q8: In your opinion, are there any gaps regarding the rural tourism sector in Cyprus? If so, which of the following?

Half of the respondents (5) identified a lack of financial support as a gap in Cyprus regarding rural tourism. A lack of infrastructure and the option 'other' were selected by 4 respondents each. Those who said 'other' further explained:

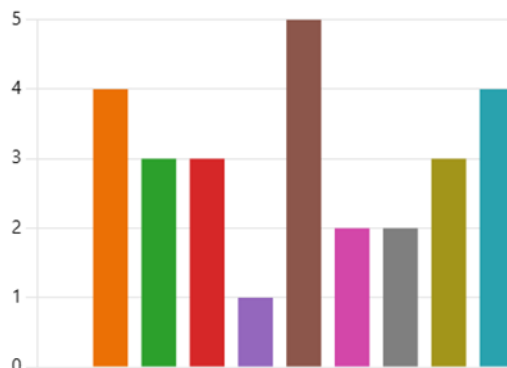
- Insufficient assistance from the state.
- Lack of overall promotion.
- The concept of Cypriot agrotourism is misunderstood; it isn't just about staying in the countryside, but it is about experiencing as well. For example, stay at the farm and work with the farmer.
- Cyprus Agrotourism Company addresses the shortages and needs of the sector.

A lack of basic services, inadequate promotion, and depopulation garnered 3 responses each. According to 2 respondents, insufficient support exists for both digital and green transition. The lack of training/education was also mentioned by 1 person.

9. Κατά τη γνώμη σας, υπάρχουν ελλείψεις όσον αφορά τον τομέα του αγροτικού τουρισμού στην Κύπρο;
Εάν ναι, ποιες από τις ακόλουθες;

[More Details](#)

Δεν υπάρχουν ελλείψεις	0
Έλλειψη υποδομών (π.χ. περιορι...	4
Προβλήματα με βασικές υπηρε...	3
Μείωση του πληθυσμού στις α...	3
Έλλειψη προγραμμάτων κατάρ...	1
Έλλειψη οικονομικής υποστήρι...	5
Ανεπαρκής υποστήριξη για ψη...	2
Ανεπαρκής υποστήριξη για πρ...	2
Ανεπαρκής προώθηση	3
Other	4



Q9: Do you have any recommendations for improving the sector in Cyprus?

Eight people said they have recommendations for improving rural tourism in Cyprus. There recommendations are as follows:

- Government support (2 people mentioned that)
- State funds.
- Securing financial state support with less bureaucracy.
- Positivity from the owners and good behaviour
- Reduction of all-inclusive hotels because they create a problem both for the environment and for small businesses.
- More promotion in wealthy countries whose citizens are interested in this kind of tourism.
- In addition to promoting the unique attributes of Cyprus, such as the climate, the sun, and the sea, we should also promote our culture.
- There should be more thematic parks, but they should be different but not with the same theme.
- To preserve the experience, it is important not to be too industrialized and not to have protocols.
- We need to be more informed.

Q10: Is there any other kind of support that you would like to receive as a rural tourism professional?

Six interviewees noted that there is additional support they would like to have. In more detail:

- Financial support.
- Government support.
- Provide incentives for rural tourism professionals.
- The Department of Town Planning and Housing should grant permits for small hospitality facilities, funding for facilities, digital transformation, and reducing barriers to obtaining permits.

- Infrastructure, experiences, and seminars. Marketing.
- Promotion of Cyprus as a year-round destination and of small and private businesses.

Conclusion

Among the entrepreneurs and professionals interviewed in Cyprus, most started their businesses or started working in rural tourism within the last decade. Most of the businesses are microbusinesses and mostly family owned. It is often the case that older established businesses pass down from generation to generation. In addition, most Cyprus' rural tourism businesses provide a variety of services and activities. In more detail, the majority of people interviewed own or work in agrotourism, farm tourism and experiential tourism. Regarding the funds used, in most cases, the entrepreneurs started their business with personal investment; however, they mentioned knowing about the EU and national funds available. Furthermore, all the entrepreneurs involved in this research are taking steps to ensure their businesses' sustainability. Top actions mentioned by most of them include ensuring tourist satisfaction, preserving culture, promoting environmental sustainability, and encouraging responsible tourism. As for challenges faced, entrepreneurs and professionals appear to face different problems. Among entrepreneurs, financial challenges and finding the necessary staff, especially trained staff, seem to be the most frequent problems. Professionals mainly mentioned lack of support for digital transition. Most respondents from both groups said they had attended a VET program. Entrepreneurs, however, even though they had participated, did not provide any to their employees. Furthermore, they reported being unaware or unsure of the rural tourism programs offered in Cyprus. Individuals from both groups were generally positive regarding the benefits of receiving training and reported digital marketing and e-commerce as their most interesting topics. Entrepreneurs chose video making as their second most preferred option, followed by professionals choosing EU funding. Finally, based on this research it seems that there are several gaps in Cyprus regarding rural tourism. Both entrepreneurs and professionals indicated a lack of financial support and a lack of infrastructure. Furthermore, entrepreneurs noted that depopulation makes it difficult to find staff.