

RURAL TOURISM

in Austria, Czech Republic and France
Concept, activities and trainings



respect

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This book was published in support of the project "Echanges et bonnes pratiques touristiques en espace rural".

This project was financed by the European Union from the programme SOCRATES/Grundtvig. Authors are fully responsible for the content of this book. This publication does not represent any views and ideas of the European Commission and the European Commission is not responsible for the use of information contained in this book.

Edition: 1.
Title: Rural tourism in Austria, Czech Republic and France
Subtitle: Concept, activities and trainings
Issue: 100
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Editor: Ivo Moravec
Lay-out: Jakub Johanus
Press: Vlastimil Johanus - TISKÁRNA, České Budějovice, Czech Republic
Publisher: Centrum pro komunitní práci
(Centre for Community Organising), 2007

ISBN: 978-80-86902-51-7
ISBN: 978-80-86902-50-0 (czech edition)

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Part A:

The rural tourism in Austria

I. Tourism and rural tourism

A. Tourism in Austria in general

Tourism plays a very important role in the Austrian national economy. The contribution of tourism to the macroeconomic gross value added (GVA) of Austria is 8.7 %. If the total leisure industry is also included, the proportion rises to 16.3%.

In the year 2006 the arrivals reached the 30 million mark for the first time. The number of the over night stays was 119.4 million at that time (2006).

1. Tourist nights by selected countries of origin in the year 2006

The most important incoming markets for Austria are Germany (48.764,8 tourist nights), the Netherlands (8.762,9), Eastern Europe (5.968,4), the UK (3.785,3) and Switzerland (3.577,8).

As for the seasonal distribution of tourist arrivals in summer and winter, the seasons have been approximating each other during the last years: At the beginning of the 1990ies 60 % of all overnight stays were in summer and only 40 % in winter. In the meantime, both seasons have reached nearly the same importance for Austrian tourism. The time concentration of tourism in and to Austria is still very dense, though: More than half of all overnight stays take place in only 4 months of the year: January and February, July and August.

(http://www.statistik.at/fachbereich_tourismus/tsa.shtml > in German)

(<http://www.austriatourism.com/xxl/site/int-de/area/465219/subArea/465248/subArea2/481356/id/487647/index.html> > in German)

2. Organisation of Austrian tourism

The tourism industry in Austria is organized through the nine federal states, with sections for tourism in each federal state government (including a Responsible Provincial Programme Unit (RPU) for the LEADER+ Program) and tourism offices in the regional capitals.

The national tourism organization in Austria, which is primarily responsible for marketing measures, is called "Österreich Werbung" (ÖW) or (on the international market) "Austria Info" (<http://www.austria.info>). It is financed through public funds and the revenues of marketing activities. For Austrian tourism suppliers, the ÖW makes customized marketing measures in general and on specific demand. In addition to this national organization, regional associations work to promote their regions as tourist destinations. As far as the regional tourism in Austria is concerned, these associations can be quite powerful.

B. Rural tourism in Austria

1. Definition of rural areas and rural tourism

The use of the term "rural areas" was traditionally assigned to all those areas not being classified as "urban", or to municipalities of a limited number of inhabitants (e.g. under 5.000 inhabitants: ÖIR 1975, p. 11-29).

The vast part of Austria can be considered as rural area. Therefore, tourism in Austria is concentrated in rural areas.

The nine federal capitals including Vienna make only 14,7 % of all overnight stays in Austria.

However, in scientific and political discussions the term "rural area" has often been used in a very undifferentiated manner as a synonym for all non-urban areas, or has generally been equated with peripheral (remote) regions. This cursory approach has been supported by **methodological and conceptual problems of delimitation between rural and urban areas. Above all, the expanding "transitional" space with fast changing spatial structures provides a wide field of interpretations.**

One definition of „rural tourism“ is the following:

"Rural tourism aims for a recreational experience involving visits to rural settings or rural environments for the purpose of participating in or experiencing activities, events or attractions not readily available in urbanized areas. These are not necessarily agricultural in nature."

(<http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/definition.html>)

2. Mass tourism in rural areas – do these areas stay "rural"?

One problem of defining what exactly is "rural tourism" in Austria is the fact that most visitors come to skiing regions and resorts in the Alps. Many rural regions in the Alps (not only in Austria) deal with a huge number of visitors – mass tourism – and have been heavily influenced and transformed by the influx of mass tourism during the last decades.

3. Rural "non-mass-tourism"-regions

Other rural regions, which may even be neighbours to the Alpine mass tourism regions (or may be outside of the central Alpine range) do not receive as many visitors, due to many different reasons, mainly geographical ones. They may also be more remote from the urban centres. These regions often have preserved more "traditional" lifestyles and also an attractive, yet not so heavily "commodified" landscape (in

comparison to the mass tourism skiing resorts). **In this paper, we focus on these regions and on the problems they face and options they have in attracting and handling tourism.**

If these rural regions wish to attract more visitors, they can and should put emphasis on their strengths and combine them in an innovative way: Historical and cultural heritage, nature areas, special culinary aspects, quality of service.

These rural areas need "motors" for touristic development: Authentic offers that are unique highlights and make the region special. These "motors" can be **thematic trails** (we will focus on these in the second part of the report), **national parks, nature parks and a combination of all these.**

A short consideration of national parks and nature parks in the context of Austrian tourism:

4. National Parks

National parks are environmentally protected areas. National parks also fulfill the purpose of recreation. The core area of a National Park is not to be used for economic purposes, but the so-called outer zones and surroundings can be used for and in fact attract tourism. National parks can be leading "tourism motors" for regions and are a valuable resource for the rural areas they are situated in. There are six national parks in Austria, all within ecologically valuable and sensitive regions, and 66 National Park municipalities in total.

The first one to be officially created was the National Park "Hohe Tauern", in 1971. 2.350 km sq of Austria's territory are part of a National park, this is 3% of the Austrian territory. National parks are usually better known as the more numerous nature parks.

Entrance to national parks is free for all visitors, therefore no exact numbers of visitors can be given. However, participants of excursions, guided trekking tours, visitors at Information

Centers, at exhibitions and events and many school group visitors to national parks are counted: In 2006, a total of 392.241 visitors participating in excursions, guided tours etc. were counted in Austria's National Parks. It has to be taken in account that the absolute numbers of visitors to Austria's National Parks are much higher.

Website: <http://www.nationalparksaustria.at/>

5. Nature Parks

A nature park is a protected landscape area, originated in an interaction between humans and nature. Inhabitants of the area play an important part, also in participative processes for developing tourism concepts. This results in "Cultural Areas", interplays between human culture and economy with the natural environment. The goal of nature parks is the protection of the landscape in combination with their usage.

At the moment there are 44 nature parks in Austria, covering 100.000 hectare¹, additional nature parks are in being planned. They are predominantly situated in the regions of Burgenland, Lower Austria and Styria and can account for 5 million guests per year. Since 1995, Austria's nature parks are united under the umbrella organisation of "Nature Parks Austria" (Verband der Naturparke Österreichs, VNÖ). Within this frame, they jointly developed nature parks as model regions for sustainable development.

The title "Nature Park" means obligations, but also benefits for the regions. The protection and sustainable development of the landscape has to be guaranteed by the communities within a nature park, but they gain a valuable recreation area with natural and cultural offers for tourism. The destination is promoted, direct and indirect employment opportunities are

¹ There are also 180 forest reserves covering 8 300 hectares (status May 2005).

created. A by-product and good example for regional marketing is the product line of the VNÖ, which sells regional products through a common marketing instrument – “Naturpark Spezialitäten” (“Nature Park Specialities”).

Website: <http://www.naturparke.at/>

6. Questions about rural tourism worldwide

The award-winning international website www.planeta.com, which specializes on discussion and conferences about the environment and travel, put forward a number of questions about rural tourism worldwide:

- *How is 'rural tourism' interpreted in various parts of the world?*
- *What are 'lessons learned' -- what to repeat and what to avoid?*
- *What are the special needs of rural mountain communities developing tourism?*
- *Can rural tourism create jobs and alleviate migration?*
- *Can rural tourism support conservation of cultural and natural resources?*
- *Who funds rural tourism development and promotion?*

These are, in respect’s opinion, some very relevant questions if we consider rural tourism. They can be applied to rural tourism in any country.

II. Jobs and activities in rural tourism

A. Host

Tourists need somewhere to stay – pensions, hotels, farms. Therefore, one core activity in tourism everywhere is earning income by hosting guests. Farmers in Austria can participate in the program “Holiday on Farms”, rent out apartments or rooms for tourists. The operation of hotels, pensions, hostels or camping sites are also part of the hosting profession. With the increased size of an enterprise, additional employment opportunities will be established in the hospitality industry. National or nature parks attract many visitors and some will use the local accommodation facilities.

B. Catering

This, of course, is one of the core activities in tourism. Tourists in rural regions need local restaurants and cafes. These should offer regional products, if possible, concentrate on organic products. Shops with regional products (direct sale) are well-liked by tourists and may create a substantial source of income for the region. Knowledgeable shop clerks are needed to consult the guests on the products they are interested in.

C. Guide

In the vicinities of national and nature parks, there is a demand for qualified Landscape-, Nature-, Trekking-, Park- or Mountain-Guides. Especially school groups and other study groups need guides.

D. Health sector

The Health Sector offers additional professional opportunities in rural tourism. The well-developed “Wellness” sector in Austria with offerings like massages, meditation courses or other specialized offerings is an option.

E. Administration

Direct employment in national or nature parks are an important part of the local value creation. Tourist information offices also create employment opportunities for the local population.

F. Museums/exhibitions

A local or regional museum or temporal exhibitions bring additional regional employment opportunities.

III. Trainings

A. Association “Farm Holidays”

“Farm Holidays” (“Urlaub am Bauernhof”) is an association of 3.400 family farms spread throughout Austria. With a total of 44.800 beds, they have more capacity than the city of Vienna. The offers are authentic and varied as well as unique. Farm Holidays is a model concept in Europe regarding the cooperation between agriculture and tourism. Through this kind of holiday the preservation of regional heritage and farming traditions is guaranteed, which does include dialects. The participating families also pursue innovations and developments on their farms and in the

region. Nature is an important selling point for the sellers, therefore environmentally conscious farm management and the production of high-quality, healthy, home-grown products are part of the offers.

The umbrella organisation developed criteria to guarantee for the quality of Farm Holidays. A commission controls the quality of the farm, the environment and furnishing and the quality of the provided service. Comparable to “stars” in the hotel industry, “flowers” are given to certify the standards and create categories. Farms have either 2, 3 or 4 flowers, augmenting with their quality respectively.

Farms furthermore specialise in Bio-, Baby & Children, Horseback riding, Wine, Biking or Health. Some offer holidays for people in wheelchairs or have the infrastructure for seminars. Farm Holidays give the opportunity for 3.400 families to earn an income with tourism on their farms and give regions an offer to act as a valuable tourist destination. Many farms are situated in the vicinities of National or Nature Parks. Together they constitute an invaluable combination to form a high profile region. Local leisure- and recreational facilities (sport centers, horseback riding schools, public pools, miniature golf courts, golf courts, tennis courts,.....), stores in the city center for groceries, clothes, other supplies or souvenirs, and local catering facilities will profit from the upgrading of the region as a travel destination.

“Farm Holidays” provides formation and further education workshops for members.

B. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

At the national level, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, section II/2 is developing, coordinating and funding trainings. For courses held at the LFI (see below) it trains and certifies consultants.

C. KEBÖ

The KEBÖ (Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung) is the umbrella organisation for adult education in Austria. Several organizations taking part in it, some of them, like the BFI (Bundesförderinstitut), which is also organised after the federal principle sometimes offer tourist related seminars for rural areas. The most important is the LFI.

D. LFI

The federal organized Institute for Rural Training (Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut) offers certified courses in direct marketing, environment and biological agriculture and holiday on farms.

In cooperation with Nature Parks Austria a certified training for Nature- and Landscape Guide is offered. This course takes place on five weekends, comprising a total of 120 hours.

Website: <http://www.lfi.at/>

E. Agro pedagogics academy² (Agrarpädagogische Akademie)

The academy offers a bachelor in agro- and environmental pedagogics, which last three years. Annually there are more than 100 continuing education courses with subjects that focus in agro- and school policy, agriculture and society, science and technology as well as agro business. A one-

² There will be a name change in Oct. 2007 into University of Agro- and Environmental Pedagogics (**Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik**)

semester course offers continuing education of graduates of the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna (BOKU). Those trainings are aimed at consultants and teachers in rural areas. The academy is also financed by the Ministry mentioned above.

Website: <http://www.agrarpaedak.at/>

F. National Parks – Visitor Mentors

Each National Park in Austria trains so called “Visitor Mentors” or National Park Guides. The curriculum differs from Park to Park due to the unique environmental settings. The minimum of training is 30 days, the training ends with an examination and a certificate. Continuing education for Mentors are guaranteed by each National Park.

G. Nature Park Academy Styria

The Nature Park Academy is a joint venture of all Nature Parks in Austria. It offers seminars, continuing education in Nature Park management and innovation. There is also a course of how to develop thematic trails (Themenstraßen).

Website: <http://www.naturparkakademie.at/>

H. CIPRA

The International Organization for the Protection of the Alps is organizing seminars on the topic of protection the ecological environment of the Alps. The uniqueness of the area is underlined and a sustainable development for the future aimed for.

I. Austrian Federation of Mountain Guides and Ski-mountaineering instructors

To become a Mountain Guide or Ski-mountaineering instructor a training has to be completed at the Innsbruck Sports Academy, which is lead by the training team of the Federation team. A three day entry examination is needed at the Federation, which has federal offices, to become a certified guide. Around 300 Mountain Guides work full time and many more part time in Austria.

J. Mountain- and Trekking Guide

Training for Mountain- and Trekking Guides are offered in some federal states. After 10 days a certified exam has to be taken to qualify as Mountain- and Trekking Guide.

Part B:

The rural tourism in Czech Republic

I. Tourism and rural tourism

A. Rural tourism and rural space

1. Rural tourism - definition

Rural tourism is tourism that takes place in rural country.

Rural tourism is:

- located in rural areas;
- based on the specific features of rural space, which primarily are: small-scale production, open space and contact with the natural environment, historical and cultural heritage, traditional conventions and ways of living.
- it is rural to its scale, which means it is connected with small buildings and small establishments;
- it is intrinsically traditional, which means that its growth is slow, organically connected with local families;
- it is often controlled at the local level and developed with the purpose of securing a long-term development for the particular region;
- it is sustainable, helps to preserve the special rural nature of the region and is not destructive of local resources;
- it takes many forms that provide the complex picture of rural environment, economy and history.

2. Definition of rural space

Rural space covers low-density population areas, with open space and small municipalities of population less than 10,000. The use of land is primarily connected with

agriculture, forestry and the protection of nature and landscape. People living in these areas are inclined to traditionalism. The influence of traditional conventions is often very strong. The Czech Republic keeps to the OECD definition.

B. Tourism and rural tourism

Though rural tourism shows clearly expressive characteristics, it cannot be defined just by holiday types. An important role is played by the rate of utilization of available services, location, control methods, integration with the community and other factors. Once again, the term of continuity (area overlapping) can come handy. Various types of holidays can be spent in metropolitan and rural locations. People on holiday can take part in both urban and rural activities in just one day. The continuity concept spanning from a typical rural to a typical urban holiday follows the following summary, with a broad category of overlapping activities in the middle:

Holidays that are typically rural	Holidays that can be either rural or urban or carried out in tourist centres or resorts	Holidays that are usually urban or typical of tourist centres or resorts
Hiking	Swimming	Sightseeing
Mountaineering	Holiday on a little or medium frequented beach	Shopping
"Adventure" holidays or holidays in the wild	Downhill running in a medium-frequented location	Holiday on a highly frequented beach
Canoeing	Sports requiring completed infrastructure of semi-nature type, e.g. golf	Downhill running in a highly-frequented location
Rafting	Culinary holiday	Urban tradition and culture

Holidays that are typically rural	Holidays that can be either rural or urban or carried out in tourist centres or resorts	Holidays that are usually urban or typical of tourist centres or resorts
		focused holiday
Cross-country skiing	Holiday focused on learning about traditions	ZOOS
Snow-shoe trips	Holiday focused on the protection of nature	Wellness resorts (spa)
Downhill skiing in little-frequented location	Educational holidays	Industrial tourism
Nature studies in open air, including bird observations, picture taking, etc.	Cultural shows	Important conferences or meetings
Hunting	Holiday focused on crafts	Holiday focused on entertainments or games
Cycling or bicycle trips	Sightseeing or outing trips	Holidays in resorts
Horse-back riding	Camping	Sports requiring completed infrastructure, e.g. events of international significance
Admiration of landscape	Conferences or meetings in smaller scope	
Rural tradition study	Sailing or amusement cruises	
Trips to small towns or villages	Fishing on larger water areas	
Relaxation holiday requiring rural surroundings		
Meetings or conferences of little significance		
Rural parades		

Holidays that are typically rural	Holidays that can be either rural or urban or carried out in tourist centres or resorts	Holidays that are usually urban or typical of tourist centres or resorts
Fishing on rivers and channels		
Sports requiring natural scenery, e.g. orienteering		

C. New forms of tourism in the Czech Republic

Tourism is an important factor of the economic development of the Czech Republic. Its share in GDP is growing steadily and the same applies to overall income from out-of-country tourism.

At present, a whole range of new forms of tourism more and more frequently comes to attention. These new forms have in common their consideration for destinations, friendliness to the nature and the environment as a whole, as well as consideration for cultural and historical heritage and interpersonal relations.

The widest term in respect to considerate tourism is so-called, green tourism. Unlike the classic tourism taking place in towns or cities or in coastal resorts, green tourism emphasises free landscape or moderately populated areas. It is characterized by visitors' desire to integrate with the nature as well as human environs. It involves activities and is thoughtful to and protects the nature. Green tourism in a particular form is primarily seen as ecotourism and rural tourism.

3. Ecotourism

Ecotourism is usually defined as touring the nature and learning about it. This form of tourism focuses mostly on

getting to know nature preserves, national parks, protected landscape areas and other natural beauties in a way that avoids harmful interference.

Rural tourism is usually understood as tourism that develops in other than recreational and tourist centres and urban settlement areas. It includes recreational stays predominantly in rural communities but also outside. Rural tourism has several specific features. First, its considered approach to the environment and landscape – the landscape is the actual tourist attraction that is taken care of and further promoted. Accommodation is decentralized, with limited lodging capacities, which allows for spreading tourist numbers and thus eliminating negative impacts so typical of “mass tourism”. Further, rural tourism is characterized by intimate, almost family-like facilities offering understanding for a person’s individual activities. The guests are also often offered fresh produce from the farm.

Rural tourism takes a whole range of forms, of which the most typical are: village tourism, agrotourism, ecoagrotourism and weekend cottage stays.

4. Village tourism

Village tourism is a form of rural tourism where activities are immediately connected with the nature, landscape and rural environment. Its focus is on individual recreational activities based on deriving benefit from the attractiveness of a particular rural environment of the visited destination. Its special feature is the decentralization of accommodation facilities that allows for spreading tourist numbers and thus eliminate negative impacts so typical of organized tourism. Services to rural tourists are provided by various managers of accommodating and catering facilities as well as entrepreneurs in the field of cultural, sports, social and other areas. Village tourism is therefore all tourism taking place in villages, except for agrotourism.

5. Agrotourism

Agrotourism is a specific form of rural tourism, which in addition to immediate benefit from the countryside nature and environment is characterized by its direct relation to farming work and farm establishments. This kind of tourism is usually offered by entrepreneurs in agricultural production and provides for them an additional source of income to sustain or even enhance their primary line of business, i.e. production of agricultural produce. Agro-tourism is an ideal type of family holiday. It allows spending leisure time in a healthy countryside environment. Tourists can freely walk around the entire farm, which gives them the perfect opportunity to learn about everything, including domestic animals and livestock. They can also buy domestic animal produce (such as milk, curd, cheese, eggs) or fresh vegetables and fruits. The farm surroundings then offer various trips, swimming or the possibility to pick blueberries, raspberries, mushrooms and other. This type of tourism is therefore tourism in land farms or farming establishments. This form of tourism can be realized in all natural conditions, with the exception of basin areas, strongly industrialized centres, areas with nature largely devastated by industry and mining.

Village tourism and agro-tourism are associated with village communities and profit mostly from the local environment natural resources. The difference between these is the style of accommodation, recreational activities and nature of living during the recreational stay in the village. This difference is clearly visible foremost for agrotourism at a family farm as its main feature is the sharing of living with the farm family.

6. Ecoagrotourism

Ecoagrotourism is a specific form of agrotourism. It involves stays in eco-farming – undertakings. These farms do not use any synthetic chemicals, fertilizers, artificial colorants or preserving agents in their plant growing and animal

breeding. Animals are kept in natural conditions and fed without the use of meat-bone meal and similar. Ecologic agricultural produce is subject to strict supervision and meets international standards. It can use the "BIO" registered mark. An essential characteristic of this form of agrotourism is not only the sharing of living with the farming family but also taking part in farming work and the consummation of produce from their ecological farming.

As to other forms of rural tourism, we should remind cottage settlements located outside villages, possibly solitary recreational buildings, camps in open nature and stays in cottages.

D. Beginnings of rural tourism and developments in Czech rural country

Rural tourism is not new to Bohemia and Moravia. Visits to the rural country, especially with farming families in form of "summer lodging" were an important part of pre-war tourism in the Czech Republic. After World War II though, the ties between the urban and rural areas were broken and rural tourism in its true form disappeared for a long time. The regular use of cottages and country houses began developing, nevertheless without a direct relation to typical rural environment.

After 1989, rural country went through significant changes. Agricultural production was restructured and agricultural undertakings were transformed. As a result of these processes, the number of people employed in the industry decreased substantially. To sustain land-based prosperity and permanent population outside urban centres, it was necessary to look for new tools of economic revitalization. Development of rural tourism and its specific product, agrotourism, is therefore very important for those regions that had been affected by the restructuring and transformation most. It not only introduces new businesses

but also encourages the creation of new jobs and subsequently, the stabilization of population in rural areas. Another cause of the development of rural tourism is the worldwide trend of returning to the nature and living in its proximity in harmony.

What is the difference between today's rural country and that which existed in our country several decades ago? There are several of them. A principal change is the decrease in employment in agriculture. While agricultural production was always on the first place in job vacancies available in the country, today, the numbers of employees in this national economic sector are lower and lower. There is a whole range of reasons why people are not interested in agricultural production any more. They are not able to make their living on it, they wish to find jobs with better conditions (in a town or city) and, last but not least, collectivization also played its part in lesser numbers of land workers. A new, compelling issue is the aging and gradual desolation of rural country. Young people do not find opportunities or the possibility to live their lives fully and leave.

A favourable change for overturning this trend is the development of entrepreneurial opportunities in rural country. These primarily involve businesses associated with rural tourism and agrotourism. Unfortunately, this form of tourism has not had a long tradition here and many people are uncertain as to starting a business there. The main reason why rural tourism is not as developed in our country as well as in other European states is that land-workers could not participate in the development of agrotourism in 1970's. In 1950's collectivization, large-scale founding of cooperatives and state farms resulted in mass production and the liquidation of family farms, suitable for agrotourism. In 1970's, rural tourism and agrotourism started developing dynamically in other countries of Europe. This form of tourism is therefore not so well established. People lack experience and many people actually have relatives or own a weekend cottage or a weekend house in the country.

E. Current status of rural tourism enterprising in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is well preconditioned for the development of rural tourism by natural, cultural and historical, social and other attractions. Most favourable ratings usually go to the scenic rural landscape, human potential (skilful, hard-working and resourceful people) and extensive communicational network that make a good setting for accessibility to even the most remote villages in the country.

Nevertheless, along with the above advantages there are also many problems impeding rural tourism development here. These are primarily the deceleration of rural tourism in municipalities by frequently falsely perceived competition between businesses and the local authority. Effective use of marketing in a municipality requires a suitable organizational and institutional municipal structure where a regional tourist association plays a prime role. Such associations are missing in most municipalities and regions. A basic mistake is missing cooperation of individual businesses. While such cooperation is common in countries with developed tourism, our country shows mutual jealousy of these businesses. They still have not come to realize that joint action in meeting the needs and requirements of tourists is both important and beneficial. Municipalities do not carry out market researches and do not know their visitors. Owing to this lack of knowledge, they are not able to address particular market segments or evaluate individual tourist seasons.

A problem from the local government perspective is the underestimation of the region or municipality development strategy. As each region has its specifics and varied conditions for tourism development, it is necessary to consider whether the particular region is more suitable for recreational purposes or whether it is better not to develop tourism at all. Specific problems include, for instance, the conflict of interests of entrepreneurs, local government and

self-government representatives, the public, environmentalists, investors, and similar. Others include the overpopulation of some recreational areas in the summer or winter seasons (many tourists result in the landscape devastation, higher risk of infection, etc.) and the absence of multiplication effect in the regions. This means that there is lack of interconnection among individual municipalities inside the region and beyond. Another principal problem is that every municipality keeps doing everything instead of focusing on a particular tourism product in terms of financial and methodical assistance. There are continued barriers between the nationwide and regional tourism product. Still, it is necessary to create individual, complex product for specific market segments – the tourists. There is a lack of good-quality nation-wide and individual presentation of tourism in the domestic and foreign markets. It is necessary to present in multiple languages. Local government and businesses lack sufficient information on the possibilities of subsidy policy for rural tourism areas. It is necessary to allow municipal authorities to cooperate in providing subsidies.

The level of rural tourism development in individual regions of the Czech Republic differs. While in some places the capacities are not sufficient, others reportedly do not see any interest. Recently however, Czech people have begun to re-discover the charm of rural tourism. And foreigners spend their holidays at our domestic agricultural farms, as well. This nevertheless does not apply to all regions in the same extent. While Šumava (also known by its German name *Böhmerwald*) has a record of extreme demand and hardly catching up supply, in other areas the situation is different and rural tourism is coming out of its dippers with difficulties.

In some places, rural tourism development – in particular agrotourism – comes short due to regional tradition. For example, in South-Moravian Region agro-farms are in the shadow of preferred viniculture tourism. In East Bohemia, there are approximately 30 farms and the same number are in Ústecký region. 13 farms are registered in the Liberec region and the highest number of farms is in Vysočina,

coming close to 60. There are about 40 farms in South Bohemia and Moravia. Approximately 30 – 40 thousand people spend their holidays at farms in the Czech Republic, of which about one third are foreigners – predominantly Dutch, German and Poles. Their average length of stay at a farm is 5 – 7 days. By 2010, the number of people spending their holidays at Czech farms could reach 80-100 thousand people per year. Most of them are expected to be foreign.

F. Rural tourism in Ústecký Region – case study

Ústecký Region has very favourable conditions for rural tourism development. This region's rural areas dispose of natural and culturally historical potential. In recent years, the entire conception of tourism in the region has been changing and this area offers increasingly focus on various forms of pro-active holidays. Cyclo-tourism, agrotourism and horse-back riding, and also adrenaline sports have been developing.

In addition to horse-back riding, farms in Ústecký region also offer their prospects the opportunity to try out what the demanding care of horses, sheep or goats is all about. Some farmhouses offer accommodations in rooms or suites. Others are considering, among other, the starting of a camp.

One of Ústecký region farms is engaged in farming and agrotourism. It is located in Velké Chvojno. It specializes in horse breeding. It offers stabling for horses and ponies of private individuals, horse-back and pony-back riding trips, runs a riding activity group. In addition, people can try out the demands of caring for the animals. There is no accommodation available so far, except for the riding group members. Nevertheless, the owner is considering the setting up of a camp.

Letní stráň farm in Boletice near Děčín offers excellent conditions for agrotourism. It primarily focuses on cattle, sheep and horse breeding. It offers accommodation in new

rooms and suites with own toilet and bathroom. In addition to horse riding training courses it also offers conventional horse riding through free country. Visitors can learn about the breeding of horses, cattle and sheep.

A farm in Březí u Malečova offers a newly built accommodation facility, which has only been in service for two years. Visitors can use the opportunity to go horse riding in the country connected with caring for these animals. In May, at the opportunity of opening pastures, there will be an amateur horse race.

G. Future of rural tourism in the Czech Republic

Rural tourism as one of potential forms of rural enterprising is winning more and more popularity in the world. It is not just a fad but, to a certain extent, the expression of the contemporary approach to the nature and environment. Healthy lifestyles are more visible. People are interested in bio-produce of ecological farms. This trend is gradually becoming more distinct in Czech conditions, as well.

Many people leave holidays in busy coastal towns or cities and start to orientate more on restful holidays offering better relaxation from everyday stress and noise of the city. Apart from that, this kind of holiday is also interesting from financial point of view, which is to be greatly appreciated especially by families with children that make the biggest customer segment.

It is necessary to see rural tourism as a tool that helps with solving some of the issues in rural areas, such as unemployment, retention of the cultural function of landscape or lower migration of rural population.

As a result of all these positive reasons and benefits, rural tourism should further develop. Nevertheless, we cannot expect that it would reach the same dimensions as in more

developed countries of the European Union. Considering its different historical development as well as different economic, social and legislative conditions, the Czech Republic will probably focus more on other forms of rural tourism than on agrotourism, which is firmly connected with farming or other land-based production. Still we can expect that the number of agrotourist farms will grow even in our country and their standard will continually improve, with Czech and foreign tourists not only from Europe but from the entire world as their guests.

II. Jobs and activities in rural tourism

A. Main product - accommodation

Accommodation services are the substance of tourism development. As far as rural tourism is concerned, these services take two basic forms – one is accommodation in private and the other are collective accommodation facilities.

Accommodation in private is primarily typical of agrotourism. Available options are either the lease of a habitable room or the lease of an entire recreational unit (cottage, cabin, weekend house, recreation house). For this form of accommodation, the maximum of 10 beds per one building is recommended and it is possible with this number of beds to also provide breakfast without the necessity of additional license for catering.

Collective accommodation facilities suitable for rural tourism are small hotels and guesthouses. In this case, however, the matter is more complex as it also involves the hiring of personnel unless the owner has a large family or numerous relatives. These facilities are usually presumed to provide all-day boarding to its guests. In reality, this means the opening of a restaurant as part of the accommodation facility and also employing qualified personnel. As boarding services are a

licensed trade, the owner must document the appropriate qualification. If the entrepreneur does not have one, he/she must find a responsible associate who has this qualification. If there is such a qualified person in the family or kinsfolk, the solution is a little bit easier. However if there is no-one like that, it is usually rather complicated to find and pay such an employee.

B. Accompanying programs

Rural tourism does not subsist in just providing accommodation. Whoever aspires to be a successful entrepreneur in rural tourism, they should also provide for their guests' leisure time. A well-organized tourism also contains a range of interesting, attractive accompanying programs. These do not have to be just programs organized by the accommodator directly but in particular mediated activities associated with the neighbourhood or sports or wellness events organized nearby by other entrepreneurs. In this case, cooperation among entrepreneurs in this area pays. It is not just about potential service commission or contact but a mutual benefit – mutual recommending of services is the least expensive advertising for any firm. Accompanying programs usually relate to rural mentality, present historical, cultural and natural background of rural country and derive benefit from the specifics of such rural territory. Such programs make the available tourist product complete and give it a somewhat promotional trademark. The accompanying program allows the entrepreneur to specialize and make his/her offer different.

Accompanying programs characteristic of rural tourism and agrotourism primarily include catering. The entrepreneur offers bio-food or typical rural cuisine. Depending on region, local specialities can be focused, e.g. vineyard areas with their products or village wake festivities and hog-killing time special food.

Other programs involve farming functions. Tourists participate in the common household work and help with haymaking, harvest, livestock grazing, stable and stall cleaning, etc..

Where the farmer keeps horses, he/she can offer a very attractive product – horse-back riding outings. These can even be supplemented with fly or carriage rides. These services can be potentially mediated by another undertaking if there is such nearby.

Hunting and fishing are products that, once again, depend on the overall background of the firm – on the size of owned woods and fishing ponds. This type of activity can also be mediated by another firm.

Walking in forests, mushroom-picking, picking of forest fruits are other extremely popular, though undemanding activities.

Accompanying programs where the main role is played by the relief of surrounding landscape are summer and winter sports. Available sports are hiking, cycling, bathing, or in winter skiing, sledging, snowboarding or skating.

History, culture, natural environment – these are the names for accompanying programs, which may among others also include: local sightseeing (castles, manors, convents and monasteries) or attractive natural locations (karst caverns and natural configurations, habitat of rare flowers, plants and vegetation, preserves with rare wildlife, etc.) and demonstrations of traditional crafts (mills, smitheries, glass-works, laceworks).

An entrepreneur in rural tourism can benefit from local knowledge, be informed about every newly opened local shop, forgery, jewellery with jewels made of leather or wood, wood-carving, manufacture of Easter decorations, glass or china. It is necessary to prepare leisure-time programs and offer them immediately as soon as accommodated tourists get bored or when the weather is not good.

III. Training courses

Most known associations rendering support to rural tourism include Svaz podnikatelů ČR (*in English: CR Entrepreneurs Association*) and ECEAT CZ association.

A. CR Entrepreneurs Association

CR Association of Entrepreneurs in rural tourism and agrotourism is an open, apolitical trade association of entrepreneurs in rural tourism and other patrons. This association was established in 1997 and is a member of Eurogites, the international organization of rural tourism associations. In its actions, the association contributes to the economic, cultural and social revitalization of rural country, the recovery of its traditions, preservation of the countryside and stabilization of its population. It enforces and advocates for the interests of its members – rural entrepreneurs. It introduces to practice and supervises quality standards for accommodation capacities in the rural country, assists in the development of professional skills of service providers in rural tourism and, in cooperation with its partners (primarily ECEAT CZ) helps to promote accommodation facilities of its members.

CR Entrepreneur Association is implementing a project called KVALITA (*in English: QUALITY*). At times when global competition is growing, a guaranteed level of quality for customers is one of the most essential prerequisites of success. Qualitative parameters of rural country accommodation are not standardized in any legally binding norm. In cooperation with its partners and with the support of CR Ministry for Local Development, CR Entrepreneur Association therefore prepared a unified certification system for rural tourism and has been gradually introducing it into practice since 2001. The purpose of this project is to develop

a qualitative certification system for rural tourism accommodation facilities that would correspond with European standards and deliver verification. Further, it should promote this qualitative certification system as to the both lay and tourist public as well as support the prestige of certified accommodation facilities and give them promotion.

Another project is the *SERVIS (SERVICE)* project. The public and beginner entrepreneurs especially turn to the Association with many questions and suggestions, requests for legal advice, law interpretation, help with promotion or basic technical advice. Based on these requests, the Association decided to establish and operate a simple, comprehensible source of qualified information for the public, both in printed form and in electronic form in website www.venkovskaturistika.cz. Cooperating with partners, another objective is the creation and development of a training system and consulting service for rural country rural tourism entrepreneurs and provide regular, systematic presentations of rural tourism in the Czech Republic in media and by taking part in exhibitions and trade fairs. Last but not least, it aims to support and develop integrated promotion of rural tourism in cooperation with partners, called "Holidays in Rural Country".

B. ECEAT CZ association

ECEAT CZ (European Centre for Eco-Agro-Tourism) is a Czech non-profit organization – civil association. It participates actively in the activities of ECEAT International and is a member of CR Association of Entrepreneurs in Rural Tourism and Agrotourism. ECEAT was created in 1999 as a successor organization of ECEAT Foundation. The mission of ECEAT CZ is to support rural country regeneration by considerate tourism, encouraging new business opportunities and jobs in rural tourism and further by helping with the development of technical capacities for new service providers.

ECEAT CZ offers complex development and training programs. Product "Holidays in Rural Country" is laid out as a complex solution for the development of rural tourism, with puts emphasis on individual accommodators. This product takes consideration of local culture, habits, supporting local population and is environment friendly. Accommodation facilities are selected with care to correspond with the "Holidays in Rural Country" perception – i.e. no noise, no mass capacities, etc. "Heritage Paths" are laid out as regional tourism development concept promoting, utilizing and protecting the broad cultural and natural heritage of our country. "Green Holidays" are a concept promoting eco-tourism in CR, based on eco-certification.

C. CzechTourism

Czech central of tourism "CzechTourism" in its rural tourism development program focuses on supporting human resources development in the area of rural tourism and agrotourism in tourist areas of the Czech Republic. It organizes seminars based on direct enquiries from tourist areas or entrepreneur associations. Its objective is to provide the entrepreneur with knowledge about conditions necessary for successful enterprising in rural tourism. Educational seminars provide contact with people who already have experience with undertaking business in rural tourism and are willing to share their experience. In seminars, participants receive updated information about financial support to rural tourism entrepreneurs from the state and from the EU.

The strategy for the selection of CR tourist product topics as a whole is based on an analysis of preconditions and opportunities of CR in the international market. Those concerning rural tourism are primarily :

- cultural and learning tourism based on the unique scope, variety and concentration of historical landmarks and other objects and therewith associated cultural events,
- rural tourism based on the valuation of relatively unburdened territories,
- topic-oriented paths with representative contents (glassworks, fine pottery production, historical handicrafts, brewery, viniculture, and other),
- hiking making use of our unique network of marked routes,
- cyclo-tourism making use of our dense network of cycling paths and routes.

Presently, the Central carries out a program called "Training and Education of People Working in Tourism" focused on the improvement of qualification levels and professional skills of people working in tourism in connection with the introduction of high-tech, information and communication technologies and environment friendly technologies. The program makes available new technical education and an opportunity for life-long learning to people working in such a specific area as tourism.

Educational/training subprograms related to rural tourism :

- Ethical manager, international cultural specifics in tourism services, specifics for handicapped clients of tourism services
- Region and tourism
- Public – essentials of conduct in relation to tourists in common situations
- Rural tourism, its specifics and conditions for development
- Maximization of the potential of protected natural preserves and national parks in tourism
- Guide in tourism – professional knowledge and skills
- Utilization of cultural and natural landmarks for tourism

D. CR Trade and Tourism Union

Svaz obchodu a cestovního ruchu ČR (SOCR ČR) (in English: CR Trade and Tourism Union) – is a top, independent, open and lobby association that represents unions, associations, large retail and distribution companies, consumer cooperatives, business alliances and franchising networks, small and medium-sized companies in the area of trade, tourism, hotel trade and associated services. Further, through its regional offices it cooperates with local self-governments on the social and economic development of regions.

Individual offices work as consultancies providing orientation and help with application for enterprising subsidies from European, national and regional programs and as a source of trade-specific information. The union organizes and gives special conferences, seminars and workshops, creates and co-publicizes special magazines, manuals and other aids, as well as serves as an expert place for consultations and solving of specific issues.

E. Mendel's Agricultural and Forestry University

Mendelova zemědělská a lesnická univerzita v Brně - Ústav marketingu a obchodu (in English: Mendel's Agricultural and Forestry University in Brno – Institute of Marketing and Trade) Educational programs are prepared in cooperation with the European Centre for Eco-Agro-Tourism (ECEAT) and Trade and Tourism Union (SOCR). Educational courses on the subjects of Entrepreneurship in Tourism, Regional Products in Tourism, Destination Management and Rural Tourism in Sustainable Regional Development are carried out under a project funded by the EU European Social Fund and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

IV. Conclusions

Rural tourism can be a meaningful instrument in the development of not only the particular village but the entire microregion or region. It does not only bring additional income sources to the farm owner but can encourage the revitalization of whole regions. This is important primarily for regions affected by agricultural basic industry restructuring and transformation, and estate restitution processes.

Rural tourism helps to solve some problems of rural areas. In particular, it drives down unemployment and creates jobs not only in agriculture but also in areas with services used by rural tourists. As a result, it contributes to lower migration and stabilization of rural population. An important merit of rural tourism is the fact that it revives traditional craft binding and keeps folklore and other village traditions alive. It contributes to the utilization of natural, cultural and historical potential of the municipality and its surroundings, while maintaining the original landscape pattern. Rural tourism differs from other forms of tourism primarily by its consideration to its destinations and environmental friendliness. It helps landscaping, does not bring almost any environmental risks and brings the returning of man back to the nature.

In the Czech Republic, nevertheless, rural tourism is not doing as well as in other European countries. This is partially given by our history. In 1970's when other countries were developing rural tourism, the same was not possible in our country after the collectivization, creation of large cooperatives and state farms. Collectivization and its associated activities led to mass production and the liquidation of family farms so suitable for agrotourism. In addition to this, there are also other problems impeding rural tourism development. For successful enterprising, the cooperation of all parties involved such as agricultural entrepreneurs, accommodators and providers of other

associated services, as well as all self-government levels is inevitable. While such cooperation is common in other countries with well-developed tourism, entrepreneurs in our country have not realized the importance and benefits of joint procedure yet.

Further, it is necessary to do marketing at the municipality, region and state levels. The creation and subsequent implementation of a marketing concept must be based on the cooperation of business entities, state administration bodies and local self-governments, as well as all other parties involved, including the village and region population. Municipalities should not exert their efforts on everything but focus on a particular tourism product only and base the region image on it.

Local administration and businesses lack sufficient information about the issues of rural tourism. To improve informedness about enterprising in rural tourism, the Czech Republic should have more varied seminars on this topic. Even potential tourists lack sufficient information. Many people still cannot imagine anything concrete under the term of rural tourism or agrotourism or their idea is rather obscure. There is lack of good-quality nation-wide and individual presentation of tourism in the domestic and international markets.

Rural country does not know how to attract tourists. Information offices in the Czech Republic do not provide unified, comprehensive information about the entire country. That is why foreign tourists mostly only know Prague, Český Krumlov or West-Bohemian spa towns. Scenic or otherwise attractive coves in regions remain undiscovered.

There is a whole range of problems associated with rural tourism enterprising. Still, every municipality, where the conditions for its development allow at least a little, should try to support this kind of tourism. First, because it is highly significant for the development of rural country and of entire regions, and second because the Czech Republic has very good preconditions for rural tourism.

In the Czech Republic, the traditions of rural tourism enterprising are only coming to their birth. Individual regions in the Czech Republic differ as to the level of rural tourism development. Greatest achievements are in Šumava. Agrotourism development is significantly supported by various organizations such as CR Entrepreneurs Union or ECEAT CZ association. These institutes try to contribute to rural revitalization through considered tourism. They help renew traditions as well as establish new business opportunities. At the same time, they develop professional skills of rural tourism service providers and promote the accommodating facilities of its members.

In the past EU programming period, it was possible to receive financial support for rural tourism enterprising from several different programs, such as CR LEADER or the Rural Development and Multifunctional Agriculture Operating program. Programs were aimed at the construction, renovation and refurbishment of buildings, construction of infrastructure, renovation of cultural landmarks and natural locations, etc. The 2007 – 2013 programming period will allow the opportunity to acquire ample funds from the European Agrarian Fund for Regional Development.

In view of its significant benefits and environmental friendliness, rural tourism is assumed to keep developing into the future. Statistics show a clear trend of recess from mass holidays in large tourist centres and growing demand for rural country accommodation. People more and more desire to return to the nature – to escape from noisy, dehumanized, stressing urban environment to elsewhere in the rural country, with simple way of life, in a nice environment affording quiet relaxation. In addition, this kind of holiday is interesting financially, which is primarily appreciated by families with children that make a large segment in this clientele.

For rural tourism to develop in our country, it is primarily necessary to overcome the above problems. Basic inspiration for agrotourism development here could be Austria. Austria is

a country of similar traditions as the Czech Republic that has a similar geographical profile and it is our neighbour country, which offers the possibility to coordinate many projects and take advantage of experience acquired by Austrian entrepreneurial establishment.

Part C:

The rural tourism in France

I. Tourism and rural tourism

A. Short history of the rural tourism concept

What we call rural tourism is the result of a post-war sociocultural trend in France, which led to the development of the first rural self-catering holiday accommodation (*gîtes*) and the Logis de France hotel network.

In the sixties rural tourism was synonymous with family holidays in the country, staying with older relatives often still working on the land, or in holiday villages run by associations. The image of this type of tourism was that of modest low-cost collective or family holidays, often rated below mass seaside tourism.

Then things began to change. During the seventies, town and country planning issues came to the fore, and attempts were made to revitalise rural areas through new economic activities, one of which was rural tourism. Small-scale rural tourism was successfully planned and developed and valuable experience gained.

In the last fifteen years attention has been increasingly directed towards the tourist market demand. Planners and operators are aware that the demand for holidays consisting of a few days or weeks in the country has been increasing among town dwellers: not just for French consumers but also for British, Dutch, Belgian, German, and other tourists. Rural tourism is now being developed as a consumer service. At the same time, the topical issues of sustainable development and ethical consumption are favouring sustainable ethical

solidarity tourism respectful of the environment and local contexts.

Hence the place and practices of rural tourism in France have had to move on. Rural tourism has become more important and taken on a more complex picture, in which the requirements of different types of tourist, the diverse economic opportunities generated by the demand and the planning objectives of local authorities all play a part.

B. The different sorts of rural tourism

The terms commonly used to refer to rural tourism tell a story: *green tourism, nature holidays, ecotourism, on-the-farm tourism, agritourism, farmstay holidays, diffuse tourism or countryside tourism, inland tourism, local tourism, small-scale tourism, homestay, heritage tourism, integrated tourism, sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, low-impact tourism, solidarity tourism, ethical tourism, etc.*

They reflect the wealth of forms that rural tourism can take and the varied viewpoints on it: the focus can be on the overall service (green tourism, ecotourism), the types of hosting (farmstay, homestay), the spatial pattern (diffuse tourism, countryside tourism), or the planning status (integrated tourism, sustainable tourism, solidarity tourism). Some of these terms are specific to rural tourism (in italics) insofar as they concern the natural environment, landscape, farmers, agricultural locality, etc., in a word all that makes the tourism rural. Others are non-specific and can include forms of tourism other than rural.

C. The core of rural tourism

1. Definitions

Two definitions are useful for the representation of rural tourism.

- *'Local tourism, desired and controlled by local people. Tourism based on meeting and sharing, motivated by interest in the locality and by the friendliness of its inhabitants.'* (Descamps J.J., 1993)
- *'Rural tourism is defined in the overall economy of tourism as the economic use of the countryside, natural resources, cultural heritage, rural habitat, local tradition and local produce through certified products and services illustrating regional identity. It responds to the needs of consumers for accommodation, catering, leisure activities, entertainment and other services. It supports local sustainable development and meets the leisure demands of modern society through a new social solidarity of town and country.'* (Euroter, 1992)

2. Specific features of rural tourism

The specific features of rural tourism can be depicted by the overlap of three circles (**see Fig. 1**) representing space, activities and people. The overlapping area represents the local establishment of the rural tourism sector: the rural tourism product is typified by its local identity and flavour supported by a local population embodying a vernacular culture that meets the needs for authenticity, unwinding and encounter expressed by tourists.

Thus rural tourism does not include nautical and beach resort activities (diving, etc.) or mountain resort sports (downhill skiing, etc.) because these activities are too remote from the essential rural environment. The resort beach and the ski slopes are merely playgrounds located in a natural setting.

By contrast, cross-country skiing or hiking in snowshoes can be included in rural tourism insofar as such guided activities prompt or respond to an interest in local fauna and architecture.

Auvergne (an eminently rural area) offers an interesting case in point. Vulcania, the famous scientific and leisure theme park is located opposite the Lemptégy open volcano park, a tourist attraction built on an industrial pozzolan quarry that is still being exploited. Are these rural tourism amenities? No, in the case of Vulcania, which offers a standard product focused on the world's volcanoes rather than on the Chaîne des Puys and its alignment of 80 volcanoes where the amenity is located. Yes, in the case of Lemptégy, which still receives 120,000 visitors a year, but presents a real guided visit of a real Auvergne volcano, albeit extinct.

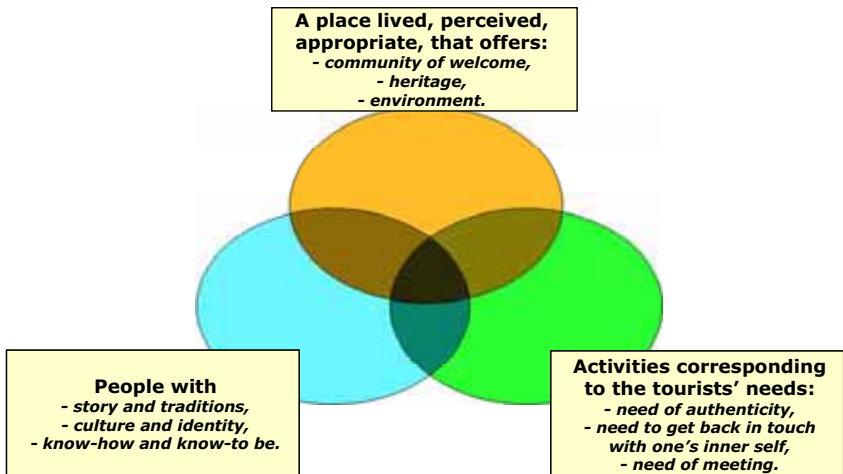


Fig. 1: Specific features of rural tourism

3. Rural tourist destinations

Figure 2 intersects rural and built-up tourist areas, urban, seaside and mountain tourist areas, local tourism and countryside tourism.

The core of rural tourism is where countryside tourism and local tourism meet. However, close to this core, destinations near cities, on the coast or in upland locations also need to be considered. Areas that are too built-up are excluded because of their high population density and the types of activity there, which are non-rural. On the other hand, certain areas on the outskirts of towns can be considered as rural tourism destinations, as can small towns typifying local and identified rural areas, some of which may have become small 'green' seaside or mountain resorts.

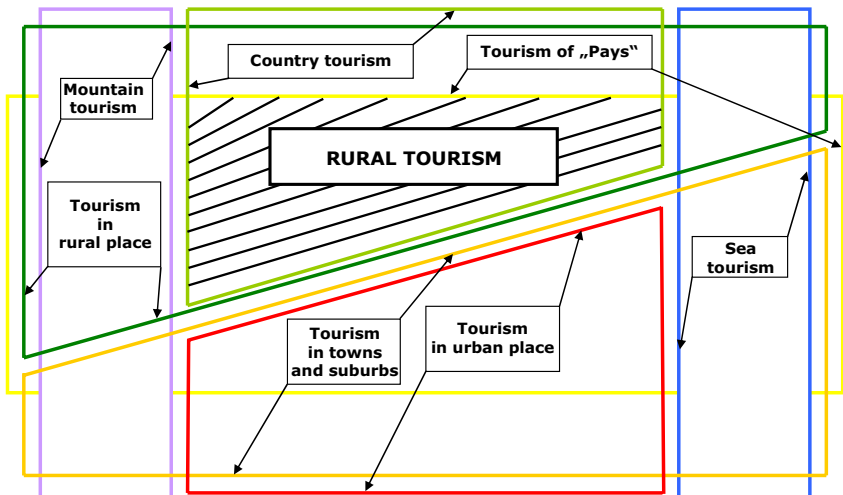


Fig. 2: Rural tourism definition

D. Some figures

The figures reveal the importance of rural tourism, but also the relatively low tourist spending in rural areas. According to the Bosson-Descamp report (1993), rural tourism concerns 80% of the country, 52% of total tourist accommodation, 28% of stays and 22% of tourist spending. We also note that foreign tourists are frequent (16% of the total) and that short stays are popular in rural tourism (38% of the total).

In a general upward trend in tourism, rural tourism lost market share up until the eighties, before levelling off, since when it has held a stable position among the different tourist destinations (**Table 1**).

Table 1 – Breakdown of holiday time spent in France (%)

	1964	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Seaside	33.9	41.4	46.5	41.9	43.6	41.0	40.8	41.6	41.4
Mountains	13.9	20.1	17.2	20.5	17.6	18.5	19.1	18.0	19.3
Country	35.2	29.0	28.3	27.6	26.0	27.4	26.3	26.3	26.7
Touring	2.8	3.4	3.8	3.2	3.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	3.6
Town and others	14.2	6.1	4.2	6.8	9.3	8.7	9.4	9.7	9.0
<i>Holiday time in France (millions of days)</i>	<i>541</i>	<i>649</i>	<i>718</i>	<i>747</i>	<i>726</i>	<i>727</i>	<i>742</i>	<i>724</i>	<i>742</i>

Source INSEE

According to INSEE, rural tourism accounts for more than one quarter of the holiday time spent by French nationals in France. On the more general basis of tourist stays – long or short, covering the wide range of holiday experiences sought by tourists, the ONT states that rural areas host, on average, one third of all tourist stays or total holiday nights away (**Table 2**).

Table 2 – Travelling for personal reasons by French nationals: breakdown of stays and nights away by geographical environment

	% of total stays				% of total nights away			
	1995	1998	2001	2003	1995	1998	2001	2003
Rural tourism	37.4	36.8	36.1	35.8	32.4	34.0	32.1	32.2

Source ONT (Mémento du tourisme - 2004)

Over the period 1990-1998 stays in the country (commercial and non-commercial accommodation, resident and non-resident) rose steadily (270,000 stays in 1990, 330,000 in 1998), according to SDT 1999. The proportion of rural holidays in the total has not increased, but total tourist consumption rose in value by 15 % between 1992 and 2000.

E. Factors affecting rural tourism trends in the next 20 years

Rapid trends are appearing in the tourist economy, including rural tourism, that impact on activities and needs for competencies, in rural tourism and elsewhere.

1. Factors affecting tourism trends in rural areas

- A very abundant offer of tourist destinations, heightening competition.
- Stricter regulations and scarcer public funding.
- Generalised use of the internet, strongly affecting the provider-customer interface, the role of travel agencies and the commercialisation.

2. Trends in customer expectations: customised offers and high-quality reception

- The trend is towards intense products that are readily accessible, immediately practicable, with high pleasure density and constraint-free.
- A broad spectrum of expectations; however, the demand for rural holidays is driven by sports activities.
- Familiarity with different areas, leading to comparable quality requirements for all areas.
- New mobility requirements: multi-accessibility, unpredictability – always a factor outside the usual circuits – make real-time information compulsory.

3. The 'rural' dimension in the trends in tourism practices

- Uniformisation of practices, interpenetration: the rural environment shares the life-styles stemming from urban social values (mobility, multigroup membership, individual self-reliance).
- Discovery patterns combine different types of area within the same stay (e.g., short stay associating a day at a theme park with a day in town and a day exploring the environment).

4. Trends in supply: service chains with meshing of providers

- Ability to adjust prices to potential customers
- Ability to offer intermediate services (favouring accessibility) and personal services, bringing out new service combinations.
- Ability to offer a combined response (meshing of services). This necessary evolution stresses the importance of partnerships among the players in the

mobility chain and on the local scale of rural destinations.

II. Jobs and activities in rural tourism

A. Characteristics of jobs and competencies for tourism

There is no single occupational branch. Tourism is a multisector business that includes many trades, e.g., transport, accommodation, catering and tourist activities. Thus this economic sector presents a broad diversity of companies involved in meeting the tourist demand. These companies differ in their positioning (accommodation, catering, leisure, etc.), their economic place on the tourist market, their status and their employment patterns (self-employed, permanent salaried staff, seasonal workers, etc.).

Most of the jobs in tourism are salaried. They have the following features:

- There are a large number of jobs (700,000 salaried personnel recorded in 2001 by UNEDIC).
- More than half of them are in catering and about a quarter in accommodation.
- Continuous job creation, with a constant need for personnel, estimated at some 30,000 jobs per year. The tourist industry suffers from a labour shortage aggravated by the very poor image of this job sector, which is associated with low-status leisure activities, seasonal work, repetitive tasks and low pay.
- High feminisation and a marked presence of young people and large numbers of foreign workers.
- High rates of part-time work and short contracts.
- Many seasonal jobs are held by persons that fall into one of four main categories: seasonal professionals,

locals with multiple activities, young people starting work, and young people in social job schemes.

There are two main types of job in rural tourism:

- Jobs in hotel and catering, which display a certain degree of homogeneity despite their great diversity.
- Other jobs linked to the tourist economy at the provider-customer interface: reception, sports and leisure guides, cultural and heritage activities, organisation, communication, sales, etc. (**see Appendix 1**).

B. Specific features of jobs and competencies for tourism in rural areas

Rural tourism is a full tourist activity, and so includes all the jobs and skills found in tourism generally, together with some specific to rural tourism. There are seven features specific to jobs and skills in rural tourism:

- Unlike tourism in general, rural tourism is characterised by mainly small operating companies with few staff. The most frequent job status in rural tourism is self-employed operator or spouse of a self-employed operator. Companies involved in tourism are mostly small in size, run by couples, families and artisans. The creators of these companies often seek to combine lifestyle and occupational objectives with high personal commitment.
- Few individuals exercise the whole of their activity in the tourist market. However, many professional occupations are linked at least partly to tourism. The jobs directly concerned by rural tourism on the 'main'

market (i.e., accommodation, catering and leisure) are relatively few in number.³

- Individuals combine, invent and assemble skills and expertise to construct their own jobs. Initiative, innovation, management of complex situations, requirements for multiple technical, economic, and commercial competencies together with social skills and an understanding of the environment are all needed. These job creation and development activities in rural tourism are most often gradual, but it is difficult to identify a typical pattern.
- The seasonal character of work in rural tourism is more marked than in the other forms of tourism. It generates multiple activity where persons combine one or more occupations, both salaried and self-employed. This multiple activity can induce unstable employment, but can also be experienced, especially in rural tourism, as a life choice, priority being given to a particular lifestyle and working environment.
- Rural employment in tourism enjoys a special link to the locality as a heritage resource (economy, culture, heritage, history, population, nature), which makes it possible to construct specific tourist products that support jobs in tourism and leisure pursuits. This in turn requires organised upkeep, management and planning. The political and sociological setting must

³ Delmache & Moreau propose a typology of job types found in rural tourism:

- 'Exclusive professional' where employment is directly linked to tourism.
- 'Occupational shift' where some part of the job is directed to tourism.
- 'Specific forms' where the employment in tourism is secondary (one-time activities, seasonal work, paid or unpaid).
- 'Hotel and catering': all the professional jobs in this sector.
- 'Market combinations' characterised by a combination of a main activity and a tourist activity.

also be taken into account in creating and steering tourist jobs.

- The meshing of functions⁴ in rural tourism is often incomplete and therefore needs a strong partnership between the different tourism players on the local scale ('demand' locality, 'supply' locality, and 'administrative' locality). Development engineering plays a very important role in strengthening the functions of assembly and distribution, and generates skills specific to rural tourism: tourism development agents, assistance with the creation of tourism operations, amenity management and upkeep, etc.
- Local authorities are deeply involved in the funding of infrastructure and in the development of tourist activities. The important role of local elected representatives must be underlined.

C. Required competencies

According to Guy Le Boterf⁵: *"A competent person is one who knows how to act relevantly in a specific context by combining and mobilising a dual resource equipment system consisting of personal resources (e.g., knowledge, expertise, qualities, culture, emotional resources, etc.) and environmental resource networks (e.g., professional networks, information networks, etc.)."*

Rural tourism is a full tourist activity that includes all those functions of tourism that require the general competencies

⁴ By meshing of functions we mean the overall process of offering a service, making products, constructing a product range and setting up a general proposal for a tourist destination.

⁵ - Engineering and evaluation of competencies, Ed d'Organisation, 2002,
- From competency to professional navigation, Ed d'Organisation, 2002

deployed in any tourist activity, to which must be added competencies specific to the rural setting.

The competencies required do not imply any special technical skills, but rather the ability to design a product from a recognition of the resources of the locality and the local context, the ability to conduct a rural tourist activity in a local context (in relation to the locality and in relation to others) and responsiveness to trends in the rural tourism market.

We can identify four blocks of competencies (**see Fig. 3**) specific to rural tourism, supported by a 'core' of 'skill' competencies that are not narrowly characteristic of rural tourism:

- **Qualifications and skills, the 'core':** competencies and possibly recognised skills that may have to be acquired and updated (in particular when the activity is regulated) in one or more job areas (e.g., cross-country skiing instructor, cook, etc.). The nature of tourist activities is infinitely varied, and so these 'skill' competencies are not especially characteristic of rural tourism.
- **Integration of locality and tourism product:** ability to integrate the locality dimension in the tourism product. This means acquiring the culture of the tourism service, assembling the partnerships for the tourism product on the scale of its sector and (or) locality, and lastly being able to construct specific products from local heritage resources.
- **Steering of a rural tourist activity:** acquisition of the additional knowledge necessary to steer a rural tourist activity; for both salaried personnel and the self-employed. This means acquiring a tourism culture and competencies linked to the transversal functions common to all small companies (direct and indirect customer reception, promotion and commercialisation, administration and financial management, human

resources management), and steering the creation and (or) the development of an activity in a rural locality (in relation to the locality and in relation to others).

- **Attentiveness, anticipation, innovation:** development of observation reflexes upstream (technology watch) and downstream (strategic watch, market analysis, etc.) of the rural tourism market in order to anticipate and innovate.

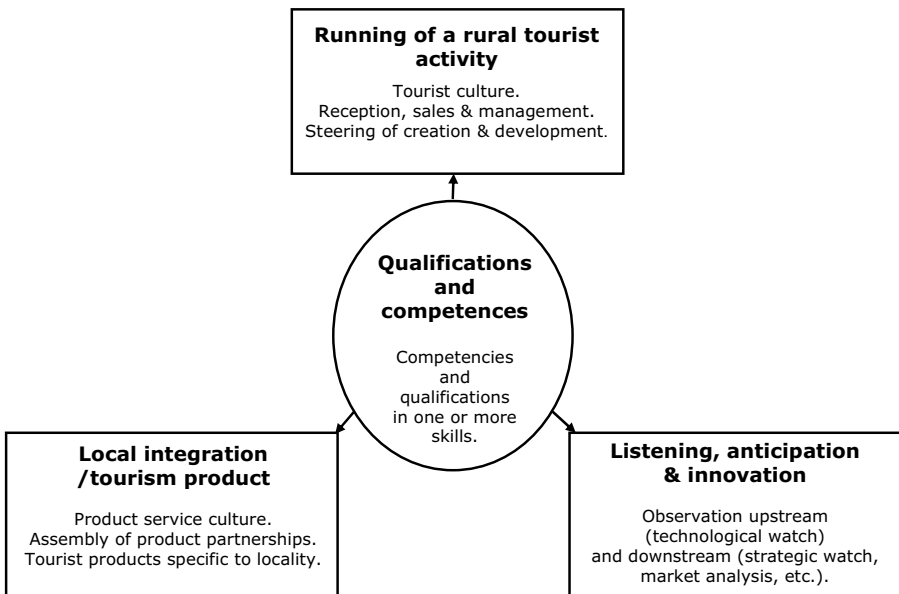


Fig. 3: Required competencies in rural tourism

III. Trainings

A. Training and professionalisation

According to Guy Le Boterf: *'Professionalisation is the result of personal investment in a gradual process supported by various resources: conventional training, training situations where skills are acquired in less conventional ways, and certain formalised work situations'*.

Training and professionalisation are not the same thing. Training contributes to professionalisation:

- by producing resources (knowledge, expertise, etc.),
- by facilitating the combination and mobilisation of resources (study of a problem, work-study, action training, etc.),
- by taking a more detached viewpoint,
- by teaching how to learn,
- by helping to forge an individual and collective professional network identity.

An operator's professionalisation process is a progression towards excellence (**see Fig. 4**).

Professionalisation in rural tourism implies first acquiring the basics of the generic tourism jobs: hotelier, caterer, guide, group leader, consultant, travel agent, etc. These are operational skills. These skills then have to be extended by additional competencies related to the natural environment, sport, culture, etc., because of the specific features of certain jobs or skills. In all cases, rural tourism is a diversified practice anchored in one or more localities. This makes it necessary, in order to improve performance, to integrate the spatial, partnership, and local dimensions of the rural tourism destination. Lastly, to continue improving performance, excellence in rural tourism means competency in

attentiveness to trends and new developments, innovation and anticipation.

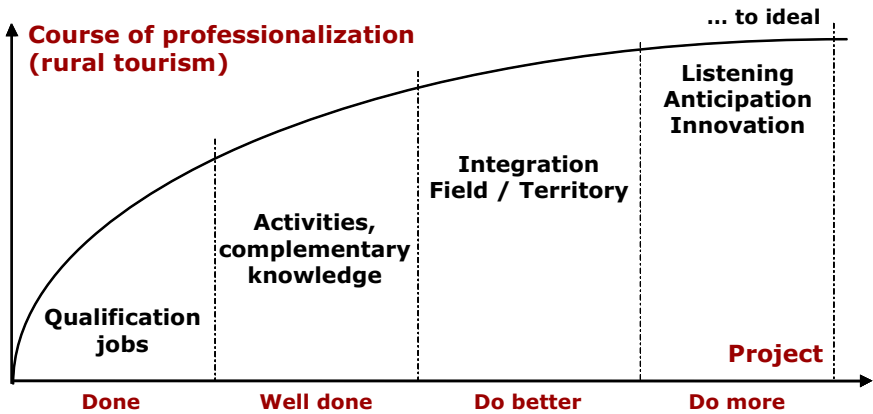


Fig. 4: Professionalisation process in rural tourism

B. The different types of training

To acquire the necessary competencies, a rural tourism operator’s professionalisation process can be supported by a range of training experiences (**see Appendix 2**).

1. Type 1: conventional training

This type consists of resources that are mainly intended to provide training. They include initial and continuing training courses in tourist activities, e.g. hotel, catering and non-regulated leisure activities, etc., and (or) in tourism functions (reception, promotion/commercialisation, etc.). Qualifying initial and continuing training courses for regulated activities (sports, cultural, children’s holidays, etc.), in-house training courses in tourism companies, sectors and networks, continuing training for the creation of companies or activities, etc.

2. Type 2: less conventional training situations

This type involves training situations in which the training experience is less conventional than in Type 1. Development training, action training, professional exchange networks, participation in seminars and events, reading of professional journals, training by tutorials, collaboration with consultants, etc. **Appendix 3** presents certifications concerning tourism in various government ministries.

3. Type 3: professional situations entailing formalisation

Certain work situations can provide training experiences if they entail formalisation (**see Appendix 4**): participating in a development project in an activity, sector or locality, steering a project, participating in a certification committee, in a quality approach, in the setting up of a new tourist amenity, etc.

C. Trainees and types of training

The persons concerned by this training are both pupils and students in initial training and adults in continuing training, such as self-employed or salary-earning heads and (or) creators of tourist activities, salaried personnel and (or) trainees for salaried positions in companies involved in tourism, tourism development aid structures, elected representatives and volunteers and all other types of operators in a locality.

IV. Conclusions

The specific features of rural tourism are expressed in the strong links it implies between localities, operators and customers. There are two converging approaches. The first is meeting customer demand. The second is an approach through local development; rural tourism allows varied local assets to be put to economic use.

In addition to generic competencies in tourism, the specific features of rural tourism require specific competencies to take into account the rural setting, the wide range of resources in rural localities, the mobilisation of players and populations in the tourist destinations, the meshing of activities and their assembly, and attentiveness to future trends and responsiveness to opportunities in rural tourism, etc.

Three points emerge :

- Diversified training is important to integrate several types of learner (locality-centred and customer-centred) and fill job vacancies, in terms of both salaried positions and creation of new companies.
- Qualification by validation of experience responds to a situation that is very frequent in rural areas. Such qualification can be a negotiation point on the tourism job market.
- General training provision needs to be maintained and developed to underpin tourism production (accounting, marketing, communication, etc.).

Part D:

Comparative analysis of the three national reports on rural tourism

I. Tourism and rural tourism

The definitions of rural tourism proposed by each partner are very similar. They tend to regard tourist activity under various aspects : products linked to agriculture, nature, heritage... Way of rural development... Development of environment (ecotourism).

On the other hand, importance of rural tourism is widely recognized in France and in Austria, whereas it is yet a theme in development in Czech Republic.

II. Jobs and activities in rural tourism

The common aspects are in the categories of identified jobs : accommodation and catering firstly, then different leisure activities.

But each partner has a different look. The Czech partners rather identify the diversity of tourist activities on the side of tourists. The Austrian partners Les Autrichiens describe jobs. The French partners underline the specificities of jobs in rural tourism and the needed competences.

III. Trainings

The approaches are very different. Austrian and Czech partners deal with a description of training structures, public and private.

The French one rather present training courses and situation leading to professionalisation. Indeed, an approach by the way of training structures would have been too tedious because of its number and diversity.

Part E: Appendices

**Appendix 1:
 Jobs/competencies in tourism identified by ROME**

Activity	Jobs/skills identified by ROME	No.
Accommodation	Cleaner - chambermaid/valet	13111
	Hotelier - Hotel manager	13135
	Manager of accommodation	13134
	Head receptionist	13133
	Janitor	13132
	Hotel operator	13131
	Receptionist	13122
	Hotel employee - hotel porter	13121
Catering/Bar	Restaurant manager	13234
	Head of catering facility	13233
	Restaurant operator	13235
	Cafe operator	13321
	General restaurant employee	13221
	Cafe employee	13311
	Chef	13231
	Kitchen employee	13212
	Head waiter	13232
	Wine waiter	13223
	Kitchen help	13211
	Restaurant waiter/waitress	13222
Bar employee	13224	

Local reception	Receptionist agent	12112
	Tourism and transport salesperson	12241
	Promotion and communication specialist	32213
	Information management spcialist	32214
Sports and leisure supervision (water, snow, climbing, hiking, riding, etc.)	Sportovní koordinátor	23133
	Provozovatel zařízení volného času	21243
	Koordinátor aktivit volného času	23131
	Turistický průvodce	43411
Cultural heritage activities	Heritage and environmental protection specialist	61114
	Cultural activities specialist	23132
	Tourist guide	43411
	General leisure coordinator	23131
	Coach driver	43112
Organisation, communication and sales	Promotion and communication specialist	32213
	Information management spcialist	32214
	Local development agent	23211
	Tourism production technician	12242
	Tourism and transport sales technician	12241
	Cultural and novelty salesperson	14225
	Promotion manager	32221
	Reception agent	12112
	Tourist guide	43411
	General leisure coordinator	23131

Appendix 2:

Means and opportunities for professionalisation

- Type 1: opportunities in conventional training carried out in conventional ways for the prime purpose of training.
- Type 2: opportunities in training situations where the training is provided in less conventional ways
- Type 3: opportunities in work situations where the prime objective is not training, but which can provide training if certain conditions are met.

The professionalisation process can take place through these various opportunities to acquire resources (knowledge, expertise) and (or) learn to manage 'professional situations'.

Type	Aims	Examples of opportunities for professionalisation in rural tourism
Type 1	Main conventional training aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial and continuing qualifying training by tourism sector (accommodation, catering, non-regulated leisure activities etc.) and (or) by tourism function (reception, promotion/commercialisation, etc.) - Initial and continuing qualifying training for regulated activities (sport, cultural, children, etc.) - Training schemes in tourism companies and sectors/networks - Continuing training in the creation of new companies or activities, etc.
Type 2	Training aims but in 'unusual' ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development training, action training - Professional exchange networks - Attendance at seminars and events - Reading of professional journals - Training through tutorials - Collaboration with a consultant, etc.
Type 3	Non-training aims but possible opportunities for professionalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in a development project in an activity, sector or locality. - Steering of a project - Participation in a certification committee - Participation in a quality approach - Participation in the setting up of a new tourist amenity

Appendix 3: **Certification in government ministries in France**

➤ **Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries**

Qualifications⁶ (all qualifications take into account rural environment)

- Levels I and II: vocational bachelor's and master's degrees, graduate degrees, veterinary and landscaping degrees and doctorates.
- Level III: BTSA (higher agricultural technical qualification) e.g., BTSA Services in rural areas
- Level IV: BTA (agricultural technical qualification), vocational, technical and general baccalaureates, e.g., BTA specialised in Services in rural areas
- Level V: CAPA (agricultural apprenticeship), BEPA and BPA (agricultural vocational qualifications), e.g., CAPA Services in rural areas.

The functions of engineering and certification are overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture. Three reference frames are defined: professional (describing the activities), training, certification (examination modes).

- In initial training: the qualifications are directed first of all to production and services. The modular training courses are tailored to individual needs.
- In continuing training: the qualifications are constructed on the basis of credit units (UC), from Level V to Level III (7 UC for Level V; 10 UC for Level IV). The UC-UCARE is similar to that used at the Ministry for Sport.
- CS (specialisation certificates) are offered to extend a qualification, e.g., 'green tourism, reception and coordination in rural areas (Level IV)'

⁶ Source: <http://www.educagri.fr>

- Local initiative specialisation (SIL) modules are offered on the initiative of training entities, after opportunity studies. This is qualifying training, without formal qualification. An SIL must be converted into a CS after 3 years. In fact, few SILs have gained official recognition.

➤ **Ministry for Youth and Sport**

Qualifications concerned:

- Sports instructor (BEES)
- Sociocultural coordinator (BASE, DEFA)
- Social sports coordinator (BAPAAT, BPJEPS, DEDPAD)

A far-reaching programme to review the existing qualifications and training has been engaged, guided by the following principles:

- Consider the creation of qualifications according to the professional situations observed and expected.
- Construct qualifications supported by a professional reference frame (describing the activities of an existing or emerging skill or job) and a certification reference frame (describing the competencies necessary for the skill or job identified). The qualifications are constructed in credit units (UC) to develop the individual tailoring of training courses and the validation of qualifying experience. This system will facilitate the implementation of dual qualifications and double certifications.
- Create a true qualification series to ensure consistency and smooth connection of the different qualification levels.

This review was made necessary by the modification of regulations (e.g., the coordinating structures could no longer authorise the supervision of 50 persons without the BAFD from 2005). We emphasise further work at Level IV, the first level of independent intervention, and work on Levels II and

higher, and the perspective of grouping the 15 qualifications in a single vocational Youth and Sports qualification.

In the Youth and Sports area, the qualifications concerned by the validation of experience are:

- Technical coordinator (BAPAAT),
- Sports instructor 1st and 2nd degree (BEES) and mountaineering qualification,
- Youth activities and sports qualification (BPJEPS).

➤ **Ministry of Education, Universities and Research**

Initial training comprises a vocational arm (CAP, BEP, vocational baccalaureate), and a technology arm directed towards management and supervisory functions.

The higher technical qualification BTS Tourism has two options: BTS VPT Sales and production in tourism (1998 enrolled in 2004), and BTS AGTL Local tourism coordination and management (1527 enrolled in 2004), obtained through either initial or continuing training.

Two-year degrees include the DU, vocational university degrees (DEUP) and scientific and technical degrees (DEUST). There are numerous university qualifications, from the vocation bachelor's degrees to master's degrees, and thought needs to be given to how well they fit the numbers and levels of the jobs available in the tourism sector.

➤ **Ministry of Employment, Social Cohesion and Housing**

At AFPA (vocational training association), the TLHR sector (tourism, leisure hotel and catering) comprises 16 certified titles (7 of which are in tourism and leisure, and 9 in hotel and catering). The professional titles are reviewed after 5 years. The frames of reference for employment, skills and competencies (REAC) and for certification (RC) have been set by government order published in the Official Journal and are available online at the AFPA website (certification).

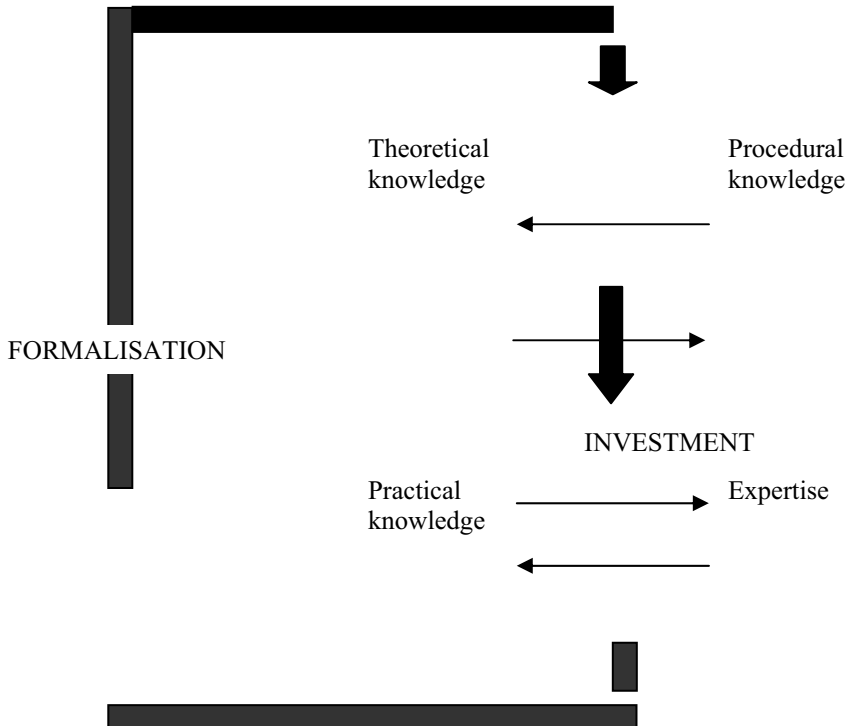
Each certification corresponds to a typical job (e.g., tourism reception agent) described by two to four typical consistent skills. For each typical activity the professional competencies required are identified (blocks of competencies). Each of the activities is validated by a certificate of professional competency (CCP). The qualification courses are limited to 5 years. A candidate has to construct his or her competencies in 5 years to obtain the title.

The frame of reference for the certification of the speciality under the professional title 'tourism reception agent' Level 5 of the Ministry for Employment, set by the order of 31 July 2003, comprises three certificates for professional competencies (corresponding to the three typical skills stated below):

- Receive and inform visitors for a tourism and leisure operator.
- Assist individual visitors meet their tourism requirements.
- Participate in the organisation of a festive or cultural event.

Appendix 4: Combination of the four knowledge categories

(from Gérard Malglaive)



Gérard Malglaive describes four types of knowledge:

- Theoretical knowledge: this answers the question 'How does it work?' It is general knowledge that enables us to understand a process, situation, or problem (concepts, subject knowledge).

- Procedural knowledge: this describes 'how to do it'. It includes procedures, methods and directions.
- Practical knowledge: this is gained by experience. It is the direct result of action, success and failure, constraints and unforeseen events.
- Expertise: this enables us to proceed. It comprises the approaches, methods, procedures that we know how to apply.

In action, theoretical knowledge/procedural knowledge and practical knowledge/expertise can be interchanged, overlapped, combined and intermeshed. It is through the gradual layering of experience acquired in real situations that theoretical knowledge and possibly technical knowledge can support an activity. Still too often, learning through initial and continuing training emphasise 'investment' of theoretical and procedural knowledge in action at the expense of a learning approach supported by the 'formalisation' of practical knowledge and expertise. This conceptual point may be a key for the examination and analysis of training provision in the last part of the study.

Part F: Photographs



Relaxing place designed as a bird's nest in the exterior part of the Visitor Centre in the Donau-Auen National Park. (www.donauauen.at, Orth an der Donau, Austria)



Functional stone mills in the archaeological park serve both as entertainment for children and teenagers, and as a source of knowledge. (www.urgeschichte.com, Museum für Urgeschichte, Asparn/ Zaya, Austria)



Lively open-air museum shows the life and atmosphere of the country in the Weinviertel area before the beginning of the industrial revolution (www.museumsdorf.at, Museumsdorf Niedersulz, Austria)



Modern exhibition situated in the part of a former amethyst mine (www.amethystwelt.at, Visitor Centre Amethyst Welt, Maissau, Austria)



Agro-tourism as one of potential forms of business in the national parks (Knížecí Pláně, Šumava National Park, Czech Republic)



Demonstration of wheelwright craft, which has almost been forgotten, during one of the weekend events in the Open-air Wallachian Museum (www.vmp.cz, Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, Czech Republic)



Modern-designed wooden building of the Visitor Centre focused on timbering in Modrava (www.sumavanet.cz/modrava, Modrava, Šumava National Park, Czech Republic)



Visit of an interactive exhibition at the Visitor Centre focused on timbering as a supplementary programme or as an alternative in case of bad weather (www.sumavanet.cz/modrava, Šumava National Park, Czech Republic)



Outstanding natural locality with beige, sunflower-yellow and brick-red soil in the so-called “Colorado of Provence” attracts many tourists every year (www.apitude-luberon.com, Roussillon, Provence, France)

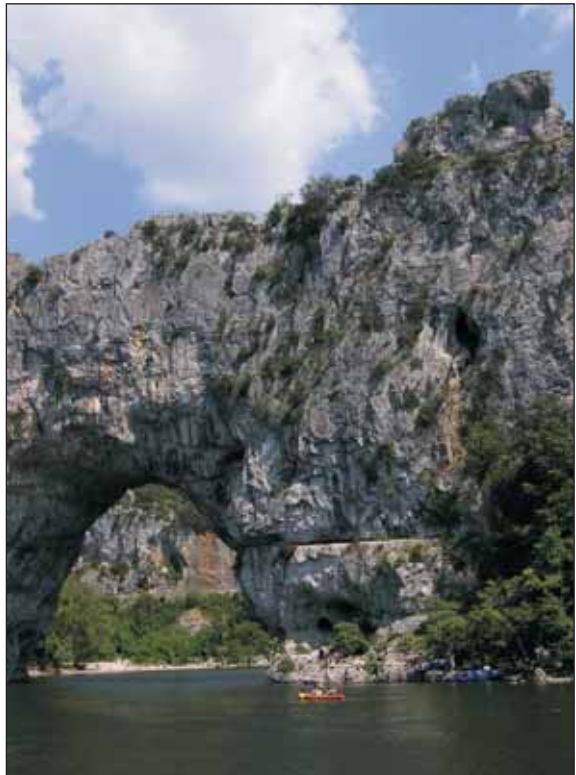


Sales of local products at the springs of the Loire river (Mont Gerbier de Jonc, Massif Central, France)



▲
Country museum focused
on saint patrons and
traditions
(www.musee-du-santon.org, Fontaine de
Vauvcluse, Provence,
France)

►
Large number of canoe
and rafting fans go down
the romantic Ardeche
river with a natural lime
“bridge” Pont d’Arc
every year
(Pont d’Arc, Ardeche,
France)





ISBN: 978-80-86902-51-7
ISBN: 978-80-86902-50-0 (czech edition)