



# multifunctional Farming for the sustainability of European Agricultural Landscapes

Project Nº: 2016- 1- SK01- KA202- 022502



## TRAINING MODULE 2

# Entrepreneurial Concepts in the Linkage of EAL, Sustainable Farming and Multifunctional Agriculture (MFA)

### Linking farming and agricultural landscape



# Entrepreneurial Concepts in the Linkage of EAL, Sustainable Farming and Multifunctional Agriculture (MFA)



## Description of the module

Overview: This module is focused on interactions between farming, as a professional activity based on agricultural land management, and landscaping, as a land design associated with agriculture and other rural activities, consciously linked to knowledge of the territory, its natural capital and landscape heritage.

- Learning objectives

### *Knowledge*

- to have knowledge of a large range of activities and services suitable for agri and rural tourism, ecotourism, heritage food tourism and didactic farms

### *Skills*

- to gain an in-depth competence on all kind of outdoor facilities and services that can be provided by well-structured multifunctional farm planning
- to understand and practise marketing solutions and commercial offers for ecotourism private clients, groups and tour operators.

### *Attitudes*

- to gain an overall knowledge and awareness of farmings traditional heritage constituting a basis from which to start successful farm multifunctional activities based on agricultural landscapes



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## Contents

- Overview
- Chapter I – Scheme for interpretation of agricultural landscapes
- Chapter II – Cultural principles connecting sustainable farming and landscapes
- Chapter III – Multifunctional agriculture, sustainable land use and landscapes
- Chapter IV – Contributing to landscape protection, conservation and innovation
- Conclusions



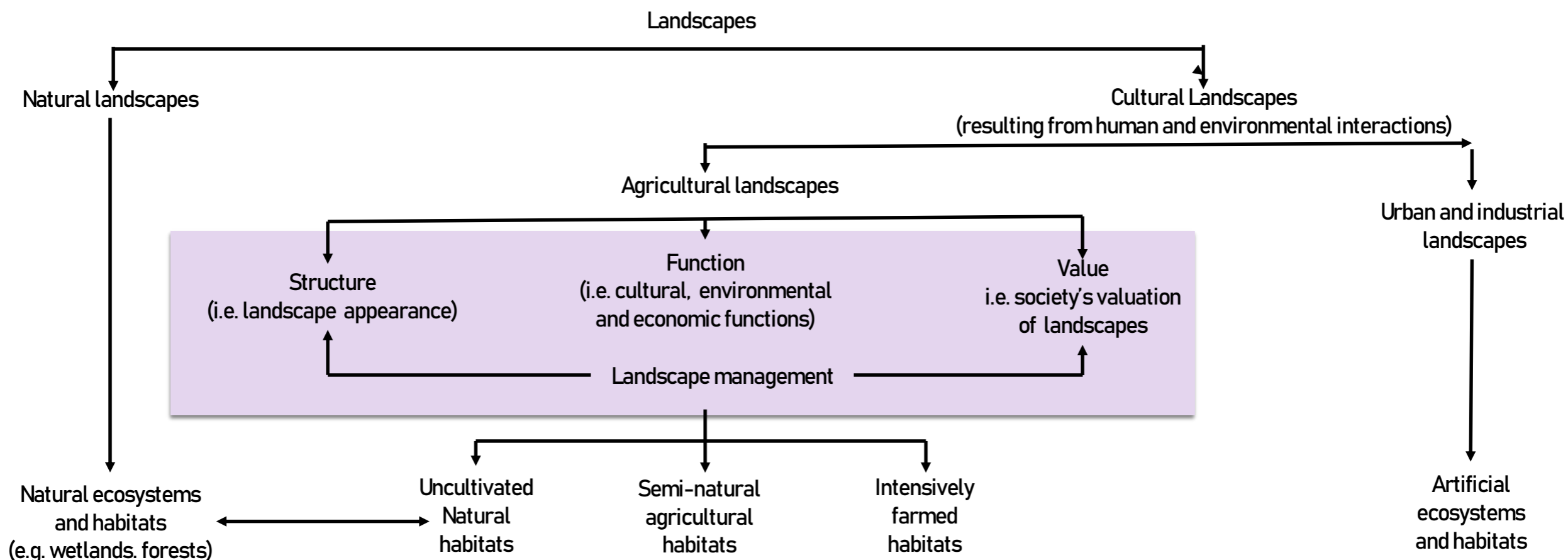


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## Chapter I: Scheme for the interpretation of agricultural landscapes

Human and environmental interactions can be considered as the basis of cultural landscapes of which agricultural landscapes are a notable part, as represented in the chart below (Source OECD, 2011)



Farmers, managing rural areas, including woodlands, pastures, orchards, crops as well as farmhouses and other agricultural buildings, are protagonists of the landscape protection and management, in rural areas.



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## Chapter II – Cultural Principles connecting sustainable farming and landscape

### II. 1 Natural opportunities for farmers and rural communities

If the relationships between the natural environment and historical and ongoing human work to shape it as an agricultural space are well known, however until now the less observed and studied opportunities from landscape management for farmers and rural communities have been in terms of positive economic and social impact.

Agritourism, rural tourism and other kinds of services for ecotourists, such as trekking, biking, climbing, horse riding, sailing, canoeing, etc. have increased work opportunities in the countryside and attention to the conservation and maintenance of the landscape by farmers and rural villages. Another strong point is the territory identity, which is more and more important in giving land and its local food products additional value and appeal to nature lovers and food heritage fans.





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## II.2 Cultural principles connecting sustainable farming and landscape

Factors considered to be reference points of the European strategy for conservation and valorisation of historical agricultural landscapes, also influencing the CAP reform since the early 2000s are an expression of a long and deep relationship between people community and natural environment (historical identity);

- specific land-use with sustainable techniques that take into account the nature of the soil, local traditions and surrounding landscape (traditional techniques);
- a continuing landscape fulfilling an active social role in a contemporary community closely associated with a traditional way of life and in which there is an evolution still in progress maintaining its characters of integrity and authenticity (authentic characters)





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## II.3 Rural tourism as a factor of landscape management

Successful rural tourism management and other linked activities should be able to offer a pleasant stay to people sensitive to natural places and interested in experiencing genuine local food and a healthy life style. Depending on national laws, it is in any case absolutely necessary to respect all provisions for a legal beginning and management of this kind of activity.

All preliminary requirements are to be considered before starting with a rural tourism or agritourism activity.

- 1 – the location has to be charming and well situated in an interesting rural area;
- 2 – the house and other available buildings are to be rebuilt, restored or refurbished in the original style of the farmhouses;
- 3 – gardens and parks belonging to the property are to be designed while keeping in mind the local trees, crops, shrubs and flowers;
- 4 – farm animals, chicken, rabbits, sheep, goats, pigs, cows and veals, horses, etc. are important for the rural and leisure environment, i.e. for horse riding, as well as for serving genuine food (even if vegetarians, farm eggs, milk and homemade cheese will be appreciated).

All together these factors are included as a part of the rural landscape and the farmer contributes to preserve the characteristics of places and human life in the community.

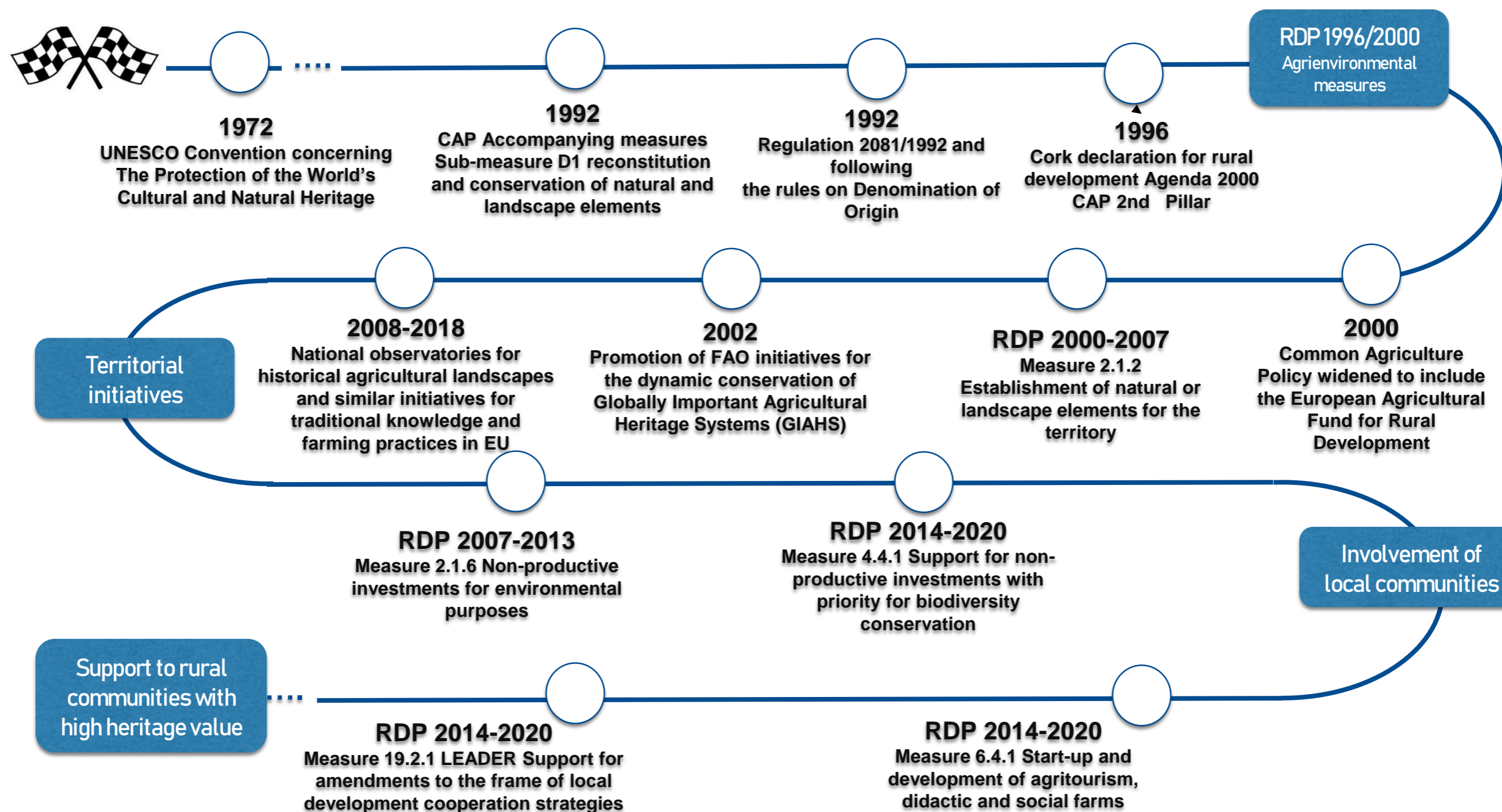




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## II.4 Process for conservation and valorisation of rural heritage in the EU





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- Chapter III – Multifunctional agriculture, sustainable land use and landscape

Multifunctional agriculture is considered as a driver for local development aiming to attract tourists and visitors, developing local communities and valorising their tangible and intangible heritage, from the restoration of farmhouses transformed into accommodation for tourists to the offer of traditional dishes also with the provision of didactic and social activities in collaboration with schools and social and health services. Traditional farming and historical agricultural landscapes became part of this “rural renaissance” passing from weak points compared to the modern agriculture industry performances to strong points for quality lifestyles of rural communities.





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## III.1 Growth and evolution of rural tourism

- Farmhouse accommodation initially started as traditional hospitality offered to farm visitors during the off season, when work was slow, mainly in the winter and it was not so common in the European countries.
- Between the '50s and '60s the industrialization created abandoned areas of countryside
- During the '70s tourism discovered the rural areas as destinations for leisure time and short holidays
- During the '80s in Italy, a new legal approach stated the specific conditions for eligibility of agritourism as tourism complementary to farm activities whilst rural tourism activities conducted by non-farm people were distinguished and called rural tourism. In all other countries of Europe rural tourism grew up even if it was not being governed by a specific legal framework.





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### III.2 Rural tourism and sustainable development of local areas and communities

Agritourism is a source of extra-income for farmers to complement the primary production, as well as this rural tourism is a sustainable development driver for rural communities and an opportunity of valorisation and development for the rural areas in general.

Agritourism helps the rural populations to remain in disadvantaged areas, such as mountains and high hills, maintain agricultural production, maintain the ecosystem and provide tourism services.

In this way the real properties and the human capital of a rural area can increase their values in terms of local development many times more than the invested funds.

The farmer is also encouraged to offer natural farm food and traditional recipes that can be appreciated particularly by guests, while also attractive to people in search of traditional tastes.

*Check out the FEAL Case Studies SK 04 or SL01*



*Extra-income for a farmer and is an opportunity of valorisation and development for the rural areas.*





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## III.3 Social, economic and cultural value of rural hospitality for landscapes

Rural hospitality is a notable tourism promotion tool itself for the qualification of a territory, fulfilling the visitors' expectations, satisfaction and experiences, within a framework of rural landscapes, natural and cultural attractions and traditional food and products representing the territory. In the same way food products and traditional recipes can be represented by the territory in terms of landscape, as an icon capable of impersonating the charm of a special and unique place.

Rural tourism is an economic and cultural driver of rural development with high added value also given by the restoration of traditional buildings. This also includes care of gardens, parks, routes and paths as parts of the agritourism spaces offered to the customers for their outdoor activities. Some institutions at regional level have fixed quality standards for agritourism and rural tourism accommodations, i.e. represented by ears instead of stars, based on comfort and services offered to the clients; also recommended are furniture and interior decorations consistent with the traditional rural heritage.





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## III.4 Agricultural landscapes and traditional food heritage

Tourists and visitors highly appreciate good traditional and natural food at farms as a very important element of the rural tourism appeal. There are food and wine tasting movements of people, also called “gastronauts”. In Europe there is a very large variety of geographical indication of origin products, such as PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), Regulation 510/2006 and TSG (Traditional Specialty Guaranteed), Regulations 509/2006, totally more than 1,000 designations. The European Union try to protect the geographical indications by international agreements, but currently the imitation of European food and simulation of their geographical origin is largely diffused in non- European countries, with serious economic and image damage. This is the reason why the European Parliament is discussing elaborating a legislative proposal on unfair trading practices in the food supply chain.

*[Check out the FEAL Case Study DE01](#)*



Visitors as  
„gastronauts“





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## III.5 Rural tourism, landscape and local culture

The traditional heritage represented by farms and outbuildings are included in territories with scenic landscapes and historic small villages. Some specific hill cultivations, such as vineyards or olive groves, are still often protected by stone walls built up in the medieval age, handmade and maintained over the centuries right up to our times.

In different seasons the valleys are coloured with a variety of multicolour effects, depending of the crops. Forests in the mountains and around cultivated land give hospitality to wild animals, as well as rivers and lakes. All together those agricultural landscapes represent a unique heritage value.

Small churches, monasteries, castles, manor houses and towers are elements of unique landscapes speaking about the history of a territory, also offering sometimes art masterpieces to their visitors.

This complementary set of tourism activities, including accommodation in traditional farmhouses, natural food from traditional recipes, a view into daily farm workings, the offer of visitor tours to local attractions and cultural events, can be very successful with customers looking for the real taste of the territory. Some thematic cultures, important for the history of European lands, have also generated a European project, the European Cultural Routes and Landscapes.





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## III.6 Rural tourism, farm crops and biodiversity

An advantage of agritourism for farmers is the opportunity to use their own farm products for traditional recipes offered to the customers. This is comparable to a direct sale to the client with an even higher revenue than from the market and an added value from the restaurant activity at the farm.

Farmers are therefore stimulated to diversify their own production and also to get in contact with other farmers to source what they cannot directly cultivate. In this way agritourism fosters a virtuous cycle in the rural economy and sometimes farmers are also encouraged to create producers' cooperatives and farmers' markets for communities and tourists.

This also favours the local sale of products, with a consequent reduction of emissions due to transport, the so called "0 kilometre" market. This attitude to provide local traditional food also encourages the rediscover old varieties, often lost or forgotten.

Genetic research and old farmers have together contributed to reproduce and save many seeds. There are international organisations, such as Slow Food or WWF (World Wildlife Fund), giving their support to seed savers and communities fit for biodiversity preservation.



Slow Food Agricultural  
biodiversity Rural communities





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## III.7 Rural tourism, landscaping and gardening

Gardening can be also an attractive outdoor activity that could be offered as a live laboratory to the visitors. Well-kept gardens are very important for rural tourism.

Flower gardens and groves are offered as green areas to customers for relaxation and leisure activities or breakfast and lunch, as well as for didactic farms hosting teachers and pupils. Kitchen gardens are like a living pantry of fresh vegetables and herbs always ready for culinary use.

Gardening is currently considered a pleasant hobby for people, both for roof gardens and villas. Some farms have also developed this activity as a professional nursery and garden centre, also with expertise in landscaping and the use of agricultural machines and equipment for this purpose.



Farmers as  
landscape  
designers





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## III.8 Rural tourism, food routes

The so called “wine and food movement” is a very important trend of the tourism market based on destinations famous for their high quality products. This kind of tourism has also been stimulated by local associations like “the routes of wine”, “the routes of olive trees”, “the towns of truffles”, etc.

Some names of towns or places to which those high quality products belong have become synonymous with excellence. The territory with its farming and landscapes is particularly important in representing this excellence and therefore traditional dishes and recipes have a special connection with local food heritage.

This is a starting point for farmers and communities offering rural tourism to understand how successful it can be to offer genuine ingredients and traditional cooking to their customers.

It will be necessary to observe HACCP rules (that are the international legal framework for food safety) from farm to fork, under a specific manual of procedures, but most importantly for the client will be the quality of cooking and goodness of tastes from natural fresh ingredients, traditions learned and the creativity symbol of the territory they visited.



Food routes





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### III.9 Rural tourism and didactic and social farms

Didactic activities are one of the most popular opportunities available to schools, to learn about the practical side of life in the countryside, what is the real beauty of rural landscapes, how food is made and farmed with respect for the environment.

Didactic farms have a long tradition in many European countries, so called “open farms” and “school farms” in the UK and Ireland, “fermes pédagogiques” in France, “granjas escuelas” in Spain, “boerderijschool” in the Netherlands and “fattorie didattiche” or “scuola in fattoria” in Italy.

Also popular are social farms, developed in many European countries since the 90's and stimulated by integration of social and healthcare services, increasing demand from families, associations and municipalities.

The theoretical approach was based on some holistic disciplines for rehabilitation in natural contexts offering enlargement of relationship spaces for people with mental disabilities, social disorders or serious family and personal troubles.

Reduction of disadvantage and discrimination, through a common mission, based on sharing practical tasks, projects and discussions, are the main goals of this kind of activity.



*Check out the FEAL Case Study DE04*

School farms, Social farming





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## III.10 Ecotourism and rural landscapes

Ecotourism is one of the most interesting evolving trends moving from the small niche markets according to the WTO (World Travel Organization), currently rated at 6% of the total market.

There are more traditional and contemplative kinds of environmental tourism activities, such as bird-watching, trekking and orienteering, and the more adventurous, such as canoeing, canyoning, rafting, climbing, hang gliding, downhill mountain biking, etc. This kind of tourist is mostly young or middle age, with a good budget and spending propension, sensitive and passionate, always looking for special emotions and/or performances.

The Rural Development Plans have contributed to funding local tourism products based on bike and mountain bike tourism, equestrian tourism, hiking and trekking tourism, etc. In many European countries there are international circuits for these kind of tourists, i.e. Eurovelo for bikers, Equestrian Tourism Routes for horse riders and European long-distance paths for trekkers, well developed with the contribution of local municipalities.

Farmers can be involved and contribute to these kind of facilities by maintaining and keeping open farmland paths and routes and providing customers with bike racks, post-stables for horses and a call service for assistance and recovery if needed.



Youth  
eco is in!





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## Chapter IV – Contributing to landscape protection, conservation and innovation

Traditional heritage and innovation are often considered opposing issues, but some advanced examples of rural tourism have been able to combine them.

Rural heritage is based on territory values, including landscapes, biodiversity, gastronomy, recipes, farmhouses and villages.

Innovation has developed and improved production processes, creating new attractive products and favouring sustainability based on renewable energy sources and constituting the so called circular economy.

In this way, by representing the best of the rural heritage and constantly engaged in innovation, the rural tourism movement has contributed simultaneously to preserving agricultural landscapes and biodiversity but also limiting greenhouse gases and environmental damage.



Traditions  
&  
Innovations merge in  
circular economy





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## IV.1 Sustainable innovation in rural buildings

Rural buildings adapted for hospitality should respect the traditional design of country and farm houses, but sometimes, when it is permitted to build a new house, it is also possible to adopt new modern technologies respecting energy saving principles and reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases. The so called passive houses (NZEB, Near Zero Energy Buildings) are built with renewable natural non-polluting substances and designed to save energy (exposure to the sun, insulating materials, smart energy systems and the use of warm and cold air streams,...).

Biomass recycled from pruning, straw and other kinds of natural substances, can be used for heating and energy production. Stables can be perfect supports for photovoltaic panels, also providing clean energy from the sun without having disturbing effects on the landscape.



Green buildings  
Green energy





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## IV.2 Courtyards, gardens and greens

Courtyards can be the heart of social life and a lovely place offered to customers with a view to the surrounding landscape. Gardens for an agritourism are more than a quick glance: they complete the rural character of a farmhouse, including a kitchen garden always fresh, fruit, vegetables and aromatic herbs. Even slopes can be cultivated with all kind of aromatic herbs for tasty recipes and healthy infusions, landscaping the garden, the green or the park. Beauty and relaxation are the main attributes of courtyards, gardens and greens as important complementary areas of the surrounding rural landscape. Old rural tools and artefacts, hung up or on the ground, can add a traditional feel to the environment as witnessed in the past.





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## IV.3 Flower and kitchen gardens and game courts

“The flower is the poetry of reproduction. It is an example of the eternal seductiveness of life”, wrote the famous French novelist Jean Giraudoux.

All great artists were enchanted by the wonderful show that nature offers with its numberless colours and odours. Even a rainy day can give you different lights and wet smells, not less pleasant than sunshine. The miracle of nature is something always changeable and this is also a plus of a holiday in a farmhouse surrounded by a beautiful landscape. If flowers can give you, as a customer, strong feelings, the kitchen garden is the real kingdom of ingredients and flavours of a rural restaurant.

Fields can also offer a play area for football, mini-golf, bowls or other kinds of entertainment for children and adults, always appreciated by customers who care to be surrounded by trees without being disturbing of the landscape view.



Environment as a  
witness to the past





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### IV.4 Food processing and traditional gastronomy as a plus for the territory

Food processing at farms is a very important added value for farmers offering rural tourism. There has been increasing interest in food origin over the last few years.

Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), covers agricultural products and foodstuffs which are produced, processed and prepared in a given geographical area using recognised know-how, Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), covers agricultural products and foodstuffs closely linked to the geographical area; at least one of the stages of production, processing or preparation takes place in the area, and Traditional Specialty Guarantee (TSG), refers to a traditional recipe, either in the composition or means of production.

All of them are certificated quality products under the protection of EU Regulations. This is a plus of quality for rural tourism because customers are directly guaranteed of the food authenticity, since they can directly check what is produced at the farm as a taste of the territory. Ingredients are from the farm or surrounding area and cheese, ham, jam, preserves are produced respectively from their own milk, pork, fruit and vegetables.

At a farm there is often home baked bread and cakes available, from traditional recipes. Where there are vineyards, olive trees or orchards, it means wine, extra-virgin-olive oil and homemade fruit juice are often available at the farm. In the last few years it has also become very popular to provide, homemade traditional beer and cider. All in all, from farm to fork food is one of the most appealing areas for agritourism customers.





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## IV.5 Rural tourism, trekking, hiking and wellness

Hiking and trekking are the slowest way to explore a territory.

A network involving public institutions in charge of tourism, tour operators and professional guides, is a good practice to improve customers services and associated satisfaction levels.

Information leaflets and detailed maps are to be available under request for trekkers and hikers to promote the territory and enjoy rural landscapes.

Circle tours with related metre drop and difficulty level are the best way to organize trekking for a group. For individuals asking for long distance treks a lift can be organized at the end of the trip to get back.

Holidays in the countryside are for customers synonymous of relaxation and wellness facilities, such as swimming pools, thermal baths can implement the appeal of a rural area offering to the tourists a bonus of wellbeing.

The design for these facilities has to pay special care to good camouflage within the environment without compromising the surrounding landscape.



Wellbeing in  
natural  
environment





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## IV.6 Rural tourism, equestrian tourism and bike tourism

In many countries there are rural areas often offering scenic landscapes, with a tradition for horse-riding and equestrian tourism. There are horse clubs organizing trips in such areas for their members.

These kind of holidays require a high level of facilities, such as post-stages for horses, equipped with all kind of wash and clean services, paddocks and veterinary assistance on demand.

Equestrian tourism is a special sport and leisure hobby and therefore agritourism offering accommodation, facilities and services for this purpose have to be specifically organized for this kind of tourism.

Bike tourism is very popular in many European countries. Cycling in the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Germany is a common and ecological mean of transport.

Mountain bike tourism is also a sport with many fans. For all of them it is important to have friendly accommodation and assistance on demand, also offering a small garage equipped for small repairs.

International circuits for bike tourists have been developed and maintained, i.e. Eurovelo, bike main roads connecting all the main European countries. Agritourism involved in this kind of tourism provide bike racks, information and maps for bike and mountain bike itineraries.



Equestrian Tourism  
Animal emphaty



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## IV.7 Rural tourism, fishing, birdwatching, boating and sailing

Rivers and lakes offer scenic landscapes and are very attractive for outdoor and active tourism.

Fresh water, indispensable to life, is also a tourism resource for fishermen, birdwatchers, sailors and many other kinds of water sport fans.

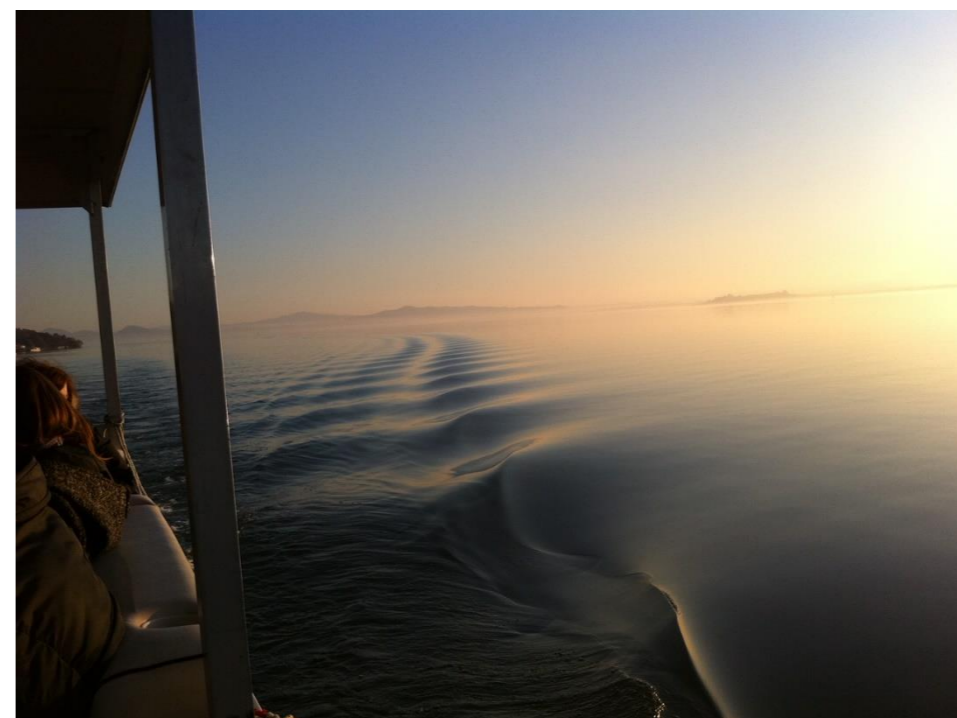
There are agritourisms specialized for hunting and fishing, where the customers find also specific information and assistance for these kind of leisure activities. Lake tourism destinations are equipped with all kind of facilities and services, such as a touristic harbour where it is possible to rent a boat, a sail or a windsurf.

For ecotourists there are wildlife reserves where it is possible to watch birds and other kind of fauna.

Rivers can be interesting for canoeing, rafting and canyoning disciplines, much appreciated by tourists of fun and adventure holidays.



Water offers  
adrenalin  
vs. relaxing  
activities





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## IV.8 Rural tourism and cultural tourism – festivals

The harmony of nature and the human touch gives a plus to a tourism destination. Masterpieces and special cultural events enrich this kind of tourism, aimed at persons attracted by cultural knowledge and representation. Performing arts, ballet, theatre, music, are also very attractive for cultural tourists. Farmhouses adapted for tourists can offer charming accommodation in the surroundings of locations chosen as part of festivals and events.

So it is very important for rural communities to communicate and update information on all kinds of cultural opportunities available in their own region. Special cultural events have become important yearly dates for fans, so customers are used to booking their accommodation every year.

The European Cultural Routes, under aegis of European Union and Council of Europe, are an example of cultural tourism products, also shared with Regions and Municipalities but rural communities should be more involved to make this initiative more successful and focused on the beauty of landscapes along the routes.



Festivals support  
tourism  
destinations





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## IV.9 Rural tourism, marketing and online commercialisation tools

Internet travel websites are currently considered the top choice by more than 50% of respondents to surveys on tourism information, followed by recommendations by family or friends and then, outdistanced, guidebooks, travel community sites, magazines and newspapers, traditional travel agents and visitor bureaus (source Expedia, 2007). Actually word-of-mouth is still important for tourism reputation and therefore also for customer care, but the internet is making more and more a difference to business success.

It is important for farmers to implement up to date techniques in communication and service to reach the goals of linking multifunctional farming and EAL, turning preservation of traditional elements of farming and EAL to sustainable development. Useful tools and means in communication can be:

- Internet travel website fostering public quality assessment of tourism services, tourism reputation
- Social media management to implement a friendly approach to customers
- Direct internet selling
- Online booking



CUSTOMER  
ANALYSIS  
ADVERTISING  
MARKET  
SALES  
PROMOTION  
PRICE  
INTERNET  
TARGET





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## Conclusions

*I grow plants for many reasons: to please my eye or to please my soul, to challenge the elements or to challenge my patience, for novelty or for nostalgia, but mostly for the joy in seeing them grow.▲*

— David Hobson

Sustainable farming and agritourism with connected customer services are the main ways to make farmers aware and responsible for the preservation of rural landscapes and local traditional food heritage as a symbol of the territory. Ecotourism cannot be considered as mass tourism, but it is rather a niche market with a positive trend due to the growing importance given to the natural environment and countryside far away from the crowded cities and traditional destinations. Regions with an agricultural vocation, also as a consequence of specific funds, have started to know a new sustainable development driven by rural tourism. Agritourism has become a popular word and a good business, so that some entrepreneurs, often without a previous direct connection with farming, have restored farmhouses, sometimes not offering genuine food from local farms, and, on the other hand, some farmers have simply obtained funds to restore own farmhouse without providing facilities and services attractive for tourists. In the last few years tourists looking for a real rural tourism experience have learnt to refine their choices, also adding to accommodation preference, authentic farm life, traditional dishes, outdoor activities, visits to old villages, farm markets and handicraft producers, etc.

In other words a valuable marketing mixture has become a plus for tourists looking for active holidays in the countryside and preservation of rural landscapes are taken into consideration by local communities and farmers as a local community capital to be preserved and maintained.





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