

TITLE: NETWORKING – TRAVEL & TOURISM AGENCIES

1. Introduction

This guideline is aimed at raising awareness to mentors the importance of networking for a farm / Agritourism enterprise in order to learn about new opportunities in the sector, new trends, funding programs and other benefits. This guideline will also describe the cooperation between travel & tourism agencies and Agritourism enterprises.

2. Key elements

2.1. Networking

Networking is vital for Agritourism enterprises especially because they are located in remote, mountainous rural areas away from the public services in the cities. The majority of European countries have associations / organisations that are established by government bodies or the private sector for Agritourism enterprises which offer a lot of benefits for their members. Some of these benefits are the information and the resources they provide, especially about new travel trends and opportunities, funding programs, marketing opportunities, business development, etc. These associations, through their cooperation with the government authorities & experience, can also be very helpful and provide support for following all the necessary procedures according to each country's law for the issuance of all the necessary licences needed in order for an Agritourism enterprise to operate properly. It is very important that these associations can provide marketing services through a common website, booking platforms, digital campaigns, participation in travel exhibitions, brochures and other media. For example, many associations maintain websites that market attractions in a geographic area or map driving routes to participating farms and other Agritourism sites. Additionally, these groups can provide an opportunity to network, interact, and learn from others who are involved in similar businesses. This enables farmers and other Agrotourism entrepreneurs to build upon the experiences of others in similar ventures. Also they provide information and organise training, conferences and recent research for the benefit of their members. Most of these associations are also involved in EU funding programs and participate in the European Federations of Rural Tourism or other international or EU associations.

Networking and cooperation with other enterprises within and outside the community is vital for an Agritourism enterprise since there is no other way to develop their services and offer quality rural travel experiences, be innovative and grow.

2.2. Travel & Tourism Agencies

Travel & Tourism Industry have been dealing mostly with sun & sea holiday destinations, city tourism, cultural tourism and other popular types of holidaymaking according to each destination. Nevertheless, Agritourism has been brought forward to tour operator's, travel agent's interests in recent years. In recent year's special interest tourism is growing with many travellers around the globe searching for alternative holidays in rural areas away from the mass tourism and the noise of the cities. They search for connections with the locals of a country, the animals, create experiences, learn more about the culture and nature, local products, food & wine, be active etc. The best way to achieve this is by staying in a farm or other rural accommodation and living like a local.



Government tourism bodies, tourism ministries, boards and other tourism bodies have been working in recent years in order to improve their destinations' rural holiday product. Most of the destinations are rethinking tourism products and trying to develop ones that can show the identity of their country and competitive advantages. A farmer / Agritourism entrepreneur can benefit and increase their reservations and income from the cooperation with a local tourism agency, or an OTA (Online travel agent) and travel counsellors. Tourism boards and ministries can implement funding schemes to tour operators in order to support rural businesses and increase the arrivals in these areas.

Domestic market with one day trips or longer stays during summer or bank holidays is the most important one.

3. Example

European Federation of Rural Tourism - Ruraltour - www.ruraltour.eu

RuralTour – European Federation of Rural Tourism offers you the unique opportunity for an authentic rural holiday experience. 30 professional organisations from 26 countries give you the choice between more than 100.000 establishments.

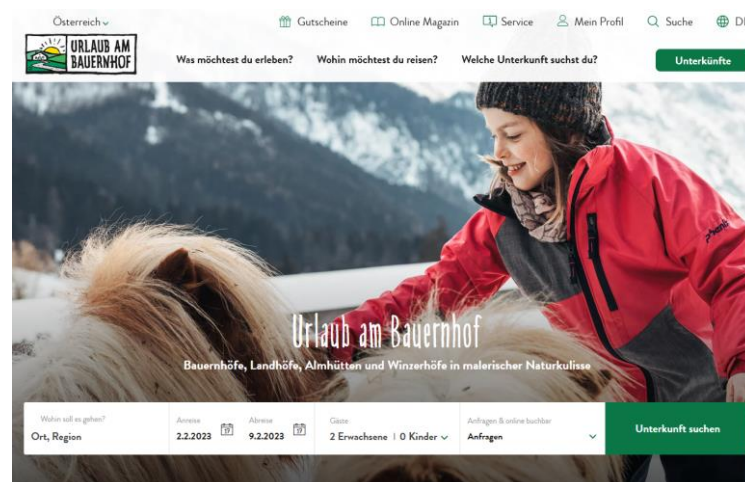
Bed & Breakfast or self-catering in private homes and farms, small family-run rural hotels and guesthouses, home-made meals, or active tourism: all stand for the authentic rural, country, and farm tourism experience in Europe under the quality label of EuroGites.

A wonderful story: going back to your roots

Live again village celebrations, discover the perfumes of your childhood and enjoy the quietness and the silence provided by nature. Meet and appreciate the men and the women who live and make the countryside of today!

Thanks to Ruraltour, the European Federation of Rural Tourism, you have already made half way leading you to the dream offered by all good stories. It is now up to you to make a choice among the 26 countries of Europe.

Through its structuring of 30 professional associations of rural tourism, Ruraltour' particular aim is to guide you and make your choice secure. Make good use of the great amount of information and practical advice that you will find about the different countries and offer through the web-links to our members. And then, be ready to experience your dream holidays!





[Landurlaub Mecklenburg-Vorpommern](#)

[Kataloge »](#)

4. Benefits and potential impact

The benefits and impact you might have from the guideline implementation are:

For the mentor	For the mentee
✓ To promote networking involvement to the Agritourism entrepreneurs	✓ To be part of these networks and understand the benefits of it
✓ To learn more about the several networking associations/organisations	✓ To decide in which association will participate