



Women Entrepreneurs in Rural Tourism WP3 Needs Analysis Synthesis Report April 2011



Association
of Cypriot Women in
Tourism



1. Introduction

In this report, the research findings from partner countries (Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Spain and UK) are summarised in line with WP3 needs analysis aims which are to:

- Identify the issues that affect women entrepreneurs in rural areas and potential entrepreneurs in relation to tourism, crafts and food production building on initial research and European Rural Tourism Development (ERTD) findings
- Identify the specific needs of target groups so as to define the training content required
- Identify the appropriate delivery methods to suit the target groups

The report is based on country reports, survey results and discussions involving partners and target group representatives at the second transnational meeting held in April 2011. Recommendations for taking forward the research results are included in Section 6.

2. Research methodology

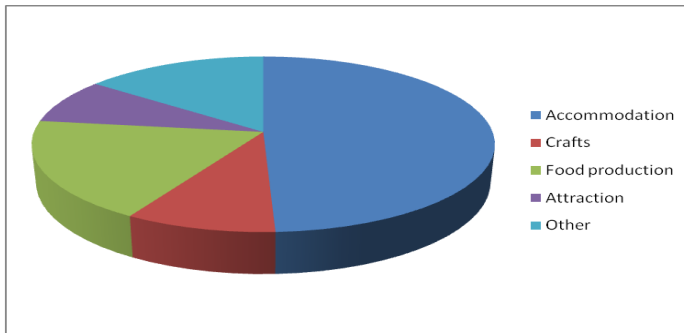
Following the agreed research methodology (Appendix 1), a survey was designed and agreed based on discussions with all partners and a target group representative at the first transnational project meeting in November 2010. The survey was translated into partner languages to make it more accessible to target groups.

Social partners were actively involved in the process to develop databases and access target groups. Networks and associations were also used to reach the target groups.

From January – March 2011, desk research and survey completion was conducted in partner countries. Surveys were completed using a range of methods including telephone, e-mail and face to face discussions with individuals and network groups.

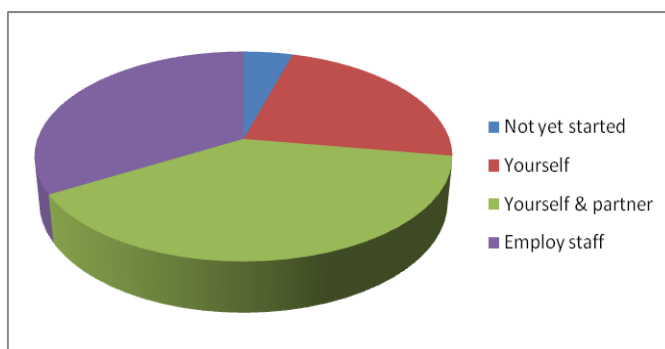
3. Survey sample

A total of 157 women entrepreneurs responded to the survey. The majority (92%) were established businesses. The views of 13 women entrepreneurs who plan to start a rural tourism business are included in the sample with at least one respondent in each partner country.



All target sectors of women entrepreneurs are represented in the sample. Accommodation is the sector most widely represented (101 respondents) followed by food production (38), crafts (19) and attractions (17) although some respondents are involved in more than one sector and 30 specified the 'other' category. There were

variations in sector representation in partner countries e.g. in Greece, food production was the sector with the highest number of respondents.



30% of respondents worked with their partner/family, 25% employed staff, 18% worked on their own and 4% had not yet started their business. This indicates that in the sample, women entrepreneurs' businesses are often small family businesses with only one quarter employing staff.

4. Summary of research findings – issues, training needs & best means of delivery to target groups

Overall results show that current skill levels were seen to be fair to satisfactory and that there was interest in all the areas of training in the survey with mean scores ranging from 3.12 to 4.01.

The overall key training needs in order of priority were identified as follows (please see Appendix 2 for more detail). It should however be noted that there were variations in training needs between partner countries

Training would be useful	Mean (1=not useful, 5=very useful)
How to market your business and develop your product	4.01
Using computers and the internet for marketing – websites, search engine optimisation	3.81
Financial management e.g. sources of finance, cash flow, profit & loss, pricing	3.78
Developing a sustainable rural tourism business	3.70
Developing a tourist business which is accessible to all	3.66

Legal aspects - finding out about regulations	3.65
Developing a quality customer service	3.63
Ability to diversify	3.61
Business planning and research	3.56
Cultural awareness and foreign languages	3.56

Marketing was perceived as a key training need in order to be competitive and, in some cases survive in the current economic climate. This extends to using computers and the internet for marketing, although this need is less marked in the sample from Estonia (mean of 3.05). Discussions with the UK target group revealed that women entrepreneurs feel the need to keep up to date with technology, research and marketing.

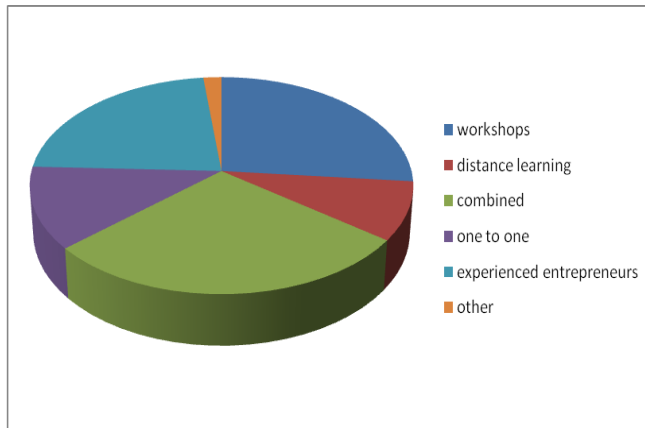
General business skills such as financial management, legal aspects, diversification, planning and research feature as areas where respondents feel they need support. Pricing was mentioned by respondents from Greece and the UK as an issue, particularly in terms of being competitive. Legal aspects and the level of bureaucracy for small businesses were seen as an issue by some UK respondents. Managing staff and team building was seen as a lower priority for training which could be due to the small business size and family nature of the sample.

In terms of rural tourism services, sustainability scored highly particularly in Spain and Cyprus although this could be interpreted either as developing a 'green' business or a survival strategy. There was generally a high interest in developing a business which is accessible to all and developing a quality customer service but this was noticeably lower in the UK (mean 2.85) which may be due to the fact that the respondents feel their current skill level is adequate. The need for accommodation management training varied significantly between countries with a high need in Spain (mean 4.23) and Cyprus (4.43) and was influenced by the sample structure.

The current skill levels and training needs in using computers varied significantly between countries. In Finland and the UK, for example, respondents appear confident in basic computer skills and need help with more advanced skills such as websites and search engine optimisation. In Spain, Greece and Cyprus, respondents indicate that more basic computer training is needed.

In the survey, self development was the area of least interest to respondents overall. However, in discussions with respondents in Greece and Cyprus, time management, balancing work and family and lack of confidence in business skills were seen to be issues. In Cyprus and Spain building confidence and networking were seen as key training needs with means of 4.64 and 3.85 respectively. In Finland, where the respondent network has been established for ten years, the desire to market to each other and visit women entrepreneurs in other countries was expressed.

Other training areas identified included first aid, safety, recruitment during busy periods and gastronomy. Please see country reports and survey results on the project website for more detail.



In terms of delivery, the key message was that training should be local with respondents willing to travel a maximum of one hour. Blended learning (workshops and distance learning combined) was the most popular method of delivery at 29% of total respondents, followed by a series of workshops (27%) and learning from experienced entrepreneurs (23%). Coaching was favoured by new entrepreneurs.

Whilst online learning was the last popular method, this was requested by some respondents living in remote areas or at a distance from training providers.

Discussions with women entrepreneurs confirmed that workshops were popular and that they should be practical with the opportunity to try out new skills such as computer skills during the workshops. It was also suggested that workshops could be held as part of regular network meetings for specific groups e.g. self catering accommodation providers.

The idea of an online network for women entrepreneurs was well received with 72% of respondents saying this would be useful to their business. A wide range of topics for discussion was contributed. However, 24% stated that they did not know indicating that the idea of an online community is not easily understood.

5. Specific country requirements & difficulties

Access to technology and connectivity were issues for some women entrepreneurs in more remote rural areas. In addition, in Greece, for example, it was noted that there can be a reluctance to get involved with technology and the belief that older women, who are active in associations and who have a low literacy level, will have difficulties in acquiring such skills. This reluctance posed difficulties in the survey completion phase of this research where individual discussions with respondents were found to be the only route to gather information. The generation gap and the fact that fewer younger women choose to live in rural areas also present issues in terms of implementing innovative training.

Infrastructure and travel time to attend training workshops are an issue for those living in more remote rural areas and on islands. Taking time away from the business is also an issue for many respondents.

With the exception of UK respondents (mean 2.66), training was felt to be useful in cultural awareness and foreign languages. Scores were highest in Spain and Cyprus

at 4.19 and 4.29 respectively. In Spain (Basque Country), respondents felt that the ability to communicate with visitors in English and French was important whilst in Finland, the ability to speak English, Russian and German to visitors was perceived to be a benefit. In Estonia, some respondents would like to learn more about how to market to foreign tourists.

Making government authorities more aware of current conditions in rural tourism was seen as a need by respondents in Spain and Greece in particular. In the sample from Cyprus, there were mixed views on this project as little interest had been shown in helping this target group previously but high scores in the survey in all areas suggest that training would be well received.

For new entrepreneurs, respondents in Estonia suggested creativity training and mentor programmes.

6. Recommendations

Based on the country reports, target group discussions and survey findings in partner countries, women entrepreneurs involved in rural tourism are looking for future orientated training to help them develop their businesses and indeed, survive, in the current economic climate. 'Developing a sustainable rural tourism business' in both senses of 'sustainable' i.e. being 'green' and surviving would be an apt description of the overall need.

Qualitative research through discussions with women entrepreneurs was felt to provide more insight into actual training needs and project partners will continue contact with target groups during the product development and pilot phases to check that the training meets current and future needs. In particular, cultural suitability of the product in each partner country will need to be taken into account by partners in the content and delivery of training. Time will be devoted to visiting rural enterprises and involving women entrepreneurs during transnational project meetings.

The intention of the transnational project team is to develop a business course which focuses on the needs of women entrepreneurs particularly through the delivery of the training. At the pilot phase, it is recommended that partners select units from the course of most need to their target group and deliver the training as close to possible to the participants' location. Training could take place in town halls, during regular network meetings or in a rural tourism venue for example. Internet access should also be considered.

Respondents have indicated that training should be very practical and focused in order to meet needs in as short a time as possible. Group work should be used to encourage the sharing of ideas and experience and help participants to build confidence in business development. At the pilot recruitment phase, the time required to complete the training should be made clear to ensure commitment and maximum benefit to participants. Influencers such as government authorities should also be invited to attend pilot training in order to build awareness of the target group needs. An online pilot option should be considered for those living at a distance from

the training venue.

A course structure has been developed based on these research findings and partner discussions at the second transnational meeting. Learning materials from the ERTD course will need to be selected and updated – particularly information technology and legal areas. New learning materials will be submitted by all partners as part of the product development phase (Work Package 4). Case studies, videos, practical tasks, external speakers, visits to rural tourism enterprises will also be considered by partners. Contact with social partners and rural tourism networks should continue as the training product is developed.

A wide range of topics have been suggested for the online WERT community (Work Package 7) All partners should encourage target group individuals to start discussions in these areas and share ideas across Europe.

Regular contact with respondents who gave their contact details on the questionnaire should be established to build the WERT community and encourage participation in the pilot.

A separate mobility initiative will be considered to enable women entrepreneurs to visit rural tourism businesses in other partner countries to share ideas and experiences.

7. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Research Methodology

Appendix 2 – Skill Area Summary

Appendix 3 – Survey results all countries

Please see project website http://europe.nortcoll.ac.uk/wert/project_progress.html for individual country reports and survey results under WP3 Needs Analysis.

APPENDIX 1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research aims

In line with WP3 aims, the aims of the needs analysis research are to:

- Identify the issues that affect women entrepreneurs in rural areas and potential entrepreneurs in relation to tourism, crafts and food production building on initial research and ERTD findings
- Identify the specific needs of target groups in each partner country so as to define the training content required
- Identify the appropriate delivery methods to suit the target groups in partner countries.

2. Desk research

The European Rural Tourism Development (ERTD) project findings and evaluations on which transfer is based will be summarised for discussion by all partners at the first project meeting. A summary of key needs identified in the preliminary research findings will also be prepared for partners to discuss at the meeting.

Desk research has been conducted into other EU rural enterprise projects as a source of ideas for our approach to needs analysis and training package development. This will also be discussed at the first meeting.

Partners should research networks of women entrepreneurs involved in rural tourism in their countries for survey distribution and discussion involving social partners where appropriate. They should also investigate any relevant national data and reports into the needs of the target group for inclusion in WP3 country reports.

3. Survey

The design of the needs analysis survey will be agreed with partners at the first meeting to meet the above aims.

Core partners will translate the survey into partner languages (Estonian, Finnish, Greek and Spanish) by end December 2010.

Core partners will work with social partners and other networks to conduct the needs analysis survey with a minimum of 20 respondents from the target groups by 11 February 2011. Partners will decide the most effective way to conduct the survey in their country e.g. by e-mail to networks, face to face discussions, postal, on-line, focus group, etc. Respondents will be invited to participate in the pilot testing of the product (a minimum of 8-12 participants required per country).

VET partners will collate the results of the survey for their country.

4. Reports and recommendations

Country reports covering the key findings of the needs analysis survey will be produced by partner countries by end February 2011 following template provided.

Key findings and recommendations on which training will be based will be presented and discussed at Work Meeting 2. NRC will then produce a Synthesis Report identifying common strands, individual partner country needs and building on ERTD research and findings by end April 2011.

The synthesis report will be translated into partner languages by end May 2011 and communicated in all partner languages as part of dissemination and exploitation activities and through the project WERT web site.

The results of this work package will be used to develop the training product in Work Package 4 and the WERT community Work Package 7.

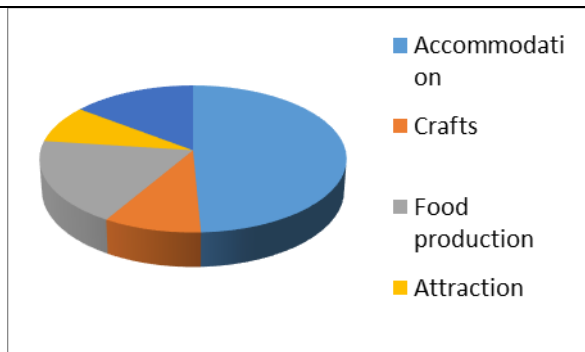
APPENDIX 2 SKILL AREA SUMMARY

	FI	ES	EE	UK	EL	CY	All countries	Rank
Training would be useful - mean								
General business skills								
Business planning and research	3.00	3.58	3.11	3.14	4.20	4.33	3.56	9
Ability to diversify	3.33	4.04	3.16	3.08	3.70	4.33	3.61	8
Financial management e.g. sources of finance, cash flow, profit & loss, pricing	3.57	3.96	3.18	3.61	4.00	4.33	3.78	3
Legal aspects - finding out about regulations	3.19	3.77	3.14	3.64	4.10	4.07	3.65	6
How to market your business and develop your product	3.86	4.27	3.23	3.89	4.50	4.33	4.01	1
Managing staff and team building	2.81	3.19	3.23	2.36	3.70	3.73	3.17	20
Using computers								
Basic word processing	2.33	4.15	3.57	2.08	3.40	3.79	3.22	19
Databases and spreadsheets	2.71	4.23	3.20	3.52	3.20	4.00	3.48	11
Using e-mail	1.95	4.08	3.07	2.04	3.90	3.67	3.12	21
Using computers and the internet for marketing – websites, search engine optimisation	4.00	4.08	3.05	3.89	3.90	3.93	3.81	2
Social networking e.g. facebook, LinkedIn, twitter	3.05	3.23	2.68	3.68	3.60	3.79	3.34	15
Rural tourism services								
Developing a sustainable rural tourism business	3.10	4.23	3.45	3.33	3.60	4.50	3.70	4
Organising and running alternative leisure activities for tourists	2.71	3.81	3.30	2.76	3.60	4.21	3.40	14
Developing a quality customer service	3.29	3.92	3.34	2.85	4.50	3.86	3.63	7
Developing a tourist business which is accessible to all	3.05	4.15	3.36	2.85	4.10	4.43	3.66	5
Accommodation management and maintenance	2.57	4.23	3.16	2.67	2.90	4.43	3.33	16

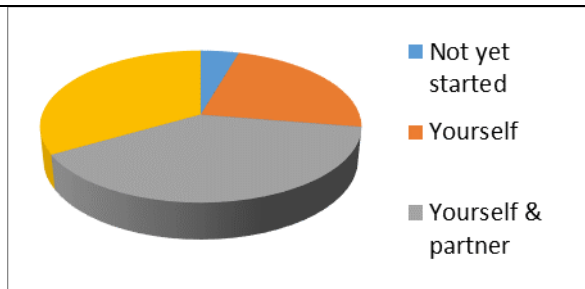
Self development								
Time planning - balancing work and family	2.95	3.69	3.27	2.64	3.30	4.07	3.32	17
Building confidence and networking	2.86	3.85	3.25	2.78	3.40	4.64	3.46	12
Written communication skills	2.62	4.08	3.39	2.18	3.50	3.86	3.27	18
Making presentations	2.90	3.88	3.09	2.71	3.90	4.21	3.45	13
Cultural awareness and foreign languages	3.19	4.19	3.52	2.66	3.50	4.29	3.56	10

APPENDIX 3 SURVEY RESULTS ALL COUNTRIES

Please state your current business situation								
Planning to start a rural tourism business	2	2	5	2	1	1	13	8%
Established rural tourism business	19	25	39	28	19	14	144	92%
Total	21	27	44	30	20	15	157	
Accommodation	8	26	32	23	3	9	101	49%
Crafts	1	0	7	6	4	1	19	9%
Food production	2	6	3	7	14	6	38	19%
Attraction	0	0	11	4	2	0	17	8%
Other, please specify in box below	10	3	12	5	0	0	30	15%



	FI	ES	EE	UK	EL	CY	All	
Not yet started	1	2	3	1	0	0	7	4%
Yourself	8	11	8	5	2	2	36	18%
Yourself and partner	5	10	19	18	5	4	61	30%
Employ staff	7	0	14	7	16	8	52	25%



Current skill level – mean								
General business skills								
Business planning and research								
	3,05	2,96	3,00	2,88	2,60	3,36	2,97	12
Ability to diversify								
	3,19	3,00	3,05	3,52	2,10	2,64	2,92	14
Financial management e.g. sources of finance, cash flow, profit & loss, pricing								
	3,05	3,12	2,89	3,00	2,60	2,71	2,89	16
Legal aspects - finding out about regulations								
	3,14	2,62	2,70	2,77	2,00	3,14	2,73	20
How to market your business and develop your product								
	3,10	2,81	2,95	3,17	2,30	3,14	2,91	15
Managing staff and team building								
	3,14	3,12	3,14	3,32	2,90	3,36	3,16	6
Using computers								
Basic word processing								
	3,81	2,81	3,80	4,14	2,00	3,57	3,35	4
Databases and spreadsheets								
	3,19	3,42	3,16	2,89	1,70	3,14	2,92	13
Using e-mail								
	4,24	3,92	4,39	4,21	2,70	3,79	3,87	1
Using computers and the internet for marketing – websites, search engine optimisation								
	2,81	3,19	2,93	3,00	1,60	3,36	2,82	19
Social networking e.g. facebook, LinkedIn, twitter								
	2,62	2,38	2,59	2,24	2,00	3,15	2,50	21
Rural tourism services								
Developing a sustainable rural tourism business								
	3,48	3,48	3,09	3,03	1,90	3,14	3,02	9

Organising and running alternative leisure activities for tourists	3,48	3,48	3,25	2,41	1,80	2,64	2,84	18
Developing a quality customer service	3,81	3,81	3,50	3,67	2,50	3,43	3,45	3
Developing a tourist business which is accessible to all	3,05	2,91	3,09	3,24	1,90	2,93	2,85	17
Accommodation management and maintenance	3,29	3,45	3,41	3,48	1,40	3,00	3,01	10
Self development								
Time planning - balancing work and family	2,95	2,95	3,30	2,97	3,10	3,57	3,14	7
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Written communication skills	3,57	3,57	3,66	3,93	2,30	3,71	3,46	2
Making presentations	3,43	3,43	2,95	3,21	2,50	3,21	3,12	8
Cultural awareness and foreign languages	3,48	3,32	3,07	2,97	1,70	3,50	3,00	11
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How to market your business and develop your product	3,86	4,27	3,23	3,89	4,50	4,33	4,01	1
Managing staff and team building	2,81	3,19	3,23	2,36	3,70	3,73	3,17	20
Using computers								
Basic word processing	2,33	4,15	3,57	2,08	3,40	3,79	3,22	19

Databases and spreadsheets								
	2,71	4,23	3,20	3,52	3,20	4,00	3,48	11
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	1,95	4,08	3,07	2,04	3,90	3,67	3,12	21
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	2,86	3,85	3,25	2,78	3,40	4,64	3,46	12
Written communication skills								
	2,62	4,08	3,39	2,18	3,50	3,86	3,27	18
Making presentations								
	2,90	3,88	3,09	2,71	3,90	4,21	3,45	13
Cultural awareness and foreign languages								
	3,19	4,19	3,52	2,66	3,50	4,29	3,56	10
Series of workshops	4	9	9	19	12	8	61	27%
Distance (online) learning	3	3	0	6	5	3	20	9%
Workshops and distance learning combined	8	11	24	10	7	5	65	28%
One to one coaching	3	4	4	8	6	3	28	12%
Learning from other experienced entrepreneurs	3	11	0	21	12	5	52	23%

Other (please state in box below)	0	1	0	2	1	0	4	2%
a) yes	13	20	29	19	18	12	111	72%
b) no	2	3	1	0	1	0	7	5%
c) don't know	6	5	14	9	1	2	37	24%

