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Mini-study in the field of services innovation in tourism niche markets

prepared for the European Commission
DG Enterprise & Industry

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1   Preliminary notes

1.1   Objektives

The aim of this study is to identify the future potential for service innovation in tourism in rural and mountain areas, in particular in fields enhanced by mobile technologies. Special consideration is given to culture tourism as one of the growing tourism markets.

1.2   Methodology

The study firstly gives an **overview on the state of the art in tourism and the creative industries** in rural areas. Then the chances for culture tourism as a niche market in rural and mountain areas are characterised by demographic change and new target groups. **Success factors and barriers** for culture tourism are identified.

The study then reviews **trends for added value service innovations** that are mainly based on mobile technologies. This is done by best practices Europe-wide. It looks into the trends of using free internet services (browser based) or service delivered through closed spaces, such as "apps" and which opportunities this opens for innovative services. Specific emphasis is paid to innovative services that support sustainable tourism in these regions and help better valorising the regional potential of culture and creativity.

The study also reviews through which new forms of **public-private partnerships** such service innovations could be supported and what the implications for regional development strategies are. It identifies possible ways and instruments to support the emergence of new activities at regional level that are enabled by innovative mobile services and aiming at making rural and mountain regions a more attractive touristic destination, including through the use of "App's".

Finally, **ten recommendations** are shown as guidelines for fostering sustainable culture tourism in rural areas.

This study is based on two national studies on tourism in rural areas which Kultur und Arbeit e. V. implemented in 2009 in Germany. The results were checked concerning their relevance for other EU regions. Additionally, this study includes desk-research, analysis and validation of best practice concerning the close connection between innovation and success in terms of generating income in rural areas.

1.3   Special focus

This study had a clear focus to provide input for the seminar of the European Commission's Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General in cooperation with the Valle d'Aosta Autonomous Region, 22-23 November 2010. Therefore major trends and the potential role that service innovation can play to offer new or better job opportunities for skilled people in remote and less densely populated regions were specifically considered. Based on this trend analysis, general policy recommendations on how to foster this development were given.

2 Executive summary

The catalytic and spill-over effects of culture tourism can be significant for driving innovation across local and regional economy. Supporting culture tourism's growth in rural areas is not simply about promoting a single sector, but rather has the potential to strengthen the region's innovation capacity and competitiveness and support the creation of new jobs.

Culture tourism presents a sustainable opportunity for economic development in rural areas, especially at a time when many other economic sectors are suffering decline. Culture tourism is a niche market and will not be a big economic player, but it has the potential to act as a serious part in the puzzle of rural economy if highly innovative aspects and the opportunities of new information technologies are supported in an economically targeted way.

3 State of the art

All over Europe, the potential economic development of culture is in the very beginning stages – at least in small cities and rural regions. Many large cities, such as Berlin, Vienna and London, strive for more economic use of their cultural wealth and have started to implement strategies for generating additional revenue.

With good reason: The cultural and creative sector in Europe turned over € 654 billion in 2003 (the turnover of the car manufacturing industry was € 271 billion in 2001 and the turnover generated by ICT manufacturers was € 541 billon in 2003). The sector contributed to 2.6% of EU GDP in 2003 and the sector's growth 1999-2003 was 12.3% higher than the growth of the general economy.[1]

However, it is not adequate, to speak of rural areas in general, because there are serious differences of rural or low density areas on national as well as European level. Therefore, in this study **rural areas are defined as areas with low density, with settlement structures of small towns and villages, specific social and socio-economic ways of living.** These areas differ from urban regions, but are not completely characterised by agriculture. Concerning **small cities** this study follows the definition of Deutscher Tourismusverband which defined cities with 20.000 - 50.000 inhabitants as "small cities"[2]. This study does not take into consideration commuter belt cities at the borders of large cities and metropolitan areas.

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[1] Executive Summary of "The Economy of Culture in Europe", study prepared for the European Commission Directorate – General for Education and Culture, October 2006, p. 6. This study offers the latest European data. In single member states there are more recent data available.

[2] Deutscher Tourismusverband e. V. [German Tourist Association]: *„Städte- und Kulturtourismus in Deutschland"*, Bonn 2006, p 6.

3.1   Preconditions of rural areas

Most of the policy and academic debates have focused on urban areas and creative industries are seen to have an urban affinity. However, Eurostat stated in 2007 a share of 24% of cultural employment in sparsely populated areas in the EU-27, which is nearly a quarter of cultural employment at all.[3] This should be worth receiving increased attention. Nevertheless, small cities and their surrounding rural regions, which normally do not concentrate economic power like urban areas, seem to be left out of these developments. There are many well known problems:

- obsolescence resulting in declining population,
- relocation of the economically active population,
- desertification of grown city centres,
- not enough people interested in cultural offerings or mobile enough to participate in them,
- less available money,
- less interest and knowledge about ongoing issues in culture,
- insufficiently developed cooperation and network structures,
- the constant need to overcome long(er) geographic distances and last but not least
- fast broadband Internet access is not available everywhere, which results in limited access to data transfer and fewer opportunities to fully utilize new information technologies.

Additionally, there seem to be specific gender aspects in the described problems: According to the Rostock Zentrum zur Erforschung des demografischen Wandels[4], young people and especially highly qualified young women leave rural areas mainly due to few opportunities to find an adequate job in the countryside. Fewer career opportunities, lower salary levels, fewer chances for further education and qualification, fewer possibilities for culture and leisure activities, and fewer chances to find an adequate partner represent the reasons why young people leave their hometowns and villages and move to large cities or metropolitan regions. Large cities already provide a shaped infrastructure for young women, specifically for those who need to combine their ambitions in gainful employment with children and family life, whereas in rural areas all-day childcare is still an exception. **However, the bond of young people from rural areas to their home towns is quite strong, and many of them would come back if the infrastructural and employment conditions were more attractive.**

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[3] EUROSTAT, Eurostat Pocketbooks: *Cultural Statistics*, European Commission 2006

[4] entitled 'Centre for Research on Demographic Change'; Westphal C*.: "Die Jugend wandert ab" ["Migrating Youth"],* in: *LandInForm*, 1/2010, pp. 14-15 (accessed at www.rostockerzentrum.de on 21 October 2010); their work focuses on the German situation but the described developments in rural areas are expected to be representative for European rural areas as well

On the other hand, rural areas have advantages as well which especially cultural communities clearly appreciate:

- lower cost of living, especially lower rent costs for office space and studios,
- lower business start-up costs,
- higher quality of life especially for families,
- (often still) good living infrastructure,
- identification with local people and authenticity in lifestyle,
- broad variety of cultural institutions, partly of international relevance,[5]
- access to a wide range of funding sources which aim at stabilising rural regions.

3.2 Specific preconditions for creative industries

Stimulating cultural economic power in small cities and rural areas does not necessarily transfer from existing urban strategies applicable to the countryside. This is notably obvious in culture tourism as one of the most interesting fields of cultural economic power.[6] The specific problems were identified in two studies by Kultur und Arbeit e. V. 2009.[7] Aim of the studies was to present the criteria for revitalising the rural economic area and living space for the inhabitants. The deficits for cultural economic growth were clearly visible:

- *A sensitised environment is barely given:* creative industries are not perceived in terms of economic factors yet
- *Lack of data*: hardly ever data is collected and analysed in a systematic way

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[5] See Drda-Kühn, Karin / Weingarten, Joe (ed*): "Land der Möglichkeiten. Kunst-, Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft in Rheinland-Pfalz"*, Zukunftsinitiative Rheinland-Pfalz, volume 6 | 2010, Mainz 2010. There the cultural sector with its implications for creative industries is comprised for a whole German Bundesland.

[6] It was explicitly identified by a study of the Creative City Networks, which clearly stated, 'Some researchers warn of the potential of introducing inappropriate frameworks to rural based cultural initiatives, and question the idea of transferring "urban-centric" creative economy policies and practices to rural locations', in: Duxbury, N., Campbell, H., and Keurvorst, E. (2009) *Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Culture: a Literature Review' – Summary Overview.,* Vancouver, Canada: Creative City Network of Canada, p.5.

[7] Drda-Kühn, Karin/ Wiegand, Dietmar: *„Förderung von Unternehmen der Kulturwirtschaft und des Handels in der Raiffeisenregion" ["Fostering enterprises of creative industries and economy of the Raiffeisen region"]*, commissioned by the city of Altenkirchen and co-funded by the Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of Economics, Mainz/Germany 2009

Drda-Kühn, Karin/ Wiegand, Dietmar: *„Identifizierung des kulturell-touristischen Potenzials der Verbandsgemeinde Altenkirchen"," ["Identification of the cultural touristic potential of the Altenkirchen municipality""]*, commissioned by the city of Altenkirchen and co-funded by the Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of Education, Science, Youth and Culture, Mainz/Germany 2009

- *Qualified actors are missing,* who could support and network with the creative industries locally.
- Especially small municipalities are located in low density areas, what *increases requirements for communication and mobility*
- *Places of cultural interaction and communication are less often,* they have to be organised (e.g. by events), while in urban areas such locations (cultural centres, cafés, creative quarters) are part of the cultural infrastructure
- *The use of new information technologies is restricted* and does not get support as an instrument for economic growth and development
- *The economic power of social media / social* communities *is underestimated.*

4 Culture tourism – growth market with future chances

Culture tourism is a niche market yet, with a supposed share of 7-10% of overall tourism.[8] **It is regarded as a „megatrend" in tourism, as one of the few growth segments of touristic demand at all.** Main advantage is that much more target groups can be addressed than in sports tourism or recreational tourism. This makes it independent form vogues, economic cycles and demographic changes.

That culture tourism is a growing touristic segment, is shown by the „Tourism Analysis 2010" of the German „Stiftung für Zukunftsfragen". It includes a statement highly interesting for culture tourism in rural areas: In culture tourism there is an increasing interest in cultural offers for everyone: "Travellers are no longer only interested in high cultural offers (museums, theatre, art exhibitions) but more and more in cultural offers for everyone like street theatre, open-air concerts, city or public festivals."[9] This complies well with the huge offer of popular events in rural areas.

4.1 Demographic change – the big chance for culture tourism

The demographic change offers chances explicitly for culture tourism, and rural areas would be well advised to start with preparations. The so called "**silver agers"** (persons beyond 60) are of special interest. This **generation 60+** is constantly growing and is expected to have an attrac-

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[8] Deutscher Tourismusverband e.V., 2006. The data can be taken as an indicator only as this study focused on city tourism mainly.

[9] Stiftung für Zukunftsfragen [‚Foundation for Future Questions']: *„Tourismusanalyse 2010"*, Hamburg 2010, p 29 [„Nicht mehr nur hochkulturelle Angebote (Museen, Theater, Kunstausstellung) stehen im Interesse der Reisenden, sondern zunehmend auch breitenkulturelle Angebote – vom Straßentheater über Open-Air-Konzerte bis zu Stadt- und Volksfest."]

tive share of around 31% of tourism until 2020.[10] Meanwhile, this group is regarded as the economic engine of tourism. The group includes a big share of well educated and culturally interested as well as economically well established persons. The fulfilment of their special needs (e.g. mobility support to cultural heritage sites, access free of barriers to cultural events, bigger lettering in exhibitions) will gain relevance in the future. Additionally, this is the fastest growing group in electronic social communities like Facebook.[11]

4.2   Social change: new family conformations

Social conditions are creating new target groups for culture tourism as well: so called "**patchwork families**" with former and current partners, own children and children of different partners, turn out to be attractive target groups. According to experiences, these families appreciate cultural offers which cover the interests of different tastes.

Due to the fact that families are often living far apart from each other, they try to spend a holiday together with members of different generations. These **multi-generation vacationers** are looking for holiday offers which are interesting for all members of the family, and culture offers perfect opportunities to spend time together in a relaxing and entertaining way. Cultural heritage sites are interesting for grandparents as well as children, and especially a great variety of edutainment is welcome and highly appreciated.

4.3   Migrants - new target groups for culture tourism

Migrants all over Europe have established their own communities which act according to own rules and needs. They are situated in urban as well as in low density areas. Interesting enough, young migrants stick to the social and cultural events of their families and estimate them as a bond to their own history. Their social events generate new kinds of tourism, e.g. the wedding tourism in Turkish and German-Russian communities which is strongly connected with art and culture[12].

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[10] *„Auswirkungen des demographischen Wandels auf den Tourismus und Schlussfolgerungen für die Tourismuspolitik"* [„Impact of demographic change on tourism and conclusions for tourism policies"], Study commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology 2009

[11] According to www.facebookmarketing.de, checked November 5th, 2010

[12] E. g. the art of embroideries on wedding clothes, special culinary dishes and the professional moderation of weddings as a truly cultural historic event with music, dance and cultural presentations generate new businesses.

Following a study of Turkish, Chinese and South Asian cultural enterprises in the Austrian city of Vienna[13], migrants have their own share of cultural events and create numerous innovative businesses around them. There is also a cultural touristic potential which is fed by migrants as well as local inhabitants who participate e.g. in fashionable clubbing events or highly specialised art performances. These events are visited by interested communities from all over Europe and take place in rural areas as well as in urban surroundings. Many of them refrain from "traditional" instruments of advertising but are communicated exclusively via Web 2.0 measures within their respective communities.

5   Success factors and barriers for culture tourism

Recent research and experiences identified success factors and barriers for culture tourism in rural areas[14], and their results are consistent in one specific point: **innovative networks seem to be the most relevant success factor for culture tourism**.

5.1   The power of networks and cooperation

The evidence of the aforementioned studies is that the **initiation, creation and professional monitoring of networks are of essential importance in the cultural economy for municipalities in rural areas**. "Cooperation" seems to be a kind of leitmotif for stimulating resources. These networks serve as continuous learning systems that lay the foundation for securing and developing the attractiveness of the living and working environment of small cities in the country.

Presently, there are only a few successfully working networks with a cultural economic focus Europe wide which could possibly serve as role models for small towns in rural areas. Local actors from culture, business and local administration rarely developed institutionalised ways of co-operation in order to generate an economic benefit for all parties. The few successful examples which were identified do not have specific model characteristics, but they are based on the initiative of extraordinarily talented people. However, what these few examples clearly illustrate is that **motivating local actors to create economically focused networks possesses an enormous economic potential which has yet to be exploited and capitalised on.**

The characteristics of the 'products' of successful cultural tourism network have been defined as follows:

- **Quality and professionalism regarding the network partners** are transparent to the public at first sight, likewise that a network is available to answer individual wishes. An adequate, professional public image, especially on the internet, is self-evident.

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[13] Andreas Gebesmair (ed.): *"Randzonen der Kreativwirtschaft. Türkische, chinesische und südasiatische Kulturunternehmungen in Wien"* [„Fringe areas of creative industries. Turkish, Chinese and South Asian cultural enterprises in Vienna"], Vienna 2010

[14] Drda-Kühn, Karin / Dietmar Wiegand 2009 (both aforementioned studies) and Duxbury et al., Vancouver 2009

- **One-stop solutions** bring about a decisive competitive service advantage, appreciated by the market.

- **Proven all-in-one packages comprising elements of tourism and culture** (packages including „hiking –comfortable sleeping - feasting – participating in a cultural offer") make it easy for potential customers to profit from various offers and they create value-added chains for several offerers.

- **The profiling of the municipality** and its cultural tourism creates unique features and with it competitive advantages.

- **The internet as a marketing and communication instrument** provides the opportunity to communicate event highlights, places of interest, information, regional excursion tips, packages or information for groups efficiently and without great effort in order to bring together tourism and people interested in culture.

Networks can be very successful in providing cultural-tourism products and services in rural areas. Competing companies, for example in the hospitality sector, and non-profit-oriented organisations, for example in the area of culture, and in some cases state establishments, e.g. involved in sales or passenger transportation, cooperate in these networks. The temporal and spatial density of cultural-tourism products and services that is lacking in rural areas and the associated inconveniences for customers are compensated in organisational terms by the network in different manner, e.g. through:

- temporal coordination and pooling of products and services,
- spatial and temporal clustering of products and services,
- the organisation and integrated provision of transport services,
- pooling of the booking and billing of products and services.

The above-named organisational services, in particular the temporal, spatial, and accounting-based pooling of products and services are provided by the network and taken away from the customers. The network also relieves customers of the comparatively demanding task of searching for temporary products and services.

The deficits that exist in relation to cultural-tourism products and services in rural areas from the perspective of customers can be eliminated in the above-described way through the establishment of these networks.

The time spent by customers in the region increases as a result with corresponding positive effects on regional value-added effects and employment. Products and services that are completely unattractive when considered in isolation suddenly become highly attractive to customers in a temporally and spatially "condensed" form. In addition, products and services can be provided in rural areas, in particular in association with the landscape, which enable a differentiation from the products and services provided by urban culture tourism – to name but a few examples, art in the landscape or products and services in the fields of agriculture and the experience of nature.

5.2 The main barrier: Finding a common language

However, there are difficulties to overcome and the networking process needs to be continuously supported. According to the experiences of successful running networks, **finding a common language between the cultural and the tourism business groups is a challenging process.**

Cultural institutions lack information about working processes in tourism and show fear regarding contact with local business representatives. They do not consider their own work – music, theatre, literature – as "products or services" and have difficulties to assess the business potential of these activities. The requirements of the tourism industry and of tourists are not really transparent to them. There is no clear insight as to how events and services need to be drafted in order to attract visitors and how partners from tourism and business can be identified.

Restaurant owners, hoteliers and other service providers of the tourism industry find it often hard to identify the marketing potential of cultural events and offers like music and dance courses, theatrical or cinema performances. In principle, they are open-minded for cooperation, but find it difficult to get in touch with cultural institutions. The development of common products and services, a common sales structure of an adequate quality focused on the interests of culture tourists is at the very early stage.

5.3 The added value of public-private-partnerships

The transition from social networks that often exist in rural areas to professionally managed networks represents an enormous obstacle that involves financial risks, however. This obstacle can be overcome through the provision of third-party support and consultancy in the initiation and promotion of networks in the start-up phase and through further training of the actors involved. This creates public-private partnership of high value for all participating members, and alliances of state actors that extend beyond municipal boundaries are a possible solution here.

It has to be said very clearly: **A strong commitment of the regional or local government is of utmost importance for the success of cultural touristic networks.** The inclusion of state actors empowers the networks in terms of opening up existing infrastructures of a region and adds quality and opportunities to ideas and solutions.[15]

The majority of the following best practices are examples of successful public-private-partnerships.

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[15] Franz-Reinhard Habbel*: „Explorer Kommune – Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft als Katalysatoren für die Erneuerung der öffentlichen Verwaltung"* [„Explorer Municipalities – Creative Industries as catalysts for Public Administration Modernisation"], in: Drda-Kühn, Karin / Weingarten, Joe, 2010 (aforementioned publication). The author is speaker of the German Association of Towns and Municipalities, the umbrella organisation of 12.500 German prevailing small municipalities with 47 Mio inhabitants. He describes the special role and innovative power of municipalities in a process of bringing public resources and the creative industries together.

6   Best practise – inspiring examples

The following best practices were chosen according to their innovative as well as economic potential:

- **new life in dying mountain villages** - culture tourism in Italy
- **networking in culture tourism** - the Akultour network (Germany)
- **innovative mobility services** - research is looking for application
- **travel 2.0 in rural areas** - the Zell am See visitor service (Austria)
- **Apps for culture tourism** – young business field with potential.

It is shown how and why they work and what barriers had to be taken. Special attention is drawn to experiences in the use of innovative mobile technologies and online social networks and how they help better valorise the regional potential of culture and creativity.

6.1   Italy: Recreation of dying mountain villages by culture and ICT

Santo Stefano di Sessanio is a fortified medieval burgh rising on a pre-existent Italic-Roman site. It is located at an altitude of 1250 metres deep in the heart of the Apennine Mountains near L'Aquila inside the Gran Sasso & Monti della Laga National Park, in Abruzzo. Since 2000, Santo Stefano di Sessanio was developed into a "hotel village" by a private investor, who saved the village after it was nearly given up by its inhabitants during the fifties. Special attention is given to the adequate restoration of the site in order to show the cultural historic quality of the setting. Beside the cultural and architectural value per se, the scope being to re-propose a "scientific" rendition of the local cultures that will foster a real economy and become a feasible development model for the entire range of semi-abandoned historical burghs in the mountains of Abruzzo.

http://www.sextantio.it

Coletta di Castelbianco is a medieval hill-top village, which was restored since the Nineties as an internet e-village. Close to the coast of the Italian Riviera in the mountainous hinterland of the Pennavaire valley (Liguria), Colletta was gradually abandoned by its traditional inhabitants and had fallen into ruins by the mid 1900s.

The revitalisation clearly focused on target groups which need or want to stay connected with their business world or their social networks: The apartments are entirely cabled for high speed broadband internet and digital TV, enabling residents and guests to access the latest technology for telecommuting or entertainment. Fast fiber optic broadband connection, wireless or wired connection, a telephone system with all the latest options including teleconferencing, fax/email bridge, print station, outstanding audio visual equipment (LCD screen, satellite TV, audio system) are part of the infrastructure.

The village regularly hosts cultural events such as art exhibitions and concerts which are regarded as a key element for keeping the place attractive for the described target groups.

www.colletta.it

6.2   Germany: The Akultour network in Altenkirchen

The network was created in 2009 and involves the local municipality of Altenkirchen, cultural institutions, hotels, restaurants and small leisure businesses. The network develops innovative cultural touristic products and services like packages for different target groups: families, 60+ people, groups. This can e.g. be packages containing accommodation, dinners with regional specialities, vouchers for museums and cultural heritage sites, guided tours through the famous Westerwald forests around Altenkirchen, creative courses, shopping vouchers, cinema visits.

The aim is to offer modules which can be combined individually via the internet by the target groups themselves; the platform for this service will be up and running by the end of 2010 (it is named "Wunderwald" – "Forest of Wonders"). Its concept focuses strongly on mobile services like e-ticketing and e-booking. This approach takes into consideration that there is still an interesting potential for broadening online bookings in tourism[16].

The network already developed adequate electronic tools in order to organise and support the working processes of the network on the one hand and to distribute and communicate the services of the network to interested parties on the other hand. All network partners for example have access to an electronic calendar with cultural as well as other events which can be used as an additional service for visitors.

Consequently, the network approach is "translated" to the communication of products. Therefore the activities of the network are communicated and evaluated by electronic social networks which are characteristic of Web 2.0. Facebook, Twitter, blogs and others play an important role in these communication processes and are at the moment tested regarding their opportunities for the Altenkirchen culture tourism. In parallel it is tested how far social media are able to substitute traditional communication measures like printed brochures.

www.akultour.net – the homepage of the network

www.derwunderwald.de – the cultural touristic platform, currently directed to a Facebook account in order to stimulate Web 2.0 opportunities

www. altenkirchen.de – the municipality in the German Westerwald region which supports the network in a public-private-partnership

A similar example for a touristic network is the Austrian Bregenzerwald Käsestraße: http://www.kaesestrasse.at/ . The network does not have a cultural focus as the Akultour network but has a culinary focus on regional cheese specialities. There are no mobile services included yet.

Another good example for bringing singular cultural touristic offers together in an online booking tool is offered by the German Ostfriesland tourism: www.ostfriesland.de

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[16] According to a representative opinion poll of 4.000 people in Germany from the age of 14, online booking has a market share of 20%. In particular, 32% of families and 34% of singles use the internet for bookings (Stiftung für Zukunftsfragen (ed): *Tourismusanalyse 2010*, Hamburg, p 13)

A highly successful cultural touristic network is managed by the so called "Koppelschleuse Meppen", a rural initiative which brings together accommodation, an archaeological exhibition centre, an art association, the municipality of Meppen and a foundation: www.koppelschleuse-meppen.de . The network generates 20.000 overnight stays per year (a quarter of the Meppen inhabitants). There are no mobile services included yet.

6.3 Improving Mobility: car sharing 2.0

Accessibility and transport are of utmost importance in rural areas. There mobility services by public transport are often restricted and do not offer flexibility and quick connections which tourists appreciate or need for visiting different places for sightseeing. This increases the dependency on private cars and leads to noise and CO_2 emissions which interfere with rural qualities like calmness and good air quality. Cost-effective flexible alternatives to traditional mobility services are rare, but projects like OpenRide show that alternatives are available.

OpenRide is an infrastructure to facilitate spontaneous shared rides. Developed at the Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems, Berlin, OpenRide is a package solution for the provision of shared cost rides. Drivers and passengers on the move can use their mobile phones to connect with OpenRide and offer or look for immediate transport opportunities.

Unlike established solutions for shared rides, OpenRide enables drivers to offer spontaneous shared rides when already on the road, and it also covers journeys over short distances. Thus OpenRide exploits the previously untapped market potential for free transit capacities in private individual transport.

One special feature of OpenRide is the openness of its infrastructure which offers established rideshare agencies and communities a simple means of connecting up with OpenRide and thus gaining a foothold on the market for mobile ad hoc rideshare opportunities.

The project is currently looking for pilot regions for testing:
http://www.open-ride.com/english/index.php

6.4 Austria: travel 2.0 in Zell am See

Zell am See is a well known rural destination for summer and winter holidays in the Austrian Alps. The destination offers a traditional homepage, which includes a page for an extraordinary art event, an exhibition of big sculptures on the mountains which can be reached by a skiing tour: http://www.zellamsee-kaprun.com/winter/aktivitaeten/kunst_am_berg/ .

Facebook and Twitter accounts are included in the homepage, so visitors won't get forwarded but stay comfortably inside the Zell am See homepage.

Additional value for cultural tourists: To visitors who are on the page with cultural information about the aforementioned exhibition in the mountains, the Twitter access offers the possibility to comment directly about the exhibition and it gets visible what other people, interested in the exhibition, already commented.

6.5 Mobile applications for culture tourism

Mobile applications ("apps") for culture tourism are the most recent products which clearly add value to travels worldwide. While the number of apps for city tourism is constantly growing, **apps for culture tourism in rural areas are rare and not sufficiently developed as business models at all yet.**

However, there are examples of new services like the **"Culture to go blog"** which brings cultural content via apps to mobile devices. The German editors are operating this weblog as a free service and are presenting and reviewing apps for culture tourism, currently for cities mainly.

Another example for a young company is the London-based **Toura**, a technology platform for the creation and launch of smartphone-based mobile guides for the travel and tourism industry and its customers around the world. Toura mobile guides entertain and educate onsite and off-site visitors to a broad range of travel and tour attractions, including cultural sites and institutions.

The Vienna based online social travel guide and trip planner **Tripwolf** offers cultural touristic destinations in rural areas a chance to be communicated. The online guide shows how a destination will look and feel like but also introduces it to a community that knows and recommends them. It offers advice and recommendations by locals and experienced travellers. Tripwolf allows to create new locations, upload and edit content, and share places with others.

See: http://blog.culture-to-go.com/category/apps/

See: http://www.toura.com

See: http://www.tripwolf.com

7 Sustainable perspective for reinvigoration

The described best practice show: Culture tourism is a perspective for coping with obsolescence, relocation of the economically active population and the desertification of rural areas. Direct and indirect impacts in employment are feasible. The information technologies as well as social networks are becoming a role as main drivers for impact in terms of employment, innovation and new business fields.

7.1 Securing and fostering employment by culture tourism

Meanwhile employment securing and fostering effects by culture tourism are considered assured. They can also contribute to stabilisation of local employability in rural areas:

- Especially economically weaker regions, threatened by the relocation of well educated staff, get an **expandable forward perspective as regards employment politics through culture tourism**, not probable in other economic sectors e.g. the manufacturing industry or the research sector, and at the same time become more attractive as a place of residence to commuters.

- **Culture tourism creates employment circumstances in the service-providing sector, which also stand open to less skilled and temporary employees**; this is relevant to the infrastructure of those regions, that are affected by the intense relocation of well educated staff, where job seekers rely on employment propositions with compatibility of family and work or where voluntary commitment plays an important role as regards the identification with the living environment.

- **Culture tourism is to a certain extent independent from vogues, economic cycles and demographic changes** because many different target groups can be addressed, not applying to such an extent for example to sports tourism or pure recreational tourism: culture interest groups as parents with children, holiday-makers interested in culture, „silver ager" with plenty of time and enough money, school classes, incentives and educational tourists are similarly willing and able to request cultural tourism offers.

- **Culture tourism tends to result in qualification and not downgrading of employees**, as connecting the wish for hospitality and culture is an essential part of many services.

7.2 Mobile technologies for fostering economic effects in culture tourism

In comparison to large cities, small cities in rural areas suffer a grave disadvantage in utilizing their cultural economic power and with it their cultural tourism potentials: Usually culture workers don't get together as „communities" in special areas of the city or quarters but are working scattered over a wide spread area. Places for informal, professionally inspiring communication (culture cafés, „in"-places, discussion forums, clubs, public viewings) are missing. Cultural heritage sites and cultural institutions are not necessarily focused and easy-to-reach by public means of transport. Often they are also scattered over a wide spread area.

Therefore communication channels don't come about by the way, but require organisation in the form of events or by accomplishing infrastructural premises. To stay alive, networks are more than in congested urban areas dependent on institutional forums and professional management.

Mobile technologies play an important, even a dual role as regards these processes. They can promote communication processes and the concertation of interests of all parties involved in a sustained manner, secure the flow of information and may be focal points, they contribute to innovation capacity in culture tourism, because the common intersections of culture and information technologies provide fertile soil for extra innovative new business segments.

7.2.1 Support of network developments by mobile services

Results from the work in common intersections and networks are new user requirements, appearing not to be just adapted to the instruments of information and communication technologies. The same is true for mobile services. Especially those, which network highly complex and independent areas of work like culture, tourism, retail, gastronomy, public transport and other service provider can highly benefit from mobile services Mobile services can support their different communication structures efficiently if organised in an intelligent way.

At the time being pilot projects need to be initiated in order to bring existing but isolated working best practice Europe wide together and learn from each other. Networks can highly benefit from innovative mobile services but they need time and space to be experienced and they need a supportive climate which is not always seen as relevant in rural areas.

7.2.2 Mobile services as instruments for marketing and communication

Communication technologies play an essential role as regards both the internal organisation of the network and contemporary marketing as well as the communication of cultural tourism offers. Location-based services, navigation aid for walkers, cyclists, hikers and ski tourers by mobile phone, mobile communities with many different applications are by now much more than just gimmicks for a very few techies. "Travel 2.0" is starting to get established for this process.

Concerning culture tourism, **it will be important for the future to take into consideration the communication potential of social media / social communities, to accomplish transparency in offers and to record strategies, risks and opportunities as regards culture tourism in Web 2.0.** Whether these media can really become an alternative to common communication strategies and traditional media (brochures, homepages, trade fair participations) is still uncertain in view of considerable personnel costs that will be caused by professional working in social media / social communities. At present we primarily intend to acquire continuously appropriate knowledge and like this to make accessible a sustainable marketing instrument.

8   Recommendations

The following recommendations give a résumé of current research and experiences and are considered as guidelines for fostering culture tourism in rural areas.

8.1   Creating data

The lack of reliable data on local as well as regional level is one of the main barriers for culture tourism in rural areas.[17] Especially, data gathering is needed on

- **strengths and weaknesses of a rural area** in terms of a professional approach to culture and tourism (analysis of visitors' behaviour, visitors' management, marketing for special target groups, strengthening of cost awareness, acquisition of third party funds),

- **proof of economic effects** (culture tourism as an economic factor, evaluation of culture events in terms of money coming into the region, monitoring, identification by recording)

8.2   Networking

At present there is only minimal networking between cultural and touristic institutions in rural areas. Awareness of how creative industries can enhance economic returns in tourism businesses, e.g. for hoteliers, gastronomy and service providers is low. This lack of engagement limits opportunities for innovation both within the creative sector and in the tourism sector. It also diminishes the opportunities for products and services targeting the needs and wishes of visitors and the chances for market development.

The establishment of professionally managed networks can enable effective developments of products and services. The added value for both parties has to become more visible by good practice examples and pilot applications.

8.3   Education and training for **professional networking and alliances**

The **importance of professionally organised networks in order to win businesses** is vital for culture tourism. The focus should be on very clear business benefits from a network in order to facilitate a higher success rate. Cultural workers for example often represent small businesses and the self-employed often lack the time and capacity to establish and engage with formal networks, which has to be taken into consideration.

8.4   Supporting new business and job models

As culture and tourism lack a common culture of cooperation, support is needed for creating new business models:

- **creative development of products** needs monitoring of target groups' behaviour, trends and markets

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[17] A very good example for data gathering was done recently by the western region of Ireland: *"Creative West – The Creative Sector in the Western Region of Ireland"*, Ballaghaderreen 2009, ISBN 978-0-9544235-8-2. A download is possible at http://www.wdc.ie/publications/reports-and-papers/reports-2009/

- **orientation on quality and service** for a perfect visitor liaison and support needs constantly further education

- **support for retail trade:** for coming close to visitors' needs (e.g. window presentations with region-specific specialities, special services (child care, language knowledge, storage and shipping of goods), management of empty spaces of former shops)

- **support for gastronomy:** by developing region-specific hospitality elements as part of the quality management, profiling towards atmosphere, wellness and authenticity

- **support of start-ups** which focus on bringing culture and tourism together.

8.5   Broadband access

Quality broadband services are of vital importance for stimulating innovative aspects in culture tourism. In rural areas broadband access has three key issues: accessibility, cost and capacity (bandwith) of broadband services. Broadband is no economic "add-on", but an essential precondition for economic growth in culture tourism. It needs to be improved wherever it is not sufficiently available.

8.6   Visitors' community building by Web 2.0

Travel 2.0 is at the beginning in rural areas and it offers a unique chance for cooperation between culture and tourism. Here the dependencies of each side get visible very clearly: without the knowledge of cultural orientated people tourism will not be able to identify the value behind certain events and offers in a region.

Especially, in culture tourism visitors are interested in insider tips, which only persons with cultural insight are able to give. And these visitors are ready to communicate these treasures to likewise interested persons in their communities: a special architectural characteristic[18], the hidden gardens of a monastery or special arts and crafts are a value beyond glossy brochures of the tourism agency. Social networks offer, what ambitious visitors are demanding: authenticity, emotion, "living history" by story/history-telling, edutainment and inclusion.

The social networks offer a chance to get part of the knowledge community of insider tips in rural areas: **Facebook, Twitter etc, should be considered as marketing instruments much more seriously.** Obviously, this is a shift from printed information to community building, and it needs additional work time for those engaged in communicating the value of a rural region. But tourism already is at the crossroad between traditional instruments like advertising and brochures and the instruments of new media and social networks. So the decision is ahead whether to decide for one or the other or how to cover both with available budgets.

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[18] such as the "Heidenturmkirchen" ("pagan tower churches") or the "Trulli" called little huts in the wine yards in the German Rheinhessen area (www.heidenturmkirchen.de and http://www.monumente-online.de/06/04/streiflicht/04_Trulli.php)

8.7 Mobile services

Mobile services like App's, mobile navigation, mobile mobility and mobile ticketing will get more important in the future and especially rural areas can benefit from these developments. However, they do not really seem prepared for these changes yet although these are clearly the innovative business fields in the near future. Their relevance is directly linked with service innovation, customer services and creativity.

It needs further consideration if there are special requirements for culture tourism necessary in order to evaluate the benefit of mobile services. Online tools for customer interviews and surveys are sufficiently and partly free of charge available and do not need more than the creation of relevant questions.

8.8 Adaption of funding schemes

Many funding schemes do not take interdisciplinary aspects sufficiently into consideration. There are sufficient funding schemes for rural development, for tourism, for culture and for economy, for start-ups and SMEs, but an integrated approach which is essential in culture tourisms often lacks support.

Vice versa, actors in the field often are not informed about existing funding opportunities which could help incubating or catalysing innovative ideas especially in service improvements. Therefore **communication of funding opportunities** should be a much more integrated part in regional development for rural areas.

8.9 Transport and accessibility

Transport connections are key factors determining the location of new businesses and employment. Difficulties in physical access are a constraint for businesses in culture tourism, but this is a common problem of many enterprises in rural regions. This should not refrain from finding innovative solutions even if airport access and the provision of public transport is a challenge. Projects like the aforementioned OpenRide-project or the Alpine Pearl villages[19] show the business potential behind innovative solutions.

8.10 Creating rural areas as innovative regions for culture tourism

Creativity and innovation as success factors for culture tourism do not necessarily come easy for regions. Therefore local and regional governments are encouraged to **develop mission statements** in order to support awareness for culture tourism. They should include:

- **"quality before quantity"** is an essential for culture tourism. Sticking to this as a general principle and constantly concentrating on high quality services is appreciated by culturally interested visitors.

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[19] The Alpine Pearls is a network of 20 municipalities in Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland that offer easy, yet comfortable ways to deal with mobility in mountain regions: www.alpine-pearls.com

- **long-term orientation on themes and strengths of a region** for profiling

- **consideration of trends** (presentation of cultural events on big screens with connected catering, summer festivals, history telling in guided tours, edutainment for children)

- **appointment of a responsible person for culture tourism** for better communication and cooperation

- **strengthening of frame conditions for economy** (support of start-ups, free further education, learning visits)

- **strengthening of frame conditions for honorary actors** in order to make their knowledge and insight usable for visitors (public appreciation, office space)

- **cooperation and integrated planning of departments relevant for tourism** (town planning, mobility, economy, culture, building, environment)

- **sensibility for the historic built environment:** fostering creative concepts for the atmospheric built environment

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