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Work Package 3 & 4

Development of Training Materials for the blended course

"Questionnaire addressed to International Mavrud Day project's stakeholders in national contexts targeting intangible contribution to WP4 (Implementation of Workshops for adult learners) described as "Creation of co-planning spaces, of community networks for shaping and designing community actions in regenerative tourism, and of community promotion."



Answers to the questionnaire for "International Mavrud Day" based on the Blended Course Developed Modules (WP3).

International Mavrud Day (Bulgaria)

The International Mavrud Day, an initiative by the Bulgarian Association of Wine Professionals (BAWP), stands as a significant inclusion in the AGORA project's training materials. This event exemplifies how a dedicated celebration of a local grape variety can foster cultural appreciation, support local winegrowers, and promote regional wine tourism. By focusing on Mavrud, a grape indigenous to Bulgaria, the initiative highlights the importance of preserving and promoting local varieties, which is a key aspect of regenerative tourism. The event not only supports the local wine industry but also educates and engages a wider audience in the rich heritage of Bulgarian winemaking. This approach aligns perfectly with the principles of regenerative tourism, which emphasise the preservation and celebration of local culture and traditions.

<https://www.mavrudday.com/en/>

Summarised answers to questions relevant to Module 1. Sustainable tourism

Question 1: In what ways does your initiative contribute to the preservation and promotion of Bulgarian cultural heritage, particularly concerning the Mavrud grape variety? What educational activities or programs have been implemented to enhance visitor awareness and appreciation of local traditions and winemaking practices?

Purpose: This question seeks to acquire an understanding of how International Mavrud Day actively **contributes to the preservation and promotion of Bulgarian cultural heritage, focusing on the Mavrud grape variety**. This might disclose **effective strategies for enhancing visitor awareness and appreciation of local traditions and winemaking practices**. This information will be valuable in developing workshops **that emphasise cultural preservation, education, and community engagement in regenerative tourism initiatives**.

Answer:

We at the Bulgarian Association of Wine Professionals actively contribute to the preservation and promotion of our rich viticultural heritage through the celebration of International Mavrud Day. This event is dedicated to the Mavrud grape, an emblematic variety that symbolises the depth and uniqueness of Bulgarian winemaking. Our efforts are rooted in showcasing the harmonious blend of millennia-old traditions and modern viticulture techniques characterising Bulgarian winemaking.

In the lands of modern Bulgaria, evidence of winemaking stretches back over 4,000 years. The ancient Thracians, who inhabited these lands, cultivated grapes and produced wine, a tradition reflected in the numerous wine vessels and rock formations used for winemaking discovered today.

Our strategy for the International Mavrud Day includes the preservation of our cultural heritage. This effort is supported by collaborative work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Tourism and individual municipalities during urban festivals.

To enhance visitor awareness and appreciation, we've developed a range of educational activities that dive deep into the history and unique qualities of the Mavrud grape. For instance, our dedicated website features extensive information on the Mavrud variety, including detailed articles that explore its characteristics, its role in Bulgarian history, and its significance in the contemporary wine scene. This online platform serves not just as an informational hub but as a narrative tool that weaves the story of Mavrud into the broader tapestry of Bulgarian culture.

Furthermore, we organise annual informational tours for journalists and wine professionals from both Bulgaria and abroad, aiming to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of our wine heritage. These tours are designed to offer firsthand experiences of the Bulgarian wine and wine regions, highlighting sustainable viticulture practices that preserve our cultural heritage and promote environmental stewardship. Through these initiatives, we strive to establish International Mavrud Day as a significant event that educates and inspires both



locals and visitors, reinforcing the cultural and economic importance of indigenous grape varieties and supporting the broader goals of regenerative tourism.

Question 2: Could you describe the sustainable practices adopted by your initiative to minimise its environmental impact? How do these practices align with the principles of regenerative tourism, and what measures are in place to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the local wine tourism industry?

Purpose: The purpose of this question is to understand the sustainable practices adopted by International Mavrud Day and how they align with the principles of regenerative tourism. By examining these practices and the measures in place to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience, the question aims to **uncover actionable strategies that can be applied to other tourism initiatives**. This information will be instrumental in developing **workshops that focus on sustainable practices and resilience in the local wine tourism industry**.

ANSWER:

For us, the term 'sustainability' truly holds significant meaning. We strive to adhere to its foundational principles, considering sustainability in all aspects concerning wine, which remains central to our cause. As practical examples from our initiatives, we meticulously plan the transportation for the festivals organised by the Bulgarian Association of Wine Professionals (BAWP), ensuring minimal fuel consumption and reducing harmful emissions. We have also introduced an incentive programme at our urban festivals where attendees are encouraged to bring their own tasting glasses, effectively reducing the use of plastic and glass. Moreover, the food prepared by our partners during these festivals is served in biodegradable paper, which is another step towards demonstrating our commitment to the environment and minimising our footprint on the planet. These practices align with regenerative tourism by reducing our environmental impact and aim to foster a culture of sustainability and resilience within the local wine tourism industry. Through these actions, we ensure that our activities contribute positively to the local ecosystem and community, promoting long-term sustainability and resilience.



Additionally, the sustainable practices adopted during International Mavrud Day exemplify the principles of regenerative tourism by setting benchmarks and serving as a model for visitors and local partners alike. By implementing these practices, we demonstrate how the wine tourism sector can operate sustainably and also educate and inspire our partners and visitors to adopt similar measures in their activities. This collaborative approach helps cultivate a regenerative ecosystem that supports environmental sustainability and bolsters the socio-economic fabric of our local communities, ensuring that our heritage and viticultural practices enrich and sustain the region for generations to come.

Summarised answers to questions relevant to Module 2. Local Producers and Regeneration

Question 1: How does International Mavrud Day incorporate the concept of regenerative tourism to enhance the cultural and environmental sustainability of the event?

ANSWER:

Through International Mavrud Day, we aim to spotlight wines from local varieties and emphasise the diversity and sustainable practices in winemaking without losing sight of innovative solutions surrounding us. Our focus extends beyond the wine itself to include elements like micro-terroir, regional cuisine, and minimal intervention in the winemaking process. We strive to highlight the people behind the wines, their crafts, and their commitment to preserving the environment. This approach is integral to promoting regenerative tourism, as it not only preserves our cultural and viticultural heritage but also encourages sustainable practices among local producers and educates attendees on the importance of environmental stewardship. International Mavrud Day fosters a more sustainable and culturally enriched tourism experience by intertwining cultural richness with ecological mindfulness.

Question 2: In what ways do the activities of International Mavrud Day contribute to the rural renaissance of the region, particularly in terms of economic and social revitalisation?

ANSWER:

International Mavrud Day, marked on October 26th, is designed not just as a one-day event but as part of a broader initiative with long-lasting impact throughout the year. Symbolically, this date marks the end of the agricultural year with the harvest, offering a significant marketing opportunity to promote Bulgarian wine against the increasing import of foreign wines.

The activities surrounding International Mavrud Day include numerous wine tastings of local varieties at wine bars and restaurants, predominantly using local farm produce to emphasise authenticity and uniqueness. Additionally, during the four Urban Wine Festivals in October, we encourage participation from more local wineries that offer wine tourism to promote their region and wine experiences. We collaborate closely with municipalities, ministries, and local accommodation providers to boost domestic tourism and attract international visitors, educating them about Bulgarian history, culture, and traditions.

These efforts contribute significantly to the rural renaissance of the region, revitalising it economically and socially by enhancing local business visibility and fostering a sustainable tourism ecosystem that celebrates and sustains our viticultural heritage.

Question 3: Can you describe the process of engaging local stakeholders in the planning and execution of International Mavrud Day and how it reflects the regenerative tourism principles?

ANSWER:

Over the past four to five years, International Mavrud Day has established itself as one of Bulgaria's most significant and quality wine events. The secret to our success, I believe, lies in our ability as the Bulgarian Association of Wine Professionals to integrate the wine event seamlessly with numerous alternative tourism products that connect to our history and cultural heritage.

We engage local stakeholders by consistently building a regional, national, and global network—including trade and diplomatic representations. This engagement reflects regenerative tourism principles by fostering community involvement and leveraging local partnerships that enhance our event's cultural and environmental sustainability.

We build on our achievements each year, setting a solid example and encouraging social and regenerative entrepreneurship, strengthening our community's economic and social fabric.

Summarised answers to questions relevant to Module 3. Community-Led Regenerative Tourism Development

Question 1: How does the "International Mavrud Day" encourage collaboration among local winegrowers, businesses, and cultural institutions to create a cohesive community network that promotes Bulgarian wine and cultural heritage on both national and international levels?

ANSWER:

From personal experience, I can attest that numerous Bulgarian wineries have started producing wines from indigenous varieties, such as Mavrud and Rubin, inspired by our International Mavrud Day initiative. They, too, wish to demonstrate their capabilities and gain the recognition they deserve. I am delighted to see this mechanism working, even though it wasn't our intention initially.

A prime example of collaborative practice with cultural institutions is evident in some urban festivals we organise. For instance, in Sofia, the festival is held at the Sofia Largo, and in Plovdiv, it takes place in the central city area, where millennia-old excavations from the ancient cities of Serdica and Philippopolis can be seen. Thanks to our partnerships with the Ministry of Tourism and municipal governments, International Mavrud Day and the Urban Wine Festivals have become integral to the annual cultural calendars.

On an international scale, it's important to mention that Mavrud Day has long transcended the boundaries of Bulgaria and is now celebrated in over 20 countries across four continents. This global reach is also thanks to several Bulgarian Association of Wine Professionals members, who are based abroad and actively promote Bulgarian wine internationally.

Question 2: How can the principles and success strategies from the International Mavrud Day initiative be adapted to foster community-led tourism in other regions, particularly focusing on creating co-planning spaces and community networks?

ANSWER:

To adapt the principles and success strategies from International Mavrud Day to foster community-led tourism in other regions, a fundamental step involves conducting an initial analysis of stakeholders' roles, relationships, and influence within the community. This analysis is crucial in developing a strategy to effectively build upon and engage an increasingly broad spectrum of stakeholders. We set a strong example of successful community engagement by leveraging what has been achieved and sharing these outcomes through public communication channels.

Additionally, establishing co-planning spaces and community networks can be facilitated by organising workshops and forums that bring together diverse community members, including local businesses, cultural groups, and governmental bodies. This collaborative environment fosters a sense of ownership and mutual benefit, which is crucial for sustaining and scaling the initiative. Sharing the model of International Mavrud Day, which includes systematic stakeholder engagement and the celebration of local heritage, provides a blueprint that other regions can modify according to their unique cultural and environmental contexts. This approach enhances tourism experiences and promotes economic and social revitalisation, adhering to the principles of regenerative tourism.

Summarised answers to questions relevant to Module 4. Virtual Experiences

Technology and digital tools make a travel experience more engaging, accessible, and sustainable. Immersive experiences backed up by new technologies (virtual and augmented reality, interactive elements, etc.) offer both alternative or complementary means to engage with diverse cultures, environments, and histories. What elements of 'virtual tourism' are implemented in your tourism offer/services?

ANSWER:

In our International Mavrud Day initiative, we've integrated several virtual tourism elements to enhance accessibility and engagement. Our website serves as a comprehensive platform, offering rich, interactive content and up-to-date information on all events. We provide a user-friendly interface allowing visitors to tailor their event experience according to personal criteria and preferences, such as choosing specific wine tastings or educational sessions.

Moreover, our robust social media campaigns and collaborations with journalists help to amplify our reach and interact with a global audience in real time. These campaigns are designed not just to inform but also to engage users through live streaming of events. These digital strategies ensure that even those who cannot attend in person can experience the richness of Bulgarian wine culture from anywhere in the world.

This approach to virtual tourism makes our event more sustainable by reducing physical travel needs and extends our educational impact by making learning about regenerative wine practices accessible to a broader audience.

Which of these do you think are most attractive to your customers/tourists and why?

ANSWER:

Each element of our virtual offerings targets specific audience segments, but we find that the information about events worldwide resonates most profoundly with end customers. This global perspective caters to the diverse interests of international visitors and connects local patrons with a broader narrative of Bulgarian wine on the world stage.

Our website serves as a versatile platform catering not only to wine enthusiasts but also to a broader spectrum of users, including media professionals, event organisers, learners, and trainers. For media professionals, it provides up-to-date information and press releases that facilitate accurate and timely reporting on events and developments within the wine industry. Event organisers find it invaluable for promoting their events and tapping into an engaged audience, thus enhancing event visibility and participation. Furthermore, our platform offers a rich repository of resources and best practices, making it an essential tool for learners and trainers looking to deepen their understanding of viticulture and oenology. By showcasing real-world applications and success stories, the website inspires and educates, promoting the spread of innovative practices in regenerative tourism and sustainable winemaking across the globe.

Which do you think could be left out as less appealing?

ANSWER:

While each component of our website caters to a specific audience, we constantly evaluate the relevance and appeal of our content to ensure that we remain focused on our core mission. After careful consideration, we have decided to streamline our offerings by reducing the emphasis on less interactive, static content that does not directly engage our users or contribute significantly to our educational or promotional goals. This includes some more passive content elements that, while informative, do not foster interaction or a more profound understanding of the wine culture.

Summarised answers to questions relevant to Module 5. Resources for the development of community tourism and forward-looking learning centres + database of resources

In what ways does this initiative contribute to the development and fostering of community-based tourism? How does it concretely aim to shift tourism toward a more collaborative ideal?

ANSWER:

Our initiative leverages the unique context of wine, nature, and local grape varieties to enrich the tourism product, effectively blending cultural heritage with tourism. By promoting the Mavrud and other local grape varieties, we aim to deepen visitors' appreciation for our regional wines and encourage sustainable tourism practices that respect and preserve our environment. Furthermore, International Mavrud Day catalyses community-based tourism by fostering a series of events that bring together local winemakers, artisans, and cultural practitioners. These events showcase the rich tapestry of our local culture and stimulate economic activity within the community. Our festivals, for instance, are designed to extend visitors' stays through a program of diverse experiences that celebrate both the traditional and innovative aspects of our wine culture. We hope these engagements encourage a collaborative tourism model where local stakeholders are active participants rather than mere observers. This approach not only enhances the visitor experience but also ensures that the benefits of tourism are distributed more evenly across our community.

Which concrete inputs are given to participants in order not only to convey more awareness but also to make them learn new information in this field?

ANSWER:

At International Mavrud Day, we strategically employ storytelling at every appropriate touchpoint to enrich the participant's engagement and learning. Each wine label tells a story; it reflects the thought, philosophy, and passion imbued in each bottle by our local winemakers. By narrating these stories during wine tastings and consumer interactions, we aim to share wine and impart the rich cultural and historical context that shapes our wine-making processes.

Summarised answers to questions relevant to Module 6. Practical Tools with Sample Instruments for Experience Co-creation

Question 1: How has design thinking influenced the planning and execution of International Mavrud Day? Could you describe a specific scenario where



empathising with your attendees significantly shaped the event's activities or offerings?

Purpose: This question seeks to uncover how design thinking, particularly the empathy stage, has been utilised to tailor International Mavrud Day to meet the needs and enhance participants' experiences. Understanding this could provide valuable insights into how to employ design thinking to deeply understand and cater to the visitors' cultural and educational expectations in regenerative tourism contexts.

ANSWER:

At International Mavrud Day, the application of design thinking, especially during the empathise phase, was pivotal in shaping our approach to the festival's offerings. Through extensive engagement with our community, we conducted detailed surveys and interviews with local wine producers, community leaders, and attendees from previous events. This allowed us to understand their experiences and expectations genuinely. For instance, feedback revealed a strong desire not only to celebrate the Mavrud grape but also to expand the festival's scope to include a more comprehensive celebration of Bulgarian wine culture, spotlighting other local varieties that were previously underrepresented.

This empathetic approach led us to develop a more inclusive event that resonated deeply with both local stakeholders and international visitors. We integrated educational segments that highlighted the diversity of Bulgarian viticulture and included more varieties in our tastings and presentations, thereby broadening the appeal and enriching the educational aspect of the festival.

Question 2: Can you share how storytelling is employed during International Mavrud Day to convey the history and significance of the Mavrud grape to visitors? What impact has this had on visitor engagement and education?

Purpose: This question aims to explore the role of storytelling in enhancing the educational aspects of International Mavrud Day. By understanding how storytelling engages and informs visitors about the cultural heritage and ecological significance of local wine production, workshop developers can better appreciate and teach the power of narrative in promoting local traditions and sustainable practices.



ANSWER:

At International Mavrud Day, storytelling is strategically deployed to deepen visitors' understanding of the Mavrud grape's heritage and significance, thereby enriching their overall experience. We intertwine engaging narratives throughout the event to educate and captivate our audience, significantly boosting visitor engagement and promoting educational outcomes.

For instance, a key narrative is the historical account of why International Mavrud Day is celebrated on October 26th—St. Dimitar's Day. This date was selected to honour the traditions established by Aristi Chorbazhakov, a revered local winemaker known for his meticulous vineyard care, which symbolises the enduring respect for craftsmanship within our community. This narrative celebrates the Mavrud grape and embeds the event within a broader cultural and seasonal context, enhancing its significance and resonance with both local and international audiences.

Numerous presentations, tastings, and promotions related to Bulgarian wines from local varieties occur during the event. Participants receive comprehensive information about each grape variety's origin, development, and specific uses. Regional specifics, terroir-expressions, and winemaking decisions are also extensively discussed to showcase the diversity and complexity of our wines. At four urban festivals, a unified and representative selection of wines from local varieties is presented by professionally trained Bulgarian Association of Wine Professionals members, who are deeply committed to the cause of Bulgarian wine and equipped to enrich visitors with necessary information.

Using storytelling, we aim to transform International Mavrud Day into more than just a wine festival; it becomes a platform for cultural and educational exchange that supports the principles of regenerative tourism. This approach ensures that the event fosters appreciation for local winemaking traditions and promotes sustainable and community-focused tourism practices.

Question 3: In what ways has service blueprinting been applied to streamline operations and enhance visitor experiences during International Mavrud Day? Could you provide examples of how this tool helped identify and solve any service delivery challenges?

Purpose: This question is designed to investigate the application of service blueprinting in managing the complex logistics and operations of a large-scale cultural event like International Mavrud Day. Insights into how service blueprinting facilitated efficient event management and problem-solving can assist in developing workshops focusing on operational excellence and sustainability in event planning within the framework of regenerative tourism.

ANSWER:

At International Mavrud Day, we leverage service blueprinting to optimise event operations and align with regenerative tourism principles, enhancing both community and environmental well-being. This method begins with mapping the customer journey from online engagement through to post-event feedback, detailing key touchpoints like interactive website features, QR-coded informational stands during the event, and post-event digital feedback channels.

Backstage processes involve coordination with local wineries, integration of academic expertise for content accuracy, and logistics management for events like the Urban Wine Festival. We use tools like Trello for real-time task management and problem-solving, which supports our goal of reducing physical travel and enhancing digital engagement through virtual tours and live-streamed sessions.

Pain points, such as logistical challenges across multiple venues, are addressed through strategic digital enhancements and community partnerships, improving sustainability and local economic impact. Continuous feedback post-event drives our iterative refinements, ensuring each Mavrud Day effectively supports sustainable tourism and community involvement.

Summarised answers to questions relevant to Module 7. Communication and Promotion

Question 1: With community initiatives such as yours involving a large number of small and mid-sized entrepreneurs and enterprises, what measures do you take to ensure that the marketing and promotion are equitable?

Purpose: This question highlights the need and challenges for businesses to participate in joint promotions or cross-promotions, where they can leverage each other's networks and customer bases.

ANSWER:

In our commitment to equitable marketing and promotion at International Mavrud Day, we focus on inclusivity and broad representation. By selecting Mavrud as a flagship for our celebration—due to its significant recognition among consumers and its unique position as an indigenous Bulgarian grape—we not only spotlight Mavrud but also celebrate Bulgarian wine as a whole. This holistic approach ensures that all local grape varieties, each characteristic of their region, receive attention. This is crucial as it educates the consumer about the diversity within Bulgarian viticulture.

We employ a cross-promotion strategy to ensure fair promotion for all participants, especially small and mid-sized enterprises. Each participant is encouraged to share and promote not only their products but also the collective event through their networks, which amplifies reach and engagement without disproportionately favouring larger entities. We facilitate this through collaborative marketing materials and digital platforms where multiple producers can equally showcase their stories and products. This strategy ensures that every participant, regardless of size, benefits from enhanced visibility and customer engagement, making our marketing efforts a collective success.

Question 2: What are the challenges in implementing centralised marketing campaigns that highlight different participants in a rotating or inclusive manner, ensure equal exposure over time, and set up transparent promotion criteria?

Purpose: The question highlights the need for unified branding, which creates a cohesive brand that all participants can use and helps smaller entities benefit from overall brand recognition.

ANSWER:



One of the significant challenges in implementing centralised marketing campaigns for International Mavrud Day is fostering a mindset of unity and a shared vision among various stakeholders in the wine industry. Achieving a unified approach to the wine market requires developing regional concepts that can be effectively promoted nationally and internationally. The overarching goal is to transition from promoting individual entities to a collective representation, ensuring that each participant benefits from the overall brand recognition regardless of size.

To overcome these challenges, we focus on establishing clear, transparent criteria for promotion that rotate exposure among participants. This strategy ensures that all involved parties receive equal opportunities to showcase their offerings over time, preventing any dominance by larger producers. We also invest in creating a cohesive brand that all stakeholders can identify with and use. This unified branding enhances the market presence of smaller entities and contributes to a stronger, more unified market perception of Bulgarian wine.

Implementing these strategies involves continuous dialogue and cooperation with all stakeholders to align interests and expectations. This is crucial for the initiative's sustainability and is an essential practice we aim to teach in our seminars, showcasing how effective communication and cooperative marketing strategies can lead to successful community-led promotional efforts in regenerative tourism.

