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Resource repository: business innovation in wine tourism

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Summary

This document constitutes a comprehensive compilation of case studies and complementary materials developed within the framework of the *Resource Repository: Business Innovation in Wine Tourism*. It aims to provide an informative and practical overview of innovative approaches, best practices, and strategic adaptations implemented by enterprises operating in the fields of wine and culinary tourism.

The repository serves as a knowledge platform that supports stakeholders, researchers, and professionals in understanding how sustainability, digital transformation, and innovation can strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of tourism businesses. The collection includes a diverse range of case studies that illustrate how companies have redefined their business models, marketing strategies, and visitor engagement practices to address emerging challenges and opportunities in the sector.

In line with the objectives set out in the Grant Agreement, the document also contributes to enhancing awareness of sustainable business strategies and risk management practices. It provides inspiration for tourism actors seeking to integrate responsible, experience-based, and market-oriented innovations into their operations. By showcasing real-world examples of adaptation and creativity, this resource supports capacity-building, knowledge transfer, and the long-term development of sustainable wine and gastronomy tourism across different regions.

To ensure accessibility, dissemination, and long-term usability of the collected knowledge, all case studies and related resources included in this deliverable will be made available through the official **GastroTour Project website**. This digital platform will serve as an **interactive online repository** designed to support educators, students, practitioners, and policymakers interested in innovation within wine and gastronomic tourism. The online repository will feature:

- **A visually engaging interface**, where each case study is accompanied by photographs, infographics, and multimedia materials that illustrate its context, stakeholders, and innovation outcomes.
- **An advanced search and filtering function** that allows users to explore the database by country, type of organization, thematic area, or “**innovation model**”, enabling comparative analysis and facilitating the identification of transferable practices.
- **Downloadable summaries and educational materials**, such as teaching notes, innovation cards, and methodological templates, developed to encourage the integration of the case studies into academic courses, workshops, and professional training.
- **Cross-references and related links** connecting each case to the broader themes of sustainability, digital transformation, community engagement, and experience design, thereby situating each example within the global framework of responsible and innovative tourism.

This digital resource will act not only as a repository but as a **living, evolving platform**, continuously updated with new materials, insights, and collaborative inputs from project partners and external stakeholders. It will thus extend the impact of the *Resource Repository: Business Innovation in Wine Tourism* beyond the duration of the project, contributing to the long-term visibility and exchange of innovative practices across regions.

In addition to documenting individual examples of good practice, the case studies collectively illustrate a



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diverse range of **innovation typologies** emerging across the wine and gastronomic tourism sectors. The analysis reveals five major categories of innovation represented in the repository:

- **Cultural and heritage-based innovation**, where traditional knowledge, craftsmanship, and regional identity are revitalized through creative tourism models and storytelling.
- **Technological and immersive innovation**, incorporating digital tools, sensory technologies, and data-driven research to enhance visitor engagement and business intelligence.
- **Sustainability-oriented innovation**, promoting environmentally responsible practices, local sourcing, regenerative agriculture, and low-impact hospitality.
- **Social and community innovation**, emphasizing inclusion, empowerment, and co-creation with local communities as active stakeholders in tourism development.
- **Educational and knowledge-transfer innovation**, fostering capacity building through research-based approaches, academic collaboration, and experiential learning environments.

Together, these innovation models demonstrate how wine and gastronomy tourism can function as a multidisciplinary arena where culture, science, and sustainability converge to create more resilient, inclusive, and competitive destinations.

Case Study1 : Emofood by Emotur Lab



Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Emotur Lab is part of the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) and stands as a pioneering hub in the emerging field of **neurotourism**. Its mission is to uncover the hidden emotional and cognitive layers of the tourism experience—what visitors feel, remember, and share beyond what traditional surveys can capture. The lab is equipped with cutting-edge technologies such as **eye-tracking, EEG devices, immersive VR/AR environments, and facial coding systems**. These tools allow researchers to transform subjective impressions into measurable data, providing insights that shape destination branding, hospitality innovation, and product design.

Emotur Lab works at the intersection of **marketing, psychology, hospitality, and information technologies**, connecting science with practice. Its research agenda is anchored in **sustainability, well-being, and innovation**, ensuring that emotions in tourism not only enhance visitor satisfaction but also contribute positively to local communities and environments.

Through initiatives such as **Emofood**, the lab collaborates with chefs, winemakers, tourism boards, and local producers to design emotionally engaging gastronomic experiences. These projects reinforce cultural identity, highlight local products, and create memorable connections between tourists, residents, and places.

Case study description

Title of the case study: Emofood by Emotur Lab – Unlocking the Emotional Dimension of Gastronomy Tourism

Emofood emerged from Emotur Lab's commitment to explore how **gastronomy is not just a component of hospitality, but a central emotional anchor of the tourism experience**. It investigates how **food and wine trigger emotions** that influence travelers' perceptions of destinations, guide their choices, and create long-lasting memories.

At its core, Emofood positions gastronomy as a **driver of identity, storytelling, and innovation**. It goes



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beyond serving dishes: each product is linked to narratives about local landscapes, traditions, and people. By combining **neuroscience and gastronomy**, the initiative reveals the subconscious layers of perception that traditional feedback methods cannot capture.

How Emofood Works Across the Tourist Journey:

- **Pre-travel phase:** Emofood studies how digital gastronomy (websites, online menus, social media images, storytelling videos) builds **anticipation and destination choice**. For example, photos of volcanic wines or Canary Island cheeses create emotional expectations before the trip.
- **On-site phase:** Tourists participate in experiences where gastronomy is combined with **immersive sensory environments**. A seafood dish may be accompanied by **projections of the ocean, ambient wave sounds, and aromas of sea breeze**, stimulating emotions beyond taste.
- **Post-travel phase:** Researchers analyze how these culinary moments remain in memory, shaping **word-of-mouth recommendations, social media sharing, and loyalty to the destination**.

Technological Innovation in Practice:

To measure these experiences scientifically, Emofood uses advanced tools:

- **Eye-tracking** to determine which visuals attract the most attention (plating, lighting, or menu design).
- **EEG monitoring** to measure neural arousal (excitement, focus, or relaxation during tastings).
- **Facial coding** to decode micro-expressions of pleasure, surprise, or hesitation.
- **Immersive VR/AR environments** and 360° videowalls to simulate gastronomic contexts and observe responses.

The 360 Immersive Gastronomic Room:

The flagship innovation of Emofood is the **360 Immersive Gastronomic Room**, a multisensory dining environment inspired by avant-garde culinary models such as *Sublimotion* but grounded in **neurogastronomy and scientific research**.

- Each course is paired with **themed audiovisual and olfactory scenes**: volcanic landscapes, marine ecosystems, or lush gardens, reinforcing the cultural and natural identity of the Canary Islands.
- Diners are seated in small groups (six per session), ensuring **intimacy and control of stimuli**.
- Emotional data (attention, excitement, memorability) are collected during the meal and later used to **refine product design**.

The presence of culinary icons such as **Ferran Adrià**, who has participated in events linked to Emofood 360, highlights its global relevance and connection to **gastronomic innovation at the highest level**.

Experimental Tastings Beyond the Room:

Emofood also extends to structured tastings of **local and international products**—including Canary wines, artisanal cheeses, olive oil, and even exotic fruits like **pitaya (dragon fruit)**. Each tasting combines **scientific data collection with cultural storytelling**, benefiting both producers and destinations.



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- For producers: insights help refine flavors, presentation, and marketing strategies.
- For destinations: eno-gastronomic routes and experiences are designed to highlight authenticity.
- For visitors: emotional engagement turns a tasting into an **educational and memorable journey**.

Why Emofood Matters:

- It proves that gastronomy is not just about taste—it is about **multisensory storytelling and cultural immersion**.
- It connects **science, creativity, and local identity**, providing evidence-based innovation for tourism.
- It shows how emotional data can be **translated into strategies for competitiveness, sustainability, and cultural preservation**.

Innovation Highlights

Emofood introduces several pioneering innovations that merge **gastronomy, neuroscience, and immersive technologies** to redefine the tourist experience:

1. 360 Immersive Gastronomic Room

- A multisensory dining environment where each course is paired with **projections, sounds, aromas, and cultural storytelling**.
- Functions as both a **stage for visitors** and a **living laboratory** where researchers collect data (attention, excitement, memorability) in real time.
- Inspired by avant-garde gastronomy models but grounded in **scientific neurogastronomy**.

2. Integration of Neuroscience into Gastronomy

- Application of **eye-tracking, EEG, and facial coding** to measure subconscious responses.
- Transformation of emotional reactions into **quantitative insights** that guide menu design, storytelling, and product refinement.

3. Customer Journey–Based Design

- Experiences are structured across the **entire tourist journey**:
 - Pre-travel → Digital storytelling and anticipation.
 - On-site → Multisensory immersion with gastronomy.
 - Post-travel → Emotional recall, sharing, and loyalty.
- Ensures gastronomy is embedded as a **memorable anchor** in destination branding.

4. Collaborative Innovation with Stakeholders

- Partnerships with chefs, winemakers, and local producers to co-create **eno-gastronomic products**.
- Reinforces **cultural authenticity and local identity**, transforming gastronomy into a tool for



territorial branding.



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5. Experimental Tastings and Applied Research

- Structured tastings of wines, cheeses, olive oils, and fruits (e.g., pitaya) combining **scientific rigor with cultural immersion**.
- Provides producers with actionable insights on consumer perception, acceptance, and willingness to pay.

6. Visual and Didactic Tools for Tourism Innovation

- Use of **immersive videos, 360° environments, and customer journey maps** for teaching and dissemination.
- Makes Emofood not only a research project, but also a **pedagogical tool** for tourism, hospitality, and gastronomy education.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social Impact

- **Cultural identity reinforced:** Emofood integrates local stories, landscapes, and traditions into gastronomy, making food a **vehicle for cultural pride and authenticity**.
- **Enhanced visitor experience:** Immersive dining creates **stronger emotional connections**, increasing satisfaction and memorability.
- **Educational value:** Emofood serves as a **didactic tool** for students, professionals, and communities, showing how science and gastronomy can work together.
- **Community engagement:** Local residents, chefs, and producers participate actively, fostering **co-creation and inclusivity**.

Economic Impact

- **Support for local producers:** Wineries, cheese makers, olive oil producers, and fruit growers (e.g., pitaya farmers) benefit from insights that help refine products and align with consumer preferences.
- **Destination competitiveness:** By offering unique eno-gastronomic experiences, destinations differentiate themselves in the global tourism market.
- **Word-of-mouth marketing:** Immersive gastronomy generates **shareable moments** on social media, amplifying destination visibility without high advertising costs.
- **Business innovation:** Restaurants and hospitality providers gain a model for **premium experiential products** with higher willingness-to-pay.

Environmental Impact

- **Sustainable gastronomy:** Emofood emphasizes the use of **local ingredients** and seasonal products, reducing ecological footprints and promoting responsible consumption.



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- **Awareness of local resources:** Experiences highlight the link between food, territory, and environment (e.g., volcanic wines, marine products, island fruits).
- **Long-term sustainability:** By valuing local ecosystems through gastronomy, Emofood fosters **conscious tourism** aligned with global sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Key Stakeholders Involved

Emofood's success is built on **collaboration across academia, industry, and local communities**. The main stakeholders include:

Academic & Research Institutions

- **Emotur Lab (ULPGC):** Leading the research in neurotourism and neuromarketing applications.
- Multidisciplinary teams of **marketing, psychology, hospitality, and technology researchers** providing scientific depth and methodological rigor.

Chefs & Culinary Innovators

- Renowned chefs, including figures like **Ferran Adrià**, who bring global visibility and expertise in avant-garde cuisine.
- Local chefs who adapt traditional recipes into **emotionally engaging gastronomic experiences**.

Local Producers & Winemakers

- Canary Islands wine producers, artisanal cheese makers, olive oil producers, and fruit farmers.
- They benefit from experimental tastings that provide **scientific insights into consumer behavior**.

Tourism Boards & Destination Managers

- Regional and local authorities promoting **gastronomy tourism as a strategic advantage**.
- Use Emofood's findings to **brand destinations through gastronomy and emotion**.

Hospitality & Business Sector

- Restaurants and hotels integrating immersive dining concepts into their offerings.
- Hospitality companies seeking **premium, innovative experiences** to increase competitiveness.

Visitors & Participants

- Tourists who engage in Emofood tastings, immersive dinners, or VR/AR experiences.
- Provide both **data and feedback**, making them co-creators of the research process.

Communities & Society at Large

- Residents benefit from stronger **territorial identity and cultural pride**.
- Society gains from **knowledge transfer**, where academic innovation becomes applied value for local development.



Ferran Adrià at Emofood 360

Within the broader division of Emofood, the star product is the 360 Immersive Gastronomic Room, a concept that combines neurogastronomy, sensory immersion, and theatrical staging. Inspired in part by the innovative model of immersive gastroexperience, this experience is designed to be a cutting-edge fusion of food, technology and emotion, tailored to unlock deeper engagement and memorable emotional connections between tourists and a destination's gastronomic identity.



Emofood 360

Emofood's 360 Immersive Gastronomic Room builds on that model, but is firmly grounded in neurogastronomy, meaning it is not only a sensory spectacle but also a laboratory environment where emotional responses are measured, analysed, and fed back into design. In this room every detail—from lighting, projection content, sound, aroma, plating design, menu sequence, to pacing—is designed to elicit and study emotional variables: attention, interest, excitement, memorability.

Lessons Learned

The Emofood initiative demonstrates several key lessons for tourism, gastronomy, and innovation:



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Emotions are central to tourism

- Tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and destination choice are strongly influenced by **emotional connections** rather than only price or infrastructure.

Gastronomy is an emotional anchor

- Food is not just nutrition; it is a **multisensory, cultural, and emotional experience** that can define the memory of a destination.

Science enhances creativity

- Neuroscience and technology (EEG, eye-tracking, immersive VR/AR) provide evidence-based insights that **refine creative gastronomy and storytelling**.

Collaboration ensures authenticity

- Working with **chefs, winemakers, producers, and communities** ensures that innovation is rooted in **local identity and sustainability**.

Immersive environments amplify memorability

- Combining gastronomy with **visual, auditory, and olfactory stimuli** significantly increases attention, excitement, and post-travel recall.

Tourism innovation can be didactic

- Emofood is not only a business model but also a **teaching resource**, showing how to connect theory, practice, and innovation in real-world tourism.

Sustainability must be integrated

- Using **local ingredients, seasonal products, and cultural storytelling** links gastronomy to sustainable development, ensuring benefits for both visitors and residents.



Sommelier in a wine tasting experiment.



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Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://emotur.ulpgc.es/>

<https://emotur.ulpgc.es/neuroturismo/emotions/>

<https://emotur.ulpgc.es/emoturlab/emofood/>

Case Study 2: Tsivis kveli: An Integrated Model of Quality Product and Hospitality



Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Tsivis Kveli – Where Tradition Meets Experience

Family-owned dairy company “Tsivis Kveli” was founded in 2008 in the picturesque village of Kurdgelauri, near Telavi in the heart of Kakheti. The factory specializes in producing a wide range of cheeses – from authentic Georgian traditional varieties to select European styles – combining heritage recipes with modern quality standards.

Today, over 25 employees, most of them local residents, proudly contribute to the factory’s growth, making Tsivis Kveli not only a producer of fine cheese but also an important employer in the community. Since 2010, the factory has gone beyond production to become a vibrant tourism destination, offering visitors the chance to:

Take part in cheese-making master classes; Actively participate in the production process; Enjoy tastings and cultural events that celebrate Georgian gastronomy.

Tsivis Kveli also plays an active role in the community and beyond, regularly participating in charity events organized by embassies in Georgia, and proudly showcasing its achievements through numerous gifts, awards, certificates, and letters of recognition.

The company’s commitment to excellence extends to its people: factory staff continuously upgrade their skills through training provided by the state, NGOs, and international organizations. This dedication to professional development ensures both the highest product quality and an authentic visitor experience.

Tsivis Kveli is more than a cheese factory – it is a place where tradition, innovation, and hospitality come



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together, offering guests a true taste of Georgia.

Innovation Highlights

1. Integration of Production and Tourism.

Traditional cheese-making with immersive tourist experiences (cheese-making workshops, tastings, farm visits).

Transforms a production facility into an educational and cultural hub for visitors.

2. Experience-Based Value Creation

Goes beyond selling products by offering hands-on experiences (tourists can make their own cheese, taste different varieties, learn about Georgian dairy traditions).

Builds strong emotional connection with the brand.

3. Diversified Business Model

Dual income streams: dairy product sales + tourism services.

Reduces risk by balancing agricultural seasonality with year-round visitor experiences.

4. Quality and Certification as Innovation

Implementation of HACCP standards and Georgian Quality Mark certification ensures international-level trust in local products.

Positions the factory as a role model for quality-driven local producers.

5. Cultural Heritage Promotion

Innovative use of Georgian culinary traditions as part of the tourism offering.

Cheese becomes not only food, but also a cultural narrative that attracts visitors.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)



1. Social Impact



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- **Rural Employment & Skills:** Provides stable jobs in cheese production and tourism services, helping reduce rural outmigration.
- **Community Engagement:** Acts as a community hub where locals and visitors interact, exchange knowledge, and celebrate Georgian culinary heritage.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Promotes Georgian dairy traditions and intangible heritage (cheese-making methods) through workshops and storytelling.
- **Education & Awareness:** Hosts tourist groups, students, and international visitors, raising awareness of sustainable agriculture and food culture.

2. Economic Impact

- **Diversified Revenue Streams:** Generates income from both cheese sales (retail, wholesale) and tourism services (workshops, tastings, agro-tourism packages).
- **Local Value Chain Development:** Supports local farmers by sourcing milk and related inputs, strengthening the regional agricultural economy.
- **Market Expansion:** Certified products (HACCP, Georgian Quality Mark) increase trust, enabling access to domestic supermarkets and export potential.
- **Tourism Contribution:** Attracts domestic and international tourists, contributing to the local hospitality economy (hotels, restaurants, guides).

3. Environmental Impact

- **Natural Resource Use:** Utilizes fresh local milk, supporting sustainable small-scale farming.
- **Food Waste Reduction:** Cheese-making workshops and on-site tastings help minimize unsold product waste through direct-to-consumer channels.
- **Awareness for Sustainability:** Educates visitors about the connection between local farming, responsible consumption, and environmental stewardship.

Tsivis Kveli has positioned itself as more than a dairy factory — it's an engine for rural development, a preserver of cultural heritage, and a contributor to local economic resilience, while moving gradually towards sustainability in production and tourism.

Key Stakeholders Involved



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1. Internal Stakeholders

- Founders / Owners – visionaries who established the dairy factory and developed the agro-tourism concept.
- Employees – staff involved in cheese production, quality control, sales, hospitality, and tourist services.

2. Local Stakeholders

- Local Farmers & Milk Suppliers – provide the raw milk for cheese production, ensuring continuous supply.
- Community Members – benefit from employment opportunities, local purchases, and increased visibility of the region.
- Tourism Service Providers – local hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, and guides partnering with Tsivis Kveli to offer packages.

3. Customers & Visitors

- Domestic Consumers – buy cheese products in local markets and supermarkets.
- Tourists (Domestic & International) – experience agro-tourism activities, tastings, and workshops.
- Distributors & Retailers – supermarkets, specialty shops, and restaurants that sell or serve Tsivis Kveli products.

4. Supporting & Institutional Stakeholders

- Government Agencies – e.g., Ministry of Agriculture, tourism and food safety authorities supporting rural enterprises and quality standards.
- Certification Bodies – HACCP and “Georgian Quality Mark” institutions ensuring quality compliance.
- Educational Institutions – universities, vocational schools, and student groups visiting for study tours.



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5. Strategic Partners

- Tourism Agencies & Tour Operators – integrate Tsivis Kveli into cultural and gastronomic tours.
- Media & Influencers – promote the brand story, heritage, and tourist appeal.
- International Markets – potential partners for export and collaboration.

Tsivis Kveli brings together a network of local farmers, employees, tourists, government bodies, and international partners. The success of the factory depends on this ecosystem of stakeholders, where each group plays a role in production, quality assurance, cultural promotion, and rural economic development.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned by Tsivis Kveli since they start the operation:

1. Tourism is More Than an Add-On

Opening the factory to visitors and offering workshops turned out to be just as important as selling cheese itself. Agro-tourism became a strong revenue source and a marketing tool.

2. Certification and Standards Pay Off

Investing in HACCP and the Georgian Quality Mark required effort and resources, but it opened doors to larger markets and built trust among consumers and partners.

3. Customer Experience Drives Loyalty

Visitors who participate in cheese-making or tastings are more likely to remember the brand, recommend it, and return — showing that experiential services strengthen customer relationships.

4. Local Partnerships are Key

Strong cooperation with local farmers for milk supply and collaboration with local tourism actors (hotels, guides, tour operators) proved essential for sustainable growth.

5. Continuous Training Improves Competitiveness

Participation in trainings from government and international organizations helped the company improve food safety, service quality, and innovation.

6. Cultural Storytelling Adds Value

Emphasizing Georgian cheese-making traditions turned the product into more than food — it became a cultural experience that attracts both locals and international visitors.

7. Adaptability is Crucial

The company learned to adapt to changing seasons, fluctuating tourist numbers, and evolving market demands by diversifying products and services.

8. Sustainability Builds Reputation

Steps toward eco-friendly practices (natural milk use, potential eco-packaging) are increasingly valued by customers, showing that sustainability is not just ethical but also strategic.



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In short: Tsivis Kveli learned that innovation lies in blending tradition with modern business practices — quality assurance, tourism experiences, local partnerships, and sustainability together create long-term success.



Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://www.facebook.com/tsiviskveli>

<https://tsiviskveli.ge/en/>



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Case Study 3: Wine Tourism and Its Role in the Transformation of Wine Production and Consumption in Czechia: A Case Study"

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

- Czech Winemakers and Winegrowers (e.g., Lahofer, Znovín Znojmo):

Local producers who play a central role in shaping wine tourism experiences. These wineries combine traditional viticulture with modern hospitality, offering tastings, cellar tours, and cultural events.

- Wine Union of the Czech Republic:

A national body representing the interests of Czech wine producers. It supports quality standards, marketing initiatives, and legislative advocacy for the wine sector.

- Czech Statistical Office & Ministry of Agriculture:

These governmental institutions provide essential data, policy frameworks, and strategic support for sustainable wine production and rural development.

- Wine Fund & Winegrowers Association:

These entities promote Czech wine domestically and abroad, fund educational and promotional activities, and support innovation in viticulture.

- Tourism Bodies (e.g., CzechTourism, Partnership Foundation):

Key players in integrating wine tourism into broader cultural and regional tourism strategies. They help develop certified wine trails, promote eco-tourism, and connect wineries with travel networks.

Innovation Highlights

- Use of predictive modeling (e.g., Holt's and Brown's exponential smoothing) to forecast viticulture trends
- Integration of wine tourism certification programs to enhance consumer experience
- Promotion of terroir-driven wine production and direct-to-consumer sales
- Climate adaptation through PIWI grape varieties and resilient rootstocks

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social:

- Increased engagement with local wine culture
- Growth in certified wine tourism services (wineries, cellars, accommodations)

Economic:



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- Stabilization of vineyard acreage despite economic uncertainty
- Rise in direct-to-consumer and online wine sales
- Enhanced competitiveness of Czech wines in international competitions

Environmental:

- Adoption of climate-resilient viticulture practices
- Emphasis on sustainable farming and reduced environmental footprint

Key Stakeholders Involved

- Czech winemakers and winegrowers (e.g., Lahofer, Znovín Znojmo)
- Wine Union of the Czech Republic
- Czech Statistical Office and Ministry of Agriculture
- Wine Fund and Winegrowers Association
- Tourism bodies (e.g., CzechTourism, Partnership Foundation)

Lessons Learned

- Wine tourism can buffer economic volatility and declining consumption
- Strategic adaptation to climate change is essential for long-term sustainability
- Certification and quality assurance build consumer trust and market value
- Diversification of sales channels (retail, direct, online) strengthens resilience
- Support for family-run wineries and generational renewal is critical

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-0472/15/17/1882>



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Case Study 4: “Quinta Vinhos de Portugal – International Strategy”

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Quinta Vinhos de Portugal is a Portuguese SME with over two centuries of history, founded in 1755. After being acquired by António Gonçalves in the 1980s, the company underwent major modernization, focusing on quality, innovation, and international expansion. It produces wines from three regions—Arruda dos Vinhos, Vinho Verde, and Douro—and has been managed by a holding company since 2008, overseeing both production and distribution.

Innovation Highlights

- Product adaptation strategy (wine style, packaging, pricing, and brand reputation)
- Portfolio diversification with wines from three distinct Portuguese regions
- Investment in wine preservation technology (stainless steel tanks since 2012)
- Participation in international wine competitions to boost brand visibility

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social:

- Promotion of Portuguese wine culture
- Support for local growers and regional development

Economic:

- Continuous growth in international sales (87% in 2022, projected 88% in 2024)
- Expansion into new markets (USA, Brazil, Mexico, Singapore, Hong Kong)
- Year-over-year increase in revenue and EBITDA

Environmental:

- Improved wine preservation practices
- Commitment to sustainable production methods

Key Stakeholders Involved

- Holding company managing the Quinta
- International importers (USA, Brazil, Angola, etc.)
- National distributors (e.g., SONAE / Continente)



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- Oenologists and wine experts
- Final consumers and commercial partners

Lessons Learned

- Successful internationalization requires deep market adaptation
- Direct expansion strategies can be risky without local insight
- Packaging and reputation are critical when marketing budgets are limited
- Strategic partnerships with importers are essential
- Investing in quality and differentiation is key to global competitiveness

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://repositorio.ucp.pt/bitstream/10400.14/41044/1/203132114.pdf>



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Case Study 5: The Potential of Wine Tourism in the Innovation Processes of Tourism Experiences in the Canary Islands—An Approach to the Case of the Canary Brand

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

The case study centers on local wineries in the Canary Islands, such as Bodega Tajinaste, Finca Marañuela, and Suertes del Marqués. These are small to medium-sized producers deeply rooted in the La Orotava Valley, Tenerife. They are known for preserving traditional viticulture practices, especially the unique Braided Cord System (BCS), while embracing innovation through wine tourism, sustainable farming, and international outreach. Their work reflects a blend of heritage, environmental stewardship, and experiential tourism, making them key players in the region's cultural and economic landscape.

Innovation Highlights

- Recognition of the BCS as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by the Canary Islands government (2024)
- Integration of wine tourism routes and storytelling into vineyard experiences
- Use of regenerative viticulture and natural winemaking practices
- Development of visitor centers, panoramic terraces, and small-scale accommodations within vineyards
- Launch of CanaryWineRoute.com to promote local wines and tourism

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social:

- Strengthened local identity and cultural heritage
- Increased visitor engagement through personalized wine tourism experiences
- Educational initiatives to promote viticulture among younger generations

Economic:

- Diversification of income for wineries through tourism
- Growth in international wine exports (e.g., USA, Canada, Asia)
- Recognition of Canary Island wines in prestigious guides (e.g., Peñín Guide)

Environmental:

- Adoption of sustainable and organic farming practices
- Preservation of traditional vineyard landscapes
- Reduced ecological footprint through regenerative agriculture



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Key Stakeholders Involved

- Local wineries (e.g., Bodega Tajinaste, Finca Marañuela, Suertes del Marqués)
- Regulatory Council of the Orotava Valley DO
- Municipal governments (La Orotava, Los Realejos, Puerto de la Cruz)
- Wine tourism guides and entrepreneurs
- Chair of Agrotourism and Wine Tourism (University of La Laguna)
- Canary Islands Wine Tourism Cluster

Lessons Learned

- Wine tourism can be a strategic tool for preserving cultural landscapes
- Public-private collaboration is essential for sustainable development
- Storytelling and authenticity enhance visitor experiences
- Training and generational renewal are critical for long-term viability
- Online visibility and infrastructure investment are needed to scale wine tourism

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/15/6314>

Case Study 6: Atena Winera



Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Atena Winera is a socially-driven winemaking initiative rooted in a place once shaped by conflict — a space that once echoed with pain, loss, and division. Today, it has been transformed into a sanctuary of peace, resilience, and community building.

More than just a winery, Atena Winera is a symbol of regeneration. It blends mindful winemaking with sustainable practices, ethical entrepreneurship, and a deep social mission. At its heart, the initiative empowers women affected by the trauma of war, offering them a space to heal, grow, and thrive.

But Atena Winera is also a place where gastronomy becomes a bridge between memory and renewal. The initiative is reviving forgotten, ancestral recipes passed down through generations—celebrating traditional flavors that speak to identity, resilience, and place. Through mindful cooking masterclasses and curated wine tastings, visitors are invited to connect deeply with the land, the people, and the stories behind every dish and bottle.

Each experience, whether a glass of wine or a shared meal, tells a story of hope, heritage, and the power of turning pain into purpose.

Innovation Highlights

1. Transforming a Post-Conflict Space into a Healing Enterprise

Atena Winera reimagines a once war-affected home into a sanctuary of peace and purpose—merging business with trauma-informed community regeneration.

Innovation: Spatial and emotional transformation as a foundation for social entrepreneurship.

2. Social Impact Through Mindful Winemaking

The initiative embeds healing and empowerment into every aspect of its winemaking process, offering conflict-affected women employment, skill-building, and emotional restoration.



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Innovation: Winemaking as a tool for psychosocial recovery and women's empowerment.

3. Culinary Revival as a Cultural and Economic Catalyst

Atena Winera is reviving ancestral recipes and offering mindful cooking classes alongside wine tasting—preserving local food heritage while creating immersive, purpose-driven experiences.

Innovation: Pairing gastronomy with social enterprise to celebrate identity, history, and sustainability.

4. Mindful Culinary & Wine Experiences

Through curated experiences, guests are invited to engage all senses with intention—learning not only about wine, but about the stories, people, and land behind it.

Innovation: Sensory storytelling through food and wine as a medium for cultural education and emotional connection.

5. Women-Led Social Regeneration

Founded and operated by women, the initiative places female leadership at the center of its social, economic, and cultural mission—breaking gender norms in both winemaking and entrepreneurship.

Innovation: Women-led post-conflict innovation that challenges traditional gender roles in agriculture and hospitality.

6. Sustainability Woven into Every Layer

From eco-conscious viticulture to regenerative land use and low-impact culinary practices, Atena Winera integrates environmental care into its core model.

Innovation: Holistic sustainability across agriculture, food systems, and community development.

7. Experience-Driven, Story-Led Business Model

Each bottle and each meal become a storytelling platform—inviting consumers into a deeper connection with values of peace, resilience, and heritage.

Innovation: Turning wine and gastronomy into immersive narratives of recovery and hope.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social Impact

Empowerment and Healing for Women Affected by Conflict

Provides meaningful employment, training, and psychosocial support to women impacted by war trauma, fostering healing, dignity, and economic independence.

Cultural Revival and Community Reconnection

Revives ancestral culinary traditions and storytelling, strengthening cultural identity and community pride through mindful cooking classes and shared experiences.

Post-Conflict Reconciliation Through Enterprise



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Transforms a space marked by division into a hub of peace and resilience, helping rebuild social cohesion and trust within the local community.

Economic Impact

Job Creation and Skill Development

Generates sustainable livelihood opportunities, especially for marginalized women, through winemaking, culinary workshops, and hospitality services.

Social Enterprise Model with Reinvestment

Operates as a values-driven business, reinvesting profits into community development, training programs, and environmental restoration projects.

Local Economic Stimulation

Supports rural development by attracting visitors for wine tastings and cooking experiences, boosting local tourism and related micro-businesses.

Environmental Impact

Sustainable Viticulture and Land Regeneration

Employs eco-friendly, low-intervention grape growing techniques that restore soil health and promote biodiversity.

Mindful Culinary Practices

Integrates seasonal, local ingredients and waste reduction strategies in cooking classes and hospitality, minimizing environmental footprint.

Holistic Sustainability Commitment

Combines social and environmental sustainability, recognizing that ecological stewardship and community wellbeing are interconnected.

Key Stakeholders Involved

Founder & Leadership

Nino Lotishvili (Founder)

Visionary and driving force behind the initiative. Leads strategy, operations, storytelling, and social mission with a personal connection to the project's origins.

Women Affected by Conflict

Primary Beneficiaries & Partners

Formerly marginalized women are not only supported but engaged as active participants in production, operations, and community-building, contributing their strength and stories to the initiative.

Local Community



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Extended Stakeholders

Includes neighbors, families, and rural communities who benefit from job creation, training, shared resources, and the revitalisation of a conflict-affected area.

Incoming tour operators bringing travellers - wine and gastro tour lovers

Sustainable Agriculture Partners

Organic Farmers, Agronomists, & Viticulture Experts

Support sustainable grape-growing practices, soil restoration, and environmentally conscious farming.

Impact Investors & Grantmakers

Social Impact Funds, NGOs, and Philanthropic Foundations

Provide funding and strategic support to help scale the social and environmental mission.

NGO ManaTheia Peace Hub founded also by Nino and funded by the EU/UNDP initiative EU4Dialogue

Mental Health & Capacity Building Partners

Offer trauma-informed care, mental health training, and psychosocial support for women affected by war.

Training & Education Institutions

Vocational and Agricultural Training Centers

Equip stakeholders with winemaking, sustainability, and entrepreneurial skills to ensure long-term impact.

Lessons Learned

1. Purpose-Driven Ventures Foster Resilience

A clear, heartfelt mission rooted in personal and community healing sustained the initiative through challenges, underscoring the power of purpose in social entrepreneurship.

2. Transforming Space Transforms People

Repurposing a conflict-affected home into a place of peace and productivity showed how physical spaces can shape emotional and social renewal.

3. Integrating Culture Amplifies Impact

Reviving traditional recipes and combining them with wine experiences deepened community engagement and created unique value propositions for visitors.

4. Empowerment Requires Patience and Adaptability

Supporting women affected by trauma meant adapting leadership styles and timelines to prioritize trust-building and emotional wellbeing alongside skill development.

5. Sustainability is Multifaceted

Environmental care, social healing, and economic viability must be addressed simultaneously to build a



truly regenerative enterprise.



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6. Storytelling Connects and Converts

Authentic narratives about conflict, healing, and heritage attracted partners, customers, and supporters who resonate with the mission beyond just the product.

7. Collaboration is Key to Growth

Partnerships with local communities, NGOs, and experts were essential for providing comprehensive support and scaling impact effectively.

8. Mindful Experiences Differentiate the Brand

Offering combined wine tasting and mindful cooking classes created a unique experiential model that engaged senses, emotions, and values simultaneously.

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559435480568>

Case Study 7: Schuchmann Wines Georgia

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Schuchmann Wines Georgia is a wine producer that combines traditional Georgian winemaking techniques with modern European standards. In addition to premium wine production, over the years, the company has developed into a full-scale wine tourism destination.

Schuchmann Wines Georgia owns a hotel, a unique wine spa, scenic vineyards, and a wine village, offering guests an immersive experience into Georgia's rich wine culture and hospitality. Schuchmann Wines plays a vital role in promoting Georgian wine internationally while supporting sustainable development and tourism in the region.

Innovation Highlights

Schuchmann Wines Georgia has successfully integrated traditional Georgian winemaking with modern European techniques to create a unique and innovative business model. Key innovations include:

Diversified Wine Tourism Offering: Beyond wine production, the company has developed a holistic tourism destination that includes:

- A boutique hotel with premium accommodations
- A wine spa, offering grape-based wellness treatments
- An immersive wine village, showcasing traditional Georgian wine culture
- Guided tours and tastings across their scenic vineyards

Sustainable Winemaking: The company employs eco-friendly practices, emphasizing organic and natural wine production while preserving Georgia's ancient Qvevri (clay jar) method.

Branding Georgian Wine Internationally: Schuchmann has played a pivotal role in rebranding Georgian wine for global markets, balancing authenticity with international quality standards.

Vertical Integration: From vine to glass to guest experience, Schuchmann controls every step of the value chain, ensuring quality and a strong brand identity.





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Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social Impact

- Created employment opportunities in rural areas, particularly in the Kakheti region, helping curb migration to urban centers.
- Promoted local culture and traditions, helping to preserve Georgia's winemaking heritage through experiential tourism.
- Engaged local communities through partnerships with artisans and small producers within the wine village.

Economic Impact

- Boosted wine exports, contributing to Georgia's growing reputation in global wine markets.
- Attracted foreign direct investment and high-value tourists, enhancing local revenue streams.
- Generated year-round income through tourism, reducing seasonality often associated with agriculture.

Environmental Impact

- Emphasized sustainable farming practices, including responsible land use.
- Invested in energy-efficient infrastructure within the hotel and spa facilities.
- Promoted low-impact tourism by focusing on small-scale, high-quality experiences rather than mass tourism.



Key Stakeholders Involved



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1. Schuchmann Wines Management & Investors – Responsible for strategic direction, operations, and innovation.
2. Local Government & Tourism Authorities – Supported infrastructure development and international promotion.
3. Local Community – Provided labor, artisanal products, and cultural knowledge that enrich the visitor experience.
4. International Wine Distributors & Partners – Helped position and distribute Georgian wines globally.
5. Guests & Tourists – Acted as both consumers and ambassadors of Georgian wine culture.



Lessons Learned

1. Integration Adds Value: Combining wine production with tourism and wellness services creates a resilient and diversified business model.
2. Cultural Authenticity is an Asset: Emphasizing traditional methods (like Qvevri winemaking) can differentiate a brand in competitive global markets.
3. Sustainability Pays Off: Investing in environmentally friendly practices enhances brand reputation and long-term profitability.
4. Community Involvement is Key: Building strong ties with the local community supports sustainable development and social impact.
5. Experiential Tourism is the Future: Modern tourists seek immersive, authentic experiences.

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://www.schuchmann-wines.com/>



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Case Study 8: “Tasting the Hills: How Dunajovské Pecky Organization Blends Wine, Food and Local Culture Into Complex Experience”

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Dunajovské Pecky is a wine-gastronomic initiative created by the Dunajovské Kopce Winegrowers' Association in the villages of Dolní Dunajovice and Březí u Mikulova, South Moravia, region of Mikulovsko.

The name “Pecky” (literally “seeds” or colloquially “gems”) refers to hand-picked places worth visiting – boutique wineries, restaurants, cafés, and cultural spots that reflect the authentic spirit of the Dunajovské Hills terroir.

The project connects:

Curated “Pecky” establishments – wineries, gastronomy, local businesses with a strong quality and locality ethos.

A digital event calendar – “Peckalendar” highlighting tastings, open-cellar weekends, cultural events, food-and-wine festivals.

Place-based storytelling about the Dunajovské Hills' landscape, vineyards, and biodiversity.

The initiative transforms the area into a destination for immersive wine and culinary tourism rather than just a place to buy wine.

Innovation Highlights

Quality-driven regional brand: A curated label that highlights not only wineries but also gastronomy, accommodations, and experiences meeting defined quality standards.

Integrated Wine + Food + Experience Approach: Visitors are guided to complete experiences – tasting, dining, accommodation, landscape tours.

Digital Tools: An online “Peckalendar,” active social-media presence, a regional magazine, and cohesive visual identity.

Collaborative Governance: Wineries operate under a joint association, sharing marketing, event planning, and infrastructure.

Terroir-based Storytelling: Emphasis on the unique natural reserve of the Dunajovské Hills (limestone soils, protected landscape) as part of the product narrative.

Regional Culinary Publication – “Kuchařka Dunajovských kopců” (The Dunajovské Hills Cookbook):

A locally curated cookbook was created in collaboration with regional chefs, wineries, and producers. It features traditional recipes, wine-pairing suggestions, and seasonal ingredients from the region, helping to preserve culinary heritage and inspire both residents and visitors to cook with local produce.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)



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Cultural heritage preservation: The cookbook documents and revitalizes traditional South Moravian recipes and integrates them with local wines.

Education & promotion: It strengthens awareness of local gastronomy among residents, restaurants, and tourists, promoting short supply chains and seasonal cooking.

Economic impact: Encourages collaboration between wineries, local farmers, and chefs, supporting regional agri-food businesses.

Marketing value: The cookbook serves as a tangible cultural product and souvenir that extends the Dunajovské Pecky brand beyond events.

Key Stakeholders Involved

Dunajovské Kopce Winegrowers' Association – initiator and main coordinator.

Local wineries (e.g., Vinařství Baláž, Mikrosvín Mikulov, Volařík Winery, KADRKA, Garčic and others from Dolní Dunajovice & Břeží).

Gastronomy & hospitality partners – restaurants, cafés, guesthouses included as “Pecky” (e.g., Wine Exposition - National Wine Salon; Winebars - KOREK, Vrata 22, Valgelato; Cafeterias - Hostina Valtice, Zahrada café; Restaurants - Chateau Petit, Anton Florian and others).

Municipalities – Dolní Dunajovice, Břeží u Mikulova, City of Mikulov supporting infrastructure and tourism policies.

Visitors & tourists – domestic and international wine-tourism clientele.

Media & digital platforms – online magazine, social media channels amplifying regional branding, Cookbook, newsletter, specialized Guidebook, Gourmet Jižní Morava (specialized multidisciplinary Gastro guide and competition).

Lessons Learned

Collaboration is crucial: Success relies on collective work of friends from wineries, gastronomy, and municipalities working under a shared brand.

Experience over product: Modern wine tourists seek authentic stories, landscapes, and food pairing – not just a bottle of wine.

Curated quality pays off: Clear quality standards ensure that the “Pecky” label has credibility and market value.

Sustainability protects the asset: Maintaining the natural landscape and terroir is essential for long-term success.

Marketing & storytelling matter: Digital communication and consistent branding attract visitors beyond the local region.

Flexibility & seasonality: Tailoring events to seasonal demand (e.g., open-cellar weekends, harvest activities) sustains visitor interest year-round.



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Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://dunajovskepecky.cz>

https://dunajovskepecky.cz/images/DK_Pecky_220x160.pdf



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Case Study 9: “Following the Hen: The Slípka-Tour Model for A Community-Driven Wine & Heritage Trail in the South Moravia Wine Region of Velké Bílovice”

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

The Velkobílovická Slípka (“The Hen of Velké Bílovice”) is a community-based wine-gastronomic initiative in South Moravia that created the Slípka-Tour, a self-guided walking and cycling trail linking local wine cellars, small producers, historical landmarks, and gastronomic spots.

Launched by a local association of winemakers, Winemakers of Velké Bílovice, tourism actors, and the municipality, the project’s playful branding around the hen (slípka in local dialect) reflects regional identity and makes the trail attractive for families, cyclists, and cultural tourists.

Innovation Highlights

Story-Driven Branding: The hen motif connects wine heritage, folk humor, and regional storytelling, becoming a recognizable local brand.

Slípka-Tour Heritage & Wine Trail – Core Innovation:

A looped, signposted route (walkable and bike-friendly) that links more than 20 cellar streets, family wineries, local farms, orchards, chapels, and folklore landmarks across Velké Bílovice.

Self-guided exploration supported by an illustrated Slípka map, downloadable QR-based navigation, and story panels that share anecdotes, dialect sayings, and viticultural history.

Seasonal “stamp-collecting game”: visitors collect hen-stamped points at each stop, redeemable for small regional souvenirs or discounts on tastings — an engaging gamification tool for families and repeat visitors.

Landscape interpretation stops explaining vineyard biodiversity, traditional orchard management, and soil-friendly viticulture, turning a leisure walk into an educational experience.

All-you-can-drink event with partner winemakers.

Foodtrucks, Coffee drinks, Local dishes, Local sweets.

Integrated Experiences: Combines wine tastings, farm-to-table snacks, folk-craft workshops, and landscape interpretation boards.

Family-Friendly & Slow Tourism Approach: Encourages cycling, walking, picnicking and emphasizes sustainability over mass events.

Digital & Map-Based Tools: Provides printed maps and a mobile-friendly guide for visitors to plan routes and discover seasonal activities.

Collaborative Local Governance: Joint effort by winegrowers, municipality, cultural NGOs, and local gastronomy providers sharing promotion and event logistics.



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Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social: Strengthened community pride and inter-generational exchange (older vintners sharing traditions with young guides and entrepreneurs).

Economic: Increased off-season wine tourism revenues for small cellars, local eateries, and B&Bs, reducing dependence on big festivals.

Environmental: Promotes soft mobility (cycling, walking), highlights traditional orchard conservation, and reduces pressure on local traffic.

Cultural: Revives local folklore and dialect expressions through branding and storytelling along the route.

Key Stakeholders Involved

Association Velkobílovická Slípka (core organizer & brand holder)

Local wineries and traditional cellar-street associations

Municipality of Velké Bílovice

Gastronomy & agri-food producers (cheesemakers, bakers, beekeepers)

Regional tourism board & cultural NGOs

Cycling clubs and local schools (educational events)

Lessons Learned

Narrative matters: A simple, culturally resonant symbol (the hen) can unify diverse actors and resonate with visitors.

Decentralized experiences reduce overtourism: Smaller cellar visits spread across the village lower pressure on infrastructure.

Synergy between wine and heritage strengthens the destination's year-round appeal.

Community ownership of branding ensures authenticity and sustainable growth.

Early investment in maps, signage, and interpretation improves visitor flow and satisfaction.

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://www.velkobilovictivinari.cz/aktuality>

<https://www.vinazmoravyvinazcech.cz/cs/akce/aNvXk7sJRcm4uFtEg1l2Bg-slipka-tour>

<https://velkobilovictivinari.cz/akce/slipka-tour-2025>

<https://velkobilovictivinari.cz/vinarstvi/seznam-clenu-a-adeptu>

<https://velkobilovictivinari.cz/images/dokumenty-media/apelacni-mapa.pdf>

https://velkobilovictivinari.cz/images/dokumenty-media/lahve_kolaz_2017-pro-web.jpg



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Case Study 10: Národní salón vín – Integrating Wine Excellence, Education and Gastronomy in the Czech Republic

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

The Národní salón vín České republiky is the highest-level wine competition and continuous tasting exposition operated by the Národní vinařské centrum, o.p.s. (National Wine Centre) in Valtice, South Moravia. It combines:

A National Wine Competition (Národní soutěž vín), which selects the best wines from the Moravian and Czech wine regions via regional nomination rounds.

A permanent tasting exposition of the top-100 awarded wines (the “Salon vín”) housed in the rural cellars of the Valtice Castle, open to the public outside January when the collection is being renewed.

Národní vinařské centrum

Associated programs: wine-education (seminars, training), literature & publications, sommeliers’ education, promotional events, and partnerships with gastronomic venues and tourism infrastructure.

Innovation Highlights

Dual Function: Competition + Exposition

The salon is not just a competition to pick the best wines; it immediately transitions those awarded into a year-round exposition. This gives wines and producers ongoing visibility. The public can taste them (exposition), purchase them, see details about each wine, its vineyard, producer etc. This connects excellence in wine with ongoing consumer exposure.

High Standards & Transparent Judging

It uses a multi-round nomination and judging process. Only wines that pass regional rounds enter the Salon competition. Judging is conducted by trained experts (sommelier, enologists, wine techs, journalists), under standard international norms (ISO etc.). There’s also laboratory analysis for some wines to ensure declared vs actual parameters align.

Public Access to Excellence

The exposition of the best 100 wines is made available to the public in dignified, cellar surroundings. Visitors can taste, learn, purchase. There are clearly presented displays with profiles, analytic data, sensory descriptions. This helps “democratize” top wine tasting, not just keep it for insiders.

Integration with Gastronomy & Tourism

The public exposition offers recommendations of restaurants, accommodation in Valtice and surroundings. It serves as a wine tourism anchor point. Gastronomy + wine pairing opportunities are encouraged. Also,



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sales and e-commerce of wines and related products (sommelier glasses etc.) are available.

Educational and Training Component

There are seminars, training for sommeliers, public wine education via tasting programs. The competition system also demands trained tasting experts. This elevates the professional capacity in the wine sector domestically.

Brand Protection and Signal Value

Wines awarded in the Salon may use the protected “Salon vín České republiky” label / medallion. This acts as a quality marker. This label is legally protected via the Czech Industrial Property Office, adding value for producers.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social / Cultural Impact

Reinforces national identity around wine, functions as a rallying point for both Moravian and Czech wine producers.

Enhances public wine literacy—visitors learn about grape varieties, terroir, wine styles via exposition and educational programs.

Attracts foreign tourists (Valtice is already wine-tourism hotspot) who are interested in top-quality wine experiences.

Economic Impact

Producers whose wines are selected gain prestige, which can translate into higher demand/prices.

Exhibited wines are available for purchase; expositions often drive direct sales.

Boost for local economy: for Valtice (restaurants, hotels, wine shops) benefitting from regular visitation to the exposition.

The competition also motivates better viticulture and winemaking practices, which potentially reduces waste, improves quality, possibly long-term profitability.

Environmental Impact

By elevating standards, there may be spillover into encouraging sustainable vineyard practices (though specific sustainability criteria are less obvious in current documentation).

Promotion of wines from local grapes helps preserve local terroir and vineyard landscapes.

Centralizing tasting in an exposition reduces need for multiple scattered wine tourism spots (less travel between distant producers), though this is more modest.

Key Stakeholders Involved

Národní vinařské centrum (National Wine Centre, o.p.s.) – organizer, exposition operator, competition manager.



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Producers / Wineries across Moravia and Czech regions participating in the competition.

Nominating regional wine competitions in similar wine regions/sub-regions.

Sommeliers, wine judges, wine technologists – both for expert judgement and public tasting programs.

Tourism & gastronomy sector – restaurants, accommodations in Valtice; visitors who pair wine with food.

Consumers / wine enthusiasts – both domestic and international visitors.

Government / Funding Bodies: Ministry of Agriculture, Vinařský fond (Wine Fund), etc., for regulatory, promotional, and sometimes financial support.

Lessons Learned

Prestige requires strict, transparent evaluation – reputation of competition & exposition depends on maintaining rigorous judging and quality standards.

Visibility year-round – moving from a competition event to a permanent exposition magnifies value for producers and keeps public engagement continuous.

Education amplifies value – when visitors understand what they taste (terroir, varietal, style), their appreciation grows, which supports higher willingness to pay.

Synergy with tourism and gastronomy strengthens impact – when wine events are connected to local food, places to stay, visitor services, the overall visitor experience improves, and local area benefits more.

Brand and quality labeling are powerful tools – legally protected medallions, certification, and layout of exposition boxes with detailed wine data all build consumer trust.

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://www.vinarskecentrum.cz>

<https://www.vinarskecentrum.cz/salon-vin>

<https://www.vinarskecentrum.cz/salon-vin/oteviraci-doba-programy>

Case Study 11: Agro House Korena: Authentic Gastronomy & Rural Hospitality in Georgia



Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Type of organization: Family-run agro & gastro tourism business.

Agro House Korena is a family-owned eco-guesthouse located in Gelati, Imereti, Georgia. It has two guesthouses with a total capacity of 22 guests and offers immersive eno-gastronomy experiences, including culinary masterclasses in a traditional Imeretian oda house, wine tastings, folklore evenings, and demonstrations of local agricultural practices. The guesthouse combines authentic Georgian hospitality, sustainability, and cultural immersion.

Innovation Highlights





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Agro House Korena provides an integrated experience where accommodation is combined with interactive eno-gastronomic and cultural activities. Guests participate in live cooking classes, Imeretian wine tastings, and folklore evenings with local performers. This approach transforms the guesthouse into a multifunctional cultural and culinary hub. The eco-oriented model uses seasonal, locally sourced products and sustainable practices, linking tourism with traditional lifestyles.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)



Social: Preserves and promotes Imeretian cuisine and folklore; facilitates cultural exchange between locals and international guests.

Economic: Generates sustainable income for the host family, local winemakers, and artisans; increases tourist flow in rural Gelati.

Environmental: Encourages eco-friendly practices, seasonal cooking, and small-scale sustainable farming.

Key Stakeholders Involved

- Guesthouse family and staff
- Local winemakers and farmers
- Folklore performers and artisans
- Domestic and international tourists
- Regional tourism networks

Lessons Learned

- Guests value authenticity and hands-on participation in culinary and cultural traditions.
- Partnerships with local farmers and artisans enhance both the quality of services and community development.



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- Balancing guest comfort with authentic rural lifestyle is key for sustainable growth.- Sharing knowledge and experiences internationally inspires innovation in rural gastronomy tourism.



Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1CwfBaLZeJ/?mibextid=wwXIfr>



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Case Study 12: Organic farming and Natural Wines of Western Georgia - prospects and challenges

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Family run winery in the Western Georgia, producing wines in Qvevri, preserving ancient Georgian winemaking method.

Innovation Highlights

Management of climate change influences on the organic farming.

Managing and overseeing development of fungal diseases in the vineyard.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Creation of environmentally sustainable practices for vineyard management

Key Stakeholders Involved

Small scale wine producers in the Western Georgia

Lessons Learned

Importance of proactive management of vineyard and implementation of mixed practices for better control.



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Case Study 13: Smart Vending for a Sustainable Future: The AMFM–Emotur Lab Experience

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

AMFM Vending SLU is a family-rooted enterprise established in the 1980s, operating as a leading vending service provider across the Canary Islands. It offers fully customized vending solutions—covering hot and cold drinks, snacks, mixed machines, and payment systems—with a focus on integrating advanced technology and sustainable features.

Headquartered in the Canary archipelago, AMFM maintains regional branches on Gran Canaria, Tenerife, Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, and La Palma. The company serves a broad client base that includes hotels, hospitals, offices, public institutions, and residential facilities, managing all stages of service from installation and maintenance to product replenishment and post-sales support. With over 100 staff members, AMFM emphasizes high-quality service, adaptability, and innovation, while upholding values of integrity, excellence, respect, and long-term vision.

Innovation Highlights

In partnership with Emotur Lab, AMFM Vending has undertaken an innovative neuromarketing project aimed at exploring the emotional and cognitive responses of consumers when interacting with vending machines. This initiative represents one of the first applications of neuromarketing methodologies—specifically Eye Tracking and Face Coding—in the context of automated food and beverage distribution.

Through the integration of these technologies, the study enables the detailed analysis of users' visual attention patterns, facial expressions, and emotional engagement during the decision-making process. By mapping where and how consumers focus their attention, and identifying the emotions triggered by different stimuli (such as product layout, packaging, lighting, or interface design), AMFM seeks to understand the underlying mechanisms that drive purchasing behaviour in vending environments.

This experimental approach allows the company to go beyond traditional consumer research, incorporating objective biometric data to support evidence-based decisions in product positioning, digital display design, and communication strategies. The results of the collaboration are expected to inform new guidelines for optimizing user experience (UX) and stimulating the selection of healthier and more sustainable products, such as locally sourced snacks, low-sugar beverages, and environmentally friendly packaging.

Furthermore, this innovation aligns with AMFM's broader commitment to sustainability, technological advancement, and consumer well-being, contributing to the development of a more responsible and data-driven vending model. The partnership with Emotur Lab also reinforces the company's openness to applied research and cross-sector collaboration, bridging the gap between academia and industry to foster continuous improvement and innovation in the food distribution sector.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

The collaboration between AMFM Vending and Emotur Lab has generated significant insights and tangible benefits across multiple dimensions.

Socially, the project has contributed to a better understanding of consumer emotions and decision-making processes in everyday consumption contexts. By identifying the emotional triggers that influence product



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choices, AMFM is able to promote more conscious and informed consumption behaviors, encouraging users to opt for healthier and more sustainable alternatives. The initiative also enhances customer satisfaction and perceived value by improving the overall user experience in vending interactions.

Economically, the neuromarketing study supports AMFM's strategic goal of improving product performance and operational efficiency. The data collected enables the company to refine its product assortment, optimize machine design, and implement marketing strategies grounded in objective consumer insights. This evidence-based approach not only increases sales potential but also strengthens the company's market positioning as an innovative and research-driven service provider in the vending sector.

Environmentally, the initiative aligns with AMFM's sustainability objectives by fostering the inclusion of eco-friendly products, such as those with reduced packaging waste or locally sourced ingredients. Insights from the study inform future efforts to guide consumer choices toward sustainable products, contributing indirectly to waste reduction and responsible consumption patterns.

Overall, the project exemplifies how scientific research and technological innovation can converge to support more sustainable, efficient, and human-centered business models within the food and beverage distribution industry.

Key Stakeholders Involved

The main stakeholder involved in this initiative is the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), through its Emotur Lab – Laboratory for Emotional Tourism Innovation. The collaboration between AMFM Vending and ULPGC merges the company's operational expertise in automated food distribution with the university's advanced research capabilities in neuromarketing, consumer behavior, and tourism innovation.

Emotur Lab played a central role in the design, implementation, and analysis of the neuromarketing experiment, ensuring methodological rigor and scientific validity. Its multidisciplinary team contributed expertise in Eye Tracking, Face Coding, and emotional data interpretation, allowing for a detailed understanding of user experience and behavior in vending environments.

In addition, local producers are actively involved in the initiative by supplying the products offered through AMFM's vending machines. Their participation reinforces the company's commitment to local sourcing, sustainability, and regional economic development, while providing consumers with access to authentic, higher-quality, and environmentally responsible products.

This collaboration highlights the value of a multi-stakeholder approach, combining academia, industry, and local production networks. Together, these actors foster innovation, knowledge transfer, and sustainable growth within the food, tourism, and service ecosystem of the Canary Islands.

Lessons Learned

The collaboration between AMFM Vending, the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), and local producers has provided valuable lessons on how innovation, research, and sustainability can converge to enhance consumer experience and business performance in the vending sector.

One of the main lessons learned is the **strategic value of neuromarketing tools**—such as Eye Tracking and Face Coding—for understanding real consumer behavior in non-traditional retail environments. The integration of scientific methodologies into business practice allows for **data-driven decision-making**, enabling companies to design vending experiences that are not only efficient but also emotionally engaging.



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and aligned with consumer preferences.

The project also demonstrated the importance of **cross-sector collaboration**. By combining academic expertise, technological innovation, and local production networks, it is possible to generate synergies that enhance both **economic competitiveness** and **social responsibility**. This model of cooperation fosters continuous learning, knowledge transfer, and innovation capacity within the regional ecosystem.

Furthermore, the initiative reinforced the need to view vending machines not merely as automated points of sale, but as **platforms for promoting healthier and more sustainable consumption patterns**. By incorporating locally sourced and environmentally friendly products, AMFM contributes to raising consumer awareness about responsible choices while supporting local producers and reducing the environmental footprint.

Overall, this case demonstrates that the integration of **applied research, technological innovation, and sustainability-oriented strategies** can create meaningful value for both companies and communities, positioning vending services as active contributors to a more sustainable and emotionally intelligent food distribution system.

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://emotur.ulpgc.es/neuromarketing-gastronomia-y-comportamiento-del-consumidor-en-el-vending-amfm/>



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Case Study 14: ICIA and Emotur Lab: Advancing Local Agri-Food Value through Emotional Research and Sustainable Innovation

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

The **Instituto Canario de Investigaciones Agrarias (ICIA)** is an autonomous public research entity under the Government of the Canary Islands, affiliated with the regional Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. Established by Law 4/1995 (BOC nº 40), its mission is to plan, execute, monitor, and transfer agrarian research and technological development across the Canary archipelago.

Tracing its origins to the Experimental Farm Station in Santa Cruz de Tenerife and the Agronomic Station of La Orotava, ICIA emerged from earlier institutions such as CRIDA, CRIAC and CITA before evolving into its current structure. The institute is headquartered in the *Finca Isamar* (San Cristóbal de La Laguna, Tenerife) and maintains research facilities and field parcels across Tenerife, Gran Canaria, and Fuerteventura.

ICIA operates with a team of technical and scientific staff—including researchers, agronomists, and support personnel—dedicated to advancing the agrarian sector's competitiveness, sustainability, and innovation. Its core functions include the development and adaptation of agrarian technologies, responding to the scientific and technical demands of the regional agricultural system, providing advisory and analytical services, conserving plant genetic resources, and promoting training and diffusion of results.

Innovation Highlights

In collaboration with Emotur Lab, the Instituto Canario de Investigaciones Agrarias (ICIA) has carried out an innovative neuromarketing study aimed at understanding consumer perceptions and emotional responses associated with the consumption and promotion of pitaya (dragon fruit) among local residents and visitors in the Canary Islands.

This initiative represents a pioneering application of neuromarketing techniques in the agri-food research field, combining Eye Tracking and Face Coding technologies to measure visual attention and emotional engagement throughout the consumption experience. The study provides objective insights into how consumers interact with pitaya—both in terms of product presentation and sensory experience—revealing the emotional patterns that influence preference and purchase intention.

Beyond emotional analysis, the project explores effective communication and marketing strategies to encourage the consumption of pitaya as a healthy and sustainable local product. Drawing on recommendations from gastronomy professionals and communication experts, ICIA and Emotur Lab worked jointly to identify how information about the fruit's nutritional and health benefits can be conveyed more persuasively to different audience segments.

This research highlights ICIA's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and knowledge transfer, integrating neuroscience-based methodologies with agri-food promotion and regional development objectives. By merging scientific research with practical applications in gastronomy and communication, the project contributes to strengthening the visibility of local products and fostering healthier consumption



patterns within the Canary Islands.



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Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

The neuromarketing study developed by ICIA in collaboration with Emotur Lab has generated relevant insights and measurable outcomes across social, economic, and environmental dimensions, contributing to the advancement of sustainable agri-food innovation in the Canary Islands.

Socially, the project has deepened the understanding of consumer attitudes toward locally produced foods, particularly exotic fruits such as pitaya. By analysing emotional responses and visual attention, ICIA identified key factors influencing acceptance and preference, allowing for more effective awareness campaigns that promote healthy eating habits and local consumption. The initiative also reinforces the connection between science, gastronomy, and communication, fostering greater public appreciation of research-based approaches to food promotion.

Economically, the study provides evidence-based insights that support the strategic positioning of pitaya as a high-value local product, contributing to market differentiation for Canary Islands agriculture. The results can guide local producers, marketers, and tourism stakeholders in designing communication strategies and product presentations that enhance consumer engagement and purchasing intent. By identifying how emotional and perceptual variables affect behaviour, ICIA strengthens the competitiveness and visibility of regional agri-food production.

Environmentally, the project aligns with broader sustainability goals by promoting the consumption of locally cultivated products, thereby reducing dependency on imports and lowering associated carbon emissions. Encouraging local fruit consumption supports short food supply chains and fosters agricultural diversification in the archipelago—key components for climate-resilient and sustainable food systems.

Overall, the initiative demonstrates how the integration of scientific research, neuromarketing methodologies, and sustainable communication practices can contribute to a more informed, responsible, and resilient food ecosystem in island territories such as the Canary Islands.

Key Stakeholders Involved

The project brought together a diverse network of stakeholders representing the intersection between scientific research, gastronomy, communication, and local production.

The Instituto Canario de Investigaciones Agrarias (ICIA) led the initiative, contributing its expertise in agri-food research, local crop development, and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices. As the coordinating institution, ICIA ensured that the study aligned with regional strategies for innovation and the valorisation of local products.

The University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), through its Emotur Lab – Laboratory for Emotional Tourism Innovation, played a key role in the design and implementation of the neuromarketing experiment. Emotur Lab provided scientific and technical support in Eye Tracking and Face Coding methodologies, enabling the precise measurement and analysis of participants' emotional and cognitive responses during pitaya consumption.

Additionally, local producers and gastronomy professionals were actively involved in supplying and preparing the pitaya used in the experiment, ensuring authenticity and relevance to the local culinary context. Their collaboration also facilitated the identification of realistic scenarios for promoting pitaya in



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restaurants, markets, and tourism-related environments.

Finally, communication experts contributed to the analysis of strategies for disseminating information about the health benefits and sustainable value of pitaya. Their involvement ensured that the project outcomes could be effectively translated into practical recommendations for marketing, public awareness, and consumer education.

Together, these stakeholders illustrate a multi-sectoral and collaborative model that bridges scientific knowledge, production, and consumer experience—strengthening the integration of research, innovation, and sustainability within the Canary Islands’ agri-food and tourism ecosystem.

Lessons Learned

The collaboration between ICIA, Emotur Lab, local producers, and communication and gastronomy professionals has provided valuable insights into how interdisciplinary research can enhance the promotion and consumption of local agri-food products in a sustainable and evidence-based manner.

One of the main lessons learned is the **potential of neuromarketing methodologies**—such as **Eye Tracking** and **Face Coding**—to objectively assess consumer emotions and behaviors toward local foods. These tools allowed researchers to move beyond traditional self-reported data, capturing genuine reactions and providing a deeper understanding of how sensory perception, product presentation, and communication strategies influence consumer decisions.

The project also demonstrated the importance of **collaboration across scientific, professional, and productive sectors**. By integrating the perspectives of researchers, agricultural producers, chefs, and communication specialists, it was possible to create a more holistic approach to the promotion of pitaya—one that considers both emotional engagement and the socio-cultural context of consumption.

Furthermore, the initiative highlighted the value of **effective science communication** in connecting research findings with public awareness. Translating empirical data into accessible messages about the health and sustainability benefits of pitaya proved essential for motivating behavioural change and fostering local pride in Canary Islands agriculture.

From a broader perspective, the project reinforces the idea that **innovation in the agri-food sector should not only aim for technological advancement but also for social and environmental transformation**. By aligning neuromarketing research with sustainability goals, ICIA and its partners demonstrated that emotional understanding and scientific rigor can coexist to strengthen local economies, promote healthier lifestyles, and support the transition toward more sustainable food systems.

Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://emotur.ulpgc.es/analisis-de-la-respuesta-emocional-ante-el-consumo-de-la-pitaya-y-los-factores-que-influyen-en-su-compra-y-consumo/>



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Case Study 15: Turning an 8 000-year Wine Tradition into Success in Georgia

Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

Baia's Wine is a family-run winery in Imereti, western Georgia, founded by sisters Baia and Gvantsa Abuladze. The winery focuses on natural, traditional Georgian wines made from local grape varieties such as Tsitska, Tsolikouri, and Krakhuna. Using sustainable farming and qvevri (clay vessel) winemaking methods, Baia's Wine combines heritage and innovation to express the authentic character of Imereti's terroir.

Innovation Highlights

At the winery, we have done some of the innovation regarding to the wine tourism development:

Immersive Family Experience

Guests are welcomed into the family home and vineyard, sharing meals, stories, and traditions. This personal, hands-on approach creates a deep cultural connection rather than just a standard tasting.

Education through Experience

Visitors learn about qvevri winemaking, local grape varieties, and sustainable farming directly from the winemakers — transforming a visit into an educational experience.

Local Food and Wine Pairing

The winery integrates local Imeretian cuisine with its wines, emphasizing the region's gastronomic identity and promoting slow food and farm-to-table tourism.

Community and Youth Engagement

Baia's Wine involves local young people and women in tourism and winemaking activities, supporting rural development and creating new opportunities in the village.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

Social Impact

- Cultural exchange: Visitors experience authentic Imeretian traditions — family hospitality, local food, and qvevri winemaking — creating meaningful cultural connections.
- Community engagement: The winery involves local people in tourism activities, creating a sense of pride and collaboration within the village.

Economic Impact

- Job creation and local income: Wine tourism provides steady employment for local residents and generates income that supports the surrounding community.



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- Value addition: By combining wine production with tourism, Baia's Wine increases the value of each bottle through storytelling and direct sales.
- Rural development: The winery's success attracts travelers to Imereti, benefiting guesthouses, restaurants, and local suppliers.

Environmental Impact

- Sustainable viticulture: Baia's Wine uses eco-friendly farming methods and traditional qvevri winemaking that minimize chemical use and protect soil health.
- Responsible tourism: The winery promotes small-group, low-impact visits focused on nature and culture rather than mass tourism.
- Education and awareness: Guests learn about biodiversity, traditional agriculture, and sustainable living practices — inspiring more conscious travel behavior.

Key Stakeholders Involved

The project brought together a diverse network of stakeholders representing the intersection between Partners and Institutions:

- Tour Operators and Travel Agencies: Collaborate to promote the winery as part of regional wine routes.
- EU; UNDP; EU4Business; GIZ / Georgian Tourism Board: Support rural development, marketing, and capacity-building projects.
- ATSU; also Wine Associations and Export Partners: Help strengthen Baia's Wine brand and connect tourism with international markets

Lessons Learned

Authenticity Attracts Visitors

Offering an intimate, family-led experience with local traditions and qvevri winemaking creates a unique selling point that resonates with tourists.

Small-scale, Personalized Experiences Work Best

Focusing on quality, small-group tastings, and immersive storytelling enhances visitor satisfaction more than mass tourism.

Community Engagement is Key

Involving local residents and suppliers strengthens social ties, builds trust, and ensures the sustainability of tourism initiatives.

Integration with Local Culture and Cuisine Adds Value

Pairing wines with traditional food and sharing regional stories deepens the visitor experience and supports local economic growth.

Sustainability is Both Ethical and Attractive



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Eco-friendly practices and preservation of vineyards and landscapes appeal to environmentally conscious travelers while protecting resources for the future.

Useful Links and Additional Resources

www.baiaswine.com

Case Study 16: The Hermanus Whale Festival – From Whale Watching to Gastrotourism Showcase



Short description of the organisation involved in the case study

The Hermanus Whale Festival (HWF) is an annual three-day eco-marine event held in the coastal town of Hermanus, in the Western Cape province of South Africa. Established over 25 years ago, the festival celebrates the annual arrival of the Southern Right Whales in the region, combining marine conservation awareness, food and wine culture, family entertainment, and local community engagement.

Organised by a dedicated operational team in partnership with the Overstrand Municipality and its tourism-marketing arm, Overstrand Marketing (a non-profit destination marketing organisation), HWF is positioned as a flagship event for the “Cape Whale Coast” region.

HWF acts as a catalyst for local tourism, driving visitation, showcasing Hermanus’s natural and cultural assets, and supporting local businesses through vendor participation and tourism packages. Each year, the festival invites community groups, restaurants, artisans, food vendors, and accommodation providers to participate in order to enhance the visitor experience and reinforce the town’s image as both a marine-wildlife destination and a gastronomic hotspot.

Innovation Highlights

The HWF underwent a major transformation in 2017 when organisers recognised the need to revitalise the event to stay relevant in a rapidly changing tourism landscape. The key innovation was repositioning the festival from a purely eco-marine celebration to a gastrotourism and lifestyle experience, combining whale watching with the region’s celebrated food and wine culture.

This rebrand introduced the theme “Whales, Wine and Wonder,” broadening the appeal beyond marine enthusiasts to include food lovers, cultural travellers, and lifestyle tourists. The innovation extended across several areas:

- **Digital Transformation:** A mobile-friendly, search-engine-optimised website became the festival’s digital hub, integrating social media, real-time updates, and online ticketing.
- **Influencer and Content Marketing:** Collaborations with travel and food bloggers generated authentic online storytelling, expanding reach to millions through curated posts and user-generated content.



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- **Product Innovation:** New experiences such as the Flavours of the Overstrand Pavilion, wine-and-food pairings, cooking demonstrations, and street-food markets highlighted the local terroir and culinary identity.
- **Community Integration:** Local chefs, wineries, and small food producers were invited to co-create experiences, linking the event directly with the Hermanus and Overstrand communities.
- **Sustainability Practices:** The introduction of “Zero Waste Kitchens,” recycling stations, and compostable packaging reflected a growing environmental consciousness consistent with the festival’s eco-marine heritage.

Together, these innovations elevated the HWF from a traditional community event to a model of integrated destination marketing, demonstrating how sustainability, culture, and gastronomy can coexist to enhance visitor experience and destination value.

Impact & Results (social, economic, environmental)

The transformation of the HWF had measurable and wide-reaching impacts that extended beyond the event itself. By integrating gastrotourism and sustainability, the festival generated tangible social, economic, and environmental benefits for the Hermanus community and the broader Overstrand region.

Economic Impact

- The 2017 festival attracted more than 100 000 visitors over three days, marking a record in its history.
- Local businesses, particularly restaurants and guesthouses, reported sales increases between 30% and 80%.
- The inclusion of new gastrotourism products encouraged longer stays and higher spending. Premium experiences such as wine pairings, chef demonstrations, and bundled travel packages added new revenue streams.
- Partnerships with Cape Town Tourism, private tour operators, and local producers expanded regional tourism linkages, further supporting the local economy.

Social Impact

- The festival became a platform for community inclusion, with local schools, artists, and small-scale food entrepreneurs participating in performances and market stalls.
- A skills development initiative helped informal food traders meet health and safety standards, enabling them to trade at future events.
- The festival’s integration of culture, cuisine, and conservation fostered a stronger sense of local pride and identity, positioning Hermanus as both a creative and environmentally conscious destination.
- Through volunteer programmes and student involvement from local universities and colleges, the event also promoted experiential learning and youth engagement in tourism.

Environmental Impact



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- The HWF maintained its commitment to eco-marine awareness by continuing to host the Eco-Marine Village, which educated visitors on marine life and conservation.
- The Zero Waste Kitchen initiative encouraged stallholders to adopt sustainable practices such as using compostable containers and separating waste into recyclable categories.
- Shuttle transport options reduced local congestion and emissions, while partnerships with conservation organisations reinforced the festival's green ethos.
- Awareness campaigns on marine biodiversity and responsible coastal tourism strengthened the festival's environmental education role.

In summary, the festival's evolution created a triple-bottom-line success, stimulating the economy, strengthening community engagement, and upholding environmental stewardship.

Key Stakeholders Involved

The success of the HWF has always depended on strong collaboration between multiple stakeholders from the public, private, and community sectors. The 2017 transformation into a gastrotourism and lifestyle event required coordinated partnerships to ensure sustainable growth and effective delivery.

Festival Organisers and Management

- **Hermanus Whale Festival Committee:** A dedicated organising team responsible for event planning, programming, logistics, and marketing. The committee oversees strategic direction, sponsorship, and partnerships.
- **Festival Director (CEO):** Leads operations, coordinates with the Overstrand Municipality, and manages relationships with vendors, sponsors, and tourism partners.

Public Sector Partners

- **Overstrand Municipality:** Provided permits, crowd management, waste control, and infrastructure support. The municipality also ensured compliance with health, safety, and environmental regulations.
- **Cape Whale Coast Tourism / Overstrand Tourism:** Assisted with marketing, branding, and international promotions through regional tourism channels.
- **Western Cape Government (Department of Economic Development and Tourism):** Supported capacity-building initiatives for small businesses and contributed to the sustainability agenda through grants and training.

Private Sector and Sponsors

- **Corporate Sponsors:** Major brands such as Nedbank, Discovery, and Coca-Cola sponsored festival zones, including the "Nedbank Food Court" and "Discovery Wine Theatre."
- **Hospitality and Wine Industry Partners:** Local wineries such as Creation Wines, Bouchard Finlayson, and Hamilton Russell Vineyards, along with restaurants, collaborated to curate gastronomic experiences and host tastings.



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- **Media Partners:** Collaborations with Cape Town Tourism, Getaway Magazine, Cape Town Etc., and local radio stations ensured widespread publicity.

Community and Non-Profit Stakeholders

- **Local Schools and Cultural Groups:** Performed at the festival, strengthening community involvement.
- **Local Artisans and Food Entrepreneurs:** Participated in the Flavours of the Overstrand Pavilion and street food markets, benefitting from exposure and training opportunities.
- **Environmental NGOs:** Organisations such as the South African Whale Disentanglement Network (SAWDN) and WWF South Africa contributed to conservation messaging and educational exhibits.

Digital and Influencer Partners

- **Travel and Food Bloggers:** Collaborated with the marketing team to produce authentic, user-generated content under the #WhaleFestival campaign.
- **Social Media Partners:** Worked across Meta platforms (Facebook and Instagram) to expand the festival's online reach to millions of users.

Through these interlinked relationships, the HWF became a collaborative ecosystem that celebrated not only whales but also the people, stories, and local flavours that define Hermanus.

Lessons Learned

The evolution of the HWF offers rich lessons in innovation, community-based tourism, and destination branding, especially in how a long-standing event can adapt to changing visitor expectations and market dynamics.

Market Research Drives Innovation

The success of the festival's transformation stemmed from listening to visitors. Research revealed shifting consumer interests from purely whale watching to immersive, multi-sensory experiences that connect nature, food, and culture. Understanding these preferences allowed organisers to realign the festival's identity, proving that data-driven decisions lead to more relevant and competitive tourism products.

Integration Builds Value

The "Whales, Wine and Wonder" rebrand demonstrated the power of integration, merging eco-marine tourism with gastrotourism to create a distinctive hybrid experience. By blending conservation, cuisine, and culture, the festival delivered value to both visitors and local producers while strengthening Hermanus's position as a holistic destination.

Diversification Enhances Sustainability

By introducing multiple experience tiers, from free community performances to premium wine-and-dine packages, the festival successfully attracted diverse markets. This tiered pricing model ensured inclusivity for locals while capturing high-value spending from affluent and international visitors, thereby enhancing economic resilience.



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Collaboration is Crucial

The festival's achievements were built on strong partnerships. Collaboration among government, private sponsors, local businesses, and community groups created a foundation of trust and shared benefit. This multi-stakeholder approach reduced costs, diversified resources, and fostered community ownership, which are essential elements for long-term sustainability.

Digital Transformation is a Necessity, Not a Trend

The shift from traditional to digital marketing was transformative. The introduction of influencer marketing, content scheduling, social media engagement, and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) resulted in millions of impressions and a measurable increase in attendance. The lesson is clear: digital tools, when strategically integrated, can amplify visibility and engagement far beyond the reach of traditional media.

Sustainability Strengthens Legitimacy

The event maintained its environmental integrity by continuing its eco-marine focus, introducing waste reduction initiatives, and supporting responsible food sourcing. These actions not only aligned with global sustainable tourism principles but also appealed to environmentally conscious travellers. The integration of green practices gave the festival credibility and long-term appeal.

Authenticity Creates Emotional Connection

What truly set the reimagined HWF apart was its authenticity, which told the story of a coastal community where whales, wine, and people coexist. Visitors were not merely attending an event; they were participating in a local narrative that celebrated both the ocean and the table. This emotional resonance created loyalty and repeat visitation, key drivers of destination success.

Final Reflection

The HWF stands as a powerful example of how a traditional tourism event can evolve into a dynamic, sustainable, and inclusive celebration of place. By uniting marine conservation with the artistry of food, wine, and culture, the festival embodies the spirit of gastrotourism, transforming visitors into participants and advocates for the destination.

For students and future tourism professionals, the takeaway is simple but profound:

“Successful tourism innovation begins with authenticity, thrives on collaboration, and endures through sustainability.”

As you move forward in your careers, remember that tourism is not only about attracting visitors but about crafting meaningful connections between people, culture, and environment. The Hermanus Whale Festival reminds us that when those connections are nurtured, both destinations and communities' flourish.

GASTRO TOUR



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Useful Links and Additional Resources

<https://hermanuswhalefestival.co.za/>

Conclusion

The *Resource Repository: Business Innovation in Wine Tourism* represents a significant step toward fostering knowledge exchange and practical understanding of how innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation can drive progress in the wine and gastronomic tourism sectors. Through the systematic documentation of diverse case studies, the deliverable provides an evidence-based foundation for learning, collaboration, and capacity building among industry practitioners, educators, and policymakers.

The repository not only captures successful examples of adaptive strategies and creative business models but also highlights the interconnectedness of cultural heritage, technological advancement, environmental responsibility, community involvement, and educational innovation. These five dimensions collectively demonstrate that the future of wine and gastronomy tourism depends on a holistic and forward-looking approach that balances economic viability with social and environmental sustainability.

By offering open access to its content through an interactive digital platform, the repository ensures long-term visibility, usability, and impact. It will serve as a living, evolving resource that continues to inspire new generations of entrepreneurs, researchers, and educators to develop responsible and experience-driven tourism practices.

Ultimately, this deliverable contributes to strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of the wine and gastronomic tourism ecosystem—showcasing that innovation is not merely a tool for recovery, but a pathway toward sustainable transformation and shared growth across regions.