
Master thesis

Ecotourism Research in Catalonia Pyrenees Areas

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Abstract

Eco-tourism has received more and more attention from the business community and academia due to its more environmentally friendly and sustainable characteristics, which meets the needs of the development of the modern era. In this paper, the author will study the development of ecotourism in Catalonia, analyze the characteristics and problems of the industry in the region through its activities and products, and highlight simple suggestions. The author mainly uses the research method combining field work and web content analysis to obtain experience and data through field investigation, and obtain supplementary data through webpage analysis to analyze ecotourism products and activities. Through these methods, the author briefly analyzes the operation modes and product types of different types of subjects in the development of local ecotourism. And probably got its characteristics and existing problems. The authors finally found that there are some local or general problems in the activities and products of these institutions and enterprises involved in ecotourism. How to create a more mature environment for the development of eco-tourism, how to improve the professionalism, academic and sustainability of eco-tourism is a problem worth studying. At the same time, it is necessary to improve the profitability of ecotourism and to be more in line with the expectations and wishes of consumers.

Key words

Ecotourism product; sustainability; mountain area; problems and suggestions

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Introduction

Concept and definition of ecotourism

Ecotourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and relatively undisturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact and often small-scale alternative to standard commercial mass tourism. It means responsible travel to natural areas, conserving the environment, and improving the well-being of the local people.¹ Its purpose may be to educate the traveler, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights. Since the 1980s, ecotourism has been considered a critical endeavor by environmentalists, so that future generations may experience destinations relatively untouched by human intervention.² Several university programs use this description as the working definition of ecotourism.³

Generally, ecotourism deals with interaction with biotic components of the natural environments.⁴ Ecotourism focuses on socially responsible travel, personal growth, and environmental sustainability. Ecotourism typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions.

¹ "What is Ecotourism? | The International Ecotourism Society". www.ecotourism.org. Retrieved 2016-11-17.

² Honey, Martha (2008). *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* (Second ed.). Washington, DC: Island Press. ISBN 978-1-59726-125-8.

³ Untamed Path Defining Ecotourism Archived 2009-03-07 at the Wayback Machine. Retrieved on 2009-03-24.

⁴ Sadry, B. N. (2009) *Fundamentals of Geotourism: with a special emphasis on Iran*, Samt Organization publishers, Tehran. 220p. (English Summary available Online at <http://physio-geo.revues.org/3159?file=1>

Ecotourism is intended to offer tourists an insight into the impact of human beings on the environment and to foster a greater appreciation of our natural habitats.

Responsible ecotourism programs include those that minimize the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore, in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, an integral part of ecotourism is the promotion of recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation, and creation of economic opportunities for local communities.⁵ For these reasons, ecotourism often appeals to advocates of environmental and social responsibility.

Many consider the term "ecotourism", like "sustainable tourism", an oxymoron. Like most forms of tourism, ecotourism generally depends on air transportation, which contributes to global climate change. Additionally, "the overall effect of sustainable tourism is negative where like ecotourism philanthropic aspirations mask hard-nosed immediate self-interest."

Ecotourism refers to tourism activities that have the dual responsibility of protecting the natural environment and maintaining the lives of local people. Its main points are: First, the objects of ecotourism are natural scenery; second, the objects of ecotourism should not be damaged. The connotation of ecotourism emphasizes the protection of natural landscapes to create a sustainable tourism industry. The term ecotourism was first proposed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 1983.

⁵ Randall, A. (1987). Resource economics, Second Edition. New York, USA: John Wiley and Sons.

In summary, the most important definition of ecotourism is the following aspects. The first is that the impact of human activities on the environment is minimized, then the development of tourism will benefit the local people, and finally the ecotourism will have to take on the role of education.

But ecotourism also has many shortcomings and defects. Different from the definition of ecotourism, critics' criticism of ecotourism can be said to be varied, and it is difficult to summarize a specific classification.

All in all, the current academic community has different understandings and definitions of ecotourism, and the ecotourism that the author is researching in this paper refers to the protection and utilization of the natural environment, which is of educational significance, sustainability, and maximum to reward the tourism projects and forms of local residents.

The development of ecotourism in Catalonia

Catalonia has a rich natural and cultural heritage, high landscape diversity and quality rural and mountain environments, together with the climate, gastronomy and traditions, contribute to make it attractive for a type of tourism based on quality.⁶

The definition that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) describes ecotourism as Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order

⁶ Ecoturisme a Catalunya Una alternativa de turisme sostenible a la natura

to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people.

One could think that in Catalonia it is not appropriate to use the term ecotourism (some tourist agents think so) and that it might be more convenient to use the term tourism of nature or equivalent. In this issue, there are three main reasons that justify the fact that this work has chosen the term ecotourism:

In Catalonia, there is often confusion between ecotourism, rural tourism and active tourism, in spite of them being different tourist modalities. This confusion is understandable to certain extent since they all share the scenario where they take place (the natural and rural environment). In fact, different tourist modalities that are practiced in the natural environment have been grouped in some studies under the concept tourism of nature.⁷

In this paper, the author's main research scope is the ecotourism activities carried out in the surrounding areas of the Catalonia, including typical ecotourism, rural tourism and active tourism.

⁷ Ecoturisme a Catalunya Una alternativa de turisme sostenible a la natura

Theoretical Context

Positives of ecotourism

Ecotourism is thought as a tourism which is positive mostly. Its advantages and positive impacts are very obvious. This impact is mainly divided into two aspects, one is the impact on the ecological environment, and the other is the impact on the social economy. The environmental and ecological impacts are the most direct and important. Due to its own attributes and characteristics, ecotourism has less impact on the environment and produces less pollution. Replacing mass tourism with the concepts and rules of ecotourism can effectively reduce the impact of human activities on the natural environment and promote the sustainability of tourism.

As an economic sector, ecotourism can create some jobs certainly. These economies are generally areas where traditional industries have not been able to get involved, or areas where traditional industries cannot be profitable. Studies have shown that ecotourism does not contribute significantly to employment, and the gap between profit and salary in the industry is very large. However, since ecotourism is mostly carried out in rural areas and underdeveloped mountainous areas, even a limited number of jobs will have a significant impact on the local economy and society.

In addition to the economic value of creating jobs, these jobs can bring a lot of positive effects, mainly in three aspects. First of all, in order to develop eco-tourism in a region, it is necessary to strengthen the investment and requirements for

ecological environment protection, which will reduce and limit the use of traditional energy sources to a certain extent, so as to reduce emissions and protect the environment. Second, ecotourists, as consumers, may support the importance of tourism to local residents (P.F.J. Eagles, J.L. Ballantine and D.A. Fennell, 1992, unpublished). Third, when residents receive benefits, the pressure on the extraction of natural resources is reduced, and residents are more likely to support tourism and protection, even to protect the site from poaching or other encroachment. For example, Lindberg et al. (1996) found that ecotourism-related benefits were an important basis for positive resident attitudes toward adjacent natural areas (see also Wunder, 1996, 1998). Conversely, if residents bear the cost and do not receive benefits, they may object to travel and protection and may intentionally or unintentionally damage the site. Whether the benefits of ecotourism will increase support for protection, and ultimately the change in resource use depends on the circumstances. (Brandon and Wells, 1992; Brandon, 1997).

As a form of tourism, ecotourism also includes three elements of tourism. The first is to travel to the location, followed by accommodation and accommodation during the trip, as well as activities that are involved during the trip. Ecotourism has different manifestations in these three parts. The first is the destination of eco-tours. Eco-tours generally use the wild environment and the region as a place of travel, which makes these originally unprotected areas enter the protected ranks and has a positive effect on environmental protection. Secondly, regarding accommodation and accommodation, in areas where ecotourism is developed, hotels and

restaurants will face more stringent and meticulous environmental policies and laws, which will reduce their energy consumption and pollution emissions. This will help the environment. Finally, the activities in ecotourism. One of the highlights of ecotourism is the educational significance of tourists. Visitors will be subtly educated in participating in ecotourism activities, and ultimately enhance their understanding and support for environmental protection. In addition to these three points, the income and profits of ecotourism will also feed back environmental protection, and policies and laws related to ecotourism will also have an impact on environmental protection. In general, well-managed ecotourism can have a positive impact on environmental protection.

Negatives of ecotourism

There are also many criticisms about ecotourism, from which we can summarize the possible negative effects of ecotourism. Similarly, the possible negative effects can be divided into economic society and natural ecology. Similarly, the possible negative effects can be divided into economic society and natural ecology. Ecotourism, as a model of tourism, is also an economic activity that affects the market, price, and employment.

Changes in supply and demand in the market will affect the price of goods and the reinvestment of enterprises in production. For ecotourism, it is possible to cause inflation to tourist destinations. Many destinations have experienced increased

prices for goods, services, and land due to tourism development, and this is a cost borne by residents of the area who purchase these items.⁸ The influx of tourists will increase the demand for daily consumer goods, such as food, housing, etc., and traffic will become more crowded. Since most of the destinations of ecotourism are located in the rural and suburban, these regions have smaller markets and weaker carrying capacity, and the influx of tourists will have a significant impact on the local market environment. The end result is inflation and rising prices, affecting the quality of life of residents.

Another economic impact is the potential new income gap. In some cases, tourism development exacerbates existing income inequalities within destination communities, while in others it generates new financial elites.⁹ The development of ecotourism focuses on the principle of sustainability, and requires a higher level of technology and more capital investment (compared to traditional tourism). Therefore, most of the ecotourism developers are companies and institutions out of the area, and local small businesses are less likely to develop ecotourism independently. This may result in the benefits of ecotourism being obtained by external companies, while the local residents are less profitable. On the contrary, because local residents bear the negative impact of the development of ecotourism, they cannot get the relevant profits. Such a phenomenon will result in a certain degree of inequality in income distribution. This is the main impact that ecotourism

⁸ P.F.J. Eagles Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

⁹ P.F.J. Eagles Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

can have on the economy.

The negative impacts of ecotourism also include the impact on the natural environment. But in general, standards-compliant and well-managed ecotourism activities do not have a significant negative impact on the environment.

The most important negative impact of ecotourism on the environment is that tourism activities do not conform to the definition of true ecological sustainability, or are mismanaged in the process of implementation. Eventually, these tourism activities have become using the name of eco-tourism, but the actual behavior is mass tourism. In this case, the so-called eco-tourism will cause damage to the environment, such as garbage left by human activities, human carbon emissions, light pollution and sound pollution, human trampling and so on. These negative effects are controllable, as long as the travel activities are practiced in strict accordance with the standards of ecotourism and management is optimized and strengthened. This type of negative impact can be greatly reduced.

Another negative impact of ecotourism is the potential impact of human activities on the environment and biology. It is undeniable that due to the continuous development and expansion of the eco-tourism economy in recent years, the possibility of its potential impact is also deepening. It's clear that the ecotourism business is booming. "Recent data showed that protected areas around the globe receive 8 billion visitors per year; that's like each human on Earth visited a protected area once a year, and then some!" said Daniel Blumstein of the University of California, Los Angeles. "This massive amount of nature-based and

eco-tourism can be added to the long list of drivers of human-induced rapid environmental change." Blumstein says the new report sets out "a new way of thinking about possible long-term effects of nature-based tourism and encourages scientists and reserve managers to take into account these deleterious impacts to assess the sustainability of a type of tourism, which typically aims to enhance, not deplete, biodiversity."¹⁰In this case, the behavior of ecotourism is in line with regulations, and management and operations are appropriate. In the long run, it may still have a potential impact on the ecological environment and biological habits. Due to the short time of ecotourism development, the relevant cases and experience are not enough, and it is difficult for practitioners to predict the potential impact.

In summary, ecotourism may have unpredictable potential impacts due to irrational management or implementation or environmental impact, or due to lack of experience and case.

Research significance and difficulties

Eco-tourism is not perfect, and it will have a certain degree of negative impact on the social economy and the ecological environment. However, it is undeniable that ecotourism is still worthy of length and promotion compared with traditional tourism models. The positive impact of ecotourism is generally greater than the

¹⁰ Is the eco-tourism boom putting wildlife in a new kind of danger? October 9, 2015

negative impact. The development of eco-tourism can promote regional environmental protection and strengthen sustainable development. The other side can promote regional economic development and increase residents' income. Finally, due to the educational nature of ecotourism, the development of ecotourism also has a positive effect on the concept of environmental protection and sustainable development.

Not only that, the protection of the ecological environment is an important topic in the current context of human beings facing climate change. The development of any industry has to take into account the control of environmental protection and pollution emissions, and the development of eco-tourism meets the requirements and trends of environmental sustainability.

At present, the development of the ecological environment is good and the industry has broad prospects. The study of ecotourism is also an emerging field. But overall, compared with the rapid development of ecotourism, research on ecotourism is not enough. Taking the whole of Catalonia as an example, relying on the unique Costa Brava and the Pyrenees, the region is rich in natural resources and landforms. On this basis, the development of ecotourism is also very rapid and has broad prospects. In contrast, the relevant literature and research are not sufficient. In particular, the lack of English literature and materials. Therefore, research in this area is very valuable, especially in English, which is more international and provides better ideas and references for similar researchers.

In conclusion, the study of Catalonia for ecotourism can meet the development

trend of ecotourism in the region and provide more suggestions and opinions for the development of its industry, so that it can better meet the environment. Sustainable requirements and promote regional economic development. On the other hand, it is possible to provide more relevant perspectives and information for researchers in the field, especially to supplement the lack of English literatures.

There are also some difficulties in this study. The first is the study sample, and the development of ecotourism in Catalonia is more complicated. Most of the tourism activities do not use the name of ecotourism, but the names like rural tourism, sports tourism, wild tourism and so on. Relevant businesses and institutions do not understand that the activities they operate are eco-tourism activities, so there are some difficulties in conducting field research.

Second is the difficulty of language. Since the author can only read the English literature directly, the relevant information about ecotourism in Catalonia is mainly in Catalan and Spanish, and the author needs to use translation to read. Therefore, there are difficulties in collecting documents and materials.

Methodology

Regarding research methods, the author mainly adopts a combination of quantitative research and qualitative research. Relevant data were collected as a basis for research through interviews and second hand information. Structural interviews will be the main form of research, supplemented by the necessary in-

depth interviews. The main issues include business activities, forms of travel, income, environmental protection measures. The second part is the acquisition of second-hand information. This is mainly from travel agencies, country hotels, regional committee websites and other materials that are open to the public. Based on these materials and information, the author will conduct content analysis and combine the results of the interviews to conduct a comparative study.

The author also conducted a field survey in this study for a total of three days, from March 12 to March 14. The location is located in the Pyrenees region of northern Catalonia, specifically in Vall de Boí (<https://www.vallboi.cat/en>) and Vall Fosca (<http://www.vallfosca.net/en/>), and two of them in the lands of Lleida. Specifically includes the following activities and meetings. Specifically includes the following activities and meetings. Meeting at Casa Leonardo in La Senterada, Meeting with Centre del romànic de la Vall de Boí at Sant Climent Taüll church in Taüll, Meeting with Hotel Balneari Caldes de Boí in Barruera Town Hall,

During these meetings, the author conducted some interviews and obtained the views and opinions of some local enterprises and associations on the development of eco-tourism, and learned about the activities and measures they currently provide.

Case study and field work plan

The author has already mentioned in the methodology section that the research

method of case study will be used primarily in this study. For the broad selection of samples, the area studied is Catalonia.

Catalonia is a world-famous tourist destination with a mature tourist market offering the industry's top level of travel services and products. Catalonia is a world-famous tourist destination with a mature tourist market offering the industry's top travel services and products. It is an important tourist destination for both Spain and Europe. The importance of tourism in Catalan economy is remarkable since it represents more than 12% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country but also because of the fact that it generates a strong impact on the territory as a result of a poor model in terms of sustainability.¹¹

Moreover, Catalonia has a very unique and rich natural landscapes. These include the subtropical Mediterranean landscape of the Costa Brava and the mountainous landscape of the Pyrenees. This is very rich in vegetation types. It is mainly subtropical evergreen hard-leaved forest in the plain area, and vertical vegetation distribution in the mountainous areas, from subtropical plants to frigid plants. The rich vegetation types provide the basis for a rich variety of animals. The developed tourism industry base and rich and unique natural scenery make the development of eco-tourism in the region very broad. This is one reason why the region was chosen as the research object.

In Catalonia, there is often confusion between ecotourism, rural tourism and active tourism, in spite of them being different tourist modalities. This confusion is

¹¹ Ecoturisme a Catalunya Una alternativa de turisme sostenible a la natura

understandable to certain extent since they all share the scenario where they take place (the natural and rural environment). In fact, different tourist modalities that are practiced in the natural environment have been grouped in some studies under the concept tourism of nature.¹² Due to some doubts about the classification and definition of ecotourism in the region, it is even more necessary to study this issue. And provide ideas and ideas for related issues.

For the above reasons, the scope of this study was selected in Catalonia.

Before the start of the study, the author will first sort out the overall situation of ecotourism development in Catalonia. This includes the classification of tourism activities, the different groups involved, and related measures in the public sector.

The author first divided the activities of ecotourism into two categories according to different purposes according to the ecotourism report of the Catalan government. Including Ecotourism with the target of observing particular elements of the natural environment or a combination of all of them (landscapes) and Ecotourism with educational purposes or to support the conservation of nature.

Scope	Activity
Ecotourism with the target of observing particular elements of the natural environment or a combination of all of them (landscapes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of terrestrial mammals. • Birdwatching (ornithological tourism). • Whale and dolphin watching. • Observation of butterflies and insects. • Observation of flora and walks through singular woods. • Walks in areas of geological, geomorphologic and paleontological interest. • Visits to caves and caverns. • Signaled trails in nature reserves and scenic landscapes. • Mountain hiking. • Bicycle tourism in which scenery observation prevails.

¹² Ecoturisme a Catalunya Una alternativa de turisme sostenible a la natura

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks and excursions on horse in areas of natural interest. • Observation of scenic landscapes with motorized transport integrated in the natural environment. • Kayaking or sailing in non-motorized transport in rivers and seas. • Routes in rivers and seas with motorized transport (ship or other kind of boat). • Exploration of the sea bottom. • Diving in reservoirs and mountain lakes. • Travels and photosafaris. • Astronomic observation.
Ecotourism with educational purposes or to support the conservation of nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities organized by the management bodies or the interpretation centers of the nature reserves or other centers of environmental education. • Volunteer stays in nature reserves to cooperate in activities of conservation of the natural environment. • Scientific ecotourism.

Form 1¹³

From the above figure, we can see that the majority of ecotourism tourists participate in the main activity is to observe. Observation activities include two aspects of pure observation and experience. Simple observations include observing wildlife, observing local vegetation and landforms, and observing local rural and cultural landscapes. Another level of observation is an experiential observation, not just observation, but an in-depth participation in activities. For example, mountain bikes, rowing, mountain rafting, etc. These activities cater to people's experience and curiosity about different life, providing visitors with an opportunity to observe nature and participate in nature.

Another type of activity is an ecotourism activity aimed at educational purposes. For example, environmental protection organizations specialize in conservation activities, or related activities involving environmental volunteers. There are also

¹³ Ecoturisme a Catalunya Una alternativa de turisme sostenible a la natura

research activities.

In this study, the author focuses on the first type of activity, which is an ecotourism activity based on observation and experience. The author believes that compared to education, volunteering and research activities. Such activities are closer to the needs of the public and have a wider audience, and the viability of market-oriented operations is higher and the development prospects are broader.

The authors of the ecotourism operators in the Pyrenees region mainly divide them into four categories, as shown in the table below.

Sustainable rural accommodation	<p>Such institutions include family-run rural hotels and large country resorts.</p> <p>Country hotels are generally family-run and small in scale. It mainly provides visitors with an environment that is consistent with the lives of locals, allowing visitors to experience local life, culture, food and more. In addition, these rural hotels work with other institutions and companies to recommend relevant eco-tourism projects to tourists.</p> <p>The other type is resort hotels, which are larger and have their own brands. It mainly provides tourists with a series of services for leisure and holiday. At the same time, relying on local natural resources, develop products such as hot springs, mineral cosmetics and so on.</p>
Local agencies operating eco-tours	<p>Many local travel agencies have also introduced eco-tourism projects based on the Pyrenees. But for most travel agencies, ecotourism is not their main business.</p>
Biologist or professional guide	<p>In the Pyrenees, there are many nature lovers, scientists, and professional guides. They operate and promote ecotourism as independent individuals.</p>
Public sector of ecotourism	<p>There are many tourist destinations operated by the public sector in the Pyrenees. Among them are some cultural heritage - Romanesque churches and mountain national parks. These places rely on the support of public finances to operate.</p>

Form 2

According to these classifications, the author will select different subjects as the research object. The author will select a representative case for each category and analyze it based on the information and information they provide. Thereby sorting out the characteristics of different categories of entities, developing content, and issues that need improvement. Therefore, the author chooses casa Leonardo, the fifth lake, and the Romanesque heritage of the Vall de Boi. These four cases are the example which I choose.

Research Case and Results

Case study of Casa Leonardo

General information

The first case is casa Leonardo in the Pyrenees Catalonia region. As mentioned in the previous field survey design, the author will spend three days investigating and visiting the Pyrenees. These three days of travel will be arranged at casa Leonardo. There were separate interviews and conversations during this period, and the owner had done a very complete presentation. The author's experience and the information that can be obtained are sufficient, so I chose this place as the first case.

Casa Leonardo is a charming country-house hotel set in privileged location at the heart of The Pyrenees of Catalonia. But the author does not want to simply

regard it as a country hotel, but a local enterprise that runs an eco-tourism integrated project.

Madam Mireia and her family is the hotel's operation. They work together to provide services such as reception, housekeeper, maintenance, meals and more. They are both the owner of the hotel and the operator of the hotel. As a country hotel, its main business, accommodation and food, is not directly related to ecotourism. However, casa Leonardo is practicing ecologically sustainable ideas in many ways and also operates activities related to ecotourism. The specific content includes the following three aspects.

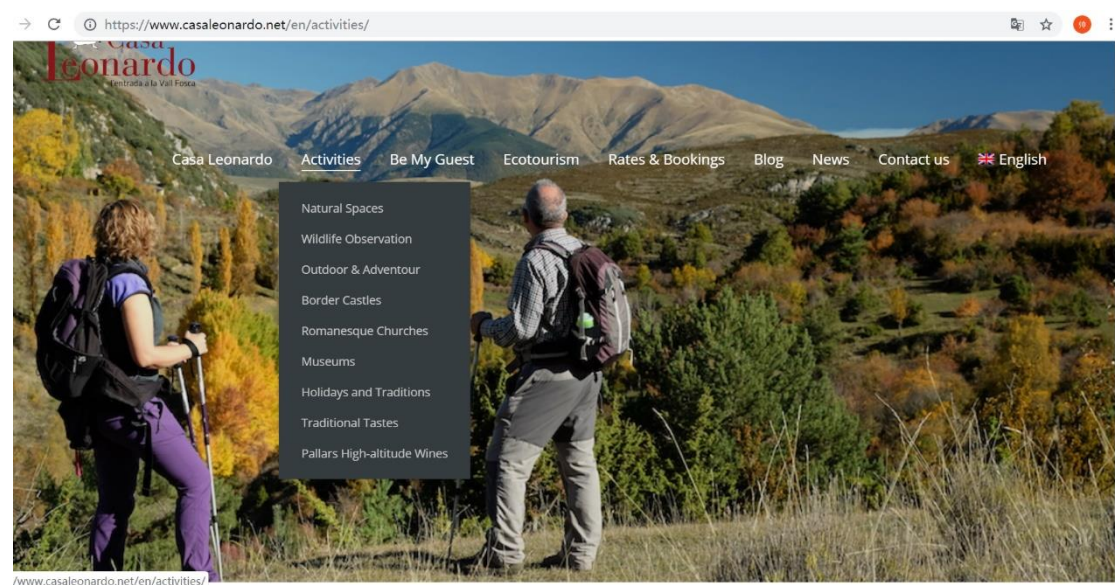
1. Energy-saving facilities are used in the design of the hotel. Reduce the use of water and electricity through intelligent equipment and improve energy efficiency.
2. Work with local travel agencies, organizations and individuals to launch eco-tours based on the Pyrenees.
3. Focus on local agricultural products, especially those that have been certified by environmental organizations.
4. Commitment to donate to the environment. They donate a portion of their income to relevant organizations and foundations to support the development of local environmental protection. In addition, tourists are encouraged to make donations to offset the carbon footprint. Or encourage public transportation to reduce carbon emissions.

Based on the above four measures, the author believes that casa Leonard is

only a rural hotel, but in fact its content is closely related to eco-travel and sustainable development. Can be seen as a typical ecological travel participant. In the Pyrenees, most rural hotels have taken similar measures to support environmental protection. Casa Leonardo is one of the outstanding representatives.

Activities they offered

It not only provides accommodation for rural hotels, but also works with some local hostels and institutions to provide visitors with many forms of eco-tourism projects. These include visits to local mountain and rural cultural heritage, as well as eco-tourism activities to experience and participate in nature. We can find a series of cultural and ecotourism activities from the official website.



Picture 1

This section includes country trips and some cultural trips, as well as observations of wildlife. From the content they provide, this part of the activity is a

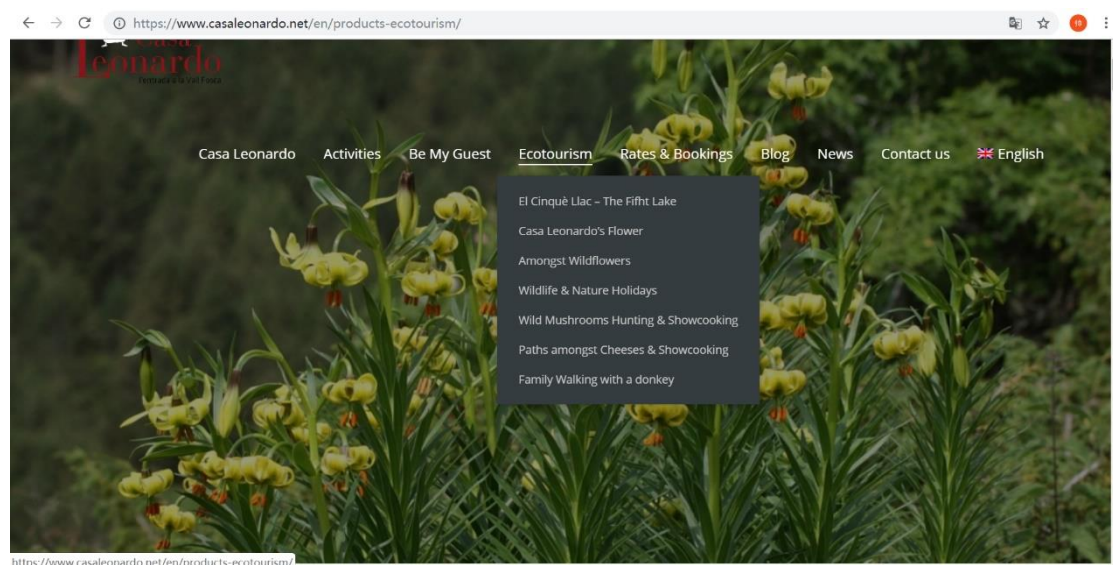
rough classification, and you can see more specific content after entering the product interface. The author noticed that basically most of the activities are not operated and provided by the hotel itself, but cooperate with other local travel agencies or some professionals to provide a promotion and sales channel by casa Leonardo. Similar to the classification mentioned by the author in the above, this part of the outdoor activities is mainly based on the observation and experience of natural ecology and rural life. These activities are all related to eco-travel, but in strict terms they are not entirely eco-tours. In order to have an example the author intercepts a portion of the web page, the main content of which is the observation of wildlife, including the identification and even tasting of native plants. The project was organized by a professional biologist (Evarist March, a biologist and botanist) who has also heard reports and presentations on her projects. It is a representative and successful eco-tourism project.



Picture 2

In addition, in its website, the section dedicated to ecotourism is specifically

listed. The authors found through research on their web pages that most of these activities are still activities that observe and experience nature, and there is no significant difference compared to the previous columns of activities. As shown in the screenshot picture 3 below. It can be found that the activities in this part have their own name, or the brand of the product. Compared with the previous field activities, these activities are more focused on ecological sustainability and regard ecotourism as their own positioning. This is a good sign that casa Leonardo is very knowledgeable about ecotourism and is deeply involved. This is an improvement over many local businesses and organizations that offer travel products.



Picture 3

In the local experience, the author also learned that they also provide relevant ecotourism volunteer activities, but the specific information is not sufficient, the author did not find relevant links in his webpage. In addition, casa Leonardo also hosts a team of research and tourism, which is also an important type of ecotourism. It cooperates with surrounding universities and researchers to receive research teams and provide them with a certain amount of discounts, while researchers

return the results of the research to the company. In turn, a benign interaction is formed. The author is benefiting from this, following the university's research team, to the field of tourism sustainable development in the Pyrenees.

Sustainable measures

As mentioned above, casa Leonardo has taken many steps to promote their daily activities to be more sustainable and reduce pollution emissions. They said "at Casa Leonardo they are fully aware of the fragility of our environment and our obligation to conserve it so that our children can enjoy it too. We thus are committed to carrying out pro-active measures aimed at protecting and preserving the environment that will help avoid any overuse of scarce resources and reduce the contamination we generate." ¹⁴ Because the measures they did, casa Leonardo is granted the EU' s Ecolabel, and the Catalan government has awarded us with a Guaranteed Environmental Quality Distinction. They use these kinds of measures to limit the cost and make their business more sustainable.

1. We separate all our waste.
2. We have installed water-saving systems.
3. We use energy-efficient systems.
4. We use locally manufactured craft products (Aixovar bedspreads, Akarona soaps, etc.) whose production processes we know and trust. In this way, we help

¹⁴ Website of casa leonardo <https://www.casaleonardo.net/en/eco-friendly-country-house-hotel-cottage/>

stimulate the local economy and save on the energy costs of transport. We buy a minimum of wrapped and packaged goods and do not offer clients individually wrapped or single-use products.

5. We have lovingly restored our house without damaging the essence of its traditional architecture. We give priority to quality, durable materials that provide greater warmth and harmony to the house as a whole.

6. We offer and promote ecotourism activities.¹⁵

In summary, casa Leonardo promotes sustainable development and environmental protection from two aspects: behavior and behavior of tourists. From its own behavior, including the classification and treatment of pollutants and garbage, reducing the use of unnecessary energy, including water and electricity. There are also special donations to support local sustainable development. In the choice of products (mainly ingredients), choose local agricultural products produced according to sustainable standards. For tourists, they recommend ways to encourage them to reduce pollutant emissions and energy use, and encourage visitors to participate in local ecotourism activities. Secondly, in the choice of transportation mode, tourists are also encouraged to take public transportation and reduce carbon emissions. Correspondingly, there are also related donation initiatives for tourists.

¹⁵ Website of casa leonardo <https://www.casaleonardo.net/en/eco-friendly-country-house-hotel-cottage/>

Conclusion

Casa Leonardo is a typical rural hotel with the characteristics of most of these hotels. They generally do not directly operate ecotourism activities, but they are indeed important players in the development of ecotourism. As a provider of accommodation, the hotels have the closest relationship with tourists. Their adoption of sustainable behaviour and reduced pollution emissions are important for the entire journey. And these hotels also cooperate with local hostels to promote eco-tourism, which is of great significance to the development of eco-tourism.

In the related research on ecotourism, scholars mainly focus on the study of ecotourism activities themselves, the management of research activities and possible impacts. However, the author believes that as a place where tourists sleep and rest, most of the energy consumption and garbage in the travel of tourists are generated at this moment. Therefore, the author believes that in measuring whether a tourism activity is ecological, whether it is sustainable, we must consider the issue of hotel accommodation. If we participate in ecotourism during the day and live in a luxury hotel at night, it might get a negative consequence at the end. Overall, casa Leonardo is an excellent example of a typical rural hotel incorporating ecotourism. There are many examples of this in the Pyrenees, reflecting a part of the development of local ecotourism.

Case study of PIRINEU emoció

The analysis of the second case is PIRINEU emoció. This is a local travel agency that is developing and operating ecotourism projects while operating traditional tourism projects. In the course of the field investigation, the author met and communicated with the person in charge of the company and made a qualitative interview. Relevant information will be presented in the following sections.

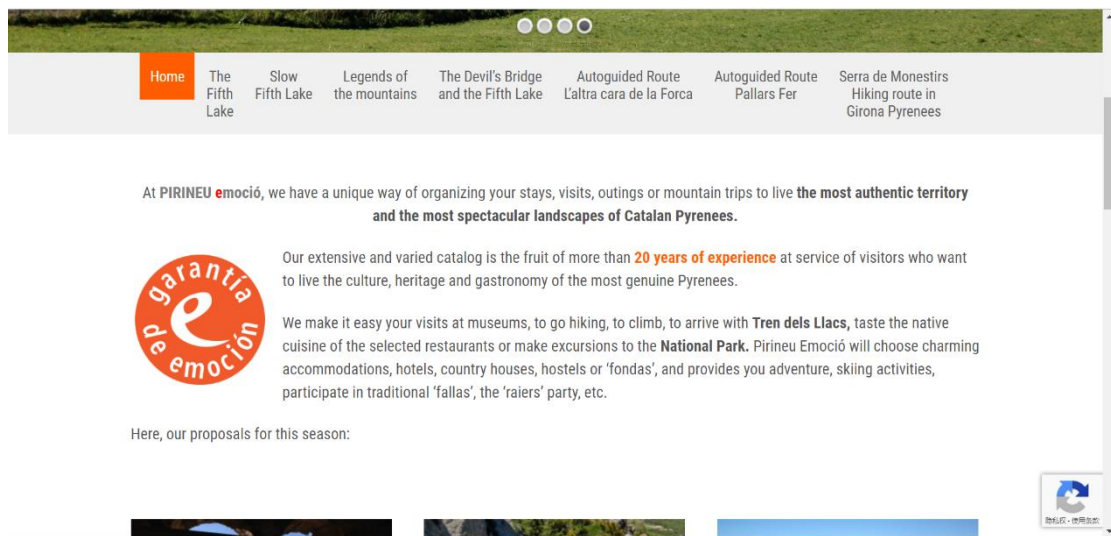
The case study for the company will consist primarily of product content analysis and web page analysis, as well as written records of face-to-face interviews. Based on these materials, the author will make a brief analysis of the status quo of products and development provided by enterprises.

General Information

PIRINEU emoció is a local travel agency with more than 20 years of experience in tourism operations and is a mature tourism company in the local area. The company's initial business scope was ordinary mass tourism or rural tourism, and a large part of the business was organizing local tourists to travel abroad. Later, as the concept of eco-tourism gradually emerged and environmental protection became more and more important, the company also followed the trend of development and began to develop eco-tourism projects, gradually achieving certain influences and markets.

Today, they operate in both foreign travel programs for local residents and local

travel products for foreign visitors. At the same time, while operating mass tourism products, it also operates eco-travel products. The projects in them basically have their own titles and names. Through their official website, the authors found specific names and content for related projects. As the picture, we can see the different activities and their own title.



Picture 4

Seen from their web page. The activities listed so far are as follows:

1. The Fifth Lake
2. Slow Fifth Lake
3. Legends of the mountain
4. The Devi' s bridge and the fifth lake
5. Autiguided Route L' Altra Cara de la Forca
6. Autoguided Route Pallars Fer
7. Serra de Monestirs Hiking route in Girona Pyrenees

All these tourism activities are based on the Pyrenees, with mountaineering and hiking as the main mode. The theme of the trip includes some famous natural

landscapes, one of which also includes the urban experience of Girona.

The Fifth Lake project is a typical project and was mentioned in the previous case of casa Leonardo. The two sides cooperate to jointly promote this eco-tourism project. The author will use this project as an example to briefly analyze the product content and characteristics of PIRINEU emoció.

The fifth lake

The fifth lake is a route located in the province of Lleida which starts and ends in the town of Segur. It is a great place to visit, especially designed for people who want to enjoy hiking without big effort, those people who appreciate nature, local culture and small details. It is accessible to a wide range of outdoor lovers.

SWOT analysis of the fifth lake.¹⁶

Strengths.

1. One of the main strengths are the Location and Access. It is just 200 km from Barcelona, a perfect opportunity to escape from the hustle and bustle from the city. There is a train from Barcelona Sants that goes directly to Lleida Pirineus and then there is another line to La Pobla de Segur where the route starts. It takes around tree hours to get there if you go by public transport which is not a long time if you consider the distance.

¹⁶ The entire section comes from the article *analysis of the fifth lake*, Shuai (2018)

15:50 (domingo) - 18:53
(3 h 3 min)

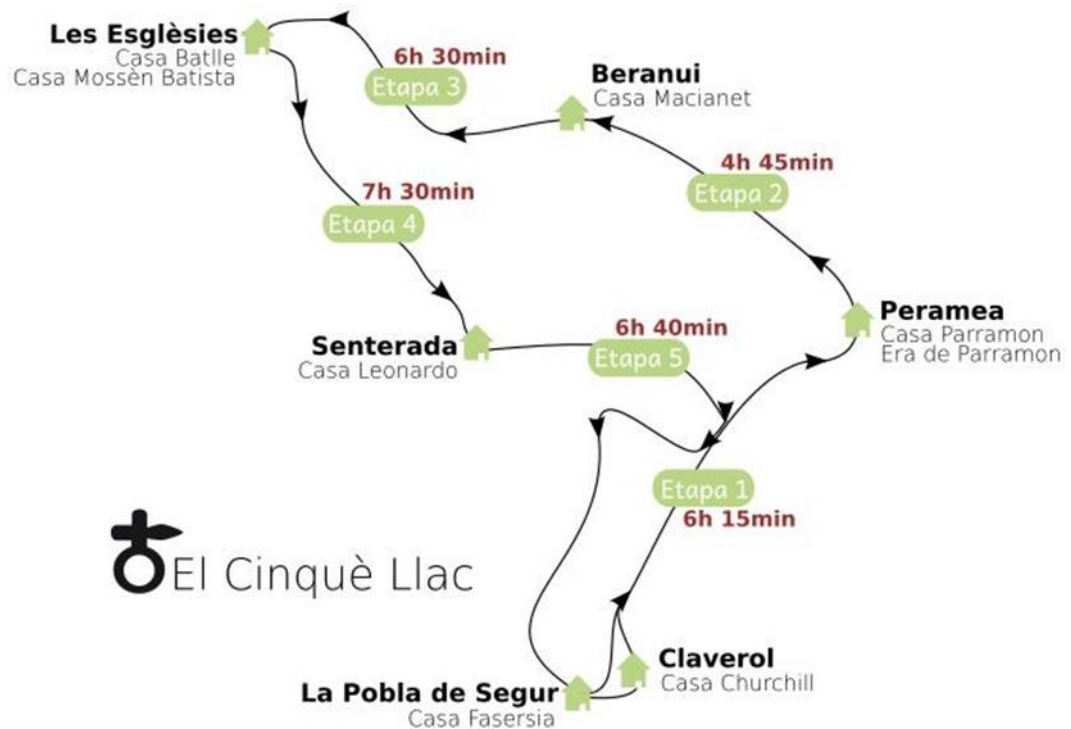
AVE > RL2 >

15:50 desde Barcelona-Sants

15 min

Picture 5

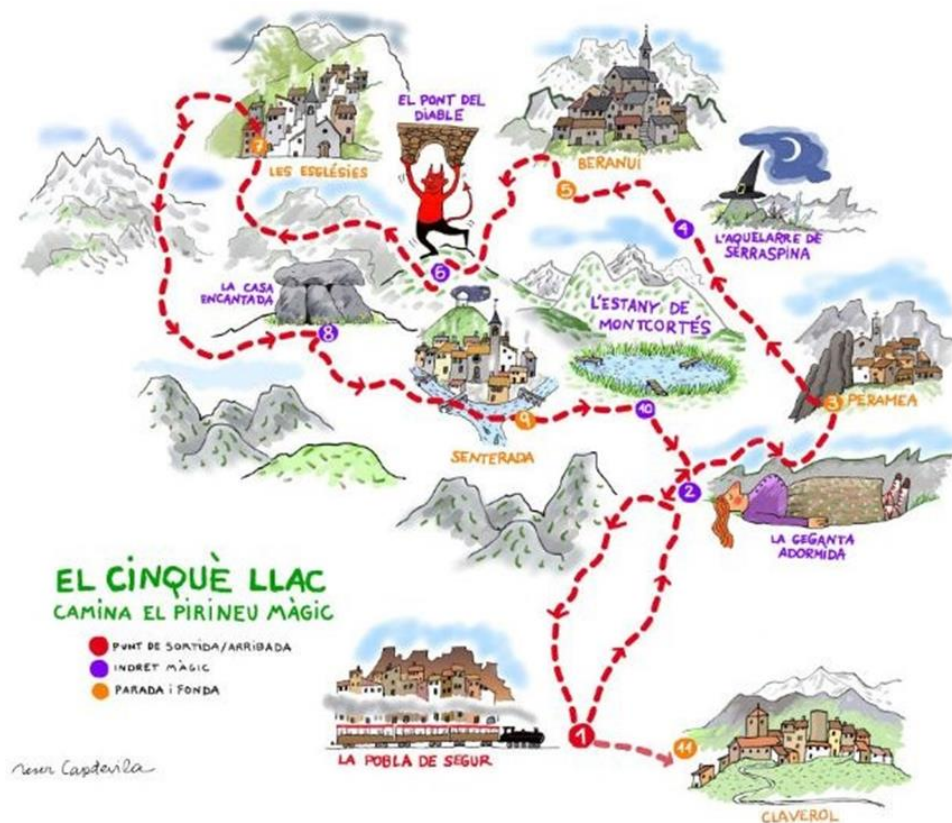
2. There is a great advantage in terms of the geographical features of the product. Long ancient trails (which are used for horse and donkey riding) and mountain trails represent the 62% percent of the route with astonishing glimpses during all the trail. The other 38 % is divided between tracks and roads. The complete circuit is very well connected, between linking stages and including services in the middle.



Picture 6¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://www.elcinquellac.com/en/>

3. Qualified staff. This route is set up and is run by small-scale hoteliers who believe in honest work and transmit the human side of tourism. They are qualified in the field and have been working with tourists quite a long time.
4. The predominance of a Great cuisine because of high quality food products such as charcuterie, especially the dry-cured sausages xolís and secallona, and exquisite cheeses. In this tour, food is considered as a very important element for the enjoyment of the client, fresh, hot and abundant food prepared by a local host; It is not survival food as sometimes it is customary to have on long hiking.
5. Reinvested money. If you choose this product, the money you pay will be reinvested in the protection of the ancient trails or the protection of the ancestral “Catalan Donkey” who is in danger of extinction.



Picture 7¹⁸

6. The combination of nature, revaluation of local culture and responsible tourism. It has taken all the valuable elements along the circuit, like dolmens (ancient tombs), shrines (sacred places), churches, fortified towns, monasteries, bridges and Romanesque ruins, huts, farmhouses and shepherd' s huts. Most of them are from prehistoric times. This combination between nature and architecture gives an enormous value to the trail. The villages hold on to their original character as well as their feasts, festivals, customs, legends and traditions. In that way they are able to transmit all these aspects as experiences that will be memorable in their visitors' minds.

Weakness.

1. Medical Attention. It is understood by the level of difficulty of the hiking that the public for this product is older people in its majority. For this reason, it is necessary to guarantee the highest possible safety and at the same time have close medical services. Although everyone has an insurance, there is not specialized medical assistance for injuries during the trip or at least is not mentioned.
2. It was not mention if it is possible for the disabled to use the route. Nowadays everyone wants to be included and leaving a group apart can damage the product image in the eyes of the customer. The comments on

¹⁸ <http://www.elcinquellac.com/en/>

the webpage are in different languages and there is not an option to translate them. Other users would also want to know what the general opinion about the route and the fact is, that they cannot understand is negative.

Opportunities.

1. The environment in which the the fifth lake is located is perfect for combining it with other activities that can complement the experience.
2. Many people from Germany comment on the web page, the adverts should focus on that market.
3. There is a large budget that can be used in restoration and maintenance of the trails. Nowadays only 10 % of the price of the product is devoted to that.
4. The young market has not been caught. As we can see in the pictures from the web page a major number are adults and old people. The fifth lake can attract new young customers is they also focus their efforts in this interesting market.

Threats.

1. There is highly variable rainfall according to the season, which is most pronounced in spring and autumn. It can have a detrimental effect on the trails and therefore the tourists can take longer to get to the places.
2. The number of tourists can damage the route if there is not an strict control of the number of people coming to the area. At the moment

nobody controls the number of people coming because it is not necessary but in a near future it should be a must if we want to preserve it.

3. Public transport. Although there are local highways and new mountain train projects, the overall public transportation resources are still insufficient. Self-driving is still the main mode of transportation for tourists. This is detrimental to the sustainability of the environment.

4. What if more people suddenly appear around in the area? Is the environmental carrying capacity of the area sufficient to withstand new and more tourists?

Conclusion

From the above SWOT, the author simply analyzed the situation, advantages and defects of the Fifth Lake as an ecotourism product. Typical works of ecotourism products in the region are typically characterized. When researching ecotourism products in similar environments, you can learn from the analysis here, because most of the advantages and disadvantages are general and similar. Here the author uses the fifth lake as a case, so there is no detailed analysis of several other products.

The author thinks that the eco-tourism products offered by such travel agencies are generally characterized by the following:

1. Relying on rich local cultural and ecological resources. The rich landscapes and cultural sites in the area are the basis for the development of

ecotourism.

2. Relying on good location conditions, including the convenience of transportation, the distance from the market.
3. Relying on famous large tourist cities, such as Barcelona. As a famous tourist destination, Barcelona attracts a large number of tourists from all over the world every year. Due to the proximity of the Pyrenees, there are potential customers of this product among visitors to Barcelona.
4. Rely on the developed tourism base of the local or surrounding areas. The Catalonia region has a highly developed tourism industry and related supporting facilities, which is a good support for the development of ecotourism.
5. Due to the influence of mountainous terrain, infrastructure construction is still not perfect. For example, the public transportation system is not rich enough, lack of health care and emergency places, lack of facilities for disabled people, etc.
6. Since the tourism development is in the natural areas of the mountains, the natural environment is relatively fragile. To carry out ecotourism, we must strictly abide by the requirements and content of ecological sustainability. Otherwise human activities can easily have a negative impact on the local environment.

Interview with the manager of PIRINEU emoció

In the field work, the author was fortunate to see Nulia, the head of the company. She also exchanged and talked with her and conducted a short interview. According to the Appendix I, the author got to know some important information of this company.

The most important news is that even the more mature eco-tourism projects like this one are not the main source of income for ecotourism. It is other tourist projects. Eco-tourism projects have higher costs and lower returns.

Conclusion

In this section, the author uses PIRINEU emoció as a case to analyze the participation of local travel agencies in the development of ecotourism, and focuses on a typical product. The author hopes to be able to sum up the general situation of enterprise development and the typical problems that exist.

Overall, the ecotourism development in the area is good, relying on the excellent location conditions in the Pyrenees. Many local travel agencies have started to launch eco-tourism activities and have made certain developments.

But for local businesses and travel agencies, ecotourism is currently not a major project to support business operations. There is still room for improvement in terms of improving profits and reducing costs.

These companies have strong cooperation and a good corporate ecology. Including travel agencies, hotels, local residents, and local public institutions have a

good relationship of cooperation.

Case study of Natural walks

In this section, the author chose Naturalwalks as another case for analysis. This is one type of organization which has professional ecotourism project initiated by ecotourists or eco-travelers. Compared with other companies and institutions, such organizations offer higher standards and more professional ecotourism products.

Some of the guides themselves are scientists or environmentalists with professional skills and knowledge. Therefore, their eco-tourism activities are more professional and educational. In addition, the ecotourism activities of these organizations also cooperate with universities and scientific research institutions, and have certain educational and research value.

According to the ecotourism development report of Catalonia, this type of ecotourism activity belongs to the second category: Ecotourism with educational purposes or to support the conservation of nature.

Brief description of Naturalwalks

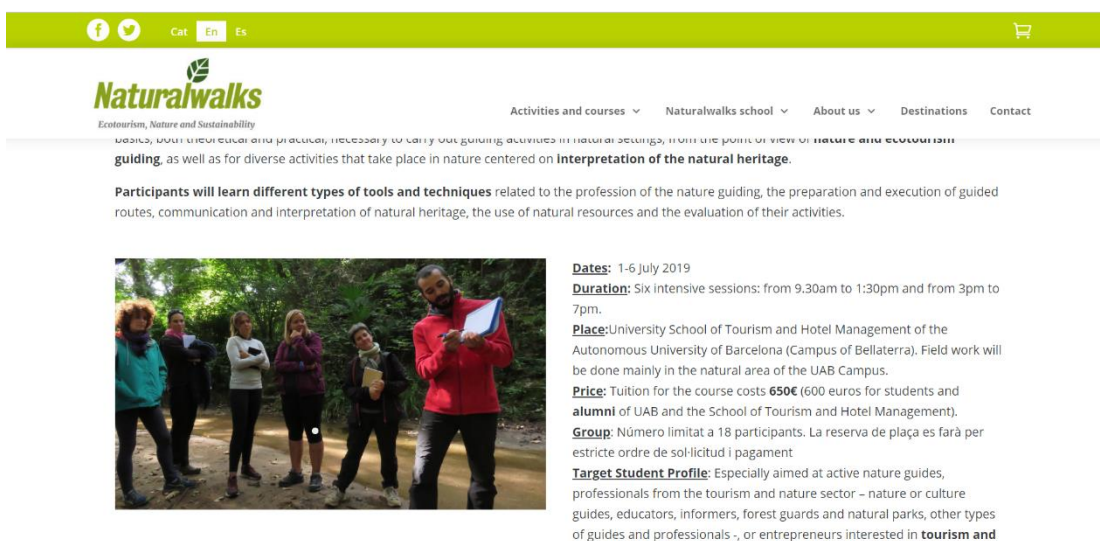
It is an independent company made up of a group of professionals from different backgrounds (Hospitality and restaurants, health, ecotourism, biology and environmental science), with a set of common values: a commitment to the territory

and the preservation of its natural and cultural heritage.¹⁹

Naturalwalks was created with the aim of bringing people into the natural environment so they can learn, enjoy, share nature and its relationships with the inhabitants of each place and its culture based on a firsthand experience.

Their excellent reputation is founded on the devotion and extensive knowledge of the territory and always with the highest level of attention to detail.

The author consulted the company's web page and found the products and activities it offered. Obviously, we can find that the ecotourism products provided by this company are very rare compared with the average travel agency. From its official website, there is only one activity currently available. That is, the natural guide course.



The screenshot shows the Naturalwalks website. The header is green with social media icons (Facebook, Twitter) and language options (Cat, En, Es). The main navigation bar includes 'Activities and courses', 'Naturalwalks school', 'About us', 'Destinations', and 'Contact'. The page content describes a course for natural guides, mentioning that participants will learn tools and techniques for guided routes, communication, and interpretation of natural heritage. A photograph shows a group of people in a forest setting. To the right of the photo, specific details are listed: Dates (1-6 July 2019), Duration (Six intensive sessions: from 9.30am to 1:30pm and from 3pm to 7pm), Place (University School of Tourism and Hotel Management of the Autonomous University of Barcelona), Price (Tuition for the course costs 650€), Group (Número limitat a 18 participants), and Target Student Profile (Especially aimed at active nature guides, professionals from the tourism and nature sector, etc.).

Dates: 1-6 July 2019
Duration: Six intensive sessions: from 9.30am to 1:30pm and from 3pm to 7pm.
Place: University School of Tourism and Hotel Management of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (Campus of Bellaterra). Field work will be done mainly in the natural area of the UAB Campus.
Price: Tuition for the course costs 650€ (600 euros for students and alumni of UAB and the School of Tourism and Hotel Management).
Group: Número limitat a 18 participants. La reserva de plaça es farà per estricta ordre de sol·licitud i pagament
Target Student Profile: Especialment dirigit a guies de naturalesa actives, professionals del sector del turisme i natura - natura o cultura guies, educadors, informers, forest guards and natural parks, other types of guides and professionals -, or entrepreneurs interested in tourism and

Picture 8²⁰

Specifically look at the content of the event. This is a one-week ecotourism course that combines a campus course with a field survey. Campus courses at the

¹⁹ <http://naturalwalks.com/en/about-us/>

²⁰ Screenprint from <http://naturalwalks.com/en/course-nature-guide-uab-catalonia/>

Autonomous University of Barcelona, fieldwork in the Pyrenees region. The total duration is one week, which is longer than other ecotourism projects. Specifically include the following:

1. The presentations used in the course and manual
2. Once the course has been passed (with a minimum attendance of 80% of in person hours), the School of Tourism and Hotel Management will grant the certificate of attendance and passing the course.
3. If, in addition, the student passes the course evaluation process, they will obtain a Certificate as an Interpretative guide from Interpret Europe, the organization that represents Heritage Interpretation professionals in Europe. This certificate includes a free annual membership fee for Interpret Europe (value of 30€).
4. Assessment after completion of course
5. Insurance during the course

From the content of its activities, it can be found that the educational significance of the event is obvious. Even for each participant, there is a review, and the relevant certificate will be issued for qualified candidates. This is the biggest feature of this event.

Positive analysis of Naturalwalks

Naturalwalks is a professional ecotourism agency that provides high quality ecotourism projects, the author will then briefly analyze the positive aspects and impact of the product.

First and foremost, the realization of the educational significance of ecotourism. The company is different from the average travel agency and focuses on ecotourism projects. And the project is very professional and academic, and the university is also involved as a partner. The course guide itself is also a professional. This allows visitors to learn about nature and gain understanding and support for environmental protection as they participate in the project. And after obtaining a training certificate, they can become a communicator and practitioner of ecotourism.

Then there is the economic impact. Such activities are more expensive than general travel products because of their professionalism. The added value of the product is high, and the profit obtained is higher. Since most of these eco-guides are part-time scholars, participating in these activities can bring them no extra income and may support their research on eco-environment.

The third is the potential role of environmental protection. For high-quality ecotourism projects such as this, the project setting itself has the attributes of environmental protection activities. Guides and visitors will participate in

environmental activities to a certain extent. The development of these activities can also provide experience and case studies on the improvement and construction of local environmental laws.

Finally, it is the impact on regional economic development. As with all tourist activities, the arrival of tourists can promote local consumption and increase the turnover of local businesses. Moreover, the development of these activities creates opportunities for new related business activities.

All in all, in addition to the general meaning of promoting economic development and creating business opportunities, the most important significance is educational significance. This kind of activity is very important because of the deeper participation of tourists and the smaller group size.

Negative analysis of Naturalwalks

The most important feature of a class of teaching ecotourism projects represented by it is the niche. The educational nature of such activities is high, often accompanied by courses and field surveys. As a tourism project, its leisure is not enough. The original intention of most tourists to travel is to get leisure and escape from the busy life. This is destined to be difficult to obtain many customers and markets and can only be operated on a smaller scale. This limits the development

of such companies, and other companies will have difficulty launching the same activities.

The second is the profit sharing of business activities. Because such activities are highly specialized and require the participation of academic institutions, most of these companies and institutions are not local businesses. Although it also cooperates with local companies, it is still insufficient compared with local travel agencies. This has led to residents taking on the impact and pollution of these activities but gained less profit.

The last shortcoming is that there are higher conditions and requirements for the development of such activities. The first is the need for highly professional guides and researchers, and the second is to work with universities in the surrounding area. This requires local higher education to develop. This is not a problem in Catalonia. However, a large part of the area where eco-tourism is developed is located in an underdeveloped area where the ecological environment is relatively primitive. If these areas want to carry out similar activities, they will face a certain degree of difficulty.

Case study of The Romanesque heritage of Vall de Boí

The fourth case is the Romanesque church in the Pyrenees, a public sector-managed tourism project. Unlike other tourism projects, such tourism activities are

first funded, managed and operated by the government or the public sector. And it is not just a pure eco-tourism project, but also a mix of cultural heritage tourism activities. This type of tourism is not a strictly eco-tourism, but it is indeed a representative of local tourism and a major tourist destination.

In many areas where ecotourism is developed, there are ecotourism projects operated by the public sector. For example, the rainforest area, the natural parks of the mountainous areas, and the world natural heritage like the Pyrenees. Therefore, the research value and significance of this case are enough, which can provide reference for ecotourism in other regions under similar conditions.

General Information

Vall de Boí's Romanesque ensemble is made up of the churches of Sant Climent and Santa Maria in Taüll, Sant Joan in Boí, Santa Eulàlia in Erill la Vall, Sant Feliu in Barruera, La Nativitat in Durro, Santa Maria in Cardet, L'Assumpció in Còll, and Sant Quirc Hermitage also in Durro.

One of the main characteristics of this ensemble is the common architectural style. The churches were all built during the 11th and 12th centuries, following a model imported from northern Italy, the Lombard Romanesque, characterized by its functional buildings, skilled stonework, thin bell-towers and the external decoration of rounded arcading and pilaster strips.

The Romanesque churches of Vall de Boí are the artistic reflection of a society which was structured around the hierarchies of feudalism and clergy, in this case personified in the Lords of Erill and the bishopric of Roda de Isábena, the promoters of these temples. In this medieval society, not only did the Church serve a religious function, but it also played an important social role as a place for people to meet and seek refuge. In the case of Vall de Boí, this social function of churches was further underlined by the use of the thin bell-towers as a means of communication and protection.

An important highlight are the murals that used to be located in the churches of Sant Climent and Santa Maria in Taüll and in Sant Joan in Boí, and which are currently kept at the National Museum of Catalan Art (MNAC) in Barcelona. Also worthy of mention are the carvings produced by the Erill' s Workshop, particularly the Descent in the church of Santa Eulàlia in Erill la Vall.²¹

As a UNESCO-certified World Heritage Site, these Romanesque buildings are a valuable tourism resource and the basis upon which tourism activities take place. Since the murals and heritage in the church have been transferred to the National Museum of Catalonia for protection and research, it is not enough to rely solely on these sites to attract tourists. In addition, since these churches are located in the Pyrenees, they are also higher and less accessible, so the individual church tours are slightly monotonous. This has led to the local combination of sightseeing and other

²¹ <https://www.vallboi.cat/en/catalan-romanesque-its-best>

eco-tourism activities of these churches, which has increased the competitiveness of their products.

Romanesque Centre

In the case of studying this project, the author thinks that the first thing to understand is the Romanesque Center, which operates the project. The biggest difference between this heritage-related project and other tourism projects is that it is operated by a public agency or a non-profit organization, not by a business. This determines the semi-public nature of the project. The author will first study the current work of the institution, how it operates the project, and what activities it provides.

This interpretation space provides visitors with the initial keys to discover and understand the Romanesque churches of the Boi Valley. An agreeable way you can find out how the Romanesque got here, where the iconography and figuration of our Romanesque monuments come from, what Mediaeval society was like, what techniques were used in the building and decoration of the churches, what they looked like at the beginning of the 20th century and, finally, voices from the past explaining their connection with the Romanesque heritage of the Boi Valley.

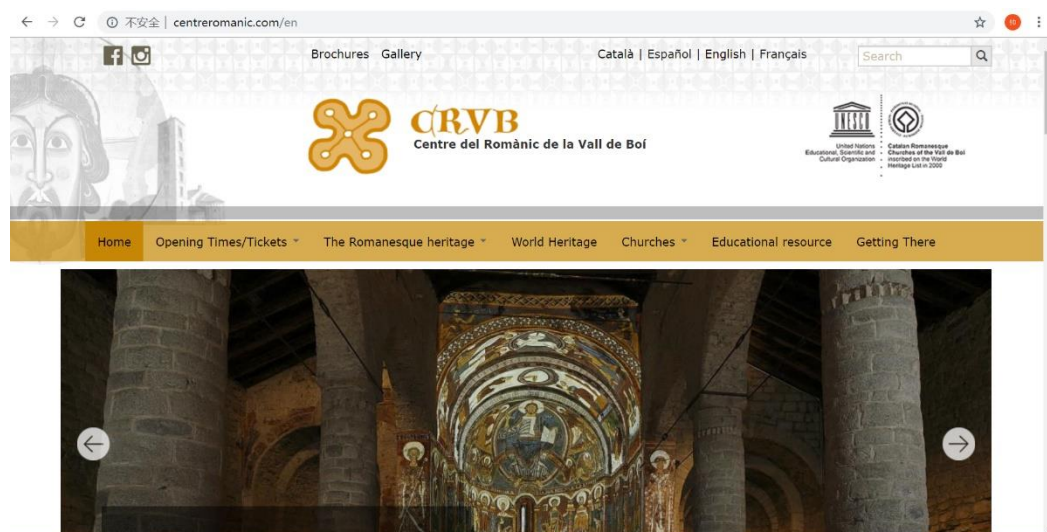
The Vall de Boí Romanesque Centre offers²²:

Practical information for visiting the churches: information leaflets about the Romanesque monuments, opening hours, ticket prices, ticket sales

Shop with specialized Romanesque publications and cultural heritage, gifts: postcards, book-markers.

Guided tours service for groups, all year round, by previous arrangement.

Guided tours for the public in general, at predetermined times during the summer season, Easter week, some bank holidays.



Picture 9²³

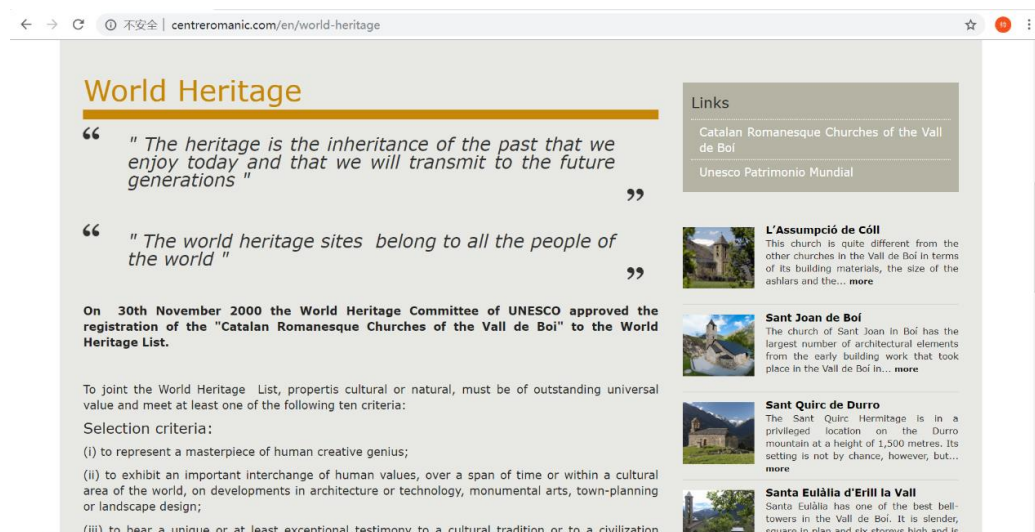
From that, in the official website of The Romanesque Center, they provide different activities and information. Including tickets services, heritage introduction

²² Information from <http://www.centreromanic.com/en/romanesque-centre>

²³ Picture from <http://www.centreromanic.com/en/romanesque-centre>

of these churches, world heritage history of these churches, church' s information, educational resource and transport information. Most of them are normal which like tickets, introduction of the churches and transport. But the part of world heritage and educational resource are something make it special.

In this section, the website describes how these churches are recognized as World Heritage Sites. Includes the process and history of application and preparation, evaluations given by UNESCO, UNESCO's assessment criteria and screening processes. This section highlights the historical and cultural values of these buildings, allowing visitors to experience a deeper experience before or during the visit.



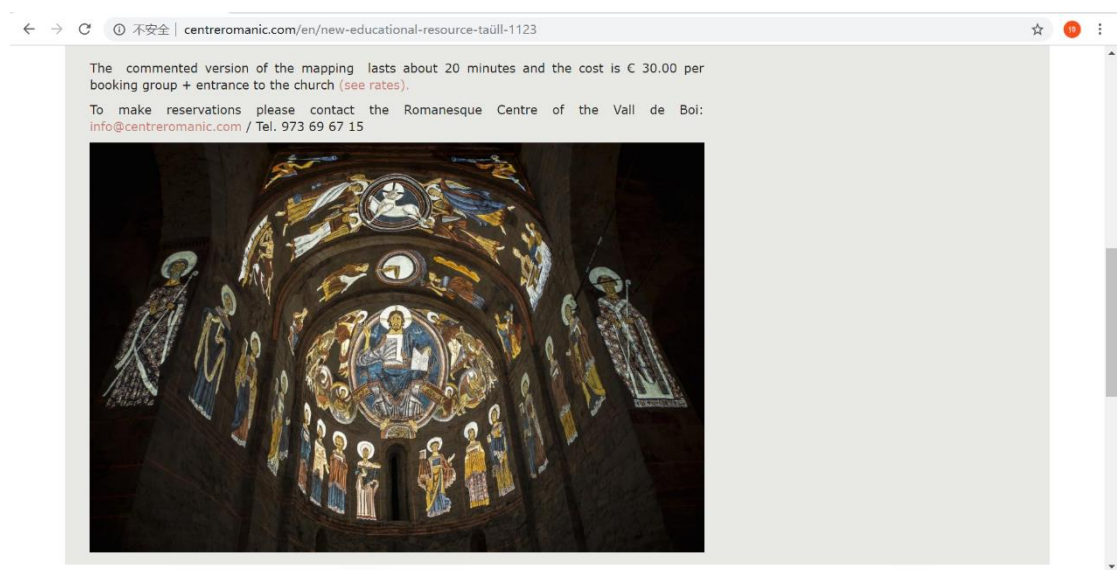
Picture 10²⁴

On the other hand, this project has outstanding educational significance. In the official website, they listed the project separately, namely the educational resource.

²⁴ <http://www.centreromanica.com/en/new-educational-resource-ta%C3%BCII-1123>

The most prominent highlight is the dynamic map of Christian murals. After a 3D holographic projection, visitors were shown how the church murals were destroyed and what measures were taken to protect them. This is a dynamic process that gives visitors an immersive feel. This shocking approach allows visitors to deepen their understanding and support of heritage protection to achieve educational value.

The new commented version of the mapping of Saint Climent is a new educational resource aimed at schools and groups interested in a deeper understanding of the Romanesque in his leisure time.



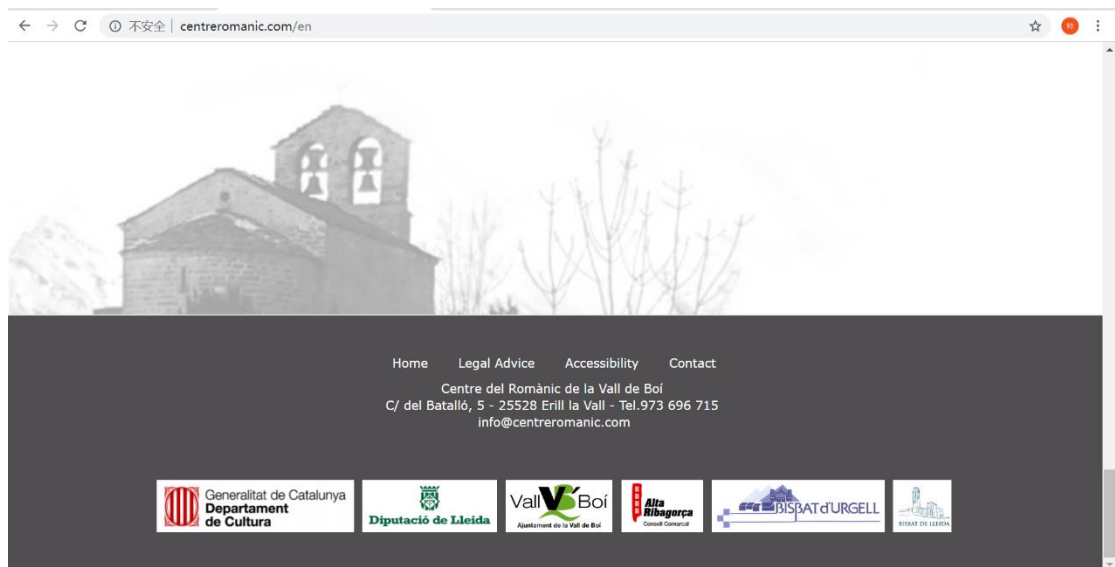
Picture 11²⁵

²⁵ <http://www.centreromanic.com/en/new-educational-resource-ta%C3%BCII-1123>

Public administration

This institution is not the same as other ecotourism organizations in the main body of operations. The government is the main operator, including the regional government and local governments.

As can be seen from the official website, the main participants include the Catalan government, the public sector in Lleida, the village committee of Vall de Boi, and some related local organizations.

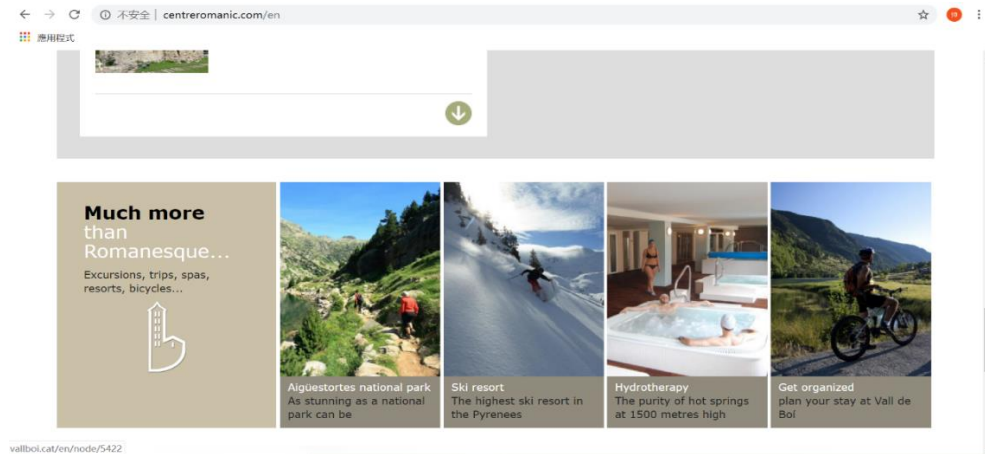


Picture 12²⁶

Almost all of the participants are in the public sector, so their public welfare is also significant. In addition to the sale of church tickets, the agency also provides

²⁶ <http://www.centreromanic.com/en/new-educational-resource-ta%C3%BCII-1123>

relevant tourist information, traffic information, cultural resources and educational information, and is free of charge.



Picture 13²⁷

As seen in the official website, this institution not only provides travel to the church. It also includes national parks, skiing, spas, bicycles and other types of tours. When you click into a different interface, you will find a different interface. The first is the National Park. This interface is an introduction to the National Park, but does not include specific activities. Similarly, the ski interface also introduces the relevant ski facilities and venues, and the agency does not provide the project directly. The spa spa interface is different, it directly provides related activities and timetables. The last mountain bike interface, after entering, there are many other related cooperation agencies, including travel agencies, event providers, accommodation and so on. Going out again can see a lot of different links.

²⁷ <http://www.centreromanic.com/en>

Based on the author's fieldwork experience, learn about the activities currently offered by this institution. The first is the information and explanation services provided by the Romance Center. The center provides free information sharing and explanation services for tourists, especially group visitors. The educational institution also gives guidance and on-site explanation services. The author visited the information center together with the research team and communicated with the staff in the information center. The entire information center provides a very rich collection of related Romanesque churches and their hard-to-protect information, including text, images, and videos. The staff then led the team to several of the churches to do field visits and explain. However, the author here is missing information, it is not clear whether this type of on-site explanation is aimed at ordinary tourists, or is specifically targeted at research groups.

Conclusion

The Romanesque Center serves as a relevant agency for tourism and cultural information, and its work is effective. Under its operation, the church of the World Cultural Heritage is well protected. And invested in tourism projects, creating profits, which in turn provide financial support for the protection and research of heritage.

It is well-coordinated and works with other local tourism departments (national parks, wild eco-tours, etc.). By leveraging new technologies (3D projection maps), it is a source of protection for the spread of cultural heritage. The overall approach is successful and worth learning.

The author thinks that his experience and measures can be learned and learned by other institutions and regions with similar conditions. Promote the combination of cultural heritage protection and ecotourism development, and ultimately promote local development.

Moreover, the agency cooperates with local businesses and institutions when conducting activities. Make products connected to each other to maximize benefits. It also enables local businesses to share profits in Romanesque church tourism projects. As a well-functioning and mature project, it can be a good model case. For those areas with similar environments, it can serve as a reference.

Conclusion and analysis

Conclusion of the Pyrenees case

In the above content analysis, the authors selected four different types of typical cases, which are the main four tourism product providers in the Pyrenees. In the analysis process, the author paid attention to their operation mode, provided the main products, and summarized their advantages and disadvantages.

According to the previous classification, the main bodies of ecotourism in Catalonia are divided into four categories. They are Sustainable rural accommodation, Local agencies operating eco-tours, Biologist or professional

guide, Public sector of ecotourism. These four types cover most ecotourism practitioners in the Catalonia Pyrenees. From the perspective of the products and operations they provide, different types have different characteristics and patterns. There are also different advantages and disadvantages.

As far as rural accommodation is concerned, its characteristics are as described above. Most of these companies are small businesses, whose owners are mostly locals and are generally small in size and operate on a family basis. The main business and products it provides are accommodation and catering, with the help of travel agencies selling some eco-tourism products and local foods. By analyzing the case, the author believes that its advantages are as follows.

1. It is mainly based on small family businesses, and its business mode is flexible and simple. Compared to other forms of ecotourism, such as field activities and professional observation. Providing accommodation is a professionally demanding business activity that is suitable for local residents. Therefore, this category of business has the strongest localization and the highest participation of local residents. Therefore, to the greatest extent, local residents can share the dividend of ecotourism development.
2. The initial investment is small, and the threshold for entry is low. Most of these rural houses are owned by the owner's own house, so there is no need to invest too much money in real estate in the early stage. The homeowner only needs to renovate and renovate his or her own home to meet the

relevant standards of the hotel industry, that is, to be able to invest in business activities. The homeowner only needs to renovate and renovate his or her own home to meet the relevant standards of the hotel industry, that is, to be able to invest in business activities. Compared with other types of ecotourism activities, it can save a lot of startup funds. Therefore, it is more suitable for local self-employed individuals.

3. Closes contact with other related industries and can promotes the healthy development of business ecology. Most of the country hotels offer accommodation primarily. But at the same time, it also provides food and some eco-tourism projects. But the country hotels themselves do not produce these products, so they need to work with exotic companies to provide these products. This can also promote the development of other food companies, business of local farmers, and travel agencies. In the end, it will form a benign ecology that is mutually beneficial and win-win.

Of course, there are also shortcomings in the country house. The author concludes that it is the following points.

1. Insufficient professionalism and insufficient measures related to ecological sustainability. Because of family business, its professionalism may be insufficient. Although casa Leonardo has taken a series of measures to reduce energy consumption, efforts have been made to make the decoration greener and more sustainable. However, there may still be

deficiencies compared to large companies or professional companies. In terms of sustainability measures, the professionalism of such rural hotels is still insufficient. Its activities depend on the guidance and assistance of professional institutions and the public sector.

2. Small family businesses create less economic benefits and create fewer jobs.

Most of these companies have family businesses and family members are employees. And sometimes a person has several jobs and many different kinds of works. In most cases, there is no need to recruit more employees.

3. The link with ecotourism is fragile. These rural family hotels do not operate eco-tourism projects themselves, and must cooperate with other companies to participate in eco-tourism business activities. These hotels may be transformed into ordinary country hotels at any time, and this may be the result if the ecotourism-related income is insufficient or the cost of sustainable development is too high.

The above points are the advantages and disadvantages of the country hotel based on the case study. It does not cover all businesses, but in general such rural hotels may have similar problems.

For travel agencies that offer ecotourism projects, due to the characteristics of their travel agencies, there are no significant features associated with ecotourism. Most of its advantages and disadvantages are the characteristics of travel agencies. The biggest advantage is the professionalism of the travel agency and the deep

understanding of the market. Travel agencies have a lot of experience in this area due to their long-term involvement in tourism products. Therefore, it is possible to better design products and operate products. But such travel agencies are not perfect. There are also problems. The main problem is to increase the profitability of ecotourism projects. Eco-tourism projects have lower profits than mass tourism projects, which is a bad phenomenon. This will hit the travel agency's determination to run the product. And if profits are low, the enthusiasm of companies to continue to develop these products will also decrease.

For the Biologist or professional guide, the overall development is good, and the products and services offered are the most professional. It is in line with the principles of sustainability and education in the development of ecotourism. The high quality of these products is a product worthy of promotion and development in eco-tourism. But the limitations are also obvious. Due to the high requirements for professionalism and academics, fewer employees can meet the conditions and qualifications, higher barriers to entry, and less significance and value for employment. Because of these constraints, it is unlikely that similar activities and products will be carried out on a large scale.

Public institutions, both as managers and providers of activities, play a more stable role in the development of ecotourism. Public institutions have sufficient funds, strict standards, and high professionalism and academics. However, due to its public sector's attributes and limited scale, it cannot occupy the development

space of the enterprise in the market, so there are limitations. And the products operated by the public sector are relatively fixed, and there are still some shortcomings in terms of flexibility and sensitivity to the market. In general, ecotourism in the Catalonia Pyrenees is developing well, with mature markets and diverse products. There are some development problems and difficulties locally.

Suggestions and discussions

According to the local problems in its development, the author believes that the following suggestions can be made in a targeted manner.

The first is that public institutions and related associations need to increase support for ecotourism and environmental protection, including legal and tax-related support. In addition, professional skills training and environmental knowledge education should be provided to improve the professional level and environmental awareness of practitioners. This will enable ecotourism to have a good foundation and dependence on the development of the region.

The second is to improve the business ecology of eco-tourism. Create conditions for cooperation between related industries, resulting in economies of scale and clustering. Improve the operational efficiency of the industry, thereby increasing profit margins and promoting industrial development. Enterprises, residents, public institutions, and academic institutions must directly strengthen

communication and collaboration, and share experiences and knowledge. Internal standards within the same industry should be strengthened to raise the standards and standards of the industry.

Strengthen cooperation between different types of entities and enterprises, and encourage healthy competition and strengthen market vitality. The four types of businesses and entities have a natural space for cooperation because of the high complementarity of the products and services they provide. Moreover, in the real development, many companies have cooperated with each other to jointly launch eco-tourism products and participate in the development and construction of eco-tourism. This should be encouraged and strengthened. In addition, companies must be encouraged to compete and innovate, and relevant institutions and the public sector can be rewarded for outstanding and innovative products and activities.

The above is the recommendations and opinions put forward by the author on the existing problems. Due to the limitations of surveys and research, these recommendations are only for some of the more prominent issues. There may be other problems in the development of ecotourism in the Pyrenees of Catalonia, which were not found in this study, so the author's suggestion may be missing.

Overall, as a well-known tourist attraction, and relying on the mature tourism market. The ecotourism development in the Catalonia Pyrenees region is generally good and has broad prospects and potential. The development experience and existing problems can be used as experience for other similar environmental areas

as a reference to develop ecotourism. As for the existing problems, as long as they pay attention and have targeted solutions, their future development will certainly be better.

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Appendix

Interviewer: Shuai Li (S)

Interviewee: Manager Nuria(M)

Date and time: March 12th 2019 18:00

Location: La Senterada

S: Thank you for taking the time for this interview.

M: You're welcome! I'm happy to answer your questions, because the subject interests me too.

S: Most of the questions you have mentioned and explained in the forum, so I will ask some other questions here, and if you are not convenient to answer, you can also refuse (laugh)

M: No problem (haha), just ask, I will try to explain and answer for you.

S: Well. What I am most interested in is, what is your attitude towards ecotourism and environmental sustainability? Because, in general, sustainable requirements can mean more overhead and expense.

M: First of all, we are sure to strongly support eco-tourism and environmental protection. This is not only the protection of the homeland in which we live, but also the responsibility of our children and grandchildren. For the more expenses you say, I must admit that this is true. However, relevant environmental protection departments and local public institutions have policies and laws that support ecologically sustainable projects, as well as funding. Excellent ecotourism projects will receive corresponding rewards. In addition, we also try to combine eco-tourism projects with the needs of consumers, market-oriented, and obtain more high-quality customers.

S: Okay, I understand. The second question is, what is the main source of income for your business? Are these ecotourism projects your main income? Are you still running other related activities?

M: To be honest, ecotourism projects are not our main business. Our company also operates other traditional tourism projects that are our main source of income. I have some other industries. If we simply operate these eco-tourism projects, it is not enough to support the development of our company.

S: In the process of developing an ecotourism project, is there any resistance from the local area? How to let local businesses and residents join the eco-tourism industry and share profits?

M: In fact, most residents support the ecological protection and support the development of eco-tourism. In the process of developing the project, we fully cooperate with local enterprises to jointly promote and sell products and share profits. This has enabled local people to support the development of the project.

S: Ok, this is the question and understanding I want to ask this time. Thank you very much for your time.

M: You are welcome, I hope this will help you.

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