



Newsletter

Welcome to the third newsletter of EXTOR (2023-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000154283 - Experiential tourism for sustainable rural development), a project dedicated to fostering sustainable rural development by promoting experiential tourism, enhancing environmental practices, upskilling entrepreneurs, and strengthening training and networking opportunities to meet evolving societal and economic needs.



Consortium Meeting

The EXTOR consortium met in September 2025 at the historic Mercouri Estate near Korakochori, Pygros, Greece, a family-run property with over 150 years of experience in wine and olive oil production.

Partners discussed progress on training materials, piloting activities, and the new EXTOR Toolkit, which will feature infographics, interactive maps, and resources for VET providers. Plans for the EXTOR Community and DigInRur platform were shared, including multi-actor forums, promotional videos, and ways to showcase rural tourism innovation. The meeting set key deadlines and next steps, keeping the project on track for its successful completion.



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Sustainability in Action: Field Trip to the Waldviertel Region

As part of the EXTOR Erasmus+ project, students took part in two experiential field trips focusing on innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability in rural tourism. In **South Iceland**, participants visited tourism and hospitality businesses in the **Hveragerði** and **Selfoss** areas, including **Mega Zipline**, **Café Reykjadalur**, **The Greenhouse Hotel**, **Hotel Eldhestar**, and the newly opened **Fröken Selfoss** café. Discussions with entrepreneurs and representatives from the South Iceland Marketing Office provided insights into experience design, destination marketing, and cross-sector collaboration in a dynamic rural tourism environment.

In **Austria's Waldviertel region**, students explored diverse approaches to sustainable regional development, from agricultural tourism at **Mohndorf Armschlag** and eco-conscious hospitality at **Schwarz Alm Zwettl** to health tourism at the Cardiovascular Center in **Groß Gerungs**. Visits to **SONNENTOR Stadthof**, the Sonnenseitn Alpaca Farm, and nature-based attractions in Schrems further highlighted how innovation and collaboration support resilient tourism destinations.



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In **Greece**, EXTOR trainees participated in two additional study visits highlighting social entrepreneurship, cultural initiatives, and sustainability. At **Cine Rodon**, the summer cinema of **Stafidokampos**, participants were warmly welcomed by Giorgos Alevizopoulos, founder and president of the social enterprise managing the cinema. Through a guided tour and an engaging presentation, trainees learned about Cine Rodon's vision, mission, and evolution, as well as the challenges and successes behind keeping a cultural landmark alive. Discussions highlighted the cinema's strong connection to the local community, its changing governance models, and the importance of collaboration with local stakeholders. The experience provided valuable inspiration for the trainees' upcoming presentation video and future entrepreneurial ideas.



Another visit took place in **Pyrgos** during the **3rd Alfeios Eco Festival 2025**, a two-day event promoting sustainable tourism, environmental awareness, and social action. Trainees attended open discussions on balancing tourism development with environmental protection and on outdoor sporting events as forms of alternative tourism in rural areas. They also analyzed the festival's organization, stakeholder engagement, and communication strategies, gaining practical insights into event planning, public participation, and the role of cultural and environmental initiatives in empowering local communities and supporting sustainable regional development.



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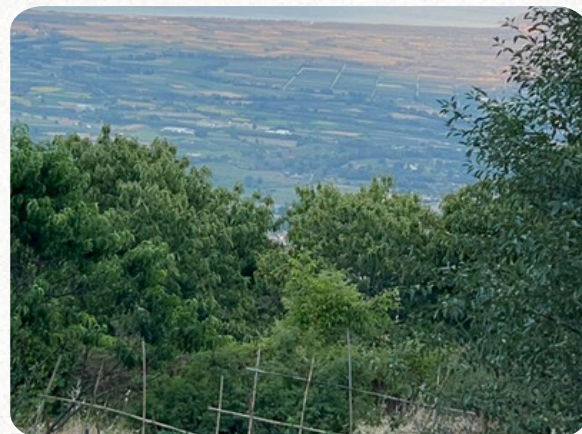
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Ktima Katsarou Winery and Agrotourism, Greece

As part of the study visit, rural tourism professionals visited **Ktima Katsarou Winery** in **Krania Olympou**, a family-run estate renowned for its commitment to **sustainable viticulture** and quality winemaking. Participants explored how the winery integrates **eco-friendly practices, local heritage, and agrotourism** experiences to attract visitors and support the rural economy. The visit provided valuable insights into linking wine production with tourism development, highlighting how small rural enterprises can diversify their offerings, preserve local identity, and contribute to the sustainability of the broader Olympus region.



On May 27, 2025 in the **Palermo** area, trainees and VET teachers met with five organizations active in sustainable and community-based tourism: **Addiopizzo Travel, Palma Nana, Lisca Bianca, La Libreria del Mare, and MultiVolti**. These encounters offered a real-world perspective on diverse business models and good practices, while fostering meaningful connections with professionals and social enterprises. Students explored potential career paths, and teachers gained insights and contacts to enrich future educational activities.



As part of the EXTOR piloting activities, trainees and trainers took part in the field visits that offered hands-on insight into community-based initiatives and sustainable tourism models.



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Two additional visits offered direct insight into gastronomic and enotourism. At the **International School of Cuisine** (Chamber of Commerce of Valladolid), students experienced how culinary training supports the design of high-value, authentic food tourism offers. Finally, in **Peñafiel** (Ribera del Duero), they explored the power of wine tourism to revitalise rural economies and preserve heritage, interacting with local wine entrepreneurs and reflecting on digital promotion strategies.

INFODEF and IES Diego de Praves (Valladolid) organised a rich and diverse programme of six field visits between June and July 2025. These activities were aimed at deepening the understanding of experiential rural tourism among VET students in Tourism, Hospitality, and Culinary Arts, connecting classroom learning with real-world innovation in rural Spain.

The journey began at the **Hotel Balneario de Olmedo**, where students explored wellness tourism in a rural setting. They learned how health, history, and hospitality merge to create meaningful rural experiences that attract visitors all year round. Students then visited **La Bien Pagá**, a performing arts space in Valladolid. This visit showcased how cultural and creative industries can bring life to depopulated villages, offering tourism based on emotion, storytelling, and community engagement.

The experience at **Red Íncola** allowed students to reflect on inclusive tourism, understanding how the sector can also promote social responsibility, diversity, and empathy. Tourism was presented not only as an economic engine but also as a potential space for human connection. Another visit took place at **El Majuelo**, an ecological and community-led project focused on regenerative agriculture and environmental education. Students discovered how sustainable tourism can grow from ethical, values-driven initiatives rooted in nature and rural resilience.



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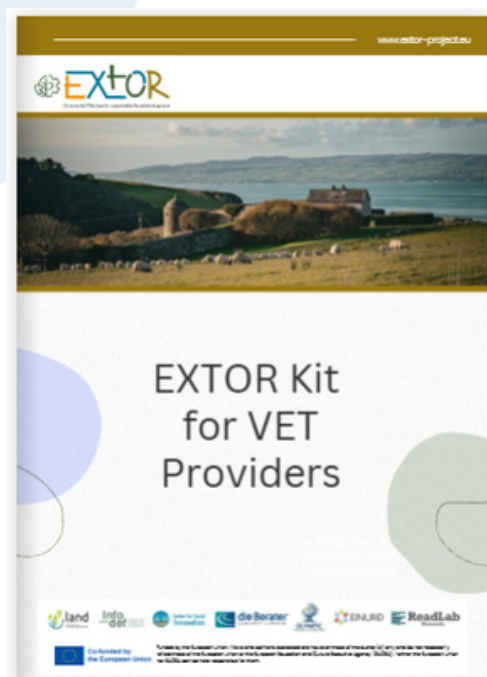
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The EXTOR Toolkit for VET providers is here!

Empowering innovation in rural entrepreneurship

The EXTOR Training Kit for VET providers and trainers is a key result of the EXTOR project, designed to support the renewal of Vocational Education and Training (VET) across Europe. Developed and refined through real-life testing with target groups, the kit equips VET professionals with **practical tools**, clear **guidelines**, and **concrete instructions** to successfully deliver and replicate the **EXTOR training programme** with their learners.



Available free of charge in **7 languages on the EXTOR e-platform**, the kit helps trainers adapt the programme to their own professional and regional contexts, ensuring long-term sustainability, transferability, and impact. It supports innovative learning approaches that go beyond traditional training, encouraging collaboration, networking, and the use of digital tools.

[Explore the EXTOR Training Kit](https://extor-project.eu)

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