
Trabajo Final de Máster

Ruralitza't: bringing culture back to its roots

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RURALITZAT

BRINGING CULTURE BACK TO ITS ROOTS



UIC
barcelona

UNIVERSITAT INTERNACIONAL DE CATALUNYA
Cultural Project:
Master's Degree in Arts and Cultural Management
2021-2022

BIANCA LOPEZ

LARA MEDIAVILLA

MAGGIE WILSON



DEDICATION

“We dedicate this project to the past,
present, and future of Catalonia-
the one that has inspired, guided and
transformed us.

Our shared love for this culture
prompted this project, we trust that
the richness of this culture will
sustain it.”

RURALITZAT

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THE CRISIS AT HAND

Over the last twenty years, Catalonia has been faced with an emerging problem: the depopulation of the rural areas. The limitations of funding, public services and infrastructure have caused the **Rural Exodus** to bigger cities, where the population's basic needs are covered.

Where more population has been lost is in the interior of Tarragona, Lleida and also in the Pyrenees, where there is more isolation. The 'comarques' of les Garrigues, Priorat, Ripollès and Terra Alta are the ones that are suffering the most, both from aging and isolation of the population.

In total, **1 in 6 villages have a real risk of disappearing**. That's about 21% of the 947 municipalities in Catalonia. If we look even closer, there are 35 villages that have less than 100 inhabitants, which puts them at a high-risk of disappearance.

Our villages represent our roots, our origins, our traditions, our heritage; their disappearance would mean the loss of our identity and our community, and it is our duty and mission to protect them.

HOW?

By creating a sustainable tourism platform where the 35 catalan villages are put into clusters of proximity and create tours, activities and workshops for travelers to explore.



For the pilot map, see pg 04

For a complete list, see annex pg 01

As a result of the war in Ukraine and the increased price of energy and supplies, the world of the countryside has demanded from the Government an "urgent and forceful" shock plan that puts an end to speculation in this context marked by the current socio-political situation, especially by the war in Ukraine and the transport strike, and the general increase in costs derived from the rise in raw materials.



TURNING AN EMERGENCY INTO AN OPPORTUNITY

Sustainable tourism has become increasingly more popular, making the rural world the main destination of travelers. This has been proven beneficial to these villages, solving different problems such as:

- Socioeconomic recovery in front of the crisis of the rural area
- Diversification of tourism, substituting the monopoly of the "beach tourism"
- Conservation of the natural and sociocultural resources
- Preservation of the protected natural spaces
- Improvement of the communication infrastructures, thus reducing the isolation of villages and rural areas

Therefore, Ruralitza't is a platform that wants to:

- **Highlight Catalan Culture**
- **Support local restaurants, producers, and suppliers**
- **Connect the tourists with nature and their roots**

PILOT TOURS

The unique value proposition of Ruralitzat is to offer sustainable cultural tours to endangered villages in Catalonia. Unlike other tourism platforms, our project focuses in the use of tourism as a way to highlight Catalan culture and help protect their heritage. Through **organizing villages into clusters**, we have united villages that share traditions, history and heritage to further exalt their common essence.

LAND PEOPLE HERITAGE TRADITIONS GASTRONOMY



Pilot Test *La Conca*



1- LA CONCA NATURAL

Visit Margalef, Vallclara, & Salvalla del Comtat

2- LA CONCA DELICIOSA

Visit Llorac, Nalec, & Senan

3- LA CONCA HISTORICA

Visit Fore's, Vallfogona de Riucorb, & Bellprat

4- LA CONCA POPULAR

Visit La Febre, Fullella, & Montornes Segarra

Area 797.108 km²

Thanks to the research done, we have been able to establish several tours that represent what Catalonia is.

Our Pilot Tours will focus on **four clusters of three villages** each from Tarragona, Lleida and Barcelona. These clusters are organized by location and common interests for travelers:

MISSION

- To be the leading platform of rural, cultural, and ecological tourism in Catalonia
- Provide unique cultural experiences in collaboration with endangered villages
- Create a network that connect tourists between themselves and with the villages

VISION

→ We exist to protect and strengthen rural Catalan culture by promoting sustainable tourism. Through highlighting the heritage of endangered Catalan villages, we aim to increase the general interest of investment and preservation in these areas and thus avoid their extinction.

VALUES

- **Preservation** of the Catalan Heritage: culture, traditions, gastronomy, architecture and nature.
- **Connection** of the people with their roots and of tourists to authentic Catalan culture
- **Education** about the history of these Catalan villages
- **Sustainability.** Promote sustainable tourism practices

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Lara Mediavilla i Calvo

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Spanish

- Bachelor's Degree in History
- Passionate about Heritage Management and seeing Catalonian culture and industry flourish.



Bethania Kopke

COMMUNICATION
MANAGER

- Brazilian

- Bachelor's Degree in International Relations
- Passionate about finding creative ways to communicate all that Catalonia has to offer to travelers.



Bianca Lopez

PROJECT MANAGER

- American

- Bachelor's Degree in Art Design and Media
- Passionate about community building and seeing local culture being sustained and shared.



Maggie Wilson

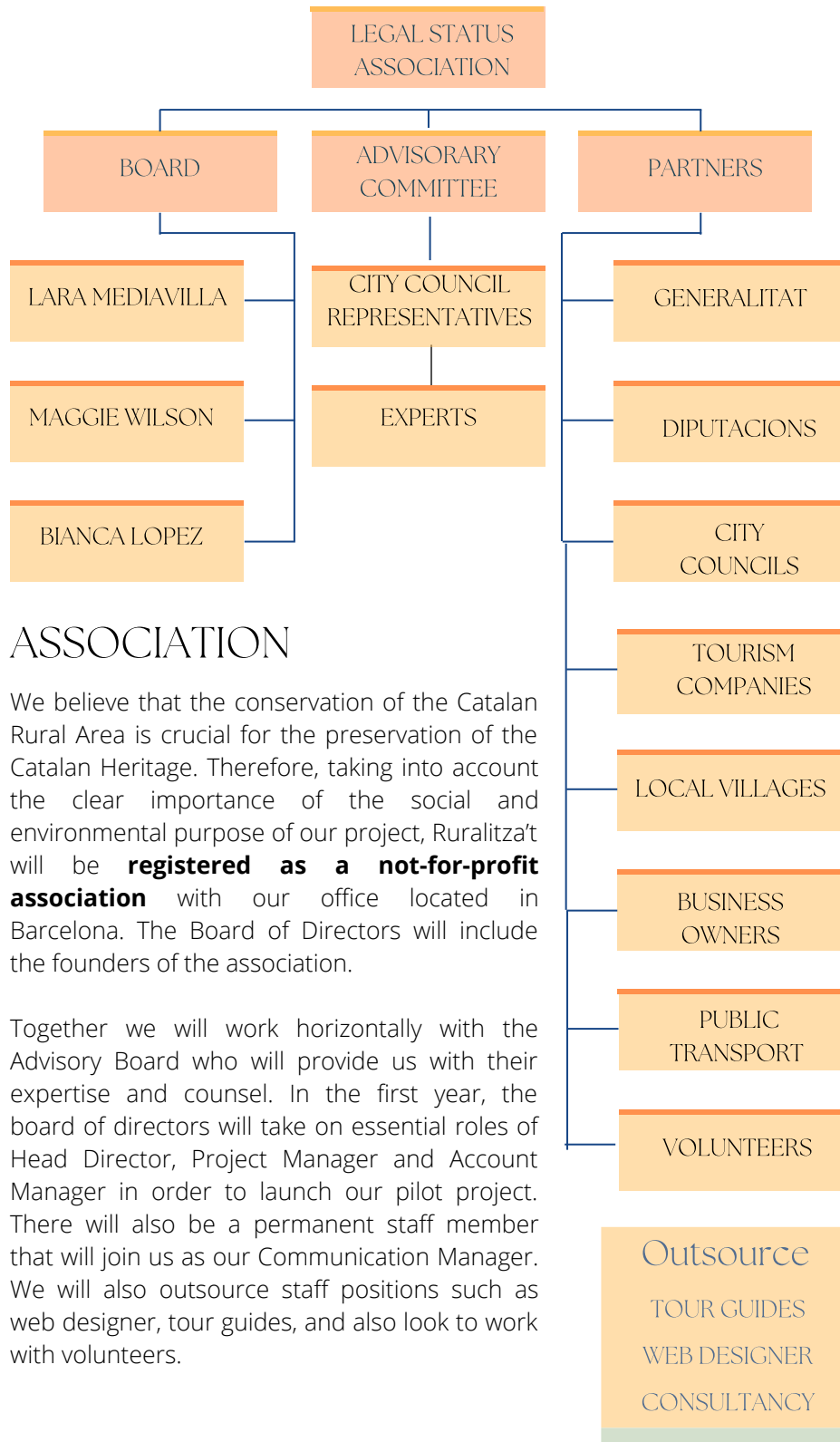
FINANCE MANAGER

- American

- Bachelor's Degree in Literature
- Passionate about financial sustainability for our organization and the villages we represent.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY



ASSOCIATION

We believe that the conservation of the Catalan Rural Area is crucial for the preservation of the Catalan Heritage. Therefore, taking into account the clear importance of the social and environmental purpose of our project, Ruralitzat will be **registered as a not-for-profit association** with our office located in Barcelona. The Board of Directors will include the founders of the association.

Together we will work horizontally with the Advisory Board who will provide us with their expertise and counsel. In the first year, the board of directors will take on essential roles of Head Director, Project Manager and Account Manager in order to launch our pilot project. There will also be a permanent staff member that will join us as our Communication Manager. We will also outsource staff positions such as web designer, tour guides, and also look to work with volunteers.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

MARCH 2022-JUNE 2023

Creation of collaborative and interdependent tours among clusters of rural villages in order to boost visibility and local economies while highlighting culture and educating visitors.

1.1 OPERATIONAL

- Create all internal operational paperwork and contracts
- Build an interactive website for information and booking
- Rent and outfit office space and outfit

1.2 MARKETING

- Create accounts on social media and connect with stakeholders
- Networking to find local partners in relevant fields:
- Hire a professional photographer/videographer to create content
- Purchase a monthly membership to Ahrefs for SEO
- Set up a free account on HootSuite for social media management

1.3 FINANCIAL

- Submit necessary paperwork to the city of Barcelona to be a for-profit business and pay relevant taxes.
- Sign employment agreements with all leadership and begin tracking hours and salaries.
- Secure private funding from interested partners in order to confirm the current budget.

NEXT STEPS

JULY 2023 AND ONGOING

Strengthening of relationships with city councils in each cluster of villages we visit in order to find new ways to engage tourists, boost local economy, and protect the local culture and landmarks.

- Reassess contracts with city councils with data gathered from pilot programs.
- Refine transportation options and create a typographically accurate map of the regions in order to better equip hikers and bikers to visit on their own or with our tour program.
- Negotiate high and low season pricing with restaurants, hostels, and activities so that self-guided tours can be conducted year-round.
- Use marketing statistics and keyword performance to refresh the annual marketing strategy.

See annex pg 02

STAKEHOLDERS

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Young and Middle Aged people (from 25 to 50 years old)
- Upper and Middle Class with expendable income
- Interested in cultural activities
- Concerned about sustainability and local economy when traveling

Primarily: **Cultural Tourists, Ecofriendly Tourists, and Van Tourists**

See annex pg 04



MARIONA

Catalan living in Barcelona. 28 years old. Art historian. Spends her free time visiting museums and traveling on the weekends with friends.

Well educated and chooses where to travel based on cultural interests and seasonal activities.



CLAIRE

British. 36 years old. Biologist and climate change activist. Loves hiking with her husband and kids. Travels to Spain every summer for vacation.

Chooses new travel locations based on landscape and possibility for sustainable booking and traveling options.



IVAN

Spaniard from Madrid. 47 years old. Freelance photographer. Loves to travel around in his van to photograph landscapes and monuments.

Chooses where to travel based on beauty of location and local festivals/holidays.

STAKEHOLDERS

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

VILLAGES:



IN COLLABORATION WITH:



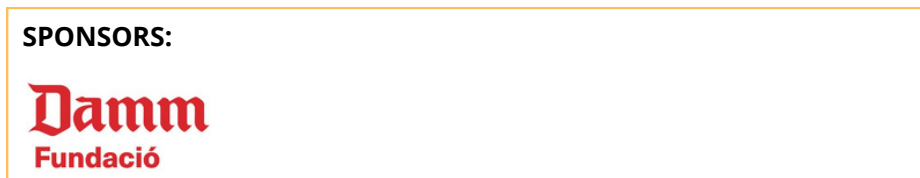
PARTNERS:



FUNDERS:



SPONSORS:

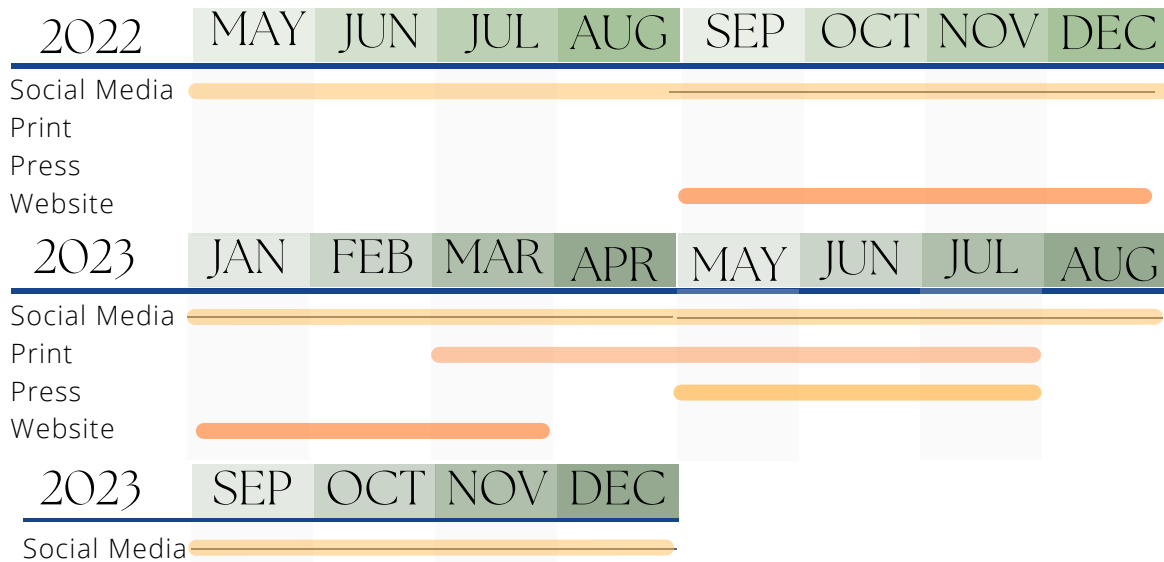


See annex pg 09

COMMUNICATION PLAN

COMMUNICATION GOALS

- “Communicate, compete and convince”
- Raise awareness about social/environmental issues in Catalan villages
- **Provide information** about the Ruralitza't project
- Gain public attention and visibility
- **Establish our brand**
- Reach future investors, sponsors and partners
- Reach target segments



PHASE 1: MAY 2022-FEBRUARY 2023

PHASE 2: MARCH -APRIL 2023

PHASE 3: MAY-JUNE 2023

PHASE 4: 1 WEEK BEFORE LAUNCH

Online influencers, flyer distribution, press conference

PHASE 5: LAUNCH DAY JULY 10TH, 2023

Social posts, IGTV behind-the-scenes, sponsors share on all social accounts, launch party

PHASE 6: AUGUST-OCTOBER 2023

See annex pg 10

The language used in our Communication Plan will vary depending on its context.

All copy the Web Platform and Social Media Channels will be written in **Catalan, Spanish and English**, since we want them to reach a bigger audience. The flyers and posters, however, will be done mainly in Catalan, and only a minority will be done in Spanish and English, since our main target is the **Catalan citizen**.

OPERATIONS

Our company will have two different locations: a physical office and an online website.

- The physical office will be located in the Gracia district, Barcelona. Since our company is small, with only three employees, a small-sized office will fulfill all of our needs, having enough space for our three desks, our equipment, and a common area.
- Our online website will consist of a platform where the consumers will be able to book our services (tours and activities) and products (merchandising). Customers will be able to contact us with inquiries they may have. Moreover, the website will include tabs with information about the villages and their history about sustainable tourism practices and list current events. Our main goal is to create a user-friendly platform in order to attract and keep the consumers.

Project Steps	2022												2023						
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
Meet City Councils																			
Meet with Local Businesses																			
Partnerships with Local Businesses																			
Partnerships with City Councils																			
Find Sponsors																			
Create Financial Plan																			
Apply for Private and Public Funding																			
Acquire Private and Public Funds																			
Develop Pilot																			
Develop Website																			
Launch Website																			
Create Marketing Strategy																			
Launch Advertising Campaign																			
Hire Tour Guides																			
Tour Guide Training																			
Pilot Test																			
Official Launch																			

COMPETITORS

CURRENT ALTERNATIVES

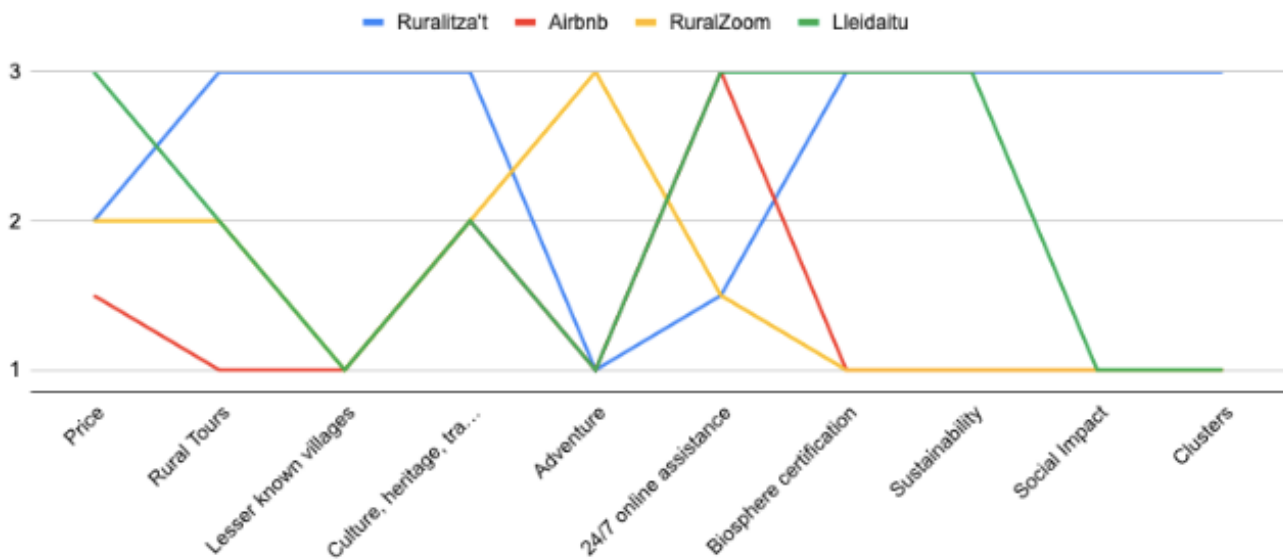
In the rural tourism business, most companies are dedicated to accommodation. There aren't many web platforms that provide **rural activities, workshops and tours** on an autonomous or national level. There are more "smaller" websites that sell these types of activities in specific regions. The companies that we consider our main competitors, are the following:

OUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

In this value curve, we compared our project with our three main competitors: Airbnb (Experiences), RuralZoom and Lleidaitu. We compared a total of 10 key aspects that represent our companies. Although having elements in common, we believe that our company has a clear differentiation with our competitors, highlighting the methodology of our tours and the impact we want to have, both in the environment and in society.

Our company would specialize in the creation of rural tours in lesser known and endangered villages, creating clusters of location and activity (gastronomy, history, nature, architecture...), focusing on the culture, traditions and heritage of these villages. With these tours we aim to promote sustainable tourism practices and create a **positive social and economic impact on these places**.

With this being said, we believe that our product will be better than the ones available because it **goes beyond tourism**. We want to create a community of conscious people that want to protect Catalonia and their roots and, within the next ten years, be able to expand all over the Iberian Península. Our main objective is to create a legacy that people can



COMPETITORS:

AIRBNB EXPERIENCES

OVERVIEW: The company has expanded to offer “experiences”, which are described as, “unique activities we can do together, led by a world of hosts”. They account for upwards of 20% of the vacation rental industry and their total revenue is \$35 billion.

LOCATION Based in San Francisco, CA but used worldwide	SERVICES Accommodation, gastronomy and guided tours, all hosted by locals	PRICING 40-120€ Per activity in Barcelona, on average	MARKET Travelers who are booking accommodation and looking to add experiences to their stay
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RURAL ZOOM

OVERVIEW: Rural tourism search engine that allows you to book every aspect of your travel on one site.

LOCATION Operates in Spain, Portugal, Andorra, France, and Italy	SERVICES Adventure activities	MARKET Travelers who want to book their own accommodation, activities, and restaurants all on the same site.	PRICING 3-150€ Per activity, on average
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LLEDAITU

OVERVIEW: Balances environmental, socio-cultural, and economic aspects of tourism. Biosphere certified. Limited tours offered.

LOCATION Began in Lleida, Operates in Catalonia, Spain	SERVICES Weekend tours and activities	MARKET Cultural tourists concerned with sustainability	PRICING 85-300€ Per weekend tour 5-50€ Per activity
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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

On this and the facing page, our 3 year projected budget is laid out with full consideration of self-financing, sponsorships and partnerships and public financing for the revenue.

Concerning the expenses, as expected, there are a few unique start-up costs but overall both expenses and revenue grow over the three years.

FINAL BUDGET- RURALITZA'T	500 tours	750 tours	1000 tours
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
REVENUE			
Self financing			
Initial investments	10.000€	0€	0€
Tickets	175.000€	262.500€	350.000€
Google ad spend	1.000€	1.000€	1.000€
Merchandising	2.000€	2.500€	3.000€
Subtotal	188.000€	266.000€	354.000€
Sponsorships and partnerships			
Fundació Repsol	10.000€	10.000€	10.000€
SST Foundation	7.000€	2.000€	2.000€
Life Program	5.000€	1.000€	1.000€
Subtotal	22.000€	13.000€	13.000€
Public Financing			
Diputació de Barcelona	0€	2.000€	2.000€
Diputació de Girona	0€	2.000€	2.000€
Diputació de Tarragona	2.000€	2.000€	2.000€
Diputació de Lleida	2.000€	2.000€	2.000€
Subtotal	4.000€	8.000€	8.000€
TOTAL INCOME	214.000	287.000	375.000

EXPENSES			
General expense			
Creation of association	38,51€	0€	0€
Renting of working place	9.000€	9.000€	9.000€
Salaries	48.000€	57.600€	72.000€
Utility bills	3.000€	3.000€	3.000€
Consultancy (Quarterly)	4.000€	4.000€	4.000€
Depreciation	1.800€	1.800€	1.800€
Equipment Maintenance	450€	450€	450€
Subtotal	66.288,51€	75.850,00€	90.250,00€
Network-related expenses			
Website creation	3.000€	0€	0€
Web domain fee	8,88€	0€	0€
Web maintenance	6.000,00€	6.000,00€	6.000,00€
Subtotal	9.008,88€	6.000,00€	6.000,00€
Activities and Tour related expenses			
Transport	45.000€	67.500€	90.000€
Tour Guides and Storytellers	5.540€	7.202€	9.003€
Accommodation	30.000€	45.000€	60.000€
Food	40.000€	60.000€	80.000€
Subtotal	120.540€	179.702€	239.003€
Marketing and advertising			
Printing Costs	2.675€	2.675€	2.675€
Merchandise Products	297€	297€	297€
Printed Advertising	5.400€	5.400€	5.400€
Digital Advertising	5.325€	5.325€	5.325€
Press Advertising	1.500€	1.500€	1.500€
Subtotal	15.197€	15.197€	15.197€
Merchandising Cost	300€	375€	450€
Subtotal	300€	375€	450€
TOTAL EXPENSES	211.334,39€	277.124,00€	350.899,50€
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	2.666	9.876	24.101

EVALUATION METRICS

MEANS OF MEASURING SUCCESS

- Number of followers on social media
- Web site visits
- Ad impressions and click-through rate
- Tours booked and revenue earned
- Repeat customers
- Tags, mentions, and shares on social media
- Features on other profiles, in print, and in video

FOLLOW-UP WITH CUSTOMERS

- In person feedback at end of tour
- Follow-up email with request for google business review and 5 question survey to respond to
- Tagging customers with social accounts in any professional photos taken while they were on the tour

See annex pg 14



01 LA CONCA NATURAL

VISIT: Margalef, Vallclara, & Salvalla del Comtat

ACTIVITIES: Rock climbing, hiking the path of Vimbodi and Poblet and hiking through Salvalla del Comtat to see the view from the baroque church of Saint Peter, built in the XVIII Century

MEALS: Ca Cabet (Margalef), La Cassola (Margalef), Restaurant la Parada (Vallclara), and picnic packs

ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Celler (Margalef) and Cal Cargol (Salvalla del Comtat)



02 LA CONCA DELICIOSA

VISIT: Llorac, Nalec, & Senan

ACTIVITIES: Cheese tasting in 'Formatgeria Sant Gil d'Albió', pottery workshop (with wine), oil tasting in Nalec's 'Cooperativa', where oil and local products have been produced for over a Century

MEALS: Restaurant l'aixopluc (Llorac), Cheese Factory (Llorac), REstaurant Xup Xup (Senan) , and picnic packs

ACCOMMODATION: Can Pinyol (Llorac) and Casa Arrufat (Nalec)



03 LA CONCA HISTORICA

VISIT: Fores, Vallfogona de Riucorb, & Bellprat

ACTIVITIES: Visit local monuments, the temple and castle in Vallfogona de Riucorb, and see the ruins and petroglyphs in Bellprat

MEALS: Bar Lo Miradors (Fores), Hostal del Rector (Flores), Bar Piscinas (Vallfogona de Riucorb) and picnic packs

ACCOMMODATION: Cal Capgros (Fores) and Cal Pinyota (Bellprat)

04 LA CONCA POPULAR

VISIT: La Febró, Fullea, & Montornes de Segarra

ACTIVITIES: Local home tours, workshop about locally produced magazines, visit the 'Molí de la Farina', built in the XIX Century, which represents a common tradition between the village's population

MEALS: La piscina de la Febro (La Febro), Hostal del Rector (Vallfogona de Riucorb), La sala de Fullea (Fullea), and picnic packs

ACCOMMODATION: Cal Serrat (La Febro) and Casa Rural Cal Drago (Montornes)



TOUR INFO

Each tour includes transportation to and from Barcelona and between the villages while on tour (as needed). Guests will stay in two different villages Friday and Saturday night, participate in three activities tailored to the villages visited and the tour title, and all meals will be produced locally.

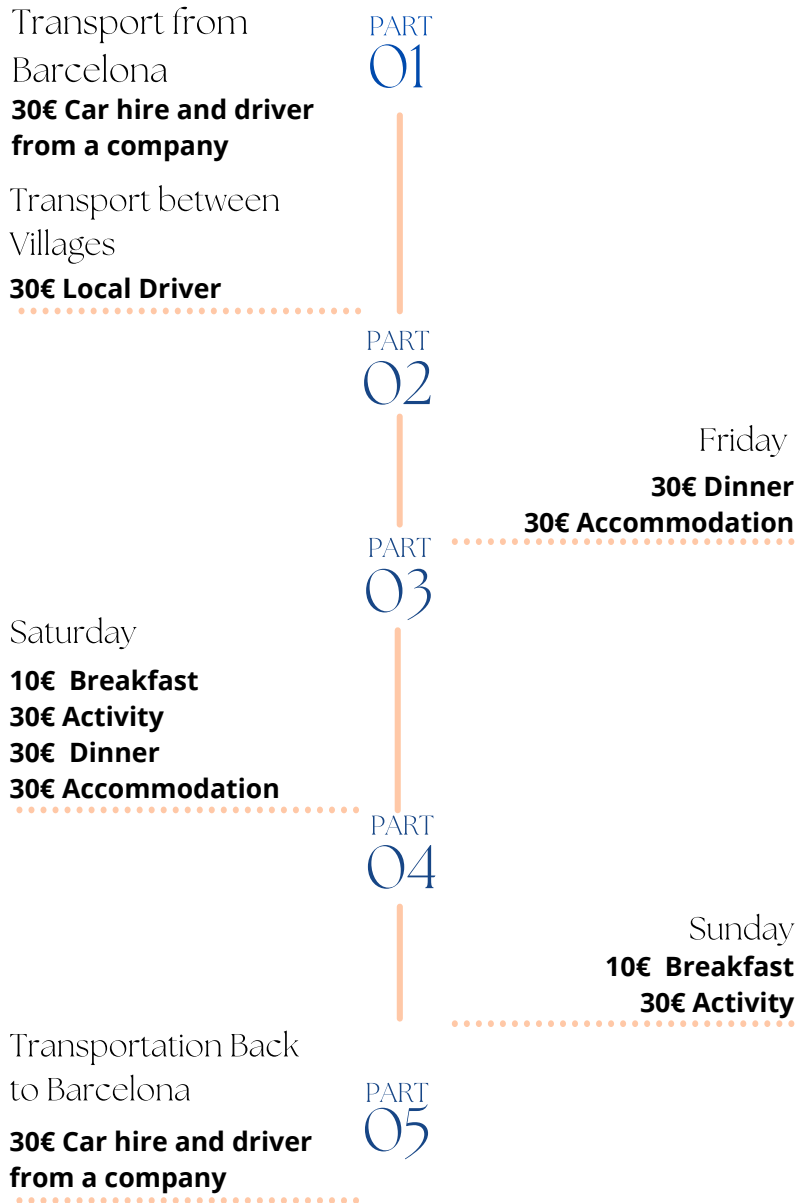
Focus on the largest cluster (12 villages) for the pilot program, offering only weekend tours to start. After the first 2 years we will expand the map to include all 7 clusters (34 of the villages) with day tours and weekend options. After the third year we will have an accurate topographical map to offer for self-guided tours driving, hiking, or cycling, and the 35th village will be included as a stand-alone destination.

- Weekend Tours- Friday evening through Sunday afternoon
- 6 people (3 pairs) per tour
- Offered seasonally with occasional extra tours to visit festivals

See annex pg 15

PRICING

Every tour includes travel to and from the villages and between them (as needed). Also included are all meals, accommodations, and activities. For those travelers who have their own vehicle or prefer to bike the cost will be lessened by 90€ per person.



Total raw cost per pair **290€**
per individual **170€**

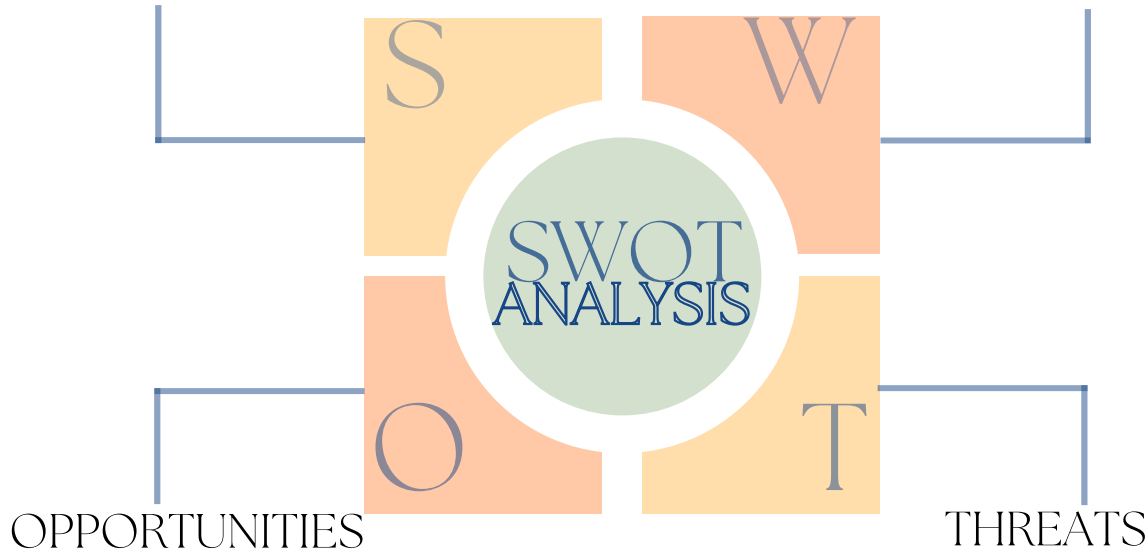
List price per pair **350€**
per individual **200€**

STRENGTHS

- Small Team: Easier Communication and Decision Making
- Knowledge about Catalonia, the Heritage and Culture
- Low Capital Requirement to Start
- Agility and Efficiency

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of Capital
- Lack of Reputation
- Lack of Previous Project Planning Experience
- Missing Expertise in Some Areas



- Increase of Interest in Ecotourism and National Tourism
- Expansion of the Project to Spain
- Support and Potential of Partnerships from Local Councils and Government
- Fill a Gap of a Need
- Competitive Pricing

- Economic Crisis - Covid 19
- Larger and Established Competitors
- Transportation to the Clusters
- Attracting Competent and Experienced Staff
- Market Access
- The Russian Invasion of Ukraine

See annex pg 17

PESTLE

The PESTLE analysis conducted by the team demonstrates that Catalonia is an **advantageous and ideal landscape** for new companies to launch, especially our model. Catalonia and Barcelona are one of the top European destinations for tourists. As such, **tourism accounts for 12% of Catalan GDP**.

Catalonia represents a large section of the Spanish economy and innovation ecosystem. Due to various factors, such as its location in the Mediterranean, trading, entrepreneurial and open economy have all contributed to placing Catalonia as a high strategic position in the south of Europe with Barcelona as a key area for international business. Many successful startups are being created here, which is attracting foreign investment and talent.

See annex pg 18

RISK ASSESMENT

RISK CATEGORY	PROBABILITY	IMPACT	PREVENTION REMEDY
Financial Insufficient funds to cover initial costs	High	High	Apply for a loan, look for investors, ask family and friends
Financial Not enough liquidity	High	High	Reduce expenses (marketing, rent) and manufacturing costs
Operations City councils deny our request to bring tourists into the community.	Medium	Medium	Focus efforts on other cities that do want tourist activity. Gather 2-3 years of data on economic and social benefits then re-address the villages who did not want tourism.
Market Lack of clients	Medium	High	Spend more money and time on promoting our company
Partners No partnerships with the Catalan deputies	Medium	Medium	Seek partnership in local governments, such as city councils, or regional governments, such as la Generalitat
Partners No sponsors	Medium	High	Revise our fundraising plan and research new sponsors
External War, Crisis, Etc	High	High	Safe house in each village and all tour guides trained on how to quickly gather and move a group to designated safe house.
LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	



“Un esforç concertat per preservar el nostre patrimoni és un vincle vital amb els nostres llegats culturals, estètics, inspiradors i econòmics, totes les coses que literalment ens fan ser qui som.”

“A concerted effort to preserve our heritage is a vital link to our cultural, aesthetic, inspirational and economic legacies- all of the things that quite literally make us who we are.”