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Analysis of the potential of entrepreneurship development for valorization of cultural heritage

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- There is an increasing interest in encouraging entrepreneurship-specific initiatives.
- It is necessary to design economic development policies -> focused on the improvement of the entrepreneurial environment.
- This approach involves
 - solutions to tackle the possible difficulties and obstacles that entrepreneurs may face
 - actions directed to their direct support.
- Thus, supporting entrepreneurship has become a priority of governments.

To analyse the stakeholders' perception regarding the opportunities for entrepreneurial development in the rural area (regional particularities on selected criteria) -> two surveys were conducted:

- the first one on **active entrepreneurs** and
- the other one on **potential entrepreneurs** in the areas with cultural heritage.

- Both surveys have so far had a low degree of representativeness
- The surveys are still open in the online environment -> to gather answers so necessary for the decision process.
- The questionnaires were sent online, through various social channels (email addresses, Skype, etc.), but also by completing the questionnaire sheets in physical format.
- From the demographic point of view, respondents to both questionnaires are distributed across the following age groups:
 - under 25 years old;
 - between 25-49 years old;
 - between 50-64 years old;
 - over 64 years old.

The first survey - Study on the analysis of the perception of active entrepreneurs in areas with unexploited heritage

The questionnaire was structured on 6 modules as follows:

- **Module I - Description and specificity of the activity.** It consists of 5 multiple choice questions, some of which also have the possibility to justify an option other than the ones proposed
- **Module II - Opportunities and limits in business development.** It includes 3 questions of great interest, and another 4 questions that allow the respondents to more clearly justify their choices.
- **Module III - Entrepreneurial skills.** It consists of 3 multiple-choice questions
- **Module IV - Strategies applied in the last year,** structured on 2 multiple choice questions
- **Module V – Financing,** structured on 2 multiple choice questions
- **Module VI - Development opportunities.** It consists of 3 multiple choice questions, and some added questions by which respondents can justify their answers.
- **Demo-economic module,** with 6 questions.

The provision of the different types of services according to the importance they have within the company:

- for **accommodation services**, more than a third of respondents indicated them as having the greatest importance, while another third considered them as having the least importance;
- **regarding restaurant services**, almost 45% of companies consider them to be of the greatest importance, and 22% - of great importance; at the same time, the cumulative share of those who consider them to be of low and very low importance is almost one-third of the total;
- **guided tours (to discover material and immaterial heritage assets)** are considered very important by only 11% of respondents; almost two-thirds consider them important and somewhat important, while the rest give them little and very little importance;
- **the organization of craft workshops** is considered very important by 12.5% of respondents, while half say they are important. The rest of the respondents, divided equally, consider this type of service to be somewhat important, of little importance or as having the least importance;
- **the provision of other activities** was mentioned by one-third of the respondents as being of the greatest importance, another third gave it great importance, while the rest considered these activities to be of the least importance.

The motivation of business development (from the most important to the least important reason):

- capitalizing on the local specifics, the immaterial elements - food, customs, traditions, etc. or to carry out similar or complementary activities to that of the other entrepreneurs in the area;
- personal reasons (social contribution, self-esteem, need for professional independence);
- the development of the material value of the local specific, of the traditional material elements - houses, traditional objects, etc.
- financial considerations (financial gain).

The methods of promoting the business / products / services offered by the responding companies (from the most important to the least important):

- online advertising, most companies choose to promote their business in this way;
- own website, which presents tourist offers and services that can be purchased online, as well as by setting up a local association
- by a travel agency that promotes the location through tourist packages;
- by other methods.

The most important impediments that companies have encountered during their activity are:

- bureaucracy;
- lack of skilled labor;
- legislative instability;
- corruption;
- lack of fiscal facilities;
- lack of infrastructure.

Respondents indicated that they used the following skills to start their own business:

- the ability to identify and access funding sources (aprox. 32% of respondents);
- the ability to identify and use the most appropriate promotion techniques for cultural heritage objectives (aprox. 32% of respondents);
- knowledge of the relevant legislation (27%);
- other skills (9%).

The most important skills needed to develop products and services based on the valorization of cultural heritage (from the most important to the least important):

- ❑ ability to innovate
- ❑ ability to respond to multiple requests;
- ❑ digital skills;
- ❑ other skills

Business models (from the most important to the least important):

- focusing on the relationship with customers;
- highlighting the local cultural heritage;
- innovation regarding products/services;
- arguing that improving the situation of infrastructure (geographic accessibility, Internet access, etc.) is one of the proposed targets to be achieved.

The second survey - Study on the analysis of the perception of potential entrepreneurs in areas with unexploited heritage

- Questionnaire with 5 modules:
- **Module I - Restoration of built assets that can be integrated into the cultural heritage.** It consists of 5 multiple choice questions, some of which also have the possibility to justify an option other than the ones proposed
- **Module II - Entrepreneurial skills** - 12 questions, plus another 6 questions through which respondents can more clearly justify their choices
- **Module III - Financing** - 4 multiple-choice questions
- **Module IV - Partnership in the development of rural cultural tourism** - 2 multiple choice questions
- **Module V- Local development opportunities** - 3 multiple choice questions, plus added questions by which respondents can justify their answers
- **Demo-economic module** - 11 questions

Asked which destination they thought best suited for the built asset they own, the respondents indicated the following:

- an integrated farm destination (accommodation + meals), to which are added activities specific to country life (plant cultivation, animal husbandry, bread baking, pottery, etc.) – 27% of respondents;
- a restored house, used for tourist accommodation services in rural areas (traditional peasant house) – 23%;
- a guest house for tourist accommodation and serving meals, based on traditional cuisine – 18%;
- a traditional house-museum – 18%;
- a traditional house only for cultural activities (weaving, pottery, handicrafts - 14%.

Options that potential entrepreneurs take into account in order to make known their offer of tourism products and or services:

- to include their business in the tourist network through online advertising (82%),
- the other ways of promotion are considered, perhaps, more difficult to access and more expensive from a financial point of view (using a travel agency that promotes the location through tourist packages, using its own website that presets tourist offers and services that can be purchased online, setting up a local association of owners of traditional houses)

Asked whether the restoration of traditional houses could be a source of income for both owners and the rural community:

- half of the respondents considered that the restoration of traditional houses can be a source of income for everyone, increasing the attractiveness of the area and boosting local economic development<
- other 45% of respondents were not very sure of this, and
- the remaining 5% stated that only to a small extent the restoration of traditional houses in the area can help them in any way to develop a business.

Motivations for developing a local business based on cultural heritage:

- most respondents indicated the possibility of capitalizing on local specificity (68%), which shows that potential entrepreneurs are attracted by the uniqueness of the areas covered by this project and the multitude of built cultural heritage;
- the financial gain also taken into account (27%), but it is not an element that defines the path of a start-up business;
- the need for independence (5 %).

Asked about how they intend to develop a business for valorizing the rural cultural heritage:

- most respondents pointed out that they are interested in developing such a business on their own or through partnerships with private entrepreneurs;
- fewer mentioned the partnerships with local authorities, which can underline the relative lack of trust in state institutions and the negative perception on bureaucracy

Factors that can stimulate the consumption of products and services associated with cultural heritage:

The majority of respondents stressed the great importance of:

- creating diversified and attractive offers for tourists;
- the involvement of local actors in creating a regional network;
- developing partnerships with other providers of complementary products and services (information centers, resource centers, etc.)

- Entrepreneurial models that will result from the analysis of the FINAL results of the questionnaires should highlight the innovation potential of local entrepreneurs as a condition for success in the development of local tourism and in raising the level of well-being.
- The approach is justified by identifying the profile of geographical areas, the profile of local entrepreneurs, and the role of social and cultural factors on the development of new models of rural entrepreneurship.

- In other words, one can start from an "overview", which goes towards the individualization of cultural heritage as an entrepreneurial goal.
- In the entrepreneurial sphere we can also discuss the predictive models that are based on the concept of innovation and interconnectivity between factors from the external or internal entrepreneurial environment.

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Thank you for your attention!