

NATURE TOURISM & INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

According to the Cyprus Strategic Tourism Plan 2003-2010, Nature and Rural Tourism are priority special interest products which capitalise on the cultural and environmental diversity of the island which contribute towards the revitalisation of rural areas. The Cyprus Tourism Organisation has invested in projects and initiatives in order to develop an attractive and integrated rural tourism experience:

- Development of traditional rural tourism accommodation establishments, taverns and other ancillary rural initiatives. More than 100 traditional houses with a total capacity of around 800 beds in 40 villages are operating. A great number of those are located in mountainous-forested areas and they provide opportunities for activities in forest recreation facilities and nature tourism special interests.
- Design of a Network of 72 Nature Trails and the creation of the Cyprus section of the European Long Distance Path E4, with a total length of 539 kms, that stretches from the south-east to the west coast of Cyprus, traversing through the Troodos mountain range and rural areas of enhanced natural beauty and high ecological, historic, archaeological, cultural and scientific value.
- Development of a Network of 8 Wine Routes, complete with signage, design of a wine guidebook and interactive electronic maps.
- Development of 30 Religious Routes in rural areas and design of a guide.
- Development of a Network of “Cycling Routes” in the Troodos forest area, complete with road surface marking, signage, area maps and guide.
- Development of Environmental Information Centre, Picnic and Camping sites and other recreational facilities in rural and forested areas.
- Development of Special Interest Activities such as Birdwatching, Skiing, etc

The Cyprus Tourism Organisation has successfully implemented the European program “European Destinations of Excellence” and selected the rural region of Troodos as “Best Emerging Rural Destination – Cyprus 2007”, one of the 10 European winners.

Key Words

3-5 keywords: Nature Tourism, Rural Tourism, Rural Recreation Activities

Key References

Cyprus Rural Tourism Program, Nature Tourism Program, Rural Development Program co-financed by Structural & Rural Development Funds