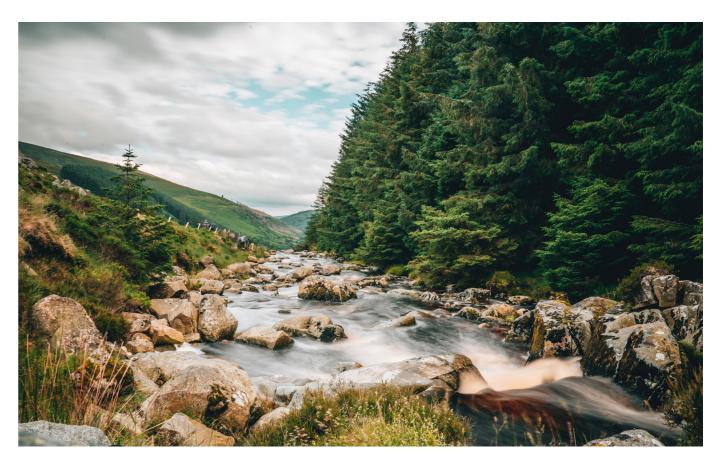UCHELDIROEDD ARFORDIROL

COASTAL UPLANDS

CEANTAIR SHLÉIBHE COIS CÓSTA

Start-up or *enhance* your regenerative tourism business or community project.

Introduction

This support handbook is designed for community groups and micro-entrepreneurs who would like to start up or enhance their tourism business. The handbook explores the regenerative tourism approach and the 10 core steps to project success, covering key topics such as revenue models, marketing and circular design thinking. At the end of the handbook, you will be invited to complete an action plan for your business or community project. This will help you to develop a clear strategy and identify key milestones for success over the next 6 months and 5 years. We encourage you to complete the activities within this handbook to get the most out of the exercises.

This handbook is based on the Regenerative Tourism Programme for Microenterprise and Community Groups run as part of CUPHAT (Coastal Uplands: Heritage and Tourism), a project funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme. CUPHAT showcases the natural and cultural heritage of four coastal upland areas in Ireland (Wicklow and Blackstairs Mountains) and Wales (Cambrian and Preseli Mountains) to increase sustainable forms of tourism within them, thus leading to the creation of more sustainable livelihoods, communities and environments.

CUPHAT worked with a range of community, local and national stakeholders from Wales and Ireland, with Aberystwyth University leading the project, and working in partnership with University College Dublin and the Dyfed Archaeological Trust. The Regenerative Tourism programme was delivered in collaboration with UpThink Innovation Agency (Ireland) and Menter a Busnes (Wales).

Regenerative tourism

Through this handbook, you will explore ways to start up or enhance your regenerative tourism microenterprise or community project by following 10 key steps to success. The action plan template at the end of this booklet can be used to develop a robust plan for your business or community project to increase revenue, discover new customers or beneficiaries and create circular products and services.

What is regenerative tourism?

The idea of local communities moving towards a regenerative tourism approach has been gaining ground over the last 2-3 years, particularly in the wake of Covid-19, the mounting climate crisis, and an increasing realisation that the mainstream model of tourism needs to change. While no concrete definition yet exists, at the most fundamental level, regenerative tourism aims to go beyond sustainable tourism. Whereas sustainable tourism can be criticised for just seeking to 'sustain' communities and places, regenerative tourism seeks more actively to regenerate places; in terms of their economy, services, cultures, and environments. It is also something that differs in its emphasis and goals, depending on place: local community members and businesses must define regenerative tourism for their specific area, inviting responsible tourists who share similar values, such as wanting to respect and enjoy surrounding natural landscapes, to engage with and give back to local communities and the places they visit. A Guidance Document to Support Regenerative Tourism was produced by CUPHAT for communities, tourism agencies and other stakeholders interested in learning more about this approach and how it was piloted through the project. The Guidance Document can be accessed here.

This podcast, released by Business News Wales, entitled, 'Is regenerative tourism the future for rural Wales?', brings together Professor Michael Woods and Dr Mandy Talbot of Aberystwyth University, as well as Dafydd Wyn Morgan of the Cambrian Mountains Initiative. In it, Professor Woods describes regenerative tourism as: *"Tourism that puts more into an area than it takes out. It goes beyond sustainable tourism – which is about trying to limit the damage from tourism, to keep things as they are. Regenerative tourism goes beyond that. It's not only just about being more environmentally sensitive in terms of how it's practised - about controlling some of the excess of tourism. It's about how we can use tourism for good to drive environmental regeneration, economic regeneration, social regeneration – supporting communities, and cultural regeneration as well."*

For many communities, there is great potential to build an alternative model of regenerative tourism that draws on an area's cultural and natural heritage to effect positive economic, social, cultural and environmental change. The term 'heritage' refers to everything that we have inherited from previous generations. This inheritance can be both tangible and intangible, and it is reflected in both our natural and in our built environments". (South Dublin County Council, 2022, p.78)

Natural heritage refers to, "natural features, geological and physiographical formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation, or natural beauty." (UNESCO, Online)

The Wicklow, Blackstairs, Preseli and Cambrian Mountains share a similar geomorphology and geology (e.g. glaciated landscapes), and flora and fauna. This upland context has played a role, alongside other factors, in influencing the development of shared forms of cultural heritage such as common agricultural practices, (e.g. sheep rearing adapted to upland environments) and collective land tenure systems, mining industry, place-names and native languages.

Cultural heritage is the legacy of cultural resources and intangible attributes of a group or society that have been inherited from past generations, including traditional song, dance, music, crafts, festivals, sports and folklore, among other things. These are, "the human elements of our heritage which have built up over generations and which give us a sense of shared identity". (South Dublin County Council 2022, p.82) The coastal upland regions across Ireland and Wales share some common aspects of history and heritage, from the neolithic to the present, including neolithic and bronze age sites, early Christian heritages, Celtic cultural links, landholding practices and other historic evidence.

However, for the CUPHAT project it was also important to recognise the vibrant, evolving and often contested nature of contemporary heritage in the communities it worked with and to avoid tendencies to suggest that these were somehow static places or relics of the past.

Natural and cultural heritage creates diverse forms of value (economic, social, cultural, environmental) that can be integrated into your offering, whether it forms elements of your storytelling for your community project or is integrated into your microenterprise's supply chain.

10 steps to success

The sections that follow offer a step-by-step road map and the core building blocks to achieving clearly-defined business or community project goals. By following the Handbook and activities throughout you will be able develop a robust Action Plan for implementation, identifying key challenges, barriers, opportunities, metrics for success and approaches to expanding your network and sphere of influence. This will also help you to develop a clear strategy and identify key milestones for success over the next 6 months and 3-5 years. We encourage you to complete the activities within this handbook to get the most out of the exercises.

Define the problem you are solving, your *purpose* and your *why*.

1. Articulate your value proposition

It is essential that you develop a clear understanding of the unique problem that your business or project is solving. This way, you can define your value proposition to grow your market or enhance your community project. A value proposition is a clear statement that explains the aims of your business or community succinctly to your customers, beneficiaries, potential funders and partners.

You can iterate your value proposition based on feedback from your customers or beneficiaries which will enhance its efficacy. This is an example of user-centred research. User-centre research helps you gain empathy for the people you are designing your offering for.

For instance, in the circular economy where, "materials never become waste and nature is regenerated...products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting" (Ellen McArthur Foundation, Online). You are not only designing for a customer or user, but also for a range of people who

Activity: Define your value proposition

Our [product/ service/ offering?] ___ help(s) [which customer/ beneficiary segment?] ___ who wants to [get what problem solved?] ___ by [your own verb, e.g. reducing, avoiding] ___ and [your own verb, e.g. increasing, enabling] ___ [you can add], Unlike [competing value proposition]
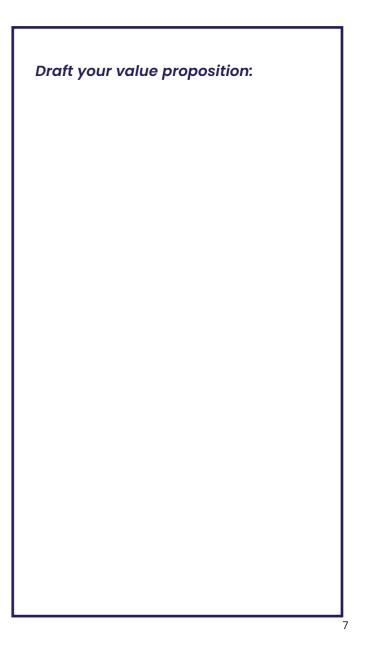
may sit within your extended value chain. User-centred research will help gain a better understanding of what's important to people each step of the way for the product or service you are creating.

Start with your why

It is important to reflect on the challenges in your local area to define a problem worth solving and identify the purpose of your community project or business.

Purpose defines the reason behind your actions. In this video, Simon Sinek encourages you to "start with why".What is your business or community project's 'why'?

Draft your value proposition:

Market research

2. Who are your customers & beneficiaries?

In this current 'information age' of the digital revolution, "Google handles more than 40,000 searches per second" (The Guardian, 2019). Rather terrifyingly, "The average person is now estimated to encounter between 6,000 to 10,000 ads every single day" (Carr, 2021). Researchers predict that we are swiftly entering the 'experience age' of artificial intelligence, chatbots and dynamic conversation flows. We are confronted with vast quantities of information from social media, TV, radio, podcasts, billboards, magazines and websites. The information we consume shapes how we think, feel, the values we hold and the narratives we live by. For microenterprises and communities, it is becoming increasingly difficult to stand out in such a crowded and chaotic playing field.

Marketing is broader than advertising. Marketing creates value, by channelling flows of information about products and services between organisations, customers and stakeholders. Effective marketing captures feedback between customers,

beneficiaries and stakeholders about how products and services should be iterated and enhanced. There are a number of frameworks that you can refer to when you are thinking about creating your brand. An important one is the focus on the "four Ps":

- **Product:** The core product or service that you offer.
- **Price:** The cost of that product or service (or if it is a free service).
- **Promotion:** Targeted and tailored advertising for your customers or beneficiaries.
- **Place:** Where your customers or beneficiaries engage with your product or service.

These kinds of frameworks can guide how you develop your marketing strategy.

Customers and beneficiaries

It is important to differentiate between your customer or beneficiary segments to communicate clearly with a range of these groups. Customer segmentation, "is the practice of dividing a customer base into groups of individuals that are similar in specific ways relevant to marketing, such as age, gender, interests, and spending habits" (Cronin, n.d.). Effective marketers recognise the importance of understanding the values of customers or beneficiaries.

Market research & testing

In order to tell an effective story that communicates your 'why', you need to find out the following information:

- What are your customers'/ beneficiaries' values?
- What are your customers'/ beneficiaries' demographics?
- What are the key ways that they access information?

Market research is critical to test that your assumptions about your customers and beneficiaries, and what they value, are correct.

Reflective activity

- Who do you solve a problem for?
- Who are your customers/ beneficiaries?
- Why would they buy/ engage with your solution?
- What is the experience they want?
- What are your customer/ beneficiary segments?
- What is wrong with the current solutions – and competitors?

Draft your reflections:

Brand Design

How to communicate with your market through brand design

Brands are more than logos. Logos are powerful, because they are symbols that tell an organisation's story, yet they are only one aspect of a brand's visual identity. A brand's visual identity presents an organisation's values. It creates consistency in communication across a range of marketing channels, including printed and digital media. Brand identities offer a clear visual language and tone of voice. Brand guidelines form the basis of a brand's identity. This includes colour palettes, tone of voice, photography styles and guidelines, illustrations style and guidelines.

Developing brand guidelines is vital to your brand's success. Guidelines should visually indicate what your brand looks like across a range of digital and printed media. Review the Wild Atlantic Way brand guidelines, Ireland's Ancient East brand toolkit, and Cambrian Mountains Initiative brand guidelines, as examples of how brand guidelines are designed to be picked up by any designer to tell visual stories across a range of digital and printed media streams. Read this article, 'One thing you must get right when building a brand' for further information.

Creating brand guidelines

There are two approaches you can take to develop brand guidelines. Research graphic designers with visual portfolios that resonate with you and your audience and clearly state your value proposition to them and provide information about your audience demographics and values. If you would like to create your own visual brand guidelines, it is good to start by researching similar brands that speak to your audience:

- What visual language do they use?
- How have they used type?
- How have they incorporated photography and illustration?
- How have they created consistent marketing across a range of digital and printed media?

Collaborating with designers

It takes years to develop effective graphic design and photography skills, and once you clearly know your audience and brand values, it is a worthwhile investment to seek a professional graphic designer to develop a strong visual brand identity for your microenterprise or community project.

Creating heritage brands

Heritage brands tell stories through their visual language. This design team creates visual stories for museums rooted in heritage. Designs can be effective when they combine history with a sense of the modern world or living heritage through visual storytelling.

Social media

Social media plays a key role in marketing and advertising today. Social media platforms provide immediate and constant feedback and connection with customers and beneficiaries. Social media can bring many opportunities for businesses, but it also poses risks in the form of negative reviews and feedback, and can also feel daunting in terms of where to begin. Brand integrity and a brand's promise is critical for your brand's success in today's world. FutureLearn hosts free social media training and digital marketing courses. In Ireland, the Local Enterprise Office (for example, see this link), and in Wales, Business Wales also provide social media training and other marketing and brand-related training for your microenterprise and community project.

Storytelling Principles

It is important to ensure that your brand tells a story that builds on your brands values. To create a compelling visual story, refer to the following principles:

- **Create a central image:** This is a visual image that builds on your why. For example, if your start-up plan is to guide hillwalking tours - your why might be related to wellbeing, mindfulness and a connection to nature; your central image will visually present this through imagery of nature and the human form engaging with it.
- **Create a clear structure:** Crafting a narrative arc and a clear structure for your story is critical."On a more granular level, a successful story will start with an inciting incident, lead into rising action, build to a climax and ultimately settle into a satisfying resolution".
- **Connect with your audience:** Through active listening to understand their values, motivations and interests.
- **Research:** Reflect on effective storytellers that you know and brands that resonate with you and why.

3. Your solution & offering – what problem do you want to solve?

What is design thinking?

Design thinking involves thinking deeply about the people and systems you are designing for. The first step of design thinking is empathising with your audience to define the problem. The next steps are ideating (creating ideas) and prototyping, creating solutions to approach ways to solve the problem. The final steps are responding to feedback and iterating designs.

What is circular design thinking?

Circular design moves away from a linear model of production, to a circular one, addressing waste and reducing loss across the value chain, and/ or striving to engage with key stakeholders who do. It is essential that organisations and communities implement business or social models that build longevity into the design of products and services and build in maintenance/ repair, reuse and recycling. Integrating impact into the early stages of design is vital for sustainability of products, services, and places. In addition to this, financial investments are often 'locked-in' once

production has started, therefore costs often increase dramatically if sustainability is addressed only after production has started. Circular design ensures that there is planning before acting. Designers need to consider both the energy required to create the product, service or project and also to maintain it all once in use. When designing a product or service, it is important to consider the full life cycle from the start. Life cycle thinking may feel at odds because it challenges our conventional practices in terms of product or services design, which typically prioritise reducing upfront costs. It is important to reflect on how a product or service can be reused in the future or recycled. Costs can often be reduced within later stages of the value chain.

Bluestone Brewery in Pembrokeshire, Wales is an example of a microenterprise that embeds circular design into their operations. For example, they send out their beer, "in compostable cardboard moulds, no dividers or extra packaging, just a cardboard box with a 12 bottle mould inside and then sealed with paper tape" to eliminate waste (Bluestone Brewery, 2023).

4. Connect with your partners & stakeholders – who are they? How do you collaborate?

Communities connect through shared values and can be defined by geographical and administrative regions, but also in terms of social networks and connections which extend beyond physical borders. Rural communities can thrive by co-creating and co-designing solutions to the challenges they face. Collaborations between business, policy-makers and community can create new opportunities. It is important to reflect on the role of policy as a lever for change. By collaborating with policy makers, you can address issues associated with the wider infrastructure of your local community (Moore-Cherry et al., 2022). There is scope for more effective, partnership-based approaches with policy makers and leaders to overcome this. This includes defining problems and overcoming barriers by seeking collective (and potentially larger scale) funding opportunities.

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who can affect or are affected by your organisation, strategy or project. They can be internal or external, and they can be at senior or junior levels. A stakeholder has a stake in your company's or community

group's success and an incentive for your products, services or projects to succeed. They can be your employees, volunteers, investors, board members, or business partners who rely on your success to keep the supply chain or social enterprise going. The roles of stakeholders differ between businesses and community groups, depending on the rules and responsibilities laid out at the founding of your business or organisation and as your focus and project activities evolve. To design products, services and projects that apply or link to circular principles and create value across the value chain, it is important to move towards a 'network' approach and reflect on all stakeholders within a product, service or project's life cycle (University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, 2020). Participatory and cooperative design, explores collaborative ways of overcoming challenges and starts with a process called stakeholder mapping. This ensures that you actively consider and involve all stakeholders in the design process - for example, customers, employees, beneficiaries and local community members - to ensure that the end product, service, or project aligns with stakeholder values and needs.

Stakeholder Analysis:

- Identify and list your stakeholders.
- Determine who the individuals are within the organisations so you can target them.
- Are they advocates/supporters (i.e. could be ambassadors)?
- Are they neutral? (i.e. hence could they be leveraged?)

Partnership Models

Partnerships are collaborations between two or more parties that aim to reach and deliver mutually beneficial outcomes. By working together, partners can often achieve the outcomes they seek more effectively than as a single party working in isolation. However, it is important to acknowledge that partnerships often require extensive commitment and resources, including time and trust. It is essential to demonstrate how your project will build effective partnerships and collaborations with other organisations, businesses, and communities, especially for the success of funding applications. Identify how these partnerships will support the growth and development of the sustainable and regenerative tourism industry in your area and how they will contribute to the long-term success of your project.

Partnerships are defined by the intention behind the collaboration and the structure of relationships to meet collective aims. When collaborating as a partnership, it is good to ensure that there is consistency used between the language of the two (or more) collaborating parties. Similarly, there needs to be an alignment of values, shared goals and aims for the collaboration to work. Partnerships should exist to achieve a shared objective or project.

Partnership resources

The Partnering Initiative (TPI) is a global NGO dedicated to promoting partnership for a prosperous and sustainable future. TPI has been a pioneer in approaches to multi-stakeholder collaboration, and has produced this toolkit.

According to the OECD, "Hundreds of partnerships have been formed worldwide during the past two decades. Some of them lasted only a short period; others have been operating a long time. Some concentrate on narrow local targets while others ambitiously try to coordinate broad policy areas in large regions where millions of people live and work. There are partnerships primarily oriented towards business circles and others focused on labour market or social issues" (Brandstetter et al., 2006, p.3).

Review this resource for a practical guide exploring concrete aspects of partnership work, with both successful and not so successful examples.

5. Know your competitors or alternative providers – what is your competitor's core value proposition?

Review similar offerings in your space

Your competitive analysis, "is a statement of your business strategy and how it relates to the competition. The purpose of a competitive analysis is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors in your market to allow you to identify and articulate how your business is significantly different. You do not want to create another 'me too' service as these business models are not sustainable in the longer term" (Cronin, n.d.) By examining similar offerings in your space, this "helps you identify your product's unique value proposition and what makes your product different from the competitors" (Cronin, n.d.).

Competitors/ similar offerings

- Who are your competitors in competition with? How are they significantly different from their competitors?
- Who are they? (Who is behind the team?)
- What is their revenue model? (Will they make money OR What impact will they have?)
- What insights did they learn?
- What's their mindset about innovation and growth?

6. Value your team – who are your team and what are their roles?

7. Access funding and develop your revenue model – what is your revenue model?

What is a revenue model?

A revenue model demonstrates how your microenterprise or community group makes money through the products and services you provide. It is the strategy of managing your microenterprise's revenue streams and the resources required for each of these revenue streams. A start-up in the circular economy, for instance, is often focused on reducing waste and conserving resources by designing products and processes that minimise waste and maximise the use of resources. Here are some revenue models that a start-up in the circular economy can use:

Subscription-based Model: This offers a product or a service on a subscription basis. For example, a company that provides a service to collect and recycle household waste can charge a monthly fee for its services. To read about some new subscription-based models being adopted in regenerative and sustainable tourism, see this article on travel industry news site Skift.

- **Product sales:** This involves selling products designed and manufactured using circular principles, such as upcycling, recycled materials or biodegradable products. Read about IRD Duhallow Furniture Revamp, a business that provides furniture restoration and upcycling services and sales in County Cork.
- **Service fees:** This can involve providing services such as repair, refurbishment, and reuse, and charging fees for these services.
- **Licensing and royalties:** A start-up can licence its intellectual property and technology to other companies and receive royalties for its use.
- **Impact investment:** This involves attracting investment from individuals and organisations that are interested in supporting the circular economy and are willing to invest in exchange for a financial return.

The revenue model that is most effective for a start-up or established microenterprise will depend on factors such as the type of products or services offered, the target audience, and the overall mission of the organisation (Cronin, n.d.).

Social Enterprise Revenue Models

A social enterprise is an enterprise whose key aim is to generate a social or environmental impact, not maximise profit for owners or shareholders (Government of Ireland, 2019). Financial surpluses are reinvested into social or environmental objectives that benefit the wider community. Social enterprises across Ireland and Wales include both community-based enterprises as well as larger-scale ones. The revenue model for a social enterprise may be a worthwhile one for community groups to explore, and refers to the way in which the organisation generates income to both sustain its operations as well as achieve its environmental and societal goals. It is important to recognise that while social enterprises are gaining recognition and support from policy and funding bodies, they can still find it challenging to acquire support that other types of enterprises may access more easily due to social/environmental impact being their main focus (Department of Rural and Community Development, 2019).

There are several revenue models that can be adopted as a social enterprise, including:

- **Direct Sales:** This involves selling goods or services directly to customers, much like a traditional business. An example would be a social enterprise that sells eco-friendly products or community services, including classes or workshops. Native Events, for example, organises sustainable events, including shows and markets, showcasing Irish innovations in crafts and sustainability. They have developed waste reduction strategies, toolkits and services to enable the running of clean and green events.
- **Grants and donations:** Some social enterprises rely on funding from foundations, governments, or other organisations to support their mission. See the list of social enterprise awardees (2022) of Rethink Ireland's Social Enterprise Development Fund.
- **Impact investment:** Social enterprises can attract investment from individuals or organisations that want to support their mission while also earning a financial return.
- **Subscription-based model:** Generate revenue by offering premium content or services to customers in exchange for a recurring fee like a subscription.
- **Social impact bonds:** In this model, the government or a philanthropic organisation pays for the delivery of social impact outcomes, and the social enterprise is paid based on the success of these outcomes.
- **Advertising:** Social enterprises that have a large audience or user base can generate revenue through advertising, by offering companies a platform to reach their target.

Social enterprises can use a combination of these models to generate revenue and support their vision. The most effective revenue model for a social enterprise will depend on factors including its target audience, the products or services offered, and the mission of the organisation or community.

Potential benefits of developing a social enterprise model

- **Hire paid staff:** Income generating social enterprise may enable the hiring of paid staff which can help spread the workload and reduce the burden on volunteers. This can also help to ensure that there is a consistent and dedicated group of people working on the social enterprise's mission.
- Develop partnerships with businesses and organisations: Developing partnerships with businesses and organisations can provide additional resources, such as financial support, in-kind donations, route to markets and / or mentoring.
- Implement a hybrid model: A hybrid model can involve combining paid staff with volunteer support. This can provide a balance between the dedication and commitment of volunteers and the consistency and reliability of paid staff.
- Foster a culture of sustainability and circularity: Both in terms of the social enterprise's impact and in terms of the well-being of its volunteers. This can help reduce the risk of volunteer burnout and ensure the long-term success of the organisation.

Creating a longer-term sustainable revenue model for your microenterprise or community project

Of course, one of the most important things required for a successful project is to ensure the financial health of your business or community group. Here is where creating a sustainable revenue model is very helpful. This will give you a necessary understanding of your cash flow and requirements. A sustainable revenue module will also allow you to be able to demonstrate to any potential investors and to your board how you plan to earn revenue and/ or raise funding to sustain your business or organisation. One of the keys to creating a successful revenue model is through forecasting, that is, projecting revenue estimates, even if you're currently in a pre-revenue stage. Forecasting is an ongoing process that will help you to manage your finances and help you to grow.

8. Use impact metrics to measure your impact

It is important to integrate impact into the heart of your business or community model. This is because currently, the majority of funders will want to clearly see how you will demonstrate the impact you will create through your project through metrics. Increasingly, these impacts are related to measurable or demonstrable positive environmental/ climate and social effects. Proposed projects need to define their metrics (e.g. number of customers, users, beneficiaries, products type/ lines, services, etc).

Community impact: Explain how your project will benefit the local community and what impact it will have on the local economy or environment. Show how your project will support local livelihoods, small businesses and create jobs, or how it will help to preserve and promote local heritage and culture. This guide from The Wheel, is a good resource for knowing and showing your outcomes and impacts.

Sustainable and regenerative tourism: Highlight the sustainable and regenerative tourism practices you will adopt, such as reducing waste and carbon emissions, preserving or enhancing local ecosystems, biodiversity and supporting local communities. Explain how your project will contribute to the development of sustainable and regenerative tourism.

Demystifying funding applications

When seeking funding, it is crucial to recognise the language, terminology and impact measurement being used in specific funding applications and by the funders themselves.
Here are some guidelines to help demystify the language:

- **Research the funder:** Before applying for funding, research the funder and the funding program you're interested in. Look at their website and read through their funding guidelines and eligibility criteria to get a better understanding of what they're looking for, whether you match this, and how they evaluate funding applications.
- **Read past funding announcements:** Review past funding announcements and read through the descriptions of funded projects. This can help you understand the type of language and terminology used by the funder and what they consider to be successful projects. If the list of projects or businesses are publicised, consider reaching out to successful awardees and asking if they'd be willing to share their experience with you. Use clear, concise, non-jargon language: When writing your funding application, use clear, concise language and avoid jargon or technical terms that may not be easily understood by the funder. Instead, focus on clearly communicating the goals and objectives of your project and show how it aligns with the funder's priorities.
- **Ask for clarification:** If you're unsure about a term or phrase used in the funding guidelines, don't be afraid to reach out to the funder for clarification.

9. Create a pitch

Pitching is an incredibly important skill to learn and refine to help you win funding applications, if a live or video presentation is requested. You are more likely to have success with funding applications if you meet the funder's goals, your idea is clear, you articulate the problems and pain points you are solving and demonstrate how you will generate impact for the funder.

Pitching principles are to tell a compelling story that highlights the key elements of your project and demonstrates not only its longer-term viability but also the value to both the local community and the broader heritage tourism industry.

The key elements to consider when pitching/ telling your story include:

- Value Proposition: What is the problem you are solving?
- How do you create gains or eliminate pain points for your customer or beneficiary?
- Keep this simple (avoid jargon).

This is also called your Unique Selling Proposition (USP). What sets your project apart from others and why is it worth funding? You need to highlight your project's USP and explain how it will contribute to the growth and development of the local tourism industry and your local community.

- Who is your target market and what is the size of this market?
- Who are you selling/ providing your offering to?
- Which sector? Be specific.
- Which segment of the market are you selling/ providing your offering to?
- What do you offer to solve the problem – in simple, clear language?
- Do not go into excruciating detail. Avoid jargon.
- Who are you? Who is behind the team?
- What makes you different as a team?
- Significant achievements?
- Who are your competitors/ those who offer a similar product or service?
- Simply being in industry with competitors is not enough.
- You need to effectively communicate how you are significantly different.
- Financials / Revenue
- What is your revenue model?
- What are your assumptions?
- What's your funding model?

Financial viability: Show how your project is financially viable and how you will secure funding for its continued operation. Explain your revenue generation strategy, your marketing plan, and your long-term vision for the project.

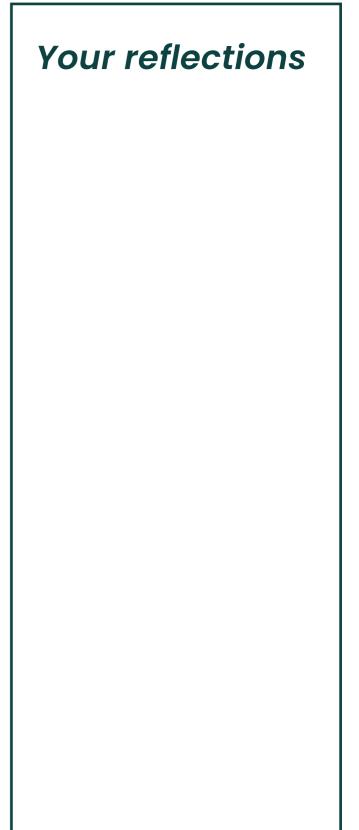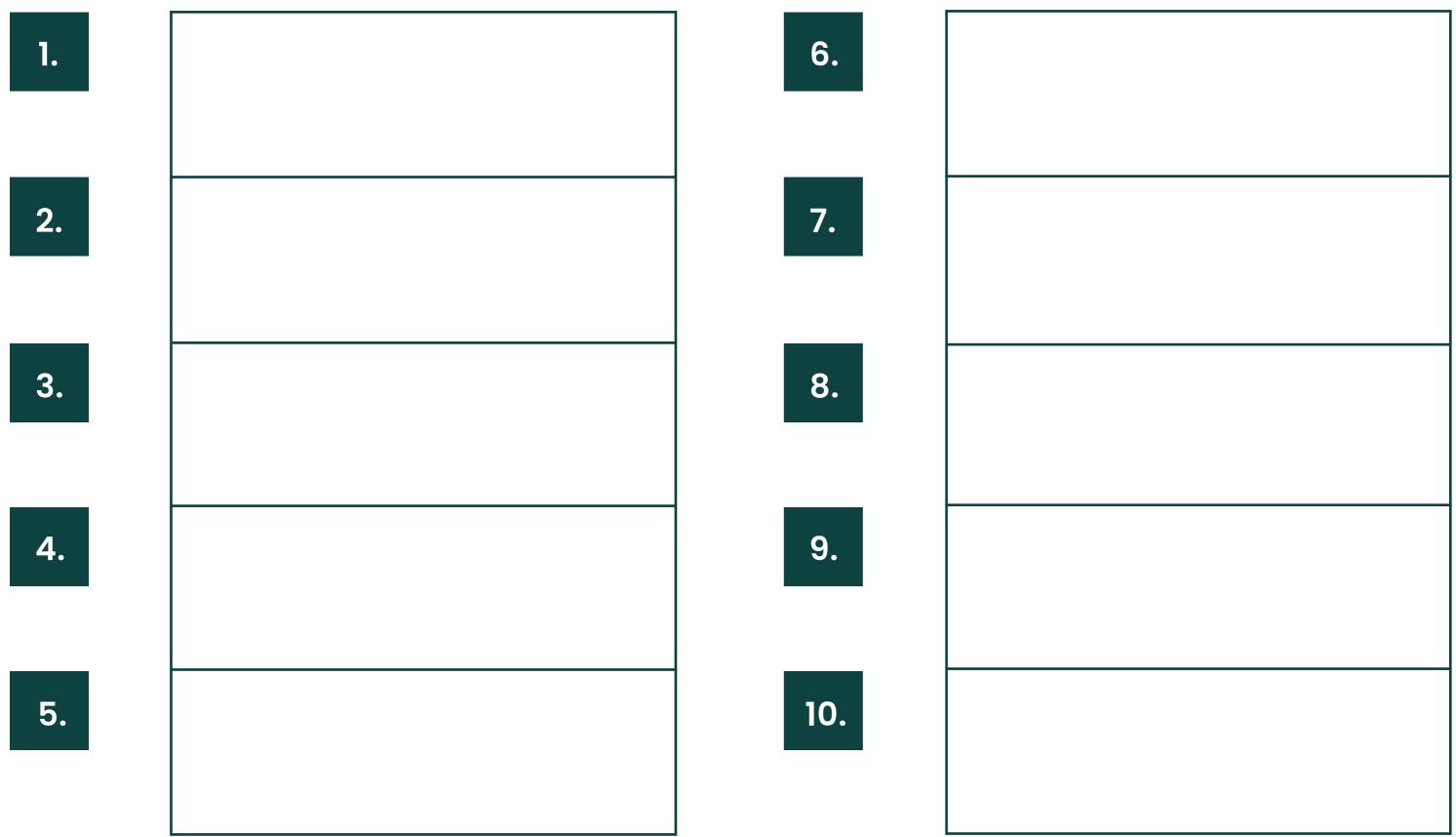|	
1. Your *why*	*Define your purpose, values, beliefs and impact*
2. Value	*What is the problem to solve?*
3. The market	*For whom is it relevant?* *Define your target customers/beneficiaries?*
4. The solution	*What do you offer to solve the problem?* *(Include benefits offered? If you eliminate pain, create a gain or an experience?)*
5. Competitors	*Who are your competitors (alternative providers)?* *Identify your competitors' core value proposition* *How are you significantly different from competitors?*
6. Stakeholders	*Who are your stakeholders?* *Who are your partners?*
7. Team	*Who are you?* *What's your story?* *Who is behind the team?*
8. Revenue	*What is the revenue model?* *Who will pay you for your product/services?* *How will you make money (enterprise) or/ raise capital?* *Identify and evaluate sources* *Plan of access to funding*
9. Impact	*What's the impact of solving this problem? It could include economic, environmental, societal and/or governance/policy impacts e.g., creating jobs, building communities/ regions, reducing emissions, circularity.*
10. Goals	*What are your goals for the next 6 months?* *What are your goals for the next 3-5 years?*

10. Action Plan

What are your 6 month milestones? What are your 3-5 year goals?

Your reflections

Now that you've completed all the reading material and exercises, you are ready to put your learning into action! The final task is to put everything together in your business or community project Action Plan. The Action Plan requires that you sit down and reflect on each question and try and formulate your response as clearly and simply as possible. Point form is fine; no essays are needed! In addition, you need to consider and identify your short term (immediate to next six months) and long-term (3-5 years) goals. By clarifying what these are now, it will help you ensure that you continue to build towards that direction and reduce the chances of moving off course. Of course, goals, ideas, plans, partnerships and so on do change. Your Action Plan is meant to be iterated as these changes take place. But having these 10 steps as a road map and guide, will help you keep you moving in the right direction for project success. It may also be a useful tool to refer to when applying for funding or grants.

Your action plan

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