



# Farmer Handbook For Rural Tourism Ventures

2025



This handbook is designed for people who live and work in rural Georgia and are starting or considering rural tourism as part of their agricultural activity. It offers practical insights and essential steps to help develop successful tourism ventures that celebrate the unique features of their local area and preserve them for future generations

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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Tourism plays a vital role in Georgia's economic development, with over **7.8 million visitors**<sup>1</sup> contributing **15 billion** GEL in tourism revenue in 2025. The country's diverse climate, stunning landscapes and rich biodiversity create ideal conditions for tourism growth. Each year, more and more tourists visit Georgia's regions to explore the natural environment, protected areas, cultural heritage sites, historical landmarks and vibrant local communities.

Local and foreign tourists are increasingly interested in the rural areas and natural beauty, the culture of their host countries and the life and traditions of local populations. This growing demand aligns perfectly with rural tourism, which offers opportunities for authentic experiences that connect visitors to local communities. Often, rural tourism develops as small and medium-sized businesses, creating additional economic opportunities in rural areas and communities.

In recent years social media, online accommodation apps and widespread access to the internet have massively increased the potential access of entrepreneurial rural people to rural tourism markets, allowing them to advertise and arrange bookings themselves.

This handbook is designed to help rural inhabitants develop rural tourism initiatives that capitalize on local biodiversity and agricultural resources. By showcasing the unique features of their farms and surroundings, families can attract visitors and offer meaningful experiences, without compromising the environment and natural resources. It provides practical steps to build tourism businesses that are both successful and sustainable.

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<sup>1</sup> *Inbound Tourism Statistics 2025, National Statistics Office of Georgia*

# WHAT IS RURAL TOURISM

Rural tourism is a form of tourism that takes place in the countryside, offering visitors the chance to experience life outside urban areas. It typically occurs in villages, farming regions, or nature-rich landscapes where traditional ways of life are still preserved. This type of tourism includes a wide range of activities connected to agriculture, nature, local culture and rural lifestyles (*United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO](#)*).

What sets rural tourism apart is its focus on **authenticity** and **sustainability**. It has several key characteristics: it typically operates on a limited scale to preserve natural and cultural landscapes; makes use of local resources such as traditional food, crafts and festivals; is often seasonal, depending on farming cycles or natural conditions and it involves local residents in planning and benefit-sharing.

This type of tourism brings economic and social benefits to rural communities. It creates jobs, encourages the sale of local products and helps preserve cultural traditions.

In **Georgia**, sustainable rural tourism should play a growing role in regional development, especially in mountainous and agricultural areas. The country's **diverse geography, ancient traditions** and **strong agricultural heritage** make it an ideal destination for travelers seeking authentic, nature-based experiences.

Georgian rural communities offer **unique hospitality, local cuisine** and **seasonal farm activities** in beautiful landscapes that align closely with the principles of rural tourism.



# TYPES OF RURAL TOURISM

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## **AGRO-TOURISM**

Agro-tourism is a form of tourism that takes place on farms and includes the following: hosting tourists, providing meals, showcasing rural life, local culture, traditions and attractions, engaging visitors in agricultural activities, offering locally produced products and conducting other activities related to tourism and agriculture (*The Law of Georgia on Tourism, 2023*).

This approach allows guests to experience farm life firsthand and learn more about traditional farming and local food systems. Visitors can take part in daily activities such as harvesting, feeding animals, or joining cooking classes. These experiences help them better understand the daily operations of a farm and the challenges faced by farmers.

## **ECO TOURISM**

Eco tourism is a form of tourism that aims to explore, appreciate and value nature, as well as the traditional cultures and activities of a given area (*The Law of Georgia on Tourism, 2023*).

Eco-tourism in Georgia can be developed near national parks, protected areas, or natural monuments where the beauty of the local environment attracts visitors and helps guests better understand nature and local ecosystems. Eco-tourism can become a main or additional source of income for rural inhabitants.

Although eco-tourism is centered on nature and environmental protection, it often overlaps with agro-tourism, especially in rural areas. When combined, these two forms of tourism can work together to offer visitors a richer experience and bring greater benefits to local communities.

## **OTHER TYPES OF RURAL TOURISM**

In addition to Agro and Eco tourism, rural areas in Georgia can offer a wide range of tourism experiences that reflect the local way of life, nature and traditions.

### **Cultural Tourism**

Cultural tourism provides visitors with the opportunity to explore a country's diverse historical and cultural sites and museums, learn about local architecture, art and folklore and participate in festivals and various cultural events. This allows travelers to gain a deeper understanding of the nation's culture, history and traditions.

### **Adventure and Rural Sports Tourism**

Includes outdoor and physical activities such as hiking, mountain biking, horse riding, rock climbing, fishing, hunting, or camping. These activities attract active tourists who want to explore nature and enjoy traditional rural sports.

### **Wellness and Leisure Tourism**

Focuses on health, relaxation and well-being in quiet rural settings. It may include apitherapy, yoga retreats, spa treatments, herbal therapy, birdwatching, photography, or simply enjoying the calm of the natural environment.

## 2. HOW TO START RURAL TOURISM

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If you live in a village, have a house, cultivate land, have domestic animals and are involved in traditional farming, i.e. you are a farmer, or your village is located in a diverse and interesting ecological zone, this is already a good precondition for starting a rural tourism venture.

This chapter will guide you through the key steps and considerations for launching a successful rural tourism business.

### DEFINE YOUR VISION

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Before starting, it's important to define your goals and clarify what kind of tourism experience you want to offer. Ask yourself:

#### WHAT ARE YOUR PRIMARY MOTIVATIONS?

E.g. To generate additional income, attract new customers, or enhance your farm's profitability?

#### WHO ARE YOUR VISITORS?

E.g. Families, eco-travelers, cultural explorers, culinary enthusiasts, adventure seekers or digital nomads?

#### WHAT WILL YOU OFFER?

E.g. Farm stays, guided nature tours, workshops, culinary experiences or hands-on activities?

### EVALUATING YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

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Once your vision is clear, the next step is to evaluate what resources you currently have. This helps determine what's possible and what needs to be improved or developed.

#### MATERIAL RESOURCES

What infrastructure do you have? (guest rooms, bathroom, yard etc)

What is the current condition of the infrastructure?

Are any repairs or renovations needed to host visitors safely and comfortably?

Does your property have anything specific or unique which will be of interest to consumers? (Architecture, location, crops, or food)



#### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Do you have savings or access to financial resources?

Would you need a loan and how would you repay it with future tourism income?



#### HUMAN RESOURCES

Do you or your family have the skills to host tourists (hospitality, communication, foreign languages)?

If not, can you train or hire people with the right abilities?





# UNDERSTANDING YOUR RURAL SETTING

## IDENTIFYING THE UNIQUE FEATURES AND RESOURCES OF YOUR SETTLEMENT

To effectively start a rural tourism venture, it is essential to conduct a thorough assessment of not only the material resources of your farm but its unique features and resources. Ask yourself: **What makes my area special?** Begin by listing the characteristics that set your farm apart - this could include historical buildings, traditional architecture, scenic landscapes or views, proximity to cultural or natural attractions, regional products etc. Think about what activities these features can support: e.g. tours, workshops, tastings, or nature walks.

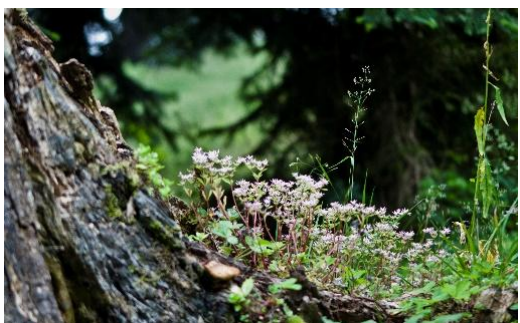
Engage family members and friends in this assessment to gain diverse perspectives on what your rural property has to offer. Understanding these strengths will help you better define offerings that highlight your farm's uniqueness and give visitors the best possible experience

## LEVERAGING LOCAL BIODIVERSITY

Local biodiversity is key for rural tourism - providing a rich environment for activities and experiences that highlight ecological heritage. Georgia's diverse landscapes are home to a remarkable variety of native plants, wildlife and habitats. Leveraging this richness can set your rural tourism offerings apart. The unique flora and fauna of your area can form the heart of memorable tours, workshops and nature-based experiences.

Remember, your local biodiversity is a valuable natural resource that you can use to create unique offerings. For rural families, this approach is more than making tourist attractions. It's about making the best use of what your land already offers, sharing its story and preserving it for future generations.

Exploring nearby protected areas is a great way to understand your rural area better. Visit the Agency of Protected Areas (APA) website to learn more about the plants, animals and habitats in your region. This can give your ideas for rural tourism - like guided nature walks, bird-watching tours, or organizing eco workshops.



If you live near a protected area, visit the Agency of Protected Areas (APA) website and explore your area's biodiversity. The site lists every protected zone in Georgia, detailing native flora and fauna, habitats, rare or endemic species and conservation status. Think: How can you use this to create unique rural tourism offerings?



[APA.GOVE.GE/  
BIODIVERSITY](https://apa.gov.ge/biodiversity)

## MAINTAINING RURAL CHARACTER

One of the main reasons tourists choose rural tourism is the chance to experience something real and different from everyday urban life. In Georgia, this means enjoying the quiet beauty of the countryside, learning about local traditions and connecting with nature and culture that hasn't been changed by modern trends. That's why keeping the authentic look and feel of your farm and village is not just important - it's essential.

Unfortunately, many rural places risk losing their character by introducing cheap, artificial renovations that make homes and guesthouses look like urban apartments. If your property looks too modern or disconnected from the local style, it loses the charm that guests came for in the first place. So, to successfully attract visitors, it is crucial to maintain the charm and character that defines your rural property and the surrounding area.

Use local, natural materials for any renovations or additions - stone, timber from native trees, traditional clay - just as generations before have done.

If you're renovating an old house, keep the original details in the old house whenever possible - windows, wooden beams, doors, even the layout. Avoid turning rural homes into modern-style apartments. Using artificial materials like plastic, faux stone, or shiny imitations is a significant mistake that detracts from the authenticity of the space.

If you're building something new, make sure it fits visually with the rest of the village. This doesn't mean avoiding comfort - it means offering it in a way that respects the place. Modern conveniences like electricity, internet and plumbing are important, but they can be installed discreetly, without altering the traditional look and feel.

Highlight the character of your space through its finishing touches. Choose handcrafted or restored furniture that reflects local heritage. Use natural fabrics instead of synthetic cloth, traditional patterns and decor inspired by your area's culture instead of mass-produced decorations. These details create a warm, inviting space and preserve the charm of your rural setting.

Another important part of preserving rural character is keeping traditional knowledge and skills alive. Georgia has a deep agricultural heritage, including ancient methods of winemaking and producing dozens of traditional regional products in each part of the country.

Visitors often appreciate learning these things, especially when they're shown in a hands-on way.

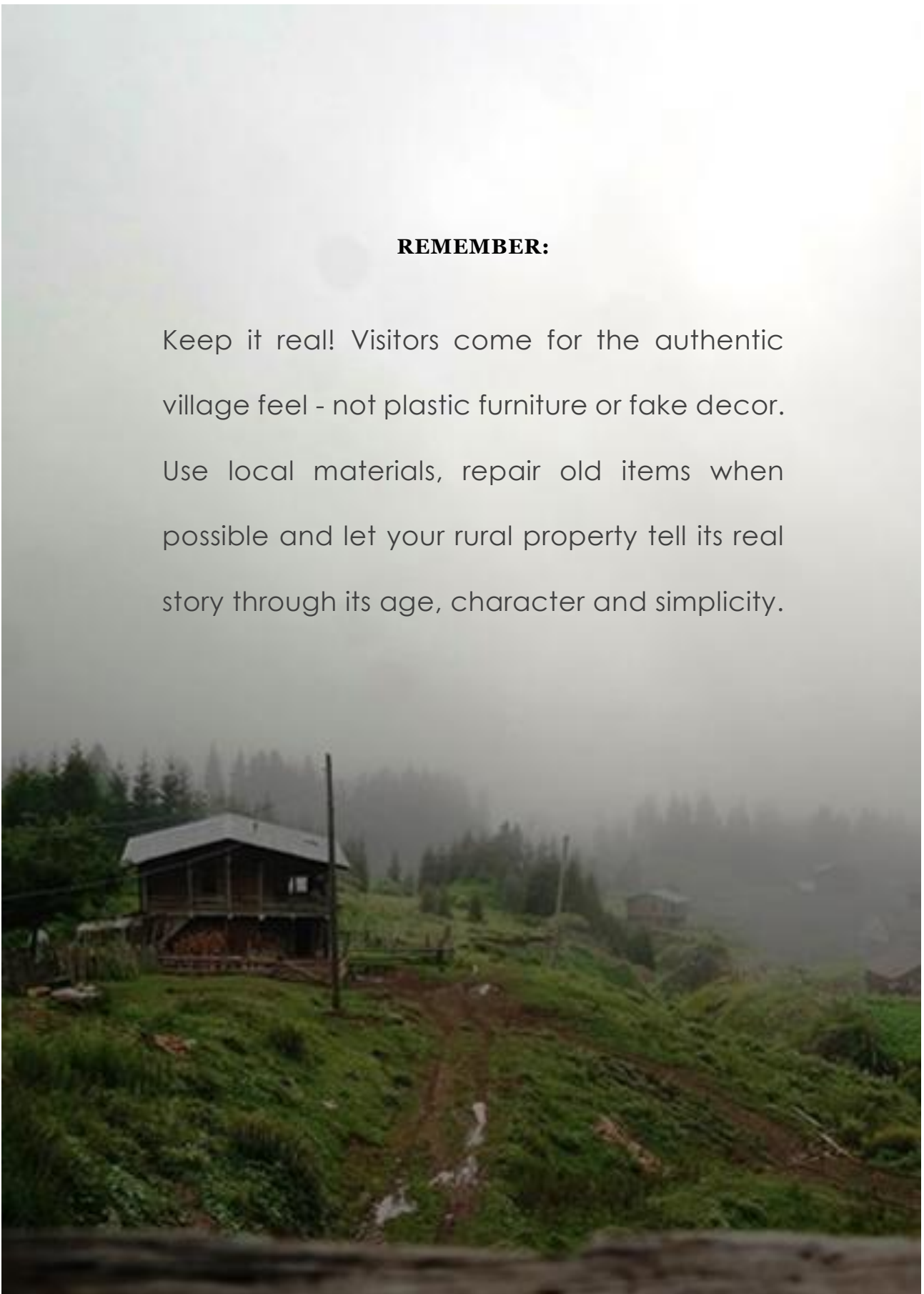
You can involve guests in making bread in a tone (clay oven), cooking traditional recipes, or helping with seasonal farm work like grape harvesting. Workshops in crafts like pottery, wool spinning, basket weaving, or making churchkhela can help keep these traditions going, adding value to the visitor experience and maintaining a strong link between heritage and daily rural life.

Finally, don't forget that **your farm and your tourism business are part of the bigger rural landscape**. What you do affects how visitors see the whole area.

Protect and respect your surroundings, by doing this you help your village remain a place where people want to return, not just visit once.

**REMEMBER:**

Keep it real! Visitors come for the authentic village feel - not plastic furniture or fake decor. Use local materials, repair old items when possible and let your rural property tell its real story through its age, character and simplicity.






### 3. PROTECTING YOUR RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Maintaining rural character is not only about what you do in your rural property, for example in a farm or guesthouse. It's also about making sure that wider development in your area - such as municipal development plans, new roads, tourism infrastructure, or large construction projects - respects your village's authenticity, nature and the well-being of local families. In some parts of Georgia, many areas have suffered from inappropriate renovations and oversized investment projects that have altered or even destroyed the architectural identity of the area that drew visitors in the first place.

As a rural resident, you and your community have the right to be informed, to participate in decision-making and to protect your environment from harmful practices. These rights help ensure that the unique charm, traditions and natural beauty of your area is not damaged by unsustainable development or overuse of natural resources.

#### YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

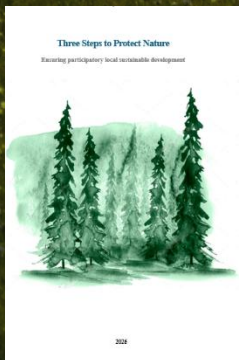
Understanding your environmental rights is the starting point for making a difference. Every person has the right to live in a healthy environment, as well as to access information and participation in decisions that affect it.

 <p><b>ASK</b></p>	 <p><b>PARTICIPATE</b></p>	 <p><b>PROTECT</b></p>
<p>ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION</p>	<p>PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING</p>	<p>ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE</p>
<p>Any citizen can request environmental information from public authorities and get a timely, complete reply. No need to justify, just ask, that's enough.</p>	<p>Any citizen has the right to be heard and contribute to decisions related to the environment, such as land, water, air, waste and natural resources.</p>	<p>Any citizen can act to protect the environment - whether by speaking out, participating in planning processes, or challenging harmful practices.</p>

Knowing environmental rights and developing strong community engagement in protecting rural authenticity and natural resources is essential for long-term sustainability. Early and active participation ensures your voice is heard before decisions are made.



To learn more about your environmental rights, public participation and how to protect your local natural resources, see the document: **Three Steps to Protect Nature** available online: [ALCP.GE/LIBRARY](http://ALCP.GE/LIBRARY)



## 4. PLANNING AND FEASIBILITY

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Before starting a rural tourism business, it's important to plan carefully and study the tourism market in your area. This will help you understand what works, what doesn't and where your farm can find its unique place in the tourism landscape. Start by asking yourself:

- ▶ **What would work well in my area? What might not?**  
Think about the strengths and limitations of your location, including the environment, traditions, accessibility and seasonal factors.
- ▶ **What are tourists looking for?**  
Consider who might want to visit your place—families, eco-tourists, cultural travelers, food lovers, etc. What kinds of experiences would they enjoy?
- ▶ **What already exists nearby?**  
Look at other rural tourism businesses in your region. What do they offer? How are they promoting themselves? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Think about how your business can offer something different or more authentic.

### CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH

Once you've reflected on your context, take a more structured look at the market:

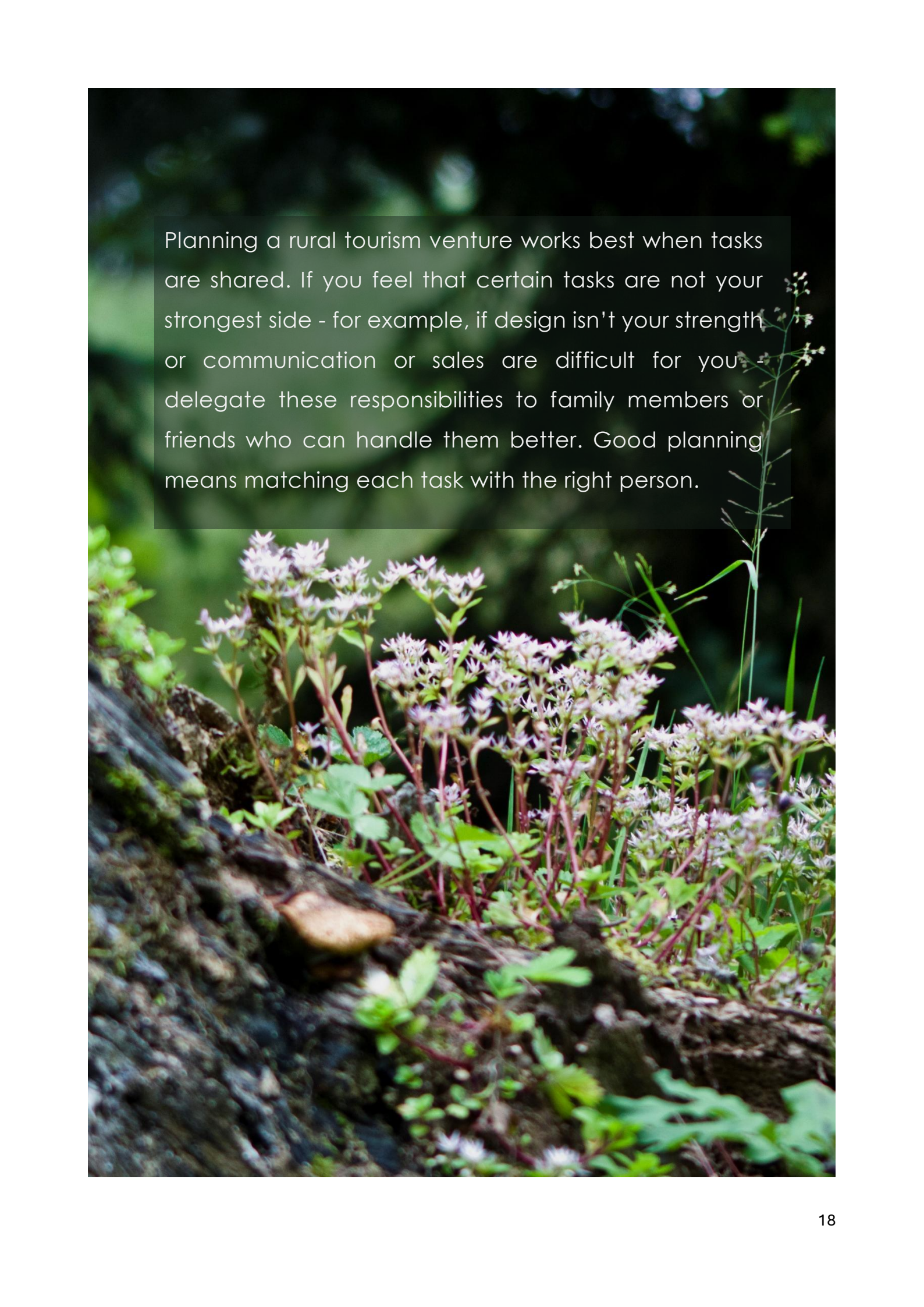
- ▶ **TARGET AUDIENCE:** Define your potential visitors: age, interests, travel habits and expectations. Understanding your audience will help you tailor your offers and marketing strategies.
- ▶ **COMPETITION:** Assess other rural tourism businesses in your region. What services do they offer and how can you differentiate your venture? Look for gaps in that you can fill in.
- ▶ **PRICE-POINT:** Research into what similar rural tourism businesses charge for comparable services or experiences. This will help you define a realistic price point that balances your costs with what visitors are willing to pay. Don't worry if you don't get it right the first time—pricing is flexible and can always be adjusted. If it's too high, you can lower it; if it's too low, you can gradually increase it as demand grows.
- ▶ **TRENDS:** Stay informed about current trends in tourism. This knowledge will help you adapt your business model to meet changing consumer preferences.

### CREATING A BUSINESS PLAN

Creating a business plan is not only useful for organizing your ideas and seeing the full picture of your tourism venture, but it also prepares you for applying for grants or loans—giving you a clear, ready-made document to present when needed. Your plan should include:

- ▶ **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** A brief overview of your business concept, goals and the unique aspects of your farm.
- ▶ **MARKET ANALYSIS:** A summary of what you learned from your research—who your target guests are, what they want and what kind of competition exists.
- ▶ **OPERATIONAL PLAN:** A description of the daily operations of your business. What activities or services will you offer? Who will help you? What equipment or spaces will you need?
- ▶ **FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS:** Estimate your startup costs, ongoing expenses and how much income you expect to generate. Even simple projections will help you see if your idea is realistic and how much investment you might need.
- ▶ **MARKETING STRATEGY:** Outline how you will promote your rural tourism offerings to attract visitors. Consider using social media, partnerships with travel agencies.

*See Annex 1: Simple Business Plan for a Rural Tourism Venture*



Planning a rural tourism venture works best when tasks are shared. If you feel that certain tasks are not your strongest side - for example, if design isn't your strength or communication or sales are difficult for you - delegate these responsibilities to family members or friends who can handle them better. Good planning means matching each task with the right person.

## 5. MARKETING

Marketing is just as important for the success of rural tourism as financial capital or the quality of services. Effective marketing helps you attract visitors, increase the visibility of your activity and build trust. Spending money on marketing is an investment that can bring greater returns over time and very often it is marketing activities that determine whether your business will be successful or not.

Focus on how potential customers will notice your activity, which channels you will use to communicate with them and how you will differentiate your offerings from others. Well-planned marketing will help you use your time and resources more efficiently, improve visibility and attract new visitors.


It is recommended to develop at least a one-year marketing plan in the early stages of your activity, which will support the planning of marketing and the effective use of available resources.

**[See Annex 2: Simple Marketing Plan for a Rural Tourism Venture](#)**

### BUILDING YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY AND MARKETING PLAN

To attract guests to your rural tourism site, it's helpful to use a mix of promotional activities. Here are some examples:

Table 1: EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES

	<p><b>Online Marketing</b> Use websites, social media platforms and online booking platforms (covered in the next chapter) to promote your rural tourism venture.</p>
	<p><b>Local Collaborations</b> Partner with nearby tourism providers - such as guesthouses, wineries, guides, or cultural sites - to create joint packages, promotions or shared events.</p>
	<p><b>Local Festivals or Markets</b> Participate in local festivals or markets, set up a small stand or table to introduce your products or services. Bring printed flyers and business cards.</p>
	<p><b>Special Offers</b> Provide discounts for families, long-stay guests, or early bookings. Create packages that combine accommodation, meals and activities.</p>
	<p><b>Influencers and Travel Writers</b> Invite bloggers, influencers and travel writers to experience your rural areas. In this way you can reach people who might never have found you otherwise.</p>
	<p><b>Word-of-Mouth and Reviews</b> Encourage satisfied guests to recommend your farm to friends and family and ask them to leave reviews online to build trust and attract new visitors.</p>

**REMEMBER MARKETING IS CRUCIAL!**

You may have a fantastic service or product, but without a strong marketing strategy, it might remain invisible and undiscovered or its potential not be used.

Don't let your initiatives and unique experiences go unnoticed - make marketing a priority.



## BRANDING YOUR BUSINESS

Branding your rural tourism business involves creating a strong brand identity that resonates with your target audience and highlights your commitment to sustainability. Here are some practical tips to help you develop your branding effectively.

### DEVELOP YOUR LOGO:

Your logo is often the first impression visitors will have of your farm, serving as the visual identity of your business. It summarizes your values and the essence of your rural tourism offerings in a single image. Design a logo that reflects these qualities, incorporating natural elements like leaves, crops, or animals to emphasize your connection to the land. Keep the design simple and memorable, ensuring it works well on various platforms, from signage to social media.

Investing time and thought into your logo is crucial, as a well-designed logo not only creates a memorable first impression but also promotes recognition and trust.

If you're working with a tight budget, you can create your own logo for free. Simply search for "free logo maker online" in Google and you'll find several websites that allow you to input your farm's name, indicate your industry and even add a slogan. These tools can generate a logo for you at no cost.

For example: [myfreelogomaker.com](http://myfreelogomaker.com)

Alternatively, consider hiring a freelancer, which can be more affordable than contracting a design company.

### Sample Logo's <sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Behance ([www.behance.net](http://www.behance.net)) is the world's largest creative network for showcasing and discovering creative portfolio works

## CREATE A SOLID BRAND MESSAGE AND SLOGAN

**Brand message** and **slogan** are key tools to help people understand who you are, what you stand for and why they should visit you. They shape how business is perceived and remembered.

- ▶ **Brand message** is a short paragraph that communicates the story, values and identity of your business. It reflects your mission, vision and what makes your place special.
- ▶ **Slogan** is a short, catchy phrase that captures the essence of your brand message in just a few words. It should be memorable, emotional and easy to repeat.

Both will appear in your promotional materials—flyers, social media pages, website and more, so it's important that they are consistent and clearly express your unique character.

**Reflect on what makes your place special:** Is it your location, traditions, hospitality, food, or way of life? What emotions do you want your guests to feel—peace, joy, curiosity, connection? What do you want them to remember and talk about when they leave? Take time to write this down. Even a few sentences can help you clarify your identity and communicate your values.



**Lori Heritage Farm**

Welcome to Lori Heritage Farm, where the rich food traditions of Racha come alive. Our special product is Traditional Rachuli Lori – salted, smoked bacon made from forest-raised pigs. It's a true taste of our region's history and flavor.

Enjoy real Georgian hospitality with homemade meals and a glass of famous Kvanchkara wine. You can also join us in the kitchen for a fun baking session and learn how to make Lobiani, a beloved local dish.

Surrounded by Racha's beautiful landscapes, your stay at Lori Heritage Farm is a chance to connect with our culture and way of life. Discover our traditions, enjoy the food, and feel at home in nature. We look forward to welcoming you!

+995 512 512 512 Village Loriland

Come for the Experience. Stay for the Memories!  
Lori Heritage Farm.

**Lori Heritage Farm**

Figure 1: A Sample Leaflet of Rural Tourism Destination with Brand Message and Slogan Sample

## USING DIGITAL TOOLS: SOCIAL MEDIA, ONLINE PLATFORMS AND WEBSITES

In today's digital world, having a strong online presence is essential for any tourism business. It helps you reach a wider audience and connect with potential visitors more effectively. Social media platforms allow real-time engagement, letting you share updates, promotions and captivating visuals that showcase the beauty of your rural area and its unique experiences or eco-tourism activities.

### USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Millions of people use social media every day to discover places to visit, food to try and experiences to enjoy. This makes social media a powerful and affordable tool that you can use for promoting rural tourism activities. Remember, your social media is a vital part of your brand's image. For a step-by-step guide please see [Annex 3: Using Facebook, Instagram and YouTube](#)



### USING ONLINE BOOKING PLATFORMS

Registering your property on online booking platforms is one of the easiest and most effective ways to attract guests. In Georgia, the two most popular platforms are Booking.com and Airbnb. These platforms can help you reach more local and international tourists, build trust through guest reviews, manage bookings and calendars easily and receive secure payments.



Booking.com is ideal for guesthouses and small hotels. It offers high visibility to international travelers and allows flexible payment (including by cash) options.



Airbnb works best for unique stays like eco-lodges, farmhouses and experiences (e.g. cooking or wine-making). It attracts travelers looking for authentic, local hospitality.

#### Why Use These Platforms?

- ▶ Reach more local and international tourists
- ▶ Build trust through guest reviews
- ▶ Manage bookings and calendars easily
- ▶ Receive secure payments

### How to Get Started

- ▶ Create an account on the platform's website or app.
- ▶ Upload photos of your rooms, common areas, garden and surrounding nature. Good lighting and clean spaces are key.
- ▶ Write a clear description – include details like room size, amenities, nearby attractions and any experiences you offer.
- ▶ Set competitive prices based on similar listings in your area.
- ▶ Keep your calendar Updated to avoid double bookings.

Being present on Booking.com and Airbnb gives your rural tourism business a professional image and opens the door to a wider market. With just a few steps, you can start welcoming guests from all over the world.

## DO YOU NEED A WEBSITE?

While an active presence on social media is essential, **having a dedicated website is just as important.** A well-designed website acts as your digital storefront - a central place where visitors can learn everything about your farm, experiences and services. It boosts your credibility, presents your business professionally and helps people easier find and trust you.

An effective website should include:

- ▶ High-quality, engaging photos
- ▶ Clear and detailed descriptions of what you offer
- ▶ Up-to-date pricing and booking options
- ▶ Contact information and location
- ▶ Easy-to-navigate design for mobile phones as well

## USE HIGH-QUALITY VISUALS:

Invest in professional photography that captures the beauty of your rural property, surrounding landscape and the authentic experiences you offer. High-quality Images of daily life, seasonal activities, local food and happy visitors can bring your story to life and make your rural tourism business stand out.

Strong visuals improve your marketing materials, build trust and help potential guests connect emotionally with your brand. People are more likely to choose a destination that feels real, welcoming and inspiring through its imagery.

## WHY YOU NEED A WEBSITE



Can be Found on Google



Online Booking Availability



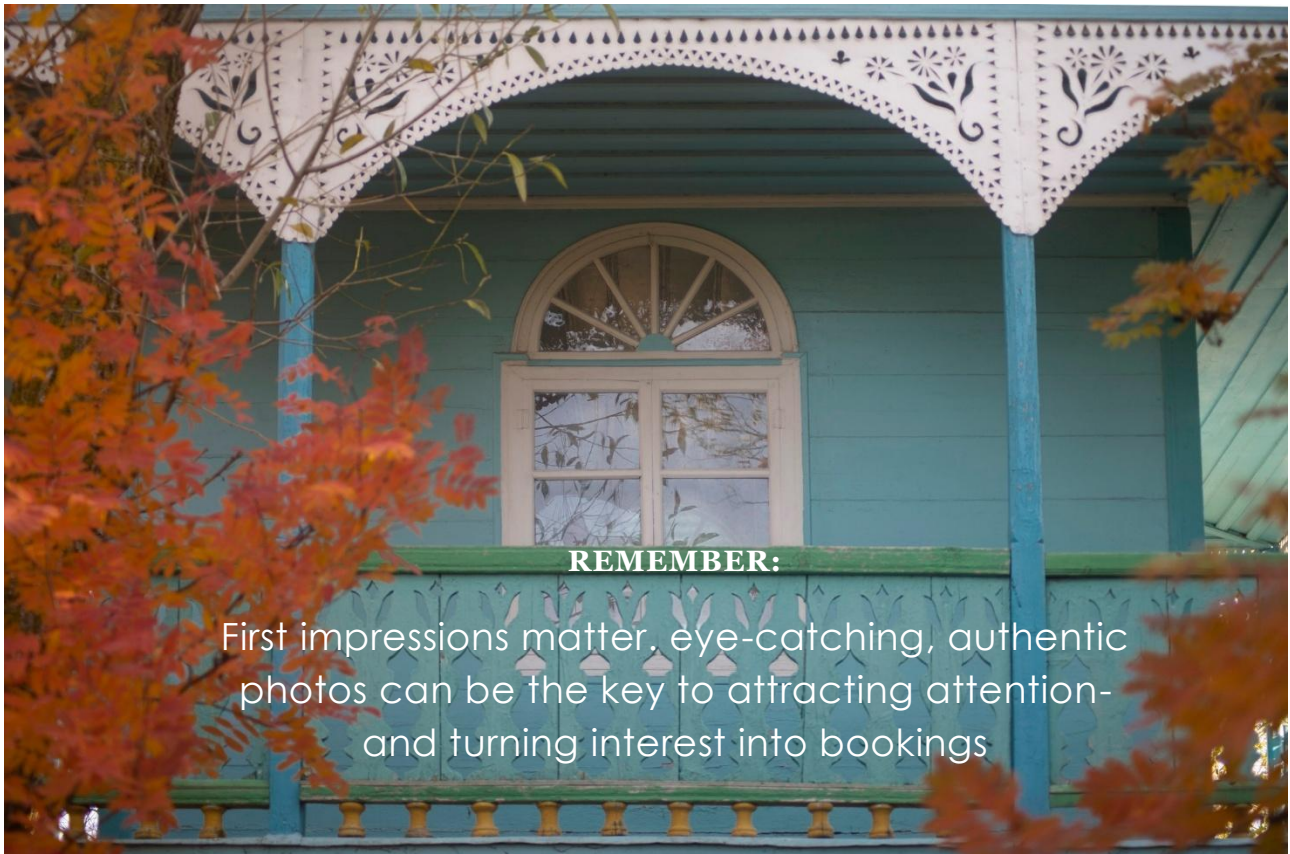
Builds Trust



Showcases Your Offerings



Tells your Story



## GETTING FOUND

Ensuring that people can find you is a simple but essential part of your business.

### SIGNAGE: MAKE YOUR PLACE EASY TO FIND

Clear and attractive signage is one of the most important tools for rural tourism ventures. A well-placed sign is a Wayfinder, first impression, your welcome message and a key part of your brand.

In rural areas, where GPS may not be reliable and landmarks are few, **signage** helps visitors find your location safely and confidently. It reduces confusion, shows that your business is professional and ready to receive guests. A missing or unclear sign may cause potential visitors to turn back - especially if they are unfamiliar with the region.

A beautifully crafted wooden sign with your name and a local symbol (like a tree, mountain, or traditional motif) or logo speaks of your connection to place. Directional signs inside your property can also improve the visitor experience - showing where to park, where the guesthouse or bathroom is.

#### DIY Recommendation:

You don't need to invest in expensive materials. You can create signage using natural wood, hand-painted lettering and simple tools.

Use weather-resistant paint and make sure the text is clear and large enough to read from a distance. Add an arrow if needed and decorate with small local touches (like carving a vine, animal, or sun).

Place it where it's most visible - from the road, at the entrance and inside the property.

#### Remember:

Good signage is a part of your hospitality. It welcomes guests before you even say hello.

### ADD YOUR VENTURE TO GOOGLE MAPS

Adding your rural tourism venture to Google Maps is crucial for attracting visitors and increasing visibility. It makes your facility easily discoverable for travelers searching for nearby attractions.

For a step-by-step guide please see [Annex 4: Adding Your Venture to Google Maps](#)

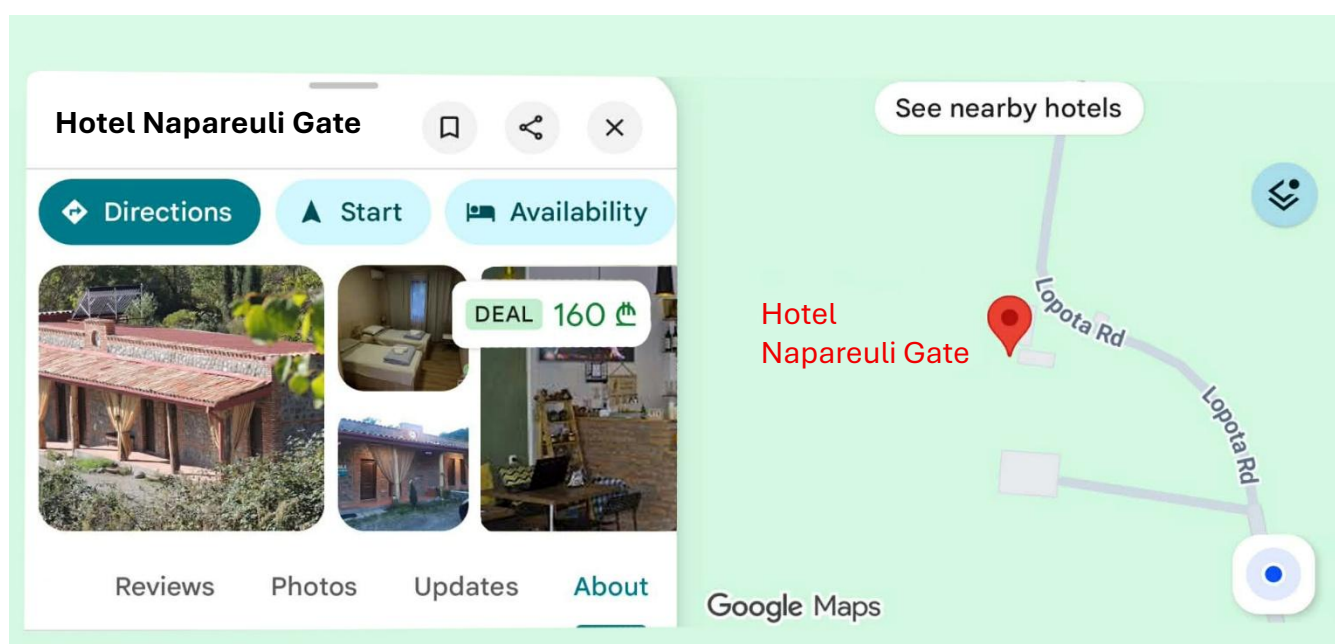


Figure 2: Example of how business listing will appear on Google Maps after being added

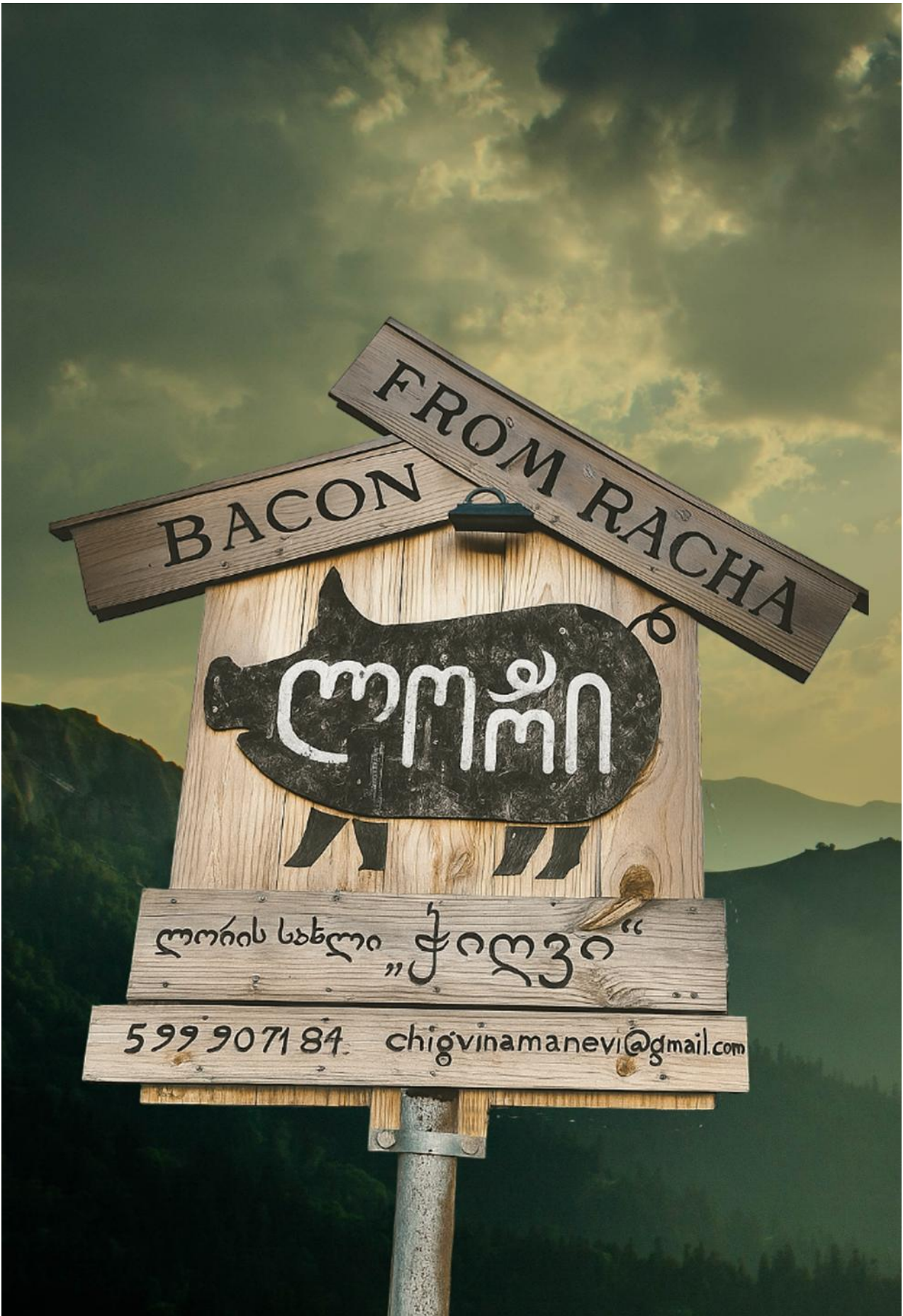


Figure 3: Illustrations of DIY Signage

## 6. RURAL TOURISM IDEAS

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The following ideas are not real ventures but showcase potential rural tourism opportunities in Georgia and suggest how they could be done best.

### Example 1: Hands-On Farm Life in Imereti

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Farmhouse Bebos Ferma in Imereti invites you to take part in artisan cheese-making and hands-on rural life.

Start the day by milking cows, then make fresh Imeruli cheese with local hosts. Bake bread and khachapuri using traditional techniques and prepare local dishes with traditional recipes from farm ingredients. Enjoy a guided walk-through beautiful pastures and a rustic picnic with the food you helped prepare. In the evening, stay in a cozy farmhouse, share stories over a warm Georgian supra and relax by the fireplace or under the open Imeretian sky.



### Example 2: Eco Tour in Samtskhe-Javakheti

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The Guesthouse Meskheti in Samtskhe-Javakheti offers guided eco-tours to nearby wetlands to observe pelicans.

Early morning birdwatching walks include quiet observation points and opportunities for nature photography. The tour continues with a herb foraging walk, where participants collect local herbs followed by a tea-making session.

For extended trip the visit also includes lake fishing with locals and mushroom foraging and evening stargazing under the clear highland sky



#### **MORE EXAMGLES**

- ▶ **Hosting weddings in farmhouse with green yard**  
Host warm celebrations with local food, greenery and traditional rural hospitality
- ▶ **Cheese-making workshops**  
Give a hands-on masterclass where guests help make traditional cheeses
- ▶ **Qvevri Wine & Supra Rituals in Kakheti**  
Invite guests to Taste qvevri wines, learn to distinguish types and enjoy a traditional supra

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## Example 3: Silk Farming Experience in Kakheti

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Visit Zemo Alvani village during the silkworm season (May–June) and take part in the revival of Georgia's ancient silk-making tradition.

Join local women as they feed and care for silkworms, observe the fascinating cocooning process and learn how silk is harvested by hand. Participate in a silk-thread spinning or natural dyeing demonstration.

This unique experience offers a rare look into a disappearing heritage brought back to life through rural women's dedication and knowledge



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## Example 4: Bee Life & Honey Experience in Guria

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Step into the world of bees at a family-run apiary in Guria.

Learn how bees live, communicate and create honey, then watch the honey-making process up close. Try on a beekeeper's suit, open a hive and taste honey straight from the comb. Guests also learn to make home remedies using honey, propolis, beeswax and pollen—such as healing salves, lip balm, or honey-lemon throat syrup.

In the evening, enjoy herbal tea, honey treats and folk stories by candlelight. Perfect for wellness-focused guests.



### **MORE EXAMGLES**

- ▶ **Herbal Foraging Walk in Guria**  
Invite participants to collect wild herbs, learn about herbal remedies and make herbal tea
- ▶ **Folk Evening in Khevsureti**  
Join villagers for traditional singing, dancing and storytelling in authentic mountain settings
- ▶ **Nature Photography Tour in Lagodekhi**  
Capture wildlife, waterfalls and ancient forests guided by a local nature photographer

## 7. YOUR POTENTIAL PARTNERS

These are public entities that offer resources which may be useful to you.

**Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA - [Link](#))** is the central body supporting the country's tourism sector. It develops and implements policies to foster sustainable tourism, attract international visitors and support local rural tourism ventures. The GNTA can help you access training and resources, connect with national marketing platforms and integrate your rural tourism offerings into Georgia's wider tourism network



**Enterprise Georgia ([Link](#))** is a government agency that supports entrepreneurship, investment and export development. To rural tourism ventures, it offers funding programs, training and support to grow small businesses or improve infrastructure. Knowing about this agency is key for anyone looking to launch or expand rural tourism projects in Georgia.



**Municipal Governments** play a key role in supporting local development. They can help you access infrastructure, small business support programs and community initiatives. By collaborating with your local municipality, you can gain visibility, participate in rural development planning and access resources for tourism, agriculture and entrepreneurship.



**Women's Rooms ([Link](#))** are local support centers established within municipal buildings across Georgia offering access to information, training and small grants, empowering local population to participate in local development. They can help you strengthen your business skills, access resources and connect with local networks and opportunities.



**The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA - [Link](#))** oversees agricultural development, environmental protection and sustainable rural growth. Through its various programmes, MEPA can help rural tourism ventures access training, grants and extension services and encourage the integration of eco-friendly and climate-resilient approaches into rural tourism activities.



**LEPL Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia (APA - [Link](#))** manages all of Georgia's protected sites, focusing on preserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems. It is closely linked to rural tourism by promoting sustainable practices, supporting traditional agriculture and creating recreational opportunities. The Agency will offer you access to valuable resources on its website, including a comprehensive list of protected areas, local hotels, ecotourism trails and guides specific to each territory.



**Destination Management Organization (DMO)** is a local, non-profit group created by municipalities and tourism stakeholders to manage and promote specific tourist areas. DMOs offer vital support - connecting small businesses to wider networks, promoting local attractions, improving service quality and encouraging sustainable tourism.



**NGOs and Donor Organizations** play a key role in developing rural tourism through funding, training and community support. They often launch projects focused on sustainability, women's entrepreneurship, cultural preservation and the green economy. The platform [projects.org.ge](http://projects.org.ge) provides up-to-date information on current donor-funded programmes and opportunities available across Georgia.



The Georgian National Tourism Administration is an excellent resource for getting valuable rural tourism related information. Their digital library is regularly updated with up-to-date research and promotional materials. Definitely Worth Seeing:



[GNTA.GE/Library](https://GNTA.GE/Library)



## 8. SAFETY

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Ensuring the safety of visitors, staff and animals is essential for any rural tourism venture. Farms and guesthouses involved in tourism must comply with relevant national legislation, anticipate potential risks and maintain high safety standards.

### Outdoor Activity & Wildlife Safety

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#### OUTDOOR ACTIVITY SAFETY

Farms located near forest or remote areas may attract wildlife. While this can interest tourists, it also introduces risks. Guides and visitors should be briefed on how to react to wildlife encounters.

#### WILDLIFE ENCOUNTER GUIDELINE



##### WOLF/JACKAL

use as loud a voice as possible, throw a stone close to animal, demonstrate your physical size as much as possible, with each motion show your physical strength to the animals



##### BEAR

keep calm, do not run. Even the fastest runner cannot escape from a bear over a short distance. Demonstrate your physical size as much as possible, frighten the animal with hand motions and a loud voice. Do not lie down on the ground, since such behaviour raises the interest of the animal and creates additional danger for you



##### SNAKE

keep calm, try to carefully move away from the reptile without turning, turn only when you are 1-2m far from the reptile



##### DEER

keep calm and try to move away carefully. A deer attacks a human very rarely, and only happens if the deer is repelling an attack from the human

# Safety on the Farm

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Farm buildings should comply with technical and safety requirements under the Law of Georgia on Construction, including standards related to natural and technogenic hazards, food safety and hygiene. To better manage risks, it's advisable to consult insurance providers about business and infrastructure insurance. This helps reduce liability and provides access to important regulatory guidance.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 6 Ensure all walking path is non-slippery and have adequate lighting, especially in the evening or during wet weather
- 5 Keep farm animals securely separated from visitor areas. Direct interaction should only occur under supervision from a host, farm staff or guides.
- 4 Ensure first aid kits are available and easily accessible in all visitor areas.
- 3 Install fire safety equipment (e.g., extinguisher, spade, water barrel) in every building.
- 2 Post clear warning signs to inform visitors about animal behavior, restricted areas and general farm rules.
- 1 Assign at least one responsible person to oversee visitor safety, who will be familiar with emergency tools: medical kits, fire extinguishers etc.

Figure 4: Key Recommendations for Internal Security of Rural Tourism Facility

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State of New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment. (2023). *Setting up an agritourism business: A guide to planning approvals*. <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/>

# Annex 1:

## Simple Business Plan for Rural Tourism Venture

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### 1. Executive Summary

Briefly describe your business concept, goals and what makes your farm or village unique.

**Example:** Our guesthouse in Ajara's mountainous village offers authentic experiences such as local cuisine cooking classes and guided nature hikes. We aim to attract eco-tourists and cultural travelers seeking immersive rural experience while supporting sustainable development in our community.

### 2. Market Analysis

Summarize results of the research: target visitors, their interests and the competition.

**Example:** Our main visitors are families, nature lovers and cultural tourists from Georgia and abroad. Current competition includes nearby guesthouses, but few offer local cooking workshops, which we will emphasize.

### 3. Operational Plan

**Describe how your business will operate day-to-day. Example:**

- Services: Accommodation, guided tours, cooking classes
- Staff: Family members plus 1 local guide during peak season
- Facilities: Renovated traditional house with guest rooms, outdoor cooking area, vegetable garden

### 4. Financial Projections

Estimate start-up costs, ongoing expenses and expected income. **Example:**

Category	Details	Amount (GEL)
Start-up Costs	House renovation	10,000
	Furniture	3,000
	Initial marketing	1,000
Total Start-up Costs		14,000
Monthly Expenses	Utilities, staff wages, food supplies (estimated)	800
Estimated Revenue	3 rooms × 60 GEL/night × 70% occupancy (21 nights/month)	3,780
Net Monthly Income	Revenue (3,780) - Expenses (800)	2,980

### 5. Marketing Strategy

Outline how you will promote your rural tourism business.

**Example:**

- Use Instagram and Facebook to share stories and photos
- Partner with local eco-tourism associations in Ajara
- Collaborate with travel agencies in Batumi
- Participate in regional tourism fairs and events

# Annex 2:

## Simple Marketing Plan for Rural Tourism Venture

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### 1. Executive Summary

Short overview of your farm, vision and the purpose of the marketing plan.

**Example:** Our farm guesthouse in Kakheti offers authentic rural experiences, including wine tasting, qvevri winemaking and seasonal harvests. The goal of this marketing plan is to attract more visitors during spring and autumn and increase awareness through local partnerships and online promotion.

### 2. Market Analysis

- Target audience: Eco-tourists, cultural travelers, food lovers (age 25–60)
- Trends: Demand for digital detox stays, wine tourism, farm-to-table experiences
- Competitors: Local guesthouses with similar offerings
- Your advantage: Qvevri wine workshops, traditional kitchen, scenic vineyard views

### 3. Marketing Objectives (SMART Goals)

- Increase weekend bookings by 25% over the next 12 months
- Gain 1,000 Instagram followers by December
- Host 3 on-farm seasonal events this year
- Partner with 5 local tourism agencies

### 4. Marketing Strategies

- Use Instagram and Facebook to share seasonal photos and guest stories
- Partner with local tour operators and eco-tourism networks
- Offer cooking classes and wine tastings during shoulder seasons
- Attend local tourism fairs and promote via regional tourism board

### 5. Budget

Activity	Estimated Cost (GEL)
Social media advertising	600 GEL/year
Printing flyers/posters	300 GEL
Website updates	500 GEL
Photography for promotion	400 GEL
Hosting 3 events (materials, food)	1,200 GEL
Total	3,000 GEL

### 6. Measurement & Evaluation

- Track monthly bookings
- Monitor social media growth (likes, comments, shares)
- Collect guest feedback
- Ask guests how they heard about you
- Adjust plan quarterly based on what works best

## Annex 3:

# Using Facebook, Instagram and YouTube

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- FACEBOOK PAGE:** Start by creating a Facebook business page. Choose a name that reflects your farm or any agritourism offerings.
- QUALITY PHOTOS:** Use high-quality images that showcase your farm, activities and the surrounding environment as your cover and profile photos.
- CONTACT INFO:** Include your phone number, email and website link in the "About" section of your page to make it easy for visitors to reach you.
- REGULAR POSTS:** Post at least once a week featuring attractive photos and engaging text, highlighting farm life, events, or promotions.
- PROMPT RESPONSE:** Interact with comments and messages quickly.
- ENGAGE AUDIENCE:** Vary content types: short videos, live Q&A sessions. Use polls or questions to encourage interaction and foster a sense of community.



- VISUAL STORYTELLING:** Create Your Account at Instagram: Optimize your profile with a clear logo and info that highlights your unique offerings.
- QUALITY IMAGERY:** Regularly post vibrant, high-quality images showcasing farm activities, landscapes and visitor experiences.
- REGULAR POSTS:** Use a content calendar to schedule a mix of promotional content, behind-the-scenes glimpses and seasonal highlights.
- CAPTIONS:** Craft captions that tell a story and encourage interaction, such as asking questions or inviting followers to tag friends.

Instagram is ideal for visually showcasing your business



- SET UP CHANNEL:** Name your channel to reflect your business and customize it with a matching logo and banner.
- VIDEO CONTENT:** Produce videos showcasing Agro/Eco tours or visitor's experiences.
- REGULAR UPLOADS:** Upload at least once a month to maintain audience engagement.
- THUMBNAILS:** Create eye-catching thumbnails to attract viewers.

# Annex 4:

## Adding your venture to google maps

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Follow these steps to ensure your business is accurately listed on Google Map:

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**STEP 1:**  
**Create a Google Account** If you don't have one already, create a Google account. This will allow you to manage your business information on Google.

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**STEP 2:**  
**Access Google My Business** Go to the Google My Business website.  
Click on "Manage now" to start the process.

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**STEP 3:**  
**Enter Business Information** Enter your Eco or Agro Tourism venture's name as you want it to appear on Google Maps.  
Business Category: Choose a category that best fits your venture  
Location: Enter your address. Ensure it's accurate

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**STEP 4:**  
**Add Contact Details** Phone Number: Provide contact numbers for potential visitors.  
Include your website URL if you have one. If not, consider setting one up for more information about your offers

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**STEP 5:**  
**Verify Your Business** After entering your information, Google will require verification.  
Choose from several methods, typically involving receiving a postcard at your business address. Follow instructions to complete this step

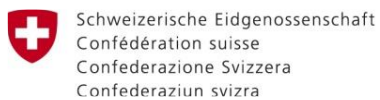
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**STEP 6:**  
**Enhance Your Listing** Upload high-quality images showcasing your farm, activities and natural surroundings. Visuals can significantly attract visitors.  
Specify your operating hours so visitors know when to reach you.  
Add a brief description about what makes your venture unique

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