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**GEO-TOURS GUIDES** ENHANCEMENT OF TOUR GUIDES AND AGENTS’ COMPETENCES ON GEOLOGICAL TOURS AND BRAND BUILDING

**E-GUIDEBOOK FOR TRAINERS**

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| Slika, ki vsebuje besede pisava, grafika, grafično oblikovanje, besedilo  Opis je samodejno ustvarjen | **Slika, ki vsebuje besede besedilo, pisava, posnetek zaslona, grafika  Opis je samodejno ustvarjen** |

**GEO-TOURS GUIDES: ENHANCEMENT OF TOUR GUIDES AND AGENTS’ COMPETENCES ON GEOLOGICAL TOURS AND BRAND BUILDING**

KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **GEO TOURS GUIDES PROJECT**

Tourism is a dynamic industry that is highly susceptible to the impact of various changes, such as economic shifts, environmental factors, and global events, which can significantly influence travel patterns and industry dynamics. The growing emphasis on sustainable and responsible travel, with travellers seeking eco-friendly and culturally immersive experiences is one of the post Covid-19 pandemic trends. Geotourism, as one of the alternative types of rural, nature tourism is now being discovered and attracts the interest of many tourists. Changing customer preferences force tourist guides and agents to shape new tourism models by introducing locally diversified and customised touristic solutions.

Tour guides play a crucial role in connecting travellers with diverse cultures, natural wonders, and historical treasures worldwide. They serve as knowledgeable ambassadors, enhancing the visitor's experience by providing insights, context, and local expertise. They ensure a deeper understanding of destinations, fostering cultural appreciation and environmental awareness. The authentic local character and environmentally friendly approach is the kind of experience that nature attracted tourists seek nowadays.

The aim of the Geo Tours Guides project is to enrich the expertise of tour guides, tour guide students and tourist agencies in the field of geo-tourism, marketing, and branding. The project aims to enhance the capabilities of both public and private entities in the tourism sector, enabling them to develop and promote this specific form of thematic tourism within the region.

**The specific objectives of the project are to:**

* Design a novel training package for tourist guides, tourist guide students and tourist agencies to obtain expertise on geological thematic tours.
* Develop the target groups’ branding-related skills (i.e. digital & social media marketing, general digital skills, networking etc.) to make transition from theory to commercialisation.
* Strengthen and extend Geological competences of the target group in addition to their basic training/education.
* Enhance the target groups’ tour portfolio with quality and unique tours based on the current trends of the customer preferences for nature tourism.

## **THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE E-GUIDEBOOK**

The Blended Training Course on Geo-Tours Guides is tailor-made for tourist guides, aspiring tourist guide students, and tourist agencies eager to enhance their expertise in Geo-tourism and elevate the branding of their geological tours. This comprehensive course focuses on honing essential skills such as online branding of geological tools, effective networking, and delves into specific geological routes, offering in-depth theoretical insights through engaging case studies.

To facilitate the training process, a special training e-guidebook has been prepared. The primary goal of this e-guidebook is to offer a comprehensive and pedagogical approach to the blended training course for Geo-Tours Guides, targeting trainers, educators, and various stakeholders within the tourism industry.

**The key objectives of the e-guidebook are:**

* **Empowering trainers and educators with educational material:** This e-guidebook seeks to empower trainers, educators, and consultants by equipping them with educational resources and materials focused on improving branding skills for tour guides as well as to provide expertise in the realm of geological thematic tours.
* **Innovative teaching and learning strategies:** One of the core missions of the e-guidebook is to enhance the capabilities of trainers and educators in conducting effective training programs on the subject matter. To achieve this, we emphasize the adoption of innovative teaching and learning strategies. These strategies will not only make the learning process engaging and dynamic but also enable trainers to facilitate courses with a high degree of effectiveness.

In essence, this e-guidebook is designed to be a valuable resource, enabling trainers, educators, and tourism professionals to excel in their roles while promoting a deeper understanding and knowledge of geological tourism experiences and branding of geological tours.

The e-guidebook on training implementation ensures the long-term effectiveness of the training course and platform for interested stakeholders. It offers a user-friendly and comprehensive resource, delivering practical insights to support trainers and educators in implementing the training course models independently.

This e-guidebook is available in English, Slovene, French, Greek, Italian, Polish, and Maltese languages.

## **NAVIGATING THIS E-GUIDEBOOK**

This guidebook is divided into three main sections, as follows:

**STRUCTURE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE TRAINING COURSE.** This part gives an overview of the structure of the training course, topics, covered in the modules and learning outcomes of each section of the training course.

**TRAINING COURSE.** The second part outlines the modules comprising the three sections. It includes learning objectives and outcomes for each module, along with practical examples. Additionally, tips on delivering the content and assessing learners' knowledge are included at the end of each section.

**E-LEARNING PLATFORM**. The last part presents the features of the online training platform, where learners can autonomously take the course at their pace and complete a quiz to test their knowledge.

# **STRUCTURE AND LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE TRAINING COURSE**

The training course is divided in three sections, that offer a holistic learning experience. Each section is composed of several modules. Together, they prepare students for success in the evolving tourism industry, blending geo-tourism and digital marketing.

## **SECTION 1: Foundations of Geo-Tourism and Sustainable Tourism**

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| **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION IN GEO-TOURISM PRINCIPLES**Provides an essential basics of geo-tourism focusing on the principles, concepts, and practices of sustainable tourism within the context of geological and cultural heritage. |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Demonstrate responsible tourist behaviour by adhering to ethical guidelines, minimizing environmental impact, and respecting local cultures and traditions.
* Measure and assess the economic impacts of geotourism, considering factors such as job creation, income generation, and the overall economic well-being of the community.
* Promote and advocate for the principles of geotourism, emphasizing the sustainable use and conservation of geological and cultural assets.
* Facilitate effective interpretation and education for tourists, providing information about the geological and cultural significance of the destination, and promoting a deeper understanding of the local environment.
* Actively engage with local communities, fostering their participation in decision-making processes, and ensuring that tourism initiatives align with community values and priorities.
 | **STRUCTURE** Module 1: Geo-TourismModule 2: The Importance of GeologyModule 3: Geo-Tourism & Social ParticipationModule 4: Ecology & GeologyModule 5: Eco-friendly Tourists Module 6: Geo-Tourism & Sustainability |

## **SECTION 2: Digital Marketing Strategies for Tourism Professionals**

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| **DIGITAL MARKETING SKILLS**Focuses on digital marketing skills for tourist guides and agents, including website creation, social media, SEO, and email marketing. |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Understand the role of various digital skills in building brand credibility and trust.
* Develop website development skills including goal setting, platform selection, content strategy and search engine optimization.
* Gain proficiency in social media marketing principles and strategy development.
* Acquire hands-on skills in creating targeted email campaigns tailored to geotourism.
* Learn to integrate website, social media, and email marketing strategies for effective geotourism promotion.
 | **STRUCTURE** Module 1: Website planning and creationModule 2: Social media marketingModule 3: Search engine optimizationModule 4: Email marketing |

## **SECTION 3: Geo-Tourism Practical Applications and Field Education**

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| **PRACTICAL APPLICATION AND HANDS ON EXPERIENCE**Emphasizes hands-on learning with field communication, sample collection, and educational activities to improve student’s communication skills and enables them to provide enriching experiences to tourists while promoting sustainable geo-tourism. |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Ability to recognize rock samples.
* Skill in describing macroscopic features of rock sample.
* Basic understanding of the processes shaping rocks within the lithosphere.
* Demonstrate proficiency in identifying and categorising basic rock types in a specific geotouristic location.
* Practical Application of Geology Concepts.
 | **STRUCTURE** Module 1: Field communication techniquesModule 2: Sample identification techniquesModule 3: Educational games & activities |

# **TRAINING COURSE**

## **SECTION 1: Foundations of Geo-Tourism and Sustainable Tourism**

Section 1 delves into the foundations of geotourism and sustainable tourism, covering a range of topics essential for tourist guides and agents, including foundations of geotourism, the importance of geology, social participation, ecology and geology, eco-friendly tourists, and principles of sustainability in geotourism.

This chapter outlines specific learning objectives and outcomes of each module, providing an overview of the module contents with practical examples. The chapter concludes with guidance on delivering the content and testing knowledge related to the foundational principles of geotourism and sustainable tourism.

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| **CHAPTER OVERVIEW** | **Module 1**: Geo-Tourism**Module 2**: The Importance of Geology**Module 3**: Geo-Tourism & Social Participation**Module 4**: Ecology & Geology**Module 5**: Eco-friendly Tourists **Module 6**: Geo-Tourism & Sustainability**How to deliver the content**: Foundations of Geo-Tourism and Sustainable Tourism**Test the knowledge**: Foundations of Geo-Tourism and Sustainable Tourism  |

## **MODULE 1: Geo-Tourism**

Geo-tourism aims to minimize the negative impact of tourism on the environment and local communities. It seeks to maintain the ecological integrity of the destination for future generations. The preservation of the natural and cultural resources is a fundamental aspect of geo-tourism. In addition, Geo-tourism emphasizes the active participation and benefits for local communities. It seeks to enhance the economic and social well-being of residents by involving them in the tourism activities and ensuring that they share in the economic benefits and places a strong emphasis on education, both for visitors and local communities by encouraging learning about the natural and cultural aspects of the destination.

Geo-tourism focuses also on the diversity of geological features, including rocks, landforms, and processes. Geodiversity is a valuable asset that contributes to the unique character of a destination.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Understand Sustainable Practices: Comprehend the principles and practices of sustainable tourism, with a focus on minimizing the environmental impact and promoting responsible tourism behaviour.
* Problem-Solving in Geo-Tourism: Identify and propose solutions to potential challenges and issues related to geo-tourism, considering both environmental and socio-cultural aspects.
* Facilitate Community Engagement: Develop the ability to engage with local communities, involving them in decision-making processes and ensuring that they benefit economically and socially from tourism activities.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Demonstrate Environmental Stewardship: Trainees exhibit a sense of responsibility for the conservation of natural resources and demonstrate a commitment to being stewards of the environment within the context of tourism.
* Design Sustainable Tourism Initiatives: Trainees can design and propose sustainable tourism initiatives for specific destinations, considering conservation measures, community involvement, and economic benefits.
* Cultivate Responsible Travel Ethics: Trainees demonstrate a commitment to responsible and ethical travel behaviour, emphasizing respect for the environment, local cultures, and communities.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Definition of geotourism.
* Key aspects of geotourism.

## **MODULE 2: The Importance of Geology**

Geology has multidisciplinary intertwined environmental and cultural elements: its sites are an alternative wellness and educational tourism attraction.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Explain what geology is.
* Provide an overview of the multidisciplinary fields of geology.
* Raise awareness of the relation between geology and cultural heritage.
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| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Knowledge of key elements of geology and its multidisciplinary fields also as inspiring professional careers.
* Capacity of assessment of the balance of natural and cultural existent elements of a geologic site.
* Bottom-up approach of heritage community (Faro Convention of CoE) as a key actor of valorization and fostering of geological cultural sites.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Definition of geology.
* Multidisciplinary aspects of geology.
* Overview of the broad spectrum of fields related to geology.
* Geology and cultural heritage.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

Deep examination of the natural and cultural tangible and intangible heritage elements of the geosites from the island of Gozo, of the site of Dwejra area which combines unique outstanding geological landscapes such as the Dwejra bay, the Fungus Rock and the Dwejra tower. This combined cultural and geological site is attractive, being one of the few remaining Maltese sites to offer an unpolluted landscape for astronomical observation during the night.

## **MODULE 3: Geo-Tourism & Social Participation**

The integration of geo-tourism principles and social participation within national networks of protected areas and geoparks creates a holistic and sustainable approach to conservation and tourism. Balancing environmental protection, community involvement, and responsible tourism practices is essential for the long-term success of these initiatives.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Explain the Importance of Geoparks: Recognize the significance of geoparks in preserving geological heritage, promoting scientific education, and fostering sustainable tourism.
* Evaluate Sustainable Tourism Practices: Assess sustainable tourism practices within geoparks and protected areas, considering the environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourism activities on local communities and ecosystems.
* Analyse Social Participation: Analyse the concept of social participation in the context of geotourism and the national network of protected areas, exploring how local communities can actively engage in the preservation and promotion of geological and natural resources.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Cultivate Environmental Stewardship: Cultivate a sense of environmental stewardship among individuals, promoting responsible behaviors and actions that contribute to the long-term conservation of protected areas and geoparks.
* Develop Interpretative Skills: Develop skills in interpreting geological and ecological features for tourists, providing educational and engaging experiences that enhance visitors' understanding and appreciation of the natural environment.
* Contribute to Conservation Efforts: Actively contribute to conservation efforts within geoparks and protected areas, recognizing the importance of maintaining biodiversity, ecosystems, and geological features.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Integration of geotourism principles and social participation.
* National networks of protected areas and geoparks.
* The significance of geoparks in preserving geological heritage.
* Social participation in the context of geotourism.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

**Example of Good Practice in Geotourism and Social Participation: UNESCO Global Geopark - Zhangjiajie, China**

*Community Engagement: Local communities in Zhangjiajie actively participate in decision-making processes regarding geotourism activities. Regular community meetings are held to discuss tourism plans, ensuring that local voices are heard, and concerns are addressed.*

*Sustainable Infrastructure: The geopark invests in sustainable infrastructure, such as well-designed walking paths, to minimize the impact on the natural environment. Visitors are encouraged to explore the park on foot, fostering a deeper connection with the landscape.*

*Educational Programs: The geopark offers educational programs for both locals and visitors. This includes guided tours, workshops, and interpretive centers that provide information about the geological significance of the area, local flora and fauna, and conservation efforts.*

*Local Cultural Experiences: The geopark promotes local cultural experiences by involving communities in displaying traditional arts, crafts, and performances. This not only enriches the visitor experience but also provides an additional source of income for local residents.*

*Cultural Preservation: Efforts are made to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of indigenous communities living within the geopark. This includes the documentation of local traditions, languages, and rituals, fostering a sense of pride and identity among community members.*

*Community Entrepreneurship: The geopark supports community entrepreneurship by providing training and resources for local businesses. This empowers residents to offer authentic cultural experiences, accommodations, and locally sourced products to visitors.*

## **MODULE 4: Ecology & Geology**

Ecology focuses on the interactions between living organisms and their environment, geology examines the Earth's structure and processes. The two fields overlap in areas such as habitat formation, ecological succession, and the study of past ecosystems through palaeontology. Understanding both disciplines is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the Earth and its natural systems.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Analyse Ecosystem Responses: Analyse how ecosystems respond to geological changes over time, considering factors like habitat formation, soil composition, and climate variations.
* Define Key Terms and Concepts: Trainees should be able to define fundamental terms in ecology (e.g., ecosystem, population, community) and geology (e.g., tectonics, erosion, and stratigraphy).
* Understand Climate-ecology Interactions: Explore the role of geological factors in shaping climate patterns and understand how climate, in turn, influences ecological processes and biodiversity.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Apply Knowledge to Real-world Scenarios: Trainees apply the understanding of the ecology-geology relationship to real-world scenarios, demonstrating how geological processes affects ecosystems and influence conservation strategies.
* Interdisciplinary Perspective: Trainees develop an interdisciplinary perspective, recognizing the interconnectedness of ecology and geology and understanding how collaboration between these fields enhances scientific understanding.
* Research and Inquiry Skills: Trainees acquire skills in conducting research and inquiries related to the ecology-geology relationship, including the ability to gather and analyse data, draw conclusions, and make evidence-based recommendations.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Definition of ecology and definition of geology.
* Practical applications of ecology.
* Ecosystems.
* Key aspects of geology.

## **MODULE 5: Eco-friendly Tourists**

Eco-tourism is more relevant after the pandemic redefining traveling patterns and trends. Geo-tourism is a key attractive element in these new scenarios.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Knowledge of ecotourism.
* Understanding multidisciplinary components of a geo-path.
* Awareness relevance of Geodiversity Action Plan (GEP).
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Understanding of eco-tourism trends and perspective.
* Capacity to assess the touristic potentialities of a geo-site.
* Planning of an attractive sustainable tourism geo-path.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Definition of eco-tourism.
* Key features which are indeed endorsed in the geo-tourism paths.
* Connection between eco-tourism and geotourism.
* Creation of geological paths for eco-friendly tourists.
* Preparation of a geodiversity action plan.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

Majjistral Nature and History Park surely represents an outstanding good practice in Malta, where you can combine extraordinary geological landscapes with cliffs, clay slopes which sits beneath the upper and lower coralline limestone, temporary freshwater rock pools, masquid scrub, habitat of garrigue, an extraordinary botanical and ornithological life. The Park also hosts significant archaeological sites such as corbeled stone huts, cart ruts, tombs, entrenchments dated back to the Knights and the Ghajn Znuber Tower of the nineteenth century, which in now the visiting centre of the park. The park has 6 km of protected coastline under the European Nature Directive. It carries out educational activities for children, with specific didactical itineraries and storytelling such as tree planting and seasonal olive picking.

## **MODULE 6: Geo-Tourism & Sustainability**

Geo-tourism is a new form of sustainable tourism, based on the preservation of environmental and cultural heritage in a framework of empowering local communities.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Knowledge of UNESCO Global Geoparks.
* Sustainable elements of geo-tourism sites.
* Relevance of local communities for sustainable tourism.
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| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Governance and tourism capacity building and potentialities of local communities.
* A roadmap for geosites as attractive experiential tourism destinations.
* Relevance of UNESCO Global Geoparks.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Geotourism and the network of UNESCO Global Geoparks.
* Definition and importance of geoparks.
* Sustainability features of geo-tourism.
* Impacts of geotourism.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

Analysis of the NW coastal area of Malta (GEOMAL) with its 22 geosites and its experiential tourism potentialities as mitigation of tourism

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**HOW TO DELIVER THE CONTENT: Digital Marketing Strategies for Tourism Professionals**

 **COURSE OVERVIEW:** This training course aims to equip participants with a comprehensive understanding of geotourism and its integration with social participation. The course emphasizes sustainable tourism practices, community engagement, and the responsible management of geological and cultural assets.

THE CURRICULUM OF THIS SECTION IS DESIGNED FOR A **3-WEEK DURATION.**

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| **Week 1: Introduction to Geotourism & Foundations of Sustainable tourism*** Session 1: Definition and Principles of Geotourism
	+ Introduction to the course, objectives, and expectations.
	+ Lecture on the definition and principles of geotourism.
	+ Group discussion on key components of geotourism.
* Session 2: Identification of Geological and Cultural Assets
	+ Lecture on the identification of geological and cultural assets.
	+ Case study analysis of successful geotourism destinations.
* Session 3: Principles of Sustainable Tourism
	+ Lecture on sustainable tourism principles.
	+ Discussion on the triple bottom line and its application to geotourism.
* Session 4: The Triple Bottom Line: Economic, Social, and Environmental Aspects
	+ Group activity: Developing sustainable tourism strategies for a hypothetical geotourism site.
	+ Peer presentations and discussion.
 |
| **Week 2: Geoheritage Management & Social Participation in Geotourism*** Session 5: Importance of Geo-conservation
	+ Lecture on the importance of geo-conservation.
	+ Interactive session on geoheritage management strategies.
* Session 6: Visitor Impact Assessment and Management
	+ Field visit or virtual tour to a local geoheritage site.
	+ Group reflection and discussion on the field experience.
* Session 7: The Role of Local Communities in Geotourism
	+ Guest speaker session on the role of local communities in geotourism.
	+ Group discussion on community engagement.
* Session 8: Benefits and Challenges of Social Participation
	+ Workshop on addressing challenges in social participation.
	+ Case study analysis of community-led geotourism initiatives.
 |
| **Week 3: Case Studies and Best Practices*** Session 9: In-depth Analysis of Successful Geotourism Initiatives
	+ In-depth analysis of successful geotourism initiatives.
	+ Group project work: Developing sustainable geotourism proposals.
* Session 10: Group Projects and Review
	+ Final project presentations.
	+ Course review, feedback collection, and discussion on further readings.
 |

**ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR TRAINERS:**

 Schedule regular breaks during each session to maintain participant engagement.

 Encourage active participation through group discussions, Q&A sessions, and interactive activities.

 Provide flexibility for guest speakers or field visits, adjusting the schedule as needed.

 Allocate time for ongoing assessment, ensuring participants receive timely feedback.

 Create a dedicated slot for a virtual or in-person networking event, facilitating connections among

 participants.

**TIPS ON HOW TO DELIVER THE CONTENT**

* Interactive Learning: Incorporate interactive elements such as group discussions, case studies, and hands-on activities to enhance participant engagement.
* Guest Speakers: Invite guest speakers with expertise in geotourism, sustainable tourism, and community engagement to provide real-world insights and diverse perspectives.
* Field Visits: Organize field visits to geotourism sites to offer participants practical exposure and a deeper understanding of on-site management and community interactions.
* Technology Integration: Use multimedia presentations, virtual tours, and online resources to complement traditional teaching methods and enhance the learning experience.
* Group Projects: Assign collaborative group projects, such as developing a geotourism proposal for a specific destination. This encourages teamwork and practical application of concepts.
* Feedback Mechanisms: Establish regular feedback mechanisms, allowing participants to share their thoughts, ask questions, and provide insights. This fosters an open and communicative learning environment.
* Facilitate Networking: Create opportunities for participants to network with professionals in the geotourism and sustainability fields. This can be achieved through online forums, webinars, or networking events.
* Continuous Assessment: Implement a mix of formative and summative assessments throughout the course to monitor participants' progress and provide timely feedback.

**SUPPORT MECHANISMS FOR TRAINERS:**

Resource Library: Provide access to a resource library containing relevant books, articles, and research papers on geotourism, sustainable tourism, and community engagement.

Online Forums: Establish online forums or discussion boards where participants can share additional resources, ask questions, and engage in ongoing discussions.

Training Manuals: Develop comprehensive training manuals or guides that participants can refer to for additional readings, case studies, and practical tips.

Webinars and Workshops: Organize webinars and workshops with experts in the field to supplement the training. Record these sessions for participants who may need to review the content.

Mentorship Programs: Introduce mentorship programs, connecting participants with experienced professionals in the geotourism sector who can provide guidance and support.

Technical Support: Offer technical support for any online tools or platforms used during the course, ensuring participants can navigate and engage with the content seamlessly.

Feedback Channels: Establish clear channels for participants to provide feedback on the course content, delivery methods, and any additional support they may require.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

* Dowling, R. K. (2013). "Geotourism’s Global Growth – The Story Continues." Geoheritage, 5(1), 5–16.
* Newsome, D., Dowling, R. K., & Leung, Y.-F. (2012). "Geotourism: The Tourism of Geology and Landscape." Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.
* Higham, J., & Carr, A. (2003). "Tourism, Recreation, and Regional Development: New Perspectives." Channel View Publications.
* Sharpley, R., & Telfer, D. J. (2002). "Tourism and Development: Concepts and Issues." Channel View Publications.
* Stone, P. R. (2013). "Geoheritage and geoconservation: Opportunities and responsibilities in tourism and recreation." Geoheritage, 5(1), 11–26.
* Timothy, D. J., & Boyd, S. W. (2003). "Tourism and Trails: Cultural, Ecological and Management Issues." Channel View Publications.
* Goodwin, H., & Santilli, R. (2009). "Community-based tourism: A success?" Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 17(2), 103–121.
* Farsani, N. T., Coelho, C., & Costa, C. (2011). "Geotourism and local development: A case study in Portugal." International Journal of Tourism Research, 13(1), 68–81.
* UNESCO. (2015). "World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism: Toolkit for Site Managers." UNESCO World Heritage Centre.
* Hall, C. M., & Boyd, S. (2005). "Nature-based tourism in peripheral areas: Development or disaster?" Channel View Publications.

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**TEST THE KNOWLEDGE: Digital Marketing Strategies for Tourism Professionals**

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

* Definition of Geotourism: What are the key principles that differentiate geotourism from conventional tourism? Provide examples to support your answer.
* Geoheritage Management: Discuss the importance of geo-conservation in geotourism. Outline strategies for managing and preserving geoheritage sites.
* Sustainable Tourism: Explain the triple bottom line in the context of sustainable tourism. How can these principles be applied to geotourism destinations?
* Community Engagement: Why is community engagement crucial in the context of geotourism? Provide examples of how local communities can actively participate in geotourism initiatives.
* Economic Impacts: Evaluate the economic impacts of geotourism on local communities. How can geotourism contribute to economic diversification and job creation?
* Social Participation Challenges: Identify potential challenges associated with social participation in geotourism. Suggest strategies to address these challenges.
* Case Study Analysis: Choose a successful geotourism initiative and analyze the key factors contributing to its success. What lessons can be learned for future geotourism projects?

**TIPS FOR LECTURER'S ASSESSMENT:**

* Application of Concepts: Include questions that require participants to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios, encouraging critical thinking and practical understanding.
* Case Studies: Incorporate case studies and ask participants to analyze and draw insights from them. This helps assess their ability to apply knowledge to specific situations.
* Group Discussions: Encourage group discussions on key topics. This fosters collaborative learning and allows the lecturer to assess participants' communication and teamwork skills.
* Practical Projects: Assign practical projects, such as developing a geotourism proposal. This assesses participants' ability to integrate knowledge and apply it to a comprehensive task.
* Critical Reflection: Include questions that require participants to critically reflect on the ethical considerations and sustainability principles in geotourism. This assesses their awareness of broader issues.
* Scenario-Based Questions: Pose scenario-based questions to assess participants' decision-making skills in the context of challenges commonly faced in geotourism and social participation.
* Class Participation: Consider participants' engagement in class discussions, their ability to articulate thoughts, and their active participation in group activities as part of the overall assessment.
* Feedback Sessions: Conduct regular feedback sessions to understand participants' learning needs and address any gaps in understanding. This promotes continuous improvement throughout the course.

## **SECTION 2: Digital Marketing Strategies for Tourism Professionals**

Section 2 emphasizes digital marketing skills for tourist guides and agents, covering website creation, social media, search engine optimization, and email marketing.

This chapter delineates the learning objectives and outcomes for each module, providing an overview of the module contents and practical examples. It concludes with guidance on delivering the content and testing knowledge of the topics covered in Section 2.

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| --- | --- |
| **CHAPTER OVERVIEW** | **Module 1**: Website planning and creation**Module 2**: Social media marketing**Module 3**: Search engine optimization (SEO)**Module 4**: Email marketing**How to deliver the content**: Digital marketing strategies for tourism professionals**Test the knowledge**: Digital marketing strategies for tourism professionals |

1.

## **MODULE 1: Website planning and creation**

Establishing a strong online presence is essential for businesses and organizations in the digital age. This module aims to guide learners through the key aspects of planning and creating a website that would support your business and brand building.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Understanding the importance and purpose of websites for tour guides/agents.
* Planning and goal setting for website development.
* Technical foundations and content strategy for website creation.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Students will be able to articulate the significance of websites as essential marketing and communication tools for tour guides and agents, including their role in building brand awareness, credibility, and trust.
* Students will develop the skills to define the purpose of a website, articulate measurable goals, and categorize different types of websites (e.g., business, personal, blog) based on their unique objectives.
* Students will acquire the knowledge to choose appropriate web hosting options, select a domain name, and understand the role of Content Management Systems (CMS) in website development. They will also get to know how to develop a content strategy aligned with the goals and target audience of the website and the importance of incorporating elements of UX design and SEO.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* The purpose and importance of the website.
* Understanding the purpose and goals of a website.
* Technical foundations of website creation and structure.
* Content strategy.
* Security and maintenance of a website.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

*Example company: Slovenia Trails & Pedals, travel agency website*

*Defining the target audience: The target audience can be segmented into the following categories:*

* *Adventure seekers: Individuals or groups looking for unique and challenging outdoor experiences. They are typically aged between 25 and 45, are physically active, and seek adventure and exploration over traditional tourism.*
* *Nature lovers: People who appreciate the outdoors and are interested in experiencing the natural beauty and biodiversity of Slovenia. This group values sustainability and eco-friendly travel options.*
* *Fitness enthusiasts: Those who incorporate cycling and hiking as part of their fitness regime. They range from beginners to experienced athletes and are interested in tours that cater to different fitness levels.*
* *Cultural explorers: Tourists who wish to combine their love for the outdoors with learning about local cultures, history, and traditions. They are likely to be interested in tours that offer a blend of physical activity and cultural immersion.*
* *Family adventurers: Families looking for safe, engaging, and educational outdoor experiences. Tours suitable for children and varying skill levels are important for this segment.*

*SEO and brand identity:*

* *Keyword research will focus on terms relevant to Slovenia tourism, such as "Slovenia tours," "adventure travel Slovenia," and "Slovenia hiking." These keywords will be naturally incorporated into website content, meta descriptions, names and alt description of photos, urls and blog articles to improve search engine visibility.*
* *Focusing on long-tail keywords like "best cycling tours in Slovenia" and "hiking trails Slovenia" to capture the interest of a more targeted audience.*

*Home page: A vibrant and inviting overview featuring stunning visuals of Slovenia's trails and paths, with quick links to tour descriptions.*

*Tour descriptions: Detailed pages for each cycling and hiking tour, including route maps, difficulty levels, calendar, what to expect, gear recommendations, and customer reviews to present social proof.*

*Calls to action:*

* *Strategically placed calls to action (CTAs) will guide visitors towards booking a tour, contacting the company for more information, or subscribing to the newsletter for updates and special offers.*

*Blog content themes segmented for our target audiences:*

* *Adventure guides: Detailed guides on what to expect from cycling and hiking tours in Slovenia, including difficulty levels, what to bring, and safety tips. These posts cater to adventure seekers and fitness enthusiasts.*
* *Nature and sustainability: Posts focusing on the natural beauty of Slovenia, wildlife, and how Slovenia Trails & Pedals operates sustainably. This content appeals to nature lovers and those interested in eco-friendly travel.*
* *Cultural insights: Articles that delve into the history, traditions, and cultural landmarks encountered on the trails. These stories cater to cultural explorers and provide a richer context to the physical journey.*
* *Family-friendly adventures: Content that highlights tours suitable for families, tips for hiking and cycling with children, and how to make such trips educational and fun. This theme targets family adventurers.*
* *Training and Preparation: Posts offering advice on preparing for a cycling or hiking tour, including training routines, nutritional tips, and gear recommendations. This content is designed for fitness enthusiasts at all levels.*

## **MODULE 2: Social media marketing**

The use of social media marketing is not merely a contemporary trend; it is a response to the evolving dynamics of communication in the digital age. This module covers foundational aspects of social media marketing and outlines the strategic approach to marketing for tour guides and agents.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Understanding the role of social media and social media marketing.
* Developing a strategic approach to social media marketing.
* Understanding how to execute an effective social media marketing campaign.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Students will be able to explain the significance of social media as a tool for businesses to build and maintain relationships with customers and understand the core principles and benefits of social media marketing.
* Students will acquire the skills to develop a comprehensive social media marketing strategy, including setting SMART goals, identifying target audiences, conducting market research, and selecting appropriate social media platforms based on the target audience and content strategy.
* Students will gain practical knowledge in content creation, distribution, and promotion for social media platforms. They will understand the importance of engaging and high-quality content, recognize the significance of community management and audience engagement, and be able to analyse social media metrics for continuous improvement.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Definition of social media and social media marketing.
* Strategic approach to social media marketing.
* Strategy development.
* Choosing the adequate social media.
* Content creation, distribution, and promotion.
* Community management and engagement.
* Analysis.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

**Social media marketing plan for a travel agency Slovenia Trails & Pedals**

*Defining goals and objectives*

* *Relationship building: Engaging with potential and existing customers by sharing stories, tips, and user-generated content (or reposting) to foster a community.*
* *Brand building: Increasing brand awareness and loyalty by showcasing the unique experiences Slovenia Trails & Pedals offers, using branded #, defining a brand voice and style.*
* *Driving website traffic: Using compelling calls-to-action (CTAs) and links in posts, stories and ads to direct social media followers to the website.*
* *Promotion: Highlighting special offers, discounts, and new tour announcements to attract new customers and reward loyal followers.*

*Target audience: Based on the refined target audience for Slovenia Trails & Pedals, the social media strategy will focus on outdoor adventure enthusiasts, nature lovers, fitness seekers, cultural and historical explorers and families. The content will be created with each segment in mind (for example tuesdays are for families).*

*Choosing the right platforms:*

* *Facebook offers broad reach and engagement opportunities with a diverse audience including families and older demographics, who might be interested in cultural and historical explorations as well as fitness and wellness activities.*
* *Instagram’s visual-centric platform is perfect for showcasing stunning landscapes, cycling and hiking trails, and sharing user-generated content. It's ideal for reaching outdoor adventure enthusiasts, photography and nature lovers.*
* *TikTok is key for engaging with younger audiences, including adventure seekers and fitness enthusiasts through engaging, short-form video content.*
* *Youtube is essential for storytelling and providing valuable content that requires more depth, such as tour previews and cultural stories.*
* *Pinterest supports the discovery and planning phase, appealing to those looking for inspiration and practical advice.*

*Community Management and Engagement*

* *Personalization and storytelling: Using a personal tone in posts and responses to create a connection with the audience. Sharing stories from the team, guides, and past travelers, using their personal names, sharing something funny and personal, telling a story.*
* *Interaction: Promptly responding to comments, messages, and reviews to build relationships and encourage engagement, asking questions to stimulate discussion.*
* *Encouraging sharing: Asking followers to share their own adventure stories or to tag a friend they'd love to share this experience with.*
* *Polls and questions in stories: Posting a poll asking followers if they prefer x or y adventures, or using the question feature to ask what their next adventure goal is.*

*Promotional strategy*

* *Content marketing: Usign a mix of blog posts, social media content, and videos to tell compelling stories that resonate with your target audience.*
* *Offering value through free resources and building e-mail base: Downloadable brochures, detailed travel guides, packing lists, and webinars on preparing for outdoor adventures. Asking users to provide their email address to access these resources.*
* *Setting up targeted ad campaigns: testing different audiences with interest targeting, lookalike targeting and retargeting ads. Using 3-4 creatives per ad set and testing different types of media (photo/video) and texts.*
* *Analysing and retargeting: Implementing retargeting ads to re-engage users who have visited our website but did not convert.*

## **MODULE 3: Search engine optimization (SEO)**

The module aims to provide a comprehensive overview of SEO strategies tailored to environmental hiking guides interested in geology-focused tours.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Increase online presence to prominently position one's geotourism products on search engines.
* Attract interested visitors through content and keyword optimization.
* Optimize the user experience and website design to convert visitors into customers or desired actions.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Gain a thorough understanding of technical aspects, best practices, and SEO trends.
* Implement the acquired knowledge on your website or projects, enhancing online visibility.
* Be able to analyse data, monitor performance, and continually adapt SEO strategies to achieve lasting and progressive results.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Fundamental concepts of SEO and its importance for environmental guides.
* Relevance of SEO for online visibility in geological sites.
* Identification of keywords related to geological sites.
* On-page optimization, including titles, meta descriptions, and site structure.
* Link building.
* Evergreen content and mobile optimization.
* Implementation of structured data to highlight geological features.
* Performance monitoring using specific analytics and KPIs.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

**EXAMPLE OF SEO-OPTIMIZED CONTENT**

*Title: “Geological Exploration in Southern Sardinia: Tour among Unique Limestone Formations and Ancient Fossils.”*

*Meta Description: “Join us on a geological tour in Southern Sardinia to explore unique limestone formations, volcanic outcrops, and discover prehistoric fossils. Our expert geological guides will take you on a journey through the intricate stories of the earth in this region.”*

*Page Content:*

* *Introduction and Contextualization: Welcome to Southern Sardinia, a land rich in geological secrets. We are excited to lead you on a tour that will immerse you in the peculiarities of this region, from volcanic features to unique sedimentary formations.*
* *Tour Description and Geological Features: Our tour traverses fascinating limestone formations, witnessing the actions of geological forces that have sculpted this landscape for millions of years. We will also explore volcanic outcrops, evidence of a tumultuous geological past that has shaped the region.*
* *Unique Experiences and Distinctive Features: Each stop on the tour offers the opportunity to discover prehistoric fossils and admire geological details that reveal the Earth's history. Experienced geological guides will share insights on stratigraphy, metamorphism, and sedimentation.*
* *Practical Information and Reservations: To ensure a seamless experience, we provide practical details about the tour, from recommended equipment to specific geological directions. Book now to join us on this extraordinary exploration of the geological past of Southern Sardinia.*
* *Reviews and Expert Feedback: Read reviews from expert geologists who have participated in our tours. The approval and support of the geological community are our guarantee of quality and authenticity in the experiences we offer.*

**EXAMPLE OF LINK BUILDING FOR GEOLOGICAL GUIDE WEBSITES IN SARDINIA**

*Let's imagine two geological guide websites in Sardinia, one specializing in tours in the National Park of the La Maddalena Archipelago and the other focused on the Su Mannau Caves, both located in this fascinating Italian region. For an effective link-building strategy, the webmasters of both sites can take the following actions:*

* *Identification of Partnerships: Webmasters identify related sites that could enhance the experience of their visitors. For instance, the Su Mannau Caves site might seek collaborations with sites offering information on the general geology of Sardinia.*
* *Thematic Link Exchange: The sites agree to exchange links, incorporating thematic links in relevant content. For example, a page on unique geological formations in the La Maddalena Archipelago National Park might include a link to the Su Mannau Caves site and vice versa.*
* *Creation of Common Resources: Webmasters collaborate on creating informative resources, such as interactive guides on the geology of Sardinia or thematic webinars. These contents can be promoted through reciprocal links.*
* *Participation in Common Events: If both sites participate in geotourism events or conferences on local geology in Sardinia, they can mutually link to each other on respective event pages or relevant blog posts.*
* *Cross Reviews: Geological guides can write positive reviews of each other and publish them on their respective sites. This provides authentic testimonials and an opportunity to include relevant links.*
* *Social Collaborations: Webmasters mutually promote their content on social media, sharing posts, photos, and relevant updates, including links to their respective pages.*
* *Regular Updates: Maintain constant communication and regularly update the list of reciprocal links based on the evolution of content and tourism offerings in Sardinia.*

*In this way, the geological guide websites in Sardinia create a network of authoritative and relevant links that enhance online visibility and provide valuable resources to visitors interested in the geology of the island.*

**EXAMPLE OF MOBILE OPTIMIZATION FOR A GEOLOGICAL TOUR WEBSITE IN SARDINIA**

*Let's assume we have a geological tour website in Sardinia called "GeoExploreSardinia." Here is a practical example of how to execute mobile optimization:*

* *Responsive Design: Implement a responsive design that automatically adapts to the screen dimensions of the device, ensuring optimal viewing on smartphones and tablets.*
* *Fast Page Loading: Optimize images and reduce file sizes to ensure quick loading times, considering connection limitations on mobile devices. For instance, use compressed image formats like WebP and reduce image quality without compromising clarity.*
* *Simplified Navigation Menu: Simplify the navigation menu to fit smaller screens, using clear icons and concise text. For example, create a hamburger menu (a code that creates a navigation menu with a hamburger icon that expands when clicked on devices with a maximum width of 768 pixels. Below this width, the menu appears in a column mode to better fit the mobile screen) to allow intuitive navigation without taking up too much screen space.*
* *Touch-friendly Text and Buttons: Increase the size of text and buttons to facilitate reading and navigation through touch screens. For example, set a readable font and buttons large enough to avoid accidental clicks.*
* *Streamlined Forms: Simplify forms and minimize the amount of data required to ease user completion on mobile devices. For instance, use clear input fields and avoid non-essential information in booking forms.*
* *Integration with Interactive Maps: Utilize interactive maps with pinch-to-zoom and panning functions to allow users to easily explore proposed geological destinations. For example, integrate Google Maps that adapts to screen dimensions.*
* *Testing on Different Devices: Conduct thorough testing on various mobile devices and browsers to ensure a consistent and satisfactory user experience on every platform.*

*Implementing these mobile optimization practices will ensure that the "GeoExploreSardinia" site offers a quality experience on mobile devices, enhancing usability and meeting the expectations of users searching for geological tours in Sardinia via their phones or tablets.*

**EXAMPLE OF SEO ANALYSIS WITH SPECIFIC KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIS) FOR A GEOLOGICAL TOUR WEBSITE (E.G. GEOEXPLORESARDINIA)**

*Main Pages Open Rate:*

*KPI: Evaluate the open rate of key pages such as "Tours," "Destinations," and "Contact Us.” Goal: A high open rate indicates significant user interest in the content offered on these pages.*

*Keyword Rankings:*

*KPI: Monitor the rankings of key keywords such as "Geological Tours Sardinia" and "Su Mannau Caves" in search results. Goal: Maintain or improve positions in the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) for relevant keywords.*

*Booking Page Conversion Rate:*

*KPI: Calculate the conversion rate of tour booking pages. Goal: Increase the number of conversions, i.e., bookings made through the site.*

*Time Spent on Main Pages:*

*KPI: Analyze how much time users spend on key pages like "Home" and “Tours." Goal: Increase time spent through interesting and engaging content.*

*Global Bounce Rate:*

*KPI: Measure the bounce rate for the entire site. Goal: Reduce the bounce rate to indicate a more satisfying user experience and increased engagement.*

*Number of Quality Backlinks:*

*KPI: Count the number of backlinks from reliable and relevant sites. Goal: Increase the number of backlinks to enhance site credibility in the eyes of search engines.*

*Competitor Analysis:*

*KPI: Analyze SEO performance compared to key competitors. Goal: Identify improvement opportunities by comparing SEO strategies and surpassing the competition.*

*Conversion Rate from Email Campaigns:*

*KPI: Monitor the conversion rate of email campaigns related to geological tours. Goal: Optimize email campaigns to maximize conversions and bookings.*

*Mobile Traffic Analysis:*

*KPI: Examine traffic from mobile devices compared to desktop. Goal: Ensure an optimal user experience on mobile devices and adjust the SEO strategy accordingly.*

*Social Media Sharing Rate:*

*KPI: Measure how often site content is shared on social platforms. Goal: Increase shares to amplify site visibility and reach.*

*This SEO analysis and its related KPIs allow for an assessment of the effectiveness of GeoExploreSardinia's site optimization strategies and targeted improvements to increase visibility, engagement, and conversions.*

## **MODULE 4: Email marketing**

The module aims to provide a comprehensive overview of email marketing strategies tailored to environmental hiking guides interested in geology-focused tours.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Enhance understanding of geotourism-focused email marketing strategies for environmental guides.
* Equip trainees with practical skills for crafting and executing successful geotourism email campaigns.
* Integrate email marketing effectively with SEO and social media for comprehensive marketing impact in geotourism.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Develop proficiency in creating targeted email campaigns tailored to geotourism, emphasizing audience engagement and communication strategies.
* Acquire hands-on skills in utilizing email marketing tools for geotourism, including list segmentation, content personalization, and campaign optimization.
* Understand the synergy between email marketing, SEO, and social media, and learn to integrate these strategies to enhance overall effectiveness in promoting geotourism experiences.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* The role of email marketing in promoting geological tour packages.
* Advantages of email marketing and its importance in communicating with the audience.
* Building targeted lists with segmentation based on geotourism interests.
* Designing compelling campaigns with customization related to geological sites.
* Campaign automation.
* Using specific metrics to assess the performance of geotourism campaigns.
* A/B testing and how to adapt strategies based on results obtained.
* Synchronization with SEO activities and other marketing channels for integrated promotion.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

**EXAMPLE OF CAPTIVATING EMAIL CAMPAIGN DESIGN FOR "GEOEXPLORESARDINIA"**

*Objective: Create a personalized email campaign to promote geological tours in the caves of Sardinia.*

* *Email Subject: Explore Underground Wonders: Tours in the Caves of Sardinia!*
* *Personalized Greeting: Hello [User's Name...]*
* *Main Image: A stunning scene of a cave with illuminated stalactite and stalagmite formations, conveying the idea of an exciting adventure.*
* *Engaging Introductory Text: Are you ready for a unique underground experience? The caves of Sardinia are ready to welcome you to a world of geological wonders.*
* *Specific Tour Description: Our “Underground Exploration” tour will take you through the most fascinating caves in Sardinia. You'll discover unique rock formations, underground chambers, and geological secrets that will leave you breathless.*
* *Personalized Call to Action: Button Text "Book Your Cave Journey Now!”*
* *Special Offer: Book by [date] and get a 15% discount on the tour. Don't miss the opportunity to experience an unforgettable geological adventure!*
* *“Why Choose Us" Section: GeoExploraSardegna is a leader in offering authentic geotourism experiences. With experienced guides, high-quality equipment, and a profound love for geology, we are the perfect choice for your cave exploration.*
* *Customer Testimonials: Listen to what our customers say: 'An incredible experience, the caves come to life with the detailed explanations from the guides!' - [Customer Name].*
* *Social Media Sharing: Want to share your experience? Use the hashtag #GeoExploreSardinia and join our geological community on social media!*
* *Contact Information and social media: For more information or to book, contact us at info@geoexploresardinia.com. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for real-time updates.*
* *Footer with Unsubscribe Option: If you no longer wish to receive our emails, you can unsubscribe here.*

*This email campaign is designed to be captivating, informative, and highly personalized to engage the specific recipient interested in exploring the caves of Sardinia. The customization of the name, compelling images, and targeted calls to action will enhance the likelihood of conversion and participation.*

**EXAMPLE OF USING SPECIFIC METRICS TO EVALUATE GEOTOURISM CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE FOR GEOEXPLORESARDINIA**

*Email Campaign: "Discover the Geological Wonders of Sardinia with Our Exclusive Tour"*

* *Open Rate: Metric: 25%. Analysis: A 25% open rate indicates significant interest among recipients. However, testing alternative subject lines could further improve the open rate.*
* *Click-Through Rate (CTR): Metric: 12%. Analysis: A 12% CTR is positive, indicating that the content has sparked interest. Sections with lower CTR could be examined for optimization.*
* *Booking Conversion Rate: Metric: 8%. Analysis: An 8% booking conversion rate is solid, suggesting that the campaign has motivated users to make reservations. Exploring ways to increase this rate with special offers or incentives could be considered.*
* *Site Dwell Time after Email: Metric: 4 minutes on average. Analysis: A 4-minute dwell time indicates substantial engagement. Ensuring that the website content aligns with the expectations set by the email is crucial.*
* *Collected Feedback and Reviews: Metric: 15 reviews, with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5. Analysis: Positive reviews indicate overall satisfaction. Continued solicitation of feedback will help further enhance the experience.*
* *Booking Bounce Rate: Metric: 18%. Analysis: An 18% bounce rate for booking pages might suggest that some users abandoned the booking process. Further simplification of the process or offering real-time assistance could be considered.*
* *Generated Social Shares: Metric: 50 shares on Facebook and Instagram. Analysis: Shares indicate positive engagement. Further incentivizing sharing through contests or user-generated content could be explored.*
* *Hashtag Usage on Social Media: Metric: 200+ uses of the hashtag #GeoExploraSardegna. Analysis: The hashtag has been widely used, suggesting active community participation. Continued promotion will help expand its reach.*
* *Email Responses: Metric: 10 direct responses. Analysis: Responses indicate direct engagement. Timely responses will be provided to maintain an open dialogue.*
* *Comparison Metrics with Previous Campaigns: Analysis: Comparing these metrics with previous campaigns, we observe a 15% increase in the conversion rate and a 20% growth in social shares. These positive results indicate progress in our marketing strategies.*

*Using these specific metrics, GeoExploreSardinia can assess the geotourism campaign's performance in detail, identifying areas of success and opportunities for improvement to optimize future marketing campaigns.*

**EXAMPLE OF A/B TESTING TO OPTIMIZE AN EMAIL CAMPAIGN FOR GEOEXPLORESARDINIA**

*Test Objective: Optimize the conversion rate for the email campaign "Discover the Geological Wonders of Sardinia with Our Exclusive Tour."*

* *Variable to Test: Email Subject*
	+ *Version A: Subject: "Discover the Geological Wonders of Sardinia with Our Exclusive Tour!”*
	+ *Version B: Subject: "Book Your Exclusive Tour in the Caves of Sardinia Now!”*
* *Test Duration: One week.*
* *Monitored Metrics:*
	+ *Open Rate: Version A: 25%. Version B: 28%.*
	+ *Click-Through Rate (CTR): Version A: 12%. Version B: 15%.*
	+ *Booking Conversion Rate: Version A: 8%. Version B: 10%,*
* *Results and Analysis:*
	+ *After a week of A/B testing, the results indicate that Version B performed better in key metrics:*
	+ *Increased Open Rate: Version B showed a 3% increase in the open rate, suggesting that the subject more focused on booking captured more attention.*
	+ *Increased Click-Through Rate: Version B achieved a 15% CTR, compared to Version A's 12%. The action-oriented subject stimulated greater interest.*
	+ *Increased Booking Conversion Rate: Version B demonstrated an increase in the booking conversion rate from 8% to 10%, indicating that the more direct approach contributed to converting more users into actual bookings.*
* *Decisions and Implementation: Based on the positive results, GeoExploreSardinia decides to implement Version B as the main subject for the email campaign. The more direct and action-oriented approach proved to be more effective in engaging users and prompting them to book geological tours in the caves of Sardinia.*

*This example illustrates how A/B testing can be used to optimize specific elements of an email campaign, enabling GeoExploreSardinia to make data-informed decisions to maximize the effectiveness of its marketing strategies.*

**EXAMPLE OF SYNCHRONIZATION FOR AN INTEGRATED PROMOTION: GEOEXPLORESARDINIA**

*Objective: Promote a new geological tour in the mountains of Sardinia.*

1. *SEO Activities:*
* *Keyword Research: Identify and optimize the website for relevant keywords such as "Geological Tours Sardinia," "Sardinian Mountain Exploration," etc.*
* *Website Content: Create landing pages on the website with detailed content about the new tour, including itineraries, geological features, and practical details for visitors.*
* *Link Building: Implement a link-building strategy to obtain backlinks from relevant geotourism sites, local guides, and travel blogs.*
1. *Social Media:*
* *New Tour Announcement: Create compelling announcements for the new tour and share them on major social channels like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.*
* *Engaging Visual Content: Publish engaging images and videos of the tour, showcasing breathtaking landscapes, unique geological formations, and participant testimonials.*
* *Community Engagement: Engage the geological community with surveys, quizzes, or social media contests, encouraging participation and sharing.*
1. *Email Marketing:*
* *Inclusion in Monthly Newsletter: Include the new tour in monthly newsletters sent to subscribers, with exclusive previews, discounts, or bonus content.*
* *Interest-Based Segmentation: Use specific segmentations based on geotouristic interests to send personalized emails to those who have previously shown interest in similar tours.*
1. *Integrated Results:*
* *Unified Metric Monitoring: Utilize analytics tools that allow unified monitoring of metrics, including website visits, clicks on social ads, email opens, and conversions.*
* *Cross-Channel Updates: Share updates across all channels, ensuring that the same information is communicated consistently and promptly.*
* *Real-Time Adjustments: Dynamically respond to detected data. For example, if social media ads are gaining a lot of attention, increase the advertising budget in that direction.*
* *Integrated Feedback: Collect feedback from all channels and use it to optimize future promotions.*

*This example illustrates an integrated and synergistic approach, where SEO, social media, and email marketing activities are synchronized to maximize the impact of promoting the new geological tour. Message consistency and real-time data-driven adjustments contribute to an effective integrated promotion campaign.*

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**HOW TO DELIVER THE CONTENT: Digital Marketing Strategies for Tourism Professionals**

 **COURSE OVERVIEW:** This training course aims to equip participants with basic digital marketing tools and strategies that could help them in their business.

THE CURRICULUM OF THIS SECTION IS DESIGNED FOR A **2-WEEK DURATION.**

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| **Week 1: Foundations of website planning & social media marketing** * Session 1: Website planning and creation
	+ Introduction to the course, objectives, and expectations.
	+ Lecture on the basics of website planning and creation for tour guides/agents.
	+ Practical examples.
* Session 2:Website planning and creation
	+ Hands on group activity: setting up a strategy for your own website as a tour guide.
* Session 3: Social media marketing
	+ Lecture on the basics of social media marketing.
	+ Practical examples.
* Session 4:Social media marketing
	+ Use of social media marketing for tour guides/agents.
	+ Hands on group activity: preparing a social media strategy for your own business.
 |
| **Week 2: Foundations of search engine optimization & e-mail marketing*** Session 5: Search Engine Optimization
	+ Lecture on the basics of search engine optimization.
	+ Practical examples.
* Session 6: Search Engine Optimization
	+ Technical aspects of SEO, best practices, and SEO trends.
	+ Hands on group activity: preparing the content for your website.
* Session 7: E-mail marketing
	+ Lecture on the principles of e-mail marketing.
	+ Practical examples.
* Session 8: E-mail marketing
	+ Hands on activity: preparation of an e-mail marketing campaign.
 |

**ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR TRAINERS:**

 Encourage active participation and foster engagement by facilitating group discussions and interactive activities.

**** Maintain participant engagement by incorporating scheduled breaks during each session.

**** Adjust the schedule as needed to accommodate guest speakers, field visits, or unexpected events.

**** Use real-world examples and case studies from the tourism industry to illustrate key concepts and demonstrate how digital marketing strategies can be applied effectively in practice.

**** Establish clear feedback mechanisms to gather input from participants on the course content, delivery methods, and overall learning experience, and use this feedback to make necessary adjustments and improvements.

**TIPS ON HOW TO DELIVER THE CONTENT:**

* Facilitate small peer-to-peer learning groups where attendees can collaborate, share experiences, and exchange best practices in applying digital marketing strategies to the tourism sector.
* Prepare simulation exercises or real-world scenarios that can be used during training sessions to simulate practical digital marketing challenges encountered in the tourism industry.
* Invite guest speakers from the tourism industry who have experience with digital marketing to share their insights, best practices, and success stories with the participants.
* Incorporate interactive elements such as polls, quizzes, and multimedia presentations to keep participants engaged and facilitate active learning.
* Include hands-on activities and exercises that allow participants to apply digital marketing techniques in simulated scenarios relevant to their roles as tour guides.
* Provide practical demonstrations of digital marketing tools and platforms commonly used in the tourism industry, such as social media management tools, email marketing platforms, and website analytics software.
* Allocate time for Q&A sessions where participants can ask questions, seek clarification, and discuss any challenges they may be facing in implementing digital marketing strategies as tour guides.
* Implement continuous assessment methods such as quizzes, assignments, and group projects to gauge participants' understanding and progress throughout the course.
* Provide follow-up resources such as additional readings, online tutorials, and practical guides to help participants further develop their digital marketing skills beyond the course.
* Encourage participants to reflect on how they can apply the digital marketing skills they have learned to enhance their roles as tour guides and improve the overall visitor experience.

**PRACTICAL TOOLS:**

WordPress: <https://wordpress.com/> - the most widely used and user-friendly content management system that helps you create and manage your website without knowledge of coding.

Mailchimp: <https://mailchimp.com> – email marketing platform and marketing automation tool that enables you design, send, and track email marketing campaigns.

Brevo (ex Sendingblue): <https://www.brevo.com>

Google’s Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide: https://developers.google.com/search

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

* Adam Clarke: SEO 2024: Learn search engine optimization with smart internet marketing strategies
* Ahref Blog: https://ahrefs.com
* Eric J. Scott: Email Marketing: Strategies to Capture and Engage Your Audience, While Quickly Building an Authority
* Litmus Blog: <https://www.litmus.com/blog>
* Moz Blog: https://moz.com/blog
* Matthew Paulson: Email Marketing Demystified: Build a Massive Mailing List, Write Copy that Converts, and Generate More Sales
* Peter Kent: SEO for dummies

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**TEST THE KNOWLEDGE: Digital Marketing Strategies for Tourism Professionals**

 **WEBSITE PLANNING AND CREATION**

* What are the benefits of a good website for a tour guide/agent?
* What is the purpose of a website for a tour guide/agent? How can it adhere to the business?
* What are the key elements of a successful tourism website, and how do they contribute to the overall user experience?
* Why is it important to share accurate and up-to date information on your website?
* What is target audience and why is it important to identify it?
* Discuss strategies for conducting user research and incorporating user-centered design principles into website planning for tourism businesses.
* How can website analytics and performance metrics be used to optimize website design and content for better engagement and conversion rates?

**SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**

* How can social media help tour guide/agent in their business?
* What are the benefits and challenges of using social media platforms for marketing tourism businesses?
* Share examples of effective social media marketing campaigns in the tourism industry. What strategies and tactics were used to engage audiences and drive results?
* What metrics can we use for analysis of our performance on social media and how can analysis help us in further activities?
* How can tourism professionals leverage user-generated content, influencer partnerships, and community engagement to enhance their social media marketing efforts?

**SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION**

* What does SEO stand for, and what is its primary goal for websites?
* Explain the importance of SEO in improving the online visibility and discoverability of tourism websites.
* Why is SEO particularly crucial for environmental guides offering geological tours?
* Provide an example of how SEO can be implemented in the content for a geological tour, including the title, meta description, and page content.
* What is the first crucial step in the search engine optimization process when promoting geological tour packages?
* Outline two actions that geological guide websites can take as part of an effective link-building strategy.
* Why is mobile optimization important for a geological tour website, and what is the purpose of creating evergreen content?
* Discuss best practices for conducting keyword research, optimizing website content, and building backlinks to improve search engine rankings for tourism-related keywords.
* How can tourism professionals monitor and measure the effectiveness of their SEO efforts using tools such as Google Analytics and Google Search Console?

**EMAIL MARKETING**

* What role does email marketing play in the overall digital marketing strategy for tourism professionals?
* How do targeted email campaigns benefit geotourism guides, and what strategies enhance audience engagement?
* Explain the significance of list segmentation in geotourism email marketing and its role in delivering personalized content.
* What practical skills have you gained for crafting successful geotourism email campaigns, and how would you approach content personalization?
* How does integrating email marketing with SEO and social media contribute to a more impactful geotourism marketing strategy?
* Which metrics would you analyse using analytics tools to measure the success of a geotourism email campaign?
* What is the importance of A/B testing in optimizing email campaigns, and can you provide a brief example scenario and its impact?
* Share examples of effective email marketing campaigns for tourism businesses. How were segmentation, personalization, and automation used to enhance the effectiveness of these campaigns?
* Discuss strategies for building and growing an email subscriber list, as well as crafting compelling email content that drives engagement and conversions.

**TIPS FOR LECTURER'S ASSESSMENT:**

* Design assessments that reflect real-world tasks or scenarios relevant to the course content. Authentic assessments allow students to demonstrate their understanding and apply their knowledge in practical contexts.
* Arrange presentations of the tasks assigned during course and encourage discussion among students.
* Work on practical projects, applying the knowledge to their case.

## **SECTION 3: Geo-Tourism Practical Applications and Field Education**

Section 3 focuses on hands-on learning with field communication, sample collection, and educational activities to improve student’s communication skills and enables them to provide enriching experiences to tourists while promoting sustainable geo-tourism.

This chapter outlines the learning objectives and outcomes for each module, offering an overview of the module contents and practical examples. It concludes with guidance on delivering the content and testing knowledge of the topics covered in Section 3.

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| **CHAPTER OVERVIEW** | **Module 1**: Field communication techniques**Module 2**: Sample identification techniques**Module 3**: Educational games and activities**How to deliver the content**: Geo-Tourism Practical Applications and Field Education**Test the knowledge**: Geo-Tourism Practical Applications and Field Education |

1.

## **MODULE 1: Field communication techniques**

Explore geotourism through effective communication techniques, enriching the experience and promoting nature appreciation.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Recognize and categorise fundamental rock types.
* Implement interactive communication techniques in geotourism.
* Utilise diverse media to enhance knowledge and appreciation in geotourism.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Demonstrate proficiency in identifying and categorising fundamental rock types in geotourism settings.
* Apply interactive communication techniques effectively, fostering engagement and knowledge exchange among geotourists.
* Showcase an enriched understanding and appreciation of geotourism using diverse media, contributing to a well-rounded educational experience.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Common communication techniques in geotourism, such as: field games and geotourism trails, loyalty programs, information boards, mobile applications, interactive information centres, field guides, educational stations, and virtual walks.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

*Loyalty Program in Land of Extinct Volcanoes Geopark: Become Explorer of the Land of the Extinct Volcanoes!*

1. ***Get your passport:*** *Children will receive it for free at the Sudetic Geoscience Centre, in guesthouses and restaurants in the Land of Extinct Volcanoes Geopark, as well as by participating in workshops.*
2. ***Collect stamps:*** *Stamps inside the passport can be obtained for participating in workshops, as well as for staying at certain guesthouses and dining in local restaurants.*
3. ***Collect stickers:*** *You will receive stickers for visiting interesting places in the Geopark – former volcanoes and other geosites, as well as historical landmarks.*
4. ***You deserve a medal!:*** *Prizes await those who collect a sufficient number of stamps and stickers: medals for Explorers of the Land of Extinct Volcanoes, crafted by local artists, available in bronze (wooden), silver, and gold (ceramic). You’ll receive your medal at the Sudetic Geoscience Centre.*

*More info:* [*https://youtu.be/lzTGMYhrEes*](https://youtu.be/lzTGMYhrEes)

## **MODULE 2: Sample Identification techniques**

The aim of this part of the course is to acquire knowledge about the types of rocks forming the lithosphere of our planet, as well as the ability to recognize these rocks in field conditions.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Distinguishing basic rock types.
* Identifying rock sample.
* Description of characteristics of rock samples.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Ability to recognize rock samples.
* Skill in describing macroscopic features of rock sample.
* Basic understanding of the processes shaping rocks within the lithosphere.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Classification of rocks and their characteristics.
* Igneous rocks.
* Sedimentary rocks.
* Organic sedimentary rocks.
* Metamorphic rocks.

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

*Observation of rocks in well-described locations.*

*Thoroughly describing rock samples based on structural, textural, and physicochemical characteristics.*

*Prioritisation of collecting in situ samples.*

## **MODULE 3: Educational Games & Activities**

During geotourism excursions, guided educational games play a crucial role, serving both school groups and providing educational entertainment for adults or families.

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| **LEARNING OBJECTIVES*** Understanding the role of educational games and activities in geotourism.
* Familiarity with various forms of educational activities, such as lectures, discussions, and hands-on experiments.
* Knowledge of outdoor workshops focused on geology, promoting engagement and interaction with geological features.
 |
| **LEARNING OUTCOMES*** Comprehensive Knowledge of Geotourism Education: Learners will gain a thorough understanding of the role and significance of educational games and activities in the context of geotourism.
* Practical Application of Geology Concepts: Participants will be equipped with practical knowledge and skills through outdoor geology workshops, including rock identification, geological mapping, and hands-on experiments, fostering a tangible connection with geological concepts.
* Effective Design and Implementation of Educational Games: Students and educators will learn how to design and implement educational games, ranging from basic to advanced, with a focus on geology. This knowledge aims to enhance the learning experience, making it enjoyable and impactful for diverse audiences.
 |

**MODULE CONTENT**

The module covers the following topics:

* Overview of educational activities for geotoruism education

**PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

***Game Name: "Geological Treasure Hunters"***

*Game Description: An educational adventure game encouraging participants to explore a geological trail, searching for geological "treasures." Suitable for both children and adults.*

*Preparation: Prepare a map of the geological trail with marked points of interest. Hide small geological "treasures" along the trail (colourful stones, minerals, etc.).*

*Game Rules: Divide participants into teams or individuals. Provide each team/player with a map. The goal is to find as many "treasures" as possible. Players navigate using the map, collecting and documenting found items. The team/player with the most "treasures" at the end wins.*

*Bonus Tasks: Include additional geology-related tasks or questions at destination points. Introduce elements of competition, such as time limits or scoring for different types of "treasures."*

*This game enhances geological learning while making the educational trail an exciting destination.*

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**HOW TO DELIVER THE CONTENT: Geo-Tourism Practical Applications and Field Education**

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** This training course aims to equip participants with knowledge and practical skills on communication skills and empower them to provide enriching experiences to tourists while promoting sustainable geotourism.

THE CURRICULUM OF THIS SECTION IS DESIGNED FOR A **2-WEEK DURATION.**

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| **Week 1: Field communication techniques & Sample identification techniques*** Session 1: Field communication techniques
	+ Introduction to the course, objectives, and expectations.
	+ Common communication techniques in geotourism.
	+ Practical examples.
* Session 2: Field communication techniques
	+ Practical examples.
* Session 3: Sample identification techniques
	+ Theoretical foundations.
	+ Presentation of rock samples and the description of their structural and textural features.
* Session 4: Sample identification techniques
	+ Field visit.
	+ Group reflection and discussion on the field experience.
 |
| **Week 2: Educational games and activities*** Session 5: Educational games and activities
	+ Lecture on educational games and activities in geotourism.
	+ Practical examples.
* Session 6: Educational games and activities
	+ Overview of case studies.
	+ Group reflection and discussion.
* Session 7: Educational games and activities
	+ Field visit.
	+ Group reflection and discussion on the field experience.
 |

**ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR TRAINERS:**

 Arrange periodic pauses throughout each session to uphold participant involvement.

 Encourage active participation through group discussions, Q&A sessions, and interactive activities.

 Allocate time for ongoing assessment, ensuring participants receive timely feedback.

 Organize a field visit to a local geologically interesting site or a museum to provide participants with hands-on experience and a more profound comprehension of on-site operations and interactions within the community. Host guest speakers with expertise in geology to provide comprehensive information on the topic.

**TIPS ON HOW TO DELIVER THE CONTENT**

**Module 1**

* In geoeducation, educators often include specialists with advanced academic qualifications. Oral narration of observed phenomena in the field is a widely accepted method for educating adult learners. Since Earth sciences are often perceived as challenging and not commonly included in general education, it's crucial for educators to use terminology understandable to participants. Presenting real-life examples and comparisons to common phenomena is essential.
* Visual aids enhance descriptions and make them more accessible. Many geological and geomorphological structures are not fully visible due to size, vegetation, and anthropogenic changes. Visual aids, such as illustrations, diagrams, maps, cross-sections, and depictions of past environmental states, help convey the dynamics of geological and geomorphological processes. Laminated prints are practical for field conditions.
* In field conditions, various types of measurements can be conducted, depending on environmental conditions, available measurement tools, and methods employed in different sciences.

**Module 2**

* The fundamental teaching method in this module should involve the presentation of rock samples and the description of their structural and textural features. It is important to note that some rocks may be classified under one name based on their chemical composition and formation process, yet they may differ in terms of structural and textural characteristics. Therefore, it is crucial to showcase the most commonly occurring forms of these rocks. The most effective way to present them is, of course, through live observation of the samples; digital materials such as videos and photos can be used as a secondary means.
* This module should be divided into three sections, each focusing on fundamental types of rocks. The theoretical information for each section should be condensed within a time frame of 15-20 minutes. Priority should be given to the presentation and description of rock samples, allocating a minimum of 60 minutes for each section. The average time for knowledge assimilation in this module should be around 270 minutes.

**Module 3**

* Scenario-Based Assessments: Develop scenario-based assessments related to geotourism, requiring participants to apply their knowledge and problem-solving skills in real-world situations. For example, present a hypothetical geotourism scenario and ask learners to propose educational activities or games suitable for the context.
* Field Performance Evaluations: Organise field-based evaluations where trainees can showcase their skills acquired through outdoor workshops. This may involve tasks such as identifying geological features, explaining geological processes, or demonstrating the ability to guide others in an outdoor educational setting.
* Case Studies and Analysis: Present case studies related to successful geotourism educational programs. Ask trainees to analyse these cases, identify key components contributing to success, and propose improvements or modifications based on their newly acquired knowledge.

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**TEST THE KNOWLEDGE: Geo-Tourism Practical Applications and Field Education**

 **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

* How can geotourism activities be designed to minimize environmental impact and promote responsible travel behavior?
* Identify examples of successful geotourism projects around the world and analyze their key features.
* How can experiential learning in the field enhance students' understanding of geological concepts and processes?
* Discuss different strategies for conducting effective field trips in geology education, including pre-trip preparation, on-site activities, and post-trip reflection.
* Share examples of innovative field education techniques that promote active engagement and critical thinking among students. How do these techniques contribute to a deeper understanding of geology?
* What are some key characteristics and properties used to identify different types of rocks in the field?
* How can educators facilitate hands-on rock sample identification activities that cater to diverse learning styles and skill levels?
* Discuss the benefits of incorporating educational games and activities into geology field education. How do these interactive methods enhance learning outcomes and student engagement?
* Share examples of educational games or activities that can be adapted for teaching rock identification skills in the field. How do these activities address different learning objectives and promote collaborative learning?

# **E-LEARNING PLATFORM**

E-learning platform can be accessed through the website <https://www.geotours-guides.com/>.

*Presentation of the e-learning platform. Technical requirements for delivery of the training course.*

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# **ANNEX**

## **ANNEX 1: Section 1 – Foundations of Geo-Tourism and Sustainable Tourism**

Module 1: Geo-Tourism

Geotourism is a form of sustainable tourism that focuses on promoting and experiencing the geological features, landscapes, and natural heritage of a destination. It emphasizes responsible travel that enhances the well-being of both visitors and the local communities while conserving the environment and preserving the cultural and geological authenticity of the area. Geotourism seeks to educate and engage tourists in understanding the geological processes that have shaped the earth’s features and landscapes over time.

The key aspects of geotourism:

* Geological and Cultural Exploration: Geotourism encourages tourists to explore and appreciate the unique geological formations, landforms, and landscapes of a destination. It also highlights the cultural aspects that are closely intertwined with the geological history of the area.
* Education and Interpretation: Geotourism aims to educate tourists about the geological history, processes, and significance of the destination. Interpretive signs, visitor centers, guided tours, and educational programs help convey geological knowledge to visitors.
* Sustainable Practices: Geotourism promotes sustainable tourism practices that minimize the impact on the environment and local communities. It encourages responsible behavior among tourists and supports initiatives that preserve the natural and cultural heritage.
* Community Engagement: Geotourism involves local communities in the tourism development process, ensuring that they benefit economically and socially from tourism activities. Locals become stewards of their geological and cultural assets.
* Conservation and Preservation: Geotourism advocates for the conservation and preservation of geological sites, landscapes, and ecosystems. It recognizes that responsible tourism can contribute to the protection of these valuable resources.
* Unique Experiences: Geotourism offers tourists authentic and enriching experiences by connecting them with the geological and cultural stories of the destination. This can include guided hikes, geological tours, and interactions with local experts.
* Scientific Research and Collaboration: Geotourism supports scientific research by creating opportunities for collaboration between scientists, educators, and the tourism industry. This contributes to the understanding and documentation of geological features.
* Appreciation of Natural Beauty: Geotourism fosters an appreciation for the beauty and complexity of nature’s geological wonders. It encourages visitors to view these features not just as static objects, but as dynamic results of earth processes.
* Promotion of Responsible Travel: Geotourism encourages travelers to follow ethical guidelines, such as staying on designated paths, avoiding damage to fragile environments, and respecting local cultures.
* Heritage Conservation: Geotourism helps preserve both natural and cultural heritage. By highlighting the geological significance of an area, it often indirectly leads to the protection of historical and cultural sites as well.

Module 2: The Importance of Geology

The Geological Society of London defines **Geology**, which is also known as “geoscience” or Earth science” as “the study of the structure, evolution and dynamics of the Earth and its natural mineral and energy resources”.

Relevance of geology: “Geology investigates the processes that have shaped the Earth through its 4500 (approximate!) years of history and uses the rock record to unravel that history”.

Multidisciplinary aspects of geology: a concise overview of the broad spectrum of fields related to geology:

* Engineering geology: broad disciplines including building and dam constructions, slope stability, mining and quarrying planning, road construction, roads, railways, coastal and many other aspects of the built environment.
* Environmental geology: the application of geological principles to mediating or solving environmental problems of water and land in or on which people, animals and plants live, that resulted from human activities or natural processes.
* Geochemistry: it examines the chemical composition of rocks and fluids and the chemical processes operating within the Earth and on its surface.
* Geochronology: the research of the age of rocks, fossils and sediments. Absolute geochronology uses radioactive isotope systems, whereas relative geochronology uses palaeomagnetism and stable isotope systems.
* Geomorphology/ Surface Processes: the scientific study of the origin and evolution of features formed by chemical and physical processes on or close to the Earth's surface.
* Geophysics: the study of the physics of the Earth, including its internal structure, earthquakes, gravity and geomagnetism. It can be deep (aiding understanding of the Earth’s core) or shallow, helping to survey archaeological sites. Geophysics is used to search for oil and mineral deposits.
* Hydrogeology: the branch of geology that deals with underground and surface water, its movement, behaviour and quality.
* Igneous Petrology: the study of igneous rocks that are formed from magma or lava.
* Metamorphic Petrology How rocks are affected by heat and pressure to produce the range of metamorphic rocks and minerals.
* Natural hazards: The characteristics and consequences of phenomena such as earthquakes, landslides, floods, volcanoes etc. and the key relevance of forecasting, resilience and mitigation measures of damage.
* Natural resources: The key sources of energy are oil, coal and natural gas, but uranium and alternative sources such as geothermal energy are also related to geology. Mining and quarrying are used to extract metals and minerals with applications from agriculture to high-tech industry.
* Oceanography: Includes ocean chemistry, ocean floor geology, meteorological oceanography and the study of climate change, as well as ocean waves and currents.
* Palaeontology: The study of fossils, from dinosaurs to microorganisms: how organisms are preserved in the rock record, and their importance as indicators of past environmental change
* Planetary science: The study of the geology of other celestial bodies (such as planets and asteroids) in our solar system and beyond.
* Remote Sensing: The use of aerial sensor technologies to detect and classify objects on Earth by means of imaging from satellites or aircraft. This is pivotal in many fields, from exploration for resources to geological mapping of the Earth or other planets or monitoring geological hazards.
* Sedimentology: The study of sediments, how they accumulate, how they become sedimentary rocks, the information they provide about past environments and their relevance for energy and other resources.
* Seismology: The study of seismic waves passing through the Earth from earthquakes, explosions or controlled sources, which can be used to predict earthquake hazards, map planetary interiors or explore resources.
* Stratigraphy: The study of the order, nature, and rates of change of geological events and processes. This is related to geological mapping of rocks exposed at the Earth's surface. Stratigraphy helps to determine the ages and field relations of rocks to construct geological maps and databases.
* Structural geology: Concerned with rock movement and deformation by folding and faulting, including the study of plate tectonics. How rocks respond to stress, both natural and man-made.
* Unconventional energy: This sector includes geothermal energy, wind power and tidal power. Sustainable energy sources are more and more relevant in current scenarios.
* Volcanology: The study of volcanoes, their location, formation and prediction, types of eruptions, and the sorts of rocks produced, plus associated hazards/societal impact.

Geology and cultural heritage: geocultural sites: defined by Reynard and Giusti - as all the sites where “the geocultural features interact with cultural elements (historical or archeological vestiges, cultural or religious monuments etc), and the geoheritage value joins the cultural value.

The alchemy of “the mix of natural and cultural values gives each its heritage importance leading to community support for its conservation and enhancement” (Aplin 2002) In a wider vision it has. A key role is the “heritage community” as defined by the Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society. In this perspective of combined cultural and environmental heritage elements of the geo-sites, it may be considered as the most complex and diversified type of cultural asset that has significant potentialities for attractive sustainable tourism destination mitigating the tourism pressure in the most popular tourism destination affected by over-tourism quite beyond their tourism carrying capacity.

A concise overview of the List of UNESCO Global Geoparks and Regional Networks (currently 195 geoparks in 48 countries).

Module 3: Geo-Tourism & Social Participation

**\*\*\*FRA**

Module 4: Ecology & Geology

**\*\*\*FRA – correct?**

Ecology (from Ancient Greek οἶκος (oîkos) ‘house’, and -λογία (-logía) ‘study of’)[A] is the study of the relationships between living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment. Ecology considers organisms at the individual, population, community, ecosystem, and biosphere level. Ecology overlaps with the closely related sciences of biogeography, evolutionary biology, genetics, ethology, and natural history. Ecology is a branch of biology, and it is not synonymous with environmentalism.

Among other things, ecology is the study of:

1. The abundance, biomass, and distribution of organisms in the context of the environment
2. Life processes, antifragility, interactions, and adaptations
3. The movement of materials and energy through living communities
4. The successional development of ecosystems
5. Cooperation, competition, and predation within and between species
6. Patterns of biodiversity and its effect on ecosystem processes

Ecology has practical applications in conservation biology, wetland management, natural resource management (agroecology, agriculture, forestry, agroforestry, fisheries, mining, tourism), urban planning (urban ecology), community health, economics, basic and applied science, and human social interaction (human ecology).

The word ecology (German: Ökologie) was coined in 1866 by the German scientist Ernst Haeckel. The science of ecology as we know it today began with a group of American botanists in the 1890s.[1] Evolutionary concepts relating to adaptation and natural selection are cornerstones of modern ecological theory.

Ecosystems are dynamically interacting systems of organisms, the communities they make up, and the non-living (abiotic) components of their environment. Ecosystem processes, such as primary production, nutrient cycling, and niche construction, regulate the flux of energy and matter through an environment. Ecosystems have biophysical feedback mechanisms that moderate processes acting on living (biotic) and abiotic components of the planet. Ecosystems sustain life-supporting functions and provide ecosystem services like biomass production (food, fuel, fiber, and medicine), the regulation of climate, global biogeochemical cycles, water filtration, soil formation, erosion control, flood protection, and many other natural features of scientific, historical, economic, or intrinsic value.

**Geology** (from Ancient Greek γῆ (gê) ‘earth’, and λoγία (-logía) ‘study of, discourse’)[1][2] is a branch of natural science concerned with Earth and other astronomical objects, the features or rocks of which it is composed, and the processes by which they change over time. Modern geology significantly overlaps all other Earth sciences, including hydrology, and so it is treated as one major aspect of integrated Earth system science and planetary science.

Geology describes the structure of the Earth on and beneath its surface, and the processes that have shaped that structure. It also provides tools to determine the relative and absolute ages of rocks found in a given location, and also to describe the histories of those rocks.[3] By combining these tools, geologists are able to chronicle the geological history of the Earth as a whole, and also to demonstrate the age of the Earth. Geology provides the primary evidence for plate tectonics, the evolutionary history of life, and the Earth’s past climates.

Geologists broadly study the properties and processes of Earth and other terrestrial planets and predominantly solid planetary bodies. Geologists use a wide variety of methods to understand the Earth’s structure and evolution, including field work, rock description, geophysical techniques, chemical analysis, physical experiments, and numerical modelling. In practical terms, geology is important for mineral and hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation, evaluating water resources, understanding natural hazards, the remediation of environmental problems, and providing insights into past climate change. Geology is a major academic discipline, and it is central to geological engineering and plays an important role in geotechnical engineering.

**Geology** is the scientific study of the Earth’s solid materials, including rocks, minerals, landforms, and the processes that shape and modify the planet’s surface. It encompasses a wide range of topics, from understanding the Earth’s history and evolution to exploring the dynamics of its interior. Geologists examine the physical, chemical, and biological processes that have shaped the Earth over billions of years. Here are some key aspects of geology:

**Earth’s History**: Geology provides insights into the history of Earth and the changes it has undergone over time. By studying rock layers, fossils, and other evidence, geologists reconstruct the geological timeline and the evolution of life.

**Plate Tectonics:** One of the fundamental concepts in geology, plate tectonics explains the movement of the Earth’s lithospheric plates, leading to the formation of continents, oceans, mountains, and earthquakes.

**Rock Types and Formation:** Geologists classify rocks into three main types—igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic—based on their origin and characteristics. They study how these rocks form and change over time.

**Mineralogy**: Geologists study minerals—the building blocks of rocks—to understand their properties, composition, and formation processes. This knowledge is essential for mineral exploration and resource management.

**Structural Geology:** This branch focuses on the study of rock deformation, faults, folds, and other structural features. It helps in understanding the forces that shape the Earth’s crust.

Sedimentology: Sedimentologists examine the processes of sedimentation and the formation of sedimentary rocks. They study how sediments are deposited, compacted, and cemented over time.

**Volcanology:** Volcanologists study volcanoes, their eruptions, and associated phenomena. This knowledge is crucial for assessing volcanic hazards and predicting eruptions.

**Geomorphology:** Geomorphologists investigate landforms and the processes that shape the Earth’s surface, including erosion, weathering, glaciation, and river dynamics.

**Geological Mapping:** Geologists create detailed maps of the Earth’s surface and subsurface to understand the distribution of rocks, structures, and features.

**Paleontology:** This branch involves the study of fossils to reconstruct past life forms and ecosystems. Paleontologists contribute to understanding evolutionary history.

**Geological Engineering:** Geologists collaborate with engineers to address geological challenges in construction, mining, and environmental remediation.

**Environmental Geology:** Geologists assess the impact of human activities on the environment and contribute to sustainable land use planning and resource management.

**Hydrogeology:** Hydrogeologists study the movement and distribution of groundwater, which is essential for water supply and environmental protection.

**Geological Exploration:** Geologists explore for mineral resources, oil, and natural gas reserves using various techniques, including geophysical surveys and drilling.

**Planetary Geology:** Beyond Earth, planetary geologists study the geological features and processes on other planets, moons, and celestial bodies.

Geology is a dynamic field that contributes to our understanding of Earth’s past, present, and future. It plays a critical role in addressing environmental challenges, managing natural resources, and predicting geological hazards.

Module 5: Eco-friendly Tourists

We must start with the UNWTO’s definition of eco-tourism and its 5 key features which are indeed endorsed in the geo-tourism paths:

* All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.
* It contains educational and interpretation features.
* It is generally, but not exclusively organized by specialized tour operators for small groups. Service provider partners at the destinations tend to be small, locally owned businesses.
* It minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment.
* It supports the maintenance of natural areas which are used as ecotourism attractions by:
	+ Generating economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes;
	+ Providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities;
	+ Increasing awareness towards the conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among locals and tourists.

A key element of reflection of the added value of ecotourism is that it fosters the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems through a market-based mechanism, activating also virtuous processes of circular economy. In fact it is an exceptional driver for strengthening communities and their local economies. A more active involvement of communities in the tourism value chain is pivotal for developing local economies and reduce unemployment. This will also improve the quality of life of the local communities, having also a catalytic influence in raising awareness and triggering policy formation at national level.

Eco-tourism mitigates one of the disadvantages of mass tourism which is the increasing exploitation of natural resources. Sustainable tourism is ensuring a balanced utilization of resources: natural, social and cultural, which is a very relevant issue and sets up long-term green eco-business environment. Reducing the over-consumption and waste avoids the cost of restoring long-term environmental damage and contributes to the quality of tourism.

The National Geographic society defines the geotourism approach as “tourism that sustains or enhances geographical character”- its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and well-being of its residents. This can be a starting point for defining the terms of reference for creating a perfect geo-path for eco-friendly tourism.

In fact, the definition of a good itinerary requires a background preliminary work of studying the key features of geodiversity present in the sites of the path, as well as its elements of abiotic nature for ensuring the most balanced tourism functions guided by the principles of nature protection. The enabling conditions of a good geo-path is a balanced management of the local natural resources with the involvement of the local “heritage community” and civil society organizations as well as with the coaching of experts which may activate and generate a fertile context for innovation, the overriding goal of which is a balanced and rooted sustainable economic development and a higher quality of life both for the experiential tourists and for the local communities.

Geological pedestrian paths have unique potentialities to introduce geo-heritage elements to the public, in particular intercepting the increasing request for sustainable experiential tourism by people attracted by knowledge-based tourism, combining the wellness experience of an attractive location and the positive feeling of movement.

When it is planned and it is set up a geopath for eco-friendly tourists, the following elements must be taken into account in a balanced way:

* the geo-heritage (environmental and cultural anthropic elements) has a remarkable aesthetic relevance;
* the geological/geomorphological significance can be easily understood by visitors with no geoscientific background;
* there is a low risk of deterioration as a result of human activities (tourism impact mitigation;
* there are good and attractive facilities and infrastructures to receive visitors, including those with disabilities;
* Geo-paths can be combined with other kinds of educational activities such as visitor centers, museums, theme parks, disused mines, audio-visual presentations and metaverse/augmented reality experiences with virtual 3D model.
* A wide array of educational potentialities due to the duality features of geology, which combines natural elements of the site and many related anthropic cultural heritage, represented by tangible built heritage and intangible heritage. In fact there is a potential educational leverage encompassing not only biology and geography, but also subjects such as history, physics, civics, chemistry and art.

For setting the enabling conditions for a suitable framework for an optimal geo-path for eco-friendly tourism, a useful tool can be the definition of a Geodiversity Action Plan (GAP), which encompasses in a holistic way all the above-mentioned geodiversity elements (geological, geomorphological, soil and hydrological eco-system, processes and interactions with the local community, systems of governance of the site and the relationships with all the involved actors/stakeholders. The geodiversity richness of the site is the unifying leitmotiv that is reflected in the alchemy of landscape and culture and it represents a key element of the local identity valorized and enhanced by the local community and the public and private stakeholders taking into account the existent environmental and cultural heritage present in the site.

A roadmap for the preparation of a Geodiversity Action Plan (GAP) can be as follows:

* Meeting with the pro-active involvement and consensus-building with all the local stakeholders;
* Preparation of a report describing the geodiversity of the potential site of geo-itinerary. The results of detailed fieldwork and a literature review should be included into a report that accurately describes the geological, geomorphological, hydrological, and soil features of the area;
* The sites that will have to be selected must be a potential geo-site or geodiversity site suitable for sustainable tourism (geo-tourism) and the related outdoor and educational activities. These sites should be assessed qualitatively from the scientific geological and geo-tourist point of view by using a set of descriptive criteria. Based on this, some of them can be proposed to be included in a wider tourism offer, activating circular economies and exploit whereas the sites have potentialities which are suitable for further development.
* The following step is for discussing and open confrontation of the completed report with stakeholders. Their comments and feedback are pivotal for the consensus building of the local communities and of all the involved stakeholders with a participatory approach in order to endorse the goals of the GAP, creating the enabling conditions to define an accurate SWOT analysis.
* The final step of this process is represented by designing and discussing ad hoc activities supporting the understanding and conserving the geodiversity and its rational and sustainable use (geotourism development, geodiversity and geo-heritage promotion, environmental education and programs for local schools, guided tours, presentation of the GAP, local geodiversity and geo-heritage at various meetings, on web pages of the organizations, on local press, preparation of information panels and leaflets, possibilities of involvement of target groups as volunteers, and so on.

As a final reflection, an accurate GAP may also attract entrepreneurs to invest in the eco-system of the geo-site, such as facilities for accommodation and food along the designed itinerary.

Module 6: Geo-Tourism & Sustainability

Geotourism is a nature tourism grounded on local geology, landforms or landscapes, whether in rural areas, but also in towns and cities were built cultural heritage (palaces, city walls, towers, fortresses) was constructed with geological materials were used as building stones. This recent type of tourism, geo-tourism has become more relevant for its feature of its inclusiveness of the social and cultural elements of the environment, which has been endorsed by UNESCO into the network of UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGp).

UNESCO Global Geoparks are “single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development”.

Geoparks represent an excellent example of sustainability because they enhance and raise awareness on the importance of the key elements that constitute geo-sites such as the sustainable use of the limited resources of the earth and the consequent relevance of empowering the local communities as agents of promotion of the environmental and cultural heritage of the sites, and at the same time activates circular economy practices with also beneficial results of employment.

Geo-tourism itself has an intrinsic element of sustainability because it is devoted to the exploration of the geological features of a specific geological site or itinerary. In fact, geo-tourism promotes a deep understanding of the environment, nature and culture.

A very positive element of geo-tourism is that it is a sustainable tourism that promotes an integrated experience of understanding of the environment, nature and culture. At the same time it also raises awareness, consensus building and appreciation of the need for the conservation and preservation of natural resources.

The recent popularity of geo-tourism is also due to the trend of more demand of tourism experiences that focuses on creating meaningful and immersive experiences for travellers.

Taking into account the peculiarity that the touristic experience of geological site includes visit, learning and didactical activities, appreciating and engaging on the geosites, it became for a tourist an unique, authentic and transformative experience.

In order to understand the sustainability features of geo-tourism we must take into account its three key elements:

* geotourism is geologically based (that is, based on the earth’s geoheritage);
* sustainable (i.e. economically viable, community-enhancing and fosters geoconservation and preservation of the surrounding environment);
* educational (achieved through geo-interpretation, didactical activities, field activities).

Geotourism is based on the earth’s geological tangible heritage with its wide spectrum of typologies of its geological forms and features and the continuous ongoing processes. We have to make a clear distinction between ecotourism which occurs in and depends on a natural setting, and geotourism, may occur in either a natural or an urban setting. An example can be the built heritage, such as churches, towers, and buildings with local geological stones.

The tourism geosites ecosystem offers an unique opportunity of local community active involvement in tourism as they perceive the local economic, social and conservation benefits and potentialities in geotourism development, offering the possibility for residents of income generation, jobs and skill development.

Geotourism therefore fosters economic viability eco-systems, community enhancement and geoconservation. The challenge to geotourism in any region or country is to develop its tourism capacity and attractiveness, and the quality of its products without adversely affecting the geo-environment that maintains and nurtures it. A holistic approach is essential to the planning, development and management of geotourism.

The involvement of local communities has different beneficial effects, which go beyond the local income and the activation of synergies of local economies. It is beneficial also for the protection of the environment, but mostly important is the improvement of the quality of the immersive tourist experience. In fact, the interaction of the tourist with local communities leads to a experiential tourism which match the visitor's interest and provides a sense of personal accomplishment thereby creating their own unique memories having experienced a truly authentic experience and getting know the local culture. It is a mutual process where tourists can help communities to achieve positive economic and social outcomes whilst preserving the authenticity and local culture. Furthermore, the same satisfied immersive tourist that enjoyed their unique experience in the geosite are the first and more enthusiastic »ambassadors« of promoting the site with their circle of friends and also with the extensive use of social-medias, reporting and documenting their unique experience.

Geoitineraries are places that are off the beaten mass-tourism paths, creating an immersive experience which build a connection to a site rather than just to see it, appreciating also its intangible heritage values. Local communities can become involved in geotourism operations and in the provision of knowledge, services, facilities and products. Geotourism can also generate income for resource conservation management, in addition to social and cultural benefits. The contribution may be financial with a part of the cost of the tour helping to subsidize a geoconservation project. Alternatively, it could consist of practical help in the field with the tourists being involved in geological data collection and/or analysis.

The educational activities in geosites with a specific focus on earth education and geo-interpretation are key tools in creating an enjoyable and meaningful geotourism experience. Geotourism attracts people who wish to interact with the earth's environment in order to develop their knowledge, awareness and appreciation of it. By extension, geotourism should ideally lead to positive action for the earth by fostering enhanced conservation awareness, which is now pivotal in a contest of climate change and geo-hazards which may pose a threat to human life, built settlements and the environment, taking into account phenomena such as coastal erosion, landslides, earthquakes,

The experiences of the geosites have demonstrated a common patterns that tourists who participate in geotours are generally interested in interacting with local communities as well as viewing landforms and other geological features. This immersive tourism of the geosites has an active involvement of the local »heritage community« with a pro-active interaction with local people through viewing geo-attractions or participating in related activities. Most of the time the local guides are often appreciated by geotourists as they can provide an enhanced understanding of the surrounding abiotic, biotic and cultural environment.

In this perspective, geotourism may be viewed and perceived as a way in which geology can be conserved and managed, largely through the efforts of local people and other relevant public and private stakeholders.

## **ANNEX 2: Section 2 – Digital Marketing Strategies for Tourism Professionals**

Module 1: Website planning and creation

1. **WEBSITE – PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE**

Websites play a central role in the digital age, delivering a wide array of advantages to businesses, organizations, and individuals. A website represents a marketing and communication tool for tour guides and agents, allowing them to reach a broader audience, offer essential information, facilitate communication, and build trust with potential customers. A well-crafted website with reliable information is essential for brand recognition and promotion while it also builds trust and credibility among visitors.

Websites are invaluable tools with a wide range of benefits. For a tour guide/agency, a good website ensures:

* Increased visibility. Online presence allows to reach a broader audience and increase exposure to potential clients as it is available at all times. It helps build brand awareness and recognition.
* Credibility and trust. A good website with accurate information develops trust and credibility among clients. Reliable information on your business, products/services, expertise, and contact information legitimizes your business and conveys professionalism.
* Improved customer experience. By providing essential and up-to-date information a good website improves customer experience.
* Promotion and sales of products/services. It serves as a communication and marketing tool. It is also an opportunity to draw customers’ attention and a point of contact. It serves as a cornerstone for marketing efforts.
1. **UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE AND GOALS**

Nowadays, the Internet is a widely used source of information for planning trips and researching destinations. Therefore, having a good, reliable website is essential for tour guides/agents to reach their target audience. Planning is a crucial step in the website development process. It is important that the website reflects the main characteristics and distinctive advantages and that it contains the content and features that are useful and interesting for the potential clients.

Before creating the website, it is important to articulate the purpose of your website clearly. Understanding the 'why' behind your website will guide all subsequent decisions. As a tour guide/agency, you may consider building one of the following types of websites:

* Business website – to promote business and its services.
* Personal website – to showcase your work and skills.
* Blog – to share your knowledge through articles.

Establish measurable goals: what do you want to achieve with your website (e.g. increased traffic, user engagement, sales…)? The goals should be the basis for how the website will be structured (“What is the purpose of my website? How do I best explain my offer? What do I want to highlight?”).

Next, it is necessary to identify and understand who your customers (target audience) are. Target audience (target market) is a specific group of potential customers that share common demographic, psychographic, and behavioural characteristics that make them more likely to be interested in and receptive to the product/service offered. Knowing the characteristics and interests of the audience that you are addressing enables you to prepare tailored content, design and choose the functionalities that meet their needs and preferences.

1. **TECHNICAL FOUNDATIONS OF WEBSITE CREATION AND STRUCTURE**

To set up the website you shall select the web host – a service that makes your website available on the internet.

* Shared hosting: suitable for small businesses with small websites, cheaper, slower but good for a start.
* VPS hosting: own virtual server, allows you more control and customize your website, faster, more expensive.
* Dedicated hosting: own physical server, full control over your web server, most expensive type of hosting, ideal for large businesses.

Choose a domain name that reflects your brand and is easy to remember. A domain name is the web address that people use to access your website (example: \*yourbrand\*.com).

To create the website, you would need a Content Management System (CMS) – a software that helps you create and manage your website without knowledge of coding. The most widely used system is WordPress (over 40% of all websites are created with WordPress, other CMS: Joomla, Drupal…). It offers various themes and plugins that would allow you to customize the layout and functionality of the website.

To display the content effectively, the structure of the website needs to be logical and intuitive for easy navigation. Visualise the customer’s journey on your website to ensure a good user experience that will lead to the goal of your website (e.g. book your tour). User Experience Design (UX Design) plays a pivotal role in achieving this objective. It involves understanding user needs and behaviours, employing elements like information architecture and visual design, and conducting usability testing and research. As this requires special knowledge and skills, you may consider working with a designer that has experience in this field.

Since users can access the website on various devices, it is necessary that the website is responsive and adapted to different screen sizes (computer, tablet, mobile phone). The design of the website should be both: appealing to the audience and should serve its purpose.

1. **CONTENT STRATEGY**

The content strategy must align with the goals of your website and resonate with your target audience. The content is what makes a website useful, relevant, and interesting. It may contain a brief overview of the company, feature customer feedback, or present your top products. As a tour guide or tour agent you may prepare tour descriptions, include appealing photos, and provide contact and booking information.

It is essential to align content with the brand's purpose and values to construct a strong brand identity. Researching keywords and phrases that are relevant to the intended audience and including them in the content will help make it more visible in search results (SEO – Search Engine Optimization). The information should be accurate, unique, and well-written to benefit the potential customer. Focus on creating high-quality, sharable content, which you may promote through your other channels – e.g. social media, email, … Include calls to action where required and aligned with your marketing goals.

1. **SECURITY AND MAINTENANCE**

Before launching the website consider testing it in different browsers and devices to ensure compatibility and responsiveness. The website needs ongoing maintenance and updates. Keep the entire system up to date by applying regular updates to your web server, operating system, and any software components, including plugins and themes—Configure automatic updates to speed up the sending of basic security patches. Practice security updates to promptly address vulnerabilities and avoid loss of data. Since this work may require specific skills and knowledge, it is worth considering collaborating with an experienced developer. Optimize the performance of your website by monitoring and identifying areas for improvement. Actively seek user feedback to pinpoint areas for improvement and enhance overall usability.

With proper management and a proactive approach to security and maintenance, you will ensure a secure, efficient, and user-friendly online presence that will help your brand building.

Module 2: Social media marketing

1. **SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**

Social media is a collection of online applications and technologies which enable the generation and sharing of user generated content. Social media may be a beneficial and practical instrument for businesses or brands to build and maintain social and emotional connections with customers in order to create a strong and long-lasting relationship with them. Organizations can leverage the potential of social media by investing in their online presence, crafting more focused campaigns, communicating directly with consumers, starting direct sales initiatives, and gaining valuable insights into how customers perceive and value a brand. Additionally, organizations can use social media to target specific goals, including customer acquisition and retention.

Social media marketing is the practice of developing content for social media platforms in order to promote products and/or services, foster communication with the target audience, and generate traffic to the business. It is the use of social media channels and software to produce, communicate, distribute and sell products/services. New platforms and features are being added to the social media marketing on a daily basis, making it a dynamic and changing field.

Social media is an essential part of marketing strategy. The benefits of social media marketing include:

* Rapid spread of information through viral marketing - the interaction between the company and consumers enables the company to react quickly to market needs. The connectivity of various social networks also enables information to spread even faster.
* Cost efficiency - with the use of social networks, it is possible to reach a large number of consumers at low costs.
* Increasing brand awareness – creating brand loyalty, directs traffic to your website.
* Address and advertise to people who are interested in your product/service – allows to target the audience that may have higher potential to purchase your product/service.
* Build relationship with your customers – interaction on the posts, answering their questions, ask for their opinions.
* Reaching new customers – it helps reach new segments of customers who may not be reached through traditional channels.

Nevertheless, social media marketing requires time and knowledge to achieve the desired outcome. Strategic approach is essential.

1. **STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**

As any other type of marketing, social media marketing requires a strategic approach as well.

**STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.** It is necessary to define the goals and objectives, target audience and prepare a content plan – what will be communicated, to who and what do we want to achieve with it.

The initial step to preparing a social media marketing strategy is to define goals that are aligned with the overall business objectives. Social media marketing goals need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Examples of social media marketing goals:

* Relationship building. Building relationships with consumers.
* Brand building. Raise brand awareness, boost its recognition, and increase brand loyalty.
* Driving website traffic. Lead consumers to your website.
* Promotion. Promote the offer and provide discounts/special offers to consumers, attract potential customers.
* Visibility. Share important information about your business and manage customer’s perceptions and satisfaction.
* Market research. Social media tools allow to learn about customers profile – demographic, behavioural characteristics, their needs, find niche audience.

Before starting a social media campaign, a thorough understanding of the target audience is paramount. This is a specific group of potential customers that share common demographic, psychographic, and behavioural characteristics that make them more likely to be interested in and receptive to the product offered. Once you know who are the customers that are interested in your product/service, you can conduct market research to understand their preferences, needs, motivation and identify your “competitors”. This enables you define the “persona” to whom you will communicate.

Also, it is useful to conduct research of your competition to understand what they are doing well and get to know what is expected in your industry. Identify their weak points to see how you can do better.

**CHOOSE THE ADEQUATE SOCIAL MEDIA.** After doing market research and defining the target group, choose the social media platforms that are most used by the target audience.

Only after doing market research and defining the target group, you can choose the social media platforms that are most used by your target audience. There are different kinds of social media (social networks, blogs, podcasts, microblogging, wikis etc.). The most widely used social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, X, Pinterest, TikTok, YouTube, …

These platforms allow sharing of rich visual content, blogs, vlogs, updates and timely information, travel inspirations, tips, and promotions. They provide a space for community building and engagement with potential travellers. Each platform offers unique advantages, and the choice depends on the target audience and content strategy of the travel agency or tour guide. It is essential to stay updated on platform demographics and trends for effective social media marketing.

**CONTENT CREATION, DISTRIBUTION AND PROMOTION.** The content needs to be engaging and of high-quality, most importantly it should be interesting and relevant to the target audience. Multiple ways of content sharing are available (text, video, photo…). Consider organic or paid advertising.

Based on the characteristics of the target group and their interests, you can identify the content and type of content that would be interesting for them and prepare a Social Media Marketing Plan (what to post, where to post, how often to post…). In a visually driven digital era, imagery and multimedia content are essential. High-quality visuals, videos, and interactive content will enhance engagement and create a lasting impression on potential customers.

Leveraging the vast user base of platforms, social media advertising enables precise targeting, allowing brands to reach specific demographics with tailored messages. From sponsored posts and carousel ads to immersive video campaigns, social media advertising allows to captivate audiences, drive engagement, and ultimately convert interest into action.

**COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT.** Build a relationship with the audience through personalization and storytelling, respond to the messages and comments, and encourage interaction.

Social media allow direct interaction with the audience. Creating a two-way dialogue enhances your credibility and positions you as an authority in your field.

**ANALYSIS.** Data and insights that social media platforms enable allow us to analyse and improve the marketing efforts and (if needed) adjust the marketing strategy.

Social media platforms offer useful analytical tools that allow to analyse the performance and are a basis for future decisions. Which metrics to track depends on your marketing goals. Some of the most common metrics to track:

* Engagement: click, comments, likes, and replies on social media posts.
* Reach: number of users who have seen your content.
* Followers: number of users that follow your profile/page and see your content regularly in their feed.
* Impressions: how many users have been exposed to your content.
* Shares: how many posts from your profile do your followers take from your profile and share with their networks.
* Video views: how many times a video has been watched (on media where you can share videos).

Looking at social media data helps you learn from what worked (or didn't work) in the past. It can guide you to making better decisions for what you should do next to achieve the goals of your marketing activities. By checking how people engage with content, what they like, and how they feel, you can get valuable insights that shape your future strategies.

Module 3: Search engine optimization (SEO)

1. **INTRODUCTION TO SEO FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDES**
	1. **Fundamental concepts of SEO and its importance for environmental guides**

SEO is the acronym for Search Engine Optimization, which means optimizing for search engines. It consists of a set of practices and techniques aimed at improving the visibility of a website on search engines such as Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.

The main goal of SEO is to position a website in the top positions of search results when users enter specific keywords related to the site's content. This increases the likelihood that users will click on the link and visit the site. Therefore, it is the foundation on which the visibility of any website is built. For environmental guides specializing in geological tours, understanding the basic concepts of SEO is crucial to ensure that their service shines online. SEO involves a series of practices optimized for search engines, ranging from careful keyword selection to site structure and link building. It is the primary means through which guides can highlight their offerings of geotourism experiences in a sea of online content.

**1.2 Relevance of SEO for online visibility in geological sites**

In the context of geological sites, online visibility is the key to reaching an interested and passionate audience. Environmental guides offering geological tours must consider that many of their potential clients will initiate their search online. SEO, therefore, becomes the primary vehicle through which these guides can be discovered by those specifically seeking geological experiences. Properly optimizing their website means being present in search results when geology enthusiasts search for the best guides to explore unique geological sites. In summary, SEO is the beacon that guides potential geological tourists toward environmental guides offering tailor-made experiences.

1. **SEO STRATEGIES FOR GEOLOGICAL TOUR PACKAGES**

**2.1 Identification of keywords related to geological sites**

The accurate identification of keywords is the first crucial step in the search engine optimization process. To effectively promote our geological tour packages in Southern Sardinia, we must select keywords that reflect the interests of our audience. Terms such as "geological tour Sardinia," "limestone formations," "prehistoric fossils," and similar, need to be strategically integrated into our content, ensuring that our online presence aligns with relevant searches by geology enthusiasts.

**2.2 On-page optimization, including titles, meta descriptions, and site structure**

On-page optimization is crucial to ensure that our content is easily indexable and understandable for search engines. Accurate and descriptive titles, engaging meta descriptions, and a well-organized page structure are fundamental. For example, a title like "Geological Exploration in Southern Sardinia: Unique Tours among Limestone Formations and Ancient Fossils" provides clarity about the content of our site. Meta descriptions should offer a captivating preview of the tour, encouraging users to click and learn more.

**2.3 Link building**

Link building is a key practice to increase the credibility of our site in the eyes of search engines. By focusing on geotouristic links, we can collaborate with other tourism operators, local authorities, or geological associations. Links from authoritative sources in the geological sector will help position us as a reliable reference. Additionally, creating internal links between pages on our site, such as those dedicated to specific geological features of our tours, will contribute to improving our online visibility and user navigation.

1. **OTHER SEO IMPLEMENTATIONS AND MONITORING**

**3.1 Evergreen content and mobile optimization**

To keep our online presence aligned with the latest trends and ensure a lasting impression, we can adopt advanced SEO strategies. The creation of evergreen content, meaning content that remains current and relevant over time, ensures that our site remains a valuable resource for geology enthusiasts. Additionally, we should invest in mobile optimization to ensure that our site is easily accessible and navigable on mobile devices. With an increasing number of users searching for and booking tourist experiences through mobile devices, optimizing our platform for this mode is essential to effectively reach our audience.

**3.2 Implementation of structured data to highlight geological features**

The implementation of structured data is a step forward in presenting our content to search engines. By using appropriate markup we can highlight the geological features of our tours directly in search results. These structured data provide richer information to users and can enhance the visibility of our site through specific searches related to geology in Southern Sardinia.

Structured data in SEO practice refers to a type of markup added to the HTML code of a web page to provide more detailed information about the structure and content of the site to search engines. This markup enables search engines to better understand the meaning and context of the data present on the page. The most common standards used to implement structured data include Schema.org and JSON-LD. In the context of geology and tours, the implementation of structured data might involve using specific markers to highlight information such as the type of geological tour offered, destinations visited, prominent geological features, user reviews, and more. These structured data can then appear in search results as rich snippets, providing users with more detailed and engaging information directly on the search results page.

**3.3 Performance monitoring using specific analytics and KPIs**

Performance monitoring is essential to assess the effectiveness of our SEO strategies. We use web analytics tools to gather data on traffic, user origin, and on-site behavior. Specific key performance indicators (KPIs) for geological tours may include the number of online bookings, the average duration of visits to specific tour pages, and the conversion rate. Regularly analyzing this data allows us to adapt and continually optimize our strategies to maximize our site's impact in search results and provide high-quality geotourism experiences.

Module 4: Email marketing

1. **INTRODUCTION TO EMAIL MARKETING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDES**

**1.1 The role of email marketing in promoting geological tour packages**

Email marketing assumes a pivotal role in the promotional strategy for geological tour packages, providing a direct and highly personalized channel for communication with the target audience. Through this medium, there is an opportunity to comprehensively present tours, highlighting the most captivating aspects and engaging potential customers in a targeted manner. In addition to conveying detailed information, a continuous connection with the audience is maintained. By utilizing periodic newsletters, updates on new destinations, and exclusive offers, an interactive and engaging experience is created. Message customization enables adaptation to the specific needs of each recipient, establishing deeper and more lasting connections. By closely monitoring user responses and interactions, the communication strategy is continually optimized, ensuring a tailored service that meets the growing expectations of the audience.

**1.2 Advantages of email marketing and its importance in communicating with the audience**

The benefits of email marketing in the geotourism context are manifold. This channel allows us to build deeper relationships with our audience by providing personalized content based on specific interests related to geological sites. Additionally, email marketing is an effective tool for keeping the audience informed about new tours, special promotions, and events, maintaining continuous engagement, and fostering long-term customer loyalty.

**Some Email Marketing Benefits for a geological tour website (e.g. GeoExploreSardinia):**

1) Direct Communication with the Interested Audience: Thanks to email marketing, we can communicate directly with those who have expressed interest in geological tours in Sardinia. Tool: We regularly send newsletters with updates on new destinations, upcoming tours, and special offers directly to our potential customers' email inbox.

2) Content Personalization: Email marketing allows us to customize messages based on the specific interests of our customers. Tool: We segment our list based on geotourism preferences, sending specific content about caves, mountains, or beaches depending on the user's preferences.

3) Special Promotions and Exclusive Offers: We use email marketing to inform our customers about special promotions and exclusive offers. Tool: We send periodic emails with exclusive discount codes for our tours, encouraging early bookings.

4) Feedback and Reviews: We gather direct feedback from our customers through surveys and reviews. Tool: After each tour, we send a follow-up email with a brief survey to collect feedback on their experience, which we can use to improve our services.

5) Updates on New Tours and Destinations: Email marketing allows us to quickly inform our customers about new tours and destinations. Tool: We send immediate communications when launching new geological tours or adding new destinations to our offerings.

6) Brand Building and Loyalty: We use email marketing to build our brand and maintain a continuous connection with customers over time. Tool: We send periodic newsletters sharing success stories, behind-the-scenes insights, and in-depth information about Sardinian geology, contributing to creating an emotional bond with our audience.

7) Analysis of Performance Metrics: We use analytics tools to monitor the performance metrics of our email campaigns. Tool: We analyze opens, clicks, conversion rates, and more to continuously optimize our strategies and maximize the effectiveness of our campaigns.

1. **EMAIL MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR GEOLOGICAL TOUR PACKAGES**

**2.1 Building targeted lists with segmentation based on geotourism interests**

In the geotourism context, building targeted email lists is crucial. We can employ advanced segmentation strategies to categorize our audience based on specific interests related to geological sites. This precision allows us to send highly relevant messages, providing personalized information and exclusive offers to groups of potential customers with similar interests. Here is an example on how to perform this segmentation:

1) User Data Analysis: Gather detailed user data, including specific interests related to geotourism. This data can be acquired through voluntary sign-ups, surveys, or past interactions.

2) Interest Categorization: Create meaningful categories of geotourism interests. For example, you could have categories like "Caves and Caverns," "Mountains and Rocky Landscapes," "Beaches and Coastal Formations."

3) Integration with Email Management System: Ensure that your email management system supports dynamic segmentation based on interests. This will allow you to automatically update lists based on user preferences.

4) Addition of Preference Options: Include clear options in your emails or on your website that allow users to select interest categories. For instance, you can include a subscription form allowing users to check the geotourism categories that interest them.

5) Dynamic Segmentation: Set up rules for dynamic segmentation in your email management system. For example, if a user selects "Caves and Caverns," they will be automatically included in the corresponding list.

6) Content Personalization: Create specific email content for each interest category. Tailor images, descriptions, and calls-to-action to reflect the geotourism preferences of each segment.

7) Campaign Testing: Conduct A/B tests on different email variants for each interest category. Evaluate performance metrics to understand which types of content work best with each segment.

8) Interaction Monitoring: Monitor user interactions with emails closely. Track opens, clicks, and conversions to better understand what stimulates the interest of each segment.

9) Periodic Updates: Periodically ask users to update their preferences. Interests may change over time, and this ensures that your lists are always up-to-date.

10) Privacy Respect and Consent: Ensure explicit user consent for the collection and use of their personal information. Adhere to privacy regulations, such as GDPR.

Segmenting your lists based on geotourism interests will not only enhance the effectiveness of your email marketing campaigns but also increase user satisfaction, as they receive relevant and interesting content.

**2.2 Designing compelling campaigns with customization related to geological sites**

The design of email campaigns is a crucial art in our marketing approach. Every message is carefully crafted to reflect the unique features of the geological sites offered in our tours. From graphics to special offers, the visual element is integrated to create a memorable impact, capturing the recipient's attention and stimulating interest in geotourism experiences.

**2.3 Campaign automation**

Automation is the cornerstone of a modern and efficient approach to email campaign management. It involves implementing automated processes that dynamically respond to user behavior in real time. This flexibility allows for personalized interactions with the audience, providing immediate and contextually relevant responses. A concrete example is the ability to automatically send personalized follow-ups after a booking or provide educational content on geology before a tour, creating a gradual and targeted engagement.

In addition to improving operational efficiency, automation plays a crucial role in ensuring consistent and timely communication with our audience. The automatic response to user behaviors ensures that each contact receives relevant information based on their specific interactions and interests. This not only streamlines workflows but also increases the relevance of communications, contributing to building a deeper and more personalized connection with our target audience. Therefore, automation not only saves time but also enhances the quality and effectiveness of our communication strategy, ensuring a more rewarding user experience that aligns with the expectations of our audience.

1. **ANALYSIS AND INTEGRATION IN GEOTOURISM EMAIL MARKETING**

**3.1 Using specific metrics to assess the performance of geotourism campaigns**

Measuring the effectiveness of our email campaigns is crucial for the overall success of our geotourism marketing. We can utilize specific metrics such as open rate, click-through rate, and conversions directly correlated to bookings for geological tours. These indicators provide us with a clear insight into the engagement of our audience and guide us in the continuous optimization of our communication strategies.

**3.2 A/B testing and how to adapt strategies based on results obtained**

A/B testing is a fundamental tool for progressively improving the performance of our campaigns. We experiment with test variations for subject lines, content, and call-to-action elements, closely observing which approach resonates most with our audience. We continuously adapt our strategies based on the collected data, ensuring that each email sent is optimized to elicit the maximum response from geology enthusiasts interested in our tours.

**3.3 Synchronization with SEO activities and other marketing channels for integrated promotion**

The integration and synchronization of email marketing activities with other strategies is essential for a synergistic promotion. We can coordinate our email campaigns with SEO optimization to ensure consistency in the conveyed message. Additionally, we can synchronize social media activities to amplify our online presence, utilizing platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to reach a broader audience of geology enthusiasts. This integration allows us to maximize the overall impact of our geotourism marketing initiatives.

## **ANNEX 3: Section 3 – Geo-Tourism Practical Applications and Field Education**

Module 1: Field communication techniques

In the field of geotourism, which involves tourism related to the exploration and discovery of geological, geomorphological, and other interesting natural aspects of a particular area, there are several communication techniques that aid in the exchange of information among various participants and the interested audience. Here are some communication techniques in geotourism:

1. **Field Games and Geotourism Trails**: Creating field games, puzzles, or geotourism quizzes that engage tourists and make knowledge acquisition attractive and interactive.
2. **Loyalty Programs:** Introducing loyalty programs that reward tourists for active participation in geotourism educational activities, such as workshops or visits to geotouristic sites.
3. **Information Boards:** Placing informational boards on geotourism trails or at strategic locations to provide information about the geology, geography, natural history, and other interesting facts about the area. These boards may also include maps, drawings, or photographs to enrich the tourist experience.
4. **Mobile Applications:** Developing specialised mobile applications that provide interactive information about geotourism attractions. These applications may include maps, descriptions of geological points, photos, videos, and navigation features, enabling tourists to explore independently.
5. **Interactive Information Centres:** Establishing interactive information centres in geotouristic areas. These centres may feature interactive displays, multimedia presentations, geological models, and exhibits that help tourists better understand the specifics of the region.
6. **Field Guides:** Hiring field guides who have knowledge of geology, natural history, and other relevant issues related to the geotouristic area. These guides can tailor information to the interests and knowledge level of the tourist group.
7. **Educational Stations:** Setting up educational stations on geotourism trails, where tourists can learn more about specific aspects of the geology of the area. These stations may include exhibits, geological models, or interactive presentations.
8. **Virtual Walks:** Creating online virtual tours that allow for remote exploration of geotourism attractions. This is particularly useful for individuals who cannot personally visit the area but are interested in its geological aspects.

Module 2: Sample identification techniques

1. **CLASSIFICATION OF ROCKS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS**

Rocks, depending on the way they are formed, are divided into:

* igneous,
* sedimentary,
* metamorphic.

**IGNEOUS ROCKS** are formed as a result of the solidification of magma and processes directly related to it, and they are divided into:

* **Intrusive igneous rocks**

Formed as a result of the solidification of magma below the Earth's surface. E.g.: granite, gabbro, peridotite.

Macroscopic characteristics:

* + most commonly coarse-grained – mineral crystals are large enough to be visible to the naked eye
	+ colour is dependent on the mineral composition:

acidic rocks, e.g., granitoids: typically grey-white, grey-pink, grey-orange

basic rocks, e.g., gabbro: more dark, greenish minerals

ultrabasic rocks, e.g., peridotite: mainly black and green minerals

* + typically non-foliated - lack of visible directional arrangement of minerals
* **Extrusive igneous rocks**

Formed as a result of the solidification of magma. E.g.: rhyolite, andesite, basalt

Macroscopic characteristics:

* + mostly aphanitic – the majority or all mineral crystals are so small that they cannot be distinguished with the naked eye
	+ they may have a porphyritic structure – larger crystals visible to the naked eye within a fine-grained groundmass
	+ colour is dependent on the mineral composition:

acidic rocks, e.g., rhyolite: relatively light-coloured rock, may take on shades of grey, beige, red, or orange

intermediate rocks, e.g., andesite: darker than acidic rocks, may range in colour from grey to dark grey, brown

basic rocks, e.g., basalt: typically dark, black, or dark grey

* + mostly non-foliated – lack of visible directional arrangement of minerals
	+ within them, oval-shaped voids called vesicles may occur, which are remnants of gases separating from the solidifying lava. These spaces may be subsequently filled with mineral substances (zdjęcia)
* **Pyroclastic rocks**

They form as a result of the deposition of pyroclastic material and represent transitional rocks between igneous and sedimentary rocks. Pyroclastic material is generated during the fragmentation of rocks that make up the volcano dome. E.g.: tuff, volcanic breccia.

Macroscopic characteristics:

* + often characterised by visible, sharp-edged fragments of rocks of various sizes (zdjęcia)
	+ the material can undergo various degrees of transformation and may occur in loose or compacted forms
	+ diverse coloration depending on the mineral composition, typically varying shades of grey, with the possibility of hues of red, yellow, and brown

**SEDIMENTARY ROCKS** form as a result of the deposition of material on the Earth's lithospheric surface, both on land and underwater. Depending on the type of deposited material and the manner in which this process occurs, they can be classified into:

* **Clastic sedimentary rocks**

They form as a result of the deposition of rock fragments. These fragments are created during the mechanical weathering (breakdown) of rocks on the Earth's surface. Subsequently, they may be set in motion and undergo transportation. The accumulation of these fragments results in clastic sedimentary rocks. E.g.: conglomerate, sandstone, silt, clay, and shale.

Macroscopic characteristics:

* + composed of grains of various sizes:

illic fraction <0,002mm (zdjęcie)

silt fraction 0,002-0,063mm

sand fraction 0,063-2mm

gravel fraction >2mm

* + colours dependent on the minerals composing the grains and the substances forming the matrix
* **Chemical sedimentary rocks**

Rocks formed as a result of the precipitation of mineral compounds from aqueous solutions. They commonly originate from the evaporation of water bodies. E.g.: rock salt, gypsum, anhydrite, limestone

Characteristics:

* + mostly nearly monomineralic – composed primarily of one mineral
	+ characteristics dependent on the specific rock:

rock salt: predominantly composed of crystals of the mineral halite, with a salty taste, white to grey colour, occasionally orange, green, or blue

gypsum: primarily composed of crystals of the mineral with the same name, with colours ranging from grey, creamy, to light brown

limestone: predominantly composed of calcite crystals, with colours ranging from gray, light brown, to orange; reacts with hydrochloric acid

**ORGANIC SEDIMENTARY ROCKS** form from the accumulation on the Earth's lithospheric surface of material derived from dead animals and plants.

Dead plant material forms: peat, brown coal, bituminous coal, anthracite.

Characteristics:

* peat: moderately cohesive material with visible plant fragments, has a brown colour and a characteristic odour
* brown coal: relatively soft, often with visible plant fragments, dark brown in colour
* bituminous coal: dense material, rarely with visible plant remains, black in colour

The hard parts of marine organisms are often composed of carbonates; their accumulation and transformation creates rocks such as limestone and dolomite.

Characteristics:

* similar to limestones formed from evaporation
* visible hard parts of organisms - fossils

**METAMORPHIC ROCKS** form through the transformation of rocks under high pressure and/or temperature. They can originate from any other type of rock. The nature of metamorphism depends on which of the factors mentioned above plays the dominant role in the transformation.

Characteristics:

* visible features indicating undergone metamorphism: foliation, deformation
* the presence of characteristic minerals
* directional textures

The most commonly encountered metamorphic rocks:

* shales - visible schistosity, manifested by the presence of flat surfaces within the rock along which it easily splits
* Gneisses – metamorphic rocks of regional metamorphism with various protoliths (original rocks), predominantly composed of light-coloured minerals such as quartz, feldspar, and mica
* Marble – a rock formed through the metamorphism of carbonate rocks, such as limestone and dolomite. Predominantly composed of crystals of calcite or dolomite. Marble is typically coarsegrained, and various types of deformations are often encountered.

Examples: Greenschist – a rock of regional metamorphism, typically formed from mafic igneous rocks. The dark green colour results from the presence of minerals with this hue.

Module 3: Educational games & activities

Geotourism, crucial for education, employs guided games, adaptable for school groups or family entertainment, including remote outdoor options like geocaching.

Educational activities vary:

* Lectures impart knowledge, often with visual aids.
* Discussions enhance critical thinking and communication.
* Experiments offer hands-on learning in science.
* Field Trips provide real-world application of classroom lessons.
* Interactive Workshops engage students actively in subjects.
* Role-Playing fosters empathy through simulations.
* Problem-Solving Activities develop critical thinking.
* Educational Games make learning enjoyable.
* Debates refine research and public speaking skills.
* Storytelling cultivates creativity and language skills.
* Art Projects encourage self-expression through painting, drawing, or sculpture.
* Peer Teaching promotes collaboration and understanding.
* Online Learning Modules offer interactive lessons.
* Reading and Book Reports involve written reflections.
* Educational Videos enhance visual and auditory learning.
* Outdoor Activities, like nature walks, connect with ecology.

Effectiveness relies on factors such as age, learning styles, and lesson objectives, requiring tailored activities for successful outcomes.

Outdoor geology workshops are engaging and educational, promoting direct interaction with geological features. Activities include rock and mineral identification, geological mapping, fossil hunting, stratigraphy study, landform interpretation, rock and mineral collecting, erosion and weathering experiments, geological hikes, river geology exploration, volcano simulations, earthquake demonstrations, mineralogical testing, exploration of caves, geological photography, landscape sketching, rock and mineral workshops, visits to geological interpretive centres, creation of geological cross-section models, and geological storytelling.

These activities, adaptable to various skill levels, aim to enhance understanding and appreciation of geology in a real environment.