



Pilot action «A snorkel on the mountain» “Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism” (MEET) Program

Management Body of Samaria National Park

3rd Report

Dimitris Poursanidis
<http://www.terrasolutions.eu/>



Financed by:



Project
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Pilot Action

«A snorkel on the mountain»

In the framework of the Project

“Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism” (MEET)

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The 2nd Participatory Meeting

The 2nd Participatory Meeting of the Pilot Action “a snorkel on the mountain” for the project “MEET” or “Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism” has been held at 18 of October 2014 in the Cultural Society Hall of Sfakia. Representatives from public agencies, private businesses and ordinary citizens attended the meeting.

The program of the meeting included:

Part A - Presentations

10:00 – 10:10 **Quality Certificate of Products and Services** – Petros Lyberakis, Dr. Biologists, researcher of NHMC, President of the Management Body of the Samaria National Park.

10:10 – 10:30 **Pilot Action «A snorkel on the mountain» Πρόγραμμα “Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism” (MEET)** – Dimitris Poursanidis
Consultant of the Pilot Action

10:30 – 10:50 **Tourism in the National Park of Samaria: Impact on local economy** – George Fakotakis, Researcher, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (M.A.I.Ch.)

10:50 – 11:10 **The importance of local products in Ecotourism.** - Meria Gialitaki, author

11:10 – 11:30 **Key challenges in the development of Agrotourism** - Frantzeskakis Nikos, President of the Federation of Unions of Agrotourism, Greece

Part B' - Round table – Open discussions

11:30 – 12:30 Conclusions, Development of the Ecotourism Strategy for the White Mountains – Action Plan, Ecotourism package design.

Closure of the meeting - Lunch in the Sfakia.

Before the meeting, local stakeholders and business representatives active in the area of the Samaria National Park had been informed by means of information leaflet and poster (both in English and Greek) as well as with direct communication in person and by phone and e-mail.



Photo 1. Mr Lyberakis at the 2nd participatory Meeting

The 2nd Meeting was based in two main axes. The first one on the information of the participants for the results of the Pilot Action and in the application of the farm-trip which had taken place between 7-12 of October with the participation of 7 evaluators. Also, a presentation about the possibility of the certification of the service providers of tourism from the Management Body as well as the improvement of the quality of ecotourism services from existing businesses was made. Presentations were also given regarding the updated statistical data on the

visitation rates and preferences of National Park's visitors, the importance of local products and the Cretan cuisine in each ecotourism package and in the end the new institutional framework for rural tourism enterprises in Greece was thoroughly presented.



Photo 2. Mr. Frantzeskakis explaining the new legal framework for agro tourism businesses

Specifically, Dr. Lyberakis presented the axis of the Quality Certificate of Products and Services which has been developed by the Management Body and has recently started to be applied. In parallel, how this certificate can act in a cooperative and reinforcing manner with the provision of quality tourism services from local businesses and the development of ecotourism packages either individually by various companies or through local partnerships.

After that, Mr. Poursanidis presented the axis of the MEET project and mainly the up-to-date data from the application of the Pilot Action “a snorkel on the mountain”. Emphasis was given in the results of the 1st test of the ecotourism package (fam-trip) while the proposed recommendations and additions for the improvement of the package were also reported.



Photo 3. Mr. Fakotakis presenting the visitation statistical data for the Samaria NP

Mr. Fotakis, researcher of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (MAICH), presented the results of a project which had been done with the cooperation of MAICH and the Management Body on the analysis of the diachronically economic impacts of tourism in the Samaria National Park

Ms. Meria Gialitaki presented the potential of ecotourism in Crete, comparing to other countries while she analyzed the approach of the Scandinavian visitors when they visit the area of White Mountains. She described with emphasis how the visitors from Finland envisaged the images and views of the Cretan Landscape and how these experiences can become potentially an ecotourism product readily usable for the region. According to Ms. Gialitaki, ecotourism travelers of White Mountains and in general of Crete are looking for the difference of the Cretan Landscape, the collection of experiences, the variety of local products but mainly the contact with the locals and the indulgence in the authentic elements of Crete.

Mr. Frantzeskakis presented the new legal framework for agrotourism in Greece and the importance of it for the clarification of the rules of the operation of agro tourism units for their activities.



Photo 4. Ms. Meria Gialitaki

The second part of the meeting was targeted on the open discussion about the ecotourism strategy and the proposed action plan as this has been presented in the 1st meeting in order to sum up in the development and the improvement of the ecotourism package which has been proposed in the 1st phase of the project. Before the open of the discussion, the presentation of the propositions for the strategic plan, the action plan and the ecotourism package had taken place in order create a suitable basis for the outcome of the debate.



Photo 5. Free discussion during the 2nd Participatory Meeting

From the discussions of the 2nd axis, no new additions came out for the initial strategic plan of the development of the ecotourism or the proposed action plan. However the following comments had been identified as important by the attendees at the meeting:

- I) It is desirable to investigate the integration of other areas of the National Park in the final ecotourism product or a new and alternative could be identified
- II) If available, studies, surveys and general interest material for local entrepreneurs, should be uploaded on the website of the Management Body to be readily available to the public concerned
- III) There is an urgent need for the forum to be set up and operate
- IV) The certification of products and services is one of the most important elements in the development of any ecotourism strategy in the region.

- V) The local products are the main asset of any ecotourism development strategy in the region.

The presentations of the 1st part of the 2nd meeting are included in the Annex 2 of the report.

Report on the implementation of the eco-tourism package by analyzing the questionnaires of the satisfaction of the participants.

The ecotourism package entitled “a snorkel on the mountain” has been tested by a team of seven (7) participants which had been selected by the General Secretariat of the MEET Project. It took place from 7 to 12 of October. The proposed package has been applied with no exceptions from the initial design.

The pre-final day, the seven (7) participants filled in the evaluation report, which has been designed by the General Secretariat of the MEET Project.



Photo 6. Day 3 of the package. Culinary seminar

The evaluation report is given in the ANNEX I.

Below, the results of the evaluation reports are presented. It has to be noted that the analysis of the evaluation reports will be concluded after the 2nd test of the package which is scheduled to take place in the spring of 2015.



Photo 7. The participants before their entrance to the Gorge of Samaria

Evaluation form results for the "snorkel on the mountain" ecotourism package

Gender	Male	Female				
	5	2				
Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	0	2	2	2	1	0
Is this your first visit to the country	Yes	No				
	3	4				
Is this your first visit to the PA	Yes	No				
	6	1				
If you are a TO, do you sell trips to this country or park?	Yes	No	n/a			
	0	0	7			
How did you arrive to the country?	low cost airline	major airline	train	bus	car	other
	2	4		0	0	1
Did you receive enough quality, useful information before the test began?	Yes	No				
	7	0				
Communication with MEET Network Secretariat	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	3	3	1
Communication with local travel agency or person responsible for the test	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	2	5	0
Reception						
<i>Staff friendliness and professionalism</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	5	1
<i>Staff skills (general)</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	3	4	0
<i>Staff language skills</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	0	7	0
<i>Service quality</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	3	4	0
<i>Appearance of reception area</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	1	2	3	1

<i>Check in/Check out process</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	2	0	4	1
Accommodation						
<i>Accessability</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	4	1
<i>Attractiveness, Atmosphere & comfort</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	2	4	1
<i>Cleanliness & Tidiness</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	2	4	1
<i>Quality, maintenance</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	1	1	4	1
<i>Quality of room service</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	1	2	2	2
<i>Did the accommodation meet your expectations</i>	Yes	No				
	7	0				
Food & Beverage service						
<i>Timely and efficient service</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	3	4	0
<i>Food hygiene & presentation</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	6	0
<i>Sustainability of food products</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	0	7	0
<i>Freshness and diversity of products</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	0	7	0
<i>Staff appearance & friendliness</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	0	7	0

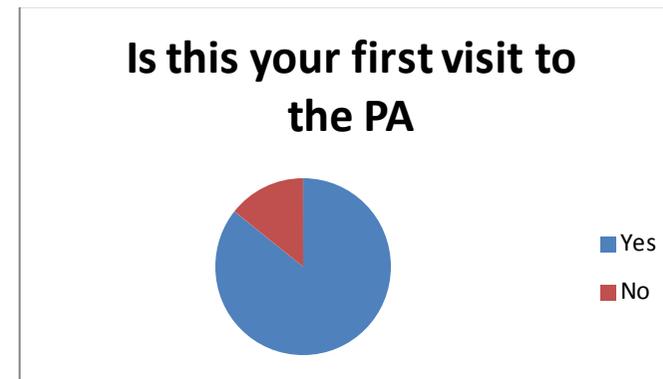
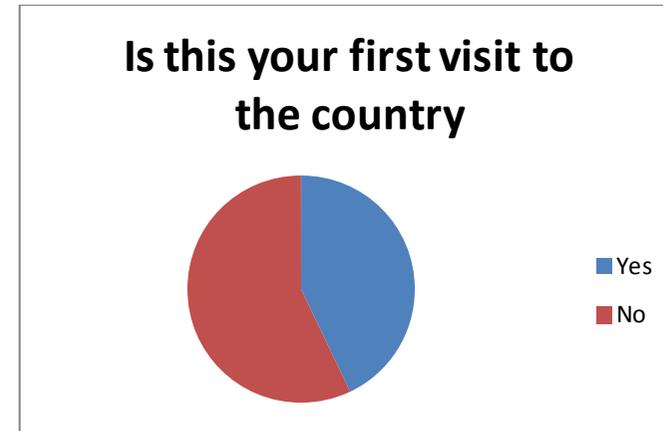
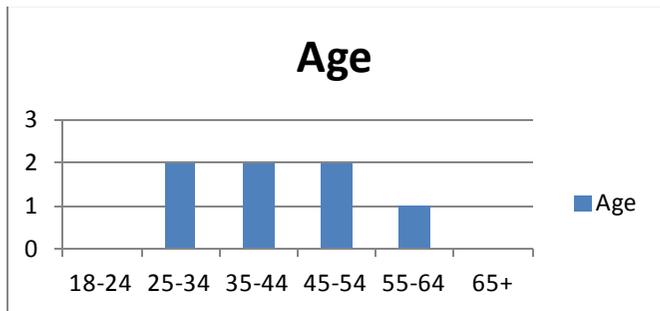
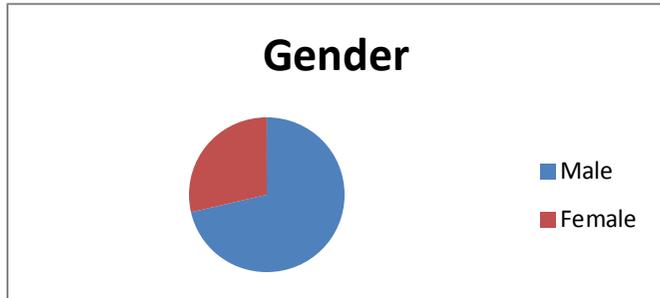
<i>Vegetarian/organic selection</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	6	0
<i>Response to dietary requests and food restrictions</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	0	6	1
<i>Did the food & beverage service meet your expectations?</i>	Yes	No				
	7	0				
Transportation						
<i>Sustainability of transportation</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	6	0	1
<i>Ease of entering /exiting vehicle</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	4	2	1
<i>Safety on board</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	6	0
<i>Convenience of time schedule</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	2	1	3	1
<i>Cleanliness of the vehicle</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	6	0
<i>Driver skills and safety</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	6	0
<i>Availability of information on board</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	2	2	3
Guide						
<i>Patient and friendly</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	6	0
<i>Sustainable practices and environmental appreciation/awareness</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	6	0

<i>Group leadership and management qualities</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	1	0	0	6	0
<i>Good general knowledge/educator</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	2	5	0
<i>Fair and equal treatment of all guests</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	1	6	0
<i>Awareness and tolerance of religious and cultural sensitivities</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	0	5	2
<i>Confidence and ability to act in challenging situations</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	2	4	1
<i>Ability to adapt and react to changing weather conditions (and organization of alternative activities)</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	0	5	2
<i>Did the guiding service meet your expectations?</i>	Yes	No				
	7	0				
Package general features						
<i>Organization and management</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	3	4	0
<i>Safety</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	4	3	0
<i>Attractiveness & uniqueness</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	0	5	2	0
<i>Awareness and educational values</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	1	3	3	0
<i>Staff professionalism</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	1	1	5	0

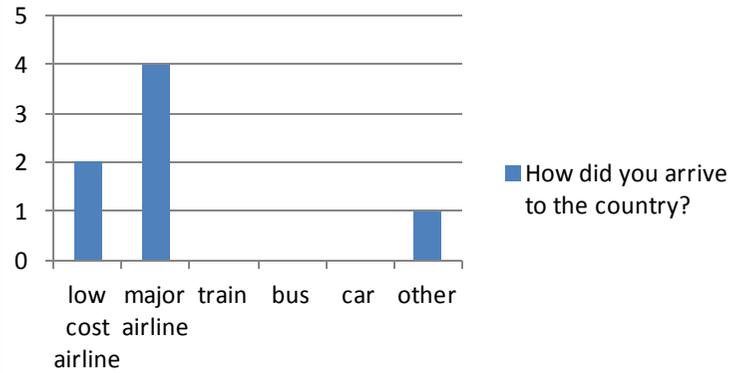
<i>Rhythm and flow of activities (too many/little, too rushed, too much/little free time)</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	2	1	3	1	0
<i>Information received (during tour)</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	1	4	2	0
<i>Did the experience meet your expectations?</i>	Yes	No				
	6	1				
Local Encounters						
<i>Integration and interaction with local inhabitants</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	0	2	4	1	0
<i>Perceived contribution of PA in supporting local community (individuals, NGO's, CBO's, SME's)</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	1	0	3	1	2
Green /Eco Aspects:						
<i>Efforts made to minimize negative impacts of tour activities on the local social and cultural assets</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	1	1	1	4	0
<i>Efforts made to minimize negative impacts of tour activities on the natural resource (e.g. reduction of water use and waste)</i>	Needs improvement	Acceptable	Average	Good	Excellent	n/a
	0	2	0	2	3	0
<i>Do you feel that the tour was somewhat educational? Were you informed of the sustainability efforts of operators and providers? (eg. locally sourced produce, pollution reduction, etc)</i>	Yes	No	N/A			
	6	0	1			
<i>Did the experience meet your expectations in terms of sustainability and your idea of 'eco'?</i>	Yes	No	N/A			
	7	0	0			

Below, the charts for each group of questions are presented after the analysis of the questionnaires:

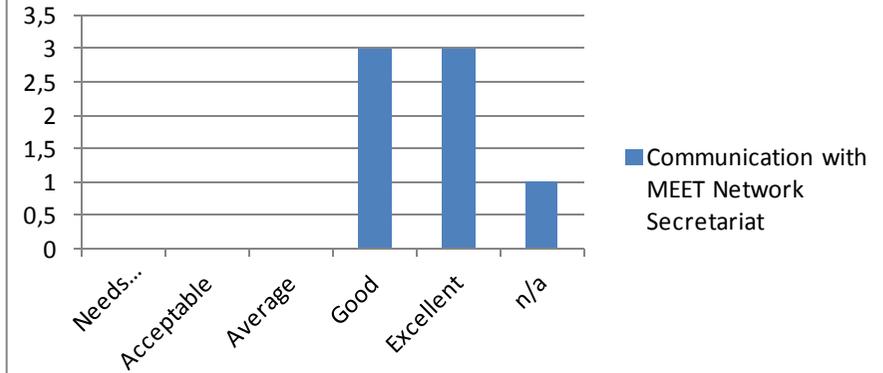
1. General questions



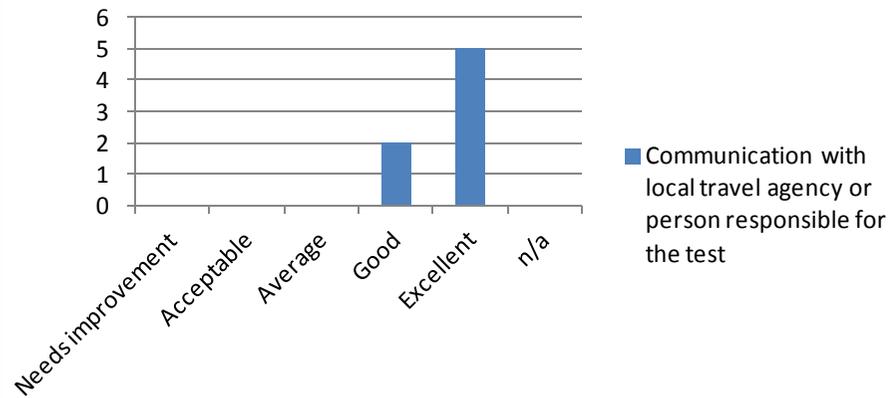
How did you arrive to the country?



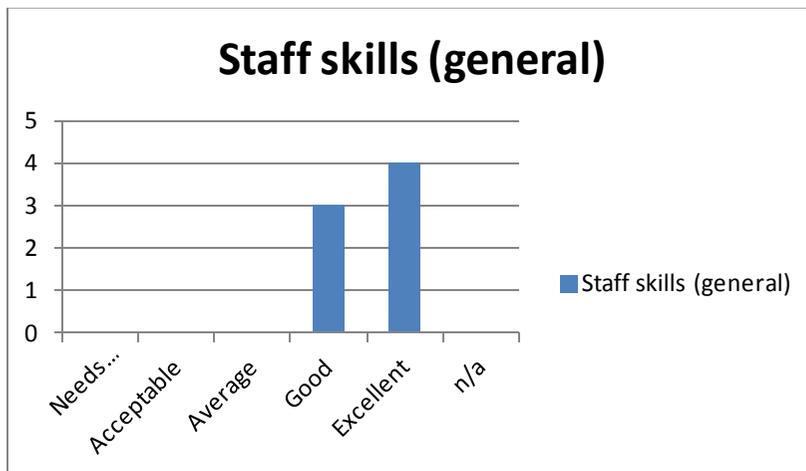
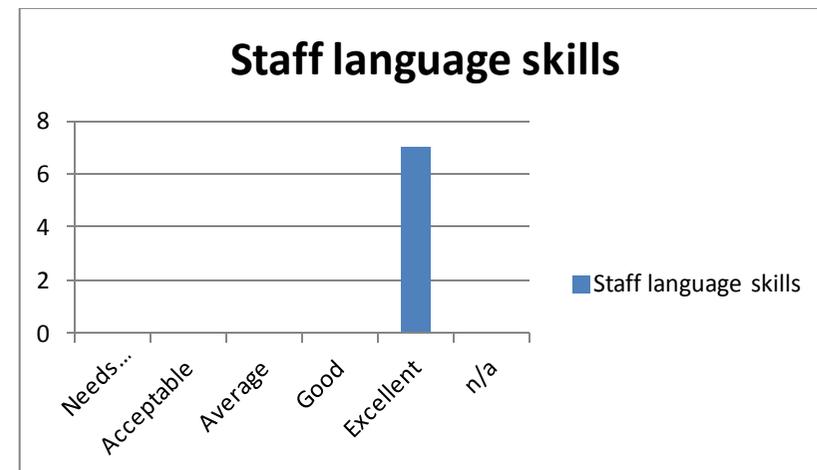
Communication with MEET Network Secretariat



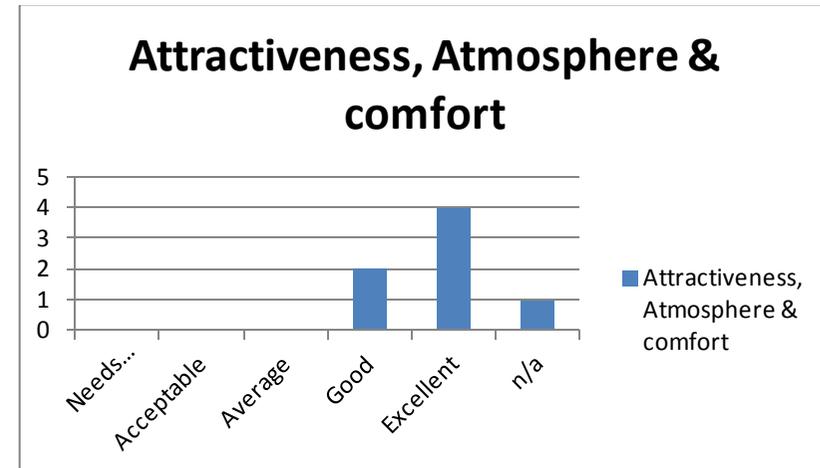
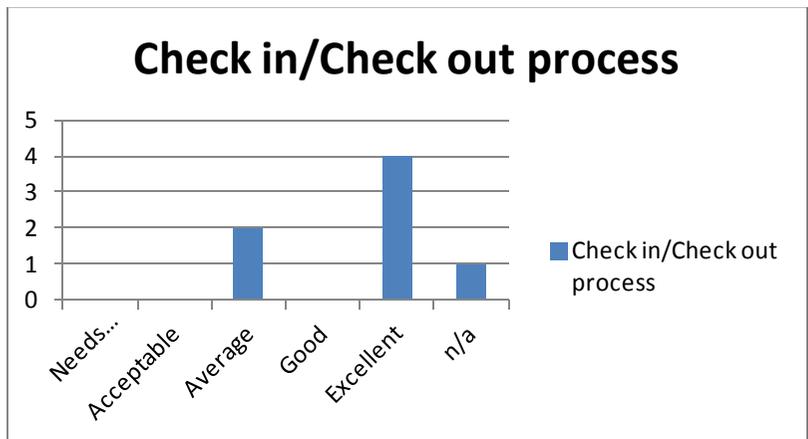
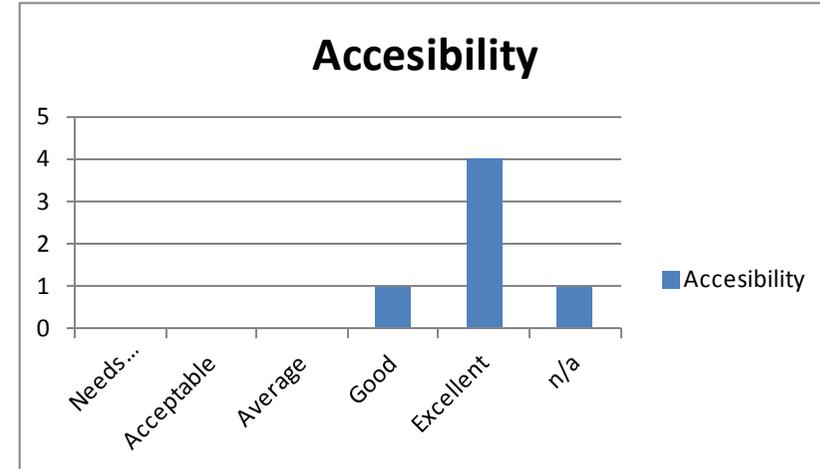
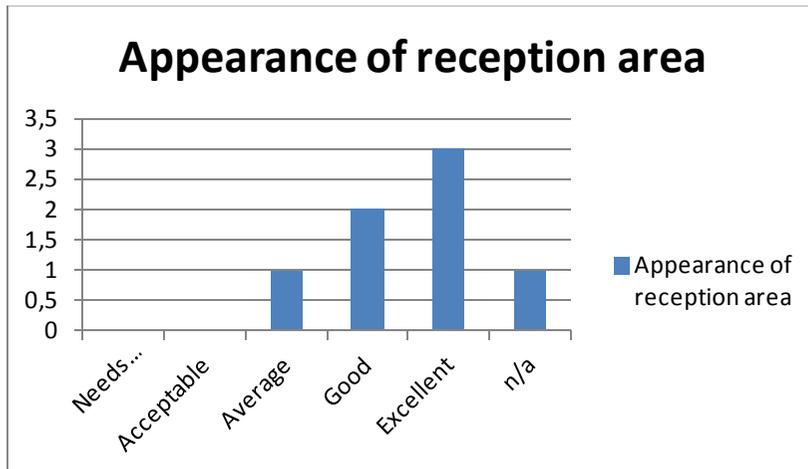
Communication with local travel agency or person responsible for the test

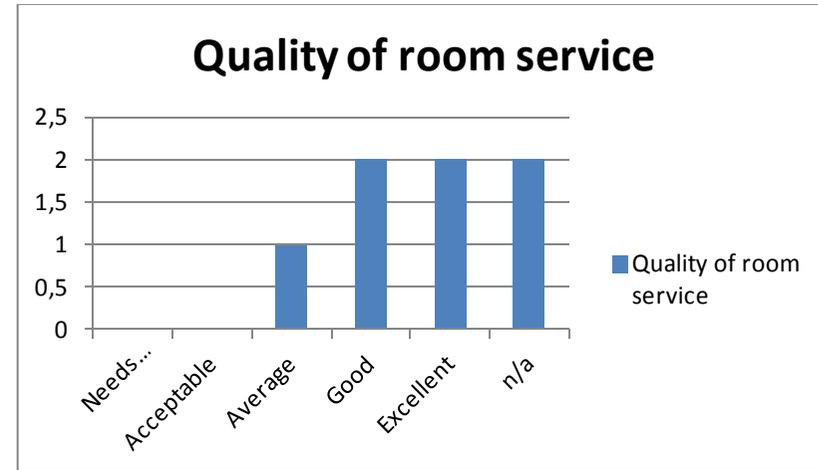
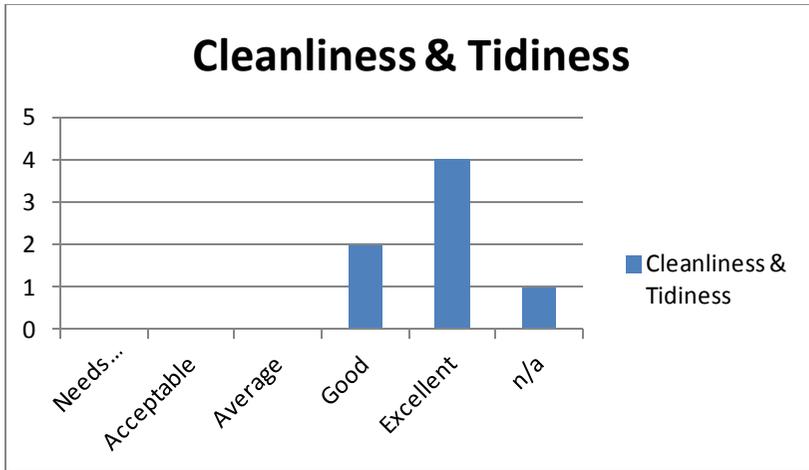


2. Reception



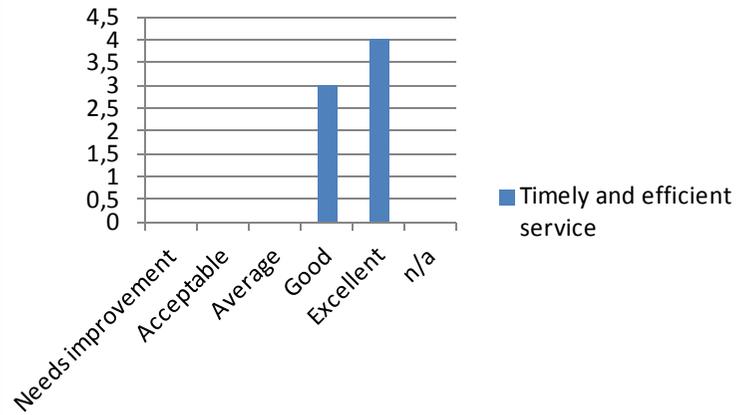
3. Hosting



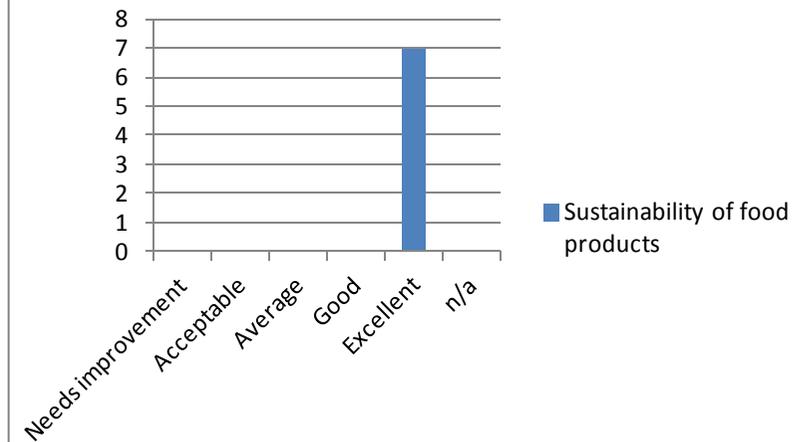


4. Food services

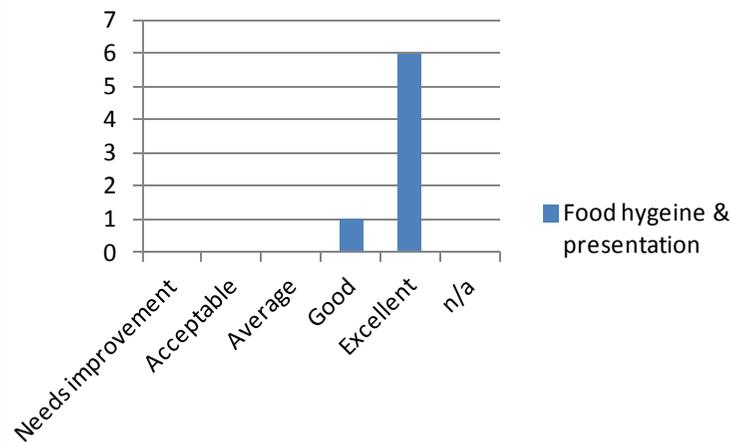
Timely and efficient service



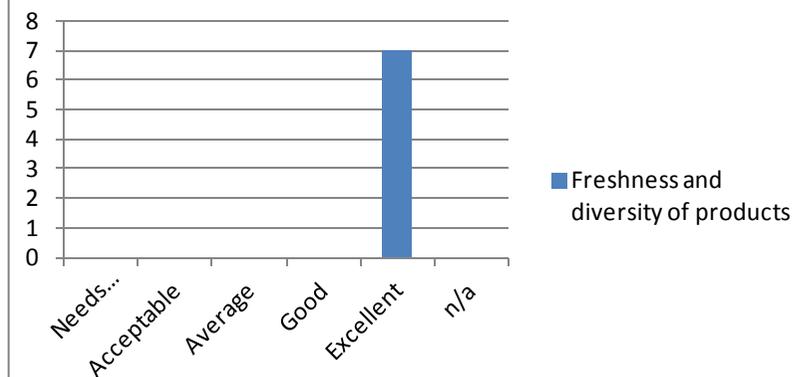
Sustainability of food products

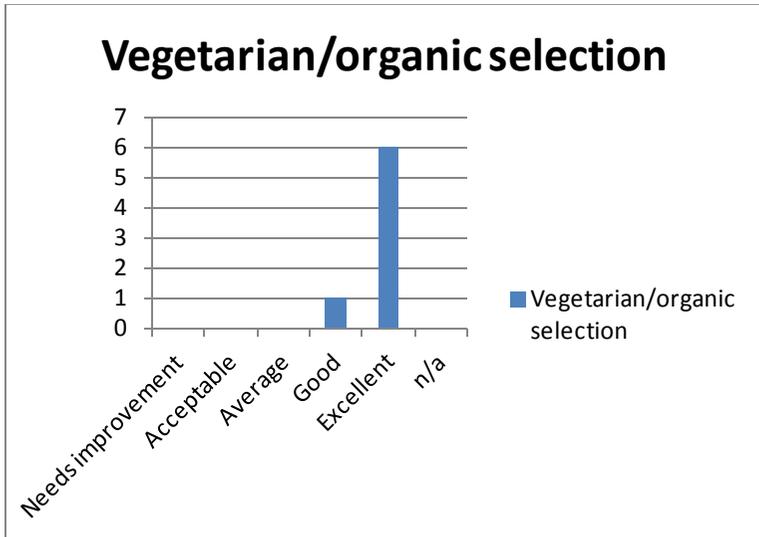
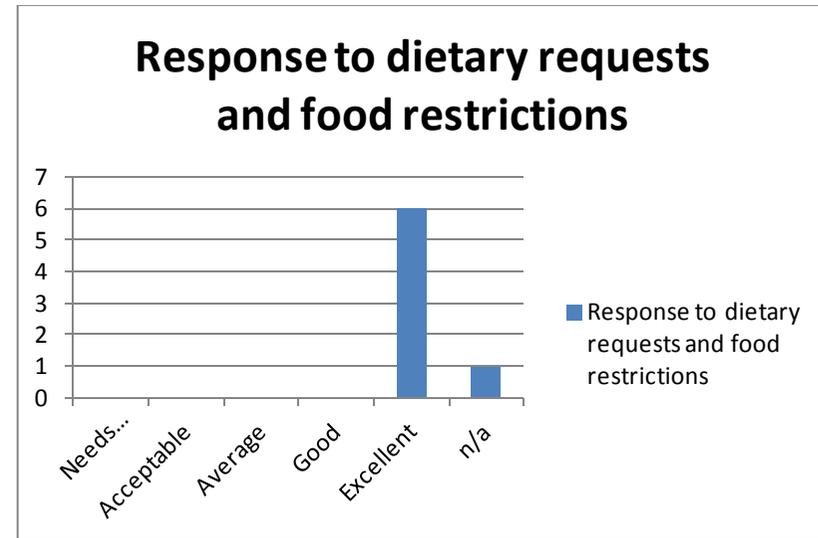
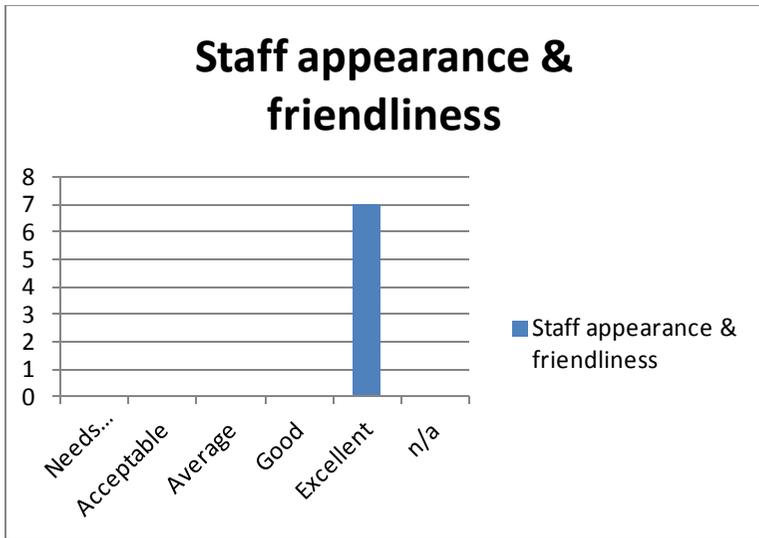


Food hygiene & presentation

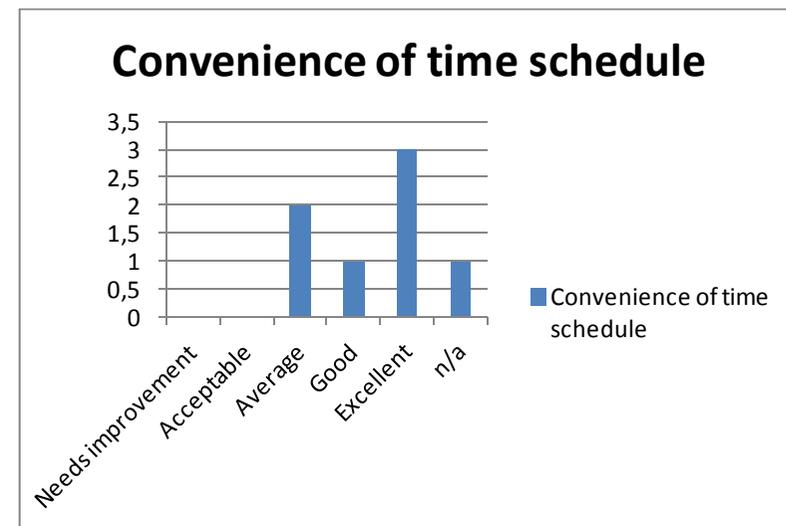
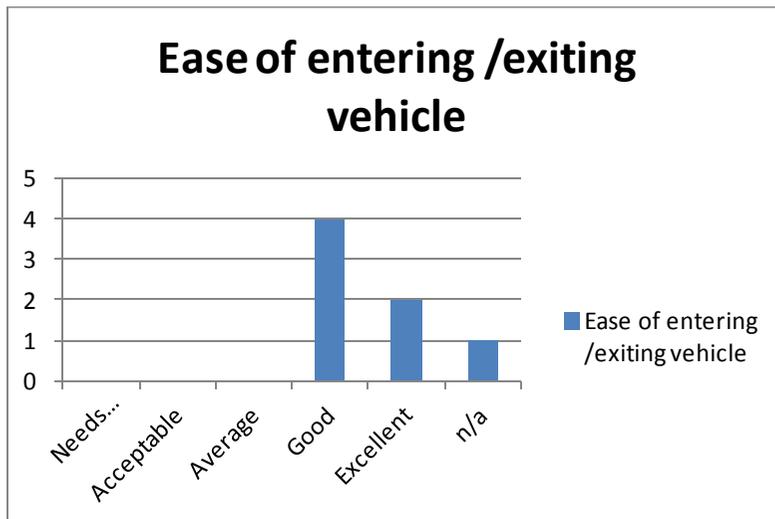
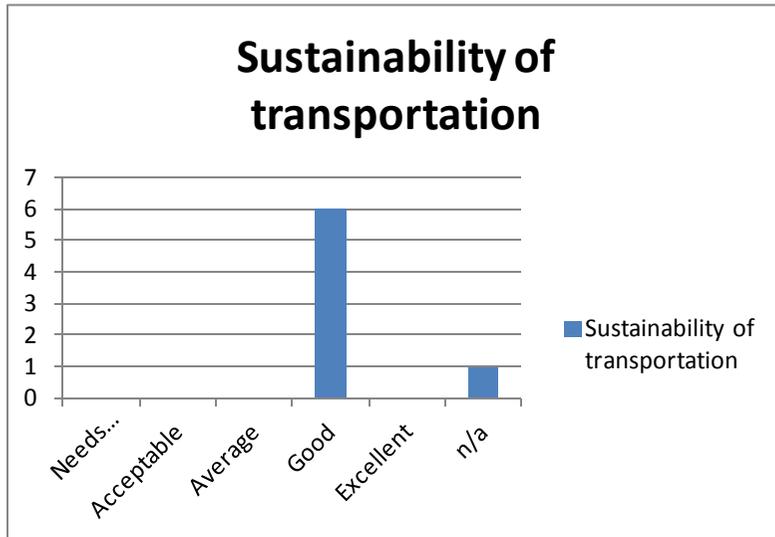


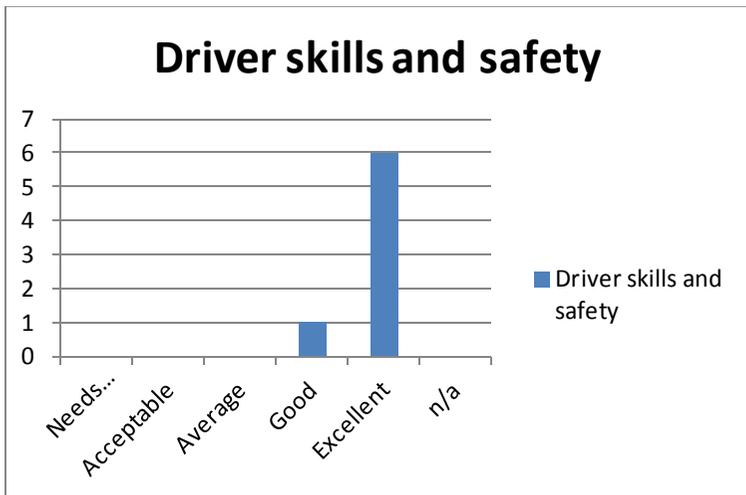
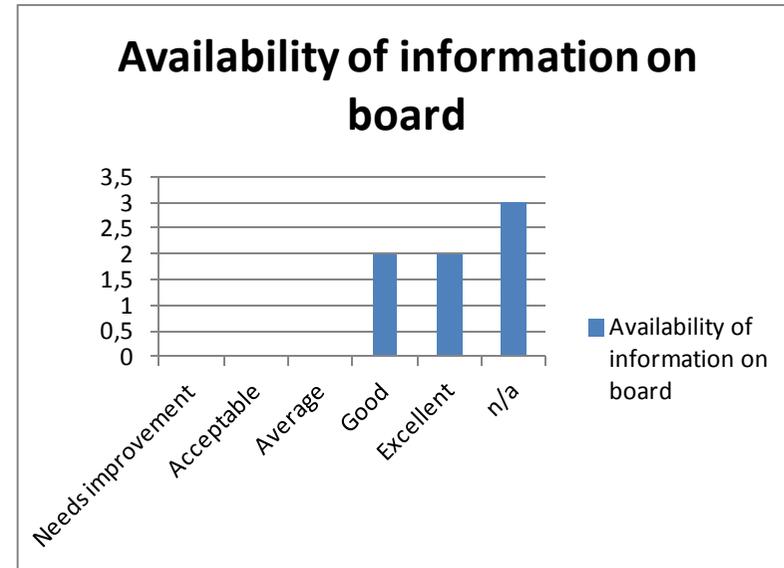
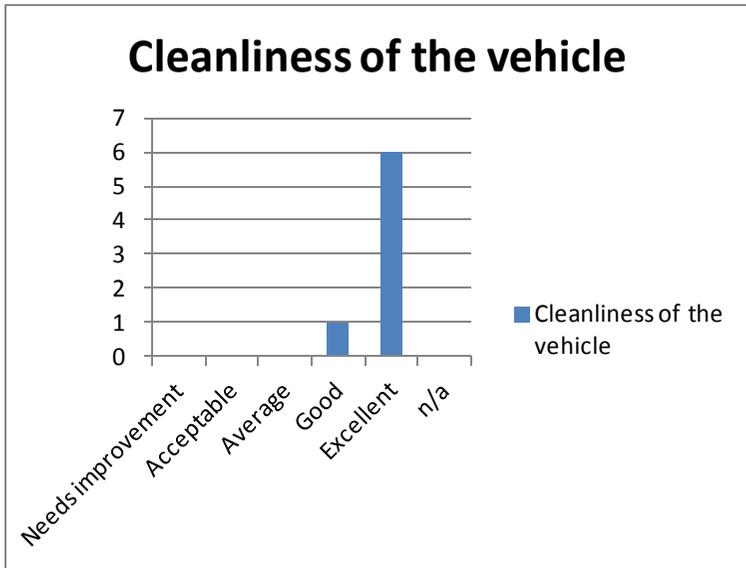
Freshness and diversity of products



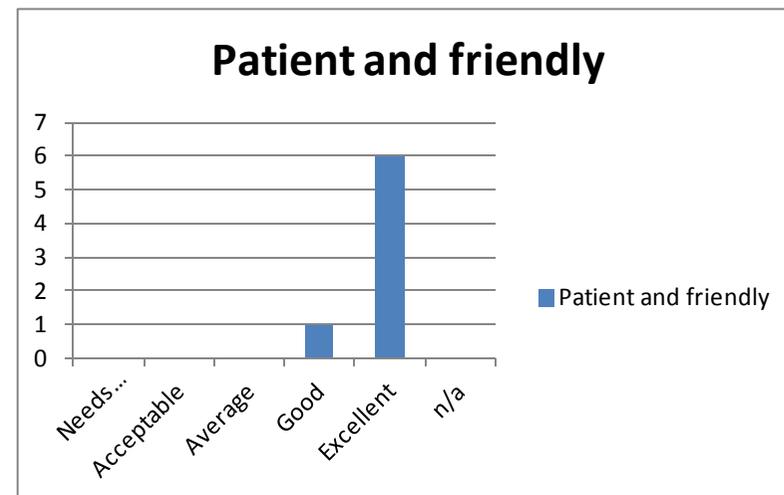


5. Transportations

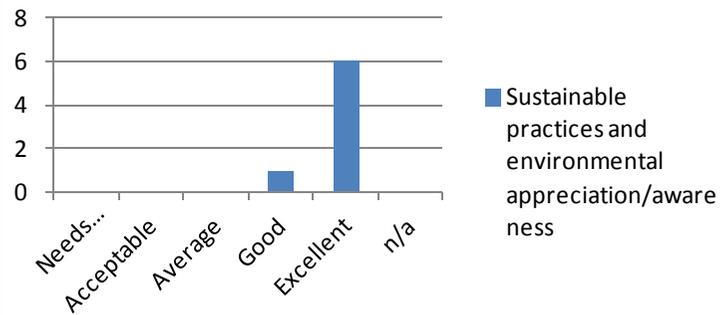




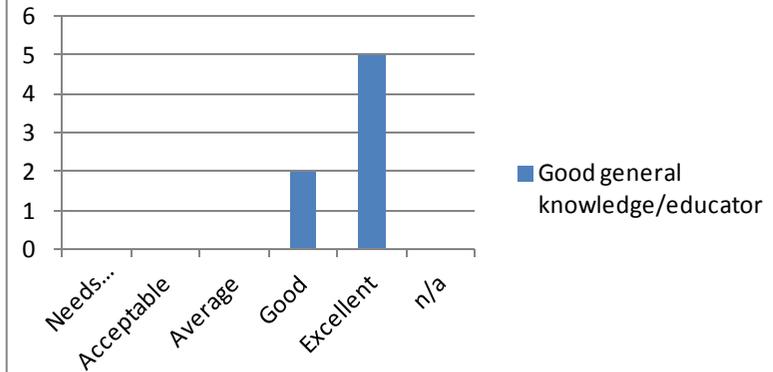
6. Guided Tours



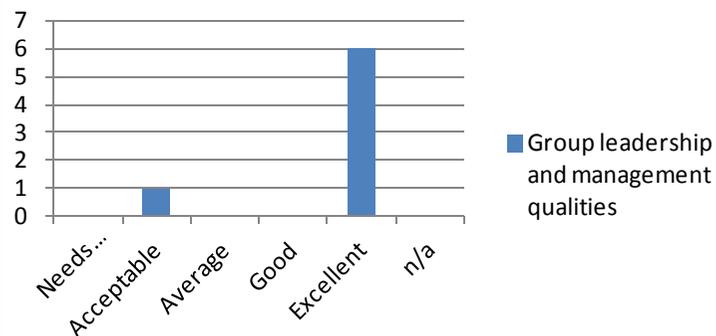
Sustainable practices and environmental appreciation/awareness



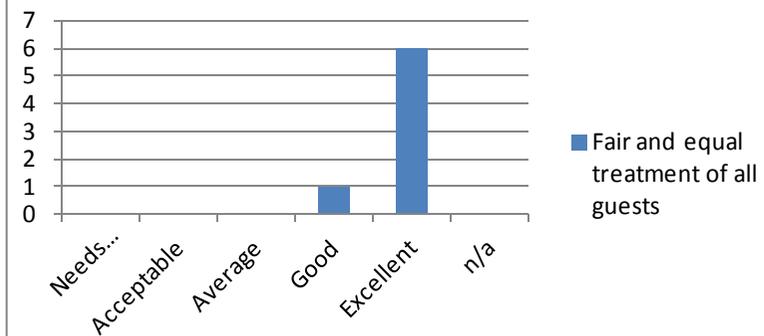
Good general knowledge/educator



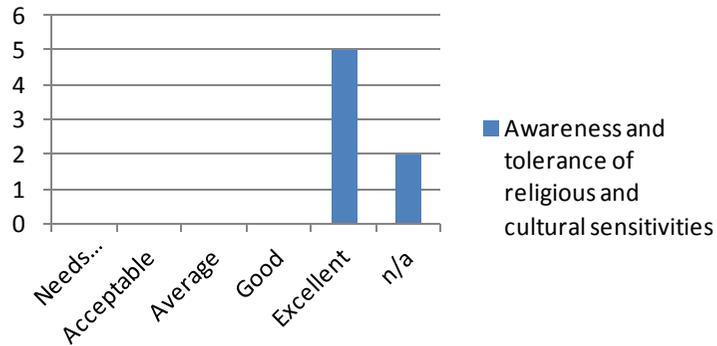
Group leadership and management qualities



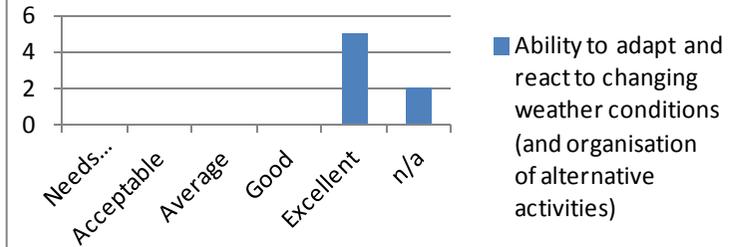
Fair and equal treatment of all guests



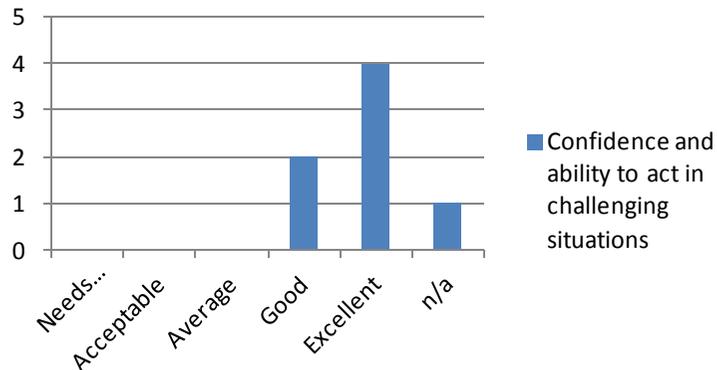
Awareness and tolerance of religious and cultural sensitivities



Ability to adapt and react to changing weather conditions (and organisation of alternative activities)



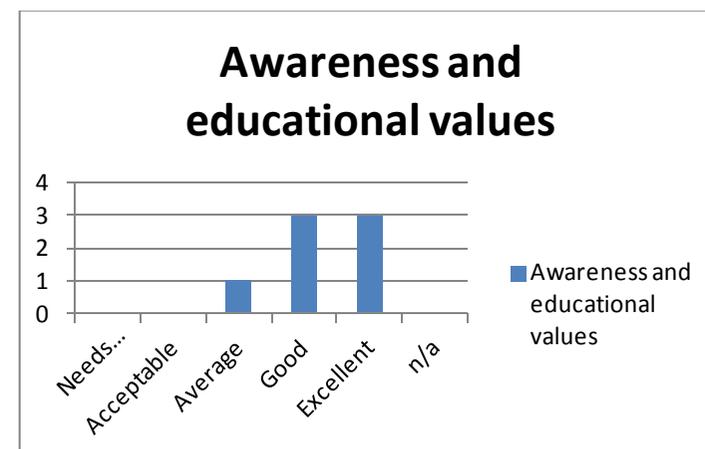
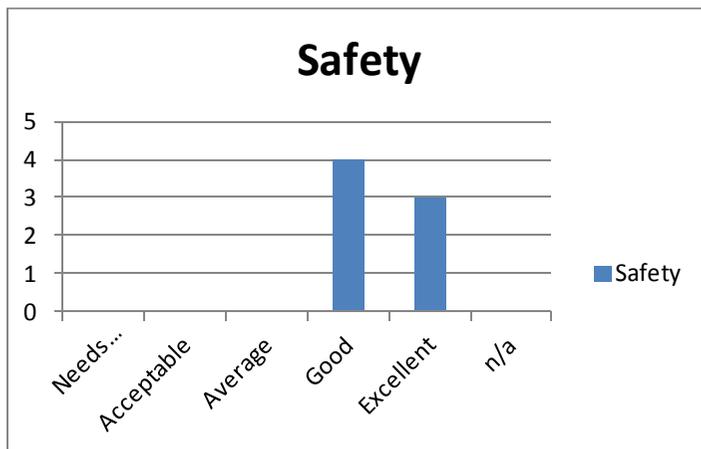
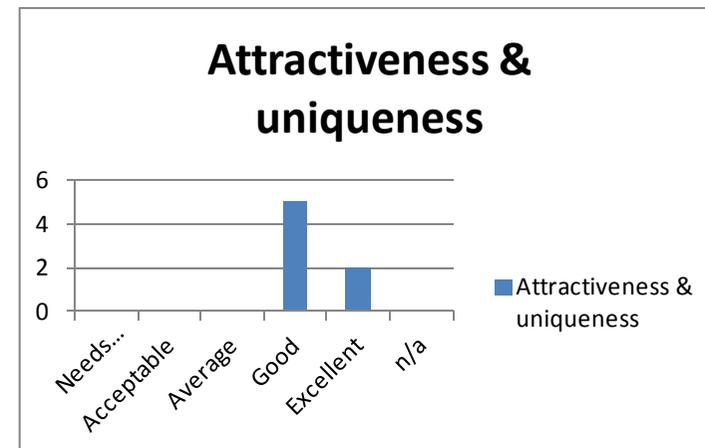
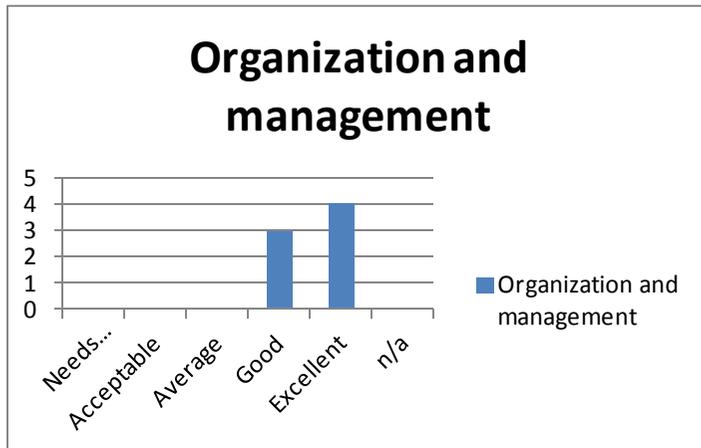
Confidence and ability to act in challenging situations

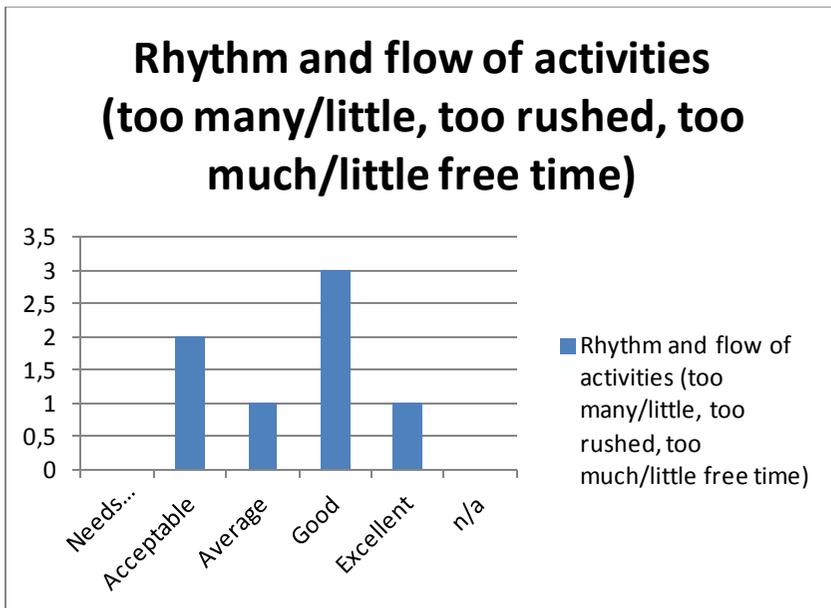
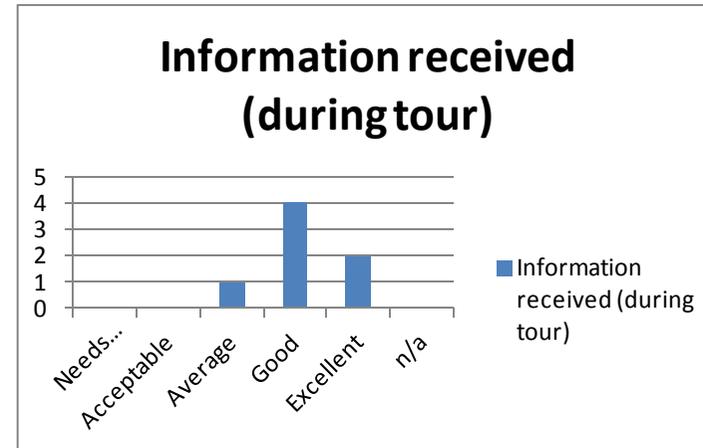


Did the guiding service meet your expectations?

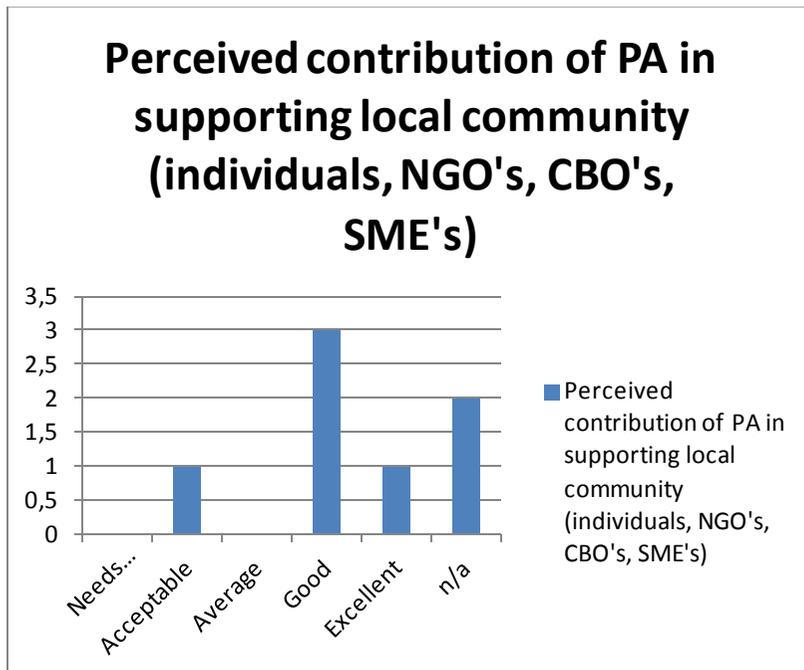
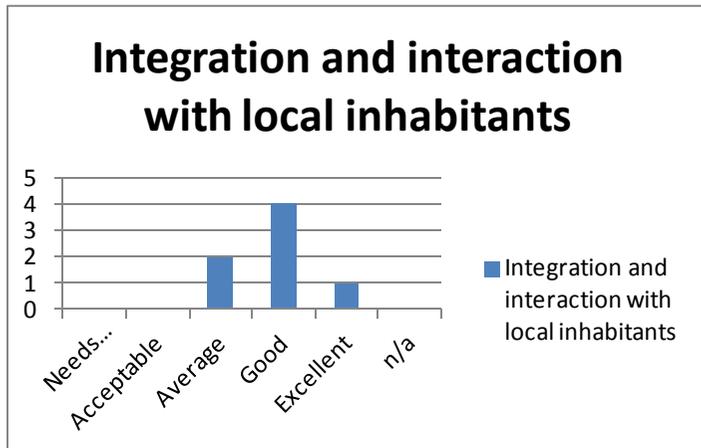


7. General characteristics of the package

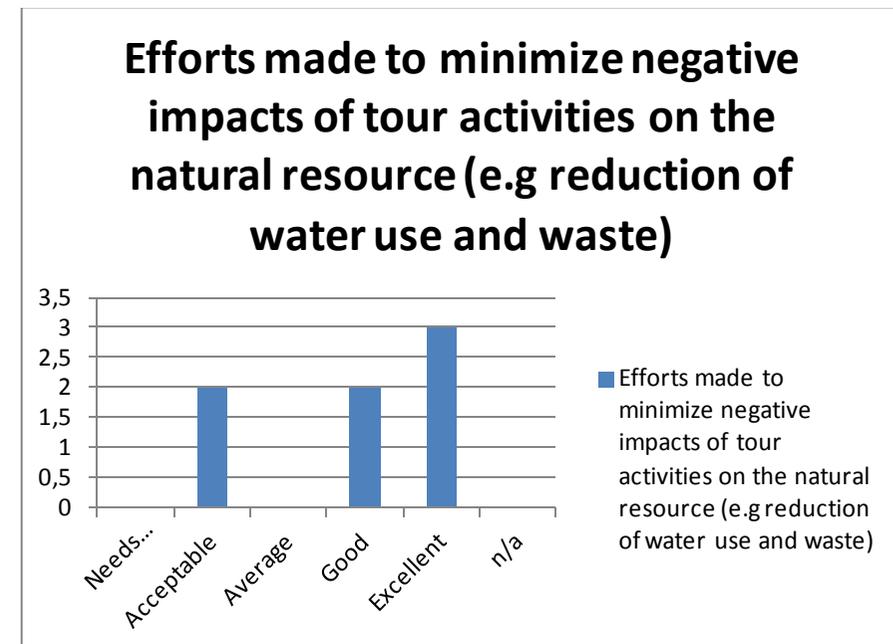
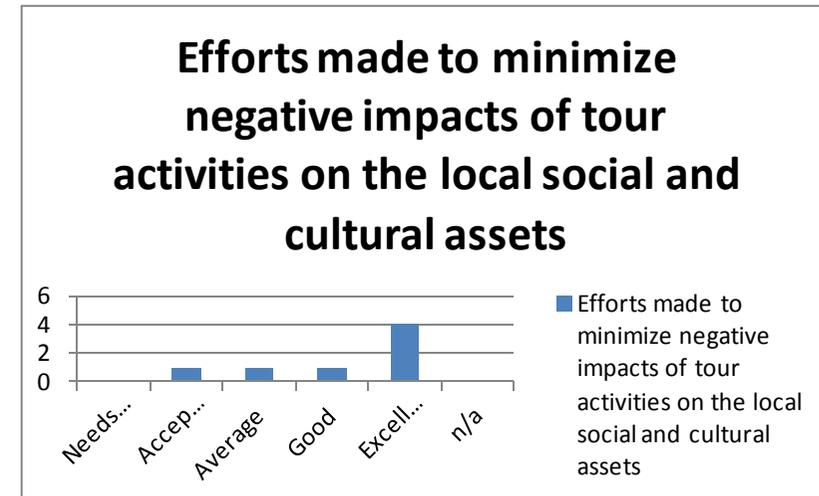




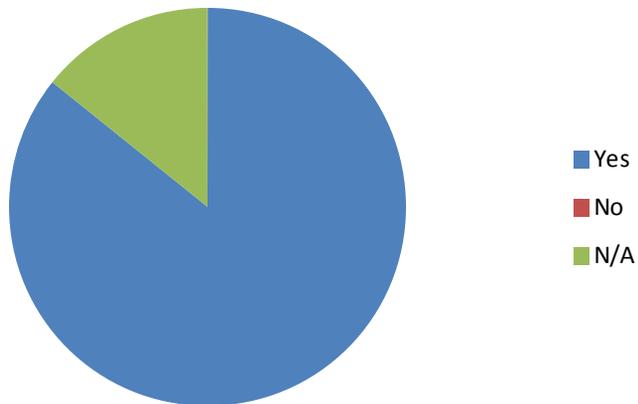
8. Contacts with local community



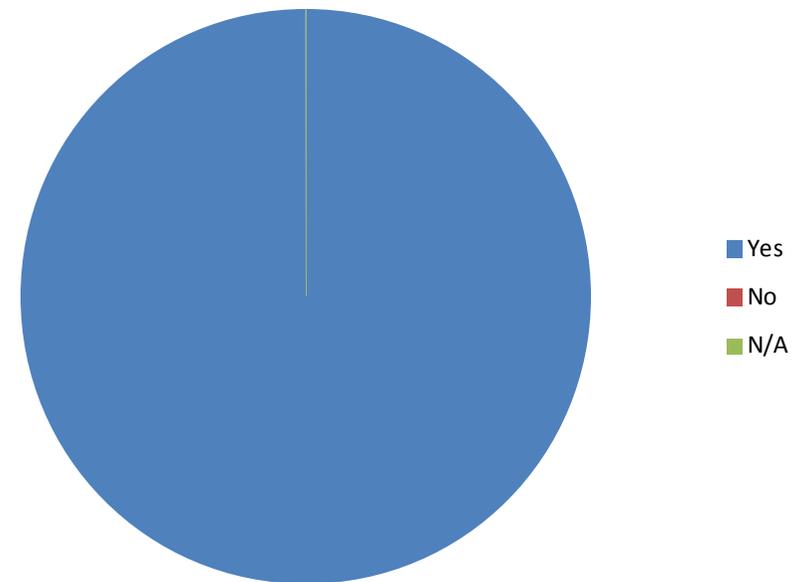
9. Ecology / Sustainability



Do you feel that the tour was somewhat educational? Were you informed of the sustainability efforts of operators and providers? (eg. locally sourced produce, pollution reduction, etc)



Did the experience meet your expectations in terms of sustainability and your idea of 'eco'?



From the results of the evaluation, the following comments have to be taken into account:

- ✚ The image of the protected area is open to significant improvements. Specifically, the water pipelines in the Samaria Gorge made a negative impression to participants
- ✚ The general impression of the accommodation can be significantly improved, although no negative comments from participants have been reported. Negative evaluation was reported for the individual shares (e.g. butter, jam) which were offered in some units. Instead of individuals shares, local products are proposed to be used
- ✚ The program of activities is open to improvements. A better course of actions so as not to occupy extensive time windows without activities and to allow sufficient time for participants to rest between activities is needed
- ✚ Additional and targeted information about the protected area and in particular the marine environment are required
- ✚ The safety of activities and mainly the sea activities should be reassessed with the participation and cooperation of the local partner.
- ✚ The contribution of the protected area in the local community should be more thoroughly highlighted
- ✚ The activities should be guided by the fewest possible adverse effects (e.g., low water consumption). This philosophy can be transferred to local businesses (e.g. water saving policy in the rooms) and shown to participants

Furthermore, the evaluation forms contained free text fields. From the comments, observations and suggestions which have been recorded, here are the most indicative:



Photo 8. Sea activities during the package

- ✚ Consider the possibility of using public transportation during travel across the various sites of the National Park.
- ✚ During the stops in activities of hiking or in the sea activities, it is important to gain the attention of all participants as to ensure uniform distribution of information.
- ✚ A greater variety of activities is required.
- ✚ It is necessary to provide additional information on local historical content and culture.
- ✚ The participants should be informed that they will stay in double rooms.
- ✚ Trekking activities should be elaborated at slower pace.
- ✚ More and longer sea activities are required.
- ✚ Provide information on basic rules of cultural behavior before the initiation of the package.

- ✚ During sea activities it is important to have adequate information before the beginning and to maintain team cohesion throughout the duration of the activity.
- ✚ More effort should be made for the sole use of English by Greek package managers in the presence of foreign participants.
- ✚ Avoid long time gaps among activities.
- ✚ Prior information about the rational use of water to all participants is vital



Photo 10. The team towards the Kakos Poros summit

Regarding the most characteristic points of the package, participants reported:

- ✚ Gastronomy
- ✚ Landscape
- ✚ Trekking activities
- ✚ The connection of various elements with the culture and history of Crete
- ✚ Balance between activities and resting time
- ✚ Samaria Gorge
- ✚ Local cuisine

From the various diagrams that have been produced during the evaluation of the test package, it is

concluded that the overall picture of the package characteristics are good. Points which should be further explored regard:

- ✚ The reception image of the Protected Area.
- ✚ The improvement of the quality of tourism accommodations.
- ✚ The balance of activities and the smooth running without the existence of temporal gaps.
- ✚ The management of the guided tours and especially the unforeseeable circumstances which are expected to take place in any ecotourism package.
- ✚ The incorporation of more information from the historical and cultural heritage of the area.
- ✚ The stronger contact with the local community.
- ✚ The information and reduce of the carbon footprint from the activities in the natural environment.



Photo 9. Gastronomy Seminar at the pre-final day of the package

Report on the proposed corrective measures after the analysis of the questionnaires of satisfaction

Even though the results and proposed corrective measures for the ecotourism package are based in a small sample of evaluators, some results can be extracted in order to take them into account in the next test phase.



Photo 11. A visit to the old village of Aradena

Consequently:

- I) It is important to maintain the first day of the package as it is with accommodation in the city of Chania and visit to the historical elements of Chania. This is imposed by the different arrival hours of participants but also from the point that the ecotourism package has to be linked culturally with the city for a complete visitor's experience.
- II) The optimum starting time for the descent in the Samaria Gorge during the second day should be after 09:30-10:00 in order to have reduced visitor traffic in the main path. Moreover, given the fact that there is no reason for a fast descent as the participants will overnight in Agya Roumeli; this can be done in a relaxed and slow rhythm. It is also important to keep the informational activity in the Information Centre of Xyloskalo, enriched with more data on the natural environment of the National Park. Perhaps, a separate presentation dedicated for ecotourism activities, has to be developed.
- III) The cuisine in Agya Roumeli and in the rest of the areas has to follow a strict Cretan nutrition pattern based on local products. Individual pods must be avoided and emphasis has to be given in vegetables, meat, dairy products, seafood and local wine. A greater variety of dishes has to be used and it is advisable to avoid the choice of main course servings but rather more and diverse dishes.
- IV) The culinary activity during the morning of the third day is suggested to be removed from the program. The third day can be dedicated to sea activities like morning swimming in Agya Roumeli and then snorkeling in Lykos bay. Also the removal of this culinary activity can benefit the trial of scuba diving (Discover Scuba Diving). Alternatively, this day can include the traditional preparation of bread, the visit to beekeeping activities, lunch and in the afternoon more sea activities.
- V) Sea activities have to be redesigned with the cooperation and assistance of the diving centre partner. It is important to have a detailed briefing on the technical parts of the activities as

well as to the natural environment of the coastal zone. Also, the guide –dive master has to be close to the team during the entire activity. The rules of the snorkelling (duration, route, equipment use, actions during an accident, species identification) have to be clear before the initiation. Also, the first route for the transfer of luggage at Lykos bay can be avoided in order to have more available time for activities, asince the boat has enough space for both visitors and luggage transported in one route. Alternatively, the transfer of visitors and luggage at Lykos bay can be done in one route, then checking-in to the hostel and afterwards sea activities can start.

- VI) The fourth day can be kept as it was initially designed with only one change suggested. The route from Lykos – Loutro – Anopolis – Aradaina should start early in the morning (07:30-08:00) in order to avoid high temperatures and to follow relaxed pace in order to be enjoyable for all participants.
- VII) The afternoon of the fourth day must not include any activity.
- VIII) The fifth day can be kept as it was initially designed, with the route Alonia – Kakos Poros or/and Alonia – Papakefala in a relaxed and smooth pace. It is suggested that the participants should be informed, before their arrival, to bring with them binoculars for bird watching activities to Kakos Poros, since this site is ideal for this activity.
- IX) The afternoon of the fifth day will be dedicated to a culinary seminar. Also the last night has to

include experience with traditional Cretan music, if available.

- X) The last day of the package and the return to the city has to be rescheduled. The War Museum in Askyfou has to be removed from the program and the visit to the winery can be avoided if the wine – tasting seminar can be scheduled to take place the previous afternoon in Agios Ioannis with products from the winery transferred to the guesthouse. The last day has to include a direct transfer to the city of Chania and if the departure flights are in a suitable time, lunch in the city of Chania can be included in order to have a daily experience of the city as well.

Consequently, the final package is proposed to have the following flow:

Basic Ecotourism Package

Title: A snorkel on the mountain

Features of the package: Consolidated mountainous and sea experience combined with seminars of gastronomy - wine tasting and strong local cultural interaction in the National Park of Samaria

Target group: 8 people, families with children over 12 years, with moderate to good physical condition, moderate hiking experience, good knowledge of swimming for children.

Duration: Six days (five nights)

Period: *to be defined*

Program:

DAY 1st (Chania airport – Chania – settlement into Chania hotel and city tour)

The 1st day's program is strongly dependant on the arrival hours and location of arrival of all participants. And since we don't want to give you a hard time nor keep you waiting for other participants of the group to arrive we decided to have the chance to view one of the most beautiful cities in Greece. So the 1st day you arrive in Crete (Chania International Airport) we meet with our guide – manager of the group at the airport. Then we transfer to the city of Chania, which is about 20km from the airport and settle to a hotel at the centre of the city where we will spend the night. The 1st day is concluded though with guided tour (from a professional guide) around the city of Chania in various city sights and archaeological monuments (preferably in the multicultural old town of Chania) as well as dinner at a local restaurant in the old and picturesque harbour of Chania.

DAY 2nd (Chania – Omalos Plateau – Samaria Gorge – Agya Roumeli – trekking activities)

Morning:

We depart at approximately 08:00 from Chania and take the 40-km road to the Omalos plateau at 1.250 meters a.s.l. where the north entrance of the Gorge is. At the entrance of the Gorge of Samaria we take a short visit (about 1 hour) to the Samaria National Park Information Centre so that we can take a small idea of what we are about to see.

Then we enter the 18km Gorge and begin the hike. Keep in mind that the area is one of the most multidesignated protected areas in Greece such as National Park, Wildlife Refuge, Biosphere Reserve through the MAB Programme of UNESCO, Biogenetic

Reserve (CoE), Important Bird Area (IBA) and has received the European Diploma of Protected Areas from the Council of Europe. It is especially rich in geomorphologic configurations, ecosystems, endemic species of fauna and flora and supports the continuum of traditional human activities. During our crossing we will take several stops along the beautiful scenery and surely one big stop at the old and abandoned village of Samaria where we rest for a while and take a short briefing about the daily way of life of the old residents of the Gorge.

Late Afternoon:

After a long hike we arrive at the coastal village of Agya Roumeli (or "Greek Waters"), swim to the Libyan Sea and settle to a local lodge where we will spend the night. (Remember: we start our hike at 1.250 metres a.s.l. and end up to the sea!).

Evening:

We'll have a traditional dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 3rd (Agya Roumeli – Lykos – Foinikas – Loutro)

Morning:

Breakfast with local products and then swim in the Libyan Sea.

Noon:

We meet at the port of Agya Roumeli where we transfer with boat taxi (diving centre boat) to the wider area of Lykos (which basically means "Wolf") - Phoenix – Loutro. A short briefing about the underwater natural environment of the National Park by our local

diving centre master diver and then snorkeling in a prescribed "trail" where we will have the chance to discover the underwater flora and fauna of the Libyan Sea.

Afternoon:

We return by boat to the beach of Lykos to settle in a local small lodge, where we will spend the night.

Night:

We will have a traditional dinner in local tavern.

Alternatively:

Morning:

Breakfast with local products and then swimming in the Libyan Sea.

Noon:

We visit an agro touristic business where we will have the opportunity to see and participate in the production of local Cretan cuisine. Then we visit a beekeeping unit where we will taste honey direct from the beehives. On the return, we will have lunch with the dishes we prepared in the morning.

Afternoon:

We meet at the port of Agya Roumeli where we transfer with boat taxi (diving centre boat) to the wider area of Lykos (which basically means "Wolf") - Phoenix – Loutro. A short briefing about the underwater natural environment of the National Park by our local diving centre master diver and then snorkeling in a prescribed "trail" where we will have the chance to discover the

underwater flora and fauna of the Libyan Sea. Those who wish (upon request), will be able to have an introduction to diving through a discovery dive.

We will return by boat to the beach to Lykos and we will settle in a small guesthouse where we stay overnight.

Night:

We'll have a traditional dinner at the hostel.

Day 4th (Lykos – Loutro – Anopolis – Aradaina – Agios Ioannis – trekking activities)

Morning:

Breakfast with local products.

Then we start hiking the coastal path from Lykos to Loutro and then start climbing the trail to Anopolis (which basically means "the city above"). This trail has an amazing view of the Libyan Sea. From Anopolis we board a 4X4 wheel-drive vehicle with direction to the 138-meters steel-wooden bridge of Aradena and the surrounding old settlement where we will take a guided tour and familiarization with the area.

Afternoon:

We transfer to the mountain village of Saint John - which is the last village on the foothills of the White Mountains - settle in a local traditional hostel where we will spend the night and take some time to rest.

Night:

We'll have a traditional dinner at the hostel.

**DAY 5th (Agios Ioannis – Kakos Poros – Agios Ioannis
– culinary activities)**

Morning:

Breakfast with local products.

Then we start hiking the trail from Saint John to the site called “Kakos Poros” or “Bad Entrance” (which is truly not bad at all..) and/or to the summit “Papakefala” with spectacular view of the Elygias gorge. Both trails are short, of low difficulty, of unique natural beauty and with magnificent views (so do not forget to keep a pair of binoculars with you!)

Afternoon:

In the afternoon we return to the old village of Saint John and take part in a “Gastronomy Seminar” or cooking lesson where we will learn how to prepare our own local dinner with products of the area.

Night:

We will watch and discuss a video for the National Park.

**Day 6th (Agios Ioannis – Anopolis –Askyfou Plateau –
Vrysses– Chania airport - return)**

Morning:

Breakfast with local products.

Then we will (unfortunately) depart from the old village of Saint John and head back to the city of Chania. On the way back we will cross several villages of the historic region of Sfakia. From there we continue towards the city of Chania where we will have lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch we will continue to the Chania International Airport where our tour around the nature and culture of the Cretan White Mountains comes to an end!

END OF THE BASIC PACKAGE

Annex 1 - Program and Presentations of the 2nd Participatory Process

European Neighborhood Partnership Instrument
"Mediterranean Sea" Programme (ENPI Med)



Φορέας
Διαχείρισης
Εθνικού
Δρυμού
Σαμαριάς

Πιλοτική Δράση

«a snorkel on the mountain»

Πρόγραμμα "Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism" (MEET)



Πρόγραμμα 2^{ης} Συμμετοχικής Διεργασίας Σάββατο 18 Οκτωβρίου 2014 – Χώρα Σφακίων

Α' ΜΕΡΟΣ – ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΕΙΣ	
10:00 – 10:10	Σύμφωνο Ποιότητας Προϊόντων και Υπηρεσιών <i>Πέτρος Λυμπεράκης, Δρ. Βιολόγος, ερευνητής Μ.Φ.Ι.Κ., Πρόεδρος Δ.Σ. Φορέα Διαχείρισης Εθνικού Δρυμού Σαμαριάς</i>
10:10 – 10:30	Πιλοτική Δράση «A snorkel on the mountain» Πρόγραμμα "Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism" (MEET) <i>Δημήτρης Πουρσανίδης, Εξωτερικός Σύμβουλος Υποστήριξης της Πιλοτικής Δράσης</i>
10:30 – 10:50	Τουρισμός στον Εθνικό Δρυμό Σαμαριάς: Επιπτώσεις στην τοπική οικονομία <i>Γεώργιος Φακωτάκης, ερευνητής, Μεσογειακό Αγρονομικό Ινστιτούτο Χανίων</i>
10:50 – 11:10	Η σημασία των τοπικών προϊόντων στον Οικοτουρισμό <i>Merja Tuominen-Gialitaki, συγγραφέας</i>
11:10 – 11:30	Οι βασικές προκλήσεις στην ανάπτυξη του Αγροτουρισμού <i>Φραντζεσκάκης Νίκος, Πρόεδρος του Συνδέσμου Ενώσεων Αγροτουρισμού Ελλάδας</i>
Β' ΜΕΡΟΣ – ΣΤΡΟΓΓΥΛΗ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΑ – ΑΝΟΙΚΤΗ ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΗ	
ΣΥΝΤΟΝΙΣΤΗΣ: ΛΥΜΠΕΡΑΚΗΣ ΠΕΤΡΟΣ	
11:30 – 12:30	Σύνοψη αποτελεσμάτων, Ανάπτυξη Οικοτουριστικής Στρατηγικής για τα Λευκά Όρη - Σχέδιο Δράσεων, Ανάπτυξη Πρότυπου Οικοτουριστικού Πακέτου



Pilot Action

«A snorkel on the mountain»

In the framework of the Project

“Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism” (MEET)

3rd Report



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