

## **Learning for resilience:**

### **Stakeholders' perceptions of training needs in wine tourism**

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#### **Abstract**

Wine tourism has emerged as a mutually beneficial opportunity for both wineries - especially the small-size ones- and wine regions. A critical success factor in this respect concerns the delivery of an integrated tourism experience to the visitor. Nevertheless, in many instances, actors engaged in wine tourism activities do not seem to have realized the importance of their role as service providers of a cultural tourism product.

While previous research has underlined the lack of appropriate training for wine tourism operators, there have been limited efforts to explore the training needs of those involved in hosting visitors or to develop tools that can be used in improving their educational prospects. Even more noteworthy is the absence of a combined methodological approach to capture a holistic view of 'learning for resilience', given the complex issues that wine tourism enterprises face nowadays.

The current study seeks to fill this gap, guided by the following research questions:

1. How do service 'providers' and 'receivers' perceive the concept of 'wine tourism experience' and to what extent are winery operators able to meet their visitors' needs?

2. Which are the training needs of those involved in wine tourism?
3. How does winery operators' training relate to the resilience of a wine tourism business?

In the light of the above questions, the present paper outlines the preliminary results of a project currently under way at the Agricultural University of Athens. Research focuses on the educational component of the wine tourism experience, from both a Supply- and a Demand- perspective. The project will be implemented in two phases, by adopting a mixed-method design, which comprises: personal, in-depth interviews with national stakeholders of wine tourism and education across Greece (Phase 1); and fieldwork in the island of Crete (Phase 2), including focus groups with winery visitors; a questionnaire census of all wineries-members of the Association "Wines of Crete"; and a series of experiential workshops in which winemakers will be introduced to the concept of case-based learning (CBL). The ultimate aim of this research is to form the basis for the development of a 'resilience benchmarking framework' for wine tourism enterprises.

The current paper reports on the results of Phase 1; Based on a Grounded Theory approach, we attempt to address the training needs of wine tourism providers, by exploring the perceptions of key stakeholders of wine tourism and education across Greece. Thematic Analysis will be used to identify patterns and refine categories in qualitative data derived from interviews.

**Keywords:** Wine tourism; training needs; learning; resilience; networks