



Designing Innovative Tourism Stays

Welcome to the Epic Stays Newsletter

*Created by Momentum Educate
+ Innovate Ireland*



www.epicstays.eu

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Empowering the Future of Alternative Tourism Accommodation in Europe

*Epic Stays is more than
a resource hub; it is a
community SME
business practice!!!*

We are delighted to launch the **EPIC STAYS resources** — a milestone moment celebrating the release of all our key project outputs that support the growing demand for **authentic, sustainable, and memorable accommodation experiences**.

EPIC STAYS was created to support **current and aspiring**

tourism entrepreneurs, educators, VET trainers, and rural tourism stakeholders across Europe who are eager to explore the potential of **alternative accommodation models** — from glamping pods and cabins to treehouses, heritage conversions, eco-lodges, wild camping frameworks, and low-impact remote stays.



Who Is Epic Stays For?

Open Free Access for All...

EPIC STAYS resources are designed for:

- ❖ Tourism educators
- ❖ VET trainers
- ❖ Tourism entrepreneurs and SMEs
- ❖ Rural and regional development agencies
- ❖ Accommodation operators
- ❖ Students exploring tourism innovation
- ❖ Policymakers
- ❖ Destination development bodies

Addressing a Pressing Industry Need

Across Europe, tourism demand continues to expand while many regions face:

- ❖ A **shortage** of traditional accommodation
- ❖ Increased visitor **interest** in authentic, rural and nature-based experiences
- ❖ A need to **support SMEs** and local communities
- ❖ The urgency to build **sustainable and regenerative** tourism models

Visitors today seek **choice, connection, design, nature, community and meaning** — not just a hotel room.



Photo Credit: Wicklow Lighthouse, Wicklow, Ireland

Why Alternative Accommodation Matters Now

Epic Stays was Created to Support the ATA Trend and Shift in the Industry!



Photo Credit: Tubbrid Castle, Kilkenny, Ireland

Visitors Seek ATAs

Alternative accommodation responds to this shift, opening the door for **entrepreneurship, rural revitalisation, innovation, and new business models.**

EPIC STAYS was created to support that shift — empowering VET educators, learners, and tourism entrepreneurs across Europe to confidently design, develop, and operate **alternative tourism accommodation (ATA)** that is sustainable, innovative, and commercially viable.

Why Alternative Accommodation Matters Now

Designed With Sustainability at the Core.

EPIC STAYS supports the European transition toward:

- Low-impact design
- Circular economy principles
- Regenerative tourism
- Rural resilience
- Community benefit models

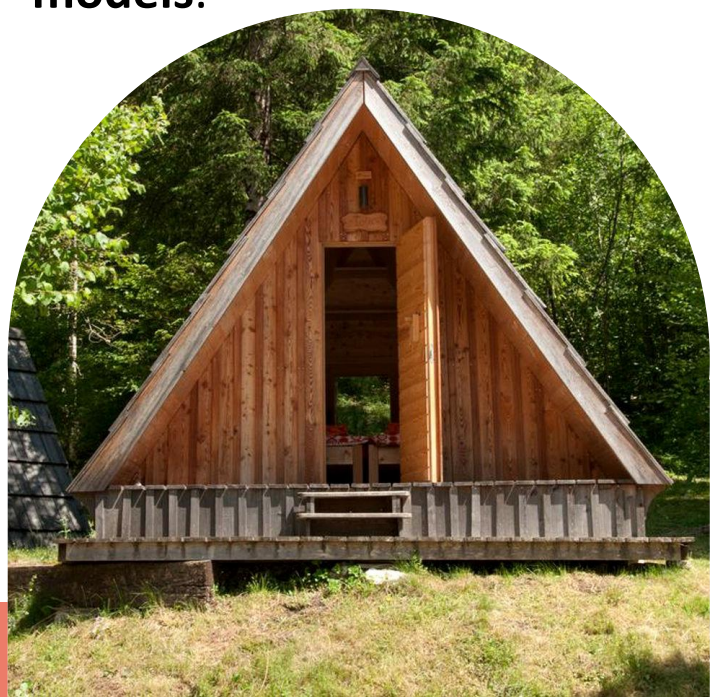
Global tourism is undergoing a significant transformation. Traditional accommodation categories alone no longer meet the expectations of today's travellers — particularly:

- ❖ Digital nomads
- ❖ Slow and regenerative tourism seekers
- ❖ Eco-conscious visitors
- ❖ Adventure, wellness, or culture-focused niche travellers

From **forest cabins** in

Slovenia, to **treehouses overlooking Italian hills**, to **dark sky pods in Ireland**, travellers are choosing places that offer a sense of **experience, identity, and exclusivity.**

EPIC STAYS helps tourism stakeholders understand this emerging market and turn ideas into **in-demand, purpose-led accommodation models.**



Epic Stays Research Report

The Need for Alternative Tourism Accommodation across Europe

The Epic Stays Research Report delivers a detailed analysis of the benefits, challenges, and key drivers shaping the demand for alternative tourism accommodation (ATA) across Europe.

Serving as a flagship resource of the Epic Stays project, this report provides a comprehensive roadmap for navigating the complexities of the alternative tourism sector.

It underscores the critical importance of a unified, competency-based approach for advancing ATA, highlighting the transformative impact of strategic practices rooted in policy awareness and practical skills. <https://epicstays.eu/epic-stays-research-report/>



Home Stays by Country ▾ Course ▾ Resources ▾ Partners Blogs 

Epic
Stays

Epic Stays Research Report

Compendium of Good Practice

Designing Innovative Tourism Stays

Epic Stays Research Report
The need for
Alternative Tourism
Accommodation
across Europe

1st edition 2024

Photo Credit: Letteran Lodges, Derry, Ireland



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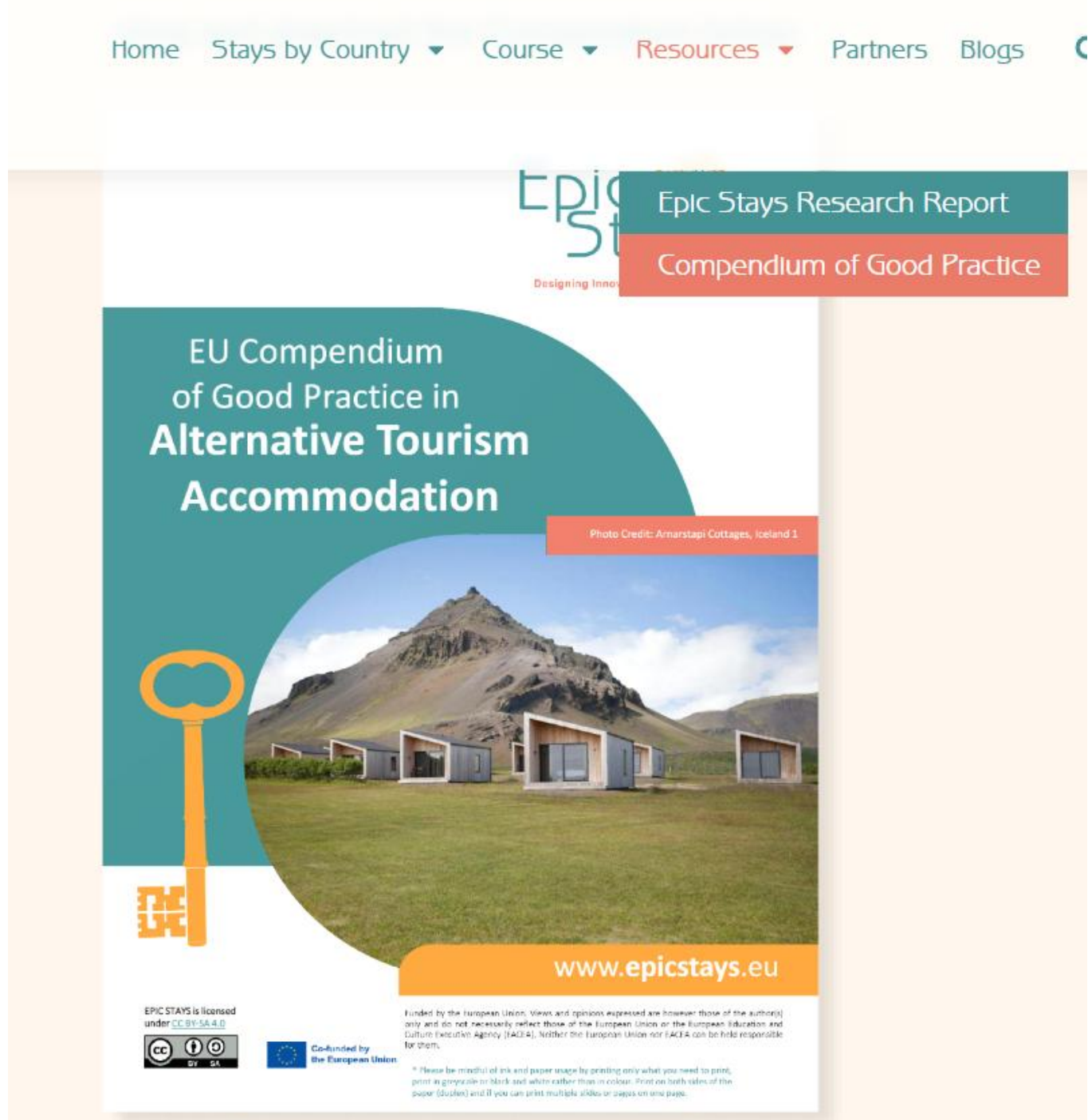
Epic Stays Compendium of Good Practice

Inspiring European Good Practice Showcase

The Epic Stays EU Compendium of Good Practice in Alternative Tourism Accommodation is an inspiring showcase and learning resource designed to spark new ideas and elevate the potential within the alternative accommodation sector.

This comprehensive resource serves as a guide for tourism industry professionals, policymakers, VET educators, and SMEs committed to sustainable and innovative accommodation models.

<https://epicstays.eu/compendium-of-good-practice/>



Epic Stays FREE Course

Ever dreamed of turning your land, building, or big idea into a place where people love to stay? Let Epic Stays show you how. This hands-on, free course walks you step by step through designing, funding, and running your own alternative accommodation.

The focus here is SME, so anything from a singular glamping pod in the countryside of Ireland to multiple tree houses in a lush forest in Slovenia, we have it covered. <https://epicstays.eu/modules/>

“If you’re ready to start small and think big, you’re in the right place”

FREE Course: Dream Big and Start Building Your Own Epic Stay!



Turn your tourism accommodation idea into an unforgettable stay!

- **Start our course and turn your business idea into an unforgettable stay.** This course takes you step by step through designing and running your own alternative tourism accommodation.
- **Discover how to spot market opportunities,** stand out in the marketplace, and deliver guest experiences that leave a lasting impression.
- **Explore different funding options,** strategic financial planning, and ways to launch and sustain a thriving business.



What's Inside!

8 Modules | 27 Learning Areas | 30+ Case Studies

MODULE 1

Introduction to Alternative Tourism Accommodation

A practical starting point for launching an alternative tourism accommodation. Learn about this high-demand trend and how to spot opportunities.

Part 1

- Introduction to Alternative Accommodation
- Why It Matters Now: Guest Motivations & Market Shifts

Part 2

- Explore Different Business Models
- Spot Opportunities: Untapped Properties & Concepts

MODULE 2

Market Research & Business Planning

Turn your idea into a clear, realistic business plan. Learn market research, define your concept, and shape a strong value proposition.

Part 1

- Understanding the Market, Your Guest & What They Want
- Define Your Concept & Value Proposition

Part 2

- Building a Viable Business Plan Using the Business Model Canvas

MODULE 3

Designing Sustainable Place-Based Accommodation

Learn how to be sustainable and connected to local identity. Design integration that supports the environment and communities.

Part 1

- Smart Starts – Adapting Buildings & Using Pre-Built Units

Part 2

- Better Building Choices: Design, Materials & Layout

Part 3

- Right-Sized Stays That Make a Local Impact

MODULE 4

Building a Strong Brand, Storytelling & How to Get Bookings!

Learn how to build a brand that's personal, place-based, and memorable. Attract more bookings and make your accommodation stand out.

Module 4

- Building a Brand that Makes You Stand Out from

- Local is the New Luxury – Connecting with Community through Curated Experiences

- Storytelling, Visual Identity and Building a Supportive Community

MODULE 5

Guest Experience – Hosting with Heart, Impact & Viability

Get confident in delivering a great guest experience. Streamline daily tasks and business operations. Learn how to effectively manage the guest journey.

Part 1

- Managing the Guest Journey – Before, During & After their Stay

Part 2

- Tools & Systems for Efficient Operations

- Growing Smart – Partnerships, Upsells & Long-Term Planning

MODULE 6

Financial Set Up & Launching Smart – Planning Your Start-Up & Capital Costs

Learn what it really takes to financially set up and launch, including site selection, buying vs leasing, realistic infrastructure costs and creating the wow factor.

Part 1

- Getting Started – The Financial Foundations of Your Business and Market

Part 2

- Location, Land & Logistics – Planning for a Profitable Site

Part 3

- Sustainability, Investing in the WOW Factor & Support Tools

MODULE 7

Finding the Funds That Fit – Funding & Finance Options

Explore financing options from self-funding to EU grants in different countries. Understand what funders seek and navigate funding applications.

Part 1

- Introduction to Private & European Funding Models

Part 2

- Spotlight on European Country Specific Funding

Part 3

- Investment Funding, Grant Applications & Pitching Your Idea

MODULE 8

Making It Viable – Pricing, Planning & Long-Term Financial Health

Learn smart pricing, seasonal planning, and contingency strategies. Learn to make decisions that secure your business's future.

Part 1

- Laying the Financial Foundations for a Viable Business

Part 2

- Understanding Your Costs, Pricing, and Break-Even Point

Part 3

- Pricing for Profit, Value, and Seasonality

Part 4

- Boosting Revenue Through Add-Ons and Financial Oversight

Part 5

- Contingency Planning for Long-Term Viability

[Click here to see our Case Studies](#)

Epic Stays Case Studies

Inspiring Journeys: European SME Entrepreneurs Who Built Their Own Epic Stays

Discover our Case Studies and how visionary entrepreneurs across Europe turned bold alternative accommodation ideas into thriving, sustainable tourism businesses. From castles reborn as luxury retreats, to eco-pods powered by the sun, to farms diversified into glamping sanctuaries — these stories show what's possible when creativity meets resilience. <https://epicstays.eu/case-studies/>

Ready to be inspired? Browse and download over 33 case studies.



Home Stays by Country ▼

Course ▼

Resources ▼

Partners Blogs



Crusader Cabins offers a portfolio of alternative tourism accommodation retreats that complement their Irish rural destination setting, where mountain



Bunk Amsterdam transformed a 1921 church into a hybrid hotel–hostel that doubles as a cultural hub. With affordable pods, private rooms, and vibrant

Panorama Glass Lodge | Iceland

Luxury Glass Igloo Cabins



Panorama Glass Lodge offers futuristic glass-roofed cabins designed to frame the Icelandic sky—aurora in winter, midnight sun in summer. Each lodge blends minimalist Viking-inspired design with privacy, hot tubs, and sustainability.

Castello di Reschio | Umbria, Italy

Luxury Castle Estate Hotel



Castello di Reschio is a thousand-year-old castle estate transformed into an exclusive retreat by Count Benedikt Bolza. It combines historic architecture with artisanal craftsmanship, organic farming, and sustainable luxury design, creating an immersive experience.



NETHERLANDS



Photo Credit: BUNK Hotel Amsterdam, Netherlands

Thank you from the Project Team



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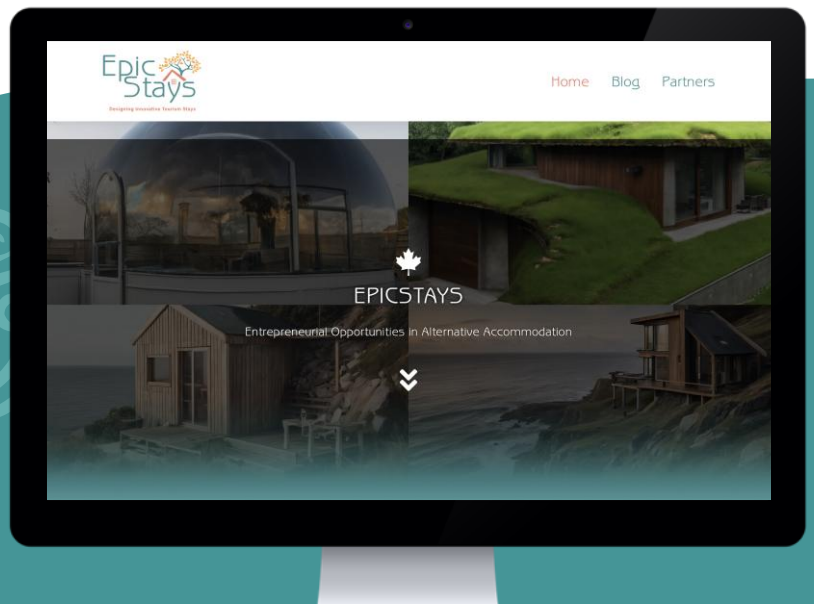
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