



GO TO PLACES

Bringing people together, helping places thrive

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: KENT

Interreg EXPERIENCE is a €23.3 million European funded project which is part of the Channel Programme that aims to extend the tourism season through the development of off-season experiences with an emphasis on overnight stays and sustainability. The project involves multiple partners across six pilot regions in England and France including Kent, Norfolk and Cornwall. Key aims of the project:

- To extend the tourism season and increase visitor spend
- To improve the sustainability of tourism by reducing the social and environmental impacts
- To develop and implement new products and services to attract new visitors

OVERVIEW

As part of this project Go To Places (acting as Visit Kent) launched an Experience development Programme to help 125 local businesses to develop new experiential off-season tourism products and experiences and take them to market. This includes all kinds of businesses from existing tourism businesses such as attractions and activity providers but also those looking to diversify into tourism such as to artists, food producers and photographers.

CHALLENGE

A number of key challenges were identified through the mentoring stage. As small businesses, time and resource to focus on the product development was the biggest challenge. Understanding how best to form effective business partnerships, build financially viable packages and technical aspects such as bookability and distribution were also identified as barriers which we've helped businesses to address through specialist support and peer networks



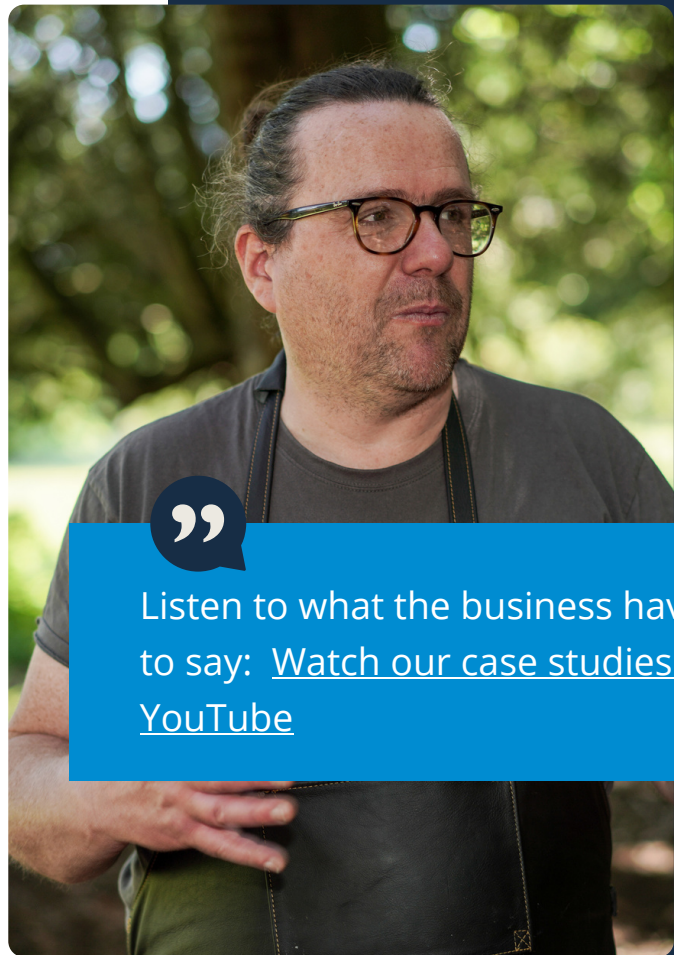
KEY STEPS

Successful businesses received a package of sector specific support to develop the product, ensure it's fit for the audience and launch it to market, including:

- 1 to 1 mentoring - Specialist consultancy to support the development of a business plan for the launch of the new product and overcome barriers.
- Product testing - Market testing of the concept with consumers and travel trade providing feedback to further develop your product.
- Specialist support - Peer networks and access to experts to help overcome barriers, signpost funding opportunities and improve accessibility.
- Content development - New photography and video of the new product and inclusion in inspirational feature content.
- Consumer marketing - Inclusion in targeted destination consumer campaigns to market products to domestic audiences.
- AccessAble Audits - Accessibility audits for businesses to support in attracting guests with accessibility needs.
- B2B distribution - Distribution of the product to the travel trade and corporate groups through our established B2B connections and networks

OUTCOME

Businesses have become more resilient through the creation of new revenue streams. By diversifying they have been able to tap into new audiences by responding to visitor trends around experiences and local produce as a result of Covid-19. For the destination, we now have a range of new authentic products to attract visitors which showcase local provenance including foraging, cake baking experiences, mushroom growing workshops, cycling brewery tours, gin and steam train packages, local cooking classes and oyster bed tours.



Listen to what the business have to say: [Watch our case studies on YouTube](#)

RESULTS

125

Businesses Supported

380

New experiences created

94.9%

Of Businesses found mentoring improved their progress of growing, improving or diversifying their business
