



2022 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Ethological safari of the horse "Garrano"

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Country: Spain

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Submission category: *(Please check one of the boxes that indicates the focus of your story)*

Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.

- Governance, Reset & Recovery
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".

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DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice?

Baiona is a small municipality of just over 12,000 inhabitants, located in northwestern Spain, in the region of Galicia.

We are a seafaring and tourist town. Our town was dedicated to fishing and agriculture until, especially in the early twentieth century, visitors began to come to an old spa, located on the beach Concheira, recommended by doctors from around the country to take advantage of the algae and iodine-rich waters of the beach. From there, villas and hotels began to be built to serve all the tourist demand that came to the spa. The tourist boom in Baiona is linked to the sea and the sun and beach, which causes a high tourist seasonality.

In this regard we detected several problems:

- The climate in Baiona limits the sun and beach to 3 months a year so we consider it very important to promote cultural, natural, sports and gastronomic tourism to fight against the seasonality of tourism that affects us.
- On the other hand, the high influx in the summer season is concentrated in the downtown area, coastal area and beaches.
- Tourism promotion has always been closely linked to the promotion of coastal resources and not so much the natural resources linked to the mountains when the natural diversity of its flora and fauna as well as its landscapes present a great opportunity to diversify the demand.
- A Groba mountain located in the upper area of Baiona, besides being a suitable area for hiking trails, has two viewpoints with spectacular views over the estuary. And the most peculiar thing is that at the moment live wild horses in freedom. The animal is a specific horse of this mountain, which is called "garrano", whose physical characteristics are adapted to live in the conditions of the mountain and to eat the typical flora, the gorse, a plant with spikes, so it is the animal that is responsible for maintaining the care of the mountain.





This animal is part of the traditional culture of Baiona since, although they live in freedom, they have owners who are in charge of worming them and cutting their manes before the summer, in an ancestral practice called "curros". Formerly, these horses were used for loading and cultivation, but nowadays, with these practices in disuse, the purpose of the maintenance and care of the horse by its owners is due exclusively to maintain the family tradition.

Without them, this animal would be in danger of disappearing, as happened in 2006.

Analyzing this problem, the Tourism Department of Baiona since a few years ago began to carry out various actions and sustainable initiatives in order to promote other types of tourism, which can complement the sun and beach or replace it in low season, such as the creation of a tourist map with all these areas, promotional videos with prominence for these resources, guided environmental tours, hiking trails,

And within these, the idea arises, at the proposal of the Finca Moreiras Association, to carry out contemplative visits to get to know the garrano and its environment

The existence of the garrano is very important for the ecosystem in which it lives because the animal has physical conditions to eat various plants of the Monte de A Groba, such as gorse (spiky plant, typical of Galicia, so, as reported in a study conducted within the GrazeLife project, this horse performs tasks of "clearing" and maintenance of the forest, which reduces the risk of forest fires and allows grass to grow in the forest, which feeds other animals that graze in the forest such as cows, sheep or goats.

Another consequence would be social, since the breeding of garranos in freedom does not generate, at the present time, economic benefits, but they do it to maintain a millenary tradition.

Methods, steps and tools applied

How was the good practice implemented?

The enhancement of Monte de A Groba in general, and of an element of our cultural and traditional heritage, such as the garrano, in particular, was set as one of the objectives of the Department of Tourism.





The manager of the Finca Moreiras Association, an association created with the aim of making known part of our culture and customs around this type of horse, is summoned to a meeting to assess the possibilities of collaboration to achieve our goal.

From this meeting comes the commitment to organize four days (one in April, one in May and two in June), funded by the City of Baiona, in which a small group of people, along with two specialized guides, go to one of the points where horses are usually found, and observe the behavior of them, how they interact with each other And on the part of the association, they are committed to maintaining this type of event throughout the year.

In addition to setting the characteristics of the visit, the first step was to find a name for the activity. It was clear to us that the activity would arouse interest, but we needed a title that would attract attention even if the activity did not take place, and that would attract the attention of the media because, by echoing the activity, we would be making known the great history of the garrano, the Monte de A Groba and Baiona in general. For this reason, the word "safari" seemed important to us, as an element of attention, and as a word referring to the observation of animals.

The days of the visits are fixed in the spring months, before the high season. The group was reduced to 20 people, the maximum number set by the specialists, and to move the group to the area it was decided to hire a collective minibus to avoid the impact of private cars.

The visit focused on observing the horses from a distance, so as not to interfere with their behavior, through binoculars, and the guides (a specialist in the study of wild horses from the University of A Coruña and the manager of the association, who comes from a family with a cattle-raising tradition) explained how they interact, why they perform certain behaviors,... they also explained the morphology of the horse, its history, what the natural environment in which they live is like, what would happen if they ceased to exist,.....

Registrations are made by e-mail at the tourist office where, at the time of confirming the places, they were given guidelines on behavior and respect for the animal and its environment.





A marketing plan was implemented to raise awareness of the initiative.

A specific brochure on the history of the garrano was also produced to raise awareness among visitors. This brochure is also distributed at the tourist office.

To reinforce the media plan, a promotional video of Baiona was made in which the manager of the Association explained to a Spanish influencer what tourists find in Baiona when they visit us. All this on the back of a garrano to also give visibility to this traditional and typical part of our mountain.

Another initiative carried out to promote the knowledge of the garrano was the elaboration of the story "A walk through Baiona" where, through illustrations, a garrano makes a journey through the history of Baiona, from an environmental point of view. This book was distributed in the schools of the municipality and was given as a gift to the children attending the presentation, where they also carried out activities and workshops related to the environment.

The cost of the organization of the safari routes was 2,178 €.

The specific objectives for the "Ethological safari of garranos" were: the dissemination of natural heritage, conservation of a specific species such as the garrano, to publicize our culture and traditions and to offer activities in low season to combat seasonality, outside the downtown area, with more visitors, to decentralize and diversify the demand, as well as to value the work of the Finca Moreiras Association, to make them known and then they can offer these visits as a complementary activity throughout the year.

Key success factors

What helped you tackle the issues?

The main success factor was the public-private collaboration between the Baiona City Council and the Finca Moreiras Association, which created synergies to achieve the final objectives. The commitment of the municipal government for the diversification of demand, promotion of nature and tradition, dissemination and conservation of the animal and its environment as well as support for private enterprise that aims to offer various activities throughout the year. As well as the tourism and press staff involved in the organization and promotion of the activity.





And above all, the Finca Moreiras Association is dedicated to the great work of preserving and disseminating the Garrano horse and promotes various complementary activities that lead to a sustainable tourism promotion of Baiona. Its manager and tour guide, Adrián Martins, for explaining the garrano and the mountain from the point of view of tradition and love for them, and the other guide, Laura Lagos, who studies the behavior of the garrano horse. The weather conditions were excellent for the development of the activity.

Lessons learned

While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome?

The first challenge was to get the attention of the media and get them to echo the news. We knew that the few places for the visit would be filled with online dissemination and at the tourist office, but we wanted the various media to echo it. That is why the choice of the name of the activity was important.

The second challenge is for the association to ensure that the activity can be carried out throughout the year and to continue carrying out sustainable activities that publicize our natural heritage. That its growth is broad and can even cause job creation.

And last but not least, protect the Garrano horse and its environment. Make it known and that they can be visited in their environment but without disturbing or hindering. And that Monte de A Groba becomes a reference tourist resource to diversify, dezonify and deseasonalize demand.

Results, achievements and recognitions

What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice?

The results obtained in the 4 routes were spectacular:

- 1st route: the 20 places were filled in 1 day and another 50 people remained on the waiting list.
- 2nd route: the 20 places were filled in 5 minutes and 75 people remained on the waiting list.





- 3rd route: the 20 places were filled in 2 minutes and another 105 people remained on the waiting list.
- 4th route: the 20 places were filled in 2 minutes and 15 people remained on the waiting list.

A total of 615 requests for information on the route were received, 300 of them corresponding only to telephone calls on the morning of April 25.

Among the people who participated in the tours, 82% were from outside Baiona and traveled, expressly, to participate in the safari. In addition, 15% of those booked decided to spend the weekend in Baiona even though they did not have a guaranteed place, in case of cancellation.

The point of departure and arrival of the group and the stipulated time of arrival were designed to allow the participants who were not staying in Baiona to stay for lunch and spend the afternoon in Baiona.

The time chosen also corresponds to outside the high season so that the activity can function as a focus of attraction for local tourism.

The commitment of the association is to create a calendar of visits throughout the year.

The activity had a great impact on the media both in the presentation and in the routes themselves. The news was published in all the written and digital media in the area, several Galician and a national television broadcast a report on the last route in prime time and in the evening news. Both the manager of the association and the Mayor of Baiona were interviewed several times by various radio stations.

Many requests for information were received at the tourist office to be able to carry out the route on your own or at another time of the year from various points in Spain.

Contact our department of 4 national agencies that are dedicated to organizing innovative and innovative activities for small groups of travelers.

The impact on social networks was amazing. For example, the video of the report that was broadcast in the news had 31,000 views.

The association has organized visits for the months of July and August. In the absence of knowing how they will work when organized by them, at a cost to the participant, their idea is to be able to keep them throughout the year.





We believe that the activity produced a great appeal both to the public in general and to the media and produced a greater knowledge of the garrano, its environment, its tradition.... Both in quantitative and qualitative data, the results achieved exceeded the prior expectations.

- Economic benefits:

- New niche market for the association. Hiring of the biologist and the bus company.
- Tourist and advertising promotion of Baiona.
- Activity that produces an attraction effect, especially for local tourism, which produces tourist spending in the town.

- Environmental benefits:

- Dissemination and diffusion of our natural heritage, the garrano and the importance of caring for the environment and how to behave in the rural environment.
- Part of the budget of the activity is reinvested in the association, which is dedicated to the breeding of garranos. In addition, they also made a donation to the Asociación de Ganaderos de A Groba, in charge of maintaining the legacy of the horses that live in the wild.
- Environmentally friendly tourism

- Social benefits:

- Expansion of the tourist offer.
- To raise awareness of local tradition and culture
- The success of the activity shows that tourism demand is heterogeneous and that it is possible to create businesses and jobs related to the natural environment and outside the center of Baiona.





Additional references

Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from YouTube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL (not WeTransfer).

- Asociación Finca Moreiras: <https://www.fincamoreiras.com/>
- Laura Lagos' study on Wild Horses in Galicia. University of A Coruña (Spanish):
https://ruc.udc.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/2183/29533/Fag%C3%BAndez_Jaime_2021_Caballos_s_alvajes_Galicia.pdf?sequence=6
- Promotional video: <https://youtu.be/7tmaXyMAfMI>
video summary: <https://youtu.be/U5ginEHLlwA>
- Project Grazelife <https://grazelife.com/>

