



Part 3: Working Together



Image courtesy of Ian Brodie & Somerset County Council

About this toolkit

This .pdf is the third part of a fully featured resource packed full with useful information and advice for new and existing rural tourism businesses. It is designed to help with business evaluation, market identification, development of effective communication and marketing strategies, and is intended to encourage initiatives that offer great visitor experiences whilst nurturing the environments that create them.

This toolkit has been created as part of the COOL Tourism Project by the COOL Partnership and tourism development charity Hidden Britain.

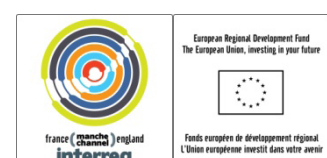
The COOL Tourism Project

The COOL Tourism Project is a European partnership of 11 local authorities and organisations, based in the east and south of England and in the north of France, who are working together to help each other compete effectively in the global tourism market.

COOL Tourism aims to address the need for market research, product development and business support in the partners' areas, and to encourage rural tourism businesses to make use of the rural areas' environmental assets and local distinctiveness to attract visitors.

The project is being delivered with the support of the European cross-border co-operation Programme INTERREG IV A, France (Channel) – England, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The project partners include; Norfolk County Council, Essex County Council (Visit Essex), Kent County Council (Explore Kent), Visit Kent, Somerset County Council, West Somerset Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Exmoor National Park Authority, Pas-de-Calais Tourisme, Somme Tourisme, and Pas-de-Calais Gîtes de France.





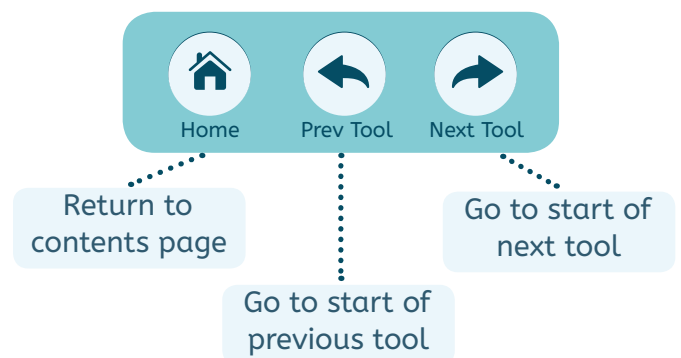
Contents

Introduction	Page 4	Go
Networking	Page 5	Go
Finding Partners	Page 7	Go
When to seek formal advice	Page 9	Go
Developing Joint Offers	Page 10	Go
Working with other brands	Page 11	Go
Sales Missions & Events	Page 12	Go
Working with Destination Management Organisations	Page 13	Go
How to get started as a destination	Page 14	Go
FAQs	Page 19	Go

How to use this Toolkit

This toolkit has been designed to allow you to dip in and select the tools you need.

You'll find navigation buttons on every page to help move back and forward between the tools and you can easily return here to the contents page by clicking the **"home"** button at any time.





Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Working Together

Running a successful enterprise inevitably involves a wide range of business disciplines – from business planning, finance, IT, operations and people management, through to market research, sales and marketing, etc... it's a long list and no one can be great at everything! That's where reaching out and working with others can ease the burden and help reach new opportunities...

Types of Partnership

You can work with others on several levels, from informal relationships all the way up to formal partnerships and functioning as destination groups. Equally, activity can range from simple networking to committing joint funds and resources for mutual gain.

Consider your own skills first

One piece of vital advice, however, is to look carefully at the skills, resources, experience and knowledge within your business before committing to any joint activity. Ensure you are fully prepared and are not over-committing.

Where you should be before you begin

Before you use any of the information and tools in this section, we would suggest you have an understanding of the following:

- Clear objectives for your business
What you need and are looking to achieve
- A clear understanding of your target audiences
Who they are, where they are and what they want
- A clear understanding of your offer
What you have to give them that will make them spend time and money with you.

Only then will you be in a position to know who you might need to work with and how. If you're unsure, check out **Part one of the Toolkit - Getting Started**.

Disclaimer

This toolkit is an in-depth resource but it cannot address every specific need. Therefore feel free to tailor the guidance or use it as a starting point to research further for your own business.

Also remember - things change, websites disappear and new trends arrive, use this toolkit alongside your own research to ensure you are right up to date.



The keys to successful networking

Networking is essentially about building your contacts and establishing long-term relationships with people who can help your business.

However, we are all different people; you will have your own preferred style and way of networking, so above all, be yourself and do it your way. All the same, here are some general tips which may help you sharpen your networking skills:

- 1** Be genuine. We trust people who are authentic, so above all be true to yourself.
- 2** Be clear about your goals, it will help you meet the right sort of people, e.g. are you networking to learn or to get your business noticed?
- 3** Don't jump in too early. Not all networks deliver, so take your time and try out a few different groups. It will help decide which ones spark your interest and meet your objectives.
- 4** Consider volunteering. It's a great way of getting yourself noticed, but also shows you're prepared to give back to groups that have supported you.
- 5** Play the host. Greet others, and make the first move to introduce yourself, don't wait to be the guest.
- 6** Perfect your introduction. Make sure you have a short, simple way to explain what you do and what you can offer. This is your "elevator pitch", your brand in a nutshell.
- 7** Ask open questions, try to use Who? What? When? Where? And How? These questions avoid "Yes" or "No" answers and mean you keep the conversation flowing.
- 8** Follow up promptly, it can kill a business relationship if you don't! Get in touch with contacts, say how much you enjoyed meeting them, and get a date for a further meeting.



Petersfield First Friday

Petersfield First Friday

Case Study

Petersfield in Hampshire created their own informal business networking group in 2003. It's still running strong with 30-40 businesses meeting monthly for lunch, informal networking and occasional guest speakers.

[Find out more](#)



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

How to prepare for a networking event

Preparing properly for networking is vital. Here is a simple checklist to make sure you are ready:

Have you gathered your networking tools: name badge, business cards etc?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know the dress code?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you clearly thought out your goals and targets for the event?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you researched who is likely to be there & have you identified key people to meet?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you fine-tuned and practised your personal introduction?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you prepared your conversation topics and questions you want to ask in advance?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you planned to arrive 15 minutes early?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Making the most of online networking

Networking isn't just about physical meetings. Nowadays, opportunities for "virtual networking" via the internet are becoming more and more significant. Here are a few places to look & consider:

- Business networking websites: There are a vast number of such sites. Some are trade specific and may be local. Take time to learn about their culture beforehand and how best to use the systems before you jump in.
- Website forums: There is an online forum for just about any subject you can think of. Do check however that it's in line with your brand values and your business objectives for networking.
- Professional body websites. Examples include the Tourism Society, British Hospitality Association and the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions. For a full list, see www.visitbritain.org/britaintourismindustry/industrygroupsandbodies/
- Community social websites: There are a vast number, and include all the usual suspects like [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). They all have their own distinctive membership profile, so it is again important to remain consistent with your brand and ensure your business profile and reputation is properly maintained.

The scope for online networking is vast, but it's got to be right for you and meet your objectives. Few modern businesses can afford to ignore it, but to do it well often requires time and resources.



Finding Partners



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Identifying who can help you

Your time and resources are finite, so working with others can often be a great way of sharing costs and saving time. There are a whole host of potential partners who can help, but how do you know who is going to be of greatest value in helping you achieve your business objectives?

Who to talk to

Before you enter any form of partnership activity, ask yourself two key questions:

- Where do my own key strengths lie?
- What jobs do I most need help with?

The answer to the first question will help you focus on the tasks that you personally need to be involved in – it’s what you do best! The answer to the second will help guide your choice of partners.



Here’s a quick exercise based on 2 key factors – **location and resources** – to help you think through what sort of help you need. Keeping your top priorities in mind, note down your likeliest partners.

1. Location:

It’s going to be most convenient for you to work with people based nearby. Starting with your most local partners and working outwards (across your destination area), who are the people you most need to talk to? Think especially about local tourism contacts.

2. Resources:

Think about the gaps in your skills and/or knowledge. Who has the resources and expertise to fill them? What specialist knowledge and contacts could they bring? Consider professional bodies, trainers, printers, web experts, designers etc.



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Tips on finding the right local partners

Here are a few ideas to help you partner with the right people in your area:

- 1** Consult local directories (online and printed) and get to know who else in your area is in your line of business. Establishing an informal network of peer contacts can be a great way of sharing ideas, information and advice.
- 2** Join a local trade association. In many areas, there are established forums for hotels, B&Bs, attractions and retailers to meet and network. The best ones provide access to support and professional advice for a relatively modest annual subscription.
- 3** Join your local Chamber of Trade and Commerce. As well as providing a range of general business advisory services, they are important business advocates to help you get your voice heard by policy-makers.
- 4** Contact your local Tourist Information Centre. TICs are often staffed by teams with extensive local knowledge and contacts and can be an important source of business referrals.
- 5** Get to know who's who in tourism in your patch. The local "DMO" or Destination Management Organisation can be an excellent vehicle for promoting your business alongside others in the area, but often offer networking opportunities as well.
- 6** Find out if there are any online communities in your area providing peer-to-peer networking and trading opportunities. Business sites like [LinkedIn](#) facilitate this form of user interaction and provide easy access to topical issues and trends.



Essex Tourism Ambassadors

Image courtesy of Visit Essex



When to seek formal advice



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Ensuring you have the right protection

Working in partnership with others can be a really rewarding experience, opening additional doors and enabling improved ways of working. However, entering into a partnership can leave you without any legal protection in terms of handling disputes, liability or the potential for litigation.

Do I need a formal agreement?

Use the checklist below to determine whether a formal agreement or advice might be necessary:

Is the activity of the partnership likely to change over time?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the partnership jointly own any assets of significant value?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the partnership require significant ongoing investment from you?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the partnership require a minimum number of partners to function?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the partnership likely to make a profit or incur a loss?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it likely that some partners may invest less than others?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you entering into partnership with direct competitors?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will the partnership require you to share information sensitive to your business?	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, it is recommended to seek legal advice on forming the partnership. This may include drawing up a partnership agreement to cover the eventualities and ensure clarity of the responsibilities and liabilities of partners. The following links may be useful:

<http://www.smallbusiness.co.uk/running-a-business/legal-advice/>

http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/docs/lc283_Partnership_Law_Summary.pdf

Other Legal Considerations

Data Protection

You can only share customer data with partners if the customers have given express consent.

http://ico.org.uk/for_organisations/data_protection

Intellectual Property

Make sure you protect your intellectual property, particularly if these elements will be used amongst the partnership.

<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/home.htm>



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Developing joint offers

Partnership with others for marketing makes great sense on a number of counts: pooling expertise, sharing resources and economies of scale.

Joint marketing can come in numerous guises, but will usually conform to three main types:

- Promotion of business
Simply pooling resources to showcase your businesses together in a single place
- Offers
Using the joint opportunity to highlight individual offers
- Conditional or packaged offers
Building offers that require a customer to purchase from both businesses to gain reward

Is the opportunity right for me?

The biggest question with any proposed joint marketing opportunity is whether it's going to give you the benefit you need. This tool is designed to help you do just that.

Firstly apply the criteria in the **Marketing Opportunities Checklist** in **Part 2 - Communicating**, then use the checklist below to evaluate any given opportunity:

Will the opportunity be valued by your client base? <i>If no, position the offer carefully so as not to put off existing customers</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can it help you reach a new market? <i>If yes, make sure it is a market you want and that your business can support/service</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you offering something greater than the sum of the parts? <i>Make sure any offer has a competitive edge and value in taking up together</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you undercutting your own offers? <i>Make sure any joint offer is not giving a better deal for the same thing you already offer</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you getting fair share of the interest/billing? <i>Even if you are a junior partner, ensure you are getting your message across directly.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you track and measure the impact to your business specifically? <i>Ensure there is an in-built way of tracking benefit directly to you from the opportunity</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You can easily extend the idea of joint offers in several ways:

- Develop full itineraries, with incentives to the customer to complete them
- Develop local voucher or loyalty card schemes redeemable at multiple businesses
- Include permanent information or material on other business at your point of sale
- Room packs or bedroom browsers - showcasing information at key visitor touch points



Working with other brands



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Communicating together

Often you will need to work with other organisations to promote a collective offer to customers. This can be anything from a restaurant and accommodation provider talking about a gastro-weekend package to many businesses coming together to create and promote a destination event.

Either way, you will need to ensure that your brands fit with other organisations and that your communications don't become a huge list of logos and straplines!

Considerations

Follow the checklist steps below to support successful working and promoting of joint activities:

Choosing the right partner from the outset:

Does your partner offer complementary services and experiences? *If so, it will make your joint offer easier to share and understand*

Does your partner share your values and ethics? *If so it results in a consistent level of customer service and harmony of promotional language*

Communicating your shared offer:

Do your communications focus on the experience you are offering? *Ensure the message is about what the visitor gets, not the detail of each business*

Have you talked about why the partnership is appealing? *Ensure the customer is clear as to the benefit they get from the partnership, not the benefit you gain!*

Visual Appearance (often a point of argument!):

Do you focus on the things that you share, not the differentiators? *e.g.; imagery styles, tone of voice, colours that appear in both of your brands*

Have you used use colours, images etc. that represent your place? *If you can't find common visual cues then use your place as the defining thread.*

Have you kept the logos to a minimum? *Only use your logo where it's relevant to the audience e.g. if showcasing a specific portion of the offer at your business*



Norfolk Hideaways

Norfolk Hideaways

Case Study

This cottage rental company has teamed up with other businesses in the local area to offer exclusive discounts and vouchers for guests. An up-to-date pack is emailed to all guests on booking.

[Find out more](#)

Sales missions & events



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Being prepared

As part of joint marketing you may find yourself on a dedicated trip to meet potential customers or exhibiting at an event.

Here's a short checklist to make the most of the invaluable time you have face-to-face with potential clients:

Be well prepared...	
Have you done your research? <i>Find out as much as you can about who's going to be at the meeting/event, their roles, and their business interests/needs/agenda.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you prepared an agenda for the conversation? <i>Make sure to cover at least the major points you want to get across.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you identified 3 reasons/things which can add value to the client?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you got all your promotional materials to hand? – <i>e.g. brochures, Powerpoint presentation, business cards etc.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At the start of the contact:	
Remember the personal touch. <i>Greet people by their names and try to build rapport at the start by asking questions about them and their interests.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen more than you speak. <i>Make sure you have asked the customer to outline their needs and challenges before you offer a solution.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarify needs...	
Ask open questions to understand their needs. <i>Focus on their timeframes, their budget, and where they are in the decision-making process.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understand who needs to be consulted/involved in making the final decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirm the things that they are most interested in/feel are most important.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer solutions...	
Outline what you can offer to help meet their needs using promotional materials. <i>Encourage their feedback, listen for and answer any concerns.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Close positively...	
Agree next steps and how you will take things forward. <i>Make sure you have left contact details and made it as easy as possible for the client to "say yes".</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow-up afterwards. <i>Send an email to summarise discussions, say thank you, and schedule a follow up call.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Support from umbrella organisations

Your trade association or destination management organisation (DMO) will be invaluable to support your business. This is a two-way partnership with benefits to both sides, so here are a few suggestions to help you make the most of the relationship:

- 1** Stay in contact: These bodies will be in the best position to help you if they know your needs and what you can offer, so keep the communications going – it will build your profile and make sure you are up to date with all the latest news.
- 2** Get online: Make the most of the various destination websites and social media channels to publicise your offer and stay informed. Make sure you're on relevant e-mail lists for news.
- 3** Offer to host: DMOs are in the business of organising familiarisation visits for media contacts and the travel trade. So you'll have a greater chance of being on their itinerary and securing valuable publicity if you offer to host events and "taster" sessions.
- 4** Make your voice heard: These bodies often arrange a social programme, AGM, or networking events for their members. Make a point of putting these in your diary, they give you a platform for promoting your business and getting your views heard.
- 5** Understand the DMO role: DMOs necessarily need to focus on marketing what makes a destination unique and special – that means focussing on the offer as a whole. Don't expect your business to be in every brochure or webpage!,

Providing the right information to an umbrella body

DMOs will only have finite resources and generally a big patch to cover, therefore don't expect them to do all the chasing. If you want your business featured you need provide the kind of information and content that a DMO or other trade body can use:

A clear and concise offer for your business (including details on your core audiences)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compelling images and video showcasing what you do	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any important information (T's & C's, opening hours, prices etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance notice of events or activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear links to your website & social media profiles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selection of testimonials from your customers	<input type="checkbox"/>

Working as a destination



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Putting your locality on the map

Working with others can take many forms, however one idea you may wish to consider is pulling all the interests in a specific area together and working jointly as a destination.

Destinations don't just appear, to begin developing one you need to make some specific decisions and gather together some like-minded people.

Define your “destination”

To make things manageable you need to define the extent of the area you intend to focus on. You are looking for a boundary that will:

- Make sense to your visitors
- Be manageable to put together and deliver
- Have some contiguous or consistent theme or offer

The only health warning here is that the larger the destination you define, the more complicated everything is likely to be. It is a good idea to draw a rough area on a map to delineate the “destination”, although there is of course nothing to stop you blurring that line further on.



Samphire Day!

Baie de Somme Zéro Carbone

Case Study

A local group in the Baie de Somme who work to coordinate actions around sustainable tourism. Their work includes promotion, audits on carbon reduction, conferences, ecotourism events and training.

[Find out more](#)

Setting broad objectives

Destination groups work best when they have a few clear objectives that direct the actions and activities they will undertake. Being clear will help recruit support and ensure activity remains focussed.

You could consider some or all of the following:

- Promoting the area to the visitor audience
- Providing a networking forum for local tourism interests
- Managing and maintaining the experience on the ground
- Providing information and interpretation
- Encouraging inward investment, skills development or business start-ups



Working as a destination



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Who to include

A destination is by definition made up of the sum of its parts, you therefore will need a wide group of committed people who have the enthusiasm and expertise to move things forward:

Local Tourism Businesses

This group are integral to any activity as they not only are the key stakeholders but also provide experience from the sharp end of the visitor market. Make sure to include:

- Accommodation Providers
- Attractions
- Local guides
- Visitor dedicated food & drink providers
- Activity providers

Non-tourism businesses

Wider businesses within your destination all have a role to play and will likely benefit from visitor spend, even if they are not directly aiming at that market.

- Other food & drink suppliers and retailers (both convenience and comparison)
- Local producers and growers
- Big local employers (who have a stake in the local economy)

Established organisations

There will already be numerous organisations both locally and with a remit for the area who can support and assist you:

- Destination Management Organisations (DMOs)



Image courtesy of Visit Kent

Finding your stakeholders

- Parish Council & other local authorities
- Protected landscape units (AONBs or National Parks)
- Specialist organisations (e.g. wildlife trusts) or user groups (e.g. ramblers)

Other local interests

Don't neglect other interests within your destination or community, you may find resources, advice and support in many other places.

- Concerned local residents (often those living in a place will happily support local causes)
- Local history, civic or conservation groups
- Local young/retired people (often keen to either gain or impart experience)

Other Considerations

Ascertain current performance. Run through the **“Evaluating your business”** section in **Part 1** and review destination websites using the **“Building Effective Websites”** section of **Part 2**.

Understanding your visitors. Take look at **“Understanding your audience”** in **part 1** to help structure your thinking.

Developing the destination offer. See the section on **“Using local distinctiveness”** in **part 4** for more information on how to do this.



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Forming and structuring a group

Managing destinations requires more than just stakeholder's aligning their interests; the most effective places have a group or organisation specifically dedicated to the task.

Management groups and organisations can come in a number of shapes and forms, from loose groups with a simple constitution up to more formal structured models such as Community Interest Companies (CIC) or regular limited companies.

What do you want to do?

What your group intends to do is the single most important criteria for determining the structure you need. Take some time to consider the following issues:

- Do you intend to apply for public or trust funding?
- Will membership of your group be open to new users locally?
- Who will take decisions and manage the organisation?
- Do you have charitable aims?
- Do you intend to sell any products or services directly?
- What will you do with any profits or surplus generated?

What structure could you have?

The table below includes an overview of some of the most popular structures for destination groups:

Type	Details	Considerations
Unincorporated Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A simple membership organisation with a simple governing document → Free to draw up your own constitution and set your own rules → Not regulated by any official body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Simple & Flexible → Cheap to run (no need to submit accounts) → Some funders may require a more formal structure → Individual members are responsible for actions, obligations & debts → It cannot enter into contracts or own property
Limited Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Can be limited by shares or limited by guarantee → Reports to Companies House → Can be established as a social enterprise by stating that any surplus is put towards the company's social purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Must submit annual accounts and a tax return → Obligations and debts are limited by shares or the level of guarantee → Even social enterprises are excluded from some funding streams → Quick and simple to set up



Working as a destination



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

What structure could you have? (cont.)

Type	Details	Considerations
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A hybrid of Charity and Company ideal for small organisations that intend to trade → Registered and regulated solely by the Charity Commission → Can't distribute its surpluses to its members or shareholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Has to be established for charitable objectives → Can take up to 40 days to register → Requires reporting only to the Charity Commission → Have limited liability (set by guarantee) → Can access almost all funding types and opportunities
Community Interest Company (CIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → A limited company with special features to ensure it works for the benefit of a community → Assets and profits are permanently "locked" so they cannot be distributed to shareholders → Registered by Companies House & regulated by a separate regulator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Can be established for any purpose that benefits the community → Lighter regulation than a CIO → Limited Liability by shares or guarantee → Excluded from charity specific funding

Many other structures also exist many of which may be more suitable depending on what you group intends to do.

The Resource Centre has an excellent **"Route Map" Tool** to help you decide which structure is right for you. www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/routemap/

Writing a constitution or governing document

Whatever organisation you decide to create, you will need to set out the governing aims and rules that the organisation will adhere to. For certain structures these are largely prescribed by the registration or regulatory body.

www.gov.uk/how-to-write-your-charitys-governing-document

www.gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise

However for an unincorporated organisation you are largely free to define your rules as you wish. In this case the following resources can be very useful to help structure it:

www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/constitutions/

www.grantnet.com/HelpfulReports/writingaconstitution.pdf



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

Raising & Managing Finances

Running any group costs money and functioning as a destination will likely mean you need to raise and commit funds to deliver promotional or other activity. You will therefore need to:

1. Open a bank account

Having an account for the organisation is often a pre-requisite for receiving funding. It also makes the case for obtaining membership fees, donations or other funds much simpler and ensures the funds are kept safely.

There are often special accounts available for non-profit organisations. Read more at: www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/

2. Raising Finance

Depending on your structure, you have several options for raising funds.

- Firstly consider all the options present in Part 1 “financing your business”
- As a destination group you will be eligible for an expanded array of funding from public bodies or trusts. Use tools like www.j4b.co.uk or www.trustfunding.org.uk to see what might be available and don't neglect other sources such as:
 - www.gov.uk/rural-development-programme-for-england
 - www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk/funding-finder
- You can consider raising funds through membership fees levied on an annual basis. However, remember you will need to put together some form of membership package of benefits in order to levy these. The more valuable the benefit to the members the more you can charge.
- Alternatively, you could work on a “pay-to-play” model where opportunities or activities are identified and costed, then presented to the membership or stakeholder base with an apportioned cost for participating. With this method you work “on demand” but would retain very little funds for a reserve.
- Like a business (and if your structure allows it) you could sell services or products directly, using the surplus and profit to deliver destination activities.

3. Managing Finances

Managing a group's finances is very similar to doing so in an individual business, with the key difference that finances are the responsibility of the whole management committee or board and all of your members have a right to know what happens to the money.

An in-depth guide on managing, monitoring, the role of a treasurer and other financial tips is available at: www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information-category/managing-money/



1. How do I find my local networking group?

Essentially, do your research! Start with local business groups such as; [Chambers of Commerce](#), ask other like-minded businesses which groups they participate in or do some online searches in places like LinkedIn or Facebook for groups meeting near you.

2 Who is my Destination Management Organisation (DMO)?

Start by reviewing the helpful guidance on VisitEngland's website on who manages tourism in any destination. www.visitengland.org/england-tourism-industry/how-tourism-is-managed/. If in doubt contact your local authority for more information.

3. I hate selling myself - how do I make networking work for me?

The golden rule is to be honest and be yourself, we are all different people and you will develop your own preferred style and way of networking. Look through the rest of the tips in the [Networking Tool](#) to help get started developing yours.

4. How can I assess what skills and experience I already have in my business?

It's always a good idea to see what you and your team are capable of before looking for those skills in partners. To assess this you can undertake a relatively simple skills audit, and the whole process is outlined in **Part Five of this Toolkit in the Training Tool**.

5. Is it better to have a formal or an informal partnership?

The type of partnership you have depends on what you are trying to do, the potential risk to the business (and you individually) and the scale of your activity. Use the When to seek formal advice Tool to assess whether a loose agreement or something more formal is best for you.

6. Where can I find out more about local loyalty schemes?

The first step is plan what your loyalty scheme should look like. For some good tips, head to: www.marketingdonut.co.uk/marketing/customer-care/customer-loyalty-schemes . With those onboard you can consider the commercial options such as [LiveShopLocal](#), [Loveloyaltycard](#) or [Reward-it](#).



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool

7. How can I decide whether a trade show or exhibiting opportunity is worth it?

Like any marketing opportunity you need to assess whether it's worthwhile undertaking. To do so use the **Assessing Opportunities Tool in Part Two of the toolkit**, but do factor in the costs (in both time and money) for you to attend, as well as how likely your end audience is to be there (and to be ready to buy from you).

8. Why would I want to work as a destination?

It's simply about sharing and pooling resources so you can shout louder, reach a wider audience and derive more benefit collectively. Being able to offer a more comprehensive, integrated and wider product can help generate more customers and spread the benefit throughout an area, to both your own business and to the services and facilities in a place too.

9. Who do I need to consult before entering into a partnership?

If you intend to undertake any action that represents an investment of time and especially money, or could have an impact on the business you need to gain agreement from those with a stake. This means any other directors, your shareholders and any investors you have. If the investment or risk is significant you may need a written agreement in order to proceed.

10. Will working in partnership help me access grant funding?

It will depend on the specific fund you are trying to access. However working in collaboration with others, sharing the risk and benefit is generally looked upon more favourably than an application that only benefits a single business.



Home



Prev Tool



Next Tool



Rural Tourism Business Toolkit

About this toolkit

This .pdf is the third part of a fully featured resource packed full with useful information and advice for new and existing rural tourism businesses.

This toolkit has been created as part of the COOL Tourism Project by the COOL Partnership and tourism development charity Hidden Britain.

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