



## **SKIVRE Training Module 1: INTRODUCTION MODULE**

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This training module is a part of SKIVRE training scheme containing 10 learning modules in total, which has been developed within the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership **SKIVRE - Skills Development for the Valorisation of European Religious Heritage**.

In SKIVRE a team of 6 European institutions – all linked to religious heritage preservation - developed a training scheme for manufacturing and marketing of high-quality handcrafted products of European monasteries. The training contents at a glance:

<b>SKIVRE Training Scheme</b>
<b>Module 1: Introduction Module</b>
Module 2: Marketing Strategies
Module 3: Monastic Products
Module 4: How to Sell Monastic Products Authentically
Module 5: Distribution Channels
Module 6: Social Media and Communication
Module 7: Value Adding Through Networks
Module 8: Creating a Strong Brand
Module 9: Financing Strategies
Module 10: Aspects of Sustainability

You can find more information at the homepage: [www.skivre.eu](http://www.skivre.eu)

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## About the module

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### Training description

In this module you will learn about the SKIVRE training scheme and why it is important for monasteries, which produce their own monastic products or would like to start a production process or want to boost their sales processes. It gives an overview of the main reasons for structuring the training scheme and the identified needs of monasteries Europe-wide. The training scheme is based on experiences of 20 monasteries in Europe, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant, with different monastic activities.

This SKIVRE module is structured using the following main areas for learning content:

- Introduction to SKIVRE project
- Monasticism and monastic products as a centuries old tradition
- Nowadays needs of the monasteries. Either the needs of monasteries nowadays or Modern needs of the monasteries.
- Overview of the modules and terminology..

### Objectives of this training module

The main objective of this module is to make you familiar with the general overview of the main topics of the SKIVRE training scheme and to present the main terminology used in all next modules of the programme. The modules are developed by experts in a structured **process**. They were tested by users, trainers and target learners and were updated in an iterative process. All modules refer to good practice examples in order to deepen your knowledge.

### Target groups

This SKIVRE-training module is designed to fit the training needs of the monks and nuns, management, staff and volunteers at European monasteries, no matter if they are run by Catholic or Protestant Orders or by the Orthodox Church; by public or private operators.

All modules are relevant for the below mentioned groups of people, but some have a more specific character. They are all interconnected, even if they are not formally complementary. They differ in terms of information and competence level and address three groups:

- **Target group 1:** For people working on the implementation level like those in monastery shops, three modules are recommended: Module 1, as an introduction to the training, Modules 3 and 4 about monastic products and authentic selling of monastic products. People who want to start considering certain strategic aspects may be inspired by Module 7 on adding value through networking.
- **Target group 2:** For people with special knowledge or experiences or a certain background and/or specified tasks in the monastic management, Module 2 on marketing strategies, Module 5 on distribution strategies, Module 8 on creating a strong brand, and Module 6 on social media and communication offer learning content and reflection.
- **Target group 3:** People on a strategy decision level with a highly specialized / experienced background and respective responsibilities in a monastery (Modules 9 on financing strategies and Module 10 on sustainability aspects).

## Gained knowledge and skills after finishing this module

After you become familiar with this learning module, you will:

- Be aware about what the SKIVRE project is;
- Be aware about the SKIVRE Training Scheme and why it has been created;
- Learn about the needs of monasteries today in the area of production and in the offering of monastic products;
- Understand how the learning content in the different modules is interrelated and thus composing a full programme.

## Training method

**SKIVRE** focuses on an interactive training approach, whether you use it as a self-learning course or instructed by a trainer. This training module includes:

- Individualized self-learning - a powerful learning method that enables each learner, on the basis of his/her own experience and knowledge, and on the basis of newly acquired knowledge, to reach development decisions on his/her own;
- Self-assessment - ongoing self-assessment tests or homework that learners send to their trainer prior to the commencement of each subsequent module;



- You might also work in small groups of 2 or 3, e.g. if you decide to implement this module with colleagues as a self-learning group in your monastery or supported by an external trainer.

You gain knowledge individually or in a group using:

- Training materials like this module;
- Training materials in nine more SKIVRE training modules which are closely linked to this module;
- The interactive SKIVRE online training platform: [www.skivre.eu/training](http://www.skivre.eu/training);
- Facilitated training sessions for learning in a group with a professional trainer.

If you would like to implement the training with a professional trainer, please contact the SKIVRE partner in your country. They are all published on the SKIVRE website: <https://skivre.eu/about/partnership/>.

# Training content



## Unit 1. Introduction to SKIVRE

**SKIVRE** - 'Skills Development for the Valorisation of European Religious Heritage' is a project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project began in September 2018, with a total duration of 24 months and the following outcomes: an interactive digital learning platform, a multilingual training scheme, a merchandising handbook for monastic products and a publication of the historic crafts of monasteries and their potential for social enterprise for rural populations. The aim of the project is to provide a training scheme targeting the management, staff, monks and nuns of European monasteries and monastery shops in a committed and responsible way.

The training is geared towards providing tools for the development and sales of high-quality monastic products, with the goal of raising finances for the preservation of religious heritage sites. Nevertheless, production and product sales is a business for a monastery, and monasteries have to find the trade-off to make sure that this business does not overwhelm the core purposes of the monastery.

The following **SKIVRE** training scheme is organised in 10 modules covering topics such as; using networks appropriately, collaborating with experienced partners, product categories and presentation, selling monastic products without reducing their 'authenticity', labelling of the products, using social media and the internet for communication with the general public, how to brand products, how to finance activities linked to product development, how to distribute products, and how to manage a sustainable monastery shop.



### Tags for Unit 1

*SKIVRE, training programme, training scheme, modules, European project, Erasmus +*

## Unit 2. Monasticism and Monastic Products

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Monasticism has existed for thousands of years, a form of contemplative life present in several religious traditions, such as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism.

As an initial reflection, it is important to note that, while mercantilism has often been frowned upon by some monastic orders, whose main purpose is to lead a contemplative and religious life, the selling of products for sustenance or to fund monastic activities has been widely accepted and practiced for a long time. Often, monastic products become part of the 'soul' of monastic life, closely integrated into their everyday routines.

Many contemplative monastic communities have integrated work as an essential part of their life of prayer. A well-known example is that of the Catholic monks following the Rule of Saint Benedict; 'ora et labora' – pray and work. Thus, everyday work becomes an essential part of spiritual life. Another principle found in monastic orders is that of self-sufficiency, prescribed in Orthodox Christianity as 'αὐτάρχια' - autarky. This self-reliance has the objective of obtaining the highest degree of material freedom as possible, so that the monastic community can focus on its mission without obstructions.

In this sense, while some monastic communities practice subsistence agriculture or carry out small-scale manufacture with a focus on self-sufficiency, others have been selling their products throughout the centuries. This production ranges from food products such as honey or cheese to ancient artisanal crafts handed down from master to disciple, such as icons or other religious artefacts. A notable example of the latter is the religious art produced by monasteries on the Mount Athos peninsula, which are famous throughout the Christian Orthodox world, and beyond. The selling of these products has been a means of supporting their communities and contributing to the maintenance of their living religious heritage – the monastic community and its buildings?

It is important to understand, however, that the construction and maintenance of built religious heritage is very costly, and monasteries have historically relied on donations alone. While some donations are given directly, the purchase of monastic products by lay people and pilgrims alike is seen to support monastic communities, and by extension, their religious heritage sites.

By selling their products, monasteries have established bonds with secular people, who view their products as a source of high quality, and often identify the added value of contributing to the sustenance of monastic communities as an essential part of the products. It is important to remember that monastic products are not made with market competition in mind, rather they are inspired by the striving for perfection in monastic life. Therefore, the work is conducted

with concentration and mindfulness, with a purpose that is often very distant from commercial enterprises.

That said, some monastic products are recognised worldwide, and are a result of expert marketing, such as the beer of the Trappist monks in Belgium or the Chartreuse liqueur of the Carthusian Monks in France. These well-known cases are often resulting from a longstanding collaboration between several monastic communities involved in the production and sales, highlighting the added value of collaborative work and networking in the sales of monastic products.

*Tags for Unit 2*

*Monasticism, monastic products, monastic communities, production*

## Unit 3. Why SKIVRE Training Scheme?

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### 3.1. SKIVRE Survey

Through a survey responded to by 20 European monasteries – Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant, we detected the need to improve the sales and appreciation of monastic products. All income that monasteries earn from their activities support the sustainable development of the buildings and monastic life. Our research identified the needs for the monasteries to gain knowledge in the following topics:

- How to sustain their production and trading activities;
- How to make the product portfolio in the shops attractive and sustainable
- How to sell their products to different buyers
- How to use internet/social media to support sales;
- How important networking is to support and leverage production and sales; and
- How to build a strong brand.

All the topics address typical economic activities related to areas of marketing and communication; therefore, we have to use economic terminology to explain the content of our training modules.

### 3.2. SKIVRE Training Scheme

The SKIVRE training scheme has three important parts that complement each other:

- training content, presented in a training module,
- exercises for self-improvement and testing gained knowledge,
- case studies, presenting good practice and other practical examples clarifying the training content.

The SKIVRE training scheme contains 10 training modules, produced in order to give managers, employees, monks and nuns the tools and knowhow to successfully improve the marketing and sales of monastic products.

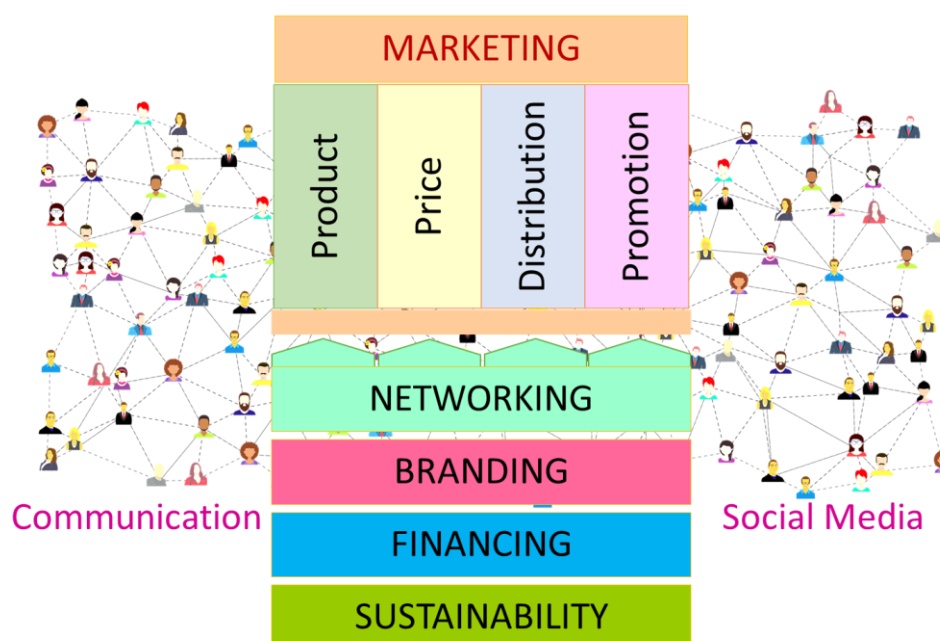


Figure 1. An overview on the modules' themes

After this introductory module, the training programme provides an overview of **marketing and marketing strategies**, named Module 2 “Marketing Strategies”. Marketing is the main activity encompassing product development, pricing, and different means of distribution and instruments of promotion. After this general introduction, marketing knowledge will be detailed in Module 3 “Monastic Products” and in Module 4 “How to Sell authentic Monastic Products”, referring to the aspects of product policies. In addition, Module 5 “Distribution Strategies” and Module 6 “Communication and Social Media”, will complement the theoretical knowledge of marketing and marketing strategies, illustrated also by practical examples and exercises.

*Furthermore, the four strategic areas are closely related to all marketing activities, namely networking, branding, financing and sustainable development. These themes are presented in Module 7 “Value Adding Through Networks”, Module 8 “Creating a Strong Brand”, Module 9 “Financing Strategies” and Module 10 “Aspects of Sustainability”. Picture 1 “An overview of the modules’ themes” summarises the interrelationship of the modules within the entire training programme.*

### 3.3. Terminology

There are several words used throughout the modules that should be properly defined for their purpose to be understood. Far from striving for a ‘business-centric’ approach, the explanations contained in the modules use ‘economic terminology’ in order to appropriately address specific



concepts but should by no means intimidate those not familiar with these words or concepts, as they can be easily understood via examples.

The terms 'product' and 'marketing' are used throughout the modules in relation to the items produced or sold by monastic communities, with the utmost respect, understanding that this is not the essential element of monastic life, rather a means to an end. In this regard, the modules do not aim at encouraging monastic productions to emulate profit-seeking enterprises, and SKIVRE partners are well aware that monastic products should not be analysed only from a material standpoint – the characteristics of the product itself – but rather in a holistic way, understanding the traditions embedded in them and their purpose in monastic life, not only as a means of obtaining income for the monastic community. However, this exercise has the ultimate purpose of assisting monasteries and monastic communities with the practical elements of marketing and selling monastic products by offering a toolkit that can be used in a multiplicity of ways and adapted to the needs or preferences of each monastery or monastery shop.

### 3.4. Conclusion

With the goal of safeguarding Europe's religious heritage and the maintenance of monastic communities and their monastic buildings, these SKIVRE modules offer tools for the employees in monastic shops, managers of monastic production or sales, and monks and nuns involved in the making of monastic products.

Case studies indicate that several monasteries have progressively opted to separate commercial activity from monastic life; detaching the contact with clients, supply chains and marketing from monastic duties, and instead hiring a lay person for this task. Often, these monasteries have been successful, able to maintain monastic life intact while offering inspiration to those working with their monastic products. In other cases, monastery shops and productions are still run by monks and nuns, who handle all related tasks. In all cases, applying ideas from existing case studies or technical toolkits such as these modules could assist in improving the overall coexistence between the monastic life, and the production and sales of monastic products.

#### *Tags for Unit 3*

*SKIVRE, survey, terminology, monastic products, monastery*

## The SKIVRE Partnership: Empowering monasteries to harvest the potential of monastic products

**SKIVRE** is an Erasmus+ project aimed at empowering management, staff, monks, and nuns at monasteries with a most interactive training approach in gaining relevant skills for raising revenues for the preservation of religious heritage sites:

The **SKIVRE** homepage [www.skivre.eu](http://www.skivre.eu) (including access to many social media tools) provides you with an inspiring multi lingual blog on monastic products, data and analyses, training material and training events in seven European countries.

The partnership comprises a multidisciplinary European team, which represents the target groups and expertise needed for training development:

### **media k GmbH | GERMANY (coordinator)**

media k GmbH offers long-year expertise in religious heritage preservation and in the management of heritage preservation projects.

[www.media-k.eu](http://www.media-k.eu)

### **Future for Religious Heritage | BELGIUM**

Future for Religious Heritage is a non-faith organisation open to all. It brings together those working to protect religious heritage all over Europe.

[www.frh-europe.org](http://www.frh-europe.org)

### **GUNET | GREECE**

GUNET is a Greek specialist in creating online learning platforms, which offer different kind of learning experiences adapted to different topics.

[www.gunet.gr](http://www.gunet.gr)

### **INI-Novation Bulgaria OOD | BULGARIA**

INI-Novation is an education provider specialised in generating economic effects from cultural heritage.

[www.ini-novation.com](http://www.ini-novation.com)

### **Bronnbach Monastery | GERMANY**

Bronnbach monastery is a former Cistercian monastery now operated by a public authority in the German Tauber valley. The monastery started to develop monastic products based on the history of the site.

[www.kloster-bronnbach.de](http://www.kloster-bronnbach.de)

### **Wissenschaftsinitiative Niederösterreich | AUSTRIA**

Wissenschaftsinititative is an education provider with longstanding experiences in developing learning platforms and learning material for heritage preservation.

[www.wissenschaftsinitiative.at](http://www.wissenschaftsinitiative.at)

## Acknowledgements

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