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Organising Nature-Based Tourism : The Experience of Gîtes de France



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Tourism in France : A promising but demanding and competitive tourist accommodation market





102 Million

International visitors projected in 2025—setting a new historic record.



€190 Billion

Domestic tourism revenue, accounting for a massive 8% of the French GDP.



2 Million

Direct and indirect jobs supported by the national tourism ecosystem.



The Accommodation Economy



€22 Billion

The estimated total revenue of the French hotel industry in 2025.

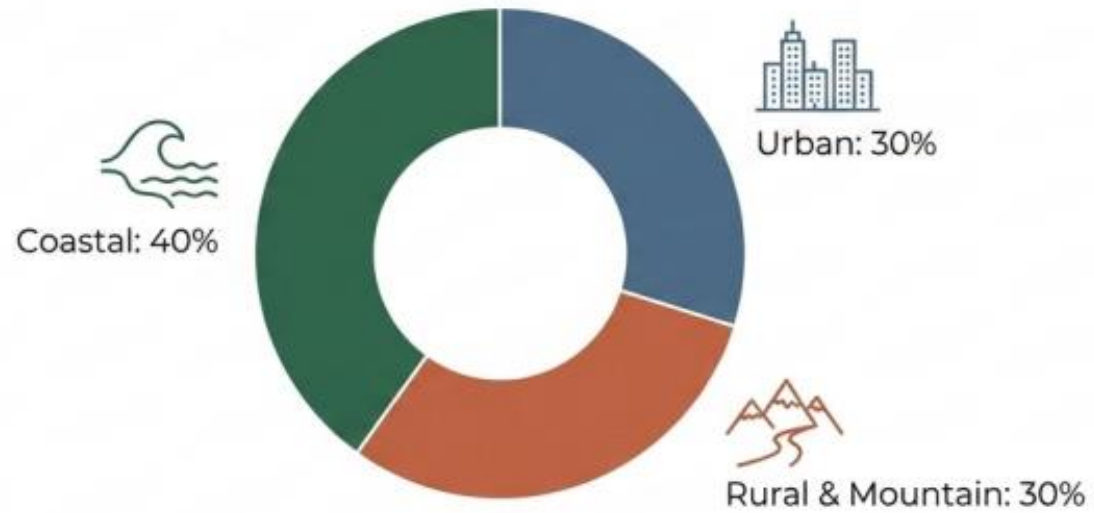


+4% Annual Growth

The year-over-year increase in overnight stays specifically for networks like Gîtes de France.



Destinations: A Shifting Balance



The Rise of Slow Tourism

+15% increase in visitors to select rural tourism areas since 2020.



An intense
competition between
platforms...
visibility is expensive !



1,000 new rural accommodations opening annually, threatening to saturate specific local markets.



17.2% average commission taken by OTAs (Online Travel Agencies like Airbnb and Booking) in 2026, creating intense margin pressure.



80% of owners are now forced to maintain an active presence on at least **3** platforms just to survive.



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Rural Tourism & Gîtes de France



The Story :

Gîtes de France is today the leading European network for bed and breakfast accommodations.

The network currently comprises 56,000 properties, 43,000 owners, and 35 million vacation days.

It is a registered trademark and a label with a quality charter.

The first accommodation opened in 1955 in the Alps. The goal was to provide a supplementary income for farmers.

The network was able to develop thanks to aid and subsidies from public authorities



Challenges and context: Standing out from the competition by making proximity a priority

Integrate AI to streamline processes: email drafting, responding to customer reviews, pricing, chatbots, etc.

Support rather than be subjected to increasingly stringent regulations: Energy Performance Diagnosis (DPE), VAT, etc.

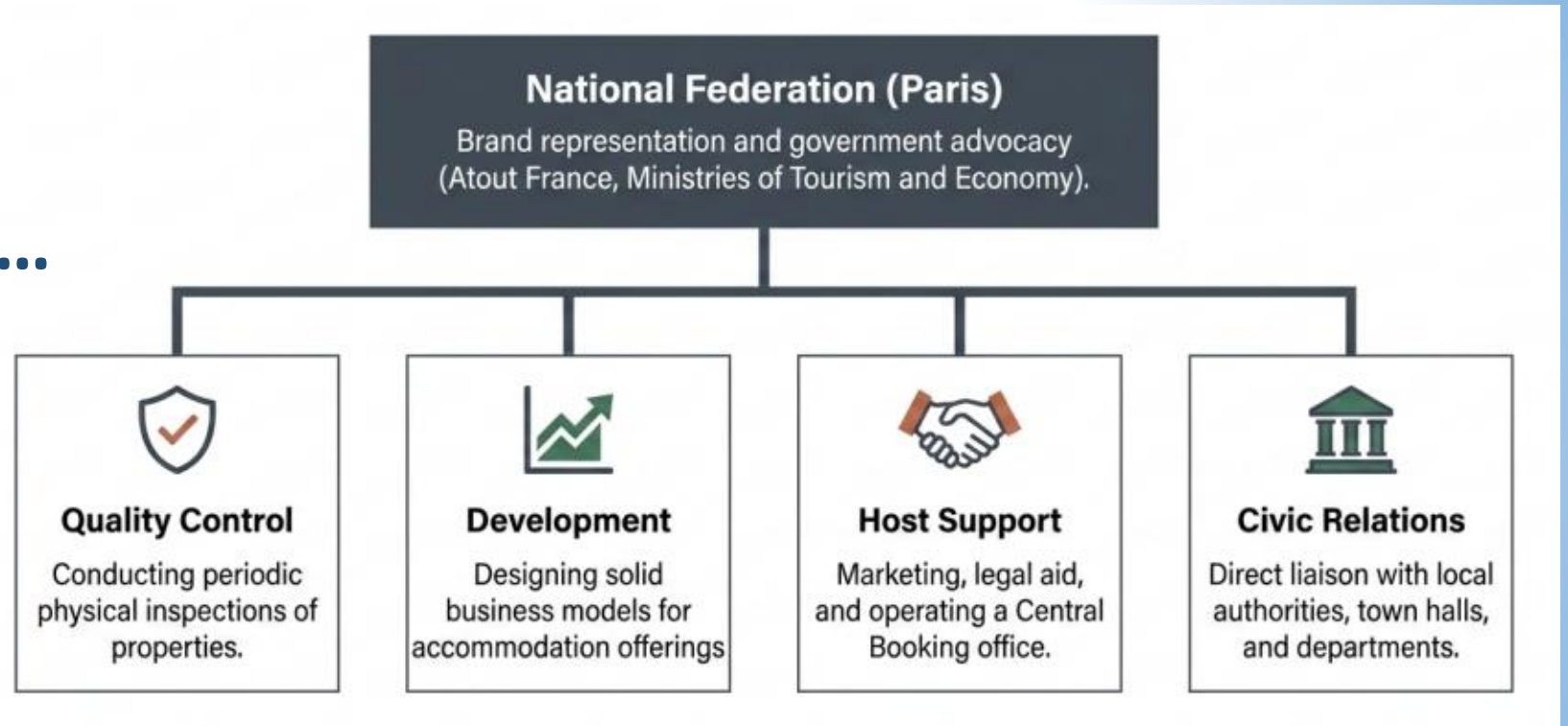
Provide individualized support to hosting providers by maintaining close contact with their operations

Collaborate to gain a stronger competitive advantage.



Structured nationally...

Operated locally



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Gites de France and based nature tourism : Strong links with benefits for everybody !



The Via Rhona : An 815 km cycling route that connects Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean Sea, following the Rhône River.

22
Million

French citizens who report cycling during holidays (now exceeding hiking).

€5
Billion

Total revenue generated by cycle tourism (accommodation, visits, meals) projected by 2025.

+28%

The spike in overall cycle route usage since the post-Covid boom in 2020.

The Solution: The Accueil Vélo Label

Guesthouses actively optimized for this market. Strict criteria include:

- Location within 5km of the official route.
- On-site repair kits and specialized equipment.
- Secure overnight bicycle parking.
- Tailored meals for athletic exertion.



Motorist Spend

€55 / day



Cyclist Spend

€75 / day



Mountain lakes and rivers: A fragile balance between development and preservation



4 Million

Total anglers in France.

1.5 Million

Specifically dedicated to freshwater fishing.

30%

The proportion of anglers who are under 25 years old (a regenerating market).

The Network Solution: The creation of specialized "Fishing Lodges."

These highly tailored accommodations feature dedicated gear rooms, immediate proximity to water, fishing books/licenses, and local expertise, massively boosting off-season occupancy.

The ongoing challenge for local agencies: Balancing the promotion of these gems with **strict protection from over-tourism.**





Infrastructure Meets Tourism: Hydroelectricity



Leisure

The dam creates expansive artificial lakes, instantly unlocking windsurfing, canoeing, kayaking, and swimming in mountainous regions.



Culture

Industrial history is transformed into an attraction. Hydroelectric museums are built, directly spurring the creation of new local guesthouses.



Reinvestment Loop

The operation of the dam generates significant municipal tax revenue. This capital is directly reinvested by town halls into further local tourism development.



Adapting Outdoor Professions to Climate Reality



Ski Instructors

Must rapidly adapt business models and skillsets to survive decreasing snow levels and increasingly shorter winter seasons.



Mountain Guides

Must learn to navigate and manage entirely new, growing terrain risks (such as increased rockfalls and landslides due to permafrost melt).

The vital necessity of modernized, climate-aware training centers to ensure the survival of mountain dwellers.



The accommodation provider of 2026 no longer sells a bed, they sell a territory.

In conclusion : To be stronger, network !

-The synergy of a guesthouse, bike rental, water sports (canoeing, kayaking, canyoning, etc.), and a local producer becomes the essential tourism package.

More than ever, it is through networking—local, national, and even international—that rural tourism businesses will continue to thrive!

