
RURAL TOURISM FORMS POSSIBLE TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE RURAL AREA. RELEVANT PRINCIPLES AND ISSUES

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***Abstract:** It is becoming increasingly obvious that the development of tourism in the rural area, in the absence of proper management, may present a threat to the integrity of local communities. Given the fact that, today consumers are visibly reorienting themselves towards organic products, the higher quality of rural products, and their capitalization through tourism, may represent an opportunity for the economy of many rural areas. The forms of tourism from the rural environment are one of the most efficient solutions to amortize the demands of tourism with the demands of environmental protection and sustainable development. In this context the paper try to come with arguments regarding the reason why rural tourism to be carried out in rural area and which are the main forms of sustainable tourism for rural environment.*

***Key words:** rural tourism forms, rural area, principles*

INTRODUCTION

In some directions, sustainable development helps to achieve the change that is inevitable, and to do so in an economical, environmentally responsible, and socially equitable manner. Rural tourism offers the possibility for people to come closer, to know the conditions of the material and spiritual life of the others, with whom they come into contact. [11]

Tourism is primarily an economic activity, many of the tourist regions have as their main source of income the tourist activity. Its economic role continues by creating new jobs, generating income for the population and non-governmental budgets, training less developed areas. Thus, in many situations, was reached to the infrastructure and equipment intensified, incompatible with the gradual rural development.

Sustainable tourism development is based on several recommendations:[11,8]

- Tourism development is frequently accompanied by environmental damage through the excessive exploitation of natural resources, pollution, degradation or destruction of natural habitats of fauna and flora, constructions that disfigure the sites or by social and cultural pressure on local communities.

- The natural environment is often the first asset of the tourism industry, so the uncontrolled or excessive exploitation of the natural habitats comes to degrade or destroy the tourist attractions.

- Tourist policies must take into account the conservation of the flora and fauna habitats, to prevent the damages caused to the environment by improper tourist pressure.

- The management of the tourist capital and of the environment allows a balanced and sustainable growth, the saving of natural resources and the respect of the environment¹.

- The promotion of rural tourism will be useful, at the same time, for contributing to the economic and cultural balance between the village and the city, but also for maintaining agriculture.

- The partnership between the local population and the decision makers favors the promotion of ecological criteria in the development of the tourism industry.

Complex activity, the development of sustainable tourism, also implies certain collaboration between the different economic sectors (agriculture, forests, water, mineral resources, industry, transport, etc.), governmental and local authorities, and other bodies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this scientific paper authors try to come with arguments regarding the reason why rural tourism to be carried out in the rural area and which are the main forms of sustainable tourism for rural environment, taking in consideration their definition the main principles and features of the activity and last but not least the main benefits. So we have use as methods of research: data collection, analysis and drawing some conclusions.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The forms of rural tourism possible to be carried out in rural environment can be numerous, but those which, in our opinion, are closest to the concept of "sustainability" are three in number, respectively: ecotourism, rural tourism and agrotourism.

Ecotourism. It is becoming increasingly evident that the development of tourism in sensitive natural areas, in the absence of a proper management, may present a threat to the integrity of ecosystems and local communities. An increasing number of visitors in ecologically fragile areas can lead to severe environmental degradation. Also, local communities and indigenous culture can be negatively influenced by the increased influx of foreign visitors with a modern lifestyle. In addition, climate change, economic instability and political-social conditions can make tourism a risky business, especially in areas strongly dependent on this economic activity.

The good part is that the same increase of tourism creates many opportunities for both conservation and well-being of local communities. In response to the increased interest in knowing nature, but also to the alarm signals coming from the most distant corners of the world, a new ethic of travel called ecotourism has gradually emerged.

Ecotourism is a sustainable version of tourism in natural areas, at the same time including elements of rural and cultural tourism. Ecotourism is, by definition, a form of tourism that respects the principles of sustainable development.

However, it is important to mention that all forms of tourism and all tourism activities should aim for sustainable development, starting with the planning and development of the tourism infrastructure and ending with the marketing activity, all tourism operations must take into account sustainable criteria from an economic, social, cultural and environmental point of view. Since ecotourism was initially just an idea and not a discipline, many organizations have promoted it without knowing its basic principles. Efforts to establish internationally recognized principles and criteria for accreditation have been initiated since 1990, but the process has evolved very slowly, given the diversity of areas, experiences, and regions involved. It is recommended that each region, where ecotourism is practiced, to develop its own system of principles, guidelines and certification criteria, based on the materials available internationally.

To help ecotourism operators to achieve maximum performance, in accordance with the principles stated, specific guidelines are required. They offer practical solutions for achieving the goals of sustainable development, a wide range of recommendations that a responsible tourist, businessman or landowner will be able to apply to select a tourist leisure stay, to build a cottage or to organize an ecotourism program. On the medium term, some improvements and changes should be introduced in the following areas:

- A guilty of natural environment much improved the aim being to reduce the negative influences especially on the protected areas.
- Establish tourism infrastructures taking into account the different financing mechanisms.
- Beyond financing, in Romania there is an obvious need for technical assistance to private or public factors, so it is a must to ensure technical assistance.

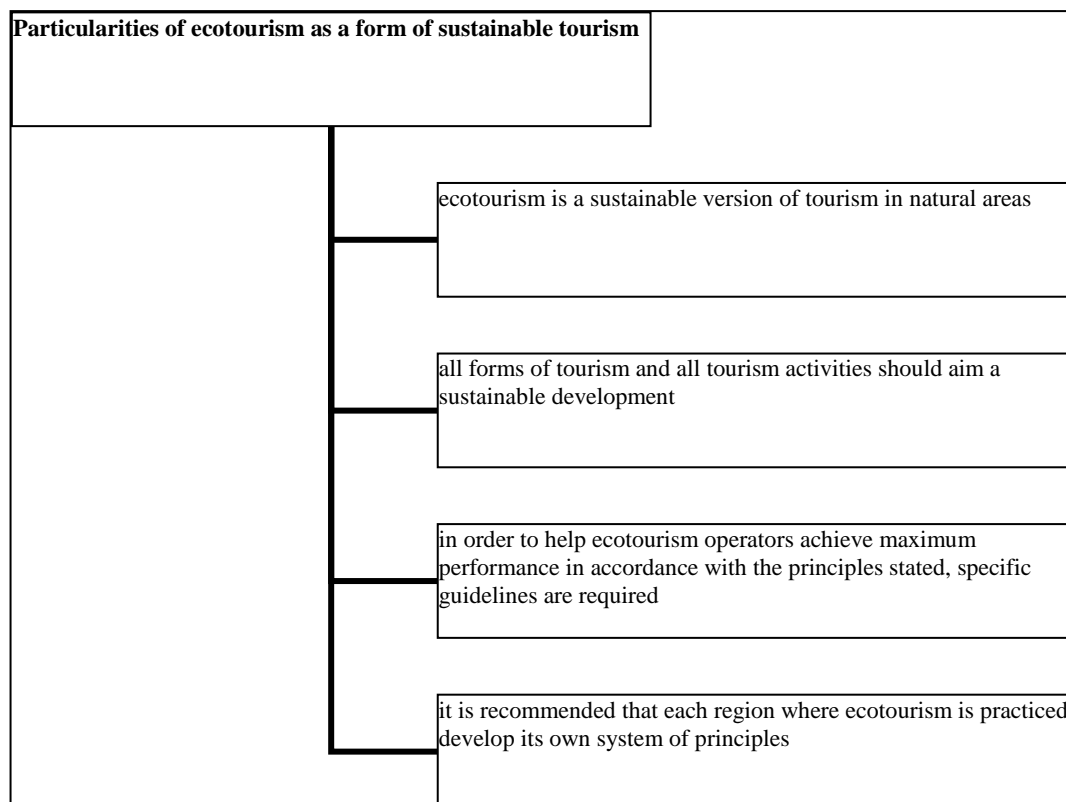


Figure 1. Particularities of ecotourism as a form of sustainable tourism

- Accent on involvement of local of the local population - especially the poorest - in the creation of new ecotourism businesses, as well as the search for ways to improve the effect of local multiplication of tourism, by providing local goods and services.

Ecotourism, unlike mass tourism, which is dependent on the large number of tourists, is concerned with the sustainable development and the capacity of receiving of the territory: it does not encourage large flows of tourists, but is intended, in particular, for the segment of individual tourists and small groups (maximum 15 people).

The development of the ecotourism sector will lead simultaneously to the prosperity of other sectors of the economy (food industry, trade, transport, etc.). As the demand for ecological tourism is constantly and steadily growing (worldwide), as a tendency to maintain this influence for the tourism market and local communities, the continuity of promoting sustainable development models is of interest. [19]

Ecotourism elucidates an explosion of interests, this being regarded as a mechanism of development of the tourism industry, in general, in order to correspond to the models of sustainable development, first of all generating and assigning an economic value to the protection of the environment, as well as highlighting cultural and natural values of local communities.

So, we can say that ecotourism has the potential and capacity to be considered a tool for the sustainable development of a region.

Rural Tourism. Tourism in rural areas is a concept of sustainable tourism specially conceived to remove worldliness.

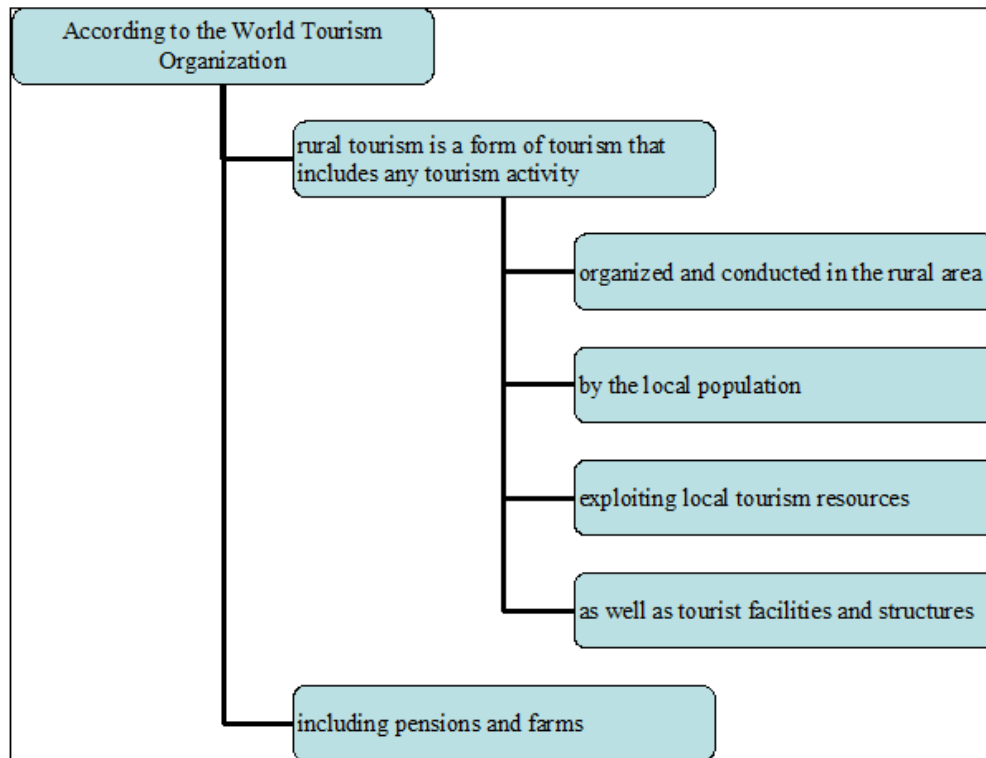


Figure 2. Rural tourism-definition

The connection realized among rural development and facilities for tourism is widespread in the development of tourism, being applied also from an ecological point of view.

As far as concerning rural tourism activity it is very important that not become one with a negative impact on the community and the rural environment where it takes place, [4,5,13,14] through its development.

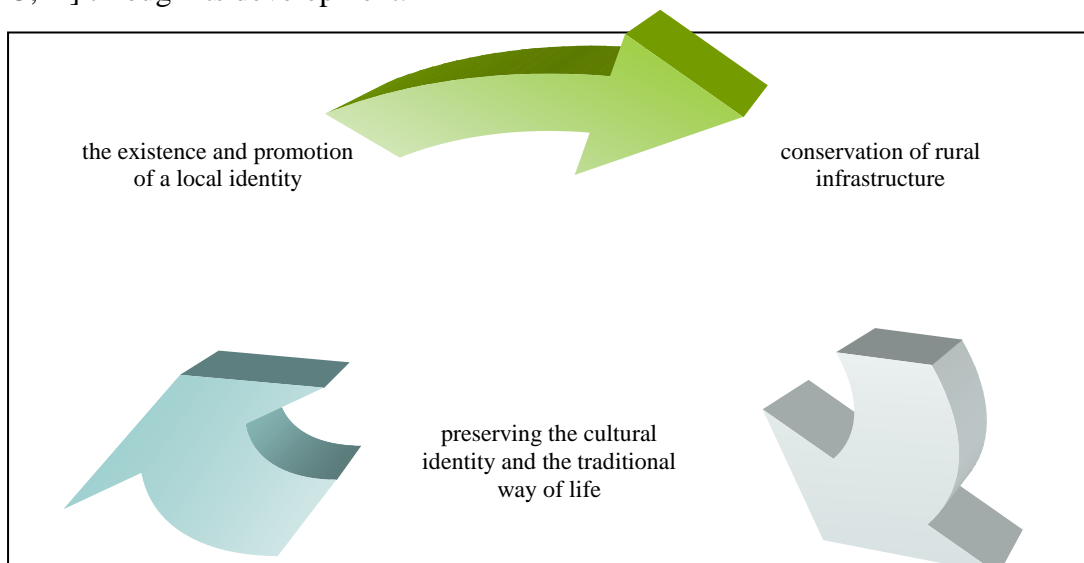


Figure 3. Important aspects of rural tourism

The negative effects of tourism development on the environment can be mitigated by rational development of tourism potential. [1,3, 10,12,16]

So the definition of rural tourism activity is synthesized by the following aspects:

- the main element is potential of rural community;

- preserving the rural way of life;
- an adequate infrastructure;
- the existence and promotion of a local identity.

Agrotourism. The place of agrotourism within the forms of sustainable tourism the following major issues must be considered:

- reducing the environment's degradation;
- protection for special tourist resources;
- a way for ensure income for rural area's inhabitants.

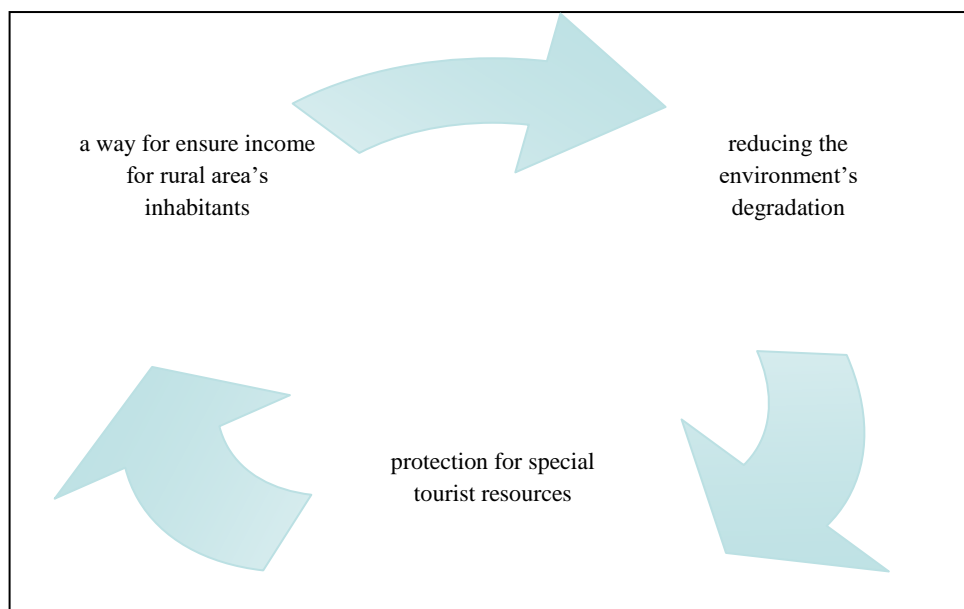


Figure 4. Major issues in terms of agrotourism development

These principles were established with the intention of applying them to the development lines for the future and thereafter, they were the basis of the strategy for achieving sustainable tourism.

The forms of development of the agrotourism are from the simple hosting to the profiling of the whole agro-zootechnical production system for agrotourist purpose.

There are several components considered as being important or key aspects for agrotourism activity, namely: rural area, meaning the place of activity's development; agrotourism products, with authenticity and quality; the persons involved in carrying out this activit. [6,7,9,17,2]

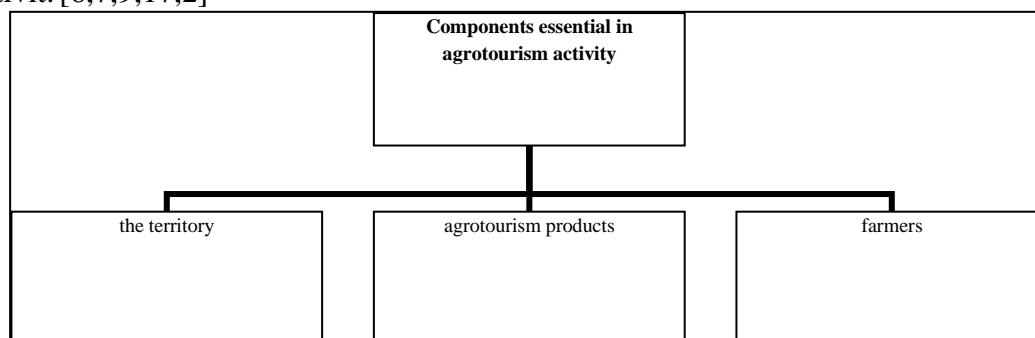


Figure 5. Components essential in agrotourism activity

Agrotourism through its effects can become a real, cheap tool for sustaining social development of the community, namely:

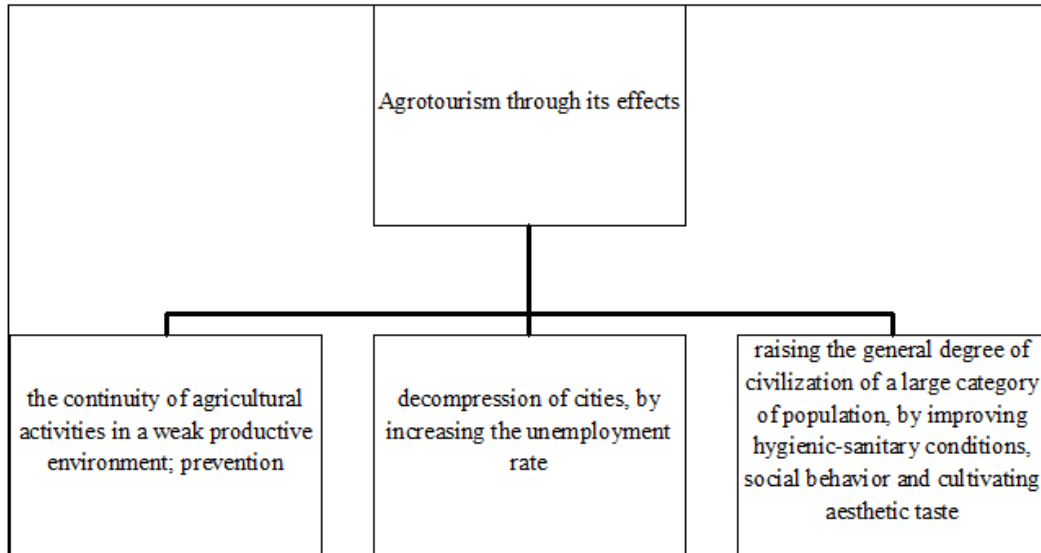


Figure 6. Agrotourism through its effects-constant tool for social progress

CONCLUSIONS

Sustainable development of tourism activities within local communities implies a number of socio-economic benefits, respectively: [15,18]

- The protection of the artistic heritage, through restoration and maintenance operations, very expensive most of the times, has become another priority of the tourism development policies.

- Saving traditional communities is an acute problem in developing countries, but also in the more "backward" regions of rich countries. A balance must be established between the tourist development and the identity of the local populations, even if the tourism meant jobs, high earnings, the increase of the living standard.

- The effects induced by tourism in the economy are notable, from ensuring the balance of payments to the competition it can exert on other forms of economic use of space (agriculture, industry). An indication of the economic effects can be the ratio between tourist consumption and tourist production. High land price may be another clue - the case of many alpine areas where the owners have sold their land in full for sports purposes. The influx of tourists to a region can inject considerable sums into the local economy, ensuring a complementary income for many citizens. Tourism can take out of anonymity some vineyards integrated in tourist circuits, it can confer notoriety of some local products (cheeses, meat dishes) or relaunch in the literal areas the artisanal fishing and stimulates the development of seafood. The high demand for tourist souvenirs supports a traditional craft

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