

# Rural Tourism an Opportunity for Sustainable Development

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## Abstract

*The study highlights the importance of rural tourism from a social economic perspective in rural areas. Tourism benefits tourists, hosts, but also the community in which they run. Turim is of major importance to the economic and social life of the area, with direct, indirect, and induced positive effects. Tourism represent an important source of jobs for rural communities. Tourism not only offers business opportunities to local residents, but it can also enhance local quality of life. Tourism can also support local culture in rural areas by encouraging restoration of local and regional historic sites.*

**Key words:** rural tourism, development, innovation, creativity, community, opportunities

**J.E.L. classification:** L83; Z30; Z32

## 1. Introduction

The tourism industry is very important from an economic, social and cultural point of view, as evidenced by international conventions and declarations that have been concluded since the beginning of the 20th century.

Tourism, the „smoke-free” industry, is a branch of the economy that is insufficiently capitalized in Romania, with a natural and exceptional human potential.

The world is becoming more and more sought after with its natural and anthropogenic beauties, but especially enlivened by hardworking and hardworking people who know how to restore your mood. More recently, the link between life and work from the countryside is made with the hospitality of the people of the place, making this symbiosis agrotourism, "a form of tourism practiced in the peasant farms (farms / hostels), comprising both the actual tourist activity basic and additional services) as well as the economic (agricultural) activity performed by the hosts of the tourists (productive activities of processing of agricultural products in the household and their marketing to tourists or other commercial networks), as well as the way of spending time free." (Glăvan V., 2002)

Of the forms of tourism that are becoming more and more remarkable is rural tourism, which becomes an alternative to urban tourism.

## 2. Theoretical background

Although rural tourism has been practiced in a spontaneous, unorganized form since ancient times, in Europe organized rural tourism became known after 1950, and in Romania after 1970, but it was reborn at national level since 1990. Being „Various associations and bodies that aim to promote and develop tourism in rural areas. The most representative ones are: The Romanian Federation for Mountain Development (1990) - which aims to support the inhabitants of the mountain area by promoting, organizing and developing agrotourism; The Romanian Agrotourism Agency (1993) - which aims at linking Romanian agritourism to the international tourism system. The National Association for Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism (ANTREC) was established in 1994 as the most representative organization in the field, a member of the European Federation of Rural Tourism (EUROGITES)." ( Dobrescu E. M., Nistoreanu P., 2018)

Many authors (Tureac, Turtureanu and Bordean, 2008; Albu and Nicolau, 2011; Fagioli, Diotallevi, Ciani, 2014; Garau, 2015) considered that rural tourism represented a good modality to develop rural areas, monoindustrial region or unpopulated areas.

Rural tourism is a form of tourism that emphasizes the destinations in rural areas with a functional accommodation structure and other services that offer the tourist the opportunity to rest in the tranquility of nature, to explore the beauties of reliefs, to enjoy the traditions, customs, ancestral customs with which he has direct contact.

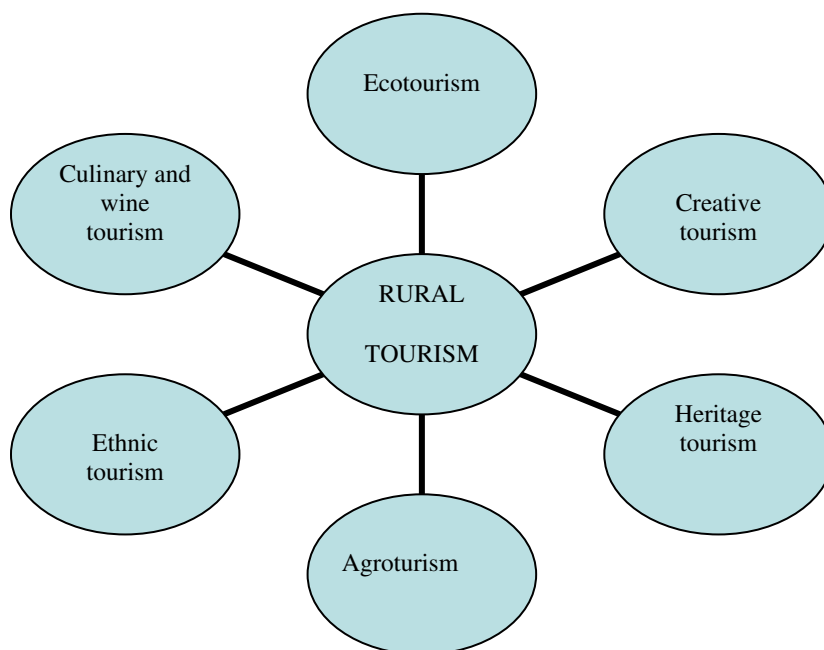
This form of tourism has been practiced since ancient times, but in an empirical, spontaneous form. The development of rural tourism is a complement to classic tourism, being a cheaper alternative to any travelers' pocket. Today, rural tourism is of particular importance. Withdrawal in an oasis of tranquility in the middle of nature is a haven for tourists wishing to escape from the daily crowds of large crowded cities. Children raised in cities among concrete and glass buildings, among the thousands of road cars, learn here to love nature, to love animals in their environment. Rural tourism has become a way of life, it is a trend of tourism industry development, being a solution to job creation in rural areas, generating additional income, thus contributing to raising the standard of living of the rural population.

### 3. Rural tourism – types and major pillars

The wide range of motivation to spend your holiday in the country is becoming more and more attractive to young people, families and the elderly. They can take hikes, take part in traditional, cultural, religious holidays to practice different sports regardless of the season.

Rural tourism can be defined as a set of goods and services offered by the peasant household to the consumption of people who, for a certain period of time, come to rural areas for relaxation, rest, recreation, initiation in crafts, etc. (Luca, Chiriac, 2015)

Figure no. 1 The main type of rural tourism



Source: Own processing

The main forms of rural tourism are:

- ❖ Agroturism
- ❖ Ethnic tourism
- ❖ Culinary and wine tourism
- ❖ Ecotourism

- ❖ Heritage tourism
- ❖ Creative tourism

The major pillars of rural tourism are tradition, wellness, and creativity and authenticity.

A very important pillar of rural tourism is considered to be the creativity "the development of creative tourism is evident in rural areas (where creativity is needed to combat a lack of economic alternatives)" (Commission and the Council of Europe, 2010, p. 26).

"Creativity allows destinations to innovate new products relatively rapidly, giving them a competitive advantage over other locations" (Richards and Wilson, 2006, p. 1215),

Following the model of other countries, where a tree or a rock has their story, creativity and innovation in this area are indispensable, they are often costly and have a major impact.

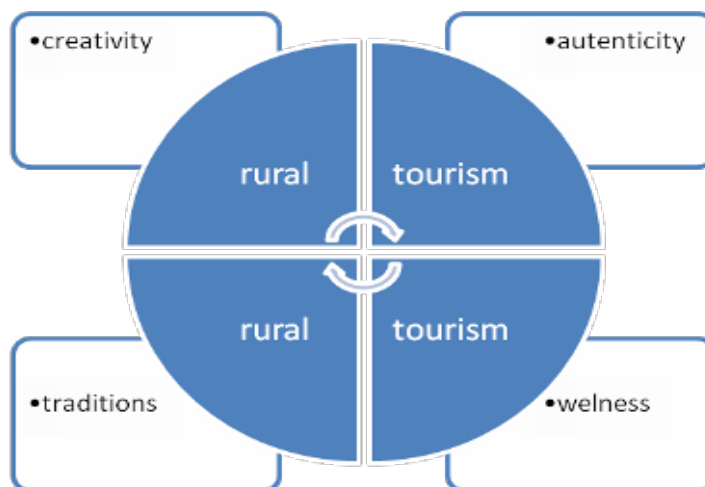
Romanian tourism needs the urge of creativity to create new tourist products and to value its rich tourist patrimony.

Authenticity comes and completes creativity, resulting in a unique tourist product, given by relief, landscapes, food, zonal traditions, people's attitude, weather. Authenticity is also viewed as a "western cultural notion associated with the past "primitive Other" articulated in opposition to modernity" (Cole 2007, p. 944). Some authors (Wang, 1999, p. 351). have considered that "things appear authentic not because they are inherently authentic but because they are constructed as such in terms of points of view, beliefs, perspectives, or powers".

Traditions can be a tourist attraction if they are well publicized and exploited, and give authenticity to zonal tourism.

The primary purpose of tourism, and of rural tourism in particular, is wellness, the general well-being of the tourist. If this is done, all the other positive effects of tourism come from itself.

Figure no. 2 The pillars of rural tourism



Source: Own processing

Rural tourism is also revolutionizing businesses and prompting economic development across the globe.

Tourism brings benefits tourists, hosts, but also the community in which they run. Tourism is of major importance to the economic and social life of the area, with direct, indirect, and induced positive effects.

Tourism represents an important source of jobs for rural communities. Tourism not only offers business opportunities to local residents, but it can also enhance local quality of life. Tourism can also support local culture in rural areas by encouraging restoration of local and regional historic sites.

The main benefits of tourism are job creation, job retention, service retention, new business opportunities, opportunities for youths, repopulation and revitalization of the unindustrialized and monoindustrial areas, community diversification, development of arts and tradition, enhances and

revitalizes community pride, landscape conservation, preservation of culture and heritage, environmental protection.

For an area to become a rural tourism destination, not just a stop off point, structured networks and collaborative agreements between public and private sector actors are essential. Community involvement is a key part of the equation.

Rural tourism investment is undertaken largely to improve the economic, environmental and social well being of rural areas. In almost all business sectors research and development involves a partnership between the public and private sectors. The need for partnership is very important if rural tourism is to succeed. For developed and improved the tourism in the area, local administration and the whole community must to involve in:

- ❖ Creation of a centre of touristic information
- ❖ Creating partnerships
- ❖ Creating new joints, various galleries, exhibitions, handicraft workshops,
- ❖ Development of public transport, utilities network, communication and internet services, scenic road construction
- ❖ Construction of roads, picturesque paths, cycling tracks, on-road, off-road route,
- ❖ Counseling and support in obtaining some external funding, training in business and hospitality skills;

#### 4. Conclusions

Therefore, Tourism is not the panacea for all rural problems but it has number of positive attractions.(Long and Lane 2000) . It is one of the many opportunities that communities might improve productivity and incomes.

Rural tourism is essentially a private sector activity, driven by income generation and job creation, and often the diversification of agricultural holdings, which is based on landscape and conservation and heritage infrastructure, often financed by the sector public These sectors have the ability to expand, be better organized and use best practices on a larger scale.

Researchers in tourism and tourism beneficiaries have come to the conclusion that rural tourism is the "tourism of the future", and agro-touristic pensions will be a great quest. For this reason, with a lot of creativity and innovation, tourist board managers need to innovate more and more attractive tourist products to "lure" the tourist and make him walk the threshold of the guesthouse and stay as pleasant as possible long lasting.

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