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Development of Rural Tourism in Serbia

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ABSTRACT

Rural Tourism is defined as tourism which produces a “rural environment” for visitors, by offering a combination of natural, cultural and human experiences which have typically rural character. It is the immersion of visitors in authentic, original and grassroots experiences which are the essence of rural life. Rural accommodation combines different forms of tourism that showcase rural life, art, culture and heritage in rural locations. The Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia defined four tourist clusters: Vojvodina, Belgrade, South-Eastern Serbia, and South-Western Serbia. Tourism attractors (natural, cultural, and man-made) are tourism sites or assets that are currently visited by tourists. Serbia hosts a large offer of natural resources and a great diversity of scenic landscapes, from high mountains to valleys and plains. The Danube, which runs through Serbia for 588 km, with the Sava, the Tisza and the Great Morava compose a dense river network, attractive for all water activities in summer and autumn. Biological diversity of Serbia, both the ecosystem and species, is extremely high and attractive for tourism. Rural Tourism overnights represent 27% of total tourism overnights in Serbia. Tourism in Serbia is expected to increase with 3% over the next five years. The same increase could be expected for rural tourism. Implementation of master plans should add 8% to the growth of Rural Tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rural development in Serbia has been defined as an economic, social and environmental priority by the Government of Serbia. The diversification of the rural economy in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way is needed in order to improve the quality of life, to reduce the poverty level, as well as to fight against social and environmental degradation. Tourism has been identified as the key sector which can drive the diversification of the rural economy and can support Serbia. Furthermore, it is believed that Rural Tourism will support Serbia to realize its objective of inclusion as an EU member. Destination Management will play an important role in the development of rural destinations. The overall vision of the Rural Tourism Master Plan of Serbia is to develop a master plan for socially, economically and environmentally sustainable rural tourism. We

underline that the vision of sustainable Rural Tourism is a balance of economic sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability, and environmental sustainability. Without the interaction and balance of these three components, the benefits of rural tourism will be limited. Furthermore, Serbian rural tourism relies on a large and diversified number of nature and culture based assets which need to be conserved, used in a sustainable way, and further enhanced through tourism development. Sustainable rural tourism generates local income and integrates local communities with a view to improving livelihoods and reducing poverty; conserves natural and cultural assets such as biodiversity, cultural heritage and traditional values; supports intercultural understanding and tolerance, aspires to be more energy efficient and climate sound; avoids over consumption of water, and minimizes waste. Rural Tourism already plays a role in the overall tourism development of Serbia. In order to understand the potential of Rural

Tourism in Serbia, it is necessary to understand the current context of Rural Tourism in Serbia, to define Rural Tourism in its greater scope and to understand the synergies of Rural Tourism with other products which are already being promoted in Serbia today.

2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Rural Tourism is defined as tourism which produces a "rural environment" for the visitor, by offering a combination of natural, cultural and human experiences which have a typically rural character. It is the immersion of the visitor in authentic, original and grassroots experiences which are the essence of rural life. It brings the visitor back to natural, back to the roots, back to basics, and embraces the return to origins and originality. Rural Tourism is comprised of a spectrum of activities and services organized by rural population [1]. It is based on principles of sustainability and offers elements of country environment, nature, as well as presenting traditional hospitality and the values of life of the local population. It is the contact with this nature and the personal human contact with the local people which makes rural tourism so unique. Rural accommodation combines different forms of tourism that showcase rural life, art, culture and heritage in rural locations. International trends suggest that Rural Tourism is becoming an increasingly broader concept and that the needs and expectations of domestic and international demand are becoming ever more sophisticated. Rural Tourism, therefore, combines many different aspects of experiencing, sharing and showcasing rural life. These rural experiences can be defined in terms of rural activities and accommodation experience.

The development of the National Rural Tourism Master Plan is one of the key components of the Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development UN Joint Programme, which works towards the diversification of rural economy in Serbia. Other key activities include (a) providing guidance for public investment, which is aimed at creating national and international partnerships between public, civil, and national sector organizations, (b) strengthening the capacities of rural tourism entrepreneurs, tourism organizations, and (c) supporting local projects through the Joint UN Fund for Sustainable Rural Tourism [2]. The UN Joint Programme activities are implemented in four target regions, namely in South Banat on the Danube, in East Serbia, in Central Serbia, and in The Lower Danube. Five UN agencies, including UNWTO, FAO, UNDP, UNEP and UNICEF, in cooperation with a number of Government of the Republic of Serbia national partners, namely the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management, and the

National Tourism Organization of Serbia are implementing the Joint Programme [3].

2.1. Approach to rural accommodation

Rural accommodation typologies have characteristics which should be analysed as follows:

1). Level of exposure, contact, immersion and participation of the tourist with the rural household.

2). The service level in rural accommodation can vary from very limited service to highly specialized and customized service. The comfort level is also an important aspect of the level of the accommodation. The level of exposure, contact, immersion and participation of the tourist with the rural household can vary from highly immersed, with a high level of contact in the rural household and related activities, to a low level of involvement. The service level in rural accommodation can vary from very limited service to highly specialized and customized service [4].

Rural Tourism can therefore be understood in terms of the balance between types of activities and types of accommodation. Rural Tourism exists across these different definitions, changing and adapting.

2.2. The need for rural tourism development in Serbia

Rural Serbia represents a key part of the Serbian population and resources. Currently 85% of Serbia's territory is rural, between 44% and 55% of the population lives in rural areas and an estimated 41% of GDP comes from rural areas [3]. The rural economy in Serbia is highly dependent on agriculture, with approximately 75% of the rural population engaged in subsistence farming [5]. However, despite the wealth of natural and cultural resources, rural areas continue to suffer from high rates of unemployment, depopulation, low economic activity and decreasing natural resources. Furthermore, many family members are not registered as agricultural producers but assist in everyday agricultural activities. These issues are specifically related to women and the poor in general. It is estimated that women in rural areas represent approximately 74% of the people being engaged in family activities without being paid [5]. The support and funding of rural development in Serbia over the past few years focused on improving agricultural competitiveness, consolidating land, improving market orientation, and developing rural economic infrastructure. However, an increased focus has been given to the diversification of the rural economy to non-agricultural business and expanding the current agricultural scope to new business. Rural Tourism has been identified as the key catalyst which can drive the differentiation of the rural economy through launching

new business initiatives and through finding synergies between current agricultural production and tourism.

2.3. Rural Tourism's role in tourism overnights in Serbia

International tourists' overnights have increased at an average annual of 13.2%, while domestic overnights registered the same as domestic arrivals. Domestic overnights represent the majority of overnights, accounting for 81% of the total overnights [6]. The average length of stay varies from 2 to 4 days. Domestic tourists on average have the longer trips (approximately 4 days) while the average for a foreign visitor is approximately 2 days. Main motivation for domestic tourists is leisure, 80% of the registered domestic arrivals were for leisure purposes. While only 15% of the foreign visitors come to Serbia for leisure, the majority comes for business in Belgrade. Rural Tourism represents approximately 2.7 million overnights in Serbia. This number is the result of adding proper rural tourism overnights 145,354, and general tourism overnights usable for rural tourism 2,556,128. Therefore, it is estimated that rural tourism overnights represent 27% of total tourism overnights in Serbia [3]. Thus, Rural Tourism already plays an important role in tourism in Serbia.

2.4. The relationship between rural tourism and other types of tourism

Rural tourism has been defined in terms of the rural activities and rural accommodation experiences. Furthermore, the synergies between rural activities and other tourism product typologies should be considered. The most relevant types of tourism typologies have been evaluated in terms of their correlation and potential to support or enhance Rural Tourism. Below we summarized the correlation between Rural Tourism and other types of tourism.

Cultural tourism is defined as tourism motivated by the discovery and experience of tangible and intangible cultural experiences. Due to the importance of this tourism in Serbia, it has been divided further according to key products within this category.

Heritage tourism. This tourism is defined by the visitors' experience of man-made resources such as monuments, archaeological sites, monasteries, and paintings.

Ethno villages and (rural life) events tourism. This type of tourism is defined by the personal contact that visitors have with a local "community", group of people or ethno group who have kept their local culture, traditions, and rituals alive. It often takes place in a rural or natural setting and visitors' main requirement is getting to know and understand the way of life of the local community.

Gastronomy and wine tourism. Defined as the type of tourism whose main motivation is to experience food and wine at a local, national, international, traditional, and indigenous level. It includes the discovery of gastronomy related to culinary heritage. It includes wine and other alcoholic beverages, such as rakija.

Nature and Earth tourism is defined as tourism that develops in a natural environment and involves an activity carried out by tourists. Nature and Earth Tourism is an important component of the attractiveness of Rural Tourism, including a broad range of activities that can be done in a natural setting. Due to the importance of this tourism in Serbia, it has been divided further according to key products within this category:

Ecotourism. Ecotourism is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that preserve and respect the environment and improve the welfare of local residents. Ecotourism main target is to allow tourists discover, get to know, and enjoy nature through participating in activities. These may include special interest activities (detailed in Special Interest Tourism).

Agro-tourism/farm tourism. Agro-tourism or Farm Tourism is defined as tourism where the main motivation is to experience farm activities and the agrarian way of life. It is further defined as any business initiated by the farmer and/or family to entertain or educate visitors in the way of life on the farm. It includes farm activities and farm products produced by the farm. Agro-tourism has very high synergies with Rural Tourism as staying in rural accommodation is a key part of Agro-tourism.

Mountains, rivers and lakes tourism. Mountains, Rivers and Lakes Tourism is defined as tourism for which the main motivation is the mountain, the river or the lake itself and activities (active or passive). The main motivation is to experience the tangible and intangible activities associated to the natural asset. These include the enjoyment of fresh air, as well as summer and winter activities like trekking and skiing respectively. Mountains, Rivers and Lakes Tourism have a high correlation with Rural Tourism.

Sport and adventure tourism is defined as tourism with a highly active motivation where visitors participate in a particular sport or in an adventure sport. This type of tourism can be very closely linked to natural areas and to the sport and adventure activities that take place in natural areas.

Sport tourism. Sport Tourism is defined as travel motivated by the participation in sports which may be outdoors. It requires a certain level of fitness and risk.

Adventure tourism. Adventure Tourism is defined as an activity which is practiced outdoors in the wild or in natural open spaces and has an adventure or thrill component to it. It also has an element of danger

or bravery to it which gives it a characteristic feature. This includes White water rafting and caving.

Wellbeing tourism is defined as the physical, mental and spiritual tourism which appeals to the principal motivation of caring and enhancing one's state of wellbeing.

Spa and wellness tourism. This tourism is defined as being associated with enhancement of wellness and beauty as well as prevention of ailments. Typically it involves treatments that are relaxing while having both a physical and emotional appeal. It includes spas and thermal waters and it often includes facilities like gym, and alternative exercises like yoga and pilates.

Medical tourism. Medical Tourism is defined as consisting of health recovery and medical treatments which include surgery and rehabilitation.

Family and child tourism is defined as tourism for which the principal motivation is the health development the family unit or of the child. This tourism can range from just relaxing in a certain environment to combining concepts (education with entertainment activities).

Family tourism. Family Tourism is defined as tourism motivated by the need for spending quality time with one's family. The family unit can include different typologies from singles with children, to couples with children. Family Tourism is becoming increasingly important as people look for opportunities to take time from the busy work schedule to spend time building relationships and share experiences with family members.

Child tourism. Child Tourism is defined as tourism which specifically targets the development needs (social, physical, and mental) of children of different ages. Typically it has a strong edutainment component.

School and educational tourism. This tourism is associated with children and/or youth and focuses on providing education in a rural environment. This type of tourism can be developed in abandoned schools which need revival or in other buildings in rural areas (such as farms). School and Educational Tourism complement practicing and learning activities in a rural atmosphere.

Nautical and cruise tourism is defined as tourism having as the main motivation activities associated with being in or on a mass of water, including rivers, lakes, and the sea.

Nautical tourism. Nautical Tourism is defined as tourism motivated by water-related activities and water sports such as scuba diving, snorkelling, sailing, surfing, water skiing, kite-surfing, boating trips. There has been an increase and specialisation in the offer of nautical products in leading world tourism countries such as in France and in Spain. It is highly complementary to Special Interest, Sports and also

Natural Tourism and is complementary to Rural Tourism.

Cruise tourism. Cruise tourism is defined as holiday journeys based on their specific transport means (vessels or cruise ships) and medium (water). This type of tourism can be carried out on rivers, at sea, or on lakes and it involves trips and short visits along the banks of rivers or along the seashore.

Meetings, incentives, congresses, events (MICE) and business tourism is motivated by business motives primarily.

Seminars and meetings tourism. Seminars and Meetings Tourism is defined as tourism motivated by attendance at meetings of professional interest (trade fairs, conferences, symposiums, congresses, presentations, product launches, etc.) or of cultural or social interest, aimed at experience sharing and networking with other like-minded people. Together with these professionally-related activities, recreational and leisure activities are included.

Team-building tourism. Team-building Tourism defines trips that companies give to their employees in an effort to improve work place atmosphere and worker productivity.

Touring is defined as tourism for which the primary motivation is to complete a circuit whereby visitors take a tour of a place and experience a destination first hand. It is the oldest form of tourism and it is the actual origin of the word "tourist" i.e. to make a tour. Tours are typically done by train, bus and car.

Short breaks tourism is defined as tourism with the motivation of having a "break" from everyday life in the form of a weekend to 5 days to relax and/or discover something new for a few days. It has become extremely popular over the past years. In the context of the city, it is typically called the City Break. In the context of the countryside it is well associated with a rural break or countryside break and, therefore, it has the potential to complement Rural Tourism very well.

Luxury tourism is a transversal category more than a motivation in itself, although there is an emerging market segment whose consumption tends to be simply motivated by hedonism. This means that it is becoming established as a distinct product on its own. This includes travel, which due both to its high costs and its parameters of authenticity, charm and exclusivity is consumed by a very select clientele.

Major events tourism is defined as tourism motivated by a major event which may take place in a location once or twice in a lifetime or that may repeat. Major events include international sport events such as the Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup, major marathons and cycling tours as well as major international cultural events.

Special interest tourism is defined as a niche activity which is the main visitors' motivation. It

includes a wide range of activities from hunting to looking for endemic species of plants, fishing, or bird watching. It is a highly specialised type of tourism for people whose preferred activity/hobby is going to be the centrefold of their holiday, dedicating a high percentage of the day to practice that activity.

2.5. Methodology

The survey objectives were the following:

- understanding tourists' preferences and needs when they are on holiday in rural areas;
- assessing the potential value of rural tourism in Serbia, according to the present conditions of the tourism system from an end-user point of view;
- assessing the quality of some indicators (safety and security; pre-arrival communication; accommodation; information; food and beverage) in rural tourism in Serbia;
- determining the preferred rural areas in Serbia, the activities available to end-users and the types of accommodation available.
- exploring current customers' opinions and perceptions of rural services in Serbia, which will help to understand the likes and dislikes of rural tourism in Serbia, as well as to identify needs for development and improvement of destinations and products.

It is a quantitative study using a survey to measure the factors to determine travel in rural areas in Serbia. The format of the questionnaire was based on previous studies and its sample questionnaire was used in a similar research study. Main survey (face-to-face) was conducted with tourists in different municipalities, from the 9th July to the 26th September. Over 588 randomly-selected tourists aged 18 and over were interviewed in four regions (South Banat, Lower Danube, Eastern Serbia and Central Serbia) and in other parts of Serbia.

Simple random sampling is the basic sampling technique where we select a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. Every possible sample of a given size has the same chance of selection; i.e. each member of the population is equally likely to be chosen at any stage in the sampling process. The statistical tools used in this study were the means, the frequency counts, and the percentages. This approach aims to get direct feedback related to the potential and limitations of the four selected regions and, at the same time, get a broader national insight of the potential of our country for Rural Tourism.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research was conducted in Eastern Serbia, Lower Danube, South Banat, Central Serbia and other

parts of Serbia. The number of respondents to the survey were: 91, 91, 58, 118 and 230, which makes a total of 588 respondents. The preliminary analysis of the survey delivered results about tourists' preferences and opinions related to rural tourism in Serbia. 41% of the respondents were males and 59% females, 35% of the sample was between 36 to 49 years old. For 79% of the respondents a reason to visit Serbia was holiday and leisure while 13% were visiting friends and family. The highest percentage of respondents with this answer were those that were visiting Lower Danube (82.42%) and the South Banat region (68.97%). According to these findings, the Eastern Serbia region is the least recognized as a tourist destination, but it also shows potential of focusing market positioning activities from the beginning to appropriate tourist products, in accordance with the Strategy for Sustainable Rural Development of Tourism in Serbia. Most tourists stay in Serbia between 2 to 3 nights (21%). The percentage of those who stay 6 to 8 nights is 20%; after that follow those who stay longer than 8 nights (17%). The percentage of tourists who stay 1 night in Serbia is 15% and the other group corresponds to daily visitors. The average length of tourists' stay is 4.32 nights. It is interesting to note that a significant percentage of tourists are daily tourists who do not use accommodation at the tourist destination at all. Eastern Serbia (41.38%) and South Banat (34.7%) could be underlined from this perspective. The reason can be the lack of accommodation facilities in these regions, as well as the lack of infrastructure development. Beside the mentioned reasons, another reason could be the relative closeness of tourists coming to Belgrade, Vojvodina and to the surrounding areas. Results show that the number of tourists who stay in one place is 71% while the number of tourists who visit the different places and attractions in the region is 27%.

Most tourists stay in guest houses (37%) and in rural apartments (22%). A more discreet percentage accounts for camping sites (8%), rural hotels (7%) second residences (6%), and for salas (5%). The structure of used rural accommodation shows that it is still relatively undeveloped and improvised. For example, salas accommodation should be positioned as attractive rural accommodation in a higher price category. It also offers the possibility of a variety of tourist products development.

In the South Banat region, the largest number of tourists stay in guest houses (37.93%), in other rural accommodation types (8.62%), and in rural hotels (10.34%). In the Lower Danube region, the most common facilities are guest houses (52.75%), camp sites and rural apartments (10.99%), and rural hotels (8.79%). In the Eastern Serbia region, the largest number of tourists stay in guest houses (23.08%) and in rural apartments (18.68%), while in the Central Serbia region, the most popular are rural apartments (44%) and guest houses (41.53%).

The most popular category of accommodation used by tourists in Serbia is 3 stars, which account for 35%. It is followed by 4 stars, with 25% and 2 stars with 12%. Most tourists stay in lower categories up to 3 stars accommodation types, which do not offer added value facilities or services and belong to lower price categories. On the other hand, it could mean that tourists prefer low and middle categories for rural accommodation, but on the other hand, it could suggest the relatively low quality of rural accommodation available in Serbia. It is important to mention that the quality of accommodation can significantly vary among facilities within the same category, especially in the categories of 3 stars and below. 70% of the respondents are domestic tourists and 28% international tourists. A significant majority of respondents is represented by domestic tourists and tourists from the neighbouring countries. A different trend appears in South Banat region, mainly because of Hungarian tourists in transit. Available information led us to the conclusion that on a short term focus should be put on tourist products defined as tourist products with high potential for domestic tourists (Agro-tourism, Gastronomy and Wine Tourism, Sports and Adventure Tourism, Family and Child Tourism, Wellbeing and Health Tourism, Short Break Tourism, etc.). On the other hand, on a long term, we should develop products that can be attractive for international tourists (Cultural Heritage Tourism, Ethnic Tourism, Rural Lifestyle Tourism, Mountains, Rivers and Lakes Tourism, Touring, Cruise Tourism, and Special Interest Tourism).

The largest number of surveyed tourists visited rural areas in Serbia more than 3 times (44%), while 32% have had that experience for the first time. Over a half of the respondents had already enjoyed rural tourism and they came back, which proves, to some extent, the degree of tourist satisfaction and loyalty. High percentage visited rural areas more than three times and that can confirm strong customer loyalty. All these indicate that rural areas in Serbia have something to offer and give a level of optimism for future rural tourism development in Serbia.

The largest number of respondents visited rural areas of Serbia as a result of their friends' or relatives' recommendation (57%). Information on the internet convinced 22% of them, 7% contacted travel agencies and tour operators, 5% obtained the information by using promotional materials while only 3% got information at fairs. More systematic and effective promotional approach should be developed both on national and regional/local levels. Internet has a great potential as a tool to create an information source and a promotional channel. In 71% of cases, respondents independently organized their trip to the rural areas of Serbia, 7% booked through travel agents or tour operators, while 5% booked on the internet and only 4% used packed holidays. Most tourists organize

trips to rural areas of Serbia on their own, which shows great potential for improvement in the role of local tourist organizations from this point of view, but also there is potential interest of tour operators that are not involved in rural tourism at the moment. Internet should be specially emphasized as it has the highest potential for growth in this sphere.

Research shows that the appeal for natural settings is the main reason to visit rural areas in Serbia (50%). It is followed by relaxation (15%), cultural visits (12%), gastronomy (food and wines) (8%), events (4%), while 5% of respondents indicated other reasons for visiting rural areas in Serbia. Half of the tourists considered nature as being the most appealing out of the reasons for travel. Agro-tourism, mountains, rivers and lake tourism should be analysed and prioritized on a short-term and mid-term rural tourism development. At the first glance, the mentioned products would attract domestic and international regional tourists.

4. CONCLUSION

The key conclusions show that there are strong opportunities for the development of Rural Tourism in Serbia for the reasons listed below.

Serbia already has a basis of Rural Tourism which has been developed over many years, particularly in Western Serbia, in Vojvodina and in Central Serbia. This should serve as the foundation to improve the Rural Tourism offer and to expand it throughout the territory. Most of the Serbian territory is rural with a large and diversified number of nature and culture based assets spread out throughout the country. These resources are highly attractive for the development of a Rural Tourism experience. Furthermore, the majority of these resources have not been developed for Rural Tourism although they have high potential for development.

Rural Tourism in Serbia should be interpreted and applied in the widest sense of the definition of Rural Tourism. That is to say Rural Tourism should prioritize rural activities and rural accommodation. In Serbia, there is an opportunity to define a truly Serbian Rural Tourism experience which is holistic and integrates these different components, thereby, creating a competitive positioning for Serbia.

Rural Tourism is highly correlated with many different tourism types, many of them having already developed products. The Serbian rural values and symbols are already highlighted by the "Village life" product and other products such as Nature and Earth Tourism and Cultural Tourism. The existing products which are correlated with Rural Tourism provide a strong basis for the further development of Rural Tourism in Serbia.

Rural Tourism has a key role to play in the protection and enhancement of the natural

environment of Serbia. The natural environment is one of Serbia's strongest resources and it should be protected and enhanced through responsible Rural Tourism development.

Rural Tourism can play a key role in Serbia in terms of diversifying rural economy, thereby creating employment opportunities which will generate additional incomes for rural households, reduce unemployment (specifically among women and young people) and it can help maintain or repopulate villages.

The qualitative analysis of the Rural Tourism Sector shows that there are many gaps in most units, such as tourism assets, leisure and entertainment activities, restaurants, handicrafts, agricultural products used directly or indirectly in the tourism sector. From a positive perspective, these gaps represent opportunities to take in order to generate business, especially micro and medium-sized enterprises.

Furthermore, Rural Tourism is already playing an important role in rural Serbia and is generating a significant level of income. Rural Tourism is an emerging reality in Serbia, supported by the more than 32,000 beds (registered and non-registered) in rural areas, out of which 10,000 beds are exclusively rural. It is estimated that these beds are generating yearly more than 5 billion RSD of accommodation income and contributes approximately 5 billion RSD more direct income for the tourism sector.

These more than 10 billion RSD income does not include visitors that do not stay at least for one night or stay with friends or relatives, although they also spend money in tourism services and in other types of services and therefore generate additional incomes for the rural areas. The 10 billion figure does not account for the indirect contribution to the local economy in terms of incomes and employment.

Therefore, there is an opportunity to use Rural Tourism as a support to general tourism development in Serbia. However, there are also many gaps and barriers that need to be addressed and removed. Among others, we identify the following major ones:

- road infrastructure in rural areas and particularly between rural tourism resources need to be improved;
- there is a need for structured Rural Tourism experiences which include activities, accommodation, and man-made facilities;
- high seasonality issues that are affecting the use of rural areas and the occupancy of tourism accommodation which is extremely low (average 4% yearly occupancy for rural units and 21% for other accommodation units);

- lack of international standards and quality guarantees throughout the Tourism sector, especially in the case of accommodation facilities;

- human resource awareness and development in order to understand and use the opportunities provided by rural tourism in a sustainable way;

- organization between the national, regional and local stakeholders (public and private sectors, civil society) in order to manage rural tourism development in an efficient and sustainable way.

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