

## THE SPECIFICITY OF RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INNOVATIVE DRIVING FORCES

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**Abstract:** *The analysis covers a wide range of problems associated with entrepreneurship in rural tourism, which is the fastest growing sector of tourism. The paper is trying to explore the importance of increase in rural tourism, both as a tourism resource and as a source of revenue for the rural community. The study also tries to present the impact of current trends on tourism and attempts to explain that, some kind of innovations in rural tourism entrepreneurship referring to product, marketing and strategic management, can be considered like new trends. The analyse is going as well to answer the question referring to the impact of tourism on growth in rural areas. The paper focused on Strategic Planning and Innovation – the proper way to sustainable development of rural areas. The paper aims is to show the opportunities of entrepreneurship in rural tourism leading to conditions necessary for the fulfillment of the needs and prospects of the rural regions.*

**Keywords:** *rural tourism, agrotourism, entrepreneurship, innovation, strategic planning.*

**JEL Classification:** *M31, O31*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been growing interest in rural tourism. The intensity of research in this subject is certainly a reflection of its importance in the process of socio-economic activation of rural areas. Rural tourism covers “a range of activities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourists to their area in order to generate extra income for their business (Hall, et al., 2005). From the definition of rural tourism raises two main issues. First – it's too variously defined rural area, and the second – a great diversity of leisure and recreation in a rural area. Regardless of whether a narrower broader treatment of this concept, rural tourism is the fastest growing sector of tourism (ILO, 2011). The strategic plan for tourism development in Poland in the years 2008–2014 prepared by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism in 2008 shows that the rural tourism and agrotourism have been classified into five areas of the Polish tourism brands with the best chance of rapid growth. (Strategia Rozwoju Turystyki w Polsce na lata 2008–2014, 2008). Rural tourism in Europe constitutes a long established institution, but recently its importance has increased, both as a tourism resource and as a source of revenue for the rural community. In some of European (UK, Germany) countries in last decade the number of tourists trips to the countryside grew by 50% (Walsh & Harvey, 2013; Clark & Chabrel, 2007; Majewski, 2012). Rural Tourism has emerged as a new mantra for alternative tourism development. (Sofique, 2012).

Analyzing current trends in tourism should be noted: 1) the trend towards a holiday for relaxation, “together” with the children on a farm associated with 2) the trend leading towards the need for involvement, learning, authenticity during the holidays and also with 3) the trend towards the need for learning the local culture and local food products include the development of rural tourism.

Rural tourism focuses on participating in a rural lifestyle. An exodus of young people to urban areas has been rapidly growing in the past decade and has led to the situation that

rural tourism becoming a good business prospect. Tourism development has long been identified as a way to help revitalize struggling rural area. Rural tourism can bring various benefits such as foreign exchange, employment, higher government revenues and the transformation of agriculture into a modern service industry (Ju, 2011).

In this study some kind of innovations in rural tourism entrepreneurship referring to product, marketing and strategic and planning (organizational innovations) will be considered like new trends. Recently H. Séraphin (2013) emphasized in his study that the guest houses in the countryside should be treated like new trend in rural tourism in particular that tourists are very keen to buy “authenticity”. Nowadays many family farms looking for innovative ways to diversify their business through various forms of entrepreneurial ventures. The aim of this analyze is to approach the concept claiming that rural tourism is a form of entrepreneurship based on the development of farms prepared to welcome tourists.

This analyse is trying also to answer the key question: What is the impact of tourism on growth in rural areas? The view of rural tourism is often too narrow in concept and its impact on growth and inclusion in rural areas (with respect to its impact on rural services) is not well understood.

The innovation and proper *strategic planning* will lead to sustainable development and also to the formation of the necessary conditions for the fulfillment of the needs and prospects of the rural regions residents. This study is going to emphasize the importance of strategic planning and sustainable tourism strategies contributing to innovative development of rural areas, which increasing entrepreneurial opportunities; serve as a source for local revenue.

### 2. DEFINITION AND TYPES OF THE RURAL TOURISM & AGROTOURISM

Rural tourism can be defined as the “country experience” which encompasses a wide range of attractions

and activities that take place in agricultural or non-urban areas. (Macklin, 2011). The concept of rural tourism includes any form of tourism in countryside environment. But not every rural area has a predisposition to becoming a tourist destination to breathe and rural tranquility is not always enough to attract tourist, besides to family and friends. Each project refer to the development of rural tourism, whether it will be an individual and wider, shell first estimate the potential of the site and its immediate surroundings: entertainment, nature, service, cultural heritage. The concept of rural tourism covers a very broad spectrum of its forms. Especially specific from is agrotourism called as well farm tourism (Bouckova, 2008), includes activities related to the reception of guests, accommodation, food and entertainment (free time management) which place is the farm (Sikorska-Wolak, 2008).

Rural tourism is not just farm-based tourism. It includes farm-based holidays but also comprises special interest nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, sport and health tourism, hunting and angling, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, and, in some areas, ethnic tourism (Macklin, 2011).

One of the form of rural tourism is agro-tourism, which refers to, "the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation" (Macklin, 2011).

Rural tourism is not an accidental or temporary growth phenomenon. The forces behind its growth are long term in nature. These forces are partly connected to long term changes in the travel market, partly to improvements in transport and communications and partly to the efforts of public agencies charged with assisting rural change (Lane, 1992).

Rural tourism involves those people and associated tourist activities, which take part in country areas. Reasons why tourists are interested in rural tourism include (Scott, 2002):

- experiencing what is perceived as a "healthy" lifestyle, with plenty of fresh air, wholesome food and exercise;
- activities associated with rural locations such as hiking, horse riding, fishing, bird watching or camping;
- getting away from a stressful and fast-paced city environment to the peace and tranquillity of the bush;
- enjoying the friendly warmth and hospitality of country people;
- visiting sites of historical, cultural and perhaps personal significance; and
- visiting friends and relatives, and reaffirming origins.

From the definition of rural tourism raises two main issues. First – it's too variously defined rural area, and the second – a great diversity of leisure and recreation in rural areas, rural development. They create the need for multifunctional development of rural areas. Rural tourism brings more and more opportunity to create new jobs, thereby improving the incomes of the population living in rural areas.

There are a wide number of stakeholders in developments of local areas from local authorities who may

provide the many footpaths, organizations that provide the many attractions and ultimately the farmers who provide the landscape are dependent, at least in part on buoyancy of the tourism sector.

Rural tourism has been established in Europe in the following two basic forms: 1) The form of "farm house holidays" which is wide spread in countries where the concept of "farm" is interwoven with farming operation (Fotiadis, 2010); 2) The form of "bed and breakfast" which involves the construction of tourist accommodation and rooms to let in small non-urban settlements origin farming lodgments (cottages) within a rural settlement and provides tourists with hospitality. The "farm tourism industry" is especially developed in France, Austria and Germany (Busby & Rendle, 2000). In these countries the farm is for the tourist-visitor a place to stay and also a place for farming activity. The visitor stays in the farm and during his/her stay takes part in the agricultural (farming and animal breeding) activities. The typical characteristic of the farm in rural tourism is that the same place combines accommodation with agricultural activity.

Nowadays many tourists prefer individual forms of tourism, flexibility, different types of accommodation, activity holidays and more interaction with the Nature (Forga Prat, 2012). In all the European countries rural tourism is regarded as a complementary activity and not as a basic one, and it usually has a limited season length. Rural tourism cannot be the same all around Europe, since the rural regions in Europe obviously differ in character among themselves. This difference is usually reflected in the wide variety of economic activities in rural areas, and in the problems, opportunities and challenges the rural populations face in these areas (Fotiadis, 2010).

### 3. IMPORTANCE OF RURAL TOURISM FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIE

Rural tourism is not an accidental or temporary growth phenomenon. The forces behind its growth are long term in nature. These forces are partly connected to long term changes in the travel market, partly to improvements in transport and communications and partly to the efforts of public agencies charged with assisting rural change (Lane, 1994).

Both rural tourism and agrotourism is not a new phenomenon. For years, some regions were evidenced in the genuine *hospitality*. Today, we deal with a different type of rural tourism, even on the ground that it involved a lot more people. Rural tourism is also revolutionizing businesses and prompting economic development across the globe. The US government has implemented several regional and state-wide development projects to increase the effectiveness of rural tourism/farm activities. The Australian and UK governments have also offered a wide range of products and services to promote tourism in the rural areas (Macklin, 2011). The rural tourism is a kind of very popular tourism as well in South America countries like *gauchos* in Argentina and *pousada holidays* in Brazil.

Tourism events have been found to increase business, income and employment in the region and are seen to assist with social and economic development (Kłodziński, 2005). Rural tourism has many potential benefits for including employment growth, an expanded economic base,

repopulation, social improvement, and revitalization of local crafts. Tourism can make an important contribution to rural incomes both at the level of the tourism operators and more widely in the local economy. As a general rule, however, rural communities are challenged to take full advantage of the tourism industry due to lack of sufficient infrastructure to support year round visitors.

Following structural changes in European agriculture and related industries, with resultant socio-economic effects, tourism has been proposed as a tool for economic development including for-keeping the population in rural areas (Marsden & Sonnino, 2008). This applies in particular to areas suffering from decline in agriculture (Hall et al, 2009). Many rural areas are inevitably moving towards a possible adaption, which is diversification of economic activity and “multifunctional land use” (Knickel et al, 2004).

Tourism and recreation is treated like important resources of innovation, which refer to development of new tourism products (based on natural, human and social resources found within the rural district) (Moscardo, 2008).

Rural tourism (including agrotourism) became more and more an opportunity to create new jobs, and thus to improve the incomes of the population living in rural areas (Brown, 2007; Kłodziński, 2005, p 11).

The rural people, its culture, tradition, arts, handicrafts, scenery, landscape can attract the tourists irrespective of its taste, perceptions and attitudes (Sofique, 2012).

Tourism stimulating economic growth, and can improve the standard of living for those living in a tourism-targeted area (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). Villages has become a popular tourism destination to many travelers and the potential benefits that tourism offers to these areas are significant. The agricultural and local infrastructures have been constructed for tourist activities and there has been a great effort in order to keep country life alive. Rural tourism can become remarkable complementary income resource, mainly for the rural population. Rural tourism is related with small-scale tourist activities which are developed in the rural regions by people who are occupied in agriculture. Rural tourism plays an important role in sustaining rural cultures and contributing to sustainable rural development.

It is crucial for sustainable regional development to stimulate and promote entrepreneurship in rural tourism (Fotiadis, 2010). The local community is provided with the chance to develop and preserve the folklore or to revive forgotten arts and practices, to produce traditional products. It promotes the agricultural income, either directly, as an additional resource of income for the farmers who are complementary occupied with rural tourism, or indirectly by contributing to the general flow of money in the region. It provides alternative and complementary occupation solutions to those parts of the population who either cannot live only by the agricultural exploitation (ibidem). It contributes to the revival of traditional settlements. It supports the protection and the promotion of the natural rich of the countryside. It helps the residents of these regions to remain in their native village. Based on literature, entrepreneurship in tourism seems to be a serious contender to the involvement of the locals in the tourism sector and in many cases to help them to improve their standard of living (Séraphin, 2013).

#### 4. ENTREPRENEURIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE RURAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

Rural tourism has potential to combine economic development and acknowledgment of rural qualities (Agriterra, 2009). There are several alternatives for farmers and their organizations to get engaged with tourism. For instance, farmers can next to their agricultural activities – provide accommodation or excursions. In this case the farmer is transformed into a rural tourism entrepreneur. Another option is that farmers deliver their products – food, fruits, crafts and curios – to the tourism economy. In this case, farmers are suppliers of goods to the tourism sector, an activity much closer to their original core business. A distinguishing feature of rural tourism is to give the visitor a personalized experience, a taste of the physical, cultural and human environment of the countryside and as far as possible allow them to participate in activities, lifestyles and traditions of local communities (Agriterra, 2009).

Participants in rural tourism are motivated by goals whose realization requires the satisfaction of various material and spiritual needs of rural tourism enterprise wanting to make tourism a source of their income needs careful analysis of the benefits that they can provide tourists. Their bid must be completely different from what potential visitors can get without leaving the countryside. To meet the expectations of tourists usually exceeds the capacity of any single provider and requires cooperation between different units of tourism supply companies do (including a farm in the rural areas) to provide its customers with certain services and goods are usually not able to meet all the needs of tourists (Kachniewska, 2012, p. 95) there is a question how to identify key areas of work conditioning offer good quality rural tourism. As shown by research (Kachniewska, 2012, p. 98) tourists choosing his village as a place of rest usually mention the following reasons:

- the possibility of a peaceful vacation in the wild,
- the desire to spend the holidays with your favorite landscape,
- values of rural health,
- relatively low costs,
- the possibility of direct contact with the rural family,
- ability to learn about the customs and traditions of folk,
- the desire to change their vacation.

It should be emphasized that the problem of traveler identification and development of promotional activities at the level of attention should also absorb rural tourism entrepreneurs and leaders (associations, local authorities) because the quality of the offer and the quality of individual farms are mutually dependent (Kachniewska 2012, p. 104). Innovative initiatives aimed towards the formation of bidding packages that include both individual tourism products as well as the so-called reception area products (eg, village or region – more on this subject see Kachniewska, p. 105). An important element of the effectiveness of the management of rural tourism development is the ability to convince and obtain approval of the local community who do not benefit directly material for the development of tourism positive effect is achieved in greatest dimension when dealing with the strengthening of social bonds, for example, in the so-called thematic villages where virtually all residents are aware of their participation

in the development of rural tourism offer. It is important for the success of rural tourism that the internal structure is based on the continual training of the owners and their specialization in the offering of qualitative services (Fotiadis, 2010). These services include accommodation and food, the sports and tourism facilities, as well as the participation in rural activities and the informing of the visitors on issues of rural life.

## 5. INNOVATION IN RURAL TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Almost any entrepreneurial effort in rural tourism will involve a high degree of innovation, as it must face the challenge of endowing some existing resource, namely the farm buildings, activities, surroundings with enhanced potential for creating wealth. Innovation is the core element of rural tourism. Based on Schumpeter's Innovation Theory (Innovation and Schumpeter's Theories, 2006), the paper summarizes five key innovation elements of rural tourism, which includes product innovation, business model innovation, market innovation, supply chain innovation and organizational innovation (Li Li & Xue-jun Chen, 2013). According to the systematic principle, it constructs the model of innovation path of rural tourism. Based on the model of innovation path, it puts forward to innovation paths of rural tourism from five aspects, including, optimizing product structure of rural tourism, forming cooperative operation pattern in all forms and at all levels, exploiting regional markets and related-industries markets, building dynamic flexible network platform of supply chain, developing enterprise groups and enterprise alliances (Li Li & Xue-jun Chen, 2013).

In the contemporary period of economic downturn, the survival and development of enterprises and the whole economic regions is dependent on their innovativeness. (Bednarczyk, 2010, Bednarczyk, 2006) It seems to be obvious that the innovativeness of the region is the synergy of regional co-operation, organizations and strategy of the five types of innovation in tourism highlighted by A. M. Hjalager (2004) [organizational (management), marketing, product (service), process, institutional.] This study engaged in rural tourism focuses on the first three of the above. It seems to that marketing innovations, in discussed problems, should concern the possibility that the development of marketing associated with rural tourism lie in e-commerce (Key Drivers of Economic Development and Inclusion in Rural Areas, 2010).

The organizational innovation concerns the planning associated with entrepreneurial capabilities in the areas of rural tourism. Organizational innovation are new forms of organization in tourism can make a distinction between networks and clusters. Networks and clusters are created according to the business segment, such as eco-tourism, clusters can play a key role when it comes to strengthening the capacity of operators in terms of innovation, as in other branches of the service sector innovation in tourism rely heavily on networking and cooperation (Stange & Brown, 2011). Problems of organizational strategies in rural tourism will discuss next chapter.

Product innovations are linked with the trend towards individualization of tourism which is also reflected in the rural tourism especially if it relates to tourism.

Product innovation (service) is a novel change for different destinations (Nielsen et al., 2010). They can make a significant contribution to the decision to purchase them by tourists, for the tourism industry is to provide an offer consisting of new tourism products and services. Tourism based on the experiences, sustainable tourism and nature tourism (cultural) heritage associated with historical and cultural are some of the strategies, which can be based on a number of innovative tourism products (Wiatrak, 2004). These problems will be concerned in chapter 6. The main reason for promoting and supporting innovation is that it helps provide income and profit that can assure access to new resources, improved competitiveness for companies and industrial sectors, and in the end improved welfare for societies. Innovation is often part of a process of changing economy from supply-to demand driven, notwithstanding the productive level of the economy (Drucker, 2002). We are mostly looking for niche innovations, as defined by Hjalager (2004). Innovation however must go hand in hand with entrepreneurship and management (Nielsen et al., 2010).

## 6. THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE RURAL TOURISM

Tourism can increase the overall quality of life for rural host communities if properly planned. The development and planning of rural tourism depends on the geographical location and the existence of the previously mentioned characteristics, the architectural infrastructure of the region, the natural, cultural and traditional heritage. The plan of innovative rural tourism entrepreneurship include:

- tourist resources and assets,
- linkages between regional actors,
- national and international trends,
- potential linkage niches relevant to the region,
- issues impacting tourism entrepreneurship,
- potential opportunities in tourism entrepreneurship development,
- economic development for local (rural) communities,
- potential resources for enhancing tourism.

In the presented plan the most important issue refer to: 1) situations analysis, 2) cooperative tourism strategy for innovative rural tourism entrepreneurship, 3) management strategy recommendations, 4) implementation action plan (MacKlin, 2010).

Ad 1) Situations analysis include:

- local (rural) keys assets,
- opportunities for et development,
- overall business climate for innovative rural tourism entrepreneurship,
- specific interventions for improving climate for innovative rural tourism entrepreneurship.

Ad 2) The cooperative tourism strategy for innovative rural tourism entrepreneurship include:

- infrastructure,
- business climate,
- marketing,
- access to finance (business plan),
- access to new technology,
- human resources,

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- focus on product development (tourism destinations),
- accessibility of the tourism attractions.

Ad 3) Management strategy recommendations referring to Integrated Quality Management in the rural tourism destinations is depend of localization and resources. The different strategy are recommended depend on:

- rich agriculture area with tourism based on farmed and rural traditions,
- remote rural community developing rural tourism based on nature/environment,
- rural tourism destinations based on specific resources (costal, historic heritage, attractive location which include protected area),
- area with established rural traditions pursuing product diversification and quality offer.

Some of these tourist destinations has benefit of Leader program, other are taking relevant measures without involvement of Leader program (Towards Quality Rural Tourism, 1999, pp. 61–62).

Ad 4) Implementation action plan should be concise, balanced, clear and logical and Focus on facts and information from credible and reputable sources. The important is validation of all key information used in the plan. Preferably in the implementing plan are information referring to animals and nature, in order for the “rural idyll” to stand out clearly. Also quality and origin – labeled food products should be mentioned when the informants relate to innovation in rural tourism.

Several studies have pointed to tourism as a tool for local economic development in rural areas (Nielsen et al., 2010). In the rural tourism, the community perspective has been dominant, along with a focus on innovation, as well development of new tourism products, preferably based on natural, social resources found within the rural district (Nielsen et al., 2010).

It seems to be important a proposal of stronger linkage between the individual farm and their professional networks, refereeing to rural tourism entrepreneurship.

### 7. STRATEGIES FOR INNOVATIVE RURAL TOURISM

Rural tourism strategies in various countries have in common that they are a major growth areas that can be used to boost local communities, and aid the seasonal and geographic spread of tourism. Entrepreneurship in rural tourism similar like almost all like all successful businesses (and many successful regions) develop special strategies. Sustainable rural tourism strategies should reconcile competing demands to avoid wasteful investment and duplication of effort as well seek out niche markets where special success can be achieved. These strategies should refer to the following features (Stange & Brown, 2005):

- an ongoing dialogue between government, tourism business communities and other stakeholders about the future of the area and tourism,
- a guide for encouraging infrastructural investment in transport, public services marketing and information,
- a new entrants can be encouraged,
- a protection for the special scenic, historic and cultural heritage,

- Nature Conservation, the Arts and Cultural Activities can be drawn into the strategy – making process,
- tourism businesses which can invest for the long term should gain in security (because they develop in more stable environment),
- educational process should bring new skills and new flexibility and can allow for a better consideration of the costs and benefits of alternative types of tourism businesses.

The rural business usually are small and are unable to afford effective marketing or training. So, the strategy – making process can be used to encourage future cooperation in marketing and training between businesses and between communities. This can be helpful for seeking the niche market (Lane, 2005, p. 14).

Entrepreneurial participation in the tourism industry has the potential for providing greater benefits to the local population. Indeed, local entrepreneurial involvement in the tourism industry, both in the formal and informal sectors, is pertinent to development as defined by balanced or quality growth for the local population that comes about as a result of greater economic wealth, as well as greater self-reliance, self-confidence, and an increased sense of well-being. (Neblett & Milford, 2002).

Investments in rural tourism often make an indigenous entrepreneur – an indigene person who shows practical creativity and managerial ability in effectively combining resources and opportunities in an effort to provide produce, goods and services appropriate to the needs of the local community, and at the same time generating sufficient income to help both themselves, their family and the community in general.

Entrepreneurship in rural tourism *does not only depend* from business management or venture capital; rather, the main factor validity lies in directing resources (financial and physical) in new ways for the generation of profit (Neblett & Milford, 2002). Gaining an understanding of entrepreneurs and their activities has important implications for policymaking particularly as entrepreneurs continue to aid the development process by employing both human and physical resources in increasingly valuable ways. Entrepreneurship is an important variable in rural area development. The strengthening of local and regional management skills, technology and entrepreneurship in all the sectors was identified as an important part of the strategy for economic revitalization. In recognizing the government's role in developing higher levels of entrepreneurship at small, medium, and large-scale levels, there was general consensus that *among other things* are important, that Government:

- provide adequate infrastructure and other supporting services, undertake programs,
- to improve the quality of human capital,
- ensure the adequate mobilization and availability of venture capital, especially equity capital,

In considering the stages of development of the rural tourist destination suggested that locals tend to have entrepreneurial involvement in the tourist industry at the exploration, involvement, and decline stages of the tourism area. Researchers have been seeking explanations as to why

some local people become entrepreneurs. Typical explanations include: 1) genetic inheritance, 2) religious values, 3) personality needs, 4) geographical climate, 5) status of group in community, and 6) family structure (Neblett & Milford, 2002).

It should be emphasized the need to understand of fact that, the development of rural tourism are interested in a number of very different social groups. Single region or municipality provides for a comprehensive system of elements and relationships, where tourism is one of its components. Therefore, there is need for a broader understanding of its development and skillful insertion into the development of the whole region without prejudice to other departments, for example, some investment interest may be contrary to the principles and priorities of environmental protection. Tourism management requires a multidisciplinary approach (Komppula in: Lassila, 2004).

There are some international programs that include the funds for the rural tourism for example SAPARD, LEADER or RDPE. SAPARD programme (The EU's Sapard, 1999) is creating and maintaining jobs (through the development of rural infrastructure and diversification of economic activities in rural areas) – largely focused on supporting the development of tourism and business indirectly involved in tourism. Under the measure “Diversification of economic activities in rural areas” is scheduled the following support areas (Komppula in: Lassila, 2004): – Creating additional sources of income on farms, – The creation of jobs in rural areas, – Public tourism infrastructure in rural areas.

LEADER program as well can take action to increase the attractiveness of rural areas (Nielsen & Aggaard Thuesen, 2012, see: The rural development programme for England 2007–2013, 2007). The RDPE Leader Programme is a European Union rural funding approach, with grant money available from late 2008–2013. LEADER grants are available to farmers, foresters, rural businesses (Getting funding – leader, 2013; see more: Funding Rural Development Programme for England, 2013).

## 8. RESULTS

There is a growing recognition by most countries of the economic vulnerability of the rural sector due to its single industry base. This reliance on a sole industry means that rural communities are highly susceptible to economic and environmental fluctuations, and their economic well-being can be extremely unstable. Tourism is recognised as a potential basic industry that can provide local employment opportunities and revenue generation. The flow-on effects of tourist expenditure and improvements in services,

facilities and infrastructure that may benefit the local community. Tourism is therefore a major contributor to the economy in many rural areas. Tourism forms are crucial link with regional and national economics and new growing importance. Rural tourism has a great potential and it is expected to increase significantly in the next five or ten years (Fotiadis, 2010).

Key finding of studies in the field of economy and tourism emphasized that farming and tourism are independent and intertwined with the wider rural economy. It pointed out that tourism is dependent on access to a landscape heavily influenced by farming but that tourism is a powerful economic force in rural areas and frequently worth more to local economics in GDP terms than the farming. It should be noted that *Strategic Planning* can be treated in rural tourism entrepreneurship like some kind of innovation, focuses on improving visitor satisfactions, while seeking to improve the local economy, the environment and quality of life in the local communities. The increasing environmental awareness of the population in general and the targets for a viable and ever profitable tourist development are considered to be the primary promotional factors of rural tourism. The countryside has an earning potential, which goes way beyond. Its use for production of food. It is “the base” of rural tourism and the key comparative advantage for the rural economy.

It seems to that starting point on the long road to the recommendations of evidence-based policy recognizes the need to understand the dynamics of innovation – in rural tourism. Of course, the challenge is to find ways to grow their business and actually create jobs, help ensure household income.

Innovation is therefore dependent on economic as well as social changes in internal and external factors. Internal factors are: disagreements and structural changes in markets and industries – or even within the individual company. External factors have to do with changes in demography, changes in moods and perception related to the products/brands and the meaning ascribed to them by the public/the consumers, and finally the possible creation of new skills and knowledge.

Still, it is worth investing in the development of rural tourism, especially through the promotion of product and organizational innovation. Every successful new agro-tourism enterprise contributes to improved quality of life for the provider(s), better town-countryside relations and a positive contribution to the package of offers available within a local, rural area.

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