



THE ROLE OF AGROTOURISM IN REVITALIZING RURAL ECONOMIES: A ROMANIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: Agrotourism is an alternative form of rural tourism that integrates traditional agricultural activities with tourism services, significantly contributing to the diversification of the rural economy. This article examines the implications of agrotourism for the sustainable development of rural areas in Romania, focusing on the three fundamental pillars of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental. In the face of growing challenges in the Romanian rural environment—such as depopulation, population aging, and declining agricultural income—agrotourism emerges as a viable solution for the economic revitalization of these regions. By harnessing local traditions, natural landscapes, authentic gastronomy, and the unique hospitality of Romanian villages, agrotourism contributes not only to the diversification of the local economy but also to the preservation of cultural identity.

• **Introduction**

Rural mountain areas are regions with remarkable natural, cultural, and economic potential, yet they also face a series of specific vulnerabilities. Geographical isolation, limited access to infrastructure, depopulation, and pressure on natural resources are just some of the challenges these regions encounter. However, through integrated policies, the valorization of local resources, and support for sustainable initiatives, rural mountain areas can become examples of balanced development. This paper analyzes the tension between vulnerability and sustainable growth in the context of these fragile yet opportunity-rich territories.

• **Material and method**

Using a mixed-methods approach—including documentary analysis, interviews with local stakeholders, and surveys conducted among both tourists and hosts—the study highlights the multiple benefits of agrotourism: additional income for rural households, preservation of cultural and natural heritage, and the reduction of rural depopulation. At the same time, the paper addresses key challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, seasonality of activities, and the need for coherent public policies.

• **Results and discussions**

The results suggest that agrotourism holds strong potential for revitalizing rural areas, provided it is integrated into a long-term sustainable development strategy.

Transforming households into tourist accommodation units, offering authentic experiences, and promoting local products allow rural communities to attract visitors and generate alternative income.

From a Romanian perspective, the development of agrotourism requires institutional support, adequate infrastructure, and the training of human resources, but it represents an essential step toward a sustainable and resilient rural economy.

- ❑ **Agrotourism leverages local resources** – traditions, landscapes, and regional products become attractive to tourists.
- ❑ **Diversifying the rural economy** through agrotourism provides additional income for households and reduces reliance on agriculture.
- ❑ **Preservation of cultural identity** is supported by promoting local customs, crafts, and gastronomy.
- ❑ **Developing rural infrastructure** is essential to make areas accessible and appealing to visitors.
- ❑ **Institutional support and public policies** can stimulate investment and training in rural tourism.
- ❑ **Creating local jobs** helps reduce migration and encourages young people to remain in rural communities.
- ❑ **Agrotourism promotes sustainability** by using the community's natural and social resources responsibly.
- ❑ **Integrating tourism into rural development strategies** contributes to the revitalization of areas affected by poverty and depopulation.

• **Conclusions**

In conclusion, agrotourism has a vital role in revitalizing the rural economy by offering households the opportunity to diversify their sources of income and to sustainably capitalize on local resources—natural, cultural, and gastronomic. By promoting an authentic, responsible form of tourism that is integrated into rural life, agrotourism contributes not only to reducing migration and preserving local identity, but also to strengthening social cohesion and protecting the environment.