

# MANAGEMENT IN RURAL AREAS

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# MANAGEMENT IN RURAL AREAS

## ABSTRACT

Croatia has been seeking to achieve pre-war results in tourism since its independence. Rural tourism in Croatia based on family farms faces a number of problems: legal foundations, the involvement of local communities, inadequate entrepreneur support etc. The political will for development exists, but there is a lack of willingness and the ability to get things started, which results in the closure of family farms that cannot cope simultaneously with agriculture and tourism. The main subject of this research is the implementation of tourism in rural areas in order to raise the quality of life and keep the young population in rural areas.

Arriving guests certainly want a new type of tourism: peace, clean environment, cultural intangible and tangible treasures, all without the noise and stress; and Croatia can definitely offer this, both in coastal or inland areas along with its traditional food and drinks.

The destination connection is not satisfactory. There is also an evident lack of legislation and regional spatial development plans for sustainable tourism which is a prerequisite for successful tourism. With these presumptions accepted, Croatian tourism would become distinctive and inland and coastal branches of tourism could complement each other so that the customer can spend his or her vacation both in the continental and the maritime part of the country, getting to know our culture and enjoying the traditional cuisine.

**Keywords:** Strategy, continental tourism, agriculture, regions, intangible and tangible goods, destinations

## 1. Introduction

For the purposes of this article, secondary information research has been made, including the information available on the Internet and contemporary literature about rural areas, problems and means of solving them, as well as a review of the present situation in countries which are members of the European Union and other countries. Better understanding of the problem of rural areas requires screening

of the current situation in Croatia and comparison with other European countries' attempts of dealing with the forementioned problem.

This article will make several strategic assumptions which might affect the development of rural areas in Croatia.

Tourism in Croatia is derived from tourism activities that take place at the seaside and it is the main industry, which is now the basis for tourism

in Croatia. The guests come to Croatia mostly because of the clear sea and the indigenous environment, especially on the islands. Thus it is necessary to take certain measures to avoid the devastation of the coast by overuse of concrete since it is evident that the guests come for the indigenous nature and everything that constitutes the tradition of living by the sea. Croatia should remain in this state not only because it will preserve the cultural identity of living by the sea, but also because the guests come for the beautiful nature that Croatia abounds in, especially at the seaside.

Of course, tourism itself is not sufficient without the other activities that will entertain the guests and allow them to spend their holidays in an active way so that they remember that holiday for a long time.

Croatian tourism as a strategic sector can not be based on maritime tourism that lasts for three months but should define the elements that will allow the extension of the pre-season and post-season. In order to include the whole territory of Croatia in tourism, the best alternative is to include both the rural and continental tourism in the Croatian tourist offer.

On the one hand, as an important resource for sustainable tourism, as well as for economic and social development, rural tourism encounters numerous marketing, managerial and economic difficulties in its development. On the other hand, there is a great demand for this type of tourism.

The development strategy should be implementing appropriate management models in this sensitive area, making agri-tourism household networking necessary as well as networking with other stakeholders wishing to participate in the development of rural tourism.

## **2. Theoretical frame**

The research of available secondary information and the use of historical and comparative methods are made in order to ascertain the assumptions of revitalizing rural areas. The example of European countries shows a historical review of the occurrence of crisis in rural areas beginning with emigration from those areas which resulted in loss of income that supported the rural areas.

Theoreticians are not single-minded about the development of tourism in rural areas; they lack a unanimous stand on a common definition of rural tourism, but are unanimous in the stand that the rural area revitalization is necessary only through sustainable development and that rural policy needs to be led with the goal of implementing tourism in rural areas as a form of sustainable development.

The objective of this research is to produce several methods of revitalizing rural areas in Croatia based on the available information, but also to compare the information and determine issues arising in the European countries' policies and their positive aspects in order to implement tourism in the rural area as an aid in revitalizing the area and making sure that the domicile population stays, especially the younger ones.

## **3. The European Union and rural area development policies**

Social and economic forces that operate globally determine not only the appearance but also the shape of the rural landscape and the manner of its evaluation and use (Butler, Hall, Jenkins, 1998). Since the 1970s, the process of economic restructuring and the crisis of agricultural production across Europe and the U.S. have threatened the economic potential of rural areas. This process has led to the loss of jobs and the closure of rural production facilities which resulted in the reduced number of farmers.

The reduction in the number of jobs and the loss of agricultural product placement possibilities has had a negative impact on the restructuring of the ownership structure in agricultural enterprises which has led to many of them abandoning primary production and searching for other sources of income, and even emigration.

Economic decisions regarding rural areas have been made in distant cities, which have also affected the development of rural areas – the 'top down' policies did not include rural area regional policies or 'bottom up' policies. These policies therefore resulted in the decline of the development potential in rural areas, and thereby reduced the traditional development strategies. Aware of the facts which had a negative impact on rural area development, the European Union attempts to stop the rural area emigration and has made a great effort through its

agricultural policies to reverse the trend and prioritize rural development. The policies in question include regional development policies, rural tourism and other policies, which encourage the youth to stay or return to the rural areas.

Some European countries such as France, the Netherlands and Sweden, have years of experience in the field of rural development, but most other European countries started giving more attention to the rural areas because of the initiatives and programs of the European Union.

According to Juen, the differences in the cultural and social context of the region affect the selection of their strategies, which can be classified into two main groups:

- a) Introvert strategy - the strategy of revitalizing rural areas based on their internal capabilities and strengths, and
- b) Strategies focused on the import of resources necessary for the development of the primary and tertiary sectors and improvement of the overall quality of the products in the region (Veer, Tuunter, 2005).

The territory of the European Union consists of about 80% of the rural areas with about 25% of the total population (Veer, Tuunter, 2005). It is also very important to note that the initiatives for the development of rural areas are now coming from the region itself and not from the cities that were not aware of the situation in the rural areas. Pursuant to the above mentioned, one of the solutions offered is the developmental model IRQ - Integrated Rural Quality (Krajinović, Čičin-Šain, Predovan, 2011). This model is implemented by the European Union with its Directive IRQ, and should serve as a foundation and model development of tourist destinations. The model is based on the experience of 15 cases of successful rural tourism destinations in Europe. IRQ will not completely solve these problems, because they are systemic and are a very important part of economic and social life, regional development, legislation and more, but it can be viewed as a prerequisite of better development of the rural area.

In accordance with the new policy towards rural areas of the European Union, support is given not only to the farmers but also to other participants in the development and promotion of rural areas.

The document titled "Agenda", adopted in 1999, defines new areas of interest of the European Union,

primarily focused on the development of the entire economy of rural areas.

With the above mentioned documents, all measures of development are sublimated and reduced to a single legislation or second tier because the first is focused on direct support to farmers (reform of market support, the European Community, 2003)

The most important strategies of the Agenda are (Krajinović, Čičin-Šain, Predovan, 2011):

- The strategy of strengthening agriculture and forestry
- The strategy of raising the competitiveness of rural areas
- The strategy of maintaining and protecting nature and rural cultural heritage.

The specificity of rural tourism is the rural development of tourist products, which are produced by the combination of agriculture and its resources, climate and natural diversity, traditions of local people, indigenous cultural resources and other facilities such as hiking trails, bike paths, cultural, entertainment and sporting events, exhibitions and fairs, souvenirs, recreational facilities, tourist signs, landscaping roads etc. (Krajinović, Čičin-Šain, Predovan, 2011).

#### **4. Rural tourism in the context of the rural development policy**

Populations of Many European countries accept tourism as one of the strategies of rural area sustainable development and, thereby the local community development. Rural tourism is developing as an entrepreneurship activity based on attracting visitors to non-traditional tourist destinations. Visitor growth in rural areas increases the demand for tourist services, which leads to an increase in entrepreneurial activities in services and activities available for visitors, including accommodation services. If they are pleased with the rural area and the service given, it can be expected that the visitors shall return eventually, and even participate in voluntary marketing by transferring their experience through the 'word of mouth' system, which will generate additional demand in the rural area.

The specificity of rural areas in Croatia is that the agricultural lands are fragmented and there is no

owner with 30 or more hectares. From the above mentioned, it is necessary to work on connecting with other owners to get a single successful unit. If rural tourism is to be implemented, it is necessary to offer indigenous agricultural products, as well as to cooperate with other manufacturers who are willing to engage in the rural tourism business, where this approach provides a synergistic effect.

Inclusion of family farms, local self-government units, tourist boards and tourist guides, charter companies etc. would successfully satisfy the ever-increasing demands of visitors and tourists. Specifically, modern tourists, as they are referred to nowadays, are eager to explore the culture, history and the living of the local population in the place where they stay.

According to Dr. Dragan Magaš, a professor at the University of Rijeka, the limit payload capacity of tourism is precisely the level of presence of tourists that creates a positive impact on the local population, environment, economy and tourists, and is sustainable in the future, which is a worthwhile concept (Magaš, 2000).

In order to minimize the negative impacts of tourism and maximize the positive effects, it is necessary to organize a high quality and professional management team that will manage the development process.

Tourism relies on the goodwill and cooperation of the local population because they are an integral part of the tourism product. Where development and planning are not in accordance with the local needs and opportunities, resistance and hostility can ruin the overall sector process.

## **5. Rural tourism as a means of developing the tourist market**

Today's tourist market is looking for new forms of spending free time. Mass tourism dominated by the sun and the sea has led to saturation, both in tourism demand and when it comes to offering new things. Tourists are looking for new places and ways to spend their holidays guided by the desire to learn about the native communities, local gastronomy, culture, authentic values and the quest for a way of life as lived by our ancestors.

One of the answers could be rural development and

Croatia should certainly increase its competitiveness and comparative advantage valorizing the rural area as a tourist destination.

By developing rural tourism, a tourist country contributes to further development of adjacent areas and enables their own tourist valorization. The evaluation of rural tourism of passive areas contributes not only to the development of these regions, but also to the preservation of the natural, cultural and historical heritage; improves the quality of life and most importantly enables employment and prevents migration from rural areas. A prerequisite for young people to stay in a rural area is economic activity: in this case, rural tourism that will provide young people with a chance to stay and receive adequate education in rural areas.

The problem that is related to difficulties in the implementation of rural tourism is primarily the weak economic strength of family farms (OPG) where it is very difficult or almost impossible to work in both agriculture and tourism. It is therefore necessary to consider rural tourism as a separate branch which will develop family farms with the involvement of the local population on the basis of agreements, contracts and the like. This primarily refers to the subcontractors who will offer their agricultural products and accommodate guests who are eager to actively participate in daily farm chores. In addition, there is the problem of inadequate financial incentives and lack of recognition of rural tourism as a form of tourism which adds value to the tourist board.

Based on everything mentioned above, the whole problem lies in the inadequate way of managing the development of rural areas that should increase economic activity and keep young people in rural areas.

In Croatia, only the Istria region can be pointed out as a region which began the valorization of rural areas with significant subsidies and incentives of the regional public sector and in the hinterland of the strongest tourist destinations in Croatia.

Unfortunately most of the Istrian farmhouses are on the verge of closure because they operate on the edge of economic viability due to the inability to manage two parallel economic sources: agricultural production and rural tourism.

This article aims to highlight one of the key issues, and that is the strategic management of the devel-

opment of rural tourism in the region. According to the available data by the Istria Tourist Board from 2010, the status of rural tourism in Istria County is evident, and that is actually a small display of the level of rural tourism in the whole of Croatia. According to the data, rural tourism is the occupation of only about 200 households.

The conclusions presented in the article were adopted on the basis of a comparative analysis of Croatia with other tourism oriented countries, and an analysis of the problems which the developed countries encountered in the stages of development of rural tourism. The conclusions of the Istrian region were adopted from a survey of households engaged in rural tourism. A possible solution is the IRQ development model, which was implemented in 15 successful rural tourist destinations in Europe (such as Austria, Germany, Italy, etc.).

Sustainable Development Strategies are as follows (Krajinović, Čičin-Šain, Predovan, 2011):

- The strategy of agricultural development that does not harm the environment
- The strategy of efficient use of water and energy
- Waste management strategy
- Green building strategies- the traditional way
- Marketing Strategy
- The strategy of establishing ecological transportation
- The strategy to preserve the cultural heritage
- Speech conservation Strategy
- The strategy of cooperation with local and regional governments.

## 6. Definitions of rural tourism

The definition of rural tourism has been the subject of many discussions, but a consensus has not been reached (Pearce, 1989; Bramwell, 1994; Seaton et al., 1994). The series of possible reasons include the following:

- Areas where rural tourism is active are hard to define because different countries use different definitions,
- Not all tourist activities in rural areas are necessarily 'rural', but can be 'urban' by its context, only

not by its location

- Different regions establish different forms of rural tourism and it is difficult to find a common denominator
- Rural areas are in the midst of complex reform processes as a result of global changes, the communication and telecommunication revolution which altered the market conditions and the demand for traditional products and services.

Rural areas are experiencing severe depopulation processes and there is an evident lack of immigration processes by retired people who could revitalize the rural area for specific products and services. The once clear distinction between rural and urban has been all but erased, which has led to urbanization, a long-distance product exchange and building of vacation houses (OECD, 1994).

Besides the term 'rural tourism,' there are many terms in use. There is an entire specter of circumstances leading to different concepts which ultimately separate their authors.

There are two types of definitions:

1. Nature tourism, rural tourism and agritourism (each of the mentioned categories is derivative of the former), based on the percentage of income distribution to the local population and to the entrepreneurs.
2. The difference is based on altering elements of the tourist offer.

Because of the forementioned in the second group, rural tourism exploits the situation when rural culture is the centerpiece of the tourist offer. Based on the primary component of the product, terms such as agritourism, green tourism, hunting tourism, adventure tourism, historical tourism, cultural tourism and others are used.

Tourist activities taking place in large tourist settlements, hotels, golf resorts etc. can hardly be incorporated into the rural tourism concept. Tourism in rural areas is specific in that it attempts to achieve close personal contact with the tourists and enable their participation in the local rural community's everyday life. It is very important to note the aim of consuming cultural, gastronomical and other elements through this form of tourism. If the authors' views are to be summarized, rural tourism could be defined as an area with a natural, forested environment where natural, economical and sociocultural

aspects such as tradition, local cooperation and interpersonal relations, based on small-scale economy with a 'friendly' treatment of the environment, combine to form sustainable development.

### **7. Rural tourism as a strategy of rural and regional development**

Tourism as an economic activity primarily represents a consumer activity. Most of the research is focused on the consumers, their needs, wishes and motivation. What attracts most of the consumers to rural areas is open space recreation, returning to 'good old times', simple way of life, gastronomy 'like in your grandmother's kitchen', tangible and intangible assets of rural areas etc.

The necessity of returning to one's roots and living a simple life with no stress or urban environment leads to an increased demand for rural areas (Kastenholtz, Davis, Paul, 1999).

The importance of rural tourism as a part of the tourist offer certainly depends on the resources of an individual country, infrastructure, market availability and competition.

Although rural tourism has less importance for the total tourism market, it is very significant for the development of rural areas and the return of the domicile young population. It is evident that tourism and its complementary entrepreneurship initiatives have become one of the most popular development strategies of the rural area (Lane, 1990; Clarke, 1981; Witt, 1987).

The assumptions favoring tourism as a development strategy of rural areas:

- rural tourism can exist with cooperation from local self-government and small and medium enterprises without the need for large companies and corporations
- rural tourism can be developed with relatively small capital and knowledge investment, resulting in decreasing the operating costs
- rural tourism opens possibilities for small and medium enterprises whose business would not otherwise be possible in the rural area, especially entrepreneurs offering accommodation services, shops, recreation objects and other infrastructure necessary for successful business in rural tourism

ism – existing farms generate secondary income (Wilson et al. 2001).

Tourism as a development strategy contributes to the rural area revitalization, decreases social tensions, encourages employment, expands existing farm businesses and generally enables sustainable regional development.

Rural tourism in the world is experiencing an increasing demand growth in the tourism market due to public support for the development of rural areas, which is typical for developed countries.

### **8. Rural tourism area product**

Location specific products can not offer a universal model of rural tourism product and destination development (Mathieson, Wall, 1982), but can certainly contribute to defining a basic frame for a better understanding of the rural tourism destination and product.

Butler's destination product life cycle theory (1980) had a pivotal role in defining the basic model for understanding the tourist destination and product. His flexible lifecycle model marks different phases in the evolution of the destination and the changes happening in it throughout its transition from one phase to another. The critical factors are: a change in the needs of the consumer, devastation of the natural environment and a change or the disappearance of the attractions that first brought tourists to the area. One of the major factors in the evolution of the destination is identification of potential consumers, adequate markets and modes to approach them. Understanding the rural tourists is necessary if their expectations are to be met.

For the tourist destinations to keep their competitiveness, they have to fulfill basic tourist needs – needs for accommodation and food. Along classic venues for accommodation, village and farm houses are often wanted. By including services in their portfolio, farm owners diversify their activities and raise the value of their product and estate services. Tourists that prefer such accommodation seek originality in diet, intimacy, participation in everyday tasks and forming friendships, which represents values almost forgotten in the modern age. Tangible and intangible assets of the destination affect the decision to visit it because tourists want to

see the surroundings in which the local people live (churches, parks, museums, customs, dialects etc).

The rural tourist destination as an integrated product is very fragile from an ecological, social and cultural aspect. Hence it requires a specific approach to its development aiming at achieving long-term sustainability.

**Table 1 Rural and urban areas, population and settlements according to OECD criteria**

Classification	OECD criteria					
	km <sup>2</sup>	%	Number of settlements	%	Number of residents	%
Rural areas*	51,872	91.6	6,001	88.7	2,110,988	47.6
Urban areas	4,731	8.4	763	11.3	2,326,472	52.4
Total	56,603	100	6,751	100	4,437,460	100

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2001

\* Includes both rural and urban areas

From Table 1 it is evident that Croatia has about 52,000 sq km of rural areas, which supports the fact that there are plenty of arguments for the implementation of tourism in rural areas. The rural area is very sensitive to cultural, natural or any other damage triggered by the development of tourism. During the valorization of rural tourism special care should be taken to protect nature, culture, water, etc., because in this way, the natural beauty and cultural heritage are preserved and can be adequately incorporated into the very offer. Special care should be taken because the historical aspect of the buildings and construction should only be allowed in respect of indigenous architecture; or a modern architectural solution should attempt to fit the accommodation capacities into the rural. If the order and the existing natural resources are violated, the tourism would not make sense because the tourists in a rural area look for untouched nature, peace, tranquility, hospitality and of course the indigenous environment and the answer to the question of how our ancestors lived.

The main characteristic of the Croatian rural policies is an attempt to stop the development lag in rural areas by using all of their resources.

Croatian policies follow the European Union's rural development policies with its development documents and acts. The objective is to keep the population in rural areas, equalize the quality of life in rural and urban areas, enable the return of the population from urban to rural areas, increase production competitiveness and thus create a larger income for the agricultural producers. Strategic objectives for Croatia's rural development are contained in the Development strategy of the Republic of Croatia 2008-2013:

1. increase in the competitiveness of the agricultural and the forest sector;
2. preservation, protection and sustainable use of the landscape, the cultural and natural heritage;
3. increase in the quality of life in rural areas and the expansion of the economic programmes;
4. increase in the effectiveness of the institutional environment.

Croatia gained access to the LEADER programme through the IPARD instrument. The LEADER consists of connecting nearby local communities into a partnership for rural development (LAG – Local Action Group) based on common characteristics, resources and interests, which will define, prepare and conduct a local development strategy.

Basic elements of LEADER implementation are determined in the IPARD programme for agriculture and rural development according to the EU regulations. Although the implementation act adoption was delayed (Protocol on implementing the measure 202 – preparation and implementation of local rural development strategies, or LEADER Protocol), which would determine the criteria and means of co-financing local action partnerships business expenditures, LEADER implementation in practice has had significant progress in Croatia.



Civil society organizations, especially the Croatian rural development network, have an important role in the promotion, explanation and advocacy of the LEADER approach. The Network organized the first Croatian rural development conference in 2006, which assembled representatives from all three sectors in Croatia, including the ministries responsible for rural development or its components. According to the IPARD programme determinants, the LAG area in Croatia consists of a rural area with a population of 5,000 to 150,000. The LAG can be comprimized by several neighbouring communities including towns with less than 25,000 inhabitants. A LAG territory is a distinct and recognizable economic, social and geographic unit and cannot overlap with other LAG territories.

The LAG is formed from representatives of three sectors (public, civil, economy), wherein the public sector has less than 50% of representatives. Experience shows that the group creation process begins with raising awareness about self value and area value. It needs to be done through careful implementation of techniques that can be used by motivated individuals and through assigning tasks that can be managed.

Local action groups enable not only IPARD implementation, but also possibilities of applying projects to other IPA components (regional cooperation, regional development and human potential development). The LAG selection for receiving IPARD aid will be conducted through predetermined procedures. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Rural Development is responsible for setting up the framework, and the IPARD agency for conducting procedures. By late 2010, over ten LAGs were registered in Croatia.

Rural area development measures have not been successful in practice. The LAGs have been formed, but their operation with the objective of rural area revitalization is not present. From the above, tourism as an economic activity is not mentioned at all, so this article can provide a contribution to the common attempt of rural area revitalization in Croatia.

## **9. National policy in the rural development function**

Tourism development in rural areas is the subject of discussion in many European countries with the goal of upgrading global, social and economic development of rural areas.

The following policies are used the most:

- administrative help which enables faster and easier access to necessary information
- legislative regulation adapted to a 'bottom up' approach
- professional training, educational workshops, adjusting the programs to the needs of tourist service providers
- taxation and finance adapted to aid the rural area and all stakeholders
- easier and cheaper loans, subventions and grants
- building the necessary infrastructure
- management marketing.

Most European countries don't have complete legislative regulations regarding tourism in rural areas. Exceptions are Italy and the United Kingdom. Italy regulated its agritourism in 1985 with Directive No 739, and implemented the new Agritourism Law in 2006 and a series of laws and rules regarding it. The United Kingdom regulated the rural area issues on the regional government level. Nearly all the European Union countries conduct entrepreneurial education for tourism development in the rural area. Education is continuous and takes place through tourism institutes, ministries of agriculture and tourism, open courses etc.

## **10. The strategy of implementation of modern architecture**

Figure 1 is an example of modern architecture that can adequately conform to the rural area. Of course each destination that wants to develop a rural area should bear in mind the construction of authentic houses and other premises that serve the purpose of rural tourism. Modern architecture can be implemented where there is a shortage of accommodation and a smaller space. This approach can solve the problem of increased housing with least infringement on the environment in which the facilities are located.

**Figure 1** Modern architecture in a rural area (Dalmatia, Istria)



Source: Available at: <http://ljubuski.net/13184-hercegovina-je-nova-istra-samo-ljudi-jos-nisu-prokuzili> (Accessed on: January 10, 2014)

The building in the picture can conform nicely into a space dominated by Dalmatian stone where there are not enough green areas such as pastures, meadows, forests, etc.

**Figure 2** Modern architecture in a rural area (Croatian Zagorje)



Source: Available at: <http://www.dnevno.hr/magazin/v-i-p-studio/80367-foto-bunga-bungakuce-pogledajte-luksuzne-vile-silvija-berlusconi.html> (Accessed on: January 10, 2014)

Figure 2 represents the solution of a business complex which serves the purpose of reception and accommodation of guests.

This building contributes to increasing the number of tourists because it is known that the Croatian Zagorje has fragmented agricultural land and one can not build in the traditional way due to limited space.

The rural area which will deal with rural tourism should base its food and drinks production on traditional methods of production without the use of pesticides and offer the guests only what is organically grown on farms. Pesticide-free production protects the land and the environment.

## 11. Conclusion

To understand the problems of rural tourism, (OPG) family farms in Croatia should consider a broader framework that consists of a number of factors such as laws, the involvement of local communities, etc. One should also consider the diversification of the Croatian territory from the aspect of population density. According to the Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Croatia from 2005, Croatia has 128 cities, 428 municipalities and 21 counties, including the capital, the City of Zagreb. Official Croatian statistics do not use the population size as a factor of determining rural from urban areas, but primarily use political criteria. According to the OECD criterion, which classifies all communities under 10,000 people as predominantly rural, Croatia is a dominantly rural country.

The new European policy on the revitalization of rural areas has a significant budget for rural areas contained in the Agenda and LEADER programmes which are designed to advocate the regional development of rural areas. The European Commission clearly stated its intent to implement tourism in rural areas through the forementioned programmes.

Considering that every European Union member state creates its own rural development programme, Croatia has good possibilities here because it is a highly rural country. It can also use the negative and the positive examples which resulted in the leaving of the rural area or developing it in a sustainable manner.

Based on the information, it is evident that Croatia needs to access revitalization of its rural areas and make it a primary goal of policies to develop rural areas and, on the basis of the strategies mentioned,

implement tourism in those areas.

Rural tourism in Croatia, particularly in Istria as the region that started this type of tourism, faces a number of problems; legal foundations, undefined jurisdiction of the ministries (agriculture, tourism, regional development or some other) to the problems at the local and regional level of local and regional governments and local and regional tourist boards.

The political will exists, but not the willingness to get things started, which results in the closure of family farms that could not cope simultaneously with agriculture and tourism.

Guests arriving in Croatia could book an arrangement offering seaside accommodation along with the rural, thus extending the tourist season and revitalizing rural areas. Destination connections can be done through charter flights which are fast and efficient and keep the guests well entertained without major time losses.

Strategic development should be seen in the context of the overall development of rural areas. Since sustainable rural tourism reduces the harm to the environment to a minimum level and can be a promoter of environmental protection (concerned with ecology, culture, sport), there should be a compromise between all factors in rural tourism: the public administration, the owners of family farms, tourism entrepreneurs, tourist offices and all other institutions involved in the development of rural areas in any way.

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## MENADŽMENT U RURALNOM PODRUČJU

### SAŽETAK

Hrvatska od svoje samostalnosti nastoji postići turističke rezultate koje je imala prije rata. S obzirom na to da se deklarirala kao turistička destinacija i da joj je turizam strateško opredjeljenje, trebala bi iskoristiti sve svoje komparativne prednosti i implementirati turizam i u ruralna područja kako bi imala jedinstvenu ponudu od kontinentalnoga do priobalnoga dijela. Glavni je cilj istraživanja ovoga rada uvođenje turizma u ruralno područje te na taj način podizanje kvalitete života i zadržavanje mladoga domicilnog stanovništva u ruralnom području.

Problematika ruralnog turizma na obiteljskim poljoprivrednim gospodarstvima uključuje niz čimbenika kao što su zakoni, spremnost uključivanja lokalne zajednice, nedovoljna podrška za poduzetnike itd. Politička volja za razvoj postoji, no nedostaje spremnosti i sposobnosti za konkretne poteze što rezultira zatvaranjem obiteljskih poljoprivrednih gospodarstava koja se ne mogu nositi s paralelnim poslom vođenja poljoprivrede i turizma.

Gosti žele turizam koji uključuje mir, čist okoliš, kulturna nematerijalna i materijalna blaga. Priobalni i kontinentalni dijelovi Hrvatske svakako to mogu ponuditi, uz tradicionalna jela i pića.

Povezanost destinacija nije zadovoljavajuća. Nedostaju regionalni prostorni planovi razvoja održivoga turizma (koji su njegov preduvjet) te zakonska regulativa. Kada bi se prihvatile navedene pretpostavke, hrvatski bi turizam bio prepoznatljiv te bi gost, za vrijeme godišnjega odmora u kontinentalnom i priobalnom području, upoznao kulturu i uživao u tradicionalnoj kuhinji.

**Ključne riječi:** strategija, kontinentalni turizam, poljoprivreda, regije, nematerijalna i materijalna blaga, destinacije