

The Importance of Tourism in Rural Development in Spain and Germany

Juan Carlos Maroto-Martos, Andreas Voth and Aida Pinos-Navarrete

Abstract The objective of this chapter is to analyse the importance of tourism in rural development in Spain and Germany, focusing in particular on the regions of Andalusia and North Rhine-Westphalia, and the impact of the LEADER programme over almost three decades since its first implementation. We present some of the main conceptual and methodological obstacles that have complicated an in-depth assessment of this complex programme, which has been implemented to varying degrees across a very diverse rural Europe. Although for many years rural tourism has been one of the most strongly supported activities by LEADER and its LAGs, it could be argued that it has not lived up to its initial expectations for promoting rural development across large areas of Europe. Today, the main efforts in support of rural tourism are centred on improving the quality of the accommodation on offer and on using ICT to drive the recovery, conservation, management and promotion of the vast natural and cultural heritage in the rural areas with greatest difficulties.

Keywords Rural development · Rural tourism · LEADER · Europe · Andalusia · North Rhine-Westphalia

The Difficulties in Defining/Characterizing Rural Tourism and the Reasons Behind Its Growth

In this section we will try to explain why it has been difficult to establish a single definition of rural tourism that is generally accepted throughout Europe, the factors that have led to the emergence of various different models of rural tourism rather

J. C. Maroto-Martos (✉) · A. Pinos-Navarrete
Department of Human Geography, University of Granada, Granada, Spain
e-mail: jcmarto@ugr.es

A. Pinos-Navarrete
e-mail: apnavarrete@ugr.es

A. Voth
Department of Geography, University of Aachen, Aachen, Germany
e-mail: andreas.voth@geo.rwth-aachen.de

than one single standard and the reasons why public administrations have chosen to back this part of the tourism sector.

Difficulties in Defining/Characterizing Rural Tourist

Rural tourism has many possible definitions, as has the broader concept of “rural areas”. There are many diverse factors that have prevented a single generally accepted definition of “rural tourism” from becoming established across Europe. The fact that rural areas across the continent have such different characteristics has made it difficult to reach a common single definition about what “rural” actually means (OECD 1994, 2010, 2012). There is also the fact that the tourists who visit these areas are looking for different things and this has led to the appearance of similar or related concepts that exacerbate the confusion. From a research perspective, this question is complicated by the huge diversity of rural tourism products on offer, the contrasting academic approaches that focus on the different dimensions of this reality and the general lack of official statistical sources to enable researchers to make comparative analyses (Pulido 2008; Crosby 2009). There are therefore conceptual, methodological and information source problems.

Broader definitions take into account the different reasons that cause people to visit country areas. In addition to agritourism, these also include an interest in rural culture and other activities that are not related directly to agriculture (Rein and Schuler 2012). Tourism in rural areas is associated with an enormous range of different activities which have given rise to concepts that are widely and incorrectly used as synonyms, such as: agritourism, nature tourism, ecotourism and others related to the wide range of activities that are carried out in these areas such as hunting, fishing, hiking, horse-riding, sightseeing or visiting historical heritage sites and monuments, festivities, gastronomy and so on (Travel and Tourism Analyst 1999).

The complexity of this subject has led public administrations to try to define it by adapting the concept of tourism used by the World Tourism Organization (WTO). Although this option involves a very reductionist definition of what is in fact a very rich, broad concept, it does at least enable it to be studied statistically and allows us to analyse the economic dimension of rural tourism, the aspect that most interests national governments. The WTO defines rural tourism as an activity in which people travel from and remain temporarily outside their normal place of residence to stay in rural areas (classified by EUROSTAT according to the criteria of population density per km² put forward by the OECD), for a consecutive period of less than one year and more than 24 h (implying at least a one-night stay) for reasons of pleasure, business or others.

The introduction and consolidation of rural tourism in Europe occurred at different times in different regions. As Cànoves (2005) points out, at the beginning of the twentieth century, in both central (Tyrol) and northern Europe (the English countryside) tourists began to be accommodated in “Chambre d’hôtes” and “Bed and Breakfasts”. In most regions, however, even in the 1960s rural tourism remained a

very exceptional phenomenon with a very limited set of products on offer and centred above all on accommodation.

In the case of Spain, the available studies indicate that rural tourism began several decades later than in the rest of Europe. Although at the end of the 1960s, the Spanish authorities (the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture) promoted a “Programme for Holidays in Farmhouses” (Programa de Vacaciones en Casas de Labranza), which led to an increase in the number of rural lodgings on offer (Boté 1979) and was positively viewed by some (Carazo 1982), the lack of standardized regulations and indeed of demand meant that the programme did not come up to initial expectations in the sense of improving the living conditions of the rural population in Spain.

The 1970s was a period of rapid expansion in rural tourism in Benelux, Italy and France, in terms of both supply and demand. In the most developed countries in Europe, the process of urbanization and rural emigration to the cities took place more gradually than in other less industrialized nations. This allowed the authorities to realize that there was a need to diversify the economy in rural areas due to the crisis affecting traditional agriculture and livestock models. Amongst other aspects, there was also a desire to return to the countryside and to escape at least for a few days to a less artificial area with a better-quality environment. In the peripheral Mediterranean countries, the emigration from the country to the cities that resulted from the urbanization of society took place later than in other countries and in a more dramatic, more intense way giving rise to what became known as the “rural exodus”.

In short, while in the centre and north of Europe the expansion of rural tourism took place between the 1960s and 1980s, a time of crisis in traditional farming, Mediterranean countries had to wait until the 1990s. In Eastern Europe rural tourism emerged even later in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

According to Fotiadis (2009), it is very difficult to characterize rural tourism in Europe, although at least two different models can be identified. The first model refers to what is generally known as “agritourism”, in which tourists stay on farms and can take part in the day-to-day activities of the people who live there, such as helping out in the fields or with the animals and/or in the forest. This is the main option available in Central European countries such as Germany, Holland and Austria. The other model is based on “Bed and Breakfast”, either in guesthouses in villages or by renting out rooms in the owner’s house. This is the dominant model in Spain, France and Italy.

Reasons that Have Encouraged the Growth in Rural Tourism

Those who have studied this question agree that rural tourism has been, remains and will continue to be an important engine for socioeconomic and environmental development, which complements other activities (agriculture, livestock farming, fishing, handicrafts, family industries, small shops, etc.), on which rural economies and societies are traditionally based (Crosby 1993, 2009; Hall 2004; Cànoves et al.

2005; Cawley and Gillmor 2008; Solsona-Monzonis 2014; Varisco 2016; Sanagustín et al. 2018).

The fact that many regions expect tourism to be a source of income and jobs has caused the different public administrations to set up a range of incentive programs aimed at promoting it.

Compared with the classical city destinations popular with cultural tourism, interest in the tourism potential of rural spaces emerged relatively late in response to recent changes in farming and demographic structures and as a result of modern trends towards the preservation of rural culture and the reinforcement of regional and local identity (Steinecke 2007).

The importance of the agriculture sector in the European economy and as a source of labour has declined steadily since the widespread transformations affecting most of the countryside that began in the 1950s. This explains the need to devise strategies to find new functions that can mitigate the consequences of these profound changes. In 1988 the European Commission issued a report entitled “The Future of the Rural World”, which stated that “Agriculture’s share of employment in the Community of Twelve fell from 11.2% in 1975 to 8.4% in 1985. Out of a total of 166 regions in the Community there are now only 10 (in Greece, Italy and Spain) in which farming still accounts for 30% of employment generally. By contrast, there are 118 regions in which less than one in 10 of all workers are farmers or farmworkers. In the same way, farming’s contribution to GDP in the Community of Twelve is now down to 3.4%, from 5.4% in 1970. There are only 17 regions (about 10% of the total) in which agriculture accounts for more than 10% of the regional product” (EEC 1988, p. 17).

The situation in large areas of rural Europe was becoming so serious that it was decided that specific measures aimed at promoting development should be taken so as to diversify the production structures and the functions of part of the rural world. These measures included the promotion of rural tourism. One of the various European documents that stressed the role that tourism could play in the necessary diversification of rural areas in decline was “Community Action within the Field of Tourism” (Official Journal of the European Communities n° C 10 of 1986). Other important publications included “Community Action to Promote Rural Tourism” issued by the European Commission (COM90/438) and the “Opinion on a policy for the development of rural tourism in the regions of the EU” issued by the Committee of the Regions in 1995 (Official Journal of the European Communities n° C210/99).

In this way, a range of different community initiatives and programmes aimed at encouraging tourism projects in the most marginal areas of rural Europe emerged (Target regions 1 and 5b). The funding for these initiatives was provided through the various structural funds: EAGF, ERDF and ESF. The first, EAGF, viewed tourism as a means of diversifying the sources of finance/income for farmers and emphasized the need to increase the value of farm produce as a way of halting the rural exodus and preserving the environment. For its part, The European Regional Development Fund (FEDER) promoted rural tourism by encouraging investments in different infrastructures in the European regions. One of the most important European projects was the LEADER (*Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l’Economie Rurale*) programme, which, initially in particular, made rural tourism a high priority in its plans

for promoting rural development. Finally, the European Social Fund (ESF) has indirectly boosted rural tourism with its investments aimed at ensuring social inclusion and good governance in Europe.

There was a growing conviction that action had to be taken to combat emigration from rural areas, largely amongst people of working and reproductive age, which was causing a progressive ageing of the population. This led to a decrease in economic activity which in turn led to a fall in rural income and a decline in the quantity and quality of the infrastructures and services on offer in these areas. The people who decided to remain in these rural areas soon realized that they had fewer opportunities to improve their future compared to those living in towns and cities, leading to a feeling, amongst some groups, that they were being treated as second-class citizens.

During this period an increasing, more widespread awareness of the need for environmental sustainability arose. It is generally accepted that the “Our Common Future” report coordinated by Gro Harlem Brundtland (1987) helped generalize the idea of “sustainable development” as an essential objective of government policy. This concept was a clear criticism of industrial, urban society. Similarly, the Green Paper “Towards a new culture for urban mobility” (COM 2007/551 final)¹ analysed the mobility conditions of people living inside and outside cities. The environmental problems affecting cities led growing numbers of city dwellers to long for greater contact with nature and many discovered that rural holidays of different lengths could provide a temporary escape from their everyday living conditions.

The identification of this problem and pressure from society resulted in various initiatives such as the Charter for Sustainable Tourism signed in Lanzarote in 1995,² the Commission Communication on basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism (2003)³ and, more specifically, the inclusion in LEADER community initiatives of sustainability criteria in farming production, so as to ensure that the end products of LEADER projects were not only of high quality but also healthy. In this context the maintenance of landscapes and cultural resources in rural areas was considered a key issue for promoting sustainable tourism in rural areas of Europe, which among other measures was viewed as a means of diversifying income for the rural population.

In short, the objective was to encourage a return, albeit temporary, to rural areas of high environmental quality, with authentic traditions. The extolling of rural traditions and local peculiarities offered a means of differentiating these areas within the tourism market. Changes in the framework on both the supply and demand sides set new challenges for tourism destinations in rural areas, but also opened up new perspectives. These are dependent on specific strengths and weaknesses, which must be assessed differently for each region. Rein and Schuler (2012) cited some of these factors that must be taken into account in rural tourism destinations:

¹<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52007DC0551>.

²<https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/unwtodeclarations.1995.21.15.1>.

³[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/com/com_com\(2003\)0716_/com_com\(2003\)0716_es.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/com/com_com(2003)0716_/com_com(2003)0716_es.pdf).

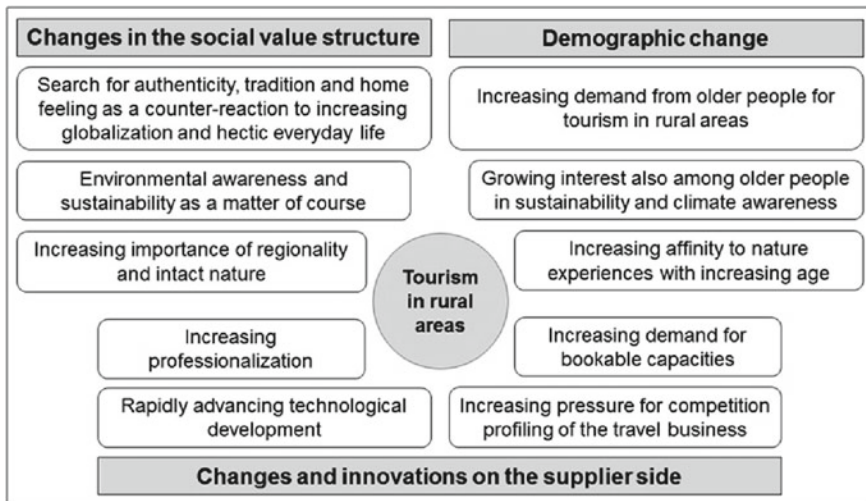


Fig. 9.1 Factors favouring tourism in rural areas. *Source* after BMWi (2014) p. 9, adapted

The strengths: peace and quiet, clean environment, natural landscapes, well preserved village character, many opportunities for landscape-related leisure activities, less traffic, a lower risk of accidents for children, a high variety of animals, the “mentality” of the people, local customs and festivals, and interesting locations for events.

The weaknesses: often poor accessibility, poor public transport links, a limited range of tourist attractions and activities, few spectacular attractions, few bad weather alternatives, a relatively limited cultural offer, in some cases a limited network of hiking and biking trails, low willingness to offer services and sometimes rejection of foreign visitors.

Several changes in the general social and economic situation are affecting tourism development in rural areas (Fig. 9.1).

In short, rural tourism is considered as an activity that should be promoted although when doing so it is essential to make investments that lead to growth and development. Right from the beginning the EU’s LEADER initiative has made a strong commitment to this sector, as we will now go on to see.

The Role of Tourism Projects in the LEADER Programme. Case Studies of the Regions of Andalusia (Spain) and North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) (Germany)

In this section we will try to answer the following question: How important has rural tourism been in the evolution of the EU rural development initiative LEADER



Fig. 9.2 Map: Spain—Andalusia and Map: Germany—North Rhine-Westphalia. *Source* The European Network for Rural Development. Modified

(1991–2013) in Andalusia (Spain)⁴ and in North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)⁵? (Fig. 9.2).

The Role of Tourism Projects in the Evolution of LEADER: The Case of Andalusia (Spain)

The LEADER programme was first applied in Spain at the beginning of the 1990s with LEADER 1. Since then and up to the end of LEADER Axis 4 (2007–2013), the most recent period for which we have definitive data, its influence on the Spanish countryside has grown steadily.

According to Peralta (2016), evidence of the importance of LEADER in Spain can be found in the sharp increase in the number of local action groups (LAGs), the bodies responsible for implementing the European development strategies (the numbers increased five-fold over this period from 52 to 264). The number of towns and villages affected by the initiative also grew spectacularly (from 1204 to 7047). The affected area was five times greater (up from 81,855 to 448,208 km²) and the theoretically affected population grew six-fold (from 1,854,305 to 12,367,417 people). This was completed with a huge increase in total investment (from 386.8 to 3096.2 million Euros), of which almost half came from the private sector (up from 203.3 to 1454.7 million Euros).

The LEADER programme was complemented with various other initiatives which were applied in specific regions of Spain. Examples include PRODER 1 and PRODER 2, and AGADER (in Galicia). These initiatives were implemented by the

⁴Andalusia is a Spanish region with a rural population in 2013 of 5.6 million inhabitants and a population density of 95 inhabitants/km².

⁵In 2014, North Rhine-Westphalia had a rural population of 4.5 million inhabitants and a population density of 236.5 inhabitants/km².

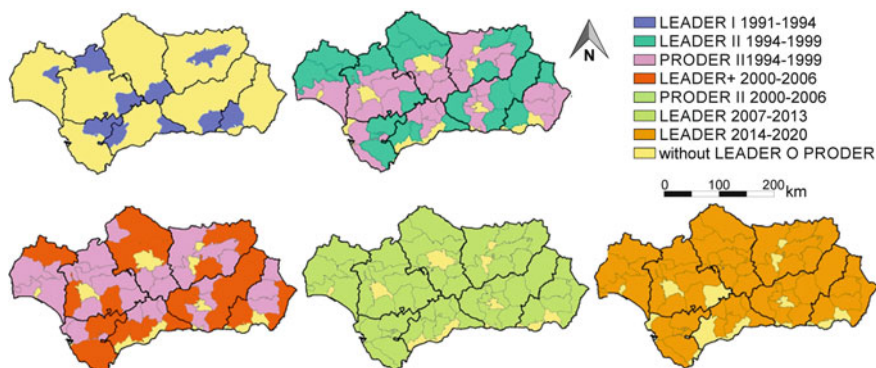


Fig. 9.3 Spatial distribution of the LAGs in the LEADER and PRODER programmes in Andalusia
Source the authors

regional governments and brought about a considerable increase in the total area affected by rural development initiatives in these regions and by extension in Spain as a whole.

Over this period, the region of Andalusia in particular played a very active role in the different rural development programmes (Fig. 9.3).

LEADER I

The aim of the LEADER I programme, which ran from 1991 to 1994, was to try to diversify the rural economy. In Spain 52 projects were approved, making it the country that most benefitted from the programme. Measure n° 3, which centred on “support for rural tourism”, received more support than other policy objectives, cornering 46% of the projects and 51.2% of total investment.

The Andalusia region played a key role in the application of LEADER I (17% of the LAGs, 15% of the towns affected and 15% of the total surface area) in Spain. According to Foronda (2000), more than half the funds were devoted to rural tourism (51.4%), which was by far the most strongly supported measure. The nine LAGs covered almost 24% of all the towns and villages in Andalusia, 13.3% of the total area and almost 9% of the population.

In general, LEADER I was considered to have been a success in the areas in which it was applied. It was therefore decided to continue the programme with LEADER II, which had a much higher budget and was aimed not only at the “diversification” of production but also at “innovation”.

LEADER II

LEADER II rural development programme ran from 1995 to 1999. In Spain LEADER II covered an area of almost 226,057 km² and was administered by 133 LAGs. Total investment in LEADER projects came to 1364 million Euros, more than half of which came from the private sector. Rural tourism was included within the rural innovation programme (B3) and in Spain as a whole received total allocated expenditure of almost 442 million Euros, which, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment (MAPA 2003), represented almost one-third (32.4%) of all expenditure on this programme.

Andalusia was the region that most benefited from the application of LEADER II. Although rural tourism obtained a smaller percentage of the projects (25%) and investment (24%) compared to LEADER I, its funding in absolute terms increased very significantly (Foronda 2000).

Leader Plus

The next programme was called LEADER PLUS and ran from 2000 to 2006. It was complemented by other parallel programmes that were only applied in Spain (PRODER 2 and AGADER in Galicia). A novel aspect of LEADER PLUS was that it was funded exclusively by the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (the previous programmes had also been financed out of structural funds) and one of its main priorities was to promote “cooperation” between LAGs both inside and outside the different member states. Total investment under the LEADER PLUS came to 1427.7 million Euros and according to the report on the final execution (MARM 2012) ended up generating total spending of 1794.3 million Euros. A total of 3477 projects were approved under Measure 108—Tourism (14.6% of all the projects approved), receiving 24.1% of total investment.

LEADER Axis 4

The last programme period (2007–2013) known as LEADER Axis 4 was based on National Strategic Plans. According to Article 11 of EC Regulation 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), each state had to specify and prioritize the objectives that the LAGs should bear in mind when designing the rural development plans for their specific area. In the Spanish case, the National Strategic Plan sets out the horizontal measures (applicable to all areas) and the elements common to all 17 regional programmes (one for each Spanish region). On the basis of these general criteria, each regional government then drew up and managed their own independent regional plan. These plans contained specific measures that sought to deal with the particular situations and needs of their region.

As a whole, the 264 LAGs operating in Spain during LEADER Axis 4 covered 7047 towns and villages and a surface area of almost 450,000 km², potentially affecting 12,367,417 people. Total investment came to almost 3096.2 million Euros. These figures were only slightly higher than the previous programme, indicating that LEADER had little room for expansion and was now reaching almost all areas of rural Spain.

Although the overall objective was sustainable rural development, a more specific aim was to improve the quality of rural life and diversify the rural economy. The need to set out specific objectives led to the designation of “the diversification of the rural economy” as the main operational objective. One of the ways to achieve diversification was through Measure 313 which proposed incentivizing the development and promotion of tourism activities.

During this period, there were 52 LAGs in Andalusia covering 700 towns and villages with a surface area of 81,514.51 km² and a population of 3,593,196 inhabitants. These figures represented, respectively, almost one-fifth of all the LAGs in Spain (264), almost 10% of the towns and villages, 18.2% of the total area and 29% of the potential beneficiary population. The importance of Andalusia within the LEADER Axis 4 programme in Spain is demonstrated by the fact that it received 26% of total Spanish funding (798 million Euros) and generated 18.4% of all the jobs created by LEADER.

In spite of the above, the problems of Spanish rural areas have not been eradicated and depopulation remains a serious issue in many parts of the countryside. Furthermore, the success of LEADER has varied greatly from one region to another within Spain and indeed within Andalusia.

The Role of Tourism Projects in the Evolution of LEADER: The Case of the North Rhine-Westphalia Region (NRW) in Germany

In Germany, tourism destinations play a major role (together with various administrative, historical and natural criteria) in drawing up the boundaries of LEADER areas (Moser et al. 2016, p. 39). It is, therefore, not surprising that tourism is also a key part of their respective rural development strategies. Raab and Auweck (2003, p. 20) argue that tourism is a central field of action for many LEADER groups and is too often regarded as a panacea. Even in the early phases of the LEADER initiative in Germany, promoting tourism was one of the key objectives. In LEADER II about 50% of all implemented projects belonged to this field of action. Nevertheless, there is often a gap between the goals originally set for tourism projects and the final results and effects achieved. In a study of regional management activities in 134 LEADER + local development groups in Germany and Austria (including the groups belonging to the complementary program Regionen Aktiv in Germany), tourism was the most frequently mentioned topic, named by 97% of all surveyed groups, well

ahead of other topics such as regional marketing, agriculture, village renewal, culture, environment and education (Schwerdtner 2008). Tourism is often combined with other themes such as agriculture, culture and nature. In this way new tourism products can be created which combine the aspects of rural culture and agriculture in an unspoilt natural setting. This follows a recent trend in consumer behaviour in tourism, which seeks to combine recreation, wellness, outdoor activities, nature and the cultural landscape with the production of regional food specialities. Tourism boards play a central role in regional marketing and in the bodies responsible for promoting and organizing rural development. The vast majority of the local development groups examined in this study (Schwerdtner 2008) indicated that they had achieved the objective of increasing the attractiveness of the area for tourists, often more successfully than other objectives.

The number of LEADER groups in Germany has increased steadily over the different phases. Rural areas in more densely populated regions are also now participating in the LEADER initiative. In the first stages of LEADER, there were relatively few local development groups, especially in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), an old industrialized region with many rural areas outside the large agglomerations. The LEADER initiative has really only gathered pace in this region in recent phases. In the 2007–2013 phase, there were 12 local development groups in NRW. In the current phase, this figure has increased to 28 groups, which are active not only in the low mountain ranges but also on the plains (Fig. 9.4). With more than 500 inhabitants per km², NRW is one of the most densely populated regions in Europe. This means that rural areas have a special function as spaces for recreation, leisure activities and ecological compensation, and also as residential areas for commuters. The distances between rural areas and urban agglomerations and important transport corridors are usually relatively short, but there are also other less accessible rural areas where the improvement of living conditions is still a great challenge. In the LEADER area in the mountainous Eifel region, for example, the population density is much lower at just over 100 inhabitants per km².

During the current LEADER phase, the total number of LAGs in Germany has risen from 244 to 321 (Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle 2018) and they now cover about two-thirds of German territory. Some of the newly added LEADER regions had previously received support from the German government in a specific German programme of integrated rural development. Across Germany, an average of 13% of the EAFRD budget is allocated to LEADER, although this figure varies greatly from state to state (between 6 and 40% of the EAFRD funds).

The LEADER programme in Germany is based on the specific rural development programmes of each federal state. These are based on the directives of the European Commission, which are adapted to suit the individual needs of each state. In the current phase of LEADER, the LAGs have more freedom to decide where to invest and are no longer bound to apply certain specific measures. This enables greater priority to be given to regional development concepts (REK) (Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle 2018).

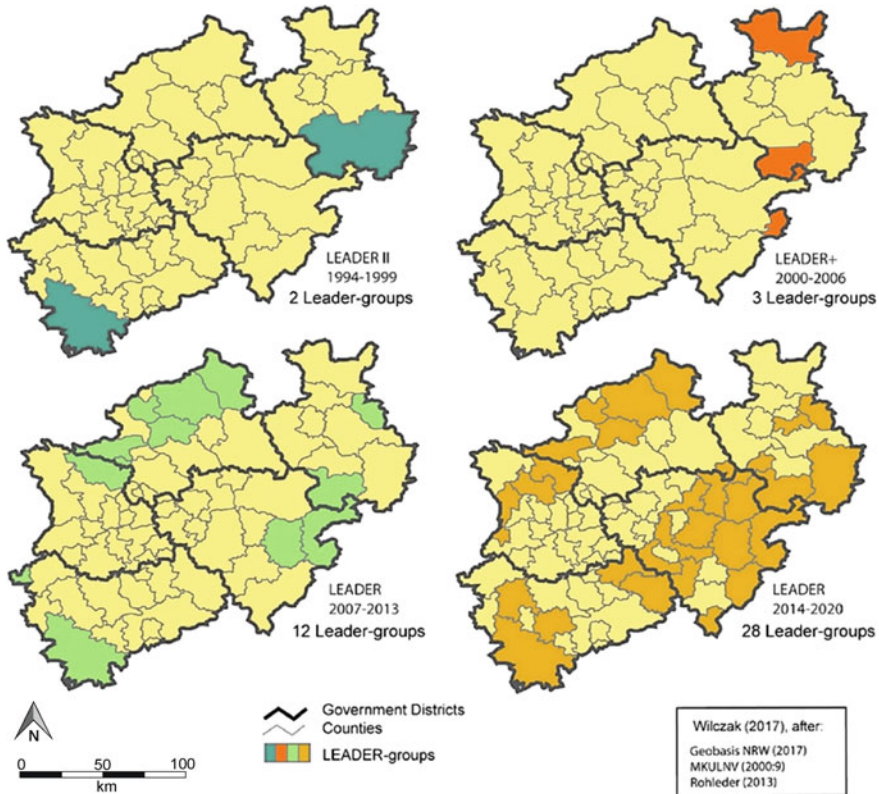


Fig. 9.4 The increasing number of LEADER LAGs in the NRW region. *Source* Wilczak (2017) adapted

In a comprehensive study in Bavaria, Lehmeier (2015) explores why tourism is so important for bottom-up regional development, highlighting certain limitations that must be considered in the assessment of tourism as a means of developing rural areas. He also points out that the wide range of contents covered by the “tourism–recreation–leisure” concept leads to a large number of very different phenomena. He also discovered significant inaccuracies in the measurement of tourism effects, such that on many occasions the impact of tourism as a driver of regional development was overestimated. Although projects relating to tourism and recreation are not easily distinguishable or separable from other development objectives, Lehmeier (2015) divides the tourism-related projects into three groups, focusing, respectively, on tourism marketing, infrastructure and networks.

The most important project in this study of Bavaria was related to hiking and cycling tourism and involved the construction of new paths and the improved sign-posting, safety and/or marketing of existing routes. Most projects are combined packages of measures that include one or more of these aspects. Although tourism

is never the only topic on which the regions base their development concepts, it is rarely overlooked.

For most of the stakeholders, tourism projects are a useful, sometimes highly valued element of regional development processes. The reasons vary (Lehmeier 2015, p. 266):

- a. Tourism is viewed by experts as “common sense”: The topic of tourism and local recreation is generally considered by professionals to be a “good idea” for regional development projects. Tourism is, therefore, one of the best-known and most widely accepted options for regional development action.
- b. Tourism in response to outside influences: The large number of tourism projects supported by regional development initiatives is often an indirect consequence of institutional framework conditions. Certain requirements for the projects and the overall goals and strategies of the initiatives, such as cross-cutting orientation and dense networking within and outside the regions, result in a selection of “good” or “suitable” projects that indirectly benefit the tourism sector.
- c. Influences from inside: Tourism is considered by many of the regional decision-makers as a quick way to achieve development in which success is guaranteed. Tourism-related themes tend to highlight the beauty of their region, so making the projects more attractive.
- d. Tourism through imitation: A lack of time and the pressure to succeed in the initiatives make the importing of foreign ideas a worthwhile, sometimes even essential procedure. This typically involves finding good examples and successful concepts and adapting them to local conditions. Successful projects are then documented for other members of the community to apply. This has consequences for the choice of strategy.

Importance and Impact of Tourism on Rural Development in LEADER 2007–2013 in Southern Spain and Western Germany

In this section we will be describing in more detail some of the specific characteristics of rural tourism in LEADER 2007–2013 in southern Spain and western Germany.

The Case of Andalusia

In Spain, LEADER 2007–2013 was articulated via 17 regional programmes and one regional programme organized by the National Rural Network. Rural tourism in LEADER Axis 4 was promoted by Measure 313 of Axis 3, and through “quality of life and diversification” (Measure 313 implemented through Measure 413).

According to the Integrated Plan for Rural Tourism in Spain 2014,⁶ the main weaknesses of rural tourism in this country were a lack of strategic planning, a lack of quality standards that made it easier to promote and market, a lack of a global vision of the rural tourism destination, a fragmented, heterogeneous business structure, difficult access to certain places, mobility and signposting problems and a wide, diverse range of sales platforms.

This plan also identified various challenges and opportunities for this sector, including the articulation of the product, the harmonization of the classification of rural accommodation, the improvement in online marketing and sales, the positioning of Spain as a rural tourism destination in international markets and the training of professionals (quality standards in the provision of services). These conclusions also apply to the Andalusia region and it seems unlikely that LEADER 2007–2013 will be able to solve and/or reduce the serious problems facing the countryside in Andalusia.

In our previous research (Maroto et al. 2017, p. 12), we analysed data provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing and Rural Development of the Regional Government of Andalusia with regard to Measures 313 and 413, which as mentioned earlier cover certain aspects of the projects aimed at promoting tourism in Andalusia (executed as part of the LEADER 2007–2013 programme). Our results regarding the main indicators of the application of the LEADER approach show that the commitment to rural tourism remains strong.

A more specific analysis showed that the economic dimension was the most important priority. This was immediately evident from the fact that the information obtained at project level provided exact figures for the investment, the subsidies received and the number of jobs created, while offering little information to enable us to properly assess the sociocultural and even the environmental dimensions of these projects.

In brief, we found that 750 rural tourism projects had been executed in the Andalusia region, 12% of the total number of projects (6,225) carried out in Spain. These projects generated 16.1% of total investment and accounted for 14.6% of the total subsidies allocated to this axis. They also generated 8.4% of all the jobs created (7.7% of total male employment, 9.3% of total female employment and 9.9% of the jobs created for young people under 35 years of age).

In the 52 LAGs in Andalusia, we observed considerable interest in promoting rural tourism in the sense that they had all carried out projects with this objective. However, we also noticed that in geographical terms these projects were highly concentrated in mountain areas with a tradition in the rural tourism sector. Most of these areas have strong environmental values and are protected by law after being declared national or natural parks and so on (Fig. 9.5).

We also observed an interesting tendency linking rural tourism in Andalusia with that in other regions of Spain with a longer tradition in this field. There has been increasing interest in areas close to the coast, as happened in some of Spain's northern

⁶https://turismo.gob.es/turismo/es-ES/Novedades/Documents/005b_Plan%20Integral%20de%20Turismo%20Rural%202014.pdf.

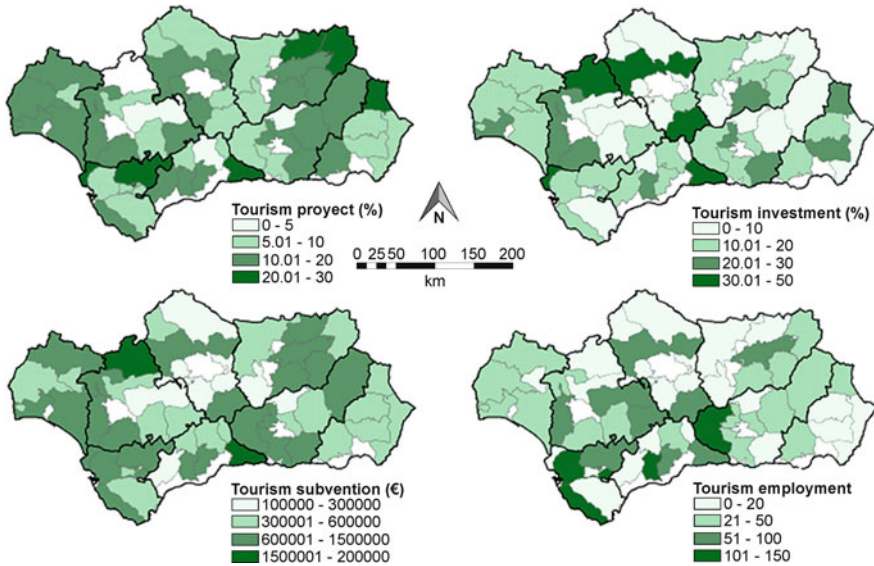


Fig. 9.5 Importance of rural tourism, in terms of investments, subsidies and employment in the LAGs in Andalusia during LEADER 2007–2013. *Source* The authors

regions, a trend that we believe will continue and increase. There has also been a slight rise in accommodation offering agritourism (Fig. 9.4).

Statistical evidence of the importance of rural tourism projects includes for example the fact that the subsidies allocated to these projects came to 37.2% of total investment and 48% of female employment was created in this field. 42.6% of the jobs created in these projects went to young people under 35 years old.

These figures show that the LEADER 2007–2013 programme continued to make very generalized, substantial investments in rural tourism, although without reaching the levels in percentage terms of the early LEADER initiatives.

One of the main problems that we noticed in the application of the LEADER programme ever since its creation is the high concentration of investment in relatively few geographic areas in which tourism is already strongly consolidated (Fig. 9.5).

Although it is evident that not all rural areas have to promote rural tourism and also that its capacity for boosting rural development has perhaps been overestimated, we believe that there are other areas that have resources that are potentially attractive for tourists but are not being sufficiently well promoted. Investment in rural tourism would also help diversify the rural economy.

It is also important to highlight that within the different areas covered by each LAG, there is a strong concentration of projects, investments and job creation in the most dynamic towns, and that the places in greatest difficulty often do not benefit from LEADER. We therefore believe that measures must be taken to prioritize development in the areas with the worst levels of ageing or falling populations, and limited economic diversification; in short, the poorest areas within each LAG.

The Case of North Rhine-Westphalia

In the rural development programmes of many federal states in Germany, the decision to promote tourism-related projects is justified by the fact that it is difficult for small rural tourism businesses to successfully profile and market themselves and that it is therefore important for rural regions to hone a more precise tourism profile and increase public awareness of the resources on offer. In many programmes they therefore stress the need to improve business networks and to support projects that do not require investments in infrastructure. Ten federal states are promoting a wide range of measures of this kind (Tietz 2007, p. 130):

- Preparatory studies, concept development and planning for projects that boost tourism.
- Development of tourism products and services.
- Marketing campaigns, print media, participation in trade fairs.
- Initiatives to create employment opportunities in rural tourism.
- Creation of regional networks in which tourism stakeholders can work together.
- Information offices and centres of local and regional tourism organizations.

In each federal state there are different requirements for linking the above measures to LEADER and other regional development plans.

The LEADER approach is not designed to ensure equal contributions to all the programme's objectives. In terms of contents, many regions have focused project implementation on tourism, village development, leisure, recreation and culture (Fig. 9.6). In general, 23% of the projects in NRW focus on tourism development (highest percentage of projects). The distinction between tourism services for visitors from outside the region and recreation for the local population is not always evident from the description of the measures, and these objectives can overlap.

Tourism projects are based around a wide variety of themes, although most of them are related in some way to different forms of recreation and active tourism

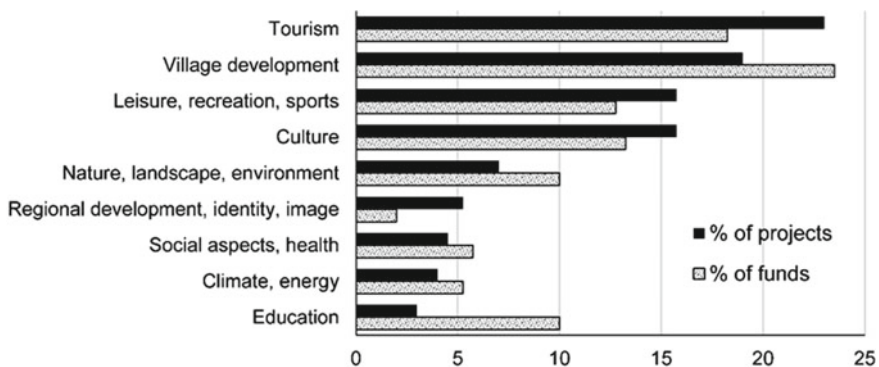


Fig. 9.6 Main themes behind the projects for the LEADER 2007–2013 in NRW. *Source* Moser et al. (2016), p. 233 adapted

(cycling, hiking, water sports, horse riding) and the facilities or infrastructure they require. They are also associated with natural and cultural features (Fig. 9.7). About a quarter of all projects are geared towards the creation or maintenance of special attractions, such as museums or themed routes.

The impact of these projects on rural tourism development remains difficult to assess. First, because the projects primarily target indirect effects by strengthening the position of their region as a tourism destination and secondly, because tourism development processes are influenced by a wide variety of other policies and support measures, making it difficult to isolate the effects of LEADER. In order to ensure synergy effects, LEADER projects must be better integrated into regional tourism concepts. In addition to coordinating LEADER with other rural development initiatives, more attention must also be paid to the corresponding ERDF support measures (Moser et al. 2016).

In her study of the role of tourism projects in LEADER 2007–2013 in NRW, Wilczak (2017) pointed out that due to the multisectoral aspect of LEADER funding these projects often affect various different thematic areas. She therefore decided to focus not only on projects based exclusively on tourism but also on projects with other themes that helped generate added value in tourism. Both types could be regarded as tourism projects, although they have different levels of impact. In order to avoid an overly subjective, narrow selection of projects that focus on tourism, this author decided to generalize the data. Her results, therefore, showed a very high percentage of tourism projects. These results could be lower if a different, more restrictive categorization of tourism projects were to be applied.

In general, all 12 LEADER areas implemented tourism projects. At least a quarter of all the projects had a tourism background. In 9 of the 12 LEADER regions, more than 40% were tourism-related. In percentage terms, the funding invested in tourism projects was lower than the number of projects. This is because many of the tourism projects were quite small and less expensive than the projects with other objectives. The number of projects alone is, therefore, not a perfect indicator of the degree to which rural development in a particular region is focused on tourism. This is best

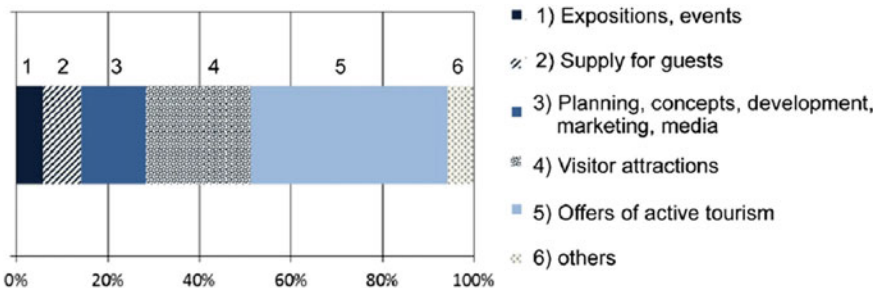


Fig. 9.7 Most common themes of tourism-related projects in NRW (2007–2013). *Source* Moser et al. (2016, p. 247), adapted

confirmed by looking also at the percentage of subsidies awarded to tourism-related projects.

One interesting aspect of the map of the 12 LAGs in NRW is the comparison of the two tourism indicators. While the bar charts indicate the amount of expenditure in tourism projects compared to the total volume of LEADER funding, the pie charts show the total number of projects and the percentage of tourism projects (Fig. 9.8).

The results of the study carried out in NRW (Wilczak 2017) demonstrate that tourism-related projects are easily integrated into the LEADER approach and rural development strategies. They are mainly executed by public institutions and associations, which means that there are fewer bureaucratic hurdles in the processing of project applications. Another advantage is that due to the fact that many tourism projects have institutional backing, there are few problems with co-financing. They are consensus projects and rarely cause conflicts within the LAGs.

While projects that address the main problems in rural areas, such as demographic change or primary care of the population, create strong local competition and conflict, tourism is a consensus topic. The favourable conditions it enjoys are also evident in the length of the approval process, which is on average four months shorter than for other kinds of LEADER projects, although there are some exceptions. The result is

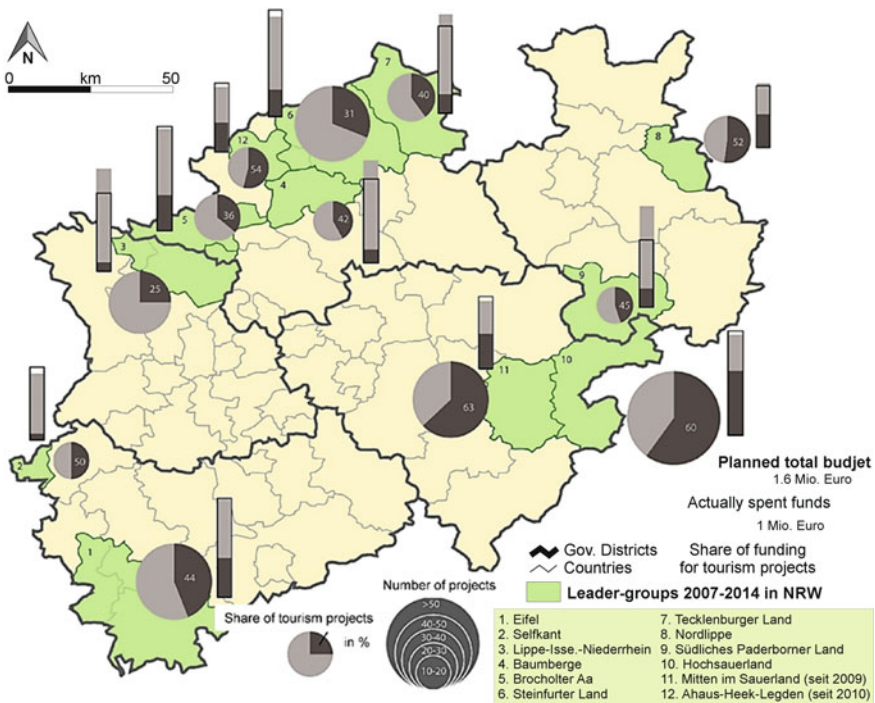


Fig. 9.8 The importance of tourism projects in LEADER 2007–2014 in NRW. *Source* Wilczak (2017) based on data from the 12 LEADER groups and Moser et al. (2016)

that tourism projects are not promoted because the core objective of the region is the expansion of the tourism sector and its added value, but because tourism is the field with the lowest barriers. This does not mean that tourism projects do not generate added value for the region. They do, but their impact is often overestimated. Although tourism projects can produce direct increases in added value, the networks of local actors that are established through the projects are often more important results. The strengthening of local governance and the experiences gained through the LEADER process can lead to follow-up projects and extend action to other fields.

Rural Tourism in the LEADER 2014–2020 Initiative: The Current Situation

The lack of any definitive data or final assessments means that it is still early to come to any firm conclusions about the importance of rural tourism in LEADER 2014–2020.

A New Direction for European Rural Development

It could be argued that ever since the beginning of the LEADER programme until the most recent LEADER 2017/2013 phase, rural tourism has been well supported by the rural development policies of the European Union and other public administrations. This conclusion can be reached from an analysis of the large sums of money invested. But what can we expect for the period 2014–2020?

In recent years there has been a restructuring of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which has led to a change in direction of the European rural development strategy for the period 2014–2020.⁷ The intention is to bring it into line with the “Europe 2020 Strategy”.⁸ In addition, “while LEADER receives full support from EU institutions and all related stakeholders, it was acknowledged that LEADER has not fulfilled its full potential to comprehensively integrate local needs and solutions into Local Development Strategies (LDS). Therefore in order to allow local territories to better take multisectoral needs into account, it is proposed that in the future LDS may be supported by other (than EAFRD) EU funds”.⁹ In the European rural development programme for 2014–2020, the aim is to prioritize above all the “transfer of knowledge”, the “innovation” of all aspects of life and work in the rural world,

⁷https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020_en.

⁸https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en.

⁹https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en.

the competitiveness of agriculture and the incorporation of innovative technologies into rural business activities.

There is currently great concern about the organization of the food chain, animal welfare, the restoration of agro-silvo-pastoral ecosystems, more efficient use of resources, the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, the promotion of social inclusion, the reduction of poverty and, in general, continued progress in rural development.

In order to achieve these goals, a new regulatory framework has been established for the structural funds and for European investment which regulates development aid for the period 2014–2020. The result is that the LEADER strategy will now be referred to as “Community-Led Local Development” (CLLD), and will be a mandatory part of the rural development programmes funded by the EAFRD and a possible option for the other funds.¹⁰

Rural Tourism Diluted Amongst the Priorities of the Second Pillar of the CAP

In this context, the EAFRD will play a key role in the funding of rural development.¹¹ To this end, Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council specified that projects that bring together agriculture and, rural tourism through the promotion of sustainable and responsible tourism in rural areas, and natural and cultural heritage should be encouraged, as well as renewable energy investments.

The aim is to improve tourist information and tourism infrastructure at a small scale so that tourism can become a useful complement to agriculture rather than an alternative. There is also a clear commitment to intensifying the cooperation between groups so as to improve the commercialization of rural tourism.

The result is that tourism is currently regarded as an important field of action in most LEADER areas and will continue to play a substantial role in the current programme phase (Wilczak 2017). Nevertheless, recent tendencies highlight a decline in the importance of tourism projects for the LAGs, and a tendency to group them together in a broader field of action with other associated activities, such as recreation and culture. Compared to former programme periods, the bureaucratic requirements and the conditions that project promoters must fulfil have become even more complicated. Many fail to get their projects off the ground because of the enormous time and effort involved. In many cases, these projects only require a small subsidy, and the effort required to obtain it often does not match the possible benefits. One of the most common reasons for the failure of projects is the lengthy approval process.

¹⁰<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/es/themes/clld>.

¹¹Regulation (EU) 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R1303>.

Rural development in Germany in this period is being carried out through 13 PDRs. As in Spain, there is also a national programme which sets out the general guidelines for the PDRs, which are financed by the EAFRD.

In NRW the priorities for the PDRs were centred on the restoration, conservation and improvement of the ecosystems related with agriculture and silviculture. They also sought to promote the social inclusion and local development of rural areas. As a result, the four main measures of the PDRs in terms of budget allocations of public funds are numbers 10, 7, 4 and 11. These measures focus on agri-environmental and climate projects, basic services and the renewal of villages in rural areas, investments in assets and finally organic agriculture.¹²

In Spain, rural development policy remains the responsibility of the regional governments and at a national level is coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs. The general objective of the Spanish National Strategic Plan (PEN) is to maintain population levels in rural areas and improve the quality of life by enhancing the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, the sustainability and protection of the environment, diversifying business activities and developing the capacities of the local rural community.

The rural development programme 2014–2020 in Andalusia (version 5)¹³ sets out the opportunities related with rural tourism. It views the growth in this sector as an interesting economic asset, highlighting the huge possibilities for promoting it from the perspective of rural culture and ethnography and even in combination with forest resources (Objectives O3 and O4 of Priority 2). Finally, it states that rural tourism must continue to be a growth sector and a source of employment (Priority 6, Objectives O2 and O7).

However, it could also be argued that rural tourism seems to be increasingly diluted not only in the Andalusian rural development programme but also in the Andalusian tourism plans. This is evidenced by the fact that since 2003 there have been no reports from the Andalusian Government describing the current situation of supply and demand.¹⁴ This is exacerbated by a lack of official information on which to base full and complete analyses of the state of this segment of the tourism sector in the region. Some relevant information can be found in reports on inland tourism¹⁵ or in those focusing on nature-based tourism,¹⁶ but neither of these are exact synonyms of rural tourism.

We believe that these priorities will not be able to solve the weaknesses and challenges facing rural tourism in Andalusia, as revealed in the Spanish Integral Rural

¹²https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/de/factsheet-north-rhine-westphalia_en.pdf.

¹³https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/export/drupaljda/PDR1420V5_aceptados%20cambios_181218.pdf.

¹⁴<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/turismocomercioydeporte/publicaciones/12721.pdf>.

¹⁵<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/turismoydeporte/export/sites/ctc/galleries/Planificacion/Estrategia-turismo-interior-Andalucia-horizonte-2020-version-16-03-16.pdf>.

¹⁶http://www.andalucia.org/media/tinyimages/file/turismo_naturaleza.pdf.

Tourism Plan of 2014,¹⁷ and which we consider perfectly transferable to Andalusia. These weaknesses include a lack of strategic planning, a lack of quality standards that made it easier to market, a lack of a global vision of the rural tourism destination, a fragmented, heterogeneous business structure, difficult access to certain places, mobility and signposting problems, and a wide diversity of sales platforms.

The aforementioned plan also identified various challenges and opportunities for this sector, including the articulation of the product, a harmonized classification of rural accommodation, the improvement in online marketing and sales, the positioning of Spain as a rural tourism destination in international markets, and the training of rural tourism professionals (so improving quality standards in the provision of services). These conclusions are also perfectly applicable to the Andalusia region.

We will soon have indicators of the forecast impacts, which will be fundamental for assessing the degree to which the objectives of rural development policies have been successfully achieved. We believe that these indicators will confirm that progress is being made not only in terms of economic variables (rural GDP per capita, agri-food trade balance, evolution of food prices, etc.) but also in social (reduction in the level of poverty, improvements in employment rates, etc.) and environmental aspects (greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, soil erosion, water quality, etc.).

Conclusions and Perspectives

Rural tourism is a complex activity. Definitions of rural tourism depend on the definition of “rural”, an equally complex concept due to the huge diversity within rural Europe. This makes a consensus definition of rural tourism very difficult to reach. We therefore have to fall back on a definition based on statistical criteria, which only partially reflects the real situation. This makes it difficult to perform rigorous analyses that provide truly comparable assessments of the impact of rural tourism projects on the different areas of rural Europe.

There is also great interest in discovering the impact of the LEADER programmes in economic terms (investments made, subsidies obtained and jobs created). This has meant that for many years the social and environmental aspects of these programmes have tended to be overlooked. Although of interest, these aspects cannot yet be satisfactorily quantified. It seems unlikely that this problem will be resolved during this current programme period (2014–2020).

LEADER is a community initiative which for almost 30 years has had an important impact in both an economic sense and in terms of jobs creation, although it has proved unable to solve the severe, deeply entrenched problems affecting large rural areas of Europe. The cases of Spain and Andalusia are emblematic in that they have benefited enormously from funds from this community initiative. In both western Germany and southern Spain, rural tourism has been a particularly important business activity

¹⁷https://turismo.gob.es/turismo/es-ES/Novedades/Documents/005b_Plan%20Integral%20de%20Turismo%20Rural%202014.pdf.

in terms of the number of projects implemented, the investments made and the jobs created.

The fundamental objectives behind the introduction of the LEADER programme, which centred above all on improving the situation of those living in the most marginal rural areas, have not been accomplished. Even today there are many rural areas which are plagued by declining, ageing population, economic apathy, a loss of cultural identity and even environmental deterioration. Although rural tourism has for many years been the star option in most of the LAGs, it has not fulfilled the initial expectations.

Today, the aim is to promote the transfer of knowledge, the “innovation” of all aspects of life and work in the rural world, the competitiveness of agriculture and the incorporation of innovative technologies into rural business activities. As a result, current efforts are centring on the expansion of new technologies in the form of “Smart Villages”, because as Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, pointed out in European Network for Rural Development n° 26, in Europe today that “only 47% of rural households have access to fast broadband while more than 80% of urban households do.”¹⁸

In the current programming period, there has also been a strong commitment to investment in small rural businesses so as to promote the development of non-agricultural business activities (instead of devoting investments almost exclusively to rural tourism). These efforts are being combined, among other things, with the promotion of cultural tourism in rural areas and of routes that seek to promote and enhance the value of natural resources as a means of guaranteeing sustainability via what has become known as ecological tourism.

A more determined bid for quality rural tourism is also important. Quality is increasingly and even more evidently related with ICT and with conserving and protecting local heritage, although it is obvious that there are other important questions that must be improved, as mentioned earlier in our analysis of the situation in Andalusia. It is also important to encourage an inclusive form of rural tourism that is accessible to people with special needs and/or disabilities. This must be combined with support for agritourism, an activity that has often been neglected in Mediterranean countries.

Until we have definitive data about the rural tourism projects that are actually carried out during the current phase of LEADER, it will be difficult to confidently state whether this measure continues to receive strong support. The information available to us at present suggests that this is the case, but an assessment of its true, social and environmental impacts is likely to be difficult as we still lack the sources and the indicators required to measure them. It is therefore essential to overcome this challenge if we genuinely want to improve the situation of the most underprivileged parts of rural Europe.

¹⁸https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd_publications/publi-enrd-rr-26-2018-en.pdf.

References

- BMWi, Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie (2014) *Tourismusperspektiven in ländlichen Räumen. Handlungsempfehlungen zur Förderung des Tourismus in ländlichen Räumen*. Berlin
- Boté-Gómez V (1979) El turismo rural en España: una estrategia artesanal para un turismo masivo. *Revista de Estudios Agro-Sociales* 109:29–51
- Brundtland GH (1987) *Our common Future*. Oxford University Press. (Trad. en castellano, *Nuestro futuro común*, Madrid, Alianza ed 1988)
- Cànoves G, Herrera L, Blanco A (2005) El turismo rural en España: un análisis de la evolución en el contexto europeo. *Rev. Cuadernos de Geografía* 77:42–58
- Carazo-García-Olalla L (1982) El turismo rural como recurso de la población agraria. *Vacaciones en casas de labranza en España*. *Revista de Estudios Agro-Sociales* 120:117–130
- Cawley M, Gillmor DA (2008) Integrated rural tourism: concepts and practice. *Annals of Tourism Research* 35(2):316–337
- COMISIÓN DE LAS COMUNIDADES EUROPEAS (1988) El futuro del mundo rural. *Boletín de las Comunidades Europeas. Suplemento* 4/88
- Crosby A (1993) El desarrollo turístico sostenible en el medio rural. *Centro Europeo de Formación Ambiental y Turística*
- Crosby A (2009) *Re-inventando el turismo rural: gestión y desarrollo*. Laertes enseñanza, Barcelona
- Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle LEADER (2018) *Netzwerk ländliche Räume*. <https://www.netzwerk-laendlicher-raum.de/regionen/leader/>
- Foronda C (2000) Problemática de la oferta del turismo rural en Andalucía. In: *Ciencia Regional en Andalucía. Congreso de Ciencia Regional. Identidad Regional y Globalización*
- Fotiadis A (2009) The role of tourism in rural development through a comparative analysis of a Greek and Hungarian rural tourism area. *Faculty of Business and Economics. University of Pécs, Hungary*
- Hall DR (2004) Rural tourism development in south-eastern Europe: transition and the search for sustainability. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 6(3):165–176
- Lehmeier H (2015) Warum immer Tourismus? Isomorphe Strategien in der Regionalentwicklung. *Bamberger Geogr. Schriften* 26, Bamberg
- MAPA (2003) *Libro Blanco de la Agricultura y el Desarrollo Rural* edn. Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación (España)
- Maroto JC, Pinos A, Cejudo E, Navarro FA (2017) La apuesta por el turismo rural dentro del Eje LEADER. El análisis de los proyectos turísticos en Andalucía 2007-13. In: *International Conference on Regional Science*. Sevilla. <https://old.reunionesdeestudiosregionales.org/sevilla2017/media/uploads/2017/10/08/MarotoPinosCejudoNavarro.pdf>
- Moser A et al (2016) *Ex-post-Bewertung des NRW-Programms Ländlicher Raum 2007 bis 2013*. Thünen-Institut für Ländliche Räume, Braunschweig
- OECD (1994) *Creating rural indicators for shaping territorial policy*. Paris
- OECD (2010) *OECD Regional Typology*. Paris
- OECD (2012) *Redefining Urban: A New Way to Measure Metropolitan Areas*. Paris
- Peralta JJ (2016) *La Sociedad civil como protagonista del desarrollo rural: LEADER*. Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente
- Pulido-Fernández JI (coord) (2008) *El turismo rural: estructura económica y configuración territorial en España*. Editorial Síntesis. Madrid
- Travel and Tourism Analyst (1999) *Market Segments: Rural Tourism in Europe*. *Travel and Tourism Analyst* 6
- Raab A, Auweck F (2003) *Arbeitsgruppen Tages- und Übernachtungstourismus*. In: *Deutsche Vernetzungsstelle LEADER. Ed Tourismus – Impuls für Wertschöpfung in der Region*. *Seminarbericht* 7/2003:20–31
- Rein H, Schuler A (eds) 2012. *Tourismus im ländlichen Raum*. Wiesbaden
- Sanagustín-Fons MV, Lafita Cortés T, Moseñe JA (2018) Social Perception of Rural Tourism Impact: A Case Study. *Sustainability* 10(339):1–25

- Schwerdtner W (2008) Erfolgsfaktoren im Regionalmarketing ländlicher Räume. Eine empirische Studie der LEADER + und REGIONENaktiv-Regionen in Deutschland und Österreich, Norderstedt
- Solsona-Monzón J (2014) Análisis prospectivo del turismo rural: el caso de la Comunitat Valenciana. Cuadernos de Turismo 34:313–334
- Steinecke A (2007) Kulturtourismus. Marktstrukturen, Fallstudien, Perspektiven, München
- Tietz A (2007) Ländliche Entwicklungsprogramme 2007 bis 2013 in Deutschland im Vergleich – Finanzen, Schwerpunkte, Maßnahmen. FAL Agricultural Research, Sonderheft 315 Braunschweig
- Varisco CA (2016) Turismo Rural: Propuesta Metodológica para un Enfoque Sistémico. PASOS 14(1):153–167
- Wilczak M-P (2017) LEADER-Projekte mit touristischer Schwerpunktsetzung—Strategien, Entwicklung und Umsetzung. Unpublished Master Thesis, RWTH Aachen University