

Interreg
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Measuring the sustainability of agritourism

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1. INTRODUCTION

- Environment is a key determinant of tourist demand. It may have a positive or a negative impact on agritourism.
- The agritourism industry can also positively or negatively affect environment.
- A positive effect of agritourism on environment is the increased financial capacity to maintain/restore cultural buildings and to protect nature.
- An example of negative influence of agritourism on environment is the pollution created by passenger transport.
- This lecture has three objectives:
 - 1) To analyze possible approaches to selecting and testing sustainable development indicators for agritourism;
 - 2) To review the problem of interpretation and choose a suitable working definitions of the terms “sustainable development” and “sustainable agritourism”;
 - 3) To present the indicators , which are used for measuring the sustainability of agritourism in the statistical practice of the European Union.

2. THE INTERPRETATION PROBLEM: DEFINING THE TERMS “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” AND “SUSTAINABLE AGRITOURISM” (SLIDE 1 OF 4)

- The selection of appropriate indicators for sustainable development of agritourism depends on the understanding of the two concepts: sustainable development and sustainable agritourism.
- Various ways to tackle the problems of interpretation of these concepts have been described in literature.
- Definitions of the word sustainability very much depend on the professional background, the general knowledge and also the ethical and ideological orientation of the different authors.
- Definitions of sustainable development:
 1. “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Report, 1987). This definition is too vague and cannot be applied for statistical purposes.
 2. “Development that ensures non-declining per capita national wealth by replacing or conserving the sources of that wealth; that is, stocks of produced, human, social and natural capital” (Handbook on national accounting, 2003);

2. THE INTERPRETATION PROBLEM: DEFINING THE TERMS “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” AND “SUSTAINABLE AGRITOURISM” (SLIDE 2 OF 4)

3. “A socially constructed and contested concept that reflects the interests of those involved” (Bramwell, 2004);
4. Hunter (2002) proposed four definitions of sustainability according to its level or “position” :
 - 4.1. Very weak sustainability position: an anthropocentric and utilitarian point of view that “infinite substitution is possible between natural and human-made capital”;
 - 4.2. Very strong sustainability position: “bioethical and eco-centric” standpoint, arguing for a minimized utilization of natural resources, for the existence of intrinsic values in nature and for a “reduced human population”;
 - 4.3. Weak sustainability position: anthropocentric and utilitarian view, accepting that “an infinite substitution between natural and human-made capital” is not possible;
 - 4.4. Strong sustainability position: a resource preservationist perspective, where the maintenance of functional ecosystems is regarded as a primary value “above the secondary value through resource utilization”.

2. THE INTERPRETATION PROBLEM: DEFINING THE TERMS “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” AND “SUSTAINABLE AGRITOURISM” (SLIDE 3 OF 4)

- Although no agreement exists in literature on a common definition of the term “sustainable development”, there is a consent about the need for changes and the direction of these changes to achieve a more sustainable future.
- A possible working definition of sustainable development, which is suitable for statistical purposes, may be formulated by combining the weak sustainability position of Hunter (2002) and the capital approach to sustainable development used in the Handbook on national accounting (2003).
- After the global acceptance of the term “sustainable development”, attempts have been made within various sectors and academic fields (including agritourism) to incorporate the concept of sustainability into their theory and practice.
- The absence of precise definition of sustainability has generated multiple and various interpretations of the term “sustainable agritourism”.
- According to McCool & Moisey (2001), sustainable agritourism is a “guiding fiction” - an expression, which is valuable in general discussions, but whose meaning is vague.
- They have identified three different interpretations of sustainable agritourism in literature:

2. THE INTERPRETATION PROBLEM: DEFINING THE TERMS “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” AND “SUSTAINABLE AGRITOURISM” (SLIDE 4 OF 4)

1. Economic interpretation: “How to maintain agritourism industry businesses over a long time frame”;
2. Environmental interpretation from the standpoint of the host community: “A kinder, gentler form of agritourism that is generally small in scale, sensitive to cultural and environmental impact and respects the involvement of local people in policy decisions”;
3. “agritourism as a tool for development” - a method to protect the natural and social capital upon which the industry is built.
 - As in the case of sustainable development, there is no agreement on how exactly to interpret the term “sustainable agritourism” but a common understanding exists of the general direction of necessary changes.
 - There is always a need of additional information. For a serious analysis of a situation, other aspects than those covered by the available indicators are required.
 - Tisdell and Wen (2001): “...many simple tests for sustainability of agritourism are found to be wanting. None seem to be adequate indicators of the sustainability of agritourism. They must, at least be supplemented by deeper analysis to decide whether a tourist development is going to show long-term sustainability.”

3. METHODS OF SELECTING AND TESTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS FOR AGRITOURISM (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

1. Review of existing information
 - 1.1. In-depth studies of materials from international organization such as EEA, OECD and WTO and from countries with interesting work done in this field
 - 1.2. Library searches and Internet searches
 - 1.3. Compilation of preliminary list of indicators for sustainability of agritourism
2. Interviews with experts
 - 2.1. Selection of a core set of indicators for sustainability of agritourism
 - 2.2. Revision of the core set of indicators for sustainability of agritourism
3. Questionnaires
 - 3.1. Survey of the interest to the indicators for sustainability of agritourism in different countries
 - 3.2. Testing the revised core set of selected indicators: are there data available for these indicators at national and regional level
4. Frameworks for analysis
 - 4.1. The integrated assessment structure for analyses of data on human activities and the environment (DPSIR4 framework)
 - 4.2. Waldron and Williams (2002): integrated framework (a combination of a domain-based framework and a pressure-state-response system)

3. METHODS OF SELECTING AND TESTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS FOR AGRITOURISM (SLIDE 2 OF 2)

5. Criteria for selection of indicators

- 5.1. Relevance to the interactions between agritourism and the environment
2. Correspondence to the different areas within DPSIR framework
3. Frequency in existing sets of agritourism sustainable development indicators
4. Data availability
5. Suitability for different geographical levels
6. Simplicity and possibility to connect to the generally accepted environmental goals.
7. Limited number of indicators

The most important is the first criterion - Relevance to the interactions between agritourism and the environment

4. INDICATORS FOR MEASURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRITOURISM IN THE STATISTICAL PRACTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

- **Core set of SDI for agritourism (European Commission, 2006)**
 1. Number of beds in hotels and similar establishments
 2. Number of trips by means of transport
 3. agritourism-related employment (% of total employment)
 4. Household consumption expenditure on agritourism
 5. agritourism share in GDP
 6. Number of tourist overnight stays in various types of accommodation
 7. CO₂-emissions from energy use in agritourism facilities
 8. Water use by tourists, per person and day in relation to use by residential population
 9. Generation of municipal waste by tourists
 10. Discharge of sewage water due to agritourism

4. INDICATORS FOR MEASURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRITOURISM IN THE STATISTICAL PRACTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (SLIDE 2 OF 2)

- **Core set of SDI for agritourism (European Commission, 2006)**

11. Areas used for specific leisure activities, e.g.: marinas, golf courses, ski areas etc., time series
12. Areas covered by forest and other wooded land (%), time series
13. Protected land and water areas (% of land area in tourist regions), time series
14. Tourists exposed to noise in hotel and similar establishments
15. Bathing Water Quality, time series
16. Sewage water treatment plants - volumes of water treated - time series
17. Percent of tourist business establishments participating in recognized environmental schemes
18. Expenditure to maintain/restore cultural and historical heritage
19. Eco-labeled agritourism facilities (as % of total)
20. Existence of land use or development planning processes, specifically referring to agritourism activities

5. CONCLUSIONS

- The suggested core set of indicators covers the DPSIR-framework, which is important especially from the environmental point of view.
- It is advisable that the countries use the suggested core set as a basis for constructing national sets of agritourism sustainability indicators.
- The geographical level needs to be detailed. Data on local levels are necessary when building up statistics for tourist regions.
- Identifying tourist regions and finding statistics on these specific regions is necessary to connect the indicators to agritourism.
- More efforts are needed to breakdown the statistics needed for the SDI for agritourism.
- Sustainable development has economical, environmental and social dimensions.
- There are no social indicators in the core set. To make it compatible with all dimensions, social indicators have to be added.
- The EU legal basis for agritourism statistics should be unified.

Thank you for your attention!