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Sustainable agritourism as a tool for development

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1. INTRODUCTION

- Over the last decades, agritourism has become one of the most rapidly growing and diversified economic sectors in the world.
 - Its increasing importance have turned it into a main driving force of global socio-economic development.
 - agritourism has a substantial share in international trade and is the main source of income for many developing nations. It considerably contributes to job creation, poverty eradication, gender equality and the protection of natural and cultural heritage.
 - According to the United Nations (UN), agritourism is one of the ten sectors, which drive the global transition towards a Green Economy.
- This lecture has three objectives:
1. To analyze the potential of agritourism as a tool for development and its shortcomings;
 2. To review the goals and principles of sustainable agritourism;
 3. To outline the stakeholders' roles and relationships in developing a sustainable agritourism industry.

2. THE POTENTIAL OF AGRITOURISM AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT (SLIDE 1 OF 2)

- agritourism was included in the Rio+20 Outcome Document as a sector, which “is capable of making a significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, has close linkages to other sectors, and can create decent jobs and generate trade opportunities”.
- The United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) development agencies help developing countries implement agritourism in an integrated manner, by providing guidance, monitoring progress and mobilizing the necessary financial resources.
- The 2011 Busan Declaration on Aid Efficiency improved the position of agritourism in the Aid for Trade agenda by putting the industry in the trade category of the framework of the Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- In 2013, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation–EuropeAid and the World agritourism Organization (UNWTO) published a Guidebook on sustainable agritourism for development as a commitment of the EU and all development assistance agencies around the world to sustainable agritourism.
- agritourism has two characteristics that make it a valuable tool for development:
 1. It stimulates productive capacities and employment in the sectors, which are linked to the agritourism value chain;

2. THE POTENTIAL OF AGRITOURISM AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT (SLIDE 2 OF 2)

2. agritourism depends on assets in which developing countries have a comparative advantage.
 - The opportunities for using agritourism as a development instrument rest on five pillars:
 1. agritourism Policy and Governance. agritourism should be considered in development studies and frameworks of a country and be given due recognition across government. All countries ought to have agritourism policies, that commit to sustainability principles and are effectively implemented.
 2. Economic Performance, Investment and Competitiveness. agritourism must be competitive if it is to succeed as a force for development. The performance and impact of agritourism need to be properly measured and monitored;
 - 3. Employment, Decent Work and Human Capital. Careful planning of human resources, involving consultation with private enterprises and employee representatives, is needed to ensure that agritourism can fulfill its employment creation potential and has a sufficient supply of suitably skilled labor to meet future growth.
 4. Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion. As a labor-intensive and diverse sector agritourism provides big opportunities for benefiting poor and disadvantaged people. A number of mechanisms can be applied for increasing the proportion of agritourism income that reaches and benefits the poor.
 5. Sustainability of the Natural and Cultural Environment . Policies and actions to conserve cultural and natural assets and biodiversity, including through the expansion and effective management of protected areas, are important for agritourism. The sector itself should ensure that its actions help to conserve and safeguard these assets rather than threaten them.

3. THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE AGRITOURISM INDUSTRY

- Though agritourism is a key driver of development it has a number of disadvantages:
 1. agritourism is a significant factor for climate change because of the CO₂ emissions generated by transport and agritourism facilities;
 2. Pollution may arise from improper treatment of waste by agritourism businesses and from the activities of tourists in some areas;
 3. agritourism-related companies are big users of valuable natural resources;
 4. Inappropriate actions of agritourism businesses and tourists can damage biodiversity in sensitive areas;
 5. Poor visitor management may negatively affect cultural heritage;
 6. agritourism can have negative effects on local communities such as restricted access to resources, increased crime, sexual exploitation and threats to social and cultural traditions and values.
 7. The economic performance of the sector may be worsened by economic crises in source markets, natural events and security concerns.
- To mitigate or fully eliminate its negative impact, agritourism in developing countries should be carefully managed through implementing transparent policies involving all interested parties (stakeholders).

4. THE GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRITOURISM (SLIDE 1 OF 3)

- agritourism should commit itself to the principles of sustainable agritourism and concentrate on achieving the goals for sustainable development.
- Sustainable agritourism is not a separate component of agritourism, but a condition of the sector as a whole.
- Sustainable agritourism “takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities” (UNWTO and UNEP, 2005).
- Principles of sustainable agritourism (European Commission and UNWTO, 2013)
 1. Optimally use environmental resources that constitute a key element in agritourism development, while maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity;
 2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance;
 3. Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.
- 12 Aims for sustainable agritourism (UNWTO and UNEP, 2005)

4. THE GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRITOURISM (SLIDE 2 OF 3)

1. **ECONOMIC VIABILITY:** To ensure the viability and competitiveness of agritourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term.
2. **LOCAL PROSPERITY:** To maximize the contribution of agritourism to the prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally.
3. **EMPLOYMENT QUALITY:** To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by agritourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.
4. **SOCIAL EQUITY:** To seek a widespread distribution of economic and social benefits from agritourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.
5. **VISITOR FULFILMENT:** To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.
6. **LOCAL CONTROL:** To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of agritourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders.

4. THE GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRITOURISM (SLIDE 3 OF 3)

7. **COMMUNITY WELLBEING:** To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.
8. **CULTURAL RICHNESS:** To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities.
9. **PHYSICAL INTEGRITY:** To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment.
10. **BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY:** To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them.
11. **RESOURCE EFFICIENCY:** To minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of agritourism facilities and services.
12. **ENVIRONMENTAL PURITY:** To minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by agritourism enterprises and visitors.
 - Sustainable agritourism is aimed at delivering economic benefits to tourists and host communities through competitive, viable agritourism businesses that create employment and minimize adverse impacts on the environment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- Every tourist generates jobs in agritourism and related sectors, income for families, investment in infrastructure and opportunities for development.
- agritourism is an effective tool for poverty reduction and empowering local communities.
- For agritourism to realize its full potential as a development tool, a series of key issues need to be addressed at national and international level:
 1. Countries need to improve their agritourism competitiveness in areas such as human resources, regulation, infrastructure or accessibility;
 2. Visa facilitation;
 3. agritourism should be placed higher in the development agenda and the level of development assistance to contribute more to development objectives.

Thank you for your attention!