Contribution to a management model for the parish of El Cisne

Publication details
Tania-Jackeline Ochoa-Ochoa, Alex-Paúl Ludeña-Reyes, Ana Patricia Armijos Maurad
Published online on: 21 Dec 2020

Please scroll down for document

Full terms and conditions of use: https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
PART 3

Management of community-based tourism & initiatives

Part 3 of this handbook focusses on the management of community-based tourism (CBT) and community-based tourism initiatives (CBTIs). This part further discusses the concepts of ownership and control of businesses within the communities. Further under the broader gamut of management, the concept of marketing and branding strategies for CBT and CBTIs, their measurement, and their relationship with customer motivations have also been looked at.

Chapter 17, titled “Contribution to a Management Model for the Parish of El Cisne: An Alternative for the Development of Rural Tourism” by Tania-Jackeline Ochoa-Ochoa, Alex-Paúl Ludeña-Reyes, and Ana Patricia Armijos Maurad, proposes contributions to a management model that identifies the relationship between the community and tourism, with the goal of defining action guidelines for the El Cisne parish to adequately develop their tourist activities. This research leads to a conceptual analysis of the factors that influence the successful development of religious tourism worldwide and its possible applicability in this territory, as well as other forms of tourism that can be adapted to the parish under consideration.

Further to this, Chapter 18, entitled “Tour Guides’ Roles and Responsibilities on Community-Based Tourism Approach”, by Gül Erkol Bayram focusses on the role of tour guides in CBT. This chapter examines the role and responsibilities of tourist guides, one of the stakeholders within the CBT approach. It contributes to existing literature on this subject, and it can be said that this study has a quality that will lead to further academic research and that it is a piece of research that tourism planners can benefit from.

Chapter 19, “Community-Based Homestay Tourism and Social Inclusion” by Kishor Chitrakar, Neil Carr & Julia N. Albrecht, examines the impact of community-based homestay tourism on the social system and explores its role in social inclusion in Panauti, through the lens of the local food culture. Panauti’s homestay tourism is an emerging community-based homestay initiative in Nepal. The findings infer that community tourism, with close host-guest interaction, can be an avenue for accelerating social inclusion in the local community by empowering sections of the community that are disadvantaged by the traditional, hierarchical system.

Next, Chapter 20, “Community-Based Tourism, Heritage Conservation and Improved Urban Design - Santa María del Tule, Oaxaca, Mexico” by Daniel Barrera-Fernández &
Marco Hernández-Escampa, presents the case of Santa María del Tule, a village located in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. This region is highly biodiverse and culturally rich, therefore is one of the most visited in the country. The study analyses the different measures taken by the community to conserve the different natural and cultural heritage of the place. The presentation of this case study is useful as a good practice for Indigenous communities dealing with the deterioration of natural heritage caused by mass tourism.

Moving ahead in this part, Chapter 21, titled “Community Readiness to Green Tourism Initiatives in Less Developed Parks: Lessons from Communities around Saadani National Park” by Agnes Sirima & Maria Mngulwi, examines the communities in all six villages around Saadani National Park and finds them enthusiastic and ready to start small-scale sustainable tourism initiatives. The opportunity to earn extra income and preserve coastal heritage and culture were the two key motives shared across villages. Furthermore, it concludes that communities see tourism ventures as opportunities to secure decent jobs and strengthen their relationships with park management, especially in areas where park-community relations have been difficult.

Chapter 22, “Managerial Capabilities of a CBTI in Transforming Communities into CBTEs: A Case Practice” by Emre ERBAŞ and, Utku ONGUN, examines managerial capabilities that are needed for a successful CBTI in Burdur, Turkey. The study assesses how the case-study CBTI provides a platform where community individuals learn entrepreneurship and participate in tourism. The chapter shows us how a managerial vision based on certain capabilities creates a role model that community individuals can adopt when building community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) at micro (individual) level and thus get involved in tourism.

Moving ahead the Chapter 23 titled “Social Media and Destination Development: The Case of Community-Based Tourism” by Raymond Rastegar & Zohreh (Zara) Zarezadeh argues that CBT can create jobs, preserve traditions and local cultures, protect local habitats and wildlife, and consequently benefit the community. The chapter also highlights how new technology such as information and communication technologies (ICTs) and social media marketing are an effective approach to promote tourism products and destinations, attract tourists, and gain competitive advantages in a highly competitive market. This research looks at the adoption of social media marketing at a community level in the case of CBT, its challenges, and suggests approaches to overcome the issues.

The next chapter, titled “Successful Community-Based Tourism in Africa: Lessons from Uganda and Kenya”, by Albert. Johannes Strydom, Dinah Mangope & Unathi Sonwabile Henama, presents two CBT case studies of Uganda and Kenya. The case studies add to the body of knowledge on CBT in Africa. The study discusses how CBT is intended mainly for underprivileged communities and is viewed as a form of tourism development that must be initiated, planned, owned, controlled, and managed by local community members in order to achieve their needs and wishes.

The last chapter in this part, Chapter 25, entitled “Critical Success Factors for Community-Related Corporate Social Responsibility in the Hotel Sector: A Literature Review” by Bussalin Khuadthong & Azilah Kasim, looks at the critical factors affecting the success of corporate social responsibility (CSR). It aims to present a literature review of past studies related to the variables involved in critical success factors (CSFs) for community-related CSR in the hotel sector. This review covers CSR and stakeholders, community-related CSR, community-related CSR in the hotel industry, and CSFs for CSR.

Sandeep Kumar Walia
CONTRIBUTION TO A MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR THE PARISH OF EL CISNE

An alternative for the development of rural tourism

Tania-Jackeline Ochoa-Ochoa, Alex-Paúl Ludeña-Reyes, and Ana Patricia Armijos Maurad

17.1 Introduction

This chapter tackles a variety of criteria focussed on the sustainability of a tourism product based on rural tourism, with specific actions pertinent to the tourism potential of the region. The result is a management model that includes the participation of public, private, and community stakeholders in order to develop local tourism and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants.

The structure of this chapter contains a conceptual analysis of the management model, the factors that have an effect on the successful development of rural tourism, a general analysis of the case study, and the analysis of the current management of rural tourism in Ecuador and the zone under study.

Likewise, this chapter contributes to the efficient management of rural tourism in the zone by presenting some lines of action focussed on innovation, sustainability, associativity, and participation in the local community. Additionally, this research work significantly contributes to public stakeholders of the parish by providing guidelines for efficient management in the short, medium, and long term.

This work is the result of the project “Rural tourism as an axis of sustainable development in the parish of El Cisne of the district of Loja in the province of Loja: Generation of a model based on gender and inclusion”. The purpose of the project was to obtain information on the perceptions of the inhabitants about tourism by surveying local families. In this project, we analyzed some variables such as development of tourist activity, perceptions of the people in charge of public administration, and practices of social responsibility.

The objective of this research work is to contribute to a management model for the parish of El Cisne. In other words, an alternate way to develop rural tourism is to consider the potential of tourism for revitalizing local economy.

After the project, we noted the lack of a legal framework that regulates and controls rural tourism in Ecuador. This absence of laws was one of the restraints for the operation of this type of tourism, and fixing it is the first line of action for the correct implementation of rural tourism.
17.2 Conceptual analysis of the management model

A management model is related to different processes that should be followed to perform an action. This model requires structure and organization to carry out activities, and it can be applied to different businesses linked to the public or private sectors. However, this application should have a different connotation because every field of a business has specific objectives.

In the administrative sector, it is imperative that every business develops a process management scheme in order to meet different market needs. Thus, process management is an area that helps the managers of a business identify, represent, design, formalize, control, improve, and make the processes of the organization more productive to earn the trust of the clients. The strategy of the organization provides the necessary definitions in a context of broad participation of all its members, in which the specialists in the processes are the facilitators. The main objective of process management is to increase productivity in organizations (Bravo, 2011).

Currently, with the scientific and technological advances, the commercial sector has become increasingly competitive. For this reason, businesses that offer products or services require strategies to meet market needs. In this sense, process management is a tool that attempts to enhance the organizational structure and the accomplishment of corporate objectives.

Therefore, the process-based model is aimed at accomplishing the mission of the organization by meeting the expectations of their clients, providers, shareholders, employees, and society. This model also determines the actions that the business performs to meet expectations, instead of focusing on structural aspects such as the chain of command and the function of each department (Mallar, 2010).

As stated above, organizations require processes to offer products and services to their clients. In the industrial context, these are usually called “productive processes”, while in the field of services they are known as “service-providing processes”. In any of these cases, these processes consist of the methods of work used by the organization to provide value to its clients (external and internal) (Pardo, 2012).

Based on the aforementioned points, it has been clearly identified that the businesses of productive or service-providing processes require other elements. These processes are associated with the existence of human resources, infrastructure, or other materials that are necessary for an appropriate operability. Similarly, according to Pardo (2012), processes consist of activities also called “tasks”, “actions”, or “operations”. These must be clearly established to avoid problems or omissions in their implementation.

Process management is a fundamental element in every organization. If a business that does not implement these processes (actions) correctly is successful, it would be an accident because the processes must be aimed at improving the performance of a business. In this respect, Medina, Nogueira, and Hernández (2009) explain that the application of process management in an organization allows us to do the following:

• Understand the shaping of the processes of the business, as well as its strengths and weaknesses.
• Determine processes that need to be improved or redesigned.
• Begin and maintain improvement plans that allow us to fulfill the objectives established.
• Reduce unnecessary variability that usually appears when certain services are generated or provided.
• Eliminate inefficiencies associated with repetition of the actions or activities and the inappropriate consumption of resources.

Therefore, management includes these aspects:

• Clients and their expectations
• Outputs of the process
• Internal activities that provide value
• Inputs of the process

The aforementioned aspects also apply to businesses that offer services. For this reason, we can include processes for optimizing resources and generating quality services in order to ensure the satisfaction of the tourist. Likewise, in tourist destinations, the aspect of quality management must be included to achieve a higher competitiveness level in the destinations, considering the tourism potential of the place and the participation of local communities.

Until now, the concept of quality in the field of tourism has been mostly introduced in complementary resources such as hotels, restaurants, and, in some cases, geotourism resources such as beaches. The inclusion of quality in these destinations has involved the adaptation of standards that ensure the use, enjoyment, and sustainability of fragile and irreplaceable goods (Castro, 2005).

Different types of tourism need resources, and some of these types are related to the protection and preservation of cultural resources so they can lead to sustainable tourism development in communities. Then, in this sector, it is necessary to establish processes of tourism management that involve all pertinent stakeholders such as government agencies, private institutions, and the community. From this point of view, tourism management becomes a tool that attempts to ensure the appropriate planning of a tourist activity in a given destination.

In rural tourism, quality is an indispensable element that cannot be overlooked because visitors need an excellent service and the host community must be prepared to meet their needs.

17.3 Conceptual analysis of the factors that influence the development of rural tourism

The evolution of the rural environment is linked to the productivity of the primary sector, allowing more people to be involved in tourism to meet non-material needs (Montero García, 1997). This activity attempts to perform pertinent actions to modify, in a way, the foundations of the community, aiming at the progress of the infrastructure and superstructure, the improvement of the population’s economy, and the inclusion and equality of the stakeholders involved, thus fostering processes for their continuous and permanent training.

The factors that influence the development of rural tourism in a zone with tourism potential are presented below, showing the elements identified in previous studies by academic colleagues.

Table 17.1 displays information related to the factors that influence the development of tourism activities in rural areas. Based on these previous studies, the case study of the present research work expects positive results.

17.4 Contextualization of the zone under study

The parish of El Cisne is part of the 13 rural parishes of the district of Loja. This parish is approximately 70 km from the city of Loja and is 2,300 m above sea level, covering an area of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the study</th>
<th>Influential factors</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperatorism and rural development</td>
<td><strong>Material measurement</strong> that employs the means necessary to facilitate rural development. <strong>Formative measurement</strong> that facilitates the aptitude and attitude towards the implementation of rural tourism.</td>
<td>(Montero García, 1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated tourism development in inland rural areas: Application in health care</td>
<td>Tourism resources; infrastructure and services; urbanism; accessibility and connectivity; complementary offer; human resources; environmental impact</td>
<td>(Olivares, 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location factors and tourism development in the rural spaces of the Valencian Autonomous Region</td>
<td>Location; The physical–natural subsystem (landscape, climate); the socio–economic subsystem (population, economic activity); the political–administrative subsystem (political–administrative entities, territorial development programmes; land-use planning); tourism subsystem (tourism resources, accessibility, equipment and public services, infrastructure, equipment and public services, image, perception and recognition of tourist places and landscape as representation).</td>
<td>(Solsona Monzonís &amp; López Olivares, 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural territories, competitiveness, and development</td>
<td>Location; environment; availability and quality of factors of production; technology; natural resources; human resources; infrastructure; culture and identity; government and financial resources; image</td>
<td>(Solsona Monzonís &amp; López Olivares, 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural territories, competitiveness, and development</td>
<td>Tourism potential; parish infrastructure; land-use planning and the interest of the parish government. Externally, institutional support and visitor flow are the factors that stand out.</td>
<td>(Cordero Salas et al., 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating loyalty to a gastronomic tourist destination as a key factor in rural development</td>
<td>Economic considerations; gastronomy of quality; cultural considerations; social considerations; environmental considerations, and technological factors.</td>
<td>(Herrera, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special analysis of income obtained by rural tourism lodging in Gran Canaria: Towards a new proposal of a standardized model using SIG</td>
<td>Natural spaces; location; accessibility (roads); entertainment services for tourists</td>
<td>(Flores, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of sustainable tourism products</td>
<td>Motivation to travel; resources; image of the rural destination; motivation to be in contact with nature</td>
<td>(Figueroa, Cabazos &amp; Moreno, 2015).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The contribution of tourism to sustainable development of recipient societies. Theoretical–methodological aspects.</td>
<td>Financial capital; human capital; social capital; ecological capital; symbolic capital; equity capital (tangible and intangible assets); infrastructural capital</td>
<td>(Álvarez–Sousa, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural tourism as an economic agent: Development and distribution of revenue in the zone of Priego de Córdoba</td>
<td>Insufficient lodging offer; increasing demand for rural tourism; increase in publicity of rural tourist destinations</td>
<td>(De la Torre, López, &amp; Agudo, 2006).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The authors, 2019.
91.4 km². El Cisne has a population of 1,628 inhabitants. It borders the parish of Gualeland, a part of Salatí, to the north; the parishes of San Pedro de La Bendita and Zambi to the south; the district of Catamayo and the parish of Chuquiribamba to the east; and the parishes of Guayquichuma and Salatí to the west.

The average annual temperature of El Cisne is 12.5°C, and the climate is temperate humid. This parish also has an irregular topography. Its population depends to a great extent on agriculture and livestock, which are the main resources of the region. Other important activities in this place are related to religion and commerce, and religious tourism is significant in economic terms.

As for the activities of the secondary productive sector, El Cisne has the craft industry, as there is a handmade candle factory that provides the local and regional markets with its products.

The parish of El Cisne is one of the most visited places in the district of Loja due to the cathedral, in which the sacred statue of the Virgin of El Cisne is worshipped. This factor has contributed to the development of tourism in this parish, as domestic and international tourists (especially from Peru) visit this place for religious reasons. Every year in August, the pilgrimage (from El Cisne to the city of Loja) of the Virgin of El Cisne takes place, gathering thousands of devotees who worship this deity. With respect to tourism development, the natural and cultural attractions are mostly present in the central part of the parish. The following are the main attractions:

- Cathedral of Our Lady of El Cisne
- House of the Pilgrim
- Museum of Our Lady of El Cisne
- Procession of the Virgin of El Cisne
- Clock tower
- Plaques of the miracles
- Water of the miracles
- Monument to El Cisne

Similarly, typical food is varied and the following dishes stand out:

- Guinea pig with potatoes
- Guinea pig hot sauce
- Yapingachos
- Cured meat
- Hominy with scrambled eggs
- Fried pork
- Reppeblanco (plantain soup)
- Chichajora (fermented corn drink)
- Chicha de maiz (corn drink)
- Morocho
- Horchata
- Empanadas (pasties)
- Corn tortilla

Regarding the field research carried out by researcher-professors from the Tourism Program at la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, the data for the project “Rural tourism as an
axis of sustainable development in the parish of El Cisne of the district of Loja in the province of Loja: Generation of a model based on gender and inclusion” was collected by administering questionnaires to 161 families in El Cisne. Some variables were analyzed, including development of tourist activity, perceptions of the people in charge of public administration, and planning of the parish, as well as practices of social responsibility.

The findings indicate that the majority of the participants (91.30%) believe that tourism can revitalize the economy of the parish, thus, generating important benefits for improving the inhabitants’ quality of life.

Another relevant aspect is the benefits that tourism can generate. According to the results, the benefits are related to the creation of employment opportunities (87.58%), and an increase in residents’ income (90.68%) and quality of life (93.17%). Undoubtedly, the perception of the inhabitants regarding tourism is totally positive for the development of this place.

We also analyzed the administration of the GAD (local government) of this parish. The participants think that the local government does not contribute to obtaining important benefits for the development of the town. They largely either totally disagreed (52%), disagreed (26.1%), or were undecided (18.1%) regarding the local government administration. Additionally, the practices of environmental responsibility were evaluated, and respondents either totally disagreed (50.3%), disagreed (21.1%), or were indifferent (18.6%) with respect to actions to minimize environmental impact, as well as the production and use of ecological packaging in the parish.

17.5 Analysis of the current management of tourism in Ecuador

In Ecuador, tourism is regulated by tourism law, which has the purpose of determining the legal framework that governs the promotion, development, and regulation of the tourism sector. The authority of the state and the obligations and rights of providers and users, as indicated in Article 1 of the Official Record, Supplement 733 (Congreso Nacional del Ecuador, 2018) in this document, is declared as state priority policy in the development of tourism in the country.

The governing body that regulates the tourist activity in the country is the Ministry of Tourism, whose headquarters is located in the city of Quito (the capital of Ecuador). This governing body is led by a minister who has several responsibilities for the development of tourism in the country. The vision of the Ministry of Tourism is to turn Ecuador into a major force in tourism, that is, a destination that develops its natural-cultural heritage and is recognized for excellence in the quality of its services. Likewise, there are three strategic axes related to fostering domestic tourism, increasing receptive tourism, and generating and attracting investment.

In the year 2016, a legal resolution, included in the Official Record, Supplement 718, was passed. By means of this legal resolution, the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador created a new political-administrative governing body of the Ecuadorian state, the purpose of which is to regulate the power and responsibilities of the autonomous local governments in provinces, districts, cities, and rural parishes in matters of tourism (Consejo Nacional de Competencias, 2016).

The Official Record, Supplement 303 in its last modification as of October 23, 2018, issued the Organic Code of Territorial Organization in which the political and administrative organization of the Ecuadorian state in terms of territory was established. These laws mention tourism as a productive activity that can be concurrently managed at all levels of government.
Moreover, there is the development of a model of mandatory and progressive decentralization through the national competencies system, the institution responsible for its administration, sources of funding, and the definition of policies and mechanisms to compensate the imbalance in the territorial development (Registro Oficial, 2014).

The regulations of this document refer to tourist activity, indicating, in Article 5, Section G, that the functions of the autonomous local government are to regulate, control, and promote the development of tourism in the districts, in coordination with other autonomous local governments. Then, there will be a promotion of the creation and operation of partner organizations and community businesses in tourism (p. 17).

The aforementioned regulations emphasize the support needed to foster the actions that lead to the revitalization of the economy through tourism, promoting investment and economic development for those who get involved in tourism.

In Ecuador, there is a lack of laws that specifically regulate the development of rural tourism in the country. However, the regulations, according to the Official Record 154, as of March 19, 2010, for community tourism centres still remain in force. The purpose is to regulate the operation of the community tourism centres and all the communities in Ecuador that carry out tourism activities. In the country, this type of tourism is a management model for the correct operation of tourism.

With respect to the instruments of tourism planning, the Ecuadorian state still maintains the “Plan Nacional de Desarrollo 2017–2021 Toda una Vida” (National Plan of Development 2017–2021 – An entire lifetime) in effect. This plan is the main political instrument that determines the direction of the government and leads the actions of the public sector. The goal is to progressively achieve the following points: (1) Constitutional rights. (2) The objectives of the development regime and the provisions of this regime (through the implementation of public policies). (3) The programmes, projects, and interventions derived.

The vision of this plan is framed within international agreements such as the UN’s Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The National Plan is organized on three programmatic axes (Axis 1: Rights for all for a lifetime; Axis 2: Economy in the service of society; and Axis 3: More society, a better state) and nine National Objectives of Development based on environmental sustainability and territorial development.

In the case of tourism, there are three actions in Objective 9 that refer to ensuring sovereignty and peace and to strategically positioning the country in the region and the world. This means that there are specific actions included in Sections 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4 that mention deepening the integration processes with strategic partners, Latin America, the Caribbean, and neighbouring countries, focusing on the free mobility of people. In addition, one of the most important sections included mentions the following:

Positioning and enhancing Ecuador as a mega diverse, intercultural and multi-ethnic country, developing and strengthening domestic tourism and cultural industries. Thus, fostering receptive tourism as a source of income and employment opportunities within a frame of protection of natural and cultural heritage.

(Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, 2017)

Clearly, tourism is an aspect to be improved in which the strategic positioning of Ecuador in the world is a priority.

In the case of the parish of El Cisne, the administrative agent of this territory is the autonomous local government. This governing body is in charge of planning development.
and land management in cooperation with the district and provincial governments under the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador. The purpose is to improve the quality of life of the population.

Table 17.2 indicates the institutions and organizations that have a permanent and occasional presence in the parish of El Cisne, pointing out those that have a high, medium and low impact on the tourism development of the parish. The entities presented are public institutions and some associations that were legally established by the inhabitants of the community. There is not an appropriate administration in this zone that is efficient and meets the needs of the environment in terms of rural tourism. Obviously, this situation is caused by tourist activity that is prevalent in this zone, that is, religious tourism.

### 17.6 Proposal of a management model for the development of rural tourism in the parish of El Cisne

Efficient management in a tourist area focusses the development of tourism on sustainability as an essential element that can get community involved. There must be elements of social inclusion and gender equality with the aims of enhancing the inhabitants’ quality of life, improving their socio-economic status, and respecting the natural and cultural heritage of the area. In order to achieve the aforementioned aims, the active participation of the community is important. They must be committed to providing tourism services that meet minimum quality standards in order to ensure visitors’ satisfaction. The tourists, in turn, could help promote the tourism resources of the area.

In this context, the administrators of tourism are obligated to develop technical tools to manage, preserve, and optimize the potential of this tourist area. They must consider the supply and demand, as well as the participation of the institutions or organizations with permanent and occasional presences.
The purpose of this contribution leads to establishing a management model for rural tourism as a tourism alternative in the area, having an active participation over time, and coping with tourism seasons (high and low) through strategies to make the right decisions to enhance tourism. This is possible by integrating four central elements: quality of service, visitors’ satisfaction, competitiveness, and improving inhabitants’ quality of life.

These aspects ensure efficient development of rural tourism through the following model (see Figure 17.1).

After presenting the models, it is necessary to implement an application process focused on the following fields that will efficiently contribute to the sustainability of the territory (see Figure 17.2).

**17.6.1 Public policies for rural tourism**

Ecuador has not had public policies for rural tourism despite the fact that the General Regulation of the Tourism Law (2018) acknowledges this type of tourism and mentions the

![Figure 17.1 Important aspects for the management of rural tourism in the El Cisne parish](image-url)
different forms of organizing trips and visits. However, since tourism is considered a fundamental pillar in the national plan called “Toda una vida” (An entire lifetime), its operation needs to be regulated, considering the fields in which this type of tourism must be included for an appropriate system performance.

These policies must encompass several aspects such as the establishment of rules for the application of control and regulation of rural tourism, based on the current national law. Likewise, it is necessary to define the types of rural tourism according to the tourism potential of each area. Another important aspect that must be taken into account is the minimum requirements for providing tourism services. In the case of the infrastructure, it must be related to the rural environment, preservation of the landscape, and respect for the architectural heritage.

The scope of the policies can also be aimed at the coordination of the public and private sectors for implementing the actions in order to meet the needs of the tourism market and, consequently, foster the active participation of local communities. Then, it is essential to coordinate efforts and promote the tourism offer and respect for natural and cultural resources for the development of the local population.

A fundamental aspect that the policies must enact is the establishment of tax incentives with the purpose of encouraging local populations to create ventures. Additionally, it is fundamental to generate a synergy of competencies among public, private, and non-governmental organizations in order to create tripartite budget lines for the promotion of the tourist destination.

### 17.6.2 The role of the tourism superstructure

The superstructure is a complement of tourism policies and comprises public and private institutions in charge of regulating, coordinating, and fostering the operation of the tourism...
Management model for Parish of El Cisne

system (Camara & Morcate, 2014). According to Boullón (2006), the tourism superstructure is the subsystem formed by the public and private institutions that optimize and modify, when necessary, the operation of each part of the system, as well as harmonize their relations to facilitate the production and sale of the multiple and different services that form a tourist product.

In this context, it is necessary to efficiently use and optimize the installed capacity of the organizations present in the area that, regardless of the competencies, must contribute to the administration of each one of the necessary resources for the orderly and safe development of rural tourism, thus ensuring the preservation and dissemination of these resources. The aforementioned points involve the coordination of local actions to favourably achieve a common objective.

Institutions have a fundamental role in the promotion of the destination. They also provide visitors with actual and reliable information about the services offered in the area and about the complementary offer. The aim of these services is to create a comfortable and safe environment for locals and visitors. Therefore, a superstructure that is efficiently managed will accomplish four planned elements: quality of service, visitors’ satisfaction, competitiveness, and enhancing inhabitants’ quality of life. These elements will support the replication of successful processes for other areas with the generation of new employment opportunities that foster local development.

17.6.3 Data management for an appropriate planning

Information management is a fundamental aspect for planning destinations. By obtaining the data, we can know the motivations of the traveller, the tastes and preferences of tourism demand, perceptions about the destination, satisfaction with the services received, the tourist attractions visited, service offers and installations in rural houses, and the socio-demographic profile.

The statistics obtained from the tourist activity become a fundamental instrument for decision-making in public administration. This situation leads to an efficient administration with the purpose of managing an appropriate planning of the destination, as the data obtained allows us to have a realistic view of the area and a deep knowledge of the supply and demand in tourism. The objective is to develop a competitive tourist destination in a rural environment.

Similarly, the information is a support for the private sector, specifically for those who are starting and managing a rural tourism venture. Statistics also contribute to proposing strategies to correctly operate rural tourism through travel agencies. Consequently, stakeholders must establish and meet the requirements of this segment of the rural tourism market for the sustainable performance of a tourist activity.

One of the key aspects for the generation of statistics in Ecuador, particularly in the southern part, is focussed on the contribution of the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja through the tourism observatory of the southern region of Ecuador (Observatorio Turístico Región Sur de Ecuador [OTRSE]). This organization was created to analyze the reality of the environment. One of the main objectives includes generating information for decision-making by the public stakeholders related to the tourism sector.

One of the contributions generated by OTRSE is the profile of the procession of the Virgin of El Cisne that shows statistics of the visitor’s profile. This information includes gender, age, origin of the visitor, reasons for traveling, frequency of visits, people with whom they travel, expenses, lodging, and occupation, among other factors (Observatorio Turístico Región Sur de Ecuador, 2017).
17.7 Sustainability as a development axis

Tourism can be a tool for rural development, but some areas have not been able to develop. The cause of this lack of progress is unsustainable principles that are the product of negative impacts that tourism has generated. Thus, there is a close relation between rural tourism and sustainability, which have become dual elements that are interconnected.

It is imperative to apply sustainability criteria for optimizing rural tourism. In this respect, the role that the people involved play is very important. In addition, we also need the participation of the host community, the administrators of the territory, and the active participation of tourists, which constitutes a synergy of these three stakeholders in order to foster an experiential activity and strengthen it. In this sense, it is stated that rural tourism in this area must be based on tourism innovation on the environmental, sociocultural, economic, and technological axes.

The environmental axis is aimed to preserve the natural heritage of the community, emphasizing natural resources as the main motivation for tourists’ visits. Many of these tourists are fascinated by the beauty of the landscape, which requires a minimal environmental impact that preserves natural areas and has an appropriate waste management.

The sociocultural axis needs the active participation of the population through the recovery and preservation of local traditions, which are expressed in different ways. The local identity is a core element that attracts many tourists who want to get away from the urban life and complement a life experience in the destination.

The economic axis is oriented towards the improvement of people’s quality of life and to the fair distribution of economic resources on the basis of appropriate planning. The presence of tourism resources is an element that leads to local development.

Another axis linked to rural tourism is the technological one since it plays an important role in the use and application of new information and communication technologies. Technology, then, is a key tool for marketing rural tourism products. Moreover, the use of technology contributes to the sustainability of the environment through good environmental practices. For instance, the use of solar panels is a viable alternative to the electric power grid.

All in all, sustainability is an integral part that must be present in the development of rural tourism with the aim of preserving the tourist product and the destination so that present and future generations can obtain benefits as well.

17.8 The efficient management of potential visitor flows

An efficient management is associated with competitiveness. A fundamental part of competitiveness is the capacity to attract visitors and encourage them to purchase the services offered. For the authors Guisado and Rodriguez (2003), the expenses that tourists incur in the destination will be useful to compensate the costs of the development of this activity and to generate investment to capture the attention of potential visitors.

After the visits for observation in the tourist destination that were carried out for the research project called “Rural tourism as an axis of sustainable development in the parish of El Cisne of the district of Loja in the province of Loja: Generation of a model based on gender and inclusion”, it was determined that a tourism product focussed on rural activities and effective plan for the dissemination of information did not exist. Since the parish of El Cisne is considered a destination for religious tourism, the local communities need to be involved to generate, prepare and implement a tourism product related to rural tourism with the purpose of developing this product throughout the year.
In order to accomplish the aforementioned points, it is important to design an appropriate and, above all, efficient plan for promoting tourism that optimizes the tourism offering in order to obtain a visitor flow for this type of tourism. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce different alternatives that include tourist packages that show all their potential with at least a one-night stay in the destination. By doing so, it will be possible to define the target public and the budget for the dissemination of information and promotion.

As a strategy to reach a new segment, the use of technology is a way to support a marketing campaign that, at the beginning, must be 50% in a digital form and 50% in a traditional form. The traditional form has the objective of attracting the attention of visitors that prefer the traditional means of purchasing a tourist product.

Regarding the aspects of this marketing plan, it is necessary to have an association with the businesses that support the sale of this type of tourism product, specifically, the tour operators of the region. One of the agreements must be focussed on the fact that the travel agencies that support the marketing of tourist packages related to rural tourism must offer a visible space on their website and social networks to generate more visibility and impact.

Another basic aspect that must be implemented by territory managers is the design of information stands endorsed by the regulatory body of tourism in Ecuador, in this case, the Ministry of Tourism. This stand must include all the information about the natural and cultural attractions present in the destination with the purpose of providing the public with tourism information about the alternative activities that derive from rural issues.

The stakeholders must pay special attention to the improvement and adaptation of spaces and infrastructure necessary, which meet minimum quality standards to promote themselves as a rural tourist destination of high quality. This is a key aspect to foster investment and acceptance on the part of tour operators and visitors.

The best scenarios to market tourist packages are the tourism fairs that can function as sales offices in various important cities, including fairs that are related to tourism that are successfully developed in northern Peru.

Last but not least, the location and geolocation are essential elements to know how to get to the destination, which is achieved through digital and traditional media. For example, virtual map platforms and signalling can inform and warn potential visitors.

### 17.9 Political and administrative management

A political and administrative organization must be in charge of a governing body of the administration. According to the territory, this governing body must be subjected to different models. However, they must keep their essence and coordinate actions aimed at decision-making that benefits the inhabitants of the area.

The beginning of tourist activity in the area requires the public administration to create sections and/or units in charge of studying and evaluating the tourism potential. All of these activities must be focussed on natural, cultural, landscape, human, and financial resources in order to foster and boost public and private investment. This investment will improve the alternatives to the rural tourism product and enhance the basic services of the environment. Obviously, these operations will be within a legal framework for the territory.

Once the planning is done, and sufficient financial resources are available, the rural tourist activity can start. For this purpose, it is essential to consider the possible markets to which the offer can be directed in order to attract visitors. The arrival of these visitors will ensure a short-, medium-, and long-term return on investment. Thus, there will be economic viability in the area, focussed on sustainable development.
As mentioned in this chapter, due to the lack of laws that regulate, organize and control rural tourism, it is important that the political and administrative organizations of the area work on those laws, rules, and norms that regulate this type of tourism. The laws must include the regulation of activities such as planning, supporting, and promoting rural tourism in the area. The field of action must include the following aspects:

- Minimum requirements of commercial ventures that offer tourism services (rural lodging, food and beverages, transportation, etc.), minimum equipment for the activities to be carried out (horse riding helmets, appropriate shoes for the place, campsites, etc.), and tourism services (native tour guides).
- Minimum requirements of tourism businesses that operate in the area (travel agencies, campsites, tourist transportation, adventure sports, etc.), including the professional profile of the people who do these activities with certifications after receiving training in their fields (e.g., native tour guide, lodging managers, polyvalent waiter, polyvalent cook, etc.)
- Operating rules under the tourism law of Ecuador and the regulations of tourism activities in Ecuador with a special section that contains a consumer protection law.
- Rules that regulate prices regarding providers of tourism services and other complementary services (horse rental, sale of handicrafts, camping equipment rental, etc.).
- Regulations for those who break the law in terms of overpricing, client mistreatment, and not respecting reservations with the purpose of punishing illegal activities and ensuring high quality services.
- Regulations that include, among others, minimum quality, healthcare, hygiene, food handling, and tourist transportation standards.

Finally, it is important to mention that, according to the policies and regulations applied in the territory, its effectiveness can be measured. Moreover, since it is a relatively small area, it is possible to easily observe its evolution and perform an evaluation.

17.10 Human talent training

In the tourism field, training is an essential factor. The providers of tourism services need continuous, integral training to offer high quality services. Entrepreneurs and locals from rural zones must also receive training, as being prepared leads to the satisfaction with the tourism experience.

The Office of Quality and Technical Training of the Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador (2019), as part of the “Toda una Vida” (An entire lifetime) plan, developed tourism training programmes at an operational, administrative, and managerial level in order to teach skills and attitudes in the field of tourism. The themes of these training courses are varied and can also be directed at those involved in rural tourism. The ideal scenario is that all stakeholders receive specific training to acquire skills related to activities such as hotel services, hospitality, food security, and tour operation, depending on the interests of the service provider.

The governing body of tourism in Ecuador, MINTUR, also offers courses linked to specific areas such as tourism marketing strategies, social network management for tourism establishments and destinations, tourism culture, cost analysis, management for innovation of tourist packages, guidance techniques, encouraging groups, and innovation of tourism businesses.
The proposal of this governing body is directly related to rural ventures because the themes of the training courses are aimed at the development of all types of tourism.

It is worth mentioning that tourism training must not be neglected. The improvement of human talent must be continuous and be directly related to the requirements of the local population, aiming at gender equality, development, and authenticity of the destination. With this process, the community can regard respect, preservation, the value of natural areas, and cultural heritage as important aspects for the development of the local population, and, consequently, the improvement of the quality of life.

All in all, the proposal of this management model is related to the zone under study. The vision is the continuous development of rural tourism. The purpose of the proposal is the active participation of the community along with visitors’ satisfaction and the authenticity of the destination.

Sustainability is, then, a fundamental element in the proposal of this management model and must be applied at all levels in order to achieve an effective improvement in rural tourism. Therefore, the synergy of public administration, the local population, and visitors will strengthen tourism experiences with a higher competitiveness.

The present management model is a proposal that can be applied in the parish of El Cisne. Carrying out this proposal depends to a great extent on the capacity and vision of the public administration of this area.

References


