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# **Exploring best practices in territorial management for rural tourism and agritourism**

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## **Abstract**

This paper suggests that we need to change the management strategy of territory to prevent harmful event and natural disasters. We need to move from an “emergency management” to a “preventive management” that tends to preserve the characteristics and potential of the areas. The paper shows in concrete several examples and schemes of the best practices of Sustainable Management and Promotion of Territory–SMPT which can drive toward a Green Virtuous Territory Circuit necessary to guarantee the fruitful and innovative concrete perspective for the future of Rural Tourism and Agritourism in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Key words:** Sustainable Development, Territory Management, Tradi-Ovation, New Paradigms, Agritourism.

## **1. Introduction**

### ***1.1 General framework***

The theory of welfare economy, since its very beginning, has always promoted the reflection on the growth and development models (Solow 1956; Hirshman 1958). The quantitative importance of development, predominant until the half of the last century, brought to a minor consideration of issues such as environmental equilibrium and equity intra and intergenerational, and sustainability strategy. From the 50s onwards the principles of sustainable development have been remarked through several stages and contributions, and thanks to that, it is currently a widespread heritage among the most important international institutions. It is worth to mention some of them: Albert Hirschman in 1958 (Hirshman, 1958), Rachel Carson in 1962 (Carson, 1962), the Club of Rome in 1971 (Meadow et al., 1972), United Nations in 1972 (UN, 1972), the WCED in 1987 (WECD, 1987), the 1st World Summit on Sustainable Development in 1992 with the Agenda 21 proposal (UNESCO, 1992), the Millennium Goals in 2000 (UNGASS 56, Session 2000), the WSSD of Johannesburg in 2002 (UN, 2003), the promotion of the Decade of Sustainable Development by UNESCO (2005-2014) (UNESCO, 2005), UNESCO World Conference on Sustainable Development in Bonn (March 2009)(UNESCO, 2009), UNGASS Resolution for Rio+20 (December 2009) (UNGASS, 2009), “The Future we Want” (UN, 2012), “The Sustainable Development Goal 2015-2030” (SDSN, 2014). Beside these general stages, there have been many debates and contributions even at the university levels: numerous scientists, researchers, and universities from all over the world contributed to the evolution of the principles, issues, and methods for the evaluation of the Sustainable Development. For all of this consequently the 21<sup>st</sup> century is strongly characterized as the era of sustainability (Sachs, 2013).

### ***1.2 Promote Sustainable Development Strategy***

In the “*Proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and Targets*” (SDSN, 2014) is stated a program for the “future of the world” firmly pointing on integrated and sustainable development. The above mentioned program, has the strong aim to remark, that it is needed an integrated amount of supporting means, toward the fielding of synergies, exceeding the monothematic approach, (often used in the development's processes and actions) because that innovative approach gives more effective and efficient results. For integration we intend to try the way to reach a capable model to improve the real sectors in the economic growth, of each

sensitive area of the world, emphasizing also the maximum opportunity to add value to those realities. Thanks to their typical specificity, they can, if properly guided, turn their elements of weakness, in strength elements, providentially involved in their social-economic modernization process. This new course has to be characterized by the support of scientific and technological innovations and by more endogenous development than exogenous, bottom-up rather, than top-down approach. The sustainable development's vision lead to a perspective of intra-and inter-generational fairness developed through at least the following **5 key** aspects: **economic** (income adjustment), **social** (adaptation of the quality of life), **environment** (productive conservation and sustainable use of natural resources), **cultural** (management of cultural diversity), **management** (sustainability management). The formation of the human capital, research development and technological innovation are essential (Ciani 2012; Tinbergen et al. 1996) and they are the two options to be put in place. However we must to be careful not to introduce those mechanisms leading to a break with the past and present structures: we must wish a technological "sweet innovation", not impacting with both the economic and social environment.

### ***1.3 Sustainable development: output of political strategy toward the culture of all people and nations***

Over the past three decades sustainable development has been configured as a political, economic and cultural strategy. One of the pillars of this strategy is the construction and deployment of a new cultural and scientific scenario. In this context it will be essential to foster a culture of sustainability at all levels of society and in particular among young people, who, if well-educated could be the first actors in the creation of a sustainable society. For these reasons it will be essential to encourage projects to make them reach, as far as possible, the higher education. Moreover this could have as result the true, wished acceleration, involved in the process to overcome the deep crisis we are living. To reach these aims all projects of international cooperation, including the mutual consultation, will become operating, through a coherent, comprehensive, frequent, clear and penetrating atmosphere, with a modern quantity of contact with the media (ECA, 2006). All is mentioned above serves to enable the gradual establishment and positioning of the element that science links, as instruments of peace and solidarity (Summer et al., 2005), through the use of the technological innovations, increase the friendly user and the general accessibility. All initiatives should follow the guidelines of the farther ambitious program, pointing to reach the establishment of a "common house" supplying scientific global scale researches (Delors et al. 1996; Leal Filho, 2011, 2012), involving, in its wide planning, the full potential, which each socio-economic wave brings: the areas of education, science and technology, and the "spearhead" of the needed actions, to get the affirmation of the sustainable development culture. The action could, and will be characterized by a progressive process to build a scientific successful framework, that bears on the values pointing to a more concrete awareness and knowledge of the new generations. A scientific society within which the University may be once again the *Universitas*, going to mark the starting of a *New Renaissance*, process related to each country, and to the whole World Society. What is to be given, to the multitudes of young people today, are concrete signs of hope and freedom, leading to a more sustainable life and livelihood, to overcome the nowadays systematic way of working, that dominates our modern "easy times" "as a prison" in order to obtain an happier and sweeter society. In this sense, the science must facilitate the removal of the barriers (Rychen and Salganik, 2003), which have often imprisoned and overshadowed the ancestral values of the ancient societies, not to be approached as they were belonging to the museum but with the revival and rediscovery spirit. A kind of science that awards property

but also humanity (Allen, 2010; Ciani, 2011). The universities research centers growth, will characterize them, more and more, as a window of consciousness (Ciani, 2012) together with their spirit of analysis, and the skill brought by all the autonomous, world society's self-decision-making people.

- In the period following to the general assembly in Rio +20 is considered very important to have a conference designed to discuss and analyze the sidelines about how, when and what, has to be done, to follow the International Sustainable Development Strategy requirement settled by the University System. This is a way to support the assertion of the Strategy of Sustainable Development, even if probably weak in terms of Cartesian analysis and predictive power, but with a concrete fruitful approach willing to promote the culture of the territory sustainability (Allen 2010; Ciani, 2012). In times of global deep crisis, and lack of economic available governance models, we can think that is sufficient, going out to start working, to rule the proper management and promotion of the territory, as great vital resource of a real wealth and healthy production, as a defeating corner where to start to act against the impairing strength of the globalized international financial speculation lobbies. In support of this the proposal for the SDG's 2015-2030 by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network-SDSN are the follow (SDSN, 2014):

- *End extreme poverty and hunger;*
- *Achieve development and prosperity for all without ruining the environment;*
- *Ensure learning for all children and youth;*
- *Achieve gender equality and reduce inequalities;*
- *Achieve health and wellbeing at all ages;*
- *Increase agricultural production in an environmentally sustainable manner, to achieve food security and rural prosperity;*
- *Make cities productive and environmentally sustainable;*
- *Curb human-induced climate change with sustainable energy;*
- *Protect ecosystems and ensure sound management of natural resources;*
- *Improve governance and align business behavior with all the goals.*

From this point of view and in particular considering the goal “*increase agricultural production in an environmentally sustainable manner, to achieve food security and rural prosperity*” the exploring of the best practice of management of territory could be the key to support a true sustainable development of rural areas.

## 2. Method

In this paper we have chosen to use an historical, analytical and deductive method of investigation with the aim to highlight some key issues:

- the importance of rural tourism and agri-tourism in the sustainable development of the territory;
- the need to distinguish between sustainable tourism and agri-tourism;
- the importance of the potential of the territory in the promotion of rural tourism and agri-tourism;

The result of this investigation is the identification of new paradigms which could be full of potential for the Sustainable Management and Promotion of the Territory.

## ***2.1. Tourism, Rural Tourism and Agritourism. From new paradigm of the development to new movement of tourism: From mass to niche.***

The movement of tourism could be well represented by the official data. The international tourist arrivals have shown virtually uninterrupted growth—from 25 million in 1950, to 278 million in 1980, 528 million in 1995, and 1,035 million in 2012 (UNTWO, 2013). The growth of the movement is very impressive and the socio-economic data are even more impressive. The Tourism activity represent all around the world 9% of the total GDP, 1 by 11 employed, 1300 Billion of the export, 6% of the total export and 6% of total export of the least development countries (UNTWO, 2013).

The model of sustainable development, that is taking shape with the Green Economy, is trying to replace the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with the Gross National Happiness-FIL thus defining new paradigms of development processes. From an inverse relationship between the environment/natural resources of the traditional development is switching to a possible direct relationship between development and environment/resources. From a monocriterial approach (only quantitative and monetary) to a multi-criteria (economic, environmental, social, cultural, managerial). From the mere consideration of the problems of the present generations towards a vision of intra-and inter-generational. The development of ICT, which is strongly characterizing our days, is proposing a series of paradoxes in relation to the sustainable development of the territory (Najsbitt J., 1990,1994). Among these the first is related to the fact that the irrepressible spread of ICT (6 billion mobile phones in the world) is leading to the spread of invasive images of places, landscapes, traditions etc. to a mass increasingly high population. All this suggests that the need of making tourism with the traditional approach should gradually fade with the replacement of the communication of images. Luckily, paradoxically, it's happening the opposite process whereby: more pictures each person see, more is encouraged to touch directly that places. In confirmation of this the data show that there is the decrease of the phenomenon of mass tourism towards finding thematic tourism and niche. In this field you enter significantly Farm and Rural Tourism.

According to a market research (Ohe, 2000, 2003) consumers choose Rural Tourism for the following reasons: be in contact with nature, feel free, sunbathing, being outdoors, do things different from usual, make an holiday to rest and to be quiet. The characteristics of visitors, which can easily be extended to matters concerning rural tourism are: love for nature, the pleasure of genuine things, the desire for peace, taste for the new, the ability to adapt. In the current situation the tourist movement in the rural areas depends on the role that actors who operate within them play in creating attractiveness related to the environment, to biodiversity landscape, to tradition and culture, which together constitute the compartment wide mesh of so-called ecosystem services. The SDG 2015-2030 (SDSN, 2013) indicate that it is necessary to achieve a possible prosperity of the agriculture and for rural areas. In this context, it becomes crucial to understand who creates and manages these ecosystem services and who instead derives benefit at zero cost. These services which have been produced, are produced and will be produced basically by agricultural operators that guarantee good management practices and promote the area (Barbieri, C., & Mshenga, P. M. 2008). It's therefore necessary, in order to bring out the truth and contribute to clarity, to make an absolute distinction between farm and rural tourism. The Agritourism is defined as a tourism service related and complementary to agricultural activity. This means that the Farm is a service that can be offered only by the farmers (Lane, 2009). You can not talk about farm without the presence and activity of primary agriculture. In this context, in order to obtain the benefits of innovative activity, integrated, which reinforces the multifunctionality of the firm are the farmers who produce the prevalence of ecosystem services that are the basis of attractiveness for tourists in rural areas. For rural tourism is any form of tourist services

offered in the rural areas by operators who are not farmers. The operators of rural tourism coming mainly from non-agricultural sectors typically have greater financial and organizational capacity in making the investments necessary to put in a regime. The service operators do not actively participate to the best practices for the management of territory, but benefit from the potential of the same to a greater extent than those who is the real actor: the farmer. In perspective must therefore possibly be strengthened the role of the farm to avoid the risk that gradually, the great opportunity that the tourism in rural areas now enjoys, the richness and dynamism of the territory supported by farmers, lose the characteristic of niche and transformed into a mass movement (Tchetchik A. et al., 2012). In this case, the paradigmatic character of rural tourism, sustainable tourism, of multi-criteria and intergenerational approach will be totally lost to the progressive deterioration of the land that will no longer have the force of attraction of localism but the flat attractiveness of globalization indistinct.

## **2.2. Territory: why, what, who**

Our interest in the territory is linked to the fact that the situation in the world and specifically in some countries shows a trend of continuous degradation both for the use of land, used for other purposes than agriculture (Coldiretti, 2014) both for the inability of local and national governments to cope with the hydrogeological instability that more and more frequently occur due to the looming effects of Global Change Climate. The damages calculated globally, refers to 2011, amounted to over 311 Billion Dollar (IFRC, 2011).

In order to study and understand the territory better we need to define what it is. A good definition of territory describes it as the physical substrate (soil, arable land, water, forestry, biodiversity, renewable energy, not renewable resources, landscape, buildings and infrastructures, etc.) where are stratified economic, social, historical and cultural aspects (Romstad, 2010).

The territory is an open book written in an ink that we can not be read as it's normally. But we have a duty to make it readable to everyone with an innovative, smart, skilled approach. This because the territory have the following different role and functions: shows and represents, tells, speaks, sings, smells, flavor, stimulates feelings, catalyzes creativity, tickle inventiveness, attracts, inspire, intrigues, etc..

The territory in its widest and most holistic form, together with man, with his capacity to analyze, choose and operate together with the "humanity", which distinguishes him from all other living creatures, should be brought back to the center of strategies used by any development model by using a concrete, operational parameter in order to create the basic conditions for an indefeasible "NEW RENAISSANCE".

This will focus on strategies for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the different areas around the world, the relationship between urban and rural areas, the challenge of renewable energy, the spread of green economy and the eradication of poverty. Therefore, these objectives and issues need to be put into practice both in a local, national and international context of professionals who, from the perspective of "think globally, act locally", have the distinctly modernized know-how and the "ability to act" connected with the vision of the ongoing revolution.

### **3. Result: New Paradigms and New Approaches to the Territory and New Opportunities for the sustainable viability of Agritourism and Rural Tourism.**

#### ***3.1 New Paradigms, New Approaches, New opportunities to Capture***

In the light of the evaluations of the preceding paragraphs strongly emerges the possibility for future years to capture the New Paradigms and New Approaches that the Territory has to offer.

Among the New Paradigms we can include the following:

- Territory is a living entity;
- Territory is the reservoir of resources to be put into the cycle of a sustainable production system of goods and services;
- Territory is an intelligent cognitive system that educates and whence we can learn with a smart use of the ICT;
- Territory is specificity, rarity and specialty but creates social inclusion;
- Territory is "TRADI-OVATION" (intended as an acronym for "Territory, Rural Areas, through Development, Innovation, Organization, Valorization, user friendly Technology, ICT sharing, Online Networking) (Ciani, 2012). In this sense is the key word and the main theme around which any innovative process can be structured in order to move from words to actions and create the foundations for the New Model of Management and Promotion of the Rural Areas.

-The territory sends us the option to overcome the Labour Prison with the Free Time and the Recovering of the Environmental Space.

Among the New Approaches we can find:

- Transformation of the Paradox "more image you see and more and more you desire to touch directly" in a common Behaviour of the man in 21th Century;
- The role of the ICT of new generation as the Broad Band, Wireless, GIS , Drone etc.;
- Wellness and open air life;
- Guaranteed origin and direct production;
- discovery and experimentation of a empathetic approach to the territory.

Among the New Paradigms we can find:

-The didactical and social inclusion farms: expanding the provision of service of the farmhouse with the educational farm service could be an opportunity on the one hand to improve cash flow, on the other hand to push a more strong for the creation of a strong culture rooted, especially in young people, to the strategy of sustainable development of the territory. Educational visits can also include direct participation of young people and children for recover the know-how of some of the family farm production such as homemade bread, jams, crafts etc.;

-Territorial Laboratory: the activity of agricultural enterprise can also be transformed through activities of inclusion, also in an instrument facilitator of social cohesion for individuals more vulnerable and marginalized.

Other new opportunities are represented by: the "farm culture and heritage museums", the training and professional learning, the renewable energy production, the short food chains, the restaurants of local food, the landscape promotion and fruition, the leisure time.

When we take into account of inspiring the activity of Agritourism and Rural Tourism to the New Paradigms and the New Approaches and we try to catch New opportunities that the Territory can us assure, it's possible to create very innovative results in each local area.

This could activate a vital process of transformation of the rural areas which we call the Green Virtuous Territorial Circuit.



### ***3.2 Sustainable Management and Promotion of Territory-SMPT and the Territorial Management Contracts***

Today, for the population in the rural areas, if we manage and promote the territory with the best available practice, is possible to achieve the all target of the SDG's 2015-2030. The short local food chain, the organic farming, the Water and Carbon Foot Print management, the small enterprise, the agritourism, the landscape, the biodiversity, the rivers and water, the forests, the smart grids for renewable energy, the tradition and innovation, the rural touristic circuits (walking, cycle, horse, fishing, landscape watching, etc.) that all derive from the Sustainable Management and Promotion of Territory-SMPT are the concretes elements and aspects that contributes at the improvement and enlargement of the strategy to transform the weakness of traditional rural areas in a strong and sustainable Smart Communities.

An important tool that should be used to the safeguarding and the developing of the territory and for the dissemination of the best available practices is the Territorial Management Contract. The idea of the Territorial Management Contract consists in establishing, within a well defined normative context, a contract between farmers and local institutions that regulates all the necessary actions for the safeguard and the environmental protection of territory, as for example drainage, cleaning of ditches, construction of dykes, soil consolidation, setting of trees rows, etc., both on their own property surfaces and the surfaces surrounding a certain farm (Ciani A.; Ohe Y., 2012). The farmers are engaged in making these activities, in respect of precise technical parameters, and they receive a payment that can be related to the surface involved and to the degree of risk of the zone. In this way, permanent or temporary damages caused by landslides and mudslides are avoided, and the role of garrison farmer is reaffirmed; moreover, this kind of contracts gives greater functionality to the role of the agricultural sector, improves cash flow business of farmers, stimulates the use and dissemination of ICT for monitoring and control activities.

An important remark is that these contracts must be "strictly localized", it means that they must be constructed on the basis of the specific characteristics of the territory they refer to. According to the specific environmental problems of a certain zone, *ad-hoc* contracts must be established with the farmers protecting that same zone. Therefore, the territorial management contracts could involve different types of preservation activities, according to different specific environmental problems involved. In force of the decentralization, the territorial management contracts, established directly with citizens and farmers could constitute the most effective expression to guaranty the viability production of the ecosystem service that are the base of the attraction of the rural areas concerning the tourism movement.

The operators also could be links the farm and its multi-functionality, with the Territorial Management Contract -TMC, at the role of active management for the defense (avoid or limited of the risks) and development of the area in a vision where the territory is consider as a common good.

### ***3.3 Good Practice of Territorial Management-Some Case Study***

To confirm the proposal model and approach of this paper it's time now to present some practice realization as concrete demonstration to make in the rural areas:

***-Stone Art School of Fallera, Perugia, Italy:*** The "Blasi" Farm based in Macereto (Piegaro), in the Province of Perugia, promotes the first Weekend of Spring the International Stone Art School in the vicinity of the archaeological site of the City of Fallera and the Field of Grey Stone site within the above-mentioned Agricultural Farm "Blasi". The initiative was founded with the purpose of activating, in a farm producing excellent wine and olive oil with an Agritourism activity located in an area of great landscape value, a road map leading to the

exploitation of local natural resources, with a vision of tradition and innovation, in the application of good management practices of environment and for sustainable development. The City of Fallera shows the remains of Roman walls dating, according to some research, the Iron Age. In the farm insists a large surface area in the basement where there is a field which is called "Gray Stone" which has a great interest for sculptures, for the furniture of interior and wall coverings and fittings. It can be assumed that this stone was machined in the area from the antiquity. The name of the city, Fallera, comes from the Etruscan words "farθan" (genius, and creative life force) and "flere" (deity). In summary, we are in an area where we celebrated the "genius of the gods", the "creative genius" and then the "genius loci" of stone working. It is therefore useful to offer to all interested in the problems of the environment, sustainable local development and the outdoor life, an unique experience that preface to venture into two days of life full of cozy Umbria countryside in the discovery of the one's own "genius artist stone grinding accompanied by the use of Flavors, Colors and Sounds of a significant". The experience offers the opportunity to work within three days on its own stone that will be delivered upon arrival and that the participants takes at the end of the same initiative and bring to their own home as "unforgettable" and filled with the pride of their's own artistic ability.

***-The Hold Mills in the Tiber River Middle Valley, Umbria Region, Italy:*** In the prevalence of the Italian Valleys there are the presence of many heritage of the Hold Mills that have been manage by the water and where it's layered a large history of the rural populations concerning tradition of food production, gastronomy and style of life.

In the Tiber Middle Valley the LAG have arranged a survey about 15 Hold Mills to propose a plan of the rehabilitation and use particularly for the Agritourism and Rural Tourism activities. The survey was done in 2000 and now there are three cases of new restaurants and guest activity joint with an educational visit for the primary school

***-The Way of the Wine (Strade del Cantico) in Umbria Region, Italy:*** Umbria Region have a large tradition of wine production linked at the etruscan, roman, middle age, era. In the last 40 years many of the different wines were produced in the Region have achieved high result in the international market also for a valorization about the e-commerce. Trough the financial support of the Rural Development Program of the CAP 1999-2006 the Central Umbria Area near Assisi, the site where born and lived S. Francisco, was created a way to exploit the wine tourism movement. The name of this way is "La Via del Cantico". This name takes origin from the name of the poetry with which S. Francesco is recognized by the catholic culture as the Saint Protector of the Nature "The Song of Created" (Il Cantico delle Creature). Nowadays around the "Way of Cantico" running many Agritourism and Rural Tourism firm and during the year there are many events that claim a lot of tourists from every part of the world;

***-The Circuit of Landscape of Todi Municipality, Italy:*** the city of Todi, for its respect and attention for the environment and for its fascinating rural landscape was defined the More Sustainable City of the World. For this reasons the Municipality have promoting in 2010 the organization of a network of pathways which you can enjoy in multiple ways: single walking under a tourist guide, walking with horse or in mountain-bike etc.. Moreover along the Circuit of Landscape is possible go in restaurants and agritourisms and to arrange photo-landscape safari;

***-The TuDER Park Project, Todi, Italy-The TuDER Park Project, Todi, Italy:*** the city of Todi (Tuder = border, from Etruscan) of Etruscan origin (1000 B.C.) is placed at the top of the Hill of Todi. Different technical and management aspects have caused the beginning of an

inexorable problem of instability in major portions of the slopes. The Municipality had to run the expropriation of 900 hectares of land. The same Municipality is working in recent years to give these lands located between the urban area (historic and recent) and the purely rural area a new feature. The authors have conceived, within the broader Plan of Development, the idea of Hill of Todi T.U.De.R-Park- Territorial and Urban Development and Rural Areas Park. Multifunctional approach and vision as common goods are the two basic principles of the Park. This to obtain an overall improvement of the image of the city that can be characterized by advanced example of sustainable land management and promotion and modern governance of territory useful to improve the relationship between urban and rural areas.

**-The Hotel Widespread of Massa Martana, Massa Martana, Italy:** Massa Martana is a small town of roman origin with 5000 citizens. In 1997 the territory of the Municipality was stricken by a big earthquake. The reconstruction was very hard and one of the intuitions was the transformation of the hold building destroyed in a network of guest room with a central Reception and Restaurant. This solution have achieved a form of the Widespread Hotel that is the main new activity of the new prosperity linked at the territory potentiality for the agritourism and rural tourism.

#### 4. Conclusions

The analysis of the development model in place in this century has allowed us to demonstrate that the movement of the world tourism has a future of great interest to every area of the world. The phenomenon is paradoxically helped by ICT which, in the progressive image transmission, stimulates the curiosity in people to visit the sites for which it receives the same images.

Sustainable development is the model that is emerging with new paradigms: the demand for an innovative approach for a sustainable vital Farm and Rural Tourism. In the light of its specific characteristics the Agritourism, linked in a complementary and related to agricultural activity, is the form that must be privileged because the movement of niche tourism in rural areas is mainly based on the supply of ecosystem services. The farmers are those that guarantee the continuity of supply of these services. The territory to be understood as an intelligent cognitive system that educates and learning is the cornerstone on which to build this perspective. It is demonstrated that the Territorial Management Agreements, the activation and exploration of good management practices and promotion of the area are the concrete model which can ensure the viability of tourism in rural areas.

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