

ROLE OF AGRITOURISM IN SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN UZBEKISTAN: INSIGHTS FROM THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

Agritourism is based on the landscape, tradition and family-based farming from which may emerge a complete competitive tourism product. This paper evaluated the potential role of agritourism activities, their contribution to the sustainable rural development in Uzbekistan, considering the tourism potential of rural areas. The paper also analysed the long dating Italian experience on the farm rural tourism activities and the rural development policy providing incentives to the diversification of farming activities. The lessons learnt from the Italian case analysis provide some suggestion for the rural development policy design in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Agritourism, sustainable development, rural areas, agritourism activity, rural tourism

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the issue of sustainable development in rural areas has been addressed under a holistic approach, which considers the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability. In line with multi-faced definition, the sustainable development of rural areas in Uzbekistan is primarily targeted to the sustainability of farming activities and to ameliorate the viability of the rural areas, improving the quality of education, the medical and social services, reducing unemployment, and investing in rural infrastructure (Rustamov, 2007)

The State Program “Rural Development and Prosperity” - entered into force in 2009 - stimulated both the scholars’ debate and the operational implementing policy proposals aiming at promoting a sustainable rural development in Uzbekistan. The State program is characterised by a comprehensive approach to rural development, which includes a wide range of measures. On one hand, the programme includes investments aiming at improving the infrastructure of rural areas, e.g. developed provision of electricity, public services, water and natural gas supply. On the other hand, the program focuses on both the development of agriculture (including training and skills development of farmers), and the growth of entrepreneurship in rural areas based on diversification of farming activities, through the provision of rural-tourism services.

Sustainable rural development, effective use of existing domestic resources, rich natural and economic potential in the process of socio-economic reforms implemented in Uzbekistan are the actual key issues of the government policy. The huge amount of population living in rural areas (almost 50%) and the leading contribution of agriculture to the country’s GDP (17%) show that the effective use of the socio-economic potential of rural areas is a priority task of sustainable rural development in Uzbekistan (UZSTAT, 2016).

AGRITOURISM DEFINITION AND TOURISTIC POTENTIAL OF RURAL AREAS IN UZBEKISTAN

Agritourism generally considered a component of rural tourism: while in the latter, the tourism and recreational services provided by a wide range of companies (hotels, restaurants, etc.) agritourism activities carried out exclusively by farmers. Despite its simple definition, agritourism is a “complex and vastly differentiated phenomenon whose socio-economic and landscape impacts depends on the characteristics of each individual territory” where tourists have holiday and recreation (Lupi et al. 2017). Agritourism is based on the landscape, tradition and family-based farming from which may emerge a complete competitive tourism product. This is in line with (Dončić et al. 2006), who identifies the basic factors characterising a tourism destination: local attractions, their homogeneity or heterogeneity, the number of visitors and the level of development of tourism destinations.

In the agritourism business case, during their staying tourists have the opportunity to enjoy landscape, rural amenities and rural lifestyle, to get acquainted with local life traditions and to engage with local people in traditional farming activities. In some cases, tourists may have a chance to work and rest at a time, so tourist may be busy with rural activities some period of the day. This allows tourists to enjoy an environmentally friendly environment in rural areas and to face other traditions and cultures. Moreover, the farm rural tourism services (horsing, biking, etc.) provided by the farmers may attract rural tourists.

Agritourism plays a key role also for “Developing Eco-tourism in Uzbekistan”, given that it gives the tourist the opportunity to know and participate in a day-by-day life of the rural people (SCRepUzEEP, 2007).

In terms of policy design, it has to be mentioned the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on “Additional measures to accelerate the development of services in rural areas in 2013-2016”, aiming at ensuring accelerated and balanced development of the service sector in rural areas, the expansion of access of rural population to modern high-tech and market services, to create new jobs and to increase the incomes of the population. This Decree places a special priority emphasis on the development of rural tourism services on the basis of ecological, health-improving and sports tourism in rural areas, as well as on individual home-based guest houses development (Decree of the President, 2013). According to Table 1 the rural areas of Uzbekistan have enormous touristic opportunities (Ibodullayev, 2008).

Table 1. Touristic potential of rural areas in Uzbekistan

№	Types of tourism	Touristic resources	Potential use
1	Historical - archaeological tourism	Historical monuments, archaeological excavations	Medium
2	Ethnographic tourism	Traditional local lifestyle, national folklore, various ceremonies	High
3	Agritourism	Village gardens, cultural landscapes and agricultural work	Medium
4	Familiarization tour	Courses and seminars (music, craftsmanship, natural treatment sources, etc.)	Medium
5	Religious tourism	Sacred places, church, mosque and other places of worship	High
6	Ecological tourism	Locality of the villages in the natural-geographical regions	High
7	Health promotion tourism	Mineral water sources, boarding houses, health centres, resorts	High
8	Recreation tourism	Impressive locality, rivers, springs, forests, riverbeds, and so on	High

Source: Ibodullayev. N. (2008). Uzbekistan`s touristic resources. Samarkand. pp 65-66.

Table 1 clearly shows that there is a great potential for tourism development in rural areas, given that, in recent years, rural tourism is rapidly growing in many countries around the world.

Thanks to the effective organization of agritourism activities in rural areas of Uzbekistan, the infrastructure improvements and the ameliorated social services provision the following beneficial effects are expected: i) increase in income of the local population; ii) higher local administrations budget availability, due to new income-taxes flow; iii) creation of new jobs; iv) preservation and promotion of cultural traditions and national values; v) environmental protection and living standards of the rural population growth.

A relevant growth of agritourism activities and, more generally, the demand for tourism in rural areas is registered since the mid-seventies of last century in many European countries and in the United States. In Europe the process was further accelerated by the economic trends, by the gradual European Union (EU) enlargement and by the role played by the EU rural development policy aiming at financially support both the farming activities' diversification with the provision of marketable services – such as recreational services – and the development of tradition and cultural based farms' economic activities in the rural areas.

Indeed, agritourism is considered a valuable contributor to the rural economy in the EU, given that it allows economic activities' diversification and it favours the protection and the enhancement of the so-called “rural social fabric” and of the heritage characterising the European rural space. Agritourism is often defined as any activity, enterprise or business strictly related to agricultural production, services and expectations in tourism. “Agritourism Industry” is one of the fastest growing sectors in the travel industry and tourism in the EU, particularly in southern Europe. Actually, the EU is characterised by the largest and still growing share of tourists' arrivals. Consequently, studying the experience of developed Western European countries (Potocnic-Slavic and Schmitz, 2013) play an important role for an effective development of the agritourism activities in rural areas of Uzbekistan.

THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

The supply of rural tourism services by farms in Italy is long dating. Pioneer example are reported in the sixties of the last century, however the agritourism diffusion is observed since the second half of the eighties, when the first national law on agritourism (Legge n. 730/1985) entered into force and regulated the accommodation and meals supply activities carried out by farmers (agritourism farms). Later, farmers' tourism-related activities where considered crucial elements of the broader multifunctional role the society is demanding to agriculture, according to the definition of multifunctionality given by the 1992 Rio de Janeiro UN Conference and inspiring the EU rural development policy since 2000 (ISMEA, 2016). According to this principle, farmers provide a wide spectrum of public and/or marketable services (e.g. food safety, sustainable development, landscape and environmental protection, rural areas viability, preservation of

tradition-based cultural and societal values, recreation services) which complement the food supply. Consequently, the multifunctionality of agriculture increases the role played by farmers in the provision of recreational services to rural tourists and to the society as a whole and this broader role was taken into account by the current Italian framework law on agritourism (Legge quadro n. 96/2006). Examples of agritourism services are: indoor and outdoor accommodation, restaurant or catering, own agricultural products and foodstuffs tasting, on-farm exhibition of traditional farming equipments, teaching and information activities on farming and/or on traditional food, seminars and workshops hosting, recreational or information activities aiming to valorise historical, environmental and/or landscape elements existing on-farm or in the territory, activities of wildlife watching, sport activities and excursions (horsing, walking, biking, etc.), recreational fishing and hunting, pet-therapy, thermal therapy – where available, hay therapy in the Alps, summer-camps and farm kindergartens. Peculiar agritourism activities are linked to the so called “teaching farms” - where young children and students are informed about farming activities and, in some cases, directly participate in farming - or to the “social farms” – aiming at rehabilitating people suffering social, physical or psychological problems.

Even if agritourism is diffused worldwide, the Italian case is a crucial and successful example, having a positive economic and social impact on rural areas (Esposti 2006 and 2012). Two factors play a key role in strengthening the farm rural tourism growth in Italy: the richness and the diversity of the traditional food production and of the Italian cuisine and the diverse historical and environmental elements that characterise the Italian rural landscapes, attracting people from other regions and from abroad. On one hand, the most visited rural places in Italy are food-driven (olive oil, wine, cheese, traditional local vegetables producing farms). Thanks to this type of tourism, people are able to know the *terroir* (historical area of production and tradition-based know how) where traditional food are produced and to taste (and buy) them in the area of production. On the other hand, in other rural areas the agritourism activity is based on the richness of their landscape, environmental and/or historical elements.

It should be noted that, thanks to farm recreational services provision, many Italian-farmers improve their income, new job are created for the family-farm members and young people are attracted by farming activities (Broccardo et al., 2017). Additionally, the effective organization of agritourism activities in the Italian rural areas is an environmentally friendly and accessible tool for nature conservation and for the provision of public services (Flanigan et al., 2015; Lupi et al. 2017; ISMEA, 2017). However, the Italian experience shows that agritourism activity is an effective rural development tool only when the tourism supply is tailored on the rural area specific features (Lupi et al., 2017) and is based on a farms’ effective marketing strategies (ISMEA, 2012).

Regulation of agritourism activity

In Italy agritourism activity has been regulated by a national law since 1985 (legge n. 730/1985). A formal regulation of the agritourism business was a crucial factor for the diffusion of the phenomenon, given that it defined the conditions under which a rural tourism activity can be considered agritourism –i.e. carried out by a farm’s household and not by a tourism-related company – so taking advantage of a special legal and tax provision, more favourable than for the other service companies. In other words, a defined legal context permitted to establish fair and clear competition rules among agritourism and rural tourism companies.

Among the farm’s activities, the new legal context included not only the primary production of agricultural products, their on-farm processing and sale, but also the provision of accommodation and meals supply services. However, the provision of those services has to satisfy three main requisites: i) the agritourism activity has to be carried out by a household actively operating in farming; ii) recreation services have to be strictly linked to the primary farming activity - using on-farm available workers, farm’s structures, facilities, and products (“farming-linked activities”) and iii) the agritourism business has to be “subsidiary” when compared to the farming activity in term of revenue. In other words, this requisite is satisfied when the turnover generated by the services provision do not prevail over the revenue from the food production. As expected, when the legal context was clearly defined, the number of agritourism farms quickly increased by 3-5 times in most Italian regions.

In 2001 amendments were introduced in order to: i) extend the permitted “farming-linked activities” including other services related to the multifunctional agriculture definition; ii) clarify that farm’s products has to prevail over the off-farm ones in the provision of tourism services (i.e. a limited quantity of off-farm products is permitted in served meals) and iii) link some recreation services not only to on-farm facilities but also to territory’s landscape, environmental and cultural factors.

On February 20, 2006, the state framework law n. 96/2006 amended the agritourism regulation. New, less restrictive, limits on off-farm food product use were introduced and other local farms’ or traditional food processing companies were permitted also. In defining the agritourism business as “subsidiary”, when compared to the farming activity, the criterion of not-prevailing working time devoted to the tourism-related activities was introduced also. While the state law defines the agritourism basic requirements, the Italian Regions are delegated to further regulate the matter.

Consequently, each Italian Region (including the two autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano) issued its own agritourism law, defining the operational criteria regulating each agritourism activity and, in particular, the quantitative methods – based on standard labour-time

requirements per each activity, and on standard quantity and prices for food products – to prove the “subsidiary” role played by agritourism. Each regional agritourism law set up also the maximum supply level in each farm, in terms of beds and camping places. For example, the current Veneto Region law on agritourism limits to a maximum of 30 beds or camping places the accommodation facility and to requires that at least 75% (in value) of food products used to prepare meals is produced on-farm or by local traditional food producers. Each regional law states also the professional skills of the agritourism household and prescribes the professional training courses he/she has to pass before starting the activity.

Since 1991, aiming to promote the diversification of the farming activity through the agritourism business, Italian government established a more favourable tax discipline than that set for the conventional tourism companies: in most cases, income taxes are conventionally applied only on 25% of the turnover, while VAT is calculated on 50% of the overall agritourism turnover.

The role played by the EU rural development policy

The EU Common Agricultural Policy financially supports the diffusion of agritourism businesses since the nineties, aiming at stimulating the farms’ diversification under the multifunctional role of its ‘European agricultural model’, based on small-medium- scale family farms. Indeed, the creation of other gainful activities directly related to the holding – i.e. using the available farm’s working units, resources and/or products – is considered a crucial factor for the survival of the European model of agriculture, integrating the income gained from farming.

However, under the EU rural development programmes (2000-06; 2007-14 and 2015-20) the amount of public transfer to farms encouraging the setting up of agritourism activities appreciably increased and a wide range of co-financed on-farm intervention measures were made available. The increasing number of agritourism farms set up in the EU and, in particular in Italy, are strictly related to the rural development policy, proving the crucial role played by the latter. A comprehensive analysis of the impact of EU rural development policy on the agritourism growth in Italy is provided by Galluzzo (2017).

The EU rural development policy is based on the following principles: i) the public founding is financed by both the EU and the national budget – the EU co-financing being higher in the region showing economic and structural problems; ii) the policy is defined under the “subsidiarity principle”, i.e. the general policy framework is defined at the EU level, while the detailed rural development programmes (RDPs) are defined and managed, after the EU approval, at each member country level or at the regional level, as in the Italian case.

Examples of the wide range of diversified measures supporting the agritourism activities – with specific reference to the Italian Veneto Region (2015-20) RDP – are the followings:

- Human capital skills improvement: organisation of courses and training activities, aiming to let the household acquire the managerial skills for effectively managing an agritourism. The related costs are fully covered by the RDP funding.
- Farm's investment in buildings restoration and/or in facilities aiming to provide agritourism services. The investments costs are co-financed by the RDP funding, the co-financing share varying from 35% to 50% according to the localisation of the farm and the type of investment (the higher rate is assured in mountain areas). An overall agritourism planning is required.
- Investments aiming to create “new ecological infrastructures” (e.g. ecological corridors, buffer strips, wildlife-friendly hedgerows, wildlife-watching infrastructures, wetland) in the farm or to create or protect on-farm semi-natural habitats. The investment and management costs (including the income losses) are fully covered for a period of five years.

The Agritourism and farm recreational services supply trend

In 2016, 22661 agritourism operate in Italy (Table 2), with a 1.9% an increase compared to the previous year. The increase is observed in most activities: +1.8 % in accommodation supply, +1.1% for restaurant and catering.

Table 2. The agritourism in Italy (number of farms by supplied activity)

Number of farm by activity	2015	2016	Variation 2016/2015 (Absolute values)	Variation 2016/2015 Values (%)
Overall	22238	22661	423	1,9
Accommodation	18295	18632	337	1.8
• Number of bed places	238323	245473	7150	3.0
Restaurants and catering	11207	11329	122	1.1
• Number of seats	432884	444117	11233	2.6
Food tasting	4285	4654	369	8.6
Recreational, sports and cultural activities	12416	12446	30	0.2
• Horse riding	1269	1357	88	6.9
• Hiking	3242	3442	200	6.2

• Nature trials	1110	1317	207	18.6
• Trekking and excursions	1838	1939	101	5.5
• Mountain biking	2666	2585	-81	-3.0
• Teaching farms	1402	1497	95	6.8
• Courses	1952	1917	-35	-1.8
• Sports activities	4846	4752	-94	-1.9
• Other activities	6443	6704	261	4.1

Source: RRN – ISMEA elaborations on STAT data (2017)2

Major growth is observed in the activity of food tasting (+8.6%) – an activity aiming to primarily promote the farm's products for direct sale. While a limited growth characterises the overall recreational, sport and cultural activities supply (+0.2), the number of farms offering nature trials (+18.6%), horse riding (+6.9) and teaching activities (+6.8%) – i.e. the recreational services not yet largely diffused among farms – appreciably increases.

According to Table 3, in 2016, the farms orientation to supply a diversified basket of recreation services as integrated hospitality formulas is confirmed: 8264 farms (44% of the total number of agritourism) offer both accommodation and restaurant services; 10390 farms (56%) supply accommodation and other recreation activities. 19% of agritourism match food tasting and accommodation. Among the 11329 farm restaurants, 58% (6550 farms) combine other recreational, sport and cultural activities with the food and wine offer. Conversely, a more limited number of agritourism are specialised in only one activity: accommodation (27 %) or restaurant and catering (13%).

Table 3. Farms by type of agritourism services in 2015-2016 years (absolute values)

Years	Accommodation	Restaurant	Accommodation and restaurant	Accommodation and tasting	Accommodation and other activities	Restaurant and other activities
2015	4701	1497	8162	3309	10440	6434
2016	4985	1466	8264	3599	10390	6550

Source: RRN – ISMEA elaborations on STAT data (2017)

Table 4 shows the geographical distribution of the Italian agritourism among the different regions – including the two autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano – in 2016. Table highlights the concentration of the agritourism facilities in Central Italy (Toscana, Umbria,

Marche), in the alpine province of Bolzano and in Northern regions (Lombardia, Veneto and Emilia Romagna), that is the regions where farm tourism services firstly diffused. However, in more recent years the agritourism business development started also in Southern Italy, where an appreciable increase is observed in 2016: Campania (+13.3%), Puglia (+6.6%), Basilicata (+20%), Calabria (+16.1%) and Sicilia (+7.7%).

Conversely, in the regions where agritourism is a more mature phenomenon (Northern and Central Italy) a physiological limited reduction occurred in 2016: Emilia-Romagna (-2.6%), Umbria (-1.5%), Abruzzo (-4.3%), Piemonte (-0.4%), Liguria (-0.5%), Veneto (-0.4%), Lazio (-0.3).

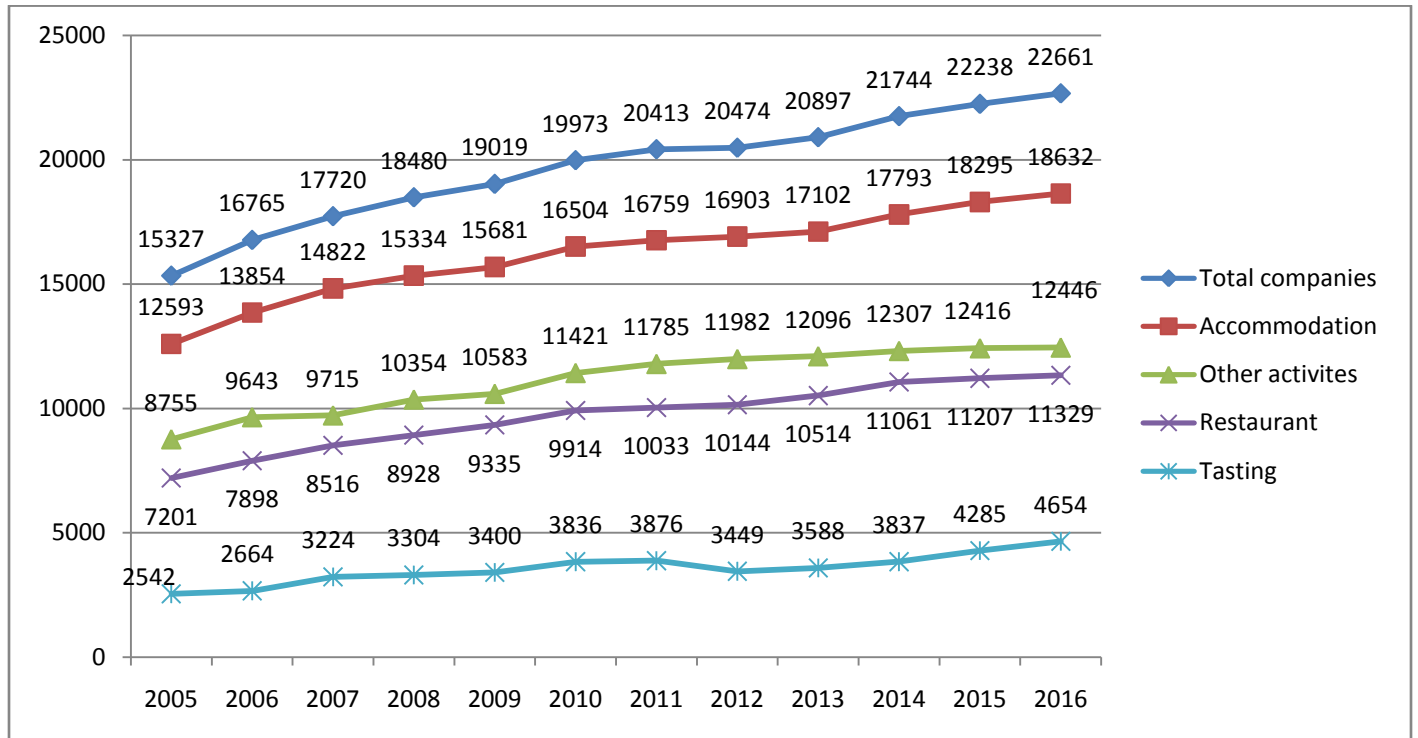
Table 4. Distribution of agritourisms among the Italian regions
in 2015-2016 years (absolute values)

Regions	2015	2016	Variation	Variation
			2016/2015	2016/2015
			Absolute values	Values (%)
Piemonte	1305	1300	-5	-0.4
Valle d'Aosta	59	61	2	3.4
Lombardia	1588	1614	16	1.6
Liguria	624	621	-3	-0.5
Bolzano	3125	3150	25	0.8
Trento	425	434	9	1.4
Veneto	1490	1484	-6	-0.4
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	643	656	13	2.0
Emilia-Romagna	1187	1156	-31	-2.6
Toscana	4391	4518	127	2.9
Umbria	1271	1252	-19	-1.5
Marche	1030	1060	30	2.9
Lazio	950	947	-3	-0.3
Abruzzo	601	575	-26	-4.3
Molise	135	136	1	0.7
Campania	572	648	66	13.3
Puglia	687	732	45	6.6
Basilicata	135	162	27	20.0
Calabria	521	605	84	16.1
Sicilia	705	759	54	7.7
Sardegna	794	749	0	0

Source: RRN – ISMEA elaborations on STAT data (2017)2

From 2005 to 2015, the number of Italian agritourism significantly increased (45.1%) (Figure 1): on the average, this growth is equivalent to 1.9 new activity per day. The growth affects the accommodation supply (+45.3%), restaurants and catering (+55.6%), food tasting (68.6%) and the offer of other recreational, sports, educational and cultural activities (+41.8 %).

Figure 1. Performance of the overall agritourism and by type of business in 2005-2015

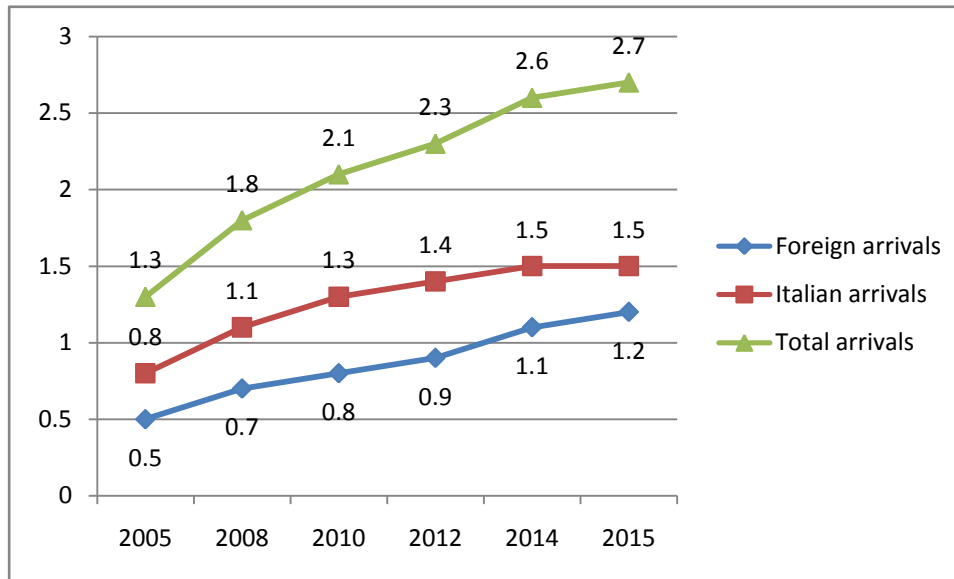


Source: RRN – ISMEA elaborations on STAT data (2005-2015)

More than a half of the agritourism activities are located in the hills, about a third are in mountains and only 16% in lowlands (ISTAT, 2017). It is interesting to note that the gender gap – the number women among farms' households is very limited – which characterises the overall Italian farms, is reduced among agritourism: overall, 36% of the them are managed by women, while the quota reaches 40.2% in Tuscany (ISTAT, 2017).

Analysing the Italian agritourism activities from the demand side (Figure 2), in the decade 2005-2015, the overall number of tourist arrivals doubled (+106 %), passing from 1.3 million to over 2.7 million in 2015, with a more significant increase in foreign visitors (+145 %) than in Italian arrivals (+82%). Agritourism arrivals are 2.4% of the overall tourists' arrivals registered in Italy in 2015 in hotels and bed and breakfast (ISMEA, 2017). This share is appreciable when the huge amount of yearly tourist flows towards Italian historical towns and sea-areas are taken into account.

Figure 2. Agritourism arrivals in 2005-2015 years (million people)



Source: RRN-ISMEA elaborations on ISTAT data

The presences – i.e. the number of overall days of staying- also show a significant increase (overall +72 %, +101% foreign tourists and + 45% Italian), albeit lower than the arrivals, given the progressive reduction in average number of days of staying per visit, which dropped from 4.9 days in 2005 to 4 days in 2015. Foreign visitors surpassed the Italians ones in 2005 and the gap between Italian visitors and tourists from abroad is higher when expressed in terms of number of days per visit (ISTAT, 2017).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING ITALIAN AGRITOURISM EXPERIENCE IN RURAL AREAS OF UZBEKISTAN

The growing success of Italian agritourism activities is due to several factors. The diversified and specific historical, cultural landscape and environmental elements which characterise many rural areas have obviously to be mentioned. However, these elements are not factors of success *per sé*, while a specific *strategic vision* is required by the household when his/her individual agritourism project is outlined: the specific basket of tourism services and the marketing strategy have to be tailored both on farm's and family farm structure and on the territorial elements able to attract tourism flows. The effective strategic vision in most successful cases go beyond the individual farm strategy, but is based on *networking initiatives* among different agents operating in the same area (see, for example the “wine-road” cases). The agritourism activity requires completely different skills and a different managerial approach from the primary farming activities. Consequently, public investments in *farmers educational*

attainments is crucial. Availability of *public funds to co-finance* the required investment in tourism facilities is also an essential factor, when agritourism are realised in small-scale farms. Last but not least, only a *well-defined legal and tax provision context* encourages the setting up of agritourism activities. In Authors' view, these issues could be considered lessons to be learnt when implementing a policy aiming at diffusing agritourism activities in rural areas of Uzbekistan.

On one hand, according to experts' opinions, Uzbekistan has a great potential for rural tourism and, in particular, agritourism development – thanks tanks to its diversified resources in rural areas (Table 1) – and the Government is investing a lot for the growth of this sector in rural areas. On the other hand, at present time three main problems hinder the development of agritourism in Uzbekistan, when the mentioned above factors are taken into account. First, this type of tourism business requires farms' investment to provide the tourism facilities and the public financial support is not yet adequate. This is one of the main reasons for the low rates of development of agritourism in rural areas of the country in the last years. The second problem is the absence of legal mechanisms regulating agritourism activity, a crucial factor, according to the Italian experience: for the development of this sector, a specific law on agritourism activity have to be adopted. Third, adequate investment on human capital (specific training and education, information provision, financial support to cover experts' advices costs, etc.) Finally, one of the most important issues is that the infrastructures in rural areas are yet developed insufficiently. Uzbekistan has great potential for organizing agritourism business in rural areas. In this regard, it is important for the country to study foreign experience to effectively define this tourism activity.

Form the on field and comparative research with the Italian case the following agritourism activities could be included in area-based well targeted agritourism programmes:

1. Establishment of active recreation zones in the countryside. In particularly, it is necessary to organize recreational facilities in beautiful, fresh places in rural areas. Additionally, horses, camels, hiking, fishing, various types of sports (such as tennis, swimming) and excursions (vineyards, fruit gardens), climbing and biking games can be organized;
2. In rural areas it is possible to organize various agricultural product fairs, local and international conferences, festivals (holidays, folklore), handicrafts;
3. Establishing gastronomic tourism in rural areas. Taking an active part in the preparation of Uzbek national foods and enjoy it on the spot, causes the great interest to travellers. In rural areas, melon, pumpkin, and bread holidays increase the flow of tourists to rural areas. There is also an opportunity for further development of

- agritourism through the establishment of eno-tourism (wine tasting) in the villages of Tashkent and Samarkand. The world-wide diffused “wine-roads”, “cheese-roads”, etc. could be taken as examples to create network among farms and agritourisms of a given area – specialised in a given value-adding agricultural product – and to implement tourism tours packages in the rural area.
4. One of the major areas of agritourism is the organization of alternative health-care services in rural areas based on traditional methods. It is also possible to organize health-care services in mountainous regions of the Republic (Fergana valley, Jizzakh region, Tashkent region, Samarkand region and other regions), as well as desert zones (mud cure, salt lakes). Also, traditional medicine diffused in some rural areas could be an element of attraction.
 5. Organization of training courses and seminars in farms. The organization of these courses is related to the activity of the farmer. For example, it is possible to organize tasting courses in gardening, bee-keeping, cookery, and wine. In addition, tourists can be directly involved in the harvesting of agricultural crops.
 6. Another important direction of the country's agritourism activity in rural areas is the organization of agricultural museums and natural parks.

Development of agritourism in rural areas of Uzbekistan is effective for both economy and social sphere. The development of this type of tourism in rural areas has resulted in an increase in tax revenues to local budgets, the creation of new jobs, and especially the employment of rural women, the improvement of rural infrastructure and the traditions and customs of local populations as well as improving environmental protection and, in general, contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas in the country.

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