

# Sustainable Rural Tourism





## Tourism: its nature and potential

**Tourism = multifaceted economic activity + strong social element**

Definition of tourism by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO):

**“tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, businesses and other purposes”**

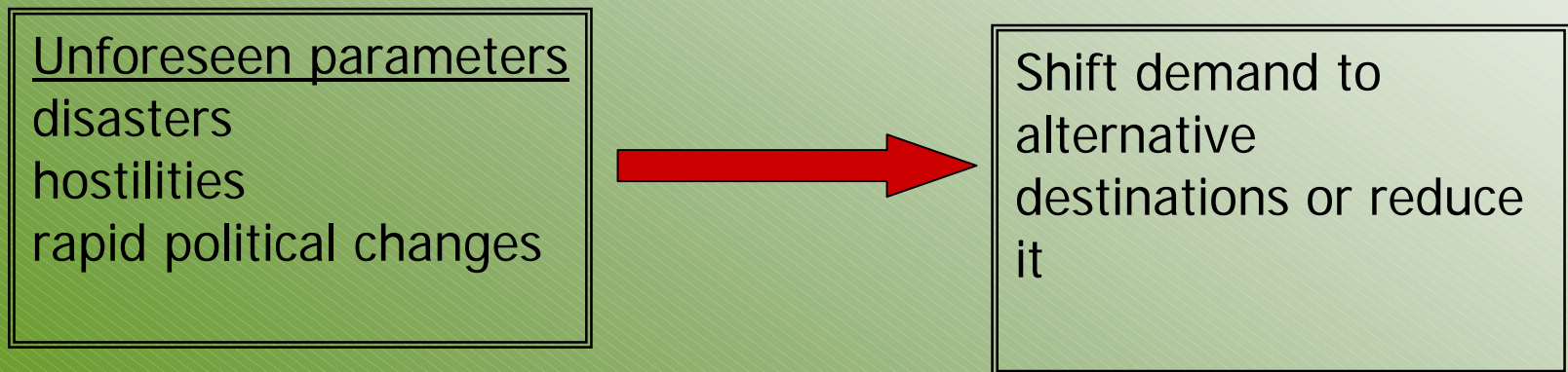
## Rising demand for tourism

Top Destinations	arrivals in 2000	% change from 1999
1. France	74,500,000	+2.0
2. Spain	48,500,000 (53.6 mil using previous series)	+3.7
3. Italy	41,182,000	+12.8
4. United Kingdom	24,900,000	-1.9
5. Russian Federation	22,783,000	+23.2
6. Germany	18,916,000	+10.5
7. Poland	18,183,000	+1.3
8. Austria	17,818,000	+2.0
9. Hungary	15,571,000	+8.1
10. Greece	12,500,000	+2.8
11. Portugal	12,000,000	+3.2
12. Switzerland	11,400,000	+6.5
13. Netherlands	10,200,000	+3.2
14. Turkey	9,623,000	+39.6
15. Ireland	6,720,000	+5.0

## Importance of tourism in national and regional economies

Tourism has been a major income-generator at national, regional or local level. It has been estimated that tourism accounts for 10.1% of the world GDP and 10.6% of world employment

**But**  
**Volatility of demand**  
**Drastically affects tourism patterns**



## Competitive nature of tourism

Constant effort to adjust to **current tourism trends** and to **diversify the tourism product**

- ❑ **market research shows** that current tourism trends display a tendency for shorter but more frequent breaks; and clients have expectations of higher quality and value for money and a growing interest towards “environmentally friendly” forms of tourism
- ❑ **diversification** of the tourism product to meet changing market demands involves the creation of sub-products in the form of new facilities and services to cater for a variety of tourist interests.



## Defining Rural Tourism

**Rural tourism = tourism that takes place in a rural context**

**Activity:** form of economic activity which depends upon, and exploits, the countryside

**Tourist:** "a state of mind whereby tourists are actively seeking a leisure experience in a rural environment"

## Contact with nature and rurality

- deviation from the traditional models of holidays
- "rurality" as the antithesis to modern, urban life
- "Alternative" forms of tourism such as agro-tourism, eco-tourism, etc have gained momentum helped by intelligent marketing and EU subsidies



## Costs and Benefits

### Benefits

- diversification of the local economy with improved income and employment opportunities
- emergence of pluri-activity, which protects income levels and guards against recession
- provision of new markets for local products
- expansion of business activity, through the creation of new businesses and the support of existing ones
- increased environmental awareness and protection
- strengthening of the local community identity and cohesion
- cultural enrichment of the host community (exchange with visitors)
- Greater viability of local services (e.g. transport)

### Costs

- more expensive public services
- increased land values or cost of houses
- creation of jobs which do not reflect the local community's skills and talents; seasonal, part-time, female jobs
- congestion and crowding that impinge on the quality of life and privacy of local residents
- increased crime and antisocial behaviour
- increased pollution and over-exploitation of the physical environment
- over-dependence on tourism may be detrimental to the integrity and values of the local community, as well as economic stability



## Defining Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems



## Principles of Sustainable Tourism

### Planning and management

- Long term perspective
- Understanding how market economies operate
- Ability to resolve conflicts of interest
- Participation of all stakeholders in the decision-making
- Applying Integrated Quality management



## Principles of Sustainable Tourism

### Approach

- ❑ not anti-growth attitude, but development which emphasises the limitations to growth and encourages tourism development within these limits
- ❑ recognising the limits to what may be achieved in the short and medium term – be realistic
- ❑ concerns are not just environmental but are also economic, social, cultural, political and managerial – integrated approach
- ❑ emphasising the importance of satisfying human needs and aspirations (equity and fairness)



## Principles of Sustainable Tourism

### Community involvement

**“a community-based approach to tourism development is a prerequisite for sustainability”**

- empowering all stakeholders in the decision-making process
- informing and educating stakeholders about sustainable tourism development issues
- avoiding the domination of local tourism by outside interests
- respect the community's desires and objectives

## Top-down approach

## Bottom-up approach





## Monitoring and evaluation



## Indicators of Sustainable Tourism

- site protection (conservation of nature and natural resources)
- visitor stress (per annum/peak month)
- intensity of use (persons in peak period/hectare)
- social impact (ratio of tourists to local)
- developing control (existence of environmental review procedure or formal controls over development of site and use densities)
- waste management (percentage of sewage from site receiving treatment, water supply)
- planning process (existence of organised regional plan for tourist destination region)
- critical ecosystems (number of rare/endangered species)
- consumer satisfaction (level of visitor satisfaction, questionnaire based)
- local satisfaction (level of local people satisfaction, questionnaire based)
- tourism contribution to local economy (proportion of total economic activity generated by tourism only)



## To evaluate impacts

### Check at least 3 things

- ↖ Carrying capacity – the ability of the site to support existing and future levels of visitors
- ↖ Quality of services and how it is assured (e.g. through education of staff, IQM)
- ↖ income and jobs generated by tourism for the local population



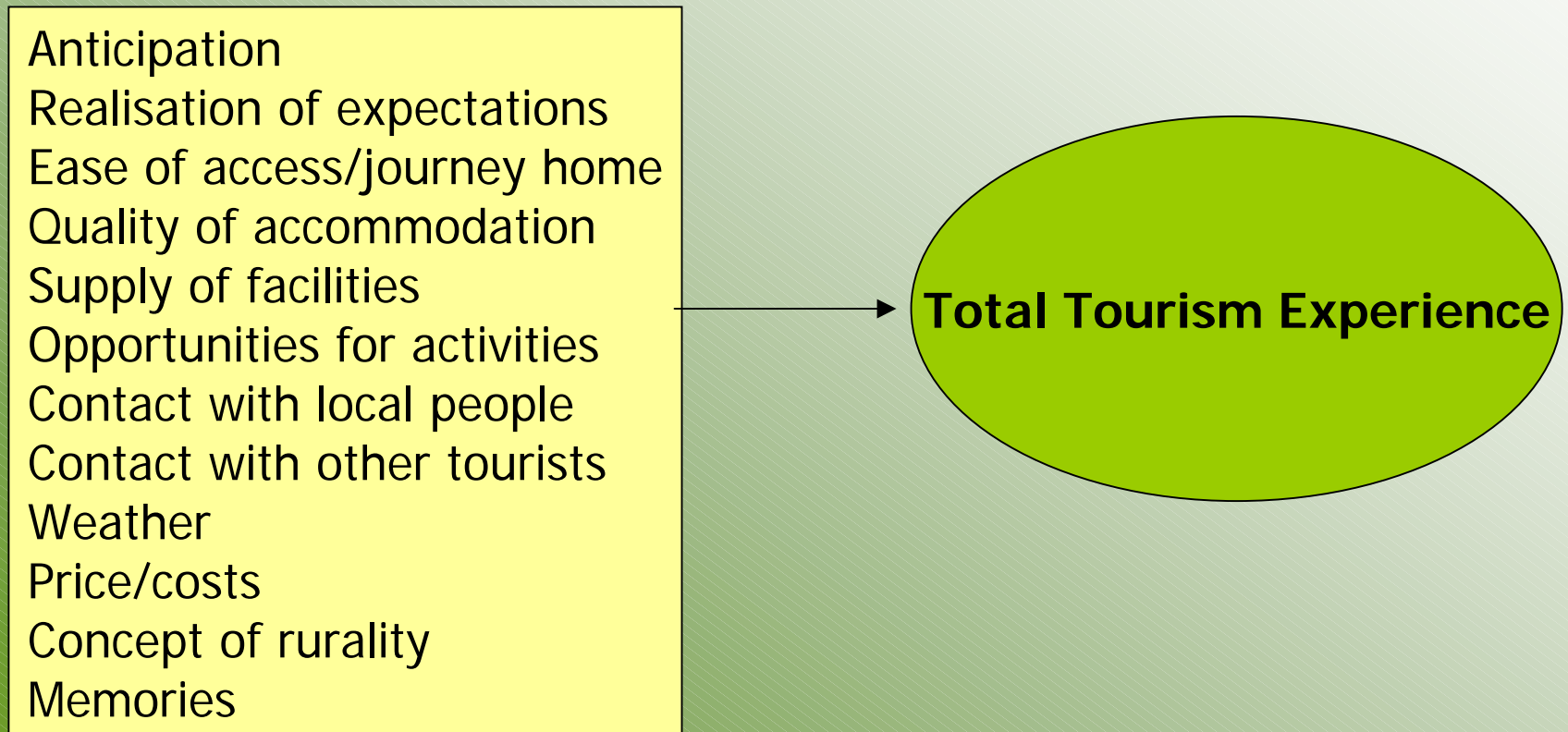
# Typologies of Rural Tourism Development



## Based on a classification of tourist destinations:

- Organised mass tourism destinations
- Individual mass tourism destinations
- Explorers' destinations
- Drifters' destinations

## A rural destination is defined by the “tourism experience”





## Based on the relative importance of tourism in the local economy

- ❑ **Modest tourism:** small scale, complementary role in the local economy, mild forms of tourism. More benefits than dangers to the local community, matched by a desire for further development.
- ❑ **Dominant tourism:** leading sector for the local economy, intensive forms of tourism, over-dependence on tourism, influx of outside investors, over-exploitation of natural resources. The dangers manifest themselves in extreme form.
- ❑ **Balanced tourism:** dynamic sector in a balanced local economy. Some intensity of development is combined with mild forms. Support and benefit between mutual sectors.