

**“When you travel, remember that a foreign country is not designed to make you comfortable. It is designed to make its own people comfortable.”  
C.Fadiman**

**Research: Rural Tourism and Environment Conservation in Georgia**

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### **Introduction**

Rural Tourism (hereinafter RT) is one of the world's fastest growing industry, identified as a mean of generating national income for indigent and needy population in rural areas. RT is becoming very popular in Georgia and could be promoted as a major source of national income in the rural areas in the country.

In discussing the status of rural tourism in Georgia we've focused on four main topics:

- Patterns of tourism organized in rural areas;
- Their economic, environmental and socio-cultural impact;
- Movements in rural tourism in Georgia : background innovations, implementation of projects, and constraints;
- Analysis of potential of rural tourism in Georgia : marketing opportunities and trends.

### **Definition of Rural Tourism**

Rural tourism takes many forms, so it is difficult to give an exact definition. RT is regarded as part of both "rural development" and "sustainable development".

RT is defines rural development as a process which leads to a rise in the capacity of rural people to control their environment, resulting from more extensive use of the

benefits which ensure such control. Rural development is affected by many factors, including economic development, humanitarian attitudes, environment, social values and knowledge perceives sustainable development as the way to raise living standards, to allow people to reach their human potential, to enjoy lives of dignity, and to ensure the welfare of present and future generations.

### **Negative Environmental Impact of Rural Tourism**

Growing number of visitors, that's welcomed, may overexploit natural resources and have a heavy impact on the virgin environment in Georgia . In addition, tourism may require infrastructure, transportation and other facilities which can cause environmental distortion.

Some tourism activities such as trekking and camping have caused environmental pollution from unhygienic disposal of human waste, discharge of sewerage effluent into water sources, and littering. Without strict regulations on appropriate land use, high-rise buildings such as tourist hotels, and the overwhelming number of tourists, have resulted in congestion and spoiled much of the local scenery.

### **Socio cultural Impact**

If the income from RT is higher than what rural people will be able to earn from agriculture, then tourism could be accepted willingly in many rural areas in spite of aforesaid negative effects.

Poorly planned tourism can mean that villages are invaded by foreign visitors with different values, disrupting rural culture. A decline in participation in rural traditional and cultural practices follows. Traditional houses could be replaced by modern buildings, as the local culture is eroded. The agriculture which was the basis of traditional life could be also replaced by, and becomes secondary to, tourism.

It is widely recognized that such negative impacts on rural communities could become stronger, and that rural tourism must be modified to give rural people its benefits.

**Note: full text could be found at ICCT library**