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Rural Development Conference

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Responsible and sustainable development of
rural tourism in South Africa

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What defines rural tourism?

Many definitions for Rural areas and rural tourism

Rural areas are heterogeneous

Common features of rural spaces according to (Ashley & Maxwell):

- Spaces where human settlement & infrastructure occupy only small patches of the landscape.
- Places where most people spend most of their working time on farms
- Abundance of land

Reasons and considerations to develop tourism in rural areas

- Increase participation of poor communities
- Bring wider benefits to rural areas
- Diversifying of rural offerings
- Economic growth / employment creation
- Reduce out-migration & possibly re-population

Reasons and considerations to develop tourism in rural areas

- Dependency on the following factors;
 - Commercial interest
 - Economic reason
 - Logistical framework
 - Quality of product offering current and future
 - Available of skills
 - Accessibility
 - Infrastructure

Challenges facing rural tourism

Common requirements for tourism development	Common characteristics of rural areas
• A product, or potential product	• Variable. May have a high-value unique selling point, may be an attractive desired location for travellers from cities, may have little to offer
• Access – transport infrastructure, limited distance, limited discomfort	• Distant from cities, poor roads, few trains/buses/planes
• Investment in facilities	• Limited access to financial capital, affordable credit & private investment
• Skills in service, hospitality	• Low skills (skills migrate)
• Regular & quality inputs. e.g. supplies of food	• Undeveloped commercial production, distant from markets

Challenges facing rural tourism

Common requirements for tourism development	Common characteristics of rural areas
• Marketing and marketing networks skills	• Distant from marketing networks
• Clustering of tourism products to create "package" holiday	• Lower concentration of tourism products is one place
• Investment – government & private sector	• Low priority

Approaches to rural tourism

- Agri-tourism – purpose of the visit has a specific agricultural focus
- Farm tourism – conversion of farms into accommodation with visitors exploring the surrounding area
- Rural tourism, or rurally-located tourism can include the above but may include lodges, safari drives, adventure sport, walking trails, heritage sites, and any activity taking place in a rural area.

Policy motives: rural growth, tourism product development

- Economic growth
- Regeneration in the face of agriculture decline
- Diversification of under-developed areas

Key issues to be considered

- Creating a product
- Ensuring sufficient quality of the product and services
- Investing in marketing and attracting visitors
- Dealing with practical, logistical and implementation challenges
- Building local institutions at community level
- Building institutional networks and policy support
- Dependency of rural tourism on national tourism developments

Key issues to be considered

Strategic Policy Planning Components

Continuous consultation

Institutional
Arrangements

Amenities

Access

Attractions

Awareness

Funding

Community involvement

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Thank you

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