

JEL Classification: M10, M31, L83

<https://doi.org/10.35945/gb.2020.10.039>

SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY FROM COVID-19 (IN ADJARA REGION)

ROSTOM BERIDZE

PhD, Professor

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia

beridze.rostom@bsu.edu.ge

IRAKLI KORDZAIA

PhD, Associated Professor

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia

kordzaia.irakli@bsu.edu.ge

MERAB DIASAMIDZE

PhD, Associated Professor

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia

diasamidze.merab@bsu.edu.ge

NATIA BERIDZE

PhD, Invited teacher

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia

beridze.natia@bsu.edu.ge

Abstract. Tourism is of particular importance to the world and many countries have chosen it as one of the main priorities of the country's development. Based on the accepted practice and the critical ecological background, each country recognizes the sustainable socio-economic development of tourism, developing concepts, systematic and complex approaches, drafting of state action programs, long-term perspectives and other aspects whose existence and implementation depends on state government. Therefore, this field can bring significant positive socio-economic results compared to other fields of economy. Rural tourism is a pleasant and useful combination of two positive events. The first is the entrepreneurial activity that can bring other benefits to the entrepreneur and the second village where the main holidays are housed in which the tourist can get interesting services such as sanitation, cognitive, aesthetic or other.

According to the UNWTO, rural tourism will be more popular after the pandemic, as tourists avoid crowded places and prefer to relax in ecologically clean environment. This new trend will be a positive event and previously unpopular places among tourists will become a source of income. This in itself will help stimulate the development of rural tourism after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The objective of the research is to study the opportunities of the rural tourism development after COVID-19 pandemic in Georgia and in mountainous regions of Adjara. Main questions discussed in this paper are: to analyze the employment opportunities for the population of rural areas; to foresee the possible secondary income, how to reduce the migration of rural population, especially the youth; possibility to supply the locally produced goods and service and to increase their awareness; possibilities to develop tourism-related industries. The joint efforts of government, municipal authorities, and business providers, with involvement of rural area inhabitants, are essential for the development of rural populated territories.

KEYWORDS: RURAL TOURISM, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM MARKET, ADJARA REGION. COVID-19.

For citation: Beridze, R., Kordzaia, I., Diasamidze, M., Beridze, N., (2020). Sustainable Rural Tourism Development Recovery from Covid -19 (In Adjara Region). *Globalization and Business*, 10. 287-294. <https://doi.org/10.35945/gb.2020.10.039>

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 global pandemic has had an unprecedented socio-economic impact and therefore the development of sustainable tourism has an unprecedented role to play in overcoming the crisis. The development of tourism plays a role of a stimulator (catalyst). Therefore, this field can bring significant positive socio-economic results compared to other fields of economy. Tourism is of particular importance to the world and many countries have chosen it as one of the main priorities of the country's development. Based on the accepted practice and the critical ecological background, each country recognizes the sustainable socio-economic development of tourism, developing concepts,

systematic and complex approaches, drafting of state action programs, long-term perspectives and other aspects whose existence and implementation depends on state government. It is also important to have synergy between the people and the government, the emergence of different specialized organizations.

Cities that treat travel promotion as a strategic investment has seen an increase in more visitors, more jobs, and higher tax revenues (United States Travel Association, 2013). Increasing rural tourism by improving marketing strategies could have a distinct impact on these destinations by increasing tourism dollars and providing employment for the populations.

Rural tourism is a pleasant and useful combination of

two positive events. The first is the entrepreneurial activity that can bring other benefits to the entrepreneur and the second village where the main holidays are housed in which the tourist can get interesting services such as sanitation, cognitive, aesthetic or other (Beridze, 2017).

Unbalanced development of rural settlement areas is often related to the unequal territorial opportunity, increase in rural population migration, insufficient level of social and technical infrastructure development, absence of alternative employment opportunities, and contrast in the level and quality of life between the city and village that finally led to the boost of Aggravation of social problems in rural area. As a result, it gets particular importance in modern conditions, to solve problems of economic and social development of rural areas.

The main purpose of this research is to study assumes, rural tourism, concerned with the utilization of natural, cultural, historical, and other resources while developing the tourism product, could be considered as a promising option for the development of rural entrepreneurship and rural settlement areas after. Conducting thorough marketing research will enable the correct decision-making when investing (Elingsen and Rosendahl 2001) to create high-quality exclusive tourist products as essential success factors in the sustainable development of rural tourism during the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic.

The growth in travel to rural regions gives great potential for the rural tourism market. These areas have the opportunity to market their destinations to many different populations, which will bring more opportunity to the residents of these areas and increase business. Rural tourism increases both population and economic development within a community (Devadze et al., 2018).

Rural tourism offers important opportunities to countries with low-level economic development. These opportunities include local culture and heritage, accommodation and other service provision, active countryside services (Evans and Pickel Chevalier). The last three decades show sharp growth in rural tourism as city people seek to relax in rural areas. People ranged from walking, horse riding to the more popular adventure and extreme sport. Rural areas offer all required activities and materials which are needed for tourists to experience rural life (Chalip et al., 2005).

Rural areas across the world are characterized by a high rate of change. Traditionally, the countryside was a territory used for production and farming. Now everything is changing – globalization and new technologies affected the fabric of rural communities. They moved from production to consumption (Marsden, 1998; McDonagh et al., 2010).

Modern marketing approaches are especially important for modern tourism business development. Unlike other areas of tourism business, it is distinguished by its specificity, e.g. seasonality (Social Capital in Georgia: Final Record and Recommendations 2011). This is where the marketing will be directly involved in the existing activity and find effective ways to attract a wide range of tourists and to provide maximum pleasure to the tourists.

The development of information and communication

technologies (ICT) has fundamentally changed the tourism industry and has had a significant impact on the tourism ecosystem. The Internet has transformed the tourism landscape and brought new tourist products and services. Travel companies have a special benefit in online technologies (Dixit et al., 2006). Today, the functions of travel companies are integrated into the intranet and extranet network resources. As a result, companies in the tourism industry have been reorganized to adapt to the existing environment. Tourist companies have actively started to move their profiles into the Internet space and establish a place on the global market.

The role of the Internet in this field includes following: research, informing, presenting/introducing products, interactive interaction, description of tourist places, presentation of tourism potential, visual tour of video tours and routes, interaction with business partners and leisure planning (Abuladze et al., 2014). The Internet is considered as the main source of travel information that exceeds the value of traditional media forms and marketing tools. Half of the tourists (50%) apply to Internet sites and social media, 10% print media, 10% radio and 10% television and 20% tourist agencies for travel information (Tourism Economics 2013).

Based on the experience of countries such as Spain, Finland, Cyprus, Malta (Hall et al., 2005) and others, we would like to emphasize that the development of a state regulation system to support sustainable rural development is a crucial prerequisite for the successful development of rural tourism in Adjara. The rural regions in Georgia differ from each other by the landscape, regional traditions, natural resources, and socio-economic conditions. Most of the rural areas are characterized by high unemployment levels and low prospects for young people, which lead to the withdrawal of villages by the educated youth and aging villages (Torja, 2008).

Research Method

To achieve the purpose of the research, we used methods to collect and analyzing information and quantitative research. The research was based on the following principles:

- Focus group interviews, as far as study results, it implies to find out the community perception towards tourism from the different social perspectives. Also, to use the mass surveying method.
- The General descriptive and correlative approach is used to analyze the survey results and find out the relationship between the variables. Quantitative analysis is essential to find out and show in dynamic the population perception changes in the long term.

We present the description of the current situation and the critical assessment of opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) for the initial stage. Therefore, the following elements should be considered:

- Description of development processes and development goals; What should we achieve, what should be changed in terms of materials and behavior; the way and means of achieving the goal;

- Ambitious and unrealistic goals;
 - Incomplete description of the action area;
 - Setting priorities;
 - Description of the relationship between the strategy and the existing projects;
 - Project financing sources are not predetermined;
 - Distribution of functions and responsibilities;
 - Lack of time plan;
 - Definition of sources of funding.
- Local development strategy should meet:
- Integration: To be maximally covered by different sectors, projects of different sectors should be coordinated and conform to development goals;
 - Coordination: must be based on important players for the region. The local development group should be created as a coordination and decision-making body;
 - Sustainability: Individual projects and overall strategy should be economically and socially justified and meet environmental principles;
 - Based on consensus: The preparation and implementation of the Strategy should not be in the fight, should be in the form of a dialogue and should not be dominated by any group of interests;
 - Action-oriented: the problems that need to be addressed, not only the texture to be described, but the proposed solutions must be implemented through projects;
 - The pilot character of the strategy: the strategy should prevail the new and innovative design ideas, which will have a pilot character.

Results and Discussions

According to the data of the National Statistics Office of Georgia in 2019, 86.2% of the economically active population is employed in the country. This figure represents 87% of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2019). 48% of employees in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara are as hired employees, 52% are self-employed (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2019). It is noteworthy that Adjara region has important prerequisites for the development of tourism - historical monuments, traditions, resorts, as well as other resources. Tourism is a field that allows the region to utilize the existing natural, historical and cultural resources. The tourism sector in Adjara municipalities is in the stage of development. Although some of them do not have any kind of resorts, tourism development has very high potential. The potential for tourism development is led by historical monuments and sights, presence of resort, great traditions of people's crafts and folklore, ecologically clean environment, water resources and more.

Adjara is a historical area that was always interesting for visitors. For local and foreign tourists, districts of Adjara are very interesting because of the special landscape, nature and historical places. There are special cultures that are cultivated mainly here. The development of Adjara region is mainly related to tourism and agriculture. In both directions, it has strong potential. Unique grape varieties (Chkhaveri,

Tsolikouri) gives it the ability to produce high-quality wine, which positively affects the welfare of the local population (Beridze, 2011). Also, there is a positive impact on the development of wine tourism. Nowadays, wine tourism routes are marked for tourists in Adjara with the support of Adjara Resorts and Tourism Department. However, it is also planned to work on folk and adventure touristic routes.

Infrastructural projects implemented by the regional and local governments during the last few years contributed to the promotion of local population infrastructure needs (roads and water system) as well as the development of tourism infrastructure. The number of tourists has increased significantly. However, there are still some places in Adjara, of which adequate exploitation will attract more tourists.

The precondition for rural tourism development is the diversification of local economic activities, attracting investments and promoting competitive agricultural and environmental practices through the participatory and strategic planning of rural development. Districts of the Adjara region should be developed, development potential and optimal use of local opportunities and resources should be strengthened.

The cooperative and coordinated action of regional and local governments is crucial. It is important to raise awareness about the development of rural tourism in the population (Scott 2004), as well as strengthening the relevant local government structures. Cooperation between different sectors is the starting point for integrated development. All the players who play an important role in this area should be involved in the development process. Often urban and rural communities are considered contradictory, although they are part of each other and they need one another (Edward et al., 2002).

Landscape and regional peculiarities of rural regions create the diversity of gastronomy and relaxation. Rest is becoming more and more popular in rural areas. Consequently, tourism development will positively affect the development of rural areas. However, there is a shortage of health care facilities and medical staff in rural areas. In many cases the large distance between the pharmacy and medical travel.

The rural areas are characterized by a remote location from the central regions. However, it is possible that the region close to the center was characterized by a rural structure. The low density of the settlement and geographical location distinguishes the village from the city. Compared to the densely populated areas, the agricultural regions are characterized by a low pace of development. The policy of the state should be directed to the growth of economically strengthening, revenue and employment of regions with weak structures.

To study opportunities for rural tourism and non-agricultural sectors we prepared SWOT analyses:

Strong points:

1. Natural resources (rivers, waterfalls, and mountains);
2. Cultural diversity and heritage;
3. Monuments, historic castles, and cultural heritage;
4. Flora and Fauna;

- 5. Protected areas, vacation in wildlife;
 - 6. Diversity of local dishes;
 - 7. The existence of unique grape varieties;
 - 8. Safe, secure, and interesting places for visitors;
 - 9. Geographical location;
 - 10. The interest of the population for the development of entrepreneurship;
 - 11. Support of preferential state programs;
 - 12. Tourist routes;
 - 13. Wide support for international donors;
 - 14. Tax privileges for mountainous regions.
- Weak points:
- 1. Inadequate experience and skills in tourism and services;
 - 2. The lack of tourists and visitors, except some places;
 - 3. The development of tourism and poor infrastructure development of related services;
 - 4. The absence of ecotourism;
 - 5. Lack of communication with tourist agencies, chaotic tourism sector;
 - 6. Low level of marketing knowledge;
 - 7. Lack of guides;
 - 8. Weak popularization, advertising and information support, lack of data (e-applications, maps, vacation sites, routes, etc.);
 - 9. Lack of youth programs;
 - 10. The non-existence of sharing experience at national and international level with other regions;
 - 11. Poor infrastructure in certain areas of the road;
 - 12. Poor quality control of local market products, especially in food safety;
 - 13. Business chaotic production, unregistered business enterprises;
 - 14. Lack of youth, their aspiration to other municipalities related to the job;
 - 15. Lack of qualified specialists/staff;
 - 16. In the field of business, low quality of marketing knowledge;
 - 17. Unregistered land plots;
 - 18. Lack of agricultural infrastructure, technology (irrigation, warehouse, equipment, etc.);
 - 19. Concentration on agriculture;
 - 20. Sustainable management practices of forest resources;
 - 21. Limited access to credit and state programs.
- Opportunities:
- 1. Creation of tourist information base;
 - 2. Marketing;
 - 3. Creation of tourist routes, vacation sites, development of significant places and arrangement of cultural events at places;
 - 4. Improve tourism infrastructure and service quality;
 - 5. Eco and Adventure Tourism Development;
 - 6. Education in the field of tourism and service;
 - 7. Participation in national and international events;
 - 8. Advocating restoration of cultural heritage;
 - 9. Relationship with export markets and increase product turnover;

- 10. Recycling of agricultural products (including medicinal plants);
 - 11. Use of renewable energy and resource-saving technologies;
 - 12. Development of Agrotourism;
 - 13. Rational use of land resources;
 - 14. Attracting investors and supporting innovations;
 - 15. Access to innovative and modern technologies;
 - 16. Interesting and encouraging young people in the direction of the business.
- Threats:
- 1. Competition in tourism;
 - 2. Environmental pollution;
 - 3. Climate change;
 - 4. Natural disasters;
 - 5. Frequent change of prices, instability;
 - 6. Politically unsustainable environment and frequent legislative amendments;
 - 7. Landslide Zones;
 - 8. Water pollution and waste disposal;
 - 9. Climate change;
 - 10. Natural disasters.

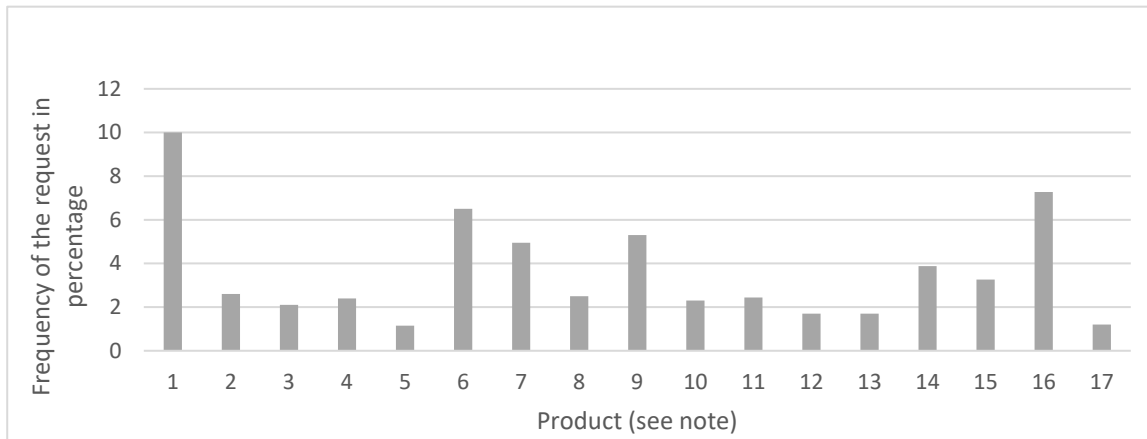
At the first stage of research, we set the task of identifying the interest of foreign tourists in the products of rural tourism in Adjara. In connection with this, we developed a questionnaire in which, among other things, respondents were asked to choose one or more deliberately modeled different niche products of rural tourism, some of which may be created in the future. The amount of respondents was 1500.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show in percent the data on the frequency of the requested one or another product of rural tourism in Adjara proposed in the questionnaire. The greatest preference (10%) for the sake of which international tourists would like to go to the countryside of Adjara was given to product No 1, which is an organized rest in the mountainous area of Adjara (See Figure 1).

The next most requested product of rural tourism in Adjara is No 17 (See Figure 1 of Potential Demand for the products of rural tourism of Adjara in the international tourist market, for more details), familiarity with the history, cultural and historical monuments in rural regions of Adjara (7.27%). Acquaintance with traditional national cuisine, provided that the food products offered are ecologically clean (No. 6 - 6.5%), was also one of the most requested products of rural tourism.

Such niche products of rural tourism were also very attractive: a bath / sauna in the mountains near the stream with the possibility of cooking on a fire (See Figure 1, No. 8 - 4.95% of Potential Demand for the products of rural tourism of Adjara in the international tourist market, for more details), horse riding through the mountainous terrain (See Figure 1, No. 10 - 5.3%), familiarity with the history, life, culture and traditions of representatives of various religious denominations (See Figure 2, No. 10 - 5.1%), familiarity with the everyday culture, traditions and customs of the rural areas of Adjara (See Figure 2, No. 13 - 5.5%).

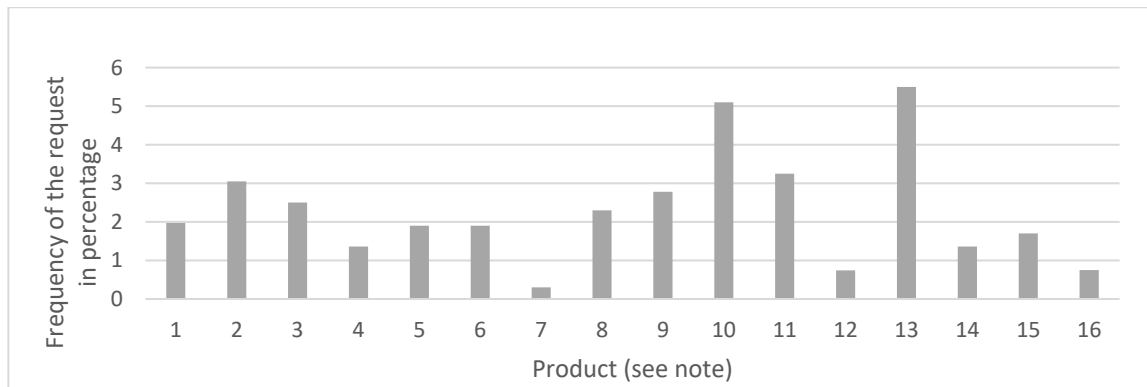
Figure 1: Potential Demand for the products of rural tourism of Adjara in the international tourist market



Source: The authors

Note: 1. organized tours, vacations in the mountains, 2 vacations for children on a private home in the mountains, 3. rest in homestead, 4. collection and purchase of organic vegetables and fruits, 5. joint cultivation of environmentally friendly products, 6. Introduction with the national cuisine, 7. Vacation in private home and participation in the collection of citruses, tea, fruit, etc., 8. bath/sauna at a mountain stream, 9. study the technology of processing, and storing agricultural products, wine and chacha, 10. horse riding in the mountains, 11. to introduce with the traditional craft, folk art. lessons for the manufacturing products of folk crafts, 12. Children entertainment, 13. courses of popular Georgian dances and songs, 14 - lessons of the Georgian feast, studying the skills of the Georgian toast-host, customs, and traditions of conducting the Georgian feast with the possibility of obtaining a certificate of a toast-master of various categories, 15. To introduce the technology of growing grapes and cooking, 16. organized fishing on the mountain rivers of Adjara, 17. acquaintance with history, monuments of culture and art.

Figure 2: Potential Demand for the products of rural tourism of Adjara in the international tourist market



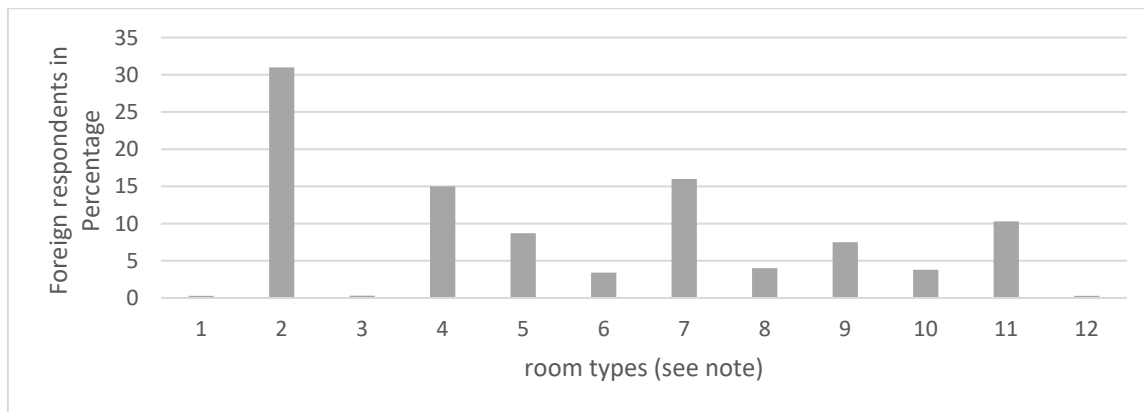
Source: The authors

Note: 1. collecting mushrooms and berries with a guide, 2. participation in festivals, mass events, 3. visiting ethnographic shows, 4. hunting for wild birds, 5. Discover the flora and fauna of the mountainous regions of Adjara, 6. stay in mountainous regions with a balneological climate, mineral waters for health purposes, 7. combination of leisure with corporate events, 8. participation in sports and entertainment events, 9. A picnic in nature in specially organized places for this purpose with the possibility of spending the night in tents with a guide, 10. acquaintance with history, life, culture, and traditions of various religious representatives, 11 - organized outdoor rest at the weekend, 12. New Year, Christmas, weddings and other celebrations in the countryside in the atmosphere of the old traditional interior and design, 13. familiarity with the everyday culture, traditions and customs of the population of the mountain regions of Adjara, 14. Short walking and cycling routes in the rural areas adjacent to the city along pre-arranged routes, 15. short-term 1-2 day trips to the high-mountainous regions of Adjara with a guide, 17. visiting archaeological sites.

With a little less in demand for respondents were rural tourism products such as introduction with history and traditions of growing grapes and preparing traditional wine varieties for the mountainous Adjara (See Figure. 1, No. 15 - 3.88%), organized fishing on the mountain rivers of Adjara (See Figure 1, No. 16 - 3.26% of Potential Demand for the products of rural tourism of Adjara in the international tourist market, for more details), taking part in festivals, traditional festivals and mass events for certain rural areas of Adjara (See Figure 2, No. 2 - 3.05%). The other niche products offered by rural tourism in Adjara were less requested (2.1% - 2.78%).

As can be seen from Figure 3, International respondents prefer high-quality products of rural tourism. Taking into account the fact that the arrangement of housing for tourists in rural areas is the most expensive event, taking into account the wishes of potential consumers of products of rural tourism will enable the relevant government agencies to make the most rational decisions when determining the conditions of government regulation to promote sustainable development of rural tourism in Adjara, using at the same time the most efficient financial, material and human resources.

Figure 3: Respondents' preferences for living conditions in rural Adjara



Source: The authors

Note: 1. rent a private house without amenities, 2. renting a private house with all amenities, 3. room in a private house without amenities, 4. a room in a private house with all the amenities, 5. apartment in a private house with all amenities, 6. accommodation in a private house with the possibility of renting a garden, 7. a room in a small hotel with all the amenities including full guesthouse, 8. suite in a small hotel with the possibility of self-catering, 9. a small house in the forest or near the river without amenities, but with the observance of all sanitary standards, 10. tent in places specially equipped for this purpose, 11. a room or apartment in a private place, decorated and equipped in the old traditional national style, 12. other.

To live in the rural area of Adjara, 31% of foreign respondents preferred to rent a private house with all conveniences (See Figure 3). The next most popular living condition was a room in a small hotel with all amenities, including full board (16%) and a room in a private house with all amenities. To live in the rural area of Adjara, 31% of respondents preferred to rent a private house with all conveniences (See Figure 3). The next most popular living condition was a room in a small hotel with all amenities, including full board (16%) and a room in a private house with all amenities. Foreigners showed great interest in renting a room or apartment on a private estate, decorated and equipped in the old traditional national style typical of this particular region of the countryside of Adjara.

Different government programs are promoting rural development in the country, but not all of them are implemented successfully, mainly because of several reasons: The farmers' interests and local relief characteristics are not foreseen and lack of project management; farmers awareness of projects is low.

It should be noted that rural tourism development gives the opportunity to fully benefit from the potential of rural populated areas.

Conclusion and recommendations

In the direction of sustainable recovery from COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that tourism offerings are as effective as possible, coordination and joint efforts are needed between business, the private sector, civil society and the public sector at all levels. Appropriate mechanisms should be created so that tourists pay the greatest attention to the destination to get the maximum impression.

Analyzing the study leads to formulating the following solutions to the existing problems:

- To create a concept of rural tourism development reflecting the local and national characteristics;

- To form a normative-legislative basis of rural tourism;
- To create tourist products and offer them to different segment markets (individual, family, and small groups);
- To create a marketing strategy for promoting regional touristic potential in the domestic and international markets;
- To popularize the historical, cultural, and natural sightseeing;
- To increase awareness of the tourism service market;
- To attract investments in the tourism industry through government and private partnerships;
- To create a human resource qualification improving the system in the tourism industry;
- To train and encourage the rural youth to create the guesthouses in the frames of the "Produce in Georgia" program;
- To create an outstanding rural tourism market in the internet using contemporary informational technologies;
- To provide marketing support and promotional activities for the regional touristic products.

The following approaches are important for ensuring development in rural areas:

- Development of local and regional economic networks: the creation of new products, creation of new ways of sales and production;
- Strengthening innovative directions: innovative rewarding communities, new technologies and the spread of knowledge creation; Cooperation with local educational institutions and enterprises; Strengths and weaknesses;
- Strengthening the participation and involvement of citizens: reduction of obstacles, promotion, and promotion of new initiatives and qualifications;
- Diversification of the regional economy, combining revenue sources based on regional cooperation;
- Improvement of infrastructure: improvement of

living conditions in rural areas. For a region with a weak structure, it is important to timely break the negative development and switch to opportunities.

In the post-COVID19 period it will be important:

- Maintain and develop jobs;
- Supporting local entrepreneurship by strengthening public-private partnership mechanisms;
- Restore trust in travelers and host communities in a transparent and secure way;
- Providing objective information to tourists about health, hygiene and safety rules;
- Promoting the development of education and skills

to improve the qualifications of staff employed in tourism;

- Acquisition of digital technologies to facilitate planning, management and monitoring of the tourism environment;

- Creating a new value chain for tourism services;
- Invest in new skills development, including digital skills training.

Tourism has the potential to recover, it will still become an important part of the national economy. The crisis caused by COVID-19 makes it possible to transform the tourism industry, it will acquire a positive character and sustainable rural tourism development of will be achieved.

REFERENCES

- Abesadze, T. (2017). Norwegian experience in the creation of exclusive rural tourism products. Proceedings from International Scientific-Practical Conference - Tourism: *Economics and Business*, Batumi, Georgia.
- Abesadze, T. (2017). Some results of study of potential Adjarian Rural Tourism products foreign markets. Proceedings from International Scientific-Practical Conference - Tourism: *Economics and Business*, Batumi, Georgia.
- Abuladze, R., and Berikashvili, L. (2014). Online tourism development problems and trends in Georgia. Proceedings from V International Scientific-Practical Conference - Tourism: *Economics and Business*. Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Faculty of Tourism. Adjara AR Department of Tourism and Resorts. Batumi. Georgia.
- Beridze, R. (2011). Wine Tour in Adjara. Proceedings of International Scientific-Practical Conference - Tourism: *Economics and Business*, Batumi, Georgia. 403-410. (in Georgian)
- Beridze, R. (2017). Rural Tourism and Sustainable Development. Proceedings of International Scientific-Practical Conference - Sustainable Tourism: *Economics and Business*, Batumi, Georgia. 174-276. (in Georgian)
- Chaganava, P. (2012). *Tourism policy. Universal*, Tbilisi. 330. (in Georgian)
- Costa, C. A., and Chalip, L. (2005). Adventure sport tourism in rural revitalization. An ethnographic evaluation. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, Vol.5, No.3. 257-279. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184740500190595>
- Dashper, K. (2014). *Rural tourism: An international perspective*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Cambridge.
- Devadze, A., Prokopenko, O., and Zhuravka, F. (2018). The problems of development of the tourism industry in Georgia. *Tourism and Travelling*, 2. [https://doi.org/10.21511/tt.2\(1\).2018.01](https://doi.org/10.21511/tt.2(1).2018.01)
- Dixit, M. Belwal, R., and Singh, G. (2006). Online Tourism and Travel-Analysing trends from marketing perspective. University of Lucknow.
- Edward, J., Blakely, T. and Bradshaw, K. (2002). *Planning Local Economic Development - Theory and Practice*, (3rd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ellingsen, K.A, and Rosendahl T. (2001). *Marketing for tourism. J.W. Capellens forlag AS*, Oslo.
- International Center for Caucasus Tourism (2016). *Georgia Marvelous Land of Tourism Researches and Reports*. viewed 10 June 2019. <https://iliauni.edu.ge/uploads/other/38/38716.pdf?fbclid=IwAR13rQRDIPDOGNOF5yDHO4YWtvu4B5bBIfv5vZjNPf93jUBKS BYX9K6TJQ>
- Hall, D., Kirkpatrick, I., and Mitchel, M. (2005). Rural tourism and sustainable business. Bristol, UK: Channel View Publications. 17-41.
- Halseth, G., Markey, S., and Bruce, D. (2010). The next rural economies: *Constructing rural place in a global economy*. Oxfordshire, UK: CABI International. <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781845935818.0000>
- Japaridze, D. (2017). Village of the future - Enhancing the competitiveness by promoting tourism and small business. Proceedings from International Scientific-Practical Conference-Tourism: *Economics and Business*. Batumi. (In Georgian)
- Marsden, T. (1998). New rural territories: regulating the differentiated rural spaces. *Journal of Rural Studies* 14, 107-117. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(97\)00041-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(97)00041-7)
- McAreavey, R.A., and McDonagh, J. (2010). Sustainable Rural Tourism: Lessons for Rural Development. *Sociologia Ruralis*. 51(2):175-194. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2010.00529.x>
- National Statistics Office of Georgia (2018). Population and Demography. viewed 2 June 2019, <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/316/population-and-demography>
- Porter, M. E., Ketels, C. H. M., Miller, K., and Bryden, R. (2004). Competitiveness in rural US regions: Learning and research agenda. viewed 5 June 2019, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6045/de90b82a8ac5d29ecc949a5750b362aa45e.pdf>

- Scott, M. (2004). Building Institutional Capacity in Rural Northern Ireland: The Role of Partnership Governance in the LEADER II Programme. *Journal of Rural Studies*. Vol. 20. 50-58. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(03\)00042-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(03)00042-1)
- Social Capital in Georgia: *Final Record and Recommendations*. (2011). USAID Georgia.
- Toria M. (2008). Peculiarity of International Labor Migration in Georgia. *Georgian Research Center for Globalization and Regional Integration*. Universal. 326-338. (In Georgian)
- Tourism Economics (2013). *Impact of Online Content on European Tourism*. An Oxford Economics Company.
- US Travel Association (2013). The Power of Travel Promotion: Spurring Growth, Creating Jobs. Washington D.C, viewed 2 June 2019. https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/page/2011/08/e_Power_Travel_Promotion1.pdf
- <https://www.unwto.org/events/executive-council-112th-session>. Tbilisi, Georgia, on 15–17 September 2020.
- World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), *World Tourism Barometer*, vol. 18, No. 3, June 2020, Madrid, <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.
- World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), *World Tourism Barometer*, vol. 18, No. 4, June 2020, Madrid, <https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng>.