

## **THEORETICAL CONCEPTS OF RURAL TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract:** The intense deterioration of the environment in recent decades requires a sustainable approach in tourism, just as in other industries. Rural tourism is of the kind that, in form and concept, takes a holistic approach and applies the sustainability principle. The aim of this study is to demonstrate the variety, attractiveness and potential of rural tourism in Serbia, to emphasise the need to co-ordinate planning and development strategy, as well as to indicate the opportunities for better positioning in the market and thus obtain a number of positive economic and other effects promoting sustainable development. The Republic of Serbia does not have a long tradition of rural tourism, but there have been attempts to introduce best European practices to revive rural areas by diversifying economic activities.

**Key words:** *rural tourism, sustainable tourism, sustainable development, Serbia*