

Samples of Turkey in the Best Tourism Village

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Annotation: Rural tourism is a type of tourism for the use of rural areas in the country for touristic purposes. Natural resources in rural areas have a remarkable feature for both tourists and tourism establishments. Encouraging tourism entrepreneurship, especially in areas with underdeveloped and small businesses, contributes to the realization of development in rural areas. The importance of rural tourism has been recognized in many countries around the world and studies have begun on this subject. The World Tourism Organization has launched the best tourism villages initiative for tourism development in rural areas. In 2021, Mustafapasa village of Nevsehir and Taraklı district from Sakarya received the best tourism villages initiative award from Turkey. In this study, the best tourism villages initiative Mustafapasa and Taraklı are examined within the scope of rural tourism.

1. Introduction

As a result of events such as the increase in people's free time and the increase in their economic income, people prefer to participate in tourism. With the increasing number of tourist's day by day, the types of tourism started to show diversity. Alternative tourism is a type of tourism that includes different types of tourism. The realization of alternative tourism types provides a competitive advantage in terms of destinations (Hacioglu and Avcikurt, 2008). One of the alternative tourism types is rural tourism. Rural tourism is a tourism activity carried out in areas exposed to immigration and where economic problems are experienced due to the red population (Cengiz and Akkuş, 2012: 61). In rural tourism areas, activities are carried out for a short time on weekends, without seasonal conditions, together with feelings such as a calm life, being away from the stress of the city, and feeling free.

Rural tourism is a type of tourism that provides social and economic developments within the framework of sustainability in rural areas and is the focus of attention day by day (Perales, 2002; Pina and Delta, 2005). Both in the world and Turkey, villages, rural settlements and towns close to touristic centers have started to become familiar to tourists in recent years (Soykan, 2003:2). Rural tourism includes many components such as public and private sector food and beverage facilities, accommodation facilities, natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, entrepreneurship opportunities (Cawley and Gilmor, 2008: 317). If rural tourism activities are not organized properly, they may have undesirable consequences on the physical environment, social structure and culture (Garrod, Wornell and Youell 2006; Holden 2005; Lane 1994; MacDonald and Jolliff 2003). In rural tourism, there is a wide range of stakeholders with many relationships with tourists, tour operators, business owners, local governments, various organizations, local people (Bramwell and Lane 2000; Hall 1999; Saxena 2005; Simmons 1994; Stonich 1998). Rural tourism also contributes to economic activities, contributing to GDP, creating employment, and eliminating seasonality (UNWTO, 2022).

The World Tourism Organization launched the Best Tourism Villages Initiative to achieve positive transformation in tourism for rural development and community well-being. The Best Tourism Villages Initiative seeks to advance the role of rural villages and associated information systems, biological and cultural diversity, local values and activities, gastronomy and tourism. Within the scope of the study, the evaluation criteria of the World Tourism

Organization's Best Tourism Villages Initiative and the properties regarding the Mustafa Paşavillage of Nevşehir and the Taraklı districts of Sakarya, which were selected as the Best Tourism Villages in 2021, were investigated.

2. Rural Tourism

Rural, which is among the dwindling resources in the world, is becoming an increasingly important issue for tourism. Rural tourism is a phenomenon that can develop in different forms and various social, cultural and political environments, resulting in different results (Sharpley and Roberts, 2004: 119). Many tourism activities carried out in rural areas can be the subject of rural tourism. There are many definitions regarding the definition of rural tourism (Su, 2011: 1438). Rural tourism can be defined by different names such as village tourism, farm tourism, eco-tourism (Alvaro, Jimenez and Martinez, 2017: 1). Rural tourism is carried out in areas that have local values, sometimes modern and sometimes historical values, where activities such as horse riding, hunting, walking, and cycling are carried out (Cengiz and Akkus, 2012:64). Since the 1970s, when rural areas are in poor economic and social conditions, rural tourism activity has started to become widespread, especially in developed countries (Perales, 2002). Especially in Europe, rural tourism activities in rural areas are of great importance. It has great importance and creating inmand in countries such as France, Austria and the United Kingdom (Pevetz, 1991). The components of rural tourism, whose importance is emphasized by the countries, have been defined by the World Tourism Organization. Rural tourism components are shown in Figure 1.

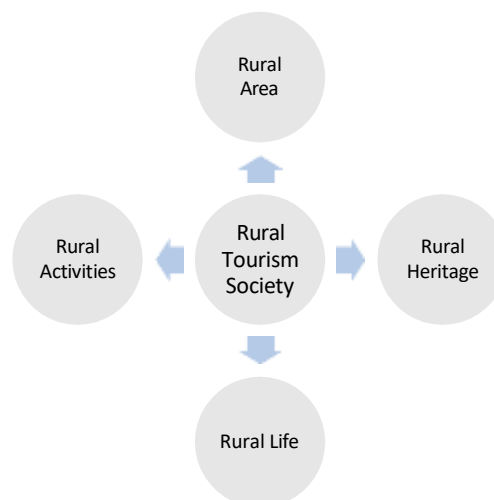


Figure 1. Rural Tourism Components Source: WTO, 2005

Rural areas are defined as geographical areas outside the cities, where agriculture and animal husbandry practices are common, and where there are few settlements (Serefoglu, 2009). In addition to agriculture and animal husbandry activities, activities such as handicrafts and tourism are also carried out in rural areas with ecological importance (Avcikurt and Koroglu, 2008). Rural heritage is a combination of traditional and local architecture, historical textures and unique value in terms of space and function (Ozcan, 2017: 40). Rural life includes a simple way of life, where agriculture and animal husbandry are common, which emerged with the traditional culture in rural areas (Aydın and Selvi, 2012: 134). Rural activities, on the other hand, include activities such as hiking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting and bird watching, which can be done in nature and on farms (OECD, 1994).

Although the changes in the understanding of tourism play an important role in the emergence of rural tourism, the fact that tourists do activities in rural areas in line with their desire to see other cultures and see traditional values contributes socially and economically (Avcikurt and Koroglu, 2008). Rural tourism activities provide many benefits to the rural area (Thibal, 1988; Kieselbach and Long, 1990; Gannon, 1994; OECD, 1994). Rural tourism activities provide economic growth by creating employment in new tourism-

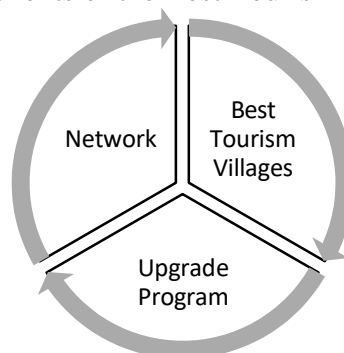
related areas (Fuller, 1990). There is socio-cultural development in rural areas with the development of public services depending on tourism activities, the preservation and development of traditional and cultural values, the emergence of social communication and exchange opportunities. Rural tourism protects the natural environment and develops the infrastructure (Sharpley, 2002).

While rural tourism makes some contributions to rural areas, some situations need to be considered to be successful (Fleischer and Pizam, 1997). Not every rural area has equal rural appeal and accommodation for tourists. Therefore, the total touristic product should have the feature to meet the needs of the tourist (Gannon, 1994). A significant investment may be needed in the development and organization of rural tourism, and at this point, government financial support may be needed to preserve the social benefits of differentiation in tourism (Fleischer and Felenstein, 2000). The government should support rural tourism. Local communities and businesses may have difficulty adapting to the service-oriented tourism sector (Hajalager, 1996). The quality of the touristic product should be at a level that can meet the expectations of the customer (Roberts, 1996). Another important thing about rural tourism is marketing activities. Marketing studies on rural tourism are seen as an important study (Embacher, 1994).

3. World Tourism Organization's Best Tourism Villages Initiative in Rural Tourism

World Tourism Organization started the Best Tourism Villages Initiative in 2021, within the scope of its vision of transforming tourism into a positive force for transformation, rural development and community welfare. The importance of tourism is emphasized in protecting the gastronomic values, biological and cultural diversity, agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry activities of rural areas and increasing their values. The Best Tourism Villages Initiative consists of 3 components: best tourism villages, upgrade program and network. Figure 2 shows the components of the Best Tourism Villages Initiative. Best tourism villages aim to develop the rural development of a village, which is an example of a rural tourism destination, whose cultural and natural assets are recognized, whose rural and community-based values, products and lifestyle are protected, and which adopts the philosophy of economic-social-environmental sustainability, and to increase the welfare of the society. Upgrade Program can be used by those who will be selected from among a few villages that do not fully meet the brand criteria. Villages in this situation will be able to receive support from UNWTO and its partners in eliminating the deficiencies in the evaluation process. A network is a space where experiences, good practices, opportunities and learning are provided. In this area, support will also be provided for UNWTO to identify good practices, develop guidelines and policies, and carry out studies on information (WTO, 2022).

Figure 2. Components of the Best Tourism Villages Initiative



Source: Created by the author.

The objectives set within the scope of the Best Tourism Villages Initiative are shown in the figure below.

Figure 3. Objectives of the Best Tourism Villages Initiative

People

- Reducing regional inequality in income and development
- Dealing with rural destruction
- Empowering women and youth, advancing gender equality

Prosperity

- Training and developing skills
- Promote rural transformation and strengthen attraction capacity
- Strengthening multi-level management with public-private-non-governmental organizations
- Improving connectivity, infrastructure, investment, access to finance
- Advancing in innovation and digitalization

Planet

- Being innovative in product development and value chain creation
- To protect natural and cultural resources
- To promote sustainable practices such as effective and efficient use of resources and management of waste and waste.

Promote the relationship between sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems and tourism to preserve biodiversity, agricultural diversity, cultural heritage and local gastronomy

Source: Created by the author.

There are certain criteria to be included in the Best Tourism Villages Initiative. The village has a maximum population of 15,000, it should be a settlement with a low population density. It should be a settlement where traditional activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and forestry are carried out. Society should be open to sharing its values and way of life. After the criteria are met, presentations are made to UNWTO member countries over the internet (WTO, 2022). Criteria at the evaluation stage after the application for the Best Tourism Villages Initiative:

- Cultural and natural resources,
- Promotion and protection of cultural resources,
- Economic sustainability,
- Social sustainability,
- Environmental sustainability,
- Tourism potential, development and value chain integration,
- Priority of management and tourism,
- Infrastructure and connectivity,
- It is in the form of health, safety and security.

Within the scope of cultural and natural resources, the village is expected to have natural and intangible or tangible cultural resources of regional, national or international importance. Within the scope of the protection and promotion of cultural resources, the efforts made for the promotion and protection of the cultural resources that the village has and that make it stand out are evaluated. Within the scope of economic sustainability, it is expected to be willing to carry out activities such as entrepreneurship, business development, investment, value chain integration, which positively affect the economic impact of tourism. Within the scope of social sustainability, within the scope of social inclusion and equality principles, it is expected to expand the benefits of tourism and lay the groundwork. In terms of environmental sustainability, it is expected to introduce policies regarding the protection of natural resources of rural villages, take precautions, expand initiatives, and plan practices that will minimize the negative effects of tourism on the

environment. The rural village has important tourism potential. Within the scope of tourism potential, development and value chain integration, market access, marketing and promotion, innovation, product development and quality are expected to contribute to the value chain and increase the competitive power of the destination. In the title of management and priority of tourism, it is expected that the rural village will see tourism as a rural development tool. Public-private sector-based management should be taken as a basis in tourism-related planning. In terms of infrastructure and connectivity, the village should have infrastructure that improves the welfare of the rural community, increases the visitor experience with business development, and facilitates access and communication. In the title of health, safety and public order, it is required that the village has features that can protect the health and safety of both local people and tourists (WTO, 2022). The table below shows the best rural tourism villages around the world by continent.

Region	Country	Village
Africa	Mauritius	Le Morne _ Grand Port
	Rwanda	nkotsi village
	Kenya	olergesailie
	Morocco	Sidi Kaouki
	Ethiopia	wonchi
America	Argentina	Caspala
	Mexico City	Cuetzalan del Progreso , Mania
	Peru	Ollantaytambo
	Chile	Pica, Puerto Williams
	Paraguay	San Cosme y Damian
	Brazil	Testo Alto
Asia-Pacific	Philippines	bojo
	Malaysia	Kampung Batu Puteh
	Japan	Miyama, Niseko
	Indonesia	nglanggeran
	India	Pochampally
	Korea	Purple Island, Ungok village
	China	Xidi, Yucun
Europe	Russia	Bekhovo
	Portuguese	Castelo Rodrigo , Cumeada ,
	Switzerland	Gruyeres , Saas-fee , Valposchiavo
	Austria	Kaunertal
	Spain	Lekunberri , Morella
	Serbia	mokra Gora
	Turkey	Mustafapasa , Taraklı
	Cyprus	Panel Lefkara
	Slovenia	Radovljica , Solcava
	Italy	San Guinea
	Greece	soufli
Middle East	Lebanon	Bkassine
	Oman	Misfat al Abriyeen
	Saudi Arabia	Rijal to Alma

Source: WTO, 2022 Created by the author

44 villages in 32 countries in 5 regions of the world have been identified as the best tourism villages by WTO. From Turkey, Mustafapasa village and Taraklı were recognized as the Best Tourism Village in 2021. Within the scope of this study, the prosperities of Mustafapasha and Taraklı as a rural tourism villages are included in the next title.

4. Best Rural Tourism Villages: The Case of Turkey

4.1. Mustafapasa Village

Mustafapaşa village, which is located 5 km from the center of Ürgüp, was known as Sinason in 1476 and 1927 and hosted various civilizations with its rock formations. It is known that until 1924, Orthodox Greeks lived in the village and there were around 700 stone mansions. It is estimated that the inhabitants of the village traded in wine and medicinal products at that time. With the population exchange, the inhabitants of the village were sent to Greece and replaced by Turks. In addition to important examples of civil architecture such as churches, mosques, and carved and decorated stone houses, it is an open-air museum with its natural beauty formed by the climate of the region. There are around 93 stone houses, around 30 churches and chapels in the village (Nevşehir Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2022).

Mustafapasa village has the Ottoman monument Mehmet Sakir Pasa Madrasa was built in 1900, St. Konstantinos-Eleni Church, St. Nicholas Monastery made of rocks and cut stones, the oldest mosque in the region, Mosque Kebir, Sipahi Mosque, Seyh Ali Mosque, Asmalı Konak, Maraşoğlu Bridge. Among the important touristic values of the village are the Cappadocia Art and History Museum, which is the first private doll museum, the small stream passing through it, the churches, monasteries, and dovecotes on its slopes, and the Gomed Valley (Ürgüp District Governorship, 2022). The natural and cultural assets of the Mustafapasa village have been taken under protection by the Mustafapasa Conservation Plan. At the same time, there are projects to protect Mustafapasa Manastır Valley, as a small model of the Cappadocia region, and to bring it into tourism (www.mustafapasakapadokya.org). The sensitive approach of the local government and the stakeholders to the protection of the natural and cultural heritage, the documentation of the cultural heritage, the restoration works, the preservation of the silhouette formed by the natural and cultural values, and the decisions to increase the visual effect, the activities to raise the awareness of the local people, the activities of the cultural heritage of Mustafapasa (Sinason). It plays a major role in the preservation of the country and contributes to its worldwide popularity by stating that it is unique (Ter, Ozcan, and Eryigit, 2014)

Within the scope of the Best Tourism Villages initiative, Mustafapasa village, in the evaluation made by the United Nations in 2021, has no poverty, good health and welfare, good quality education opportunities, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, decent work and economic growth, within the scope of sustainable tourism principles, It was deemed worthy of an award for having sustainable settlements and communities, sensitive to climate action, and being able to act together in achieving goals.

4.2. Taraklı

Taraklı is 66 km away from the Sakarya. It was located in the Bytina region in the Hellenistic period, which was previously known as Dabs. It is a district that has been under the rule of Byzantines and Ottomans in the following years. Taraklı, which is popular with its many historical houses and alternative tourism types, has also managed to become a touristic city with its local delicacies and handicrafts (www.tarakli.bel.tr).

Taraklı is located on the historical silk road route with its narrow streets, wooden houses, which have a unique example of Ottoman architecture. The city, which also has the title of slow city in 2011, was included in the European Destinations of Excellence program by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2013. Taraklı, which has rich assets in terms of natural, cultural and thermal tourism resources, has the feature of being a district that offers job opportunities for women and youth with the development of tourism. Infrastructure and superstructure investments originating from tourism have increased the quality of life of people. A Rural Life Guide was prepared by working on the preservation of cultural heritage, traditions, customs and local tastes and transferring them to future generations. In 2021, it was deemed worthy of the title of the best rural

tourism village by the United Nations due to its absence of inequalities, rural economic growth, responsible production and consumption, sensitivity to climate change, and acting together for urban purposes (www.untwo.org).

Conclusion

The planned work on the development of rural areas is being carried out. Sustainability is a particularly striking criterion for the development of rural areas. The values, touristic features, historical textures, cultural heritage and natural beauties of each rural region can be preserved and transferred to future generations by carrying out sustainable studies. While it is known that the Slow City application is universal in the process of rural development until today, the United Nations World Tourism Organization's Best Rural Tourism Villages Initiative has emerged as of 2021. In the Best Tourism Villages Initiative; Cultural and natural resources, promotion and protection of cultural resources, economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, tourism potential, development and value chain integration, the priority of management and tourism, infrastructure and connectivity, health, safety and public order are taken into account.

Mustafapasa Village and Taraklı, which took part in the Best Tourism Villages initiative from Turkey in 2021, represent Turkey in the international arena as good examples. Supporting rural areas with such practices can be seen as an important step in terms of development. The Best Tourism Villages Initiative aims to reduce the unequal distribution of income, cope with rural degradation, support young and women entrepreneurs, increase the level and quality of education, increase people's welfare, protect the values of the region by protecting natural assets and transferring them to future generations, sustainable studies and water resources, food, environmental protection can ensure the protection of the Earth.

This study, it is aimed to give information about the Best Tourism Villages Initiative, which is a new practice, and about the examples of Turkey. Many different topics such as the awareness level of local people, expectations, expectations of local administrators about the Best Tourism Villages Initiative can be determined as future research topics.

Resources

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