

The application of GIS and Remote Sensing technologies for sustainable Agritourism Development in Botswana

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SUMMARY

Many rural communities around the world are developing and implementing tourism programs to diversify and substantiate their local economies. Most western countries, particularly in Europe have implemented tourism development strategies that combine agriculture with tourism to create a new industry called agritourism. Such an industry is fairly new in Botswana, hence the need to investigate the applicability of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing techniques for its sustainable development. Unfortunately, very few studies have investigated the geospatial dimension of agritourism. Moreover, the newness of agritourism in the country means that, opportunities are lost by citizens as a result of a lack of adequate information on the site suitability aspects for certain tourism activities, which could be revealed by the use of GIS and remote sensing technologies. Hence the need to examine how location can contribute to the success and sustainability of prospective agritourism entities. This study proposes the application of GIS and remote sensing technologies to develop an agritourism potential index to assess site suitability of agritourism enterprises. An innovative and robust agritourism model based on sustainability principles that incorporate the social, economic and environmental variables will be developed using GIS and remote sensing. To demonstrate its practicality and significance, the developed model will then be applied in the South East District of Botswana to identify potential sites suitable for agritourism activities. The anticipation is that the model can provide valuable geographic information about the spatial distribution of potential agritourism sites for the benefit of policy makers and interested parties in making better informed decisions. Agritourism if properly implemented with suitable technologies, can present a significant and important revenue source for many rural communities of Botswana.

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