

Green Accommodations & Responsible Tourism

How can we engage rural tourism towards more eco-friendly accommodation?
What are the challenges and some solutions?

Expert Name: Martine Bteich

President

Lebanon Mountain Trail Association



Short Profile: Martine Btaich (MBA) is a professional in multidisciplinary development programs, with focus on community based tourism and rural development. She has extensive experience with international and local organizations, and has worked on destination development, multi stakeholder partnerships and tourism policy. She is also the President of the Lebanon Mountain Trail Association.

Expert Name: Jad AbouArrage

University Lecturer

& Development Practitioner



Short Profile: Agricultural engineer, holding a Master Degree in Development Environment and Societies from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium and a PhD degree from the University of Milan – Italy in Agriculture and Environmental Sciences.

Dr. AbouArrage has 12 years of experience in development projects. He has worked with more than 10 international and local organizations. The main areas of his expertise are: support to project management, rural and agricultural development, ecotourism planning, and territorial development.

Dr. AbouArrage is an Assistant Professor at the Lebanese University. He teaches environmental economics, sustainable landscape management, environmental risk reduction, and ecotourism.

| Definition / Benefits | Constraints / Challenges / Barriers |
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| <p>Rural Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Nature/ agriculture/ out of the city/ away from pollution and noise/ culture/ social/ highlighting local specificities and local identity/ where activities related to all above are offered/ Small scale investment <p>Eco-friendly accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Uses renewable energy/ low consumption of resources/ low impact on environment ✓ Designed in an environmentally friendly way (in using material and technology) ✓ Has low impact on environment ✓ Contribute to preserving nature and culture ✓ Low visual pollution ✓ Serves/ promotes local products <p>Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Empowers locals ✓ Create local jobs ✓ Keeps people in their villages/ land/ house ✓ Preserve local architecture/ culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Destruction of rural landscape ✓ Lack of laws and regulations and policies namely local policies at the level of the municipalities and urban planning ✓ Lack of awareness among locals/ municipalities ✓ Lack of proper landscape management and destination management ✓ Tourists and investors and developers are not aware (irresponsible travelers and investors) ✓ Consumers/ accommodation owners demand: they need something quick/ easy to build/ low cost ✓ Lack of incentives towards green/ eco friendly buildings ✓ Lack of financial resources (green is still expensive) ✓ Political and security situation in Lebanon discourage long term green solutions |
| Best Practice / Solutions / Tools | Resources / local Availability |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop national/ regional/ local policies (at the level of the municipalities) ✓ Better zoning and landscape planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Experts ✓ Guidelines by the UNWTO/ UNEP ✓ Int'l benchmarks ✓ Labeling systems |

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| <p>and management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Favor rehabilitation of what is existing instead of building something new✓ Engage and educate the tourists✓ Engage public consultation in development✓ Empower locals and raise awareness among local public, investors, travelers✓ Develop EIAs✓ Provide financial incentives (i.e. by Urban Planning reduce taxes, by municipalities...) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Available financial resources✓ |
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