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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRITOURISM AND WINE TOURISM: BUSINESS MODELS AND LEGISLATIVE IMPACTS

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Abstract:

Tourism plays an important role in the process of economic growth, poverty reduction, better local governance, biodiversity conservation, and the development of natural resource management. It is a powerful tool for achieving sustainable development goals, especially on the regional level. Among various forms of tourism, agritourism, wine tourism, and rural tourism have become increasingly important for many countries, particularly in Europe, as a means of developing sustainable tourism. The scale of wine and agritourism is growing rapidly as it provides diversified income sources. However, the correlation between business models and legislation remains a challenge for many countries. The study analyzes business models and the impact of legislation on economic direction at a regional level. The research combines an analysis of legislation, a literature review, and an evaluation of business models in different countries. The findings demonstrate that legislation plays a crucial role in the development of wine tourism and agritourism. Legislative support promotes tourism development and strengthens regional economies. This study provides valuable insights into the development of sustainable business models, highlighting the role of legislation, policies, and regulations in shaping agritourism and wine tourism.

Keywords Tourism Regulations, Business Models, Rural Tourism Development, Regional Development, Tourism Enterprise Models, Tourism Governance

INTRODUCTION

Agritourism has grown rapidly in many countries worldwide. However, for all this success, little is known about the concrete implementation, actual extent, and effectiveness of public and private agritourism support measures aimed at keeping up farming and promoting agritourism (Grillin et al, 2022). The wine was one of the first products of agricultural origin to develop a close and distinct relationship with its geographic place of origin, at first in European countries dating way back to the 15th century (Koblianidze & Sachaleli, 2021). Over the past 10-15 years, the popularity of wine tourism in European countries has greatly contributed to the development of agritourism. Agritourism is a tourism sector that is focused on the use of natural, cultural-historical and other rural resources and their specifics to create complex tourism products. The main condition for agritourism is that tourist accommodation facilities (usually individual or specialized) are located in rural settlements. Despite the relevance of agritourism around the world, an agreed upon definition of this phenomenon does not exist in international tourism research (Broccardo et al, 2017). The connection between wine and agricultural tourism can be sought in several directions. For the purpose of this presentation the focus is on the production of the main raw material – grapes. Depending on each particular case, tourist services can be united – agricultural activities and local traditions connected with grape production can be associated with agricultural tourism, while the supply of wine and related tourist services – to wine tourism (Kilimprov, 2016). Wine tourism, as an experiential tourism activity that brings together wine, food, culture, and the experience of wine and how it is produced, has huge potential for wine-producing areas (Danello & Charaia, 2024). It is important to promote sustainable tourism as a tool to attain sustainable development that can be used as a means of rural livelihood activity and an avenue to safeguard the natural environment. Wine tourism has multiple aims of promoting the economic wellbeing of local wine producers without compromising the integrity and quality of the natural environment (Trigo & Silva 2022) and trigger the economic development

of the country, through investments, employment, and even entrepreneurial incentives among different groups of society (Taktakishvili et al., 2024).

Despite the rapid growth of agritourism and wine tourism, there is a persistent policy–market mismatch: many regions promote rural tourism, yet the legal definitions, eligibility rules, tax thresholds, zoning provisions, and liability frameworks often do not align with how businesses actually operate and diversify their revenue streams. This gap creates uncertainty for small, family-based enterprises and can limit investment, compliance, and long-term sustainability outcomes.

Scientifically, the problem is not whether agritourism and wine tourism are beneficial in general, but how legislation and governance mechanisms shape business-model choices and sustainability performance at the regional level. The paper addresses this gap by linking (i) legal design and implementation rules to (ii) business-model patterns and (iii) observed economic/ social/ environmental sustainability outcomes.

The paper is internationally relevant because it treats agritourism and wine tourism as a governance-and-business-model problem, not only a destination trend. Many countries face the same challenge: rural tourism grows faster than regulatory alignment, and small enterprises struggle with definitions, compliance, zoning, taxation thresholds, and the absence of practical support. By linking legal instruments to business-model choices and Triple Bottom Line outcomes, this study offers a transferable framework that policymakers and practitioners can apply beyond one country context, especially in regions seeking sustainable rural development, diversification of farm income, and cultural landscape preservation.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Bibliometric analysis

The bibliometric analysis spans the period 2002–2025 and includes 25 publications across 17 different sources, such as journals, books, and conference proceedings. Although the number of contributions is relatively small, this body of work reflects steady engagement with the topic over more than two decades. Interestingly, the annual growth rate of publications is 0%, which suggests that the field has remained stable rather than rapidly expanding. On average, each paper is a little over six years old, which places the research in a relatively recent but not cutting-edge window. In terms of visibility, the documents have received about 13 citations each, a sign of moderate but meaningful impact.

Looking at the content, the studies use a wide range of concepts, with 62 Keywords Plus and 138 author keywords identified. This richness points to a diverse and interdisciplinary field, but it also reveals a certain level of fragmentation, where scholars are approaching wine tourism and agritourism from many different angles without yet converging on a common framework.

The way researchers collaborate in this area is also noteworthy. A total of 163 authors contributed to the 25 documents, which means there are nearly eight authors per publication on average. There are no single-authored studies at all, highlighting just how collaborative this field is. About a quarter of the publications (24%) involve international co-authorship, which shows that cross-border collaboration is already significant, though still with room to grow.

In terms of publication types, the majority of outputs are journal articles (18), supported by a smaller number of book chapters (3) and conference papers (4). This pattern reflects a clear emphasis on peer-reviewed journal research, but also shows that the field connects with conference communities and edited collections.

Altogether, the bibliometric profile paints the picture of a small but active and collaborative research area. Wine tourism and agritourism are clearly attracting international attention, with diverse perspectives enriching the conversation.

However, the field remains relatively fragmented and modest in scale, which opens up opportunities for future studies to build stronger theoretical connections, develop more consistent methodologies, and push the research towards greater international integration.



Figure 1: Word Cloud

Source: Own work

Figure 1, the world cloud of the articles, on Scopus database, showed the given results:

- 1. Dominant Core Concepts
 - “Tourism development” (largest term)
 - “Tourism economics”
 - “Income”

These indicate that much of the research centers on the economic and developmental role of tourism, especially in rural/agricultural contexts.

- 2. Strong Regional Focus
 - Italy, Portugal, Southern Europe, Michigan, Canada, United States

These appear as frequent case study regions. Italy is the most

prominent, reflecting its strong role in wine and agritourism studies.

- 3. Agriculture and Wine-Specific Terms
 - Viticulture, vineyard, livestock, organic farming, agricultural development, agricultural practice
These connect agriculture directly with tourism (i.e., agritourism, wine tourism).
 - Wine is implicit through *viticulture* and *vineyards*, showing that it's a significant but not the only agricultural component studied.
- 4. Sustainability and Climate Change
 - Terms: sustainable development, climate change, adaptive management, sustainability, future prospect
 - Suggests a strong emphasis on resilience and long-term viability of tourism/agriculture, aligning with the motor themes seen in the second image.
- 5. Economic and Consumer Dimensions
 - Willingness to pay, demand analysis, price dynamics, food consumption, livelihood, rural economy
These terms highlight a consumer economics perspective:
 - How much tourists are willing to spend.
 - How agritourism affects local incomes and rural economies.

This word cloud suggests that tourism in agricultural contexts (wine tourism, agritourism) is studied mainly through:

1. Economic development lens (income, economics, rural economy).
2. Regional case studies (Italy most central).
3. Agricultural linkages (viticulture, organic farming, livestock).
4. Sustainability and climate change concerns.
5. Consumer behavior and demand analysis (price dynamics, willingness to pay).

- Surrounding concepts: marketing, experiential, strategies, intangible, region, family-centred, digital, culture.
- Focus: marketing, consumer experience, and regional identity.
- Wine tourism is heavily associated with branding, cultural experience, and intangible value creation.

3. Agritourism Connections

- Linked to agriculture, diversification, study, synergies.
- Agritourism emphasizes economic resilience, farm diversification, and rural livelihoods.
- Positioned slightly between the "development" (gray cluster) and "wine tourism" (red cluster), making it a bridge between experiential/marketing themes and agricultural/economic themes.

4. Peripheral but Related Clusters

- Gray cluster: sustainability, development, adding, improve, Idaho - connects agritourism to broader sustainable development.
- Blue cluster: food, rural, consuming - connects agritourism and wine tourism to gastronomy and local food systems.
- Orange cluster: agriculture, Portugal - emphasizes regional agricultural contexts.
- Green cluster: consumers, exploratory, analysis - consumer-side research, somewhat peripheral but connected to wine/marketing.

1.2 Wine vs Agritourism

- Wine tourism - anchored in consumer experience, marketing, and cultural branding.
- Agritourism - anchored in agricultural diversification, rural development, and sustainability.
- Together, they intersect at tourism, making tourism the *connector* of both consumption (wine) and production (agriculture).

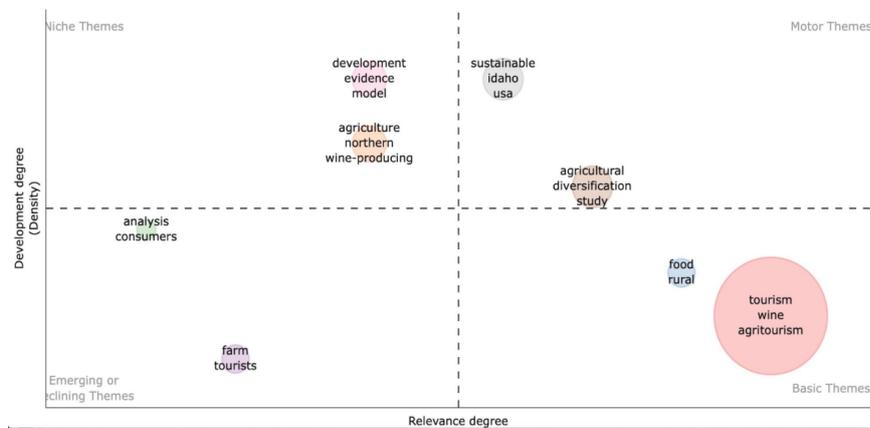


Figure 3: Thematic Map 2

Source: Own work

X-axis = Relevance degree (centrality - how important/relevant to the field)

Y-axis = Development degree (density - how well-developed the theme is)

The figure 3, demonstrates the Synergy of Wine and Agritourism:

1. Shared Foundation

- Both link agriculture with tourism, making them hybrid concepts.
- They emphasize place-based experiences (vineyards, farms) and local identity (wine regions, rural culture).

2. Economic Role

- Wine tourism - a specialized form of agritourism, strongly tied to regional branding and destination marketing.

- Agritourism - broader category (farm visits, local food, agricultural activities), where wine is often the flagship product.

3. Thematic Complementarity

- Wine adds experiential and hedonic dimensions (tasting, heritage, culture).
- Agritourism provides sustainability and diversification (helping rural economies survive by attracting tourists).

1.3 Agricultural tourism

Agricultural tourism is a new direction that began its development in Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s in order to stop mass urbanization. Due to the strong weakening of the connection between nature and the ordinary urban inhabitant, agricultural tourism became widespread, especially in industrially developed countries, where urbanization exceeded the natural resource (Teterina, 2015). Rural tourism as a kind of tourism industry came to us from Europe. Agricultural tourism has been particularly developed in such countries as France, Italy, Germany and England. Its first mention dates back to the beginning of the XIXth century. The 4 main models of tourism were named: British, French, Italian, and German in honour of these "pioneer" countries, see the figure 4 (Ilyukhina, 2021)

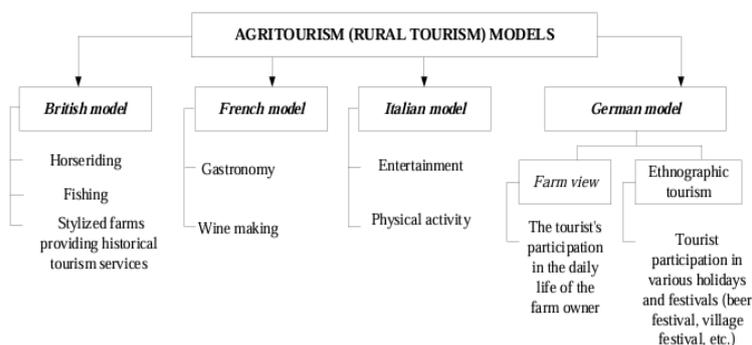


Figure 4: Agritourism Models

Source: Ilyukhina et al, 2021, p.3

The French model, in turn, brought culinary and winemaking to agrarian tourism. A distinctive feature of the Italian model is a large number of recreational activities, as well as physical activity. All events are very active and force tourists to keep themselves in good shape. What about German model it is divided into 2 more models. The first model is the farm model, which includes the participation of the tourist in the daily life of the farm owner. And the second one is ethnographic tourism, which includes for example participation in various holidays and festivals (the famous beer festival, the celebration of the day of the village, etc.) (Teterina, 2015).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Methods

Qualitative research:

- To analyze the legal frameworks of different countries, assess its impact on Agri and wine tourism.
- To study business cases of local and international practices and identify successful examples, conduct in-depth interviews with experts.
- To assess economic and social impacts of agri and wine tourism, conduct in-depth interviews with experts, with random sampling method.
- To analyses scientific literature on Scopus and make bibliometric analysis, to demonstrate the current trends.
- A qualitative research method was used to collect data from a total of 10 business owners, with an experience at least 5 years. The research was conducted between July and August 2025.

Aims of the research:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the legal frameworks in case of Agri and wine tourism.
- To propose business strategies and governance tools based on comparative international insights.

Research Objectives

- To analyze the legal frameworks and develop recommendations, based upon the international experience, regulations and legal requirements.
- To create unique business models, according to the study of successful practices.

R.Q. 1: What is the role of legislation in wine and agritourism?

R.Q. 2: What is the influence of wine and agritourism on the regional economy?

R.Q. 3: Which business models are most successful and competitive in wine and agritourism?

2.2 Data analysis procedure and ethical considerations

The study applies a mixed analytical approach. First, the legal and policy review was examined through document analysis, focusing on definitions, eligibility rules, incentives, and implementation mechanisms relevant to agritourism and wine tourism. Second, the business-level survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and simple comparisons). Because the sample is small (n=10) and the purpose is exploratory, the findings are interpreted as indicative patterns rather than generalizable results.

Likert-scale statements were summarized by comparing the share of responses in higher agreement categories and by calculating average scores to identify the strongest perceived impacts. In addition, responses describing business models, income sources, sustainability practices, community involvement, and perceived cultural impacts were grouped into thematic categories (economic, social, environmental) to support interpretation through the Triple Bottom Line framework.

Ethical considerations were respected throughout the research. Participation was voluntary, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and findings are reported in aggregated form to avoid identifying individual businesses.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Example of the USA

According Vermont Law School, Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, 2021, which Parker Jones, agritourism business counselor, has provided, there are three key tenants in emerging agritourism regulations in the USA. All current state regulations on agritourism require the venture to be connected with agricultural activity (Vermont Law School, 2021). Seventeen states limit liability for agritourism businesses if warning signs are posted for agritourism activities that meet the state's definition (Vermont Law School, 2021). Ten states have agritourism laws pertaining to land use and zoning.

In 2007, South Carolina enacted a law providing that uses "of agricultural real property for 'agritourism' purposes is deemed an agricultural use of the property to the extent agritourism is not the primary reason any tract is classified as agricultural real property but is supplemental and incidental to the primary purposes of the tract's use for agriculture, grazing, horticulture, forestry, dairying, and mariculture."(S.C. CODE ANN. § 12-43-233(A) (2024).) Under this law, agritourism uses include, but are not limited to: wineries, educational tours, education barns and many other activities (Hall et at, 2025).

According to the Hall et at (2025) Selling strawberry jam or apple fritters is a non-farming activity. Growing grapes is a farming activity but selling wine or hosting a winetasting event is not. While these activities may directly flow from the farming activity (i.e., the wine is produced from the grapes grown or the jam is created from the raised strawberries), the processing required to produce the jam and the wine is not incidental to the growing, raising, and harvesting of the crop (Treas. Reg. § 1.263A-4(a)(5)(ii)(B) (as amended in 2021); Rev. Rul. 64-148, 1964-1 C.B. 186).

3.2 Example of Georgia

According to the law about tourism, 2023 - "Agritourism is the direction of tourism, that takes places in farms and includes hosting and feeding tourists, also introducing them local rural lifestyle, culture, local traditions and attractions, involving tourists

in rural activities/agricultural activities, providing them with locally produced agricultural products, and carrying out other activities related to tourism and agriculture”, and wine tourism is explained as “A Tourism direction, in which the main goal of the trip is to get introduced with vineyards and viticulture traditions, wineries and cellars, other facilities and objects related to wine production, as well as to purchase wines made from different varieties at the place of production and participate in traditional celebrations and activities related to winemaking;

On December 30, 2024, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the resolution “On Approval of the Principles of Agrotourism and Wine Tourism Activities, the Procedure and Conditions for Obtaining and Revocation of the Status of Activity Subjects,” which regulated such important issues as the procedure for granting and revoking the status of agrotourism and wine tourism activities and the mandatory criteria for granting the status. Thus, agritourism owners and winemakers in the tourism sector received an expanded window of opportunity. The state apparently sees high potential in the development of rural and wine tourism and seeks to give entrepreneurs a wider limit with low taxes.

According to the Resolution, N 91 - 28/03/2025 - "On approval of the principles of agrotourism and wine tourism activities, the procedure and conditions for obtaining and revoking the status of business entities" on amendments to the Resolution of the Government of Georgia No. 465 of December 30, 2024

A customer service facility produces enough wine to accommodate the maximum number of adult guests that can be accommodated at any one time during a full calendar year, which is calculated as follows:

$A \times B \times C = D$, where:

A = the average amount of wine consumed by one person during a tasting (the formula always uses 2.5 liters);

B = the maximum number of adult guests that can be accommodated at any one time;

C = the number of days of hosting;

D = the amount of wine that can be accommodated at any one time during a full calendar year.

Example:

The example is based on the following assumptions: B = 10, and C = 182.

2.5 liters, x 10 x 182 = 4,550 liters.

3.3 Business Case Models

According to inclusive agriculture ecosystem Global Best Practices in Agri-Tourism include (See, the table 1).

Table 1: **Best Practices in Agri-Tourism**

Country	Business Model
New Zealand: Wine Tourism	New Zealand’s wine regions, such as Marlborough and Hawke’s Bay, have successfully integrated wine production with tourism. Visitors can tour vineyards, participate in tastings, and stay at wineries, creating a high-value tourism product that supports the wine industry.
Japan: Rice Terraces of Oyama Senmaida	The Oyama Senmaida rice terraces in Kamogawa City have become a tourist attraction while maintaining their agricultural function. Visitors can participate in planting and harvesting activities, supporting the preservation of this traditional farming landscape.
Costa Rica: Coffee Tours	Costa Rica has developed a thriving agri-tourism sector around its coffee industry. Tourists can visit coffee plantations, learn about sustainable growing practices, and participate in coffee tastings, adding value to the country’s coffee exports.
France: Château Stays	Many French châteaux, particularly in wine-growing regions, have been converted into luxury accommodations. These properties often maintain working vineyards or farms, offering guests a unique blend of history, agriculture, and high-end tourism.
Georgia: Nika Vacheishvili’s Marani	Wine tourism and Agritourism synergy is broadly implemented in Georgia as well, especially in wine producing regions. The location of the vineyards is historically known as one of the oldest traditional wine terroirs and the only microzone where “Atenuri” wine originates from.

	<p>Atenuri has been praised in medieval literature and has gained its fame as “the wine of the kings”, “better than any other” and “the noble” wine. It is to be noted that the Ateni micro zone was royal property since 10th century and was specifically used for vineyards by central government. (The inscription citing the King Bagrat IV on the wall of the Ateni Sioni says “I have created this stream bed”, implying the aqueduct system constructed for irrigation of the gorge during his reign).</p> <p>Except wine, they produce goat cheese, honey and all products we offer to our guests are from local farm. The road to the wine cellar and hotel is a guaranteed unique experience that will fascinate the guests and leave great memories to reminisce. Built in the traditional old-fashioned way, the cellar and a cozy hotel (13 rooms) are equipped with all conveniences.</p>
<p>Michigan, USA Farm Stops</p>	<p>According to Parker Jones, agritourism business consultant, and the qualitative research he has provided, Farm Stops are a growing business model that combines aspects of a farmers’ market and a grocery store. These businesses operate year-round, brick and mortar stores, sell local and regional farm products on consignment, and educate customers on the local food system (Barr, 2025). The movement was founded by Argus Farm Stop in Ann Arbor, Michigan.</p> <p>The business model is highly distributive of profits; therefore, it is often important to maintain an adjacent revenue center for business sustainability. The Lively NeighborFood Market, for example, operates a higher margin campground adjacent to the farm stop. An additional benefit is that campers place a premium value on on-site ready-to-eat and grocery food.</p> <p>The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has taken steps to foster this innovative business model. In August 2025, MDARD awarded \$361,920 to seven food hubs and farm stops (Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, n.d.). The business model is well tailored to culinary tourists and those who value educational tourist products with passive engagement.</p>

Source: Own work, according to the collected data

In table 2, there are given examples of different countries, where agricultural tourism is being developed with the support of policies and regulations.

Table 2: Case Studies: Successful Agricultural Tourism Policies/ Regulations

Case	Policy / Regulation
Case Study 1: Italy's Agriturismo Law	Italy's Law No. 730 of 1985, known as the "Agriturismo Law," has been instrumental in developing the country's thriving agriturismo sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines agriturismo and sets standards for farm stays • Provides tax incentives for farmers who offer tourism services • Establishes quality criteria and certification processes • Integrates agriturismo into broader rural development strategies The law has led to the growth of over 23,000 agriturismo farms in Italy, contributing significantly to rural economies and preserving traditional farming practices.
Case Study 2: Vermont's Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (USA)	Vermont's policy approach combines financial support with business development resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers grants and loans for agriturismo development • Provides technical assistance and business planning support • Integrates agriturismo into the state's broader agricultural and tourism marketing efforts • Supports education and networking opportunities for agriturismo operators This initiative has helped Vermont become a leading destination for agricultural tourism in the United States, supporting farm viability and rural economic development.
Case Study 3: South Korea's	South Korea's government-led initiative focuses on developing entire villages as agriturismo destinations:

<p>Rural Experience Village Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides funding for infrastructure development and experience programs • Offers training and education for rural residents in hospitality and tourism management • Integrates traditional cultural experiences with agricultural activities • Markets villages through national tourism promotion channels <p>The program has successfully revitalized many rural communities, attracting both domestic and international tourists to experience Korean rural life and agriculture.</p>
<p>Case Study 4: Georgia, The resolution “On Approval of the Principles of Agrotourism and Wine Tourism Activities”</p>	<p>The resolution “On Approval of the Principles of Agrotourism and Wine Tourism Activities, the Procedure and Conditions for Obtaining and Revocation of the Status of Activity Subjects. Starting January 1, 2025, agritourism and wine tourism receive an increased turnover limit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New limit: instead of GEL 500,000, a limit of GEL 700,000 per year is introduced. • Conditions for maintaining the 1% rate: if annual income does not exceed GEL 700,000, the entrepreneur continues to pay 1% tax as before (all other things being equal). • Exceeding the limit: if in any month the turnover exceeds GEL 700,000, the rate turns into 3% from the beginning of that month. And in case of further exceeding of the limit, it will be necessary to switch to the general system or another form.

Source: Own work, according to the collected data

Direct and Indirect Economic Benefits of Wine and Agritourism

According to inclusive Agriculture Ecosystem, Tourism generates economic benefits through various channels:

- Direct spending: Tourists spend money on accommodations, food, transportation, and attractions.

- Job creation: The industry employs people in hotels, restaurants, tour agencies, and related services.
- Infrastructure development: Tourism often drives improvements in roads, airports, and public facilities.
- Tax revenue: Governments collect taxes from tourism-related businesses and activities.

3.4. Results of the Qualitative Research

Across the ten surveyed enterprises, several consistent patterns appear. First, the sector is dominated by small, family-based operations. Every respondent reported family involvement, and most businesses operate either as sole proprietorships or as small limited liability companies, reflecting a preference for simpler organizational forms and household-based entrepreneurship.

Second, business resilience is strongly linked to diversification. Rather than relying on one service, most enterprises combine accommodation, tastings/degustation, tours, events, and product sales. This suggests that mixed offers are a core strategy for stabilizing income across seasons and attracting different visitor segments.

Third, economic perceptions are largely positive. Most respondents associate tourism with revenue growth, local job creation, and broader local economic benefits. At the same time, tourism's role in infrastructure improvement is assessed more moderately, indicating that business-level growth is not always matched by equal progress in public infrastructure.

Fourth, sustainability implementation is uneven. While many respondents report practices such as organic farming, waste management, renewable energy use, or water conservation, a notable minority report no sustainability measures. This gap suggests that sustainability is recognized but not yet systematized across the sector, likely due to differences in capacity, knowledge, or access to support.

Finally, social and cultural impacts show both benefits and risks. Most respondents see tourism as supporting cultural preservation and youth engagement in

agriculture, yet there is also recognition that tourism can pressure traditional lifestyles. This indicates the need for careful visitor management and authenticity protection so that cultural assets are not weakened by commercialization.

The survey included ten businesses operating in agritourism and wine tourism. The respondents were relatively evenly distributed across business types: agritourism-only and mixed businesses represented similar shares, while wine tourism businesses were slightly more common. This suggests that wine tourism is a leading activity, but many enterprises combine it with agritourism to diversify their offer.

The businesses were established between 2005 and 2020, with no single period dominating. This indicates steady sector development over time rather than rapid growth during one specific event (such as COVID-19). All respondents had at least five years of operational experience, meaning the sample represents established businesses rather than newly created initiatives.

Geographically, businesses were located across seven regions of Georgia. Kakheti had the highest representation, followed by Imereti, which aligns with Kakheti's strong reputation and activity in wine production and wine tourism. The presence of businesses in other regions also shows that rural tourism development is not limited to one destination.

In terms of legal structure, most respondents operated as sole proprietorships, while the rest were registered as limited liability companies. This points to a preference for simpler business arrangements, which is common for small rural enterprises.

Business models were strongly family-oriented. Family-run operations were the most frequent model, followed by commercial LLC structures and owner-operated businesses. Partnerships involving external investors were rare, suggesting that most businesses rely primarily on household resources and internal financing rather than formal investment.

Income sources were highly diversified. Businesses combined different revenue streams such as accommodation, wine tasting and degustation, tours, events, food and beverage services, and product sales. This pattern indicates that rural tourism enterprises often depend on mixed services to stabilize income and respond to different visitor needs.

Family involvement was universal: every respondent reported that family members participate in the business. Employment levels were generally small-scale, with full-time staff ranging from two to seven employees and part-time staff commonly between two and three. This reflects the typical structure of rural tourism businesses, stable enough to generate jobs, but limited in size and often dependent on flexible or seasonal labor.

Most businesses offered accommodation, showing that many aim to host tourists for extended stays rather than only providing short visits or tastings. A majority also operated year-round, although a substantial share remained seasonal, likely due to weather conditions and demand fluctuations.

Regarding performance, most respondents reported that their revenue had increased, while smaller groups experienced stable or decreasing revenue. Tourist numbers varied widely across businesses, indicating differences in capacity, market reach, and location. Despite these differences, all respondents reported sourcing local products, showing strong connections with local supply chains and regional producers.

Perceived impact on local employment was generally positive, although respondents varied in how strongly they rated their contribution. Most businesses also reported awareness of tourism-related legislation, but a notable minority were not aware, suggesting the need for clearer information or stronger communication from institutions. Legislation was mostly viewed as neutral or positive, with very few respondents perceiving it as negative.

Government support was received by a majority of respondents, but not by all. Support types varied and included financial assistance, infrastructure support, marketing support, and training. A considerable share still reported receiving no support, indicating unequal access to assistance programs.

Sustainability practices were present in most businesses, while a minority had none. The approaches differed across enterprises and included organic farming, waste management, renewable energy use, and water conservation. Community involvement was also common, with most respondents stating that they participate in community activities.

Finally, perceptions of tourism's broader impacts were mainly positive. Most respondents believed tourism increased their business revenue, created local employment, benefited the local economy, and helped attract investment. Infrastructure improvement was recognized, but opinions were more moderate compared to other economic benefits. Cultural impact was generally seen as positive, with most respondents believing tourism helps preserve local culture, although some acknowledged that tourism can also cause harm or pressure traditional lifestyles. Views on tourism providing education and training were mixed, suggesting that learning opportunities exist but are not experienced equally by all businesses. Most respondents agreed that tourism encourages youth engagement in agriculture, which highlights tourism's potential role in supporting rural continuity and future participation in agricultural activities.

Table 3: Wine and Agri Tourism and Their Impact Summary (example of Georgia)

Statement	Average Score
Tourism Benefited the Local Economy	4.2
Tourism Preserves Local Culture	4.1
My Business Created Local Employment	4.0
Tourism Attracts Investment	4.0
Tourism Increased My Business Revenue	3.9
Tourism Engages Youth in Agriculture	3.7
My Business Involves Local Community	3.7
Tourism Improved Infrastructure	3.6
Tourism Provides Education & Training	3.4
Tourism Pressures Traditional Lifestyles	2.9

Source: Own work, according to the collected data

The qualitative research results show a clear overall positive perception of wine tourism and agritourism impacts, especially on the local economy and cultural preservation. The highest-rated statement was that tourism benefits the local economy (average score 4.2), followed closely by tourism preserving local culture (4.1) and creating local employment (4.0). Respondents also strongly linked tourism with attracting investment (4.0) and increasing business revenue (3.9), reinforcing the view that tourism functions as a development driver in rural regions.

At the same time, the results highlight specific areas where impacts are weaker or more uncertain. Infrastructure improvement received a moderate evaluation (3.6), suggesting that tourism growth is not always matched by public or private infrastructure development. Education and training scored the lowest among positive indicators (3.4), indicating that skills development exists but is not sufficiently systematic or equally accessible. Finally, the statement “tourism

pressures traditional lifestyles” received an average score of 2.9, meaning that while respondents do not rate the pressure as extreme, they still recognize a real risk of cultural strain and lifestyle disruption if tourism is not managed responsibly.

1. Economic Impacts (according to the tables

Tourism Increased My Business Revenue

- 70% rated this impact as high (score 4 or 5).
- Indicates that most businesses see a positive correlation between tourism and revenue growth.

My Business Created Local Employment

- 70% also rated this positively.
- Suggests tourism is a driver of job creation in local communities, particularly in rural areas.

Tourism Benefited the Local Economy

- 40% gave the highest rating (5), 30% gave a score of 4.
- Strong consensus that tourism contributes to regional economic development.

Tourism Attracts Investment

- Responses were more balanced: 40% scored 4, 30% scored 5.
- Shows a moderate perception that tourism drives external or reinvestment into their areas.

Tourism Improved Infrastructure

- Mixed views: 40% rated 3, only 20% gave the highest score.
- While some improvements are recognized, infrastructure investment may lag behind tourism growth.

2. Social Impacts

My Business Involves Local Community

- 70% gave scores of 4 or 5.
- Indicates strong community engagement, especially in family-run or owner-operated models.

Tourism Preserves Local Culture

- 80% rated this positively.
- Confirms that wine and agritourism in Georgia are helping sustain traditions, especially winemaking.

Tourism Provides Education & Training

- 70% scored 3 or 4, but only 10% gave it the highest score.
- Suggests moderate benefits for skills development, though there's room for structured training programs.

Tourism Engages Youth in Agriculture

- 50% rated this highly (4 or 5).
- Indicates some involvement of youth, but more initiatives may be needed to make agri and wine heritage appealing.

Tourism Pressures Traditional Lifestyles

- This is a negative indicator.
- 40% acknowledged a score of 2 (meaning they feel the pressure is low), but 60% rated 3 or 4.
- Implies growing concerns about commercialization or cultural dilution, though not extreme

Discussion

The results reveal an important asymmetry: enterprises report strong economic and cultural benefits, while infrastructure improvement and structured training are weaker. This pattern suggests that market demand and enterprise diversification can generate private gains even when public enabling systems (infrastructure, capacity-building, legislative communication) lag behind. Therefore, legislative effectiveness should be evaluated not only by adoption of laws, but by implementation capacity and the accessibility of support mechanisms, especially for small, family-run rural enterprises.

According to the research was created figure5, which demonstrates that balancing these three aspects is crucial for the long-term success and positive impact of agritourism ventures.

Social Sustainability (People)

- Focus: Fair labor practices, community involvement, and cultural preservation.
- Analysis:
 - Emphasizes human and social dimensions of sustainability.
 - Ensures legal compliance (regulated labor) and ethical practices.
 - Promotes community cohesion and preserves local culture, which is especially relevant in wine regions with heritage significance.
 - Aligns with social equity and inclusion, critical for long-term acceptance and participation of local stakeholders.

Environmental Sustainability (Planet)

- Focus: Eco-friendly practices, bio wine, conservation of natural resources, biodiversity protection.
- Analysis:
 - Targets environmental responsibility in wine and agribusiness production.
 - Implementation of eco-friendly practices reduces environmental footprint.
 - Biodiversity and resource conservation ensures long-term ecological viability of vineyards and surrounding ecosystems.
 - Can enhance market appeal to environmentally conscious consumers.

Economic Sustainability (Profit)

- Focus: Viable business models, fair income for wine makers and agribusiness owners, local economic development.
- Analysis:
 - Ensures financial viability and profitability, which is necessary for sustaining social and environmental initiatives.
 - Promotes economic development in local communities, linking business success to regional growth.

- Supports a balanced approach: sustainability is not just ethical or environmental, it also needs to be financially feasible.

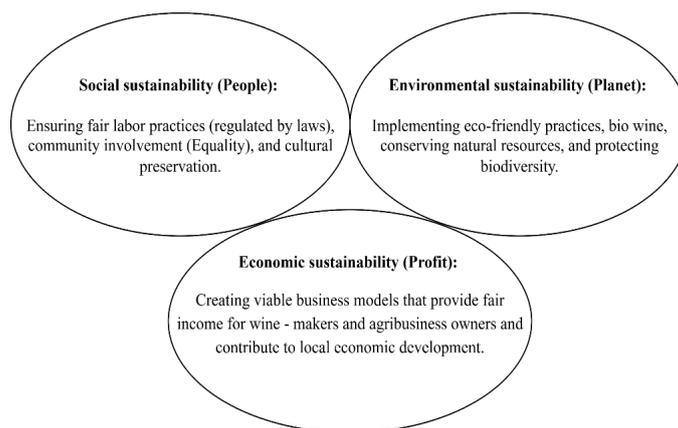


Figure 5: Triple Bottom Line and wine and agritourism

Note. Developed by the author based on the literature review and the survey findings from Georgian agritourism and wine tourism enterprises.

Figure 5 presents the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach as a way to evaluate sustainability in wine tourism and agritourism through three connected pillars: People (social), Planet (environmental), and Profit (economic). The figure emphasizes that sustainable rural tourism is not only about earning income, but also about protecting local communities and natural resources at the same time.

Social sustainability (People) in the figure is defined through fair labor practices (supported by legislation), community involvement, equality, and cultural preservation. This matches the survey results: the businesses are strongly family-centered (all respondents involve family members) and many are community-involved (most reported participation in community activities). Cultural preservation is also viewed positively by respondents, most believe tourism helps preserve local culture, although some also recognize that tourism can create cultural pressure and may harm traditional lifestyles. This shows that “People” outcomes

are mostly positive, but they require careful management so cultural traditions are not commercialized or disrupted.

Environmental sustainability (Planet) focuses on eco-friendly practices, bio/organic wine, conserving natural resources, and protecting biodiversity. The qualitative results support this pillar partly: most businesses reported having sustainability measures in place, but a noticeable share reported having none. The variety of practices (organic farming, waste management, renewable energy, water conservation) suggests that sustainability is understood in practical ways, yet not applied consistently across all enterprises. This implies a need for stronger incentives, guidance, and training so environmental sustainability becomes more widespread and systematic rather than optional.

Economic sustainability (Profit) refers to building viable business models that generate fair income for wine-makers and agribusiness owners and support local economic development. The findings strongly align with this pillar: most respondents reported increased revenue trends, and the majority agreed that tourism increases business revenue, creates local employment, benefits the local economy, and attracts investment. Many businesses also diversify their income (accommodation, tastings, tours, events, product sales), which strengthens financial resilience and reduces dependence on a single revenue stream. At the same time, tourist numbers vary widely, meaning economic benefits are uneven across businesses.

Overall, the figure helps interpret the results as a balance: profitability is important and generally strong in the sample, but long-term sustainability depends on maintaining social trust (community support, fair practices, cultural respect) and environmental responsibility (resource protection). The data suggests the sector is moving in a positive direction, but the presence of businesses without sustainability practices and the mixed perceptions about cultural pressure show that achieving the

full Triple Bottom Line requires ongoing support, awareness, and responsible tourism planning.

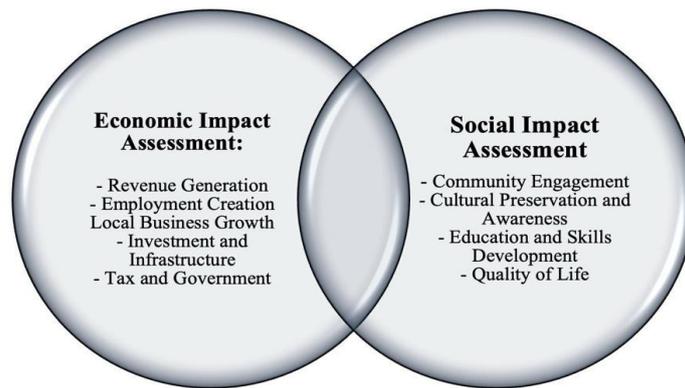


Figure 6: Economic and Social Impacts of wine and agritourism development

Note. Authors, according to the analyzed data

The Figure 6 demonstrates that:

1. Economic and social impacts are interconnected, economic growth can improve social wellbeing, and strong social systems support economic performance.
2. A comprehensive impact assessment should include both dimensions to understand the full effects of a project, policy, or initiative.
3. Decision-makers should balance financial gains with community values, ensuring development is inclusive, ethical, and sustainable.

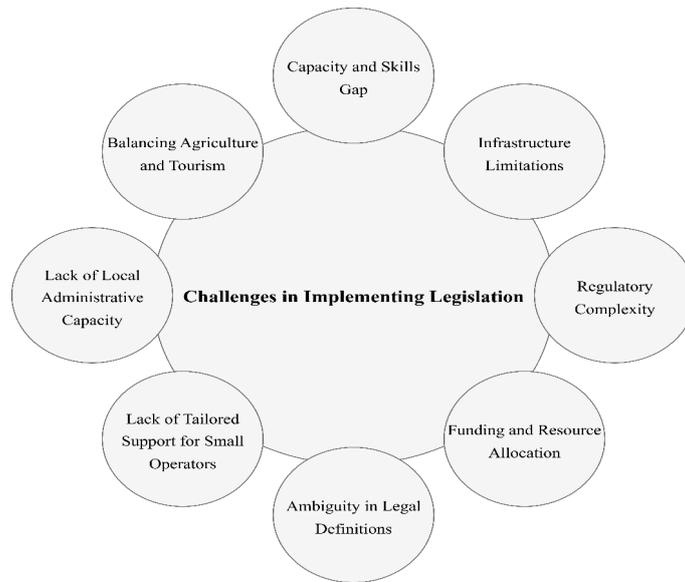


Figure 7: Challenges in Implementing Legislation

Note. Authors, according to the analyzed data

The Figure 7 suggests that successful legislative implementation requires:

- Clear legal frameworks
- Adequate resources
- Capacity-building at local levels
- Infrastructure development
- Stakeholder-specific support
- Cross-sector coordination

It also highlights that implementation is as important as legislation itself, strong laws cannot achieve intended outcomes without strong systems to support them.

Economic Impacts of Legislation in Agri and Wine tourism

The expert in economics, has shared his views about agritourism and wine tourism development, with legislation implementation. He has mentioned that the development of wine and agritourism will certainly have a positive impact on the local economy and population, as they increase the income of the local population, budget payments to the local budget and, accordingly, the population becomes socio-economically secure.

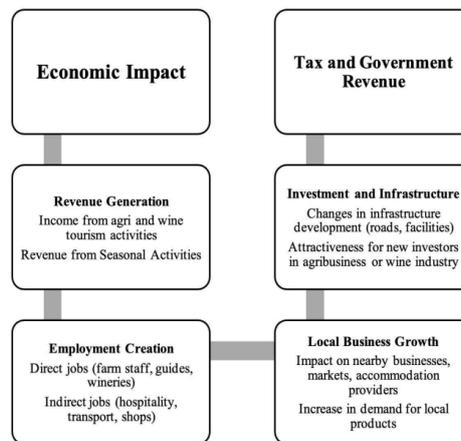


Figure 8: Economic impacts of wine and agritourism development

Note. Authors, according to the analyzed data

The Figure 8, illustrates the economic impact of a sector (likely agritourism or wine tourism) and how this impact connects to tax and government revenue.

It is divided into two major categories:

1. Economic Impact
2. Tax and Government Revenue

Each category branches into specific sub-components that explain how value is created.

1. Economic Impact

A. Revenue Generation

This section highlights the direct income sources created by agritourism or wine-related tourism activities.

Key elements:

- Income from agri and wine tourism activities (e.g., tours, tastings, farm visits)
- Revenue from seasonal activities (e.g., harvest festivals, grape-picking events)

These activities bring in money directly to farms, wineries, and tourism operators, increasing their financial sustainability and diversifying income streams.

B. Employment Creation

This component focuses on labor-related benefits.

- Direct jobs: farm staff, winery workers, tourist guides.
- Indirect jobs: hospitality, transportation, retail shops.

Tourism stimulates job growth not only in the primary sector (farms/wineries) but also across supporting industries. This has a multiplier effect on local economies.

2. Tax and Government Revenue

A. Investment and Infrastructure

This shows how tax revenue from tourism contributes to:

- Infrastructure development: roads, facilities, utilities.
- Attractiveness to new investors in agribusiness or wine industry.

Improved infrastructure supports both the tourism experience and long-term economic growth, making the region more appealing for further investments.

B. Local Business Growth

This section explains how surrounding businesses benefit.

- Impact on nearby businesses: markets, shops, accommodation.
- Increase in demand for local products.

Tourism encourages spending in local markets and boosts demand for regional goods, supporting a diversified local economy.

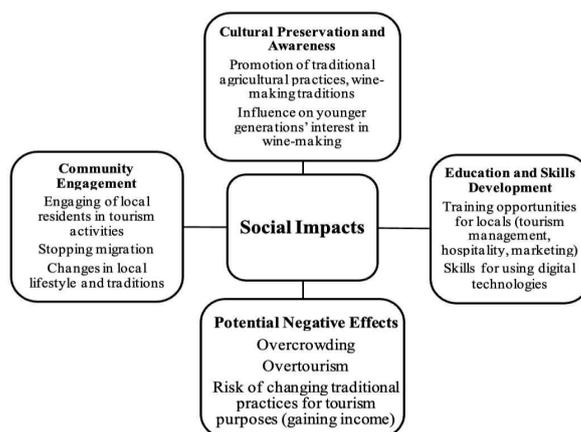


Figure 9: Social impacts of wine and agritourism development

Note. Authors, according to the analyzed data

1. Cultural Preservation and Awareness

This category focuses on how tourism can help keep traditions alive.

Key Points

- **Promotion of traditional agricultural and wine-making practices:**
 Tourism encourages farmers and winemakers to maintain and showcase their heritage.
- **Influence on younger generations' interest in wine-making:**
 Increased visibility of local traditions may motivate youth to continue family practices.

Tourism can become a tool for cultural revival. Instead of abandoning traditional work, communities may reinvest in it because it becomes economically and socially valuable.

2. Education and Skills Development

This section highlights the learning opportunities created by tourism.

Key Points

- **Training opportunities for locals**

Including tourism management, hospitality, and marketing.

- **Skills for using digital technologies**

Tourism businesses often require online promotion, booking systems, and social media management.

Tourism contributes to human capital development. Locals gain new qualifications, become more employable, and can participate in modern digital economies.

3. Community Engagement

This category reflects how tourism can strengthen local participation and cohesion.

Key Points

- Engaging local residents in tourism activities
Residents participate as hosts, guides, artisans, or service providers.
- Stopping migration
Economic and social opportunities encourage people to remain in rural areas.
- Changes in local lifestyle and traditions
Tourism can introduce new habits or revive old ones.

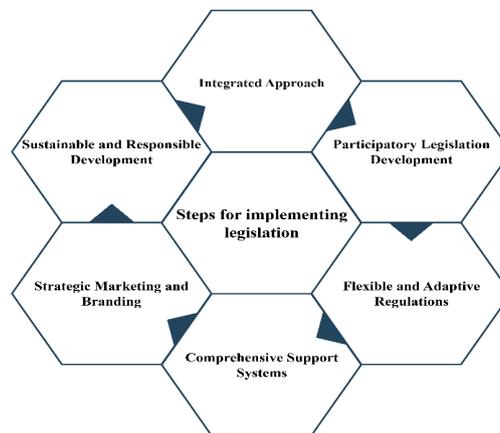


Figure 10: Steps for Implementing Legislation

Note. Authors, according to the analyzed data

The figure 10 uses a hexagonal cluster to represent interconnected steps needed for successful legislation implementation.

1. Integrated Approach

This step emphasizes that legislation should not be developed in isolation.

Interpretation

- Requires collaboration across different sectors (tourism, agriculture, environment, local government).
- Ensures laws are consistent, aligned, and supportive of long-term objectives.
- Encourages holistic planning rather than fragmented or conflicting policies.

2. Participatory Legislation Development

This step highlights the importance of including stakeholders in the law-making process.

- Local communities, businesses, farmers, and experts should be involved.
- Increases transparency and trust.
- Leads to legislation that reflects real needs and practical challenges.
- Reduces resistance to new laws because people feel included.

3. Flexible and Adaptive Regulations

This step reflects the need for laws that can evolve.

- Tourism and agriculture are dynamic sectors; regulations must adjust to new trends, technologies, and market conditions.
- Prevents outdated laws from limiting innovation.
- Allows for pilot programs or phased implementation.

4. Comprehensive Support Systems

This step focuses on providing the necessary tools and assistance for implementation.

Interpretation

- Support may include training, funding, technical assistance, legal guidance, and infrastructure.
- Ensures that stakeholders are not overwhelmed by new regulations.
- Enhances compliance by making it easier for businesses and communities to adapt.

5. Strategic Marketing and Branding

This step acknowledges the importance of promoting the legislation's goals.

Interpretation

- Helps raise awareness among locals and tourists.
- Supports destination branding, especially for agritourism or wine tourism.
- Encourages investment and signals professionalism.
- Connects policy goals with the market image of the region.

6. Sustainable and Responsible Development

This step centers on long-term, ethical, and environmentally conscious growth.

Interpretation

- Ensures legislation promotes sustainability rather than short-term profit.
- Balances economic, social, and environmental interests.
- Prevents overuse of resources and protects cultural heritage.
- Encourages responsible tourism practices.

Overall Meaning of the Diagram

The figure 10 shows that legislative implementation is not a single action but a multi-layered process. Effective legislation requires:

- collaboration (integrated approach),
- inclusivity (participatory development),
- adaptability (flexible regulations),
- support mechanisms,
- marketing strategies, and
- a sustainability focus.

Together, these elements ensure that legislation is realistic, widely accepted, and aligned with long-term regional development goals.

Parker Jones, agritourism business consultant, notes various definitions of agritourism. Arroyo's definition relates to working farms and entertainment or education tourist products (Arroyo, Barbieri, & Rich, 2013). Tew and Barbieri believe participation in farm processes or contemplation of farm landscapes denotes agritourism (Tew & Barbieri, 2012). There is not yet a unifying definition of agritourism across countries. For this analysis, we will use the framework that defines agritourism as being either direct marketing, education, entertainment, hospitality, and outdoor recreation (Chase et al., 2018).

Agritourism represents a diversification from pure agricultural production to a mixed or non-agricultural product as the unit of sale. Wine is uniquely positioned to diversify into tangential sectors of agritourism. It is a premium agricultural product, among the most popular global beverages (Koblianidze & Sachaleli, 2021). There is a large total available market for wine products and services as compared to other agricultural products.

The typical wine tourist is in their 30s, 40s, or 50s, with a medium-to-high income (Hall et al., 2000). This typical consumer wants to be connected with the agricultural product and its surrounding environment (Ghvanidze et al., 2022). This increased engagement can take the form of direct marketing, education, entertainment, and outdoor recreation products. Agritourism products from wine companies meet consumer demand for a deeper relationship with the wine product and surrounding environment.

Non-agricultural businesses can also benefit from wine tourist visits who seek to engage with the culture and land of the wine product, as well as fintech companies which can be mutually beneficial on the both ends, on one side providing financial resources in the remote areas where traditional banking system is usually weakly developed and on the other side to the fintech development in Georgia itself (Charaia et al., 2021; Lashkhi et al., 2022). The premium positioning and distributed benefits of wine tourism has led some regions to use wine as a key tenant to their tourism marketing campaigns, including “Discover Unique Georgia” and “Pure Michigan” (Pure Michigan, n.d.) National Tourism Administration of Georgia. (n.d.). In sum, wine businesses are uniquely positioned to diversify into agritourism due to high awareness and consumption of the underlying agricultural product, consumer demand for deeper engagement with the wine product and landscape, and the target audience’s higher ability to pay for related products and services. According to the bibliometric analysis wine tourism research is multidisciplinary, spanning:

- Marketing and consumer behavior
- Rural/food experiences
- Sustainability and development
- Agricultural & regional policy links

Central synergy:

- Wine tourism is positioned as both an economic activity (marketing, rural consumption) and a development strategy (sustainability, regional agriculture).

The map highlights that *wine tourism* and *agritourism* are central themes in tourism studies, bridging marketing/experiential approaches with agriculture, sustainability, and regional development. The field combines case-specific studies (regions) with broader theoretical approaches (marketing, econometric, sustainability).

Conclusions

The development of wine and agritourism offers a promising path for sustainable economic growth and development, particularly in rural areas. By leveraging the synergies between these sectors, communities can create diverse, boost economies and preserve agricultural heritage while meeting the demands of modern tourists.

As sustainable tourism is becoming more demandable there is a unique opportunity to rebuild in a way that more closely aligns with sustainable development goals. Agri-tourism and wine tourism, with their emphasis on cultural preservation, social, economic and environmental factors, are well-positioned to meet the changing preferences of travelers seeking unique and meaningful experiences.

However, the legislation integration requires discussion, careful planning, supportive policies, and strategies. Balancing the needs of local people, developing agri and wine tourism and at the same time maintaining authenticity while meeting visitor expectations, and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits are ongoing challenges that must be addressed.

In a long-term period, the continued growth of wine and agri-tourism will likely play a significant role in shaping rural economies, agricultural practices, and the tourism industry as a whole. By fostering connections between urban consumers and rural producers, wine and agri-tourism can contribute to greater understanding

and support for sustainable agriculture, ultimately benefiting both the economy and the environment.

- Wine and agritourism bring revenue to the host destinations;
- Tourism expenditures boost the local economy and increase the economic activity within the region.
- Regulations increase foreign exchange earnings to finance economic growth;
- Wine and agritourism are in some cases only sources of income.

Recommendations

Based on the legal review and the business survey results, recommendations are proposed at two levels: policy (government and institutions) and managerial (business owners). The aim is to strengthen sustainability across the Triple Bottom Line and reduce the unevenness observed in awareness, support access, and sustainability implementation.

Policy recommendations (government and institutions)

1. **Increase awareness and practical guidance on legislation.** A noticeable share of businesses are not aware of tourism-related legislation, suggesting the need for clearer communication. Institutions could provide simple toolkits (registration steps, safety rules, tax thresholds, and compliance checklists) and regional information meetings, especially outside the main wine destinations.
2. **Make support programs more accessible and transparent.** Since some businesses receive support while others do not, assistance mechanisms should be easier to apply for and clearly explained (eligibility, deadlines, selection criteria). This is particularly important for small family businesses that may lack administrative capacity.
3. **Link support to sustainability outcomes.** Because sustainability practices are not consistent across enterprises, financial and marketing support could be partially tied to adopting minimum sustainability actions (waste sorting,

water-saving measures, energy efficiency, or organic transition plans). This would encourage wider uptake without imposing unrealistic burdens.

4. **Invest in infrastructure that directly improves the visitor experience.** Businesses recognize tourism's economic benefits more strongly than infrastructure improvements, which indicates a gap. Priorities should include local roads, signage, sanitation, and digital connectivity in rural destinations to support year-round tourism and higher-value stays.
5. **Create structured training pathways.** Perceptions of education/training benefits are mixed, so targeted short courses in hospitality, wine storytelling, digital marketing, pricing, safety, and sustainability management would directly address the weakest-rated area and improve service quality.

Managerial recommendations (business owners)

1. **Strengthen "experience design," not only services.** Many businesses already offer tastings, tours, events, and accommodation. The next step is packaging these into clear experiences (e.g., harvest day, farm-to-table, qvevri storytelling, seasonal workshops) with transparent pricing and booking options to increase length of stay and spending.
2. **Use sustainability as a market advantage.** Where sustainability actions exist, they should be communicated to visitors (labels, short explanations during tours, and visible practices). For businesses without sustainability actions, starting with low-cost steps (waste, water, energy) can improve competitiveness and readiness for future standards.
3. **Manage cultural authenticity proactively.** Because some respondents recognize cultural pressure, businesses should set boundaries (visitor rules, respectful behavior guidelines, fair representation of traditions) and involve local community voices in the tourism narrative to reduce "show culture" dynamics.
4. **Reduce seasonality through micro-events.** For enterprises that do not operate year-round, small off-season activities (workshops, local food

weekends, winemaking demonstrations) can stabilize income and create employment continuity.

Limitations and future research

This study is exploratory and has several limitations. First, the survey sample is small (n=10) and cannot represent all agritourism and wine tourism enterprises in Georgia. Second, responses are self-reported and reflect business perceptions rather than independently verified economic or environmental indicators. Third, the research captures a single time period and does not measure change over time.

Future research could expand the sample size and compare regions more systematically, including more enterprises from less-represented destinations. In addition, combining business data with tourist surveys would clarify demand-side preferences, willingness to pay for sustainable practices, and perceived authenticity. Finally, longitudinal research could evaluate whether new legislative measures and support schemes lead to measurable improvements in sustainability implementation and local development outcomes.

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