

# A Legal and Policy Roadmap for Linking Energy Security in Rural Areas with Sustainable Tourism: A European Perspective

ERRG, together with the School of Management (Tourism Division) and the Centre for Environmental Strategy has initiated a project on the linkages between sustainable tourism and energy security in rural areas.

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## Funding Body

- University of Surrey Research Fund
- School of Management, University of Surrey

## Duration

2008-2009



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## The Project

This project builds upon three premises: (a) Over 50% of the EU population live in communities with a population density below 150 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>; (b) climate change has become one of the biggest environmental challenges within Europe while energy security is becoming a policy priority; and (c) tourism is a key driver of economic development in rural areas. Against this framework, this project wishes to link energy security in rural areas with sustainable tourism as part of the transition towards a low carbon economy. In particular, it wishes to explore and analyse the legal, institutional and political roadmap needed in order to promote this link in rural areas.

The research team will identify three case studies in Scotland, Spain and Romania with a view to determining whether they present a viable project from which comparisons can be drawn and recommendations made as to the legal and policy roadmaps identified. Despite current differences, Spain and Romania share similarities when looking at their historical development in perspective. Romania is now one of the poorest countries in the EU and it desperately needs to develop. Spain was in that same position until very recently (40 years ago). Tourism has been, and still is, one of the main drivers of the Spanish economy. However, the tourism pattern that has been promoted in most of the Iberia peninsula is unsustainable from the point of view of resource use and lasting benefits for local communities. The case study in rural parts of Romania would have the aim to see whether the Spanish 'story' could be repeated in a sustainable manner. In identifying a case study in Scotland, this will enrich the project by providing a UK perspective. This is important as the decline in farming revenues in the UK means ever-greater pressure to diversify into tourism. Thus, this shift to tourism could have important energy security implications

In conclusion, this research will aim to identify potential legal and institutional developments within a framework of sustainability that will facilitate the achievement of rural development through sustainable tourism and energy security in a low carbon economy.

## Milestones

This project aims to consolidate the research team and to develop a strong network in Scotland, Spain and Romania. In 2009 the researchers involved will draft a proposal that will be submitted to a domestic funding body and they will start to consider the possibility of working together on a proposal in the framework of the EU7FP.

## Contact

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