

## The Practices of Creative Tourism in Urban and Rural Areas at International Level

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**Abstract :** Several destinations have been experiencing a transition from a massified cultural tourism to a creative tourism approach. In this new segment of tourism, urban territories have been the focus for several decades. Urban studies on creative industries and initiatives have been taking place in big cities marginalizing small towns and more specifically rural areas. This paper envisages evaluating the differences between rural and urban institutions/platforms, mostly certified by the Creative Tourism Network, in what concerns the practices and initiatives in creative tourism worldwide. In the research carried out between March 2017 and March 2018, we had three levels of primary data and qualitative analysis: i) research on Google (web) by using several keywords like 'creative tourism initiatives', 'creative cities', 'best practices in creative tourism' (from March to August 2017). With the help of the certification of institutions/platforms by the Creative Tourism Network, 24 institutions were found and declared to be developing creative initiatives. It was decided to try to unravel the type of activities and some practices and initiatives carried out by these institutions and the analysis of the differences between rural and urban initiatives. A database of 20 items (e.g., institutions in charge of implementing the initiatives, year of implementation, site, activities developed, place of development, country of origin, type of partners chosen) was created for each institution/platform; ii) A deeper analysis was made on the websites' information on the institutions (from September to December 2017). The type of professionals involved in the activities, the language used in the activities and the type of activity performed were some of the data analysed and iii) To complement these data, semi-structured interviews were done to representatives of the institutions, conducted mainly by Skype from July 2017 to April 2018. The interviews consisted of 17 questions. In the present paper, these interviews are used to complement the analysis of the same items. Some of the qualitative analysis was supported by the narratives of the leaders of the twenty-four institutions that were surveyed. The results indicate that creative tourism is more active and diverse in urban areas. Some more consolidated communication strategies and partnerships are needed for these activities to become economically more sustainable. The findings of this research provide researchers and practitioners with a better understanding of creative tourism and give some information of how creative tourism is developed in rural and urban areas, the gaps and lack of information, and all the possible directions towards the development of the creative tourism industry.

**Keywords :** creative tourism, practices of creative tourism, rural areas, urban areas

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