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Development of agrotourism and rural tourism in Tena Cundinamarca

Desarrollo del agroturismo y turismo rural en Tena Cundinamarca¹

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Abstract

The article analyzes the potential of agrotourism in the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca. Considering the involvement of the community and local authorities, this research focuses on the themes of agrotourism and rural tourism. For this purpose, a methodological structure based on the mixed approach and the descriptive type of research is used, conducting surveys and semi-structured interviews. During this process, work has been done on the search for information on the resources available in the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca. Likewise, agrotourism makes visible the work conducted by the community with the products cultivated, being tourism a tool for the conservation and preservation of local agricultural traditions, in which the practice is protected, promoted, and rescued. Agro-tourism generates sustainable changes in the current climatic and economic problems, stimulating the local population to develop new offers; it is concluded that this type of tourism can make visible the work carried out by the community with the products cultivated in the municipality of Tena Cundinamarca. However, some of the tourist service operators do not have sufficient training to carry out tourist guidance in the municipality. In conclusion, this research on agrotourism and rural tourism has the potential to benefit local communities by promoting sustainable development and the preservation of cultural identity.

Keywords: agrotourism, rural tourism, community, rural development, tourist route.

Resumen

El artículo analiza el potencial del agroturismo en el municipio de Tena, Cundinamarca. Teniendo en cuenta la vinculación de la comunidad y autoridades locales, la presente investigación se enfoca en las temáticas de un agroturismo y turismo rural. Para ello se hace uso de una estructura metodológica basada en el enfoque mixto y el tipo de investigación descriptivo, realizando encuestas y entrevistas semiestructuradas. Durante este proceso, se ha trabajado en la búsqueda de información referente a los recursos con los que cuenta el municipio de Tena, Cundinamarca. Asimismo, el agroturismo logra visibilizar el trabajo realizado por la comunidad con los productos cultivados, siendo el turismo, una herramienta de conservación y preservación de las tradiciones agrícolas locales, en el cual se logra proteger, fomentar y rescatar la práctica. El agroturismo genera cambios sostenibles en la problemática climática y económica actual, estimulando a la población local a desarrollar nuevas ofertas; se concluye que este tipo de turismo puede visibilizar el trabajo realizado por la comunidad con los productos cultivados en el municipio de Tena Cundinamarca. Sin embargo, algunos de los operadores de servicios turísticos no tienen la suficiente capacitación adecuada para realizar una guía turística en el municipio. En conclusión, esta investigación el agroturismo y el turismo rural tienen el potencial de beneficiar a las comunidades locales al promover el desarrollo sostenible y la conservación de la identidad cultural.

Palabras Clave: agroturismo, Turismo rural, comunidad, ruta turística, desarrollo rural

Introduction

Agrotourism has positioned itself during the last few years as alternative tourism within the country's tourist offer, allowing rural communities to participate in the development of tourism activities. The development of this research intends to design alternatives to promote tourism in Tena, Cundinamarca. Tena is a Colombian municipality located in the department of Cundinamarca. It is approximately forty-eight kilometers southeast of the country's capital, Bogotá (Vera, 2020). However, this municipality does not have an appropriate tourist promotion that allows and facilitates the development of tourism activity, nor does it have

identified its tourist resources that would make the municipality known to potential tourists.

Osorio et al. (2020) indicate that the perception of tourists potentially plays a fundamental role in the development and success of the tourism industry in the municipality of Tena. However, for Diaz-Segura et al. (2020) how tourists perceive the destination of Tena can have a significant impact on their decision to visit it or not.

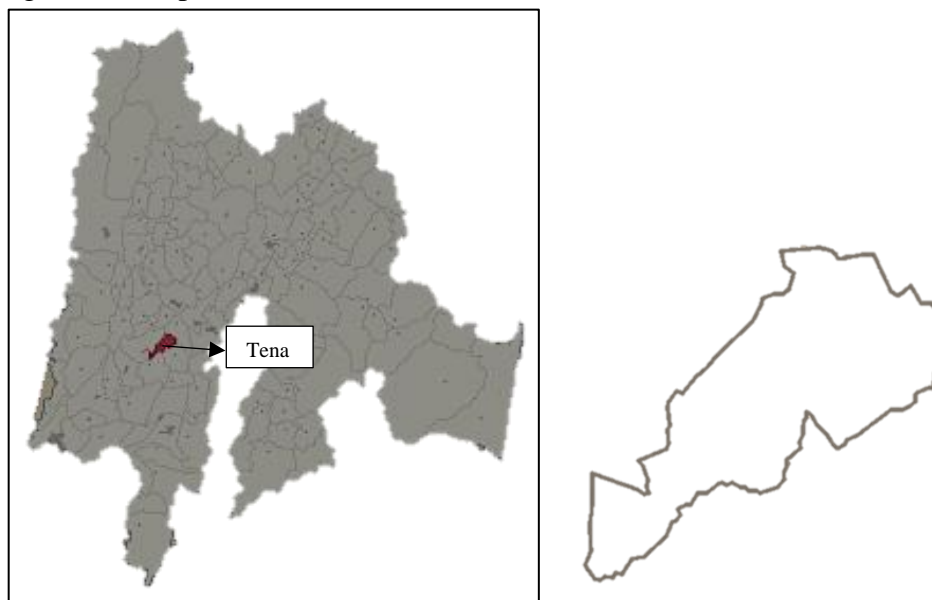


Figure 1. Map of Tena, Cundinamarca

The first step in addressing this issue is to analyze the characteristics of potential visitors through surveys to know the needs, motivations, and preferences of the traveler's profile in acquiring agritourism services in the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca. Likewise, as part of the research in this first phase, data collection was carried out based on information provided by the community, as a tourist inventory in the rural division Escalante, to propose the design of the route where it is possible to link the qualities of the region and the work of the communities, to become Tena into a tourist alternative of the department of Cundinamarca.

Tourism has achieved growth and socioeconomic development in the countries, thanks to the growth it has had worldwide (Castillo et al., 2016). Rural tourism as well as community and sustainable tourism generate local development which stimulates traditional local economies and their cultural elements (Bravo and Zambrano, 2018). The municipality of Tena Cundinamarca has natural tourist resources such as the lagoon of Pedro Pablo, the Tambo Waterfall, the Caminos Reales, and natural landscapes among others, it also has the potential to carry out tourist activities related to the practices in the region such as our agriculture; different thermal floors facilitates the cultivation of a wide variety of products, which will allow us to propose the design of an agritourism route where the work of the community, farmers, crops and products will be highlighted (Saavedra et al., 2021).

Tourism is a source of employment and has established itself as a means of progress for

social, economic, cultural, and environmental growth if these are properly and responsibly articulated. Once the confinement and restrictions were completed because of Covid 19, a need was identified to involve nature and local traditional activities of rural communities to show Tena Cundinamarca to potential visitors, as a favorable destination that integrates these elements and allows the analysis of an agrotourism route.

Agrotourism

It is defined as a tourist activity that takes place in non-urban areas and particularly comes from small tourist units that provide goods and services, such as family members or cooperatives (Kyriakou and Belias, 2016). On the other hand, it is defined as an option for sustainable tourism development, and it takes place in a rural environment, close to nature, where visitors can learn about traditions and customs (Caprio et al., 2006).

In addition, Agrotourism has had significant importance, especially for those travelers who love nature (Belias et al., 2018). It should be noted that tourism has been innovating to offer unique experiences that combine the interaction between the activities of the communities (Kubickova and Campbell, 2018).

Likewise, Agrotourism generates positive impacts in the economic, social, and environmental aspects, allowing for the conservation of rural ways of life (Little and Blau, 2020). Consequently, the demand for rural tourism has grown, thanks to family-owned rural farms, with ecotourism and agrotourism activities (Danskikh and Traskevich, 2018).

Agrotourism stimulates the local population to practice and develop different skills and creates opportunities in the diversity of offers (Little and Blau, 2020). It is important to emphasize that the basic requirements, such as sanitary facilities and public services, are essential for tourist activity to make the destination self-sufficient. (Danskikh and Traskevich, 2018). However, there must be government support that allows rural areas to have a process of legalization and training of their services (Kubickova and Campbell, 2018).

Agrotourism involves two activities, the agricultural practiced by the hosts with the production and processing of agricultural products and their commercialization; on the other hand, the tourism activities that involve the traveler and it is related to accommodation, food, and leisure (Adamov et al., 2020); There is no doubt that agritourism is also an alternative to increase local consumption of food (Brune et al., 2021).

Identifying all elements related to agrotourism, tourism actors will be able to develop strategies that strengthen and promote it (Rauniyar et al., 2021); therefore, the articulated work of different tourism sectors intensifies the resilience of destinations, particularly rural ones (Danskikh and Traskevich, 2018). However, some challenges need to be conducted to effectively promote agrotourism (Little and Blau, 2020).

Agrotourism is not mass tourism, which means that acquiring this type of travel is not

usually economic (Kyriakou and Belias, 2016). Likewise, it has been necessary to leave conventional agriculture and diversify its agricultural production to adapt to change (Little and Blau, 2020). Agrotourism is a key and essential element for rural development (Ciolac, et al., 2019); considering that tourism activity links the economic, social, and environmental factors of sustainability, it is a great alternative for rural areas in a region (Muresan et al., 2016).

It is important to emphasize agrotourism can develop jobs for rural residents, generating activities related to tourism, such as product trade, food service, sales of local handicrafts and food, etc. (Marín, 2015). Travelers connect with unique experiences of agritourism when they have a real interaction with the way of life of farmers (Pitchayadejanant & Nakpathom, 2018); from Agrotourism, it is possible to obtain an additional income to the usual agricultural activities, with the provision of other services such as accommodation, ethnic food, and activities to know rural culture and sustainability (Ahire et al., 2018). It is to be noted that, the farmer's motivations have become much broader in the development of Agrotourism, although the economic factor is relevant, there are also the social, environmental, and cultural factors (Chiodo, et al., 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a quite notorious impact on travel, which is why agritourism was a good option, this tourist activity is not mass tourism, where travelers can be close to nature and most importantly, away from the crowds, considering the current recommendations given by the WHO (Wojcieszak-Zbiersk et al., 2020). In conclusion, agritourism has been growing as a particularly good alternative travel over the last 2 years, when the pandemic was declared in March 2020, today travelers want to visit destinations that offer experiences, away from urban life where they can carry out activities in rural areas.

Tourist Route

Tourist routes must-have elements that support it as a tourist plaza (López and Sánchez, 2008). It is necessary to define the specific objective, determine the important aspects and priorities to design the route, and then in operation, validate if it is accepted and which aspects of improvement must be generated (Herbert, 2001). The increase of routes responds to the search of tourists to actively participate with the host communities and get involved in their culture and traditions (Urquiola and Lalangui, 2016).

The tourist routes are used to promote specific territories, which allows to project the place for the tourist demand (Hernández, 2011). In the tourist routes and the process of their design, cultural itineraries must be recognized to make a quality product, where their tourist offer is diversified. (Calderón et al., 2018). It is important to increase the potential to attract and hold visitors in rural tourism; also, based on new projects developed in the construction of traditional tourist routes. (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004).

Rural tourism

Rural tourism is recognized as an activity that reconciles social equity and the

preservation of natural heritage, without putting at risk those of future generations (Mathew and Sreejesh, 2017; Mora and Motato, 2019). In addition, to established itself with enormous potential in the current global crisis produced by COVID-19, which has left a decline in tourism (Melián and Bulchand, 2020). Rural community tourism is usually characterized by not generating agglomerations and developing in open spaces (Ibarra, 2020).

Likewise, rural tourism is a substitute for urban or mass tourism in difficult times; and offers an "escape" for urban tourists and an opportunity for domestic economies (Saavedra et al., 2021). In times of crisis such as the one brought about by COVID-19, it is presented as an obligatory destination for thousands of people, as a valid alternative to new normalcy where meeting with the other is censored (Korstanje, 2020).

In the academic field, rural tourism is established as a way of knowing reality, not only in tourism research but also in economic and social studies (Fang, 2020). Rural tourism is a concept that has been built, not only academically, but also entrepreneurially (Lane and Kastenholz, 2015). From another point of view, the definitive concept of rural tourism has not been established (Rosalina et al.,2021).

It should be noted that rural tourism has gained popularity in recent years, being a tourist product directed to a market segment, which must have elements such as infrastructure, environmental conservation, and the articulated work of the community and local governments (Kumar et al., 2021). Additionally, to give relevance to rural areas has become from the authors' positions, a main objective that can contribute more effectively to this development. For the authors, the potential of rural areas can be of great value if it is properly shown, especially leaving positive effects such as increased employment (Puška et al.,2021).

Rural areas allow more interaction with visitors, therefore activities such as agrotourism encourage tourists to visit them and engage with local customs (López-Sanz et al., 2021). In addition, tourists look for experiences that connect them with the diversity they can find in rural areas (An and Alarcón, 2021). Rural tourism, after the pandemic can be considered as a great opportunity to strengthen it (Rosalina et al.,2021). It should be noted, it can take advantage of the creation of tourism products such as agritourism, and ecotourism, among others (Kumar et al., 2021). On the other hand, it contributes to local and rural progress, prioritizing sustainable development, minimizing poverty, and generating local jobs (Li, T et al., 2021).

It is also important to consider the relationship between rural tourism with ecotourism, cultural tourism, and agrotourism and all the factors that influence each other so that rural areas can highlight the potential they have in the face of a demand (Puška et al.,2021). According to the authors to complement and diversify rural tourism, it is necessary to integrate other types of tourism that involve a natural environment, and it is there, that agrotourism takes on an important role without distorting the characteristics to which each experience is directed. (Rosalina et al.,2021).

Through rural tourism, the areas of greatest displacement of the population have the opportunity for sustainable growth, thanks to the care of the environment and respect for the activities of the local population (López-Sanz et al., 2021). Furthermore, it is necessary to document the real conditions for the construction of a tourist offer (Puška et al., 2021). In the same way, for an appropriate development of rural tourism without delaying its implementation, there must be mutual collaboration between suppliers and institutional structures. (Hjalager et al., 2018). Rural tourism must be supported by political development, and involved in strategies to determine what there is and what must be built. (Stoican et al., 2018).

Methodology

The methodological structure used for this research is based on a mixed approach, in which the first part is done through surveys and the second part is the data collection through interviews. Likewise, aspects of quantitative models with statistical analysis and related to qualitative models in the interpretation of the individual (Martínez, 2012). Descriptive research makes an analysis and diagnostic of the theme (Ackerman et al., 2013). The instruments used in this research were I.A.P. (Participatory Action Research) where the research is carried out through the approach with the community of the rural division Escalante of the municipality of Tena Cundinamarca, through the community leader is given an approach to the agricultural dynamics of the area, where the strengths and weaknesses of the territory are identified, in addition, the desire of the community to work on the promotion of tourist activity in the area.

The tourist inventory was carried out in the rural division Escalante based on information provided by the community, where some of the crops present in the region were identified, also farms with their crops. In addition, a semi-structured interview and a survey were conducted, where 206 people were surveyed using a ten-question form to determine the profile and perception of the potential tourist, who is willing to visit the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca for agrotourism purposes.

Development of the research

A questionnaire was used to survey 206 people to determine the profile and perception of potential tourists who are willing to visit the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca for agrotourism purposes. The results are the following: the following graph shows that 71.4% of the total surveyed are female and the participation of the male gender is 28.2%, Therefore, the profile of the potential tourist to propose the agrotourism route in Tena, Cundinamarca will be determined by the female gender.

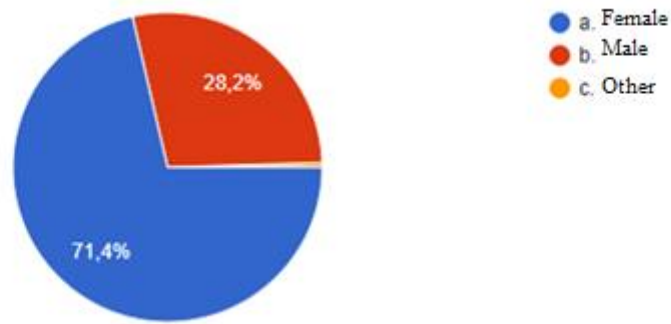


Figure 1. Gender. Own Elaboration

It is determined that the highest participation was people between 29 and 39 years old with a percentage of 41.75% and as a second place, people with a participation of 24.8% are between 18 and 28 years.

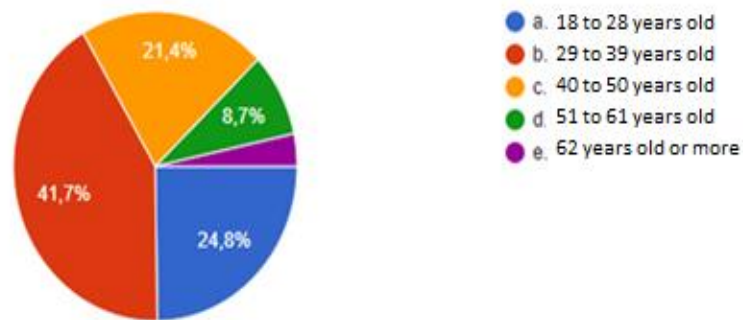


Figure 2. Age. Own Elaboration

It can be identified that 51% of surveyed are employees and with a participation of 23.8% are independent, therefore potential tourists have a job and want to participate in tourism activities different from those usually offered.

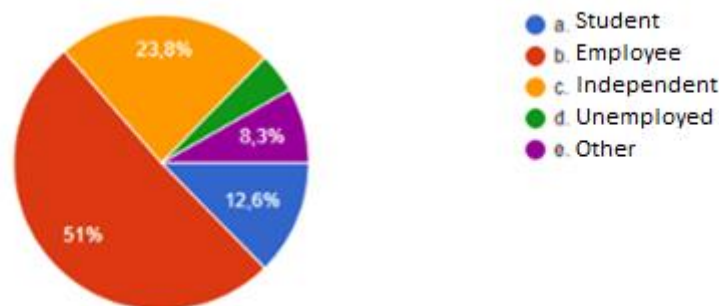


Figure 3. What is your occupation? Own Elaboration

In the following graphic, it can be evidenced that 73.3% have not visited the municipality of Tena for tourist purposes and only 26.7% have visited it at some time, despite

the proximity of the municipality to the capital city is not very known as a tourist destination.

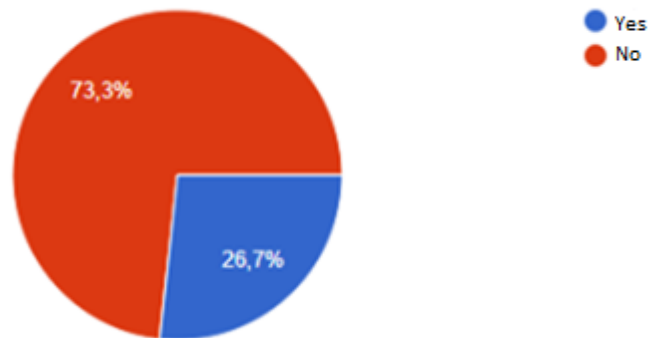


Figure 4. Do you know the municipality? Own Elaboration

The following graph shows that 59.7% have not had the opportunity to carry out agrotourism activities in the last 2 years, this result can be a positive factor; they can visit and know firsthand the offer in the municipality of Tena Cundinamarca related to agrotourism.

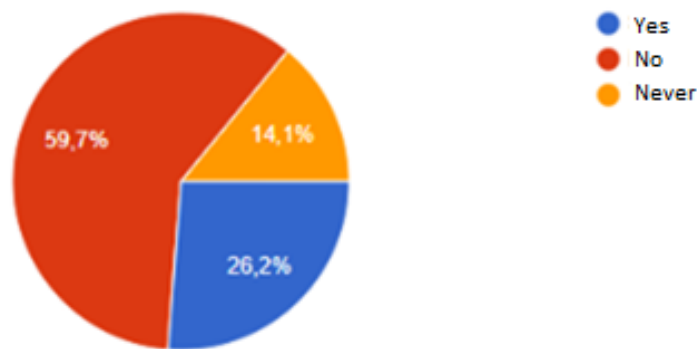


Figure 5. Have you done agrotourism activities? Own Elaboration

According to the previous analysis, in the following graph, we can show that 97.1% have the disposition and interest to carry out agrotourism activities in the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca.

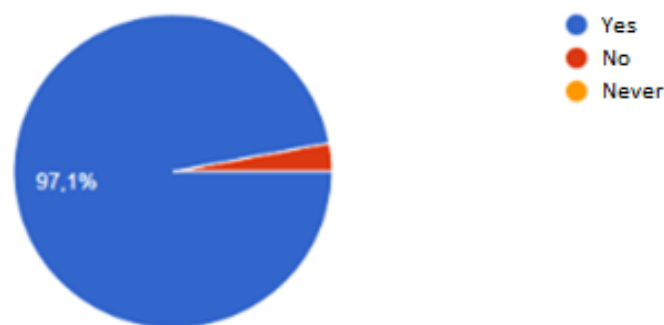


Figure 6. Would you like to do agrotourism activities? Own Elaboration

It can be observed that 44.7% of people would be willing to invest in an agrotourism route between \$70.00 to 99.999 pesos, on the other hand, 35% between \$100.000 to 199.999 pesos; considering the cost, the route can be offered for a day, taking advantage of the proximity of the capital city and the offer of activities that promote the work of farmers and the tourism promotion in the municipality of Tena Cundinamarca.

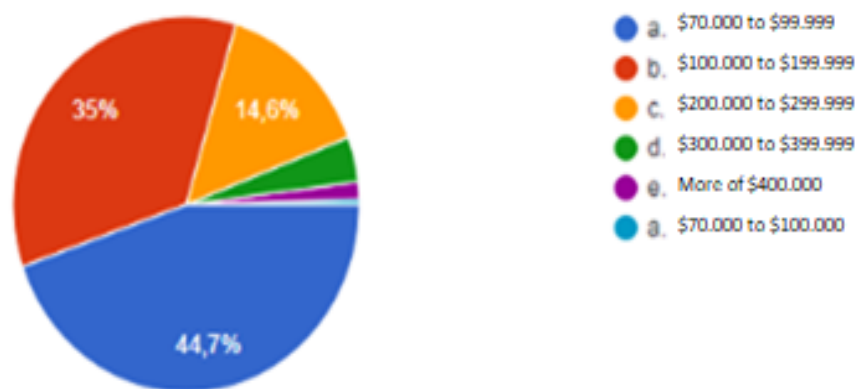


Figure 7. How much would you invest in an agrotourism route? Own Elaboration

According to agrotourism activities, 41.7% of the surveyed chose learning and tasting of crop products of the municipality as the most attractive activities, while 35% would like to interact with the local community and participate in crop experiences. These results help us to determine which activities can be articulated in the proposal of a possible agrotourism route in the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca.



Figure 8. What activities would you like to do in a possible agrotourism route? Own Elaboration

It can be observed that 99% of the surveyed would like to stay in local farms with agrotourism experiences, to have a closer interaction with the local community, this could encourage the residents of this municipality to offer housing services, complementing the proposal of an agrotourism route in the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca.

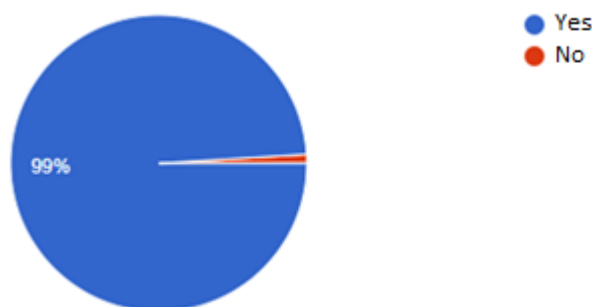


Figure 9. Would you like to stay in local farms with agrotourism experiences? Own Elaboration

Table 1. Interviews with the Community

<p>Opportunities in the region to enhance rural tourism in the municipality.</p>	<p>The community leader explains that it is the first municipality towards the south part of Bogotá, 40 minutes from the capital city; it has three thermal floors that allow a variety of crops of mango, potato, coffee, guatila, balu, orange, mandarin, etc. Highlights as another opportunity, what is being developed in the Sabio Mutis Agropark, which is the twenty-two Botanical Garden of Colombia, focused on 7 different thematic activities, in addition to the theme of museography, where they are working on the development and construction of the Nueva Esperanza Museum, with the biggest archaeological discovery in South America, of an entire Muisca city in Nueva Esperanza. Alliances in the Cundinamarca department, with the IDECUT, on the work with “Los Pueblos Dorados”, in search of tourist opportunities.</p>
<p>Community actions to strengthen rural tourism.</p>	<p>In the case of actions, the community has worked together to promote rural community tourism, the idea is to integrate the native community that are the ones who know the area and its history. Additionally, to try to recover The CAMINOS REALES and the only trapiche that still exists in Tena, to offer tourists ecological walks</p>
<p>General infrastructure of the municipality.</p>	<p>The infrastructure is underdeveloped, this because Tena is a six-category municipality, so the investment of resources is lower. Now the main access road to the municipality is La gran Via and it is a little deteriorated, the government of Cundinamarca has been requested to fix it; About health equipment and schools should have more investment, the nearest hospital is 15 minutes from we call the 'Mango Ecotourism Route" in the municipality of La Mesa. Regarding hotel infrastructure, the municipality has tourist inns, but there is no consolidated hotel equipment, although there are hotels within the tourist route; the community leaders made an inventory of tourist inns, where three hundred beds are installed in the route called the 'Mango Ecotourism Route" in three linear kilometers of area. The community leader says that they have pending the process of managing the National Tourism Registry - RNT, in the same way, they are in the process of managing the legal status and the legalization process.</p>
<p>Formal tourist service providers in the municipality</p>	<p>Tena has only three formal providers that have the necessary documentation to provide tourism services. The municipality is in</p>

	the process of managing a tourism cooperative, they have requested assistance from UNIMINUTO to take a cooperative course to strengthen it, through this cooperation they can support and help the tourist providers to be legally constituted and provide a good service.
Challenges facing the region to boost rural tourism in Tena.	The main and most important is that all tourism service providers manage and comply with all legal requirements (National Tourism Registry - RNT, chamber of commerce, etc.). Strengthen the work of a group of twenty-six people, to achieve progress in the proposal and take forward the tourist route.
Support of the municipal government with tourism promotion.	There is coordination between the Municipal Government and them to develop and execute different projects, the community leader says that they work under the same line.
Community purpose in training to provide different tourist services	The community leader indicates that they are an active community, where most of the community has welcomed this process, clarifies that some people show few interests, but their initiative is to start and, in the process, more people can be linked.

Own Elaboration, 2023.

Discussion

This research determines the profile and perception of potential tourists who are willing to visit the municipality of Tena, in the same way, Osorio et al. (2020) indicate that the perception of potential tourists plays a fundamental role in the development and success of the tourist industry in the municipality of Tena. However, for Diaz-Segura et al. (2020) how tourists perceive the destination of Tena can have a significant impact on their decision to visit it or not.

The findings of this research, agrotourism and rural tourism are two forms of tourism that have gained popularity in recent years due to the growing demand for authentic, sustainable experiences connected to nature and local culture. However, for Ana (2017) agrotourism focuses on agricultural activities and participation in food production, while rural tourism encompasses a broader variety of experiences related to rural life. According to Mura & Ključnikov (2018), rural tourism tends to have a more diversified economic impact on rural communities by involving various sectors, while agrotourism focuses on agricultural activities. In this way, according to the results obtained in this research, both issues also have the potential to benefit local communities by promoting sustainable development and the preservation of cultural identity.

Conclusions

During the research process, it was found that there is the Association for Agricultural Production, Transformation and Marketing of the Province of Tequendama (ASOTEQ), which is led by a person from the community who was our main source of information to determine the rural division Escalante as the strategic point for the development of agrotourism and rural tourism in the municipality of Tena Cundinamarca; In addition and according to the approaches of the authors in the theoretical framework, we identify that the tourist providers, who will offer

the activities of possible routes would be the same hosts of the farms, showing that they do not have adequate training for the guided development of the routes. On the other hand, regarding infrastructure, it was possible to identify, that although there are access roads to the rural division Escalante, the roads must be properly maintained, during the rainy season vehicular traffic is complicated being a disadvantage to access the services they could offer.

On the other hand, according to the objective of the research, the potential of agrotourism and rural tourism in the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca was identified based on interviews and surveys. Likewise, by the authors' proposals in the theoretical framework, it was identified that the tourism providers who would offer the activities of routes would be the hosts of the farms themselves, showing that they do not have the appropriate training for the guided development of the tours. On the other hand, in terms of infrastructure, it was identified that, although there are access roads to the Escalante village, the roads need to be properly maintained, as during the rainy season the passage of vehicles is complicated, which is a disadvantage for accessing the services that can be offered.

Agrotourism generates sustainable changes in the current climate and economic problems, stimulating the local population to develop new offers; it is concluded that this type of tourism can make visible the work done by the community with the products grown in the municipality of Tena Cundinamarca, being tourism a tool for conservation and preservation of local agricultural traditions, in which it is possible to protect, promote and rescue the practice of them. Although currently Tena, Cundinamarca, does not have agrotourism routes, the community, and its leaders have a purpose related to strategies to promote tourism in the municipality, to develop and operate the "Mango ecotourism route". However, to implement the tourism route and related services effectively, all the actors engaged must be adequately trained, organized, and planned for.

Finally, it is concluded that to propose a tourist route based on the agrotourism potential in the municipality of Tena Cundinamarca, it is necessary to generate an adequate and robust tourist inventory. The contribution of this research determines the importance of agrotourism and rural tourism in the municipality of Tena, Cundinamarca. For future lines of research, it is suggested to look for more sources of information on agrotourism and rural tourism, to investigate the expectations, preferences, and experiences of tourists who visit Tena to participate in agrotourism and rural activities. This could include the analysis of surveys and interviews to understand what attracts visitors to the region and what aspects can be improved to meet their needs and desires, bearing in mind that retractions have been relaxed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this will allow them to travel to the site to find them easier.

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