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**Local Rural Gastronomic Traditional
Tourism. A Strategy for Local and
Regional Development, at the south of
the State of México**

Jesus Gaston Gutierrez Cedillo

Professor

Autonomy University of Estado

Mexico

Jose Isabel Juan Perez

Professor

Autonomy University of Estado

Mexico

Elsa Mireya Rosales Estrada

Professor

Autonomy University of Estado

Mexico

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Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209 Email:
info@atiner.gr URL: www.atiner.gr

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A Strategy for Local and Regional Development, at the
South of the State of México**

Jesus Gaston Gutierrez Cedillo

Jose Isabel Juan Perez

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Abstract

During 2010, we started the promotion of communitarian projects at Progreso Hidalgo village, located in the Central Mexican Subtropical Highlands. Then, during 2013, we began the management and installation of two communitarian projects: one agro-industrial and the other, eco-touristic, which are both operating nowadays. The transaction procedures were made on behalf of Women in Agrarian Sector Program (PROMUSAG) and financed by the Agrarian Reform Ministry of Mexico.

The method applied for environmental, economic, and social characterization consisted of the design and application of a questionnaire; interviews with families; direct systematic observation on field, observing natural environments and cultivated fields, geo-referenced sites through a Differential Global Positioning System, as well as the making of automatized cartography. As a diagnosis, Natural and Social Sustainable Resources Management Strategies were applied in order to analyze them from a Logic Frame Approach and participatory diagnosis.

We are currently working on the design and transaction procedures of an Agro Alimentary Located System (SIAL), at a regional scale, based on a Local Rural Gastronomic Traditional Tourism project at a local scale. In order to encourage the management of the project, feasibility, profitability and viability analysis as well as a participatory prospective were carried out to end up in a Multi-scale Strategy for the development of a regional SIAL, based on local, regional tourism and gastronomic qualities.

The research gets theoretical support over the SIAL approach and the Rural and Gastronomic Tourism. The SIAL approach highlights the importance of mesh and network functioning of small agroalimentarian enterprises at Progreso Hidalgo, along with other formal and informal local organization units, at territorial scale.

Keywords: Agro Alimentary Located System, Local and Regional Development, Local Rural Gastronomic Traditional Tourism, Natural and Social Sustainable Resources Management Strategies, South of the State of Mexico.

Introduction

A form of significant intervention of societies towards their local environment is farming activity. An approach of the agricultural methods and techniques is rural tourism. Our purpose in this work is to strengthen the idea that traditional gastronomic tourism can contribute to improving the sustainability of agricultural systems, both in its environmental components (natural resources) and social ones (mainly rural farmers), in order to activate a system located at a regional level.

The rural tourism incorporates to agriculture concepts of stability, resilience and adaptability, in addition to productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in the production. The purpose is to improve the well-being, quality of life and equity among farmers (Toledo, 2000). With the design and management of a SIAL it is possible to improve the rural economy, so this project can be a generator that will help to raise employment and quality of the life of the local inhabitants in Progreso, Hidalgo, a Municipality of Villa Guerrero in the State of Mexico.

Background

This research is supported by the SIAL theoretical approach (Requier-Desjardins, 2002; Muchnik, 2004; Boucher, 2003 and 2006; Monroy, et al., 2007), rural tourism (Cuesta, 1996; Bertoncello, 2002; Barrera, 2006; Bringas, 2006) and gastronomic tourism (Muchnik and Sautier, 1998; Blanco, 2006). Since the approach SIAL underlines the importance of the operation in networks of small agro-businesses companies in Progreso, Hidalgo and its relations with other forms of local organization, either formal or informal, at a territorial level.

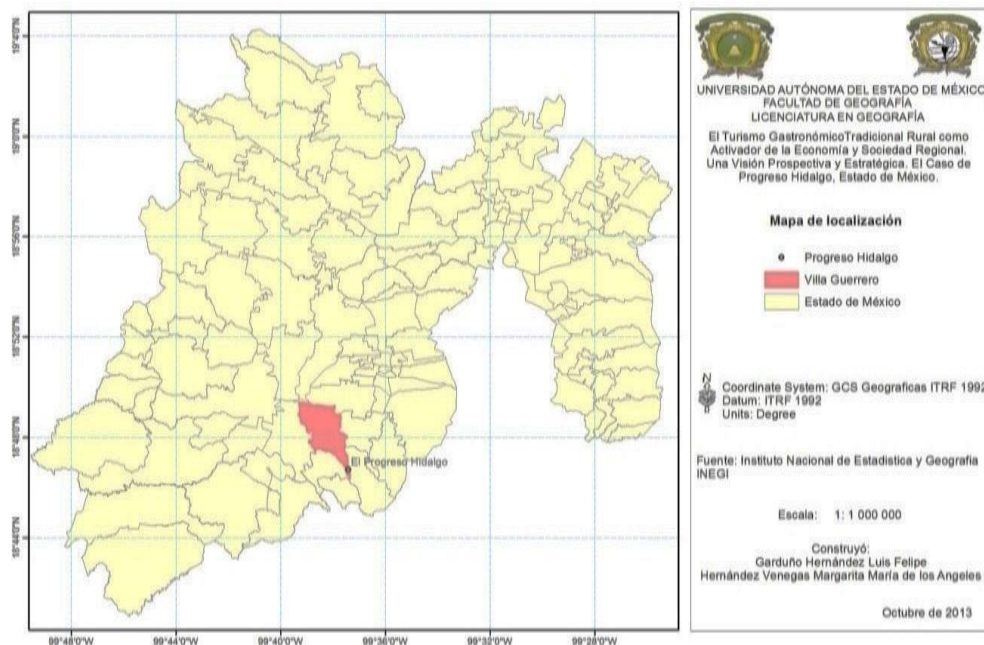
It is useful to analyze the emergence and strengthening of businesses and production of endogenous origin, depending on their location, in order to deepen the understanding of its structure, functioning and dynamics, as well as the identification of the specific resources and assets to develop, jointly with the actors involved, activation schemes to develop an effective on the sustainable development of the territory, in its economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

The Localized Agro Alimentary Systems, usually called SIAL (Sistema Agro Alimentario Localizado), is a process of territorial construction which detects and activates local resources that exist in a rural region, to achieve its economic development. Therefore it is important to investigate the interactions between the local development and the territorial dynamics, which leads to raise the concept of SIAL that is directly related to the Rural Agroindustry, usually called AIR (Agro Industria Rural), a local production system where territory becomes a major historically and socially constructed actor.

Methodology

The methodology included: first, an observation process and then a diagnostic second phase, taking into account the environmental, socio-cultural and socio-economic approaches to carry out a complete geographic diagnosis, at local level, in order to identify the potential and limitations for the management of a project of Rural and Traditional Gastronomic Tourism (Turismo Gastronómico Tradicional Rural) (TGTR). A complete geographic diagnosis mean by Logic Framework Approach (Camacho, 2001), was also carried out, including the municipalities of Ixtapan de la Sal, Tonatico, Villa Guerrero and Zumpahuacán, in order to identify the potential and limitations for the development of a SIAL (Figure 1).

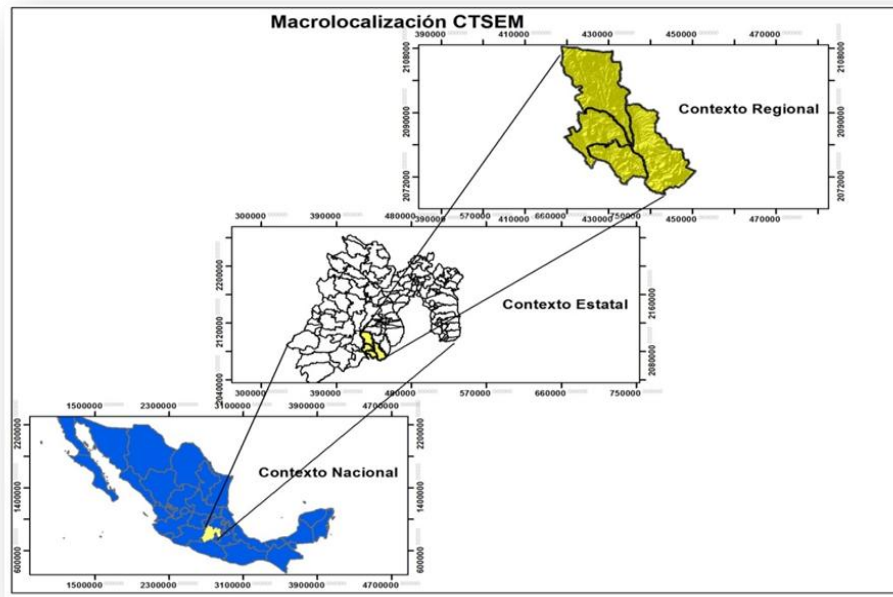
Figure 1. Location of Progreso Hidalgo, a Municipality of Villa Guerrero, State of Mexico



Source: It was designed with the cartography of IGCEM (2010)

The region study is located at south of the State of Mexico, and it belongs to the VI Region VI of Ixtapan de la Sal, which is bordered to the North with the regions of Valle de Bravo and Toluca, on the East by the State of Morelos, the South with the State of Guerrero and the West with the Tejupilco Region (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Location of the Region in the Context of the State and the Country of Mexico*



Source: It was designed with the cartography of IGCEM (2010)

The third phase was of prospecting. The expected scenarios were designed for the community and the region, according to a SIAL, at a regional level, and based on TGTR at a local level. Then the tendency scenario, the strategic scenario or objective image were made for both the community and the region. Finally, an analysis of profitability, viability and feasibility of the project was carried out. The analysis was conducted on the basis of the methodology NAFIN-OEA (1990) for the development and assessment of investment projects. We filled up the PROMUSAG form, for transaction procedures.

During the proposal stage, at the regional level, the identification and characterization of tourist attractions, restaurants and crafts was done, considering the ones that currently exist in the seven municipalities (four as destiny and three as pass way) that we have defined as members of the Tourist Circuit of the South of the State of Mexico, to include them in the study. During the management phase, some strategies were implemented to promote the development of new business opportunities, in the main local economic sectors, promoting projects in emerging sectors, based on culinary tourism and the management of a SIAL, at a regional level.

Location

The place, where the projects were set up, is located in Progreso Hidalgo. It belongs to the Agricultural Unit of Villa Guerrero, found in the strawberry region.

The kind of climate is A(C)wg. In accordance with the Classification System of Köppen Climate, this type of climate is tropical, with a transition between the warm climate and the cold one, high temperatures during the spring and summer, which is a characteristic of the ecological transition zone, located precisely in the southeast of the State of Mexico.

The temperature of the warmest month is present before the summer solstice. The annual average temperature in the north of the region is of 18° and in the south is 20°. During the summer season there is a period called "heatwave", which occurs between July and August (Gobierno del Estado de México, 1995:28). Humidity has an unequal distribution during the year, clearly dividing the rainy and dry seasons. The average of the annual rainfall is variable, between 300 and 1 800 mm (most often between 600 and 1 200 mm) (Garcia, 1986).

Results

Table 1 and Table 2 show the general data of the projects, which have been promoted and installed in Progreso, Hidalgo, as well as the objectives, rationale and goals. The two projects that were installed in 2013 are the projects of "Strawberries and their derivatives" and "Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours"; the "Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism" is at the stage of promotion, once the design stage is over.

Table 1. *General Data of the Projects already Promoted and Installed in Progreso, Hidalgo*

Main Characteristics	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Kind of Project	Agro-rural industry	Rural Tourism	Rural Tourism
Final product	Non-perishable food products derived from Strawberries	Rural Equestrian Tours	Cabins-Restaurants
Members	6 Women	5 Men and 1 woman	4 members

Table 2. Objectives and Goals of the Projects

Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Objectives	<p>1. To apply artisanal processing strategies for the management and conservation of products made of strawberries.</p> <p>2. To improve the economic conditions of rural women to survive successfully.</p> <p>3. To market products obtained from the processing of strawberries in the community, educational centers and regional markets</p>	<p>1) To promote the ecological equestrian tourism so that the peasant families in Progreso Hidalgo can live better.</p> <p>2) To design a proposal for an agro-ecological equestrian tourism, taking advantage of natural and sociocultural resources.</p> <p>3) To increase the number of horses for the agro-ecological tours, in the community.</p>	<p>1. To make a proposal based on the TGTR, in Progreso Hidalgo, to integrate a SIAL.</p> <p>2. To improve the economic conditions of the inhabitants of Progreso Hidalgo to survive successfully in a globalized world.</p> <p>3. To consider the municipalities of Villa Guerrero, Zumpahuacán, Ixtapan de la Sal and Tonatico, through their tourist visitors, such as the principal promoters of the gastronomic dishes.</p>
Rationale	<p>Progreso Hidalgo is a strawberry-producing community. During the production process of this crop, some commercial risks appear, like low prices in the market; environmental ones such as pests and diseases, and meteorological events (drought, excessive rains) that influence the loss of the farming families.</p> <p>The management of strawberries for the elaboration of jelly, jams and crystallization of the fruit represents an alternative to peasant families.</p>	<p>The agro-ecological equestrian tourism activity is a potential task for the community of Progreso Hidalgo during the entire year many groups of families visit it. It is also a scientific, educational and academic centre due to its biological and agricultural wealth.</p> <p>The Group Ortiz has experience in handling horses, and they know the broad diversity, agro-ecological and socio-cultural importance of the natural environments of the community.</p>	<p>Progreso Hidalgo is a village that presents a wide diversity of potentialities between them few are environmental, because of their wide landscape, geographic, agro-ecological, sociocultural and natural resource variety get an impulse to economy, mean by projects that offer a strategy where the peasant inhabitant families can get disposable economic resources for familiar subsistence.</p> <p>In the natural and cultivated environment there are many plant resources to complement the gastronomic dishes.</p>

Goals	1 To produce, in the first year of operation, 1000 jars of strawberry jam and to market them in the community, educational centers and regional markets.	To generate income for the members of 6 peasant families.	[1] To generate an extra income for the members of 6 peasant families.
	2 To apply three craft processes for the development of other products derived from strawberries (ate, liquor, crystallized fruits)	II To offer, in the first year of operation of the project, 10 tours per month.	[2] To extend the range of gastronomic dishes that will be offered and to expand to some neighboring regions that show a significant tourist attraction.
	3 To generate an extra income for the members of 6 peasant families, gaining great multiplying effects, at the local level.	III To have 19 horses increase, at the end of the fifth year of the project, to extend the activity of the agro-ecological equestrian tourism, at a regional level	[3] To achieve, during the first year of operation of the project, a moderate propaganda, as all the recovery of 50% of the initial investment.

These three projects are designed to contribute to the development of the local community, under the theoretical and methodological approach of SIAL, with a regional vision. The sovereignty and food security of rural families in peripheral rural regions in the State of Mexico is supported. It seeks to generate an extra income for the families, based on the extensive knowledge that the local inhabitants have over their natural resources, from the perspective of Cultural Ecology (Steward, 1972), and the great diversity of uses that they know and practice on their plant resources, from the perspective of ethnobotany (Hernandez, 1976).

Under these approaches, the projects will improve not only the income and the diet of the peasant families, but it will also encourage the ways of generating and transmitting knowledge by reproducing its cultural heritage and strengthening its system of social organization.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 discuss the Market Study of the three projects and include: description and analysis; characteristics of the local market and analysis of supply and demand, as well as the analysis, pricing and marketing strategy.

Table 3. Market Study: Description and Analysis of Projects

Stage	Projects		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
<p>Description and analysis</p>	<p>The products offered are strawberry jam. The presentation of the marmalade is in glass bottles of ¼ gallon (about 945 ml), with a metal cover.</p> <p>After the first year of operation, the team will develop other derivatives of strawberry: liqueurs and glassed fruits.</p> <p>The service has quality, since the main raw material (strawberry) is obtained directly from the local crops, without the need to use cooling. It is a handicraft product, free of conservatives; therefore, their consumption ensures a healthy diet.</p>	<p>The services that are offered are agro-ecological tours through seven natural and socio-cultural environments. A route with explanations of each site will be included.</p> <p>The horseback tours are guided by one of the five male members of the group. The participation of men is rotary. The peasant guide will also run through the seven places on the horse.</p> <p>In Mexico this kind of activity is not easily found, since there are registers that point out that people do prefer other sorts of tourism. However, this will be a quality service and possible customers are university students and foreigners.</p>	<p>22 dishes will be offered with crop plants; 23 dishes will be prepared with wild plants; 8 with cattle animals and 6 with wild animals, among which are:</p> <p>Pumpkin: with chicken, corn and chili pepper. Sweet potato: fried or smashed. Chili pepper: as condiment. Strawberries: with cream, as jam, yogurt or jelly. Jicama: as dried fruit. Corn: corn bread. Sweet bean: soup Colorín: wrapped. Huaje: with beef. Quelite: in the soup or in tacos. Castilla rose: sweet water. Purslane: in salad or cooked. Pápalo: in the soup or in salads, with beans. Preckly pear: in salads or stews. . Chilacayotes: as vegetables or as regional candies.</p> <p>The raw material for the dishes will be directly obtained through local crops and wild species.</p>

Table 4. *Market Study: Characteristics of the Local Market, as well as Supply and Demand Analysis*

Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Supply analysis	Since nobody produces the products, there are not any local competitors. At regional level, most of the families prepare strawberry jam, in a small scale, for family consumption.	This kind of service is not offered in the region; the few ones that exist are in Ixtapan de la Sal, but there people only watch without listening to any explanations, and the tour lasts only lasts one hour.	There is not any Project in the region that can offer these products, with a specialized level, therefore there are not local competitors.

Characteristics of the Local Market

Based on field work and market diagnosis, the dissemination and commercialization of the product is preferably at a local and regional level. Through distributors, the product comes to educational centers and regional markets. Students, scholars, and researchers in public and private universities, as well as staff of research centers and families from the nearby cities, that are less than 75 miles away, prefer natural foods, free from conservatives.

Demand Analysis

Progreso Hidalgo is an immigration agricultural center, which represents a great place to market this type of service and product. This town has a high potential for ecological agriculture, for this reason, entire families often immigrate there. During holidays the products will be offered in downtown. The point of sale is the geographical space of the central community, which is encouraged by schemas and patterns of social organization and mutual support, a relevant feature of peasant families.

The community is the center of agricultural work that receives more than 200 people per week, mainly in the months of agricultural production. During religious festivals more than 500 people arrive to the community and are therefore potential customers.

Table 5. Market Study; Analysis, Price Setting and Marketing Strategy

Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Analysis and cost setting	The Price of each jar will be \$20.00 (twenty Mexican pesos). No one else sells the jar.	The cost of the tour will be \$120.00 (one hundred Mexican pesos) per hour.	Since this product is not offered yet in the community, the cost of each dish will be just like the one other nearby restaurants offer.
	Once the product is in a jar, it can be sold in any season of the year.	In a single hour people can visit 6 points: La Ex Hacienda La Merced, La Presa Mayor, La Granja Ecológica, Borde de la Barranca Calderón, Borde de la Barranca Tenancingo and the field systems.	
	In rainy seasons, the marketing of jam jars is a great alternative, at local level, since there is not much work.	The two-hour tour will cost \$200.00 (two hundred Mexican pesos), including the same points with a wider explanation, time enough to take photos, participant observation with producers, fishing and a tour in the typical houses of the town. The tours will be offered on Saturdays and Sundays.	Researchers and students will visit the place during field practices or while university researching. Prices won't be affected.

Marketing Strategy

The promotion and dissemination of products and services is done by establishing channels of communication between the peasant families, students, scholars, and university researchers. The product is sold in cash and on. Because of the particular behavior of the community, products and services are known in meetings and at the end of mass.

Tables 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 show the various aspects of the Project Engineering, such as the chain of distribution and location of the three projects; the description, infrastructure, requirements and characteristics of the projects; including conditioning of spaces, the installation of the products, the workmanship and contribution of the partners. The production process and marketing of the three projects are also mentioned, as well as the supply of

products, the attention of customers, the management and maintenance of the processes.

Table 6. Project Engineering: Location

	Project		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Site	The place where products will be handled is at Filadelfa Juana Rivera's house, whose house is behind the church.	The meeting point to start the tours is the Municipal Headquarter.	The place where products will be prepared is the cabin-restaurants.

Table 7. Project Engineering: Infrastructure for Projects

Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Infrastructure	Considering the kitchen and the patio, the area has 40m ² . Raw materials like sugar, jars, spoons and casseroles will be kept there. For the implementation of the project some improvements in this location were done.	The land is around 500m ² long. There are five stables of horses. Some walls were built up in each stable, which have drinking troughs and feeding troughs. There is an iron sheet as the roof.	To start the project it was necessary to build four cabin-restaurants with a kitchen, a cupboard, bathrooms, a water tank and a patio.

Table 8. Project Engineering: Description of the Projects

Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Description of the project	<p>The following services can be found:</p> <p>III Drinking water to prepare products and clean the jars. There is also a pool of lighter water.</p> <p>IV Electricity service.</p> <p>V Drainage service.</p> <p>VI Mobile services.</p> <p>VII Paved roads.</p> <p>VIII A kitchen to prepare products.</p> <p>There are not limiting factors.</p>	<p>The project is located in a place where there are water channels for the croplands; therefore water will always be available. Traditionally, farming families give water to animals at particular times. There are twenty levees so water supply is enough. Electricity is 200 meters away.</p> <p>Manure is used for agricultural purposes.</p>	<p>There are the following services:</p> <p>V Drinking water to prepare the products and to clean the recipients. Each cabin-restaurant will have a pool of lighter water.</p> <p>VI Electricity service.</p> <p>VII Drainage service.</p> <p>VIII Mobile services.</p> <p>IX Paved roads.</p> <p>X A kitchen to prepare products.</p>

Table 9. Project Engineering: Development of Projects

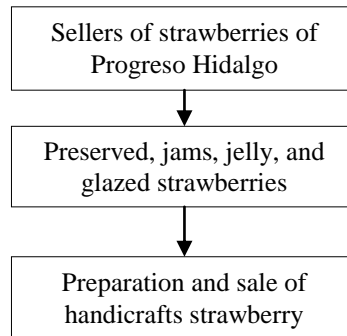
Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Development	Location improvements		
	The improvements of the sites were done by members of the team and their sons.	Each animal has its own space, including drinking troughs and feeding troughs	It was considered since the beginning of the construction.
	Products placement		
	All materials were placed out of risks for the families and the women who participate in the project. Products are made by two women once a week.	Service is offered at downtown. One member of the project takes fine animals to different sites of the community. .	The raw materials to prepare food are placed in the fridge and located in the cabin-restaurants.
	Labor work and participation of partners		
Labor work will be provided by the inhabitants of the locality.			
The main contribution will be their time, taking turns; the physical space and tools until the investment shows profits.			

Table 10. Production and Marketing

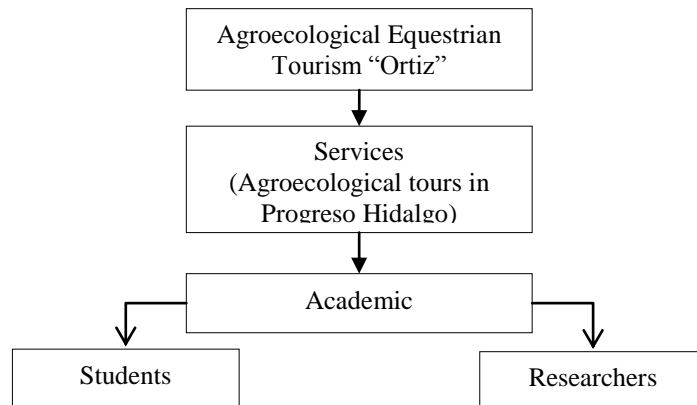
Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and Derivatives	Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism
Production and marketing	Supply of products		
	Jars, casseroles; sugar and cinnamon will be bought in Toluca city.	The acquisition of five horses, four females and one male was done in certified farms, which warranted the health and quality of the animals.	Raw materials will be bought in the community. The condiments for each dish (herbs, species and cooking oil) will be bought in Toluca.
	Strawberry and water will be obtained in the community.	Some other tools were also bought in the same places, like horse-riding saddles and chords.	
	Customers service		
	Customers will get a nice service, considering human, ethical and moral values. Respect for the environment and animals will also be shown.		
	Handling and maintenance		
	There will be a registration file to keep the record of the functioning conditions of the project. Sustainability is to be fulfilled.		
	The handling of raw materials of products is performed by the team and their sons.	The handling of horses and the facilities will be done by the team and their sons.	The handling of acquisition of raw materials and products will be done by the person in charge, who will work with the cooks to check what is to be done every day, considering approximate quantities.
	Sanitary control and hygiene is important to produce and sell clean products.	Food for animals and farm animal breeding will be provided by the six farming families.	

Chain of distribution

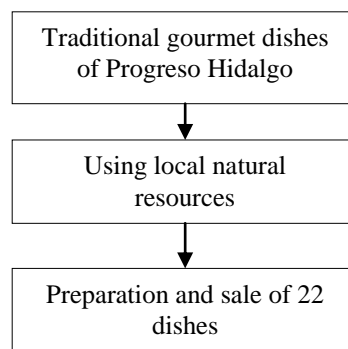
Strawberries and Derivatives



Ecological Tourism with Equestrian Tours



Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy Tourism



In Tables 11, 12 and 13 aspects related to the impacts and prevention of environment, with corrective and preventive measures based on available technologies and low-cost, which include the management of organic wastes in the three projects, measures for water supply, conservation and proper use of soil, as well as the efficient use of flora, fauna and other resources for the projects are presented.

Table 11. Impact to the Environment: Management of Organic Wastes

Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and derivatives	Ecological tourism with Equestrian tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy tourism
Management of organic wastes	Organic wastes will be used in strawberry crops, and they will be inside 20-liter jars, with a cover, and then will be spread in croplands.	The stools will be used in composting to improve soil in croplands. To mitigate odor of stool horses there will be aromatic plants. During the tours, the guide will have a special shovel to pick up wastes and will send them to croplands.	The organic wastes will be placed in recipients for their final location: croplands.

Table 12. Impact to the Environment: Water Supply, Conservation and Proper Use of Soil for the Three Projects

Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and derivatives	Ecological tourism with Equestrian tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy tourism
Water supply	Water supply will be provided from drinking water. Water supply has no cost since it is provided by a committee. The cost is associated with repair of leaks and cleaning of supply channels. There is not water pollution.	Water supply is through production and distribution channels. Water goes through a cannell and is stored in a well of 1100 liters.	Water supply will be done for the drinking water installed in the cabin-restaurant.
Conservative and proper soil use	There is not soil affectation because the process to prepare food is done inside a house.	Risks to soil are not adverse, just temporal. To avoid ground compaction, horses go to specific sites.	There is not soil affectation because the process to prepare food is done inside the kitchen, in the cabin-restaurant.

Table 13. *Impact on Environment: Advantages of Flora, Fauna and other Resources for the Three Projects*

Stage	Project		
	Strawberries and derivatives	Ecological tourism with Equestrian tours	Local and Rural Traditional Gastronomy tourism
Harmful flora and fauna	Harmful fauna that might affect the processes will be cockroaches and flies, which can be controlled with biodegradable substances that do not harm the environment.	There is not harmful fauna since facilities are located 700 meters far away from human settlement.	Harmful fauna that might affect process is cockroaches and flies, which can be controlled with biodegradable substances that do not harm environment.
Efficient advantage of flora, fauna and other resources	According to the process used while preparing strawberry products, there is not damage for the biological elements of the community.	In natural and cultivated environments, there are wild vegetables which are consumed by horses, without affecting flora and fauna of the region.	According to the process used while preparing organic products, there won't be damages to the biological elements of the community.

Conclusions

According to the field analysis and the information gathered through surveys that were applied to the community, as well as the Workshop on Desired Scenarios, it was noted that the conditions are favorable to implement a SIAL, since the physical scope in its relationship with actors of the territory, i.e., the inhabitants of this community, show harmony and do not intervene in conflicts for the proper implementation of a system such as the one proposed.

The products that can be considered to promote this system are enough to supply and use, both by the population itself and in business marketing. Local residents show knowledge about the development and preparation of different foods and various edible products, based on the local vegetation and fauna. A SIAL project has great conditions to be implemented in order to develop economy, to increase employment and quality of life that will benefit the greater part of the local population, showing favorable areas for promoting regional development.

In the framework of the destination, the gastronomy stands out for its importance, because it is part of the culture that it defines; without its gastronomy, the destination is incomplete as a tourism product. The current tourism trends are looking for a more direct relationship with the communities and their customs, so gastronomy is a determining factor. Mexico is a country with an extraordinary gastronomy richness; every state, every region and every

people of this Republic has an extensive list of unique dishes; the odors and flavors offer different itching, sweetness, thicknesses, temperatures, smells, flavors and colors, which allows people to have a great selection of local dishes and, at the same time, an authentic gastronomic configuration.

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