

THE *ECOTUR ECO-AGROTOURISM* FOUNDATION PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM IN SPAIN

The [Ecoagroturismo Foundation](#) is a reference point in Spain for the promotion of eco-tourism. It cooperates with organisations and private initiatives involved in rural tourism and natural eco-system. The Foundation is a member of the Spanish [National Rural Network](#) and works together with other sustainable and ecological tourism networks both at the European and international levels.



Since its foundation in 2006 the portal called “ECOTUR” promotes the best experiences of rural and agricultural tourism in Spain that are committed to rural and sustainable development by safeguarding local traditions and natural and cultural heritage of local communities.

All ECOTUR proposals include high-quality ecotourism initiatives engaged with local cultures. They consist in innovative accommodations such as hostels and rural houses, pedagogical farms projects, didactic activities and a great variety of Natural Tourism proposals. They support agriculture and animal husbandry of the communities by promoting their typical and ecological home-made products.

As underlined in the ECOTUR portal, tourism is a world-wide increasing phenomenon, having significant impacts on the eco-systems, depending on the different initiatives adopted. One of the ways to maximize the benefits of tourism is the ecological or sustainable certification of facilities and activities, especially when carried out in vulnerable or protected areas.

To ensure the positive foot-print on the eco-systems, the Foundation created in 2007 the “Quality System of Rural Tourism -Ceres Ecotur –Ecolabel ECEAT”. To reach the Eco-label, the initiatives of eco-tourism have to be committed to some basic and mandatory engagements in Sustainable agriculture, Cultural Heritage, Natural environment and Renewable energies.

The Eco-label initiative is carried out in cooperation with the [European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism - ECEAT](#), created in The Netherlands in 1993 to promote new approaches to face the deterioration of the natural environment generated by intensive agriculture and mass tourism. ECEAT promotes evaluation models where environment, agriculture and tourism are integrated to offer



each other a mutual benefit. ECEAT associates more than 1,800 touristic sustainable accommodations in 22 European countries.

ECOTUR cooperates with other European eco-tourism networks, in particular with [Accueil Paysan](#) based in France and active in 18 European countries, in Northern Africa and in Southern America. This association is an international benchmark for small-scale rural tourism services, managed by small farmers who offer a different experience in accommodation, activities or simple tours of their rural farms with a taste of products, mostly organic.

In Spain, ECOTUR works by establishing partnerships with other organisations that manage projects aiming at sustainable development. One example is the initiative of the [Huertos Compartidos](#), boosted by the [Reforesta association](#), which brings together those who want to garden an orchard and the landowners. It is estimated that 4,145 users in Spain are already participating in the initiative by making organic horticulture.

As underlined in the guidelines of the [2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development](#) this sector can represent a strategic tool for social and economic development. Tourism can considerably contribute to enhance endogenous resources of rural areas, by providing alternative options to their abandonment and by protecting their biodiversity.

From this perspective the work undertaken by ECOTUR to structure in an organized system the different local experiences of sustainable tourism, through the mobilization of many local, national and international actors, represents a major contribution to protection and improvement of natural, cultural and economic resources of rural areas and to a more sustainable development in different countries.

To know more

[ECOTUR website](#)

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[ECEAT website](#)

[Huertos Compartidos website](#)

[Biocultura Event in Spain](#)

