

Estimating the environmental attractions of rural tourism lodging units in La Gomera island, Spain Yolanda Santana-Jiménez^{1*}, Juan M.Hernández^{1,2} and Rafael Suárez-Vega^{1,2}

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1

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Abstract The environmental characteristics compound one of the main attractions of the tourism developed in rural areas. In this line, this paper seeks to identify the most relevant environmental attributes valued by the rural tourism market in La Gomera Island, Spain. The geographic peculiarities (climate and landscape) of this island make it an exceptional case study to analyse the role of the environmental factors in rural tourism. A hedonic price model has been estimated to obtain a quantitative measure of the relative weight of rural house attributes in the rental price. Geographical Information System (GIS) and Spatial Econometric techniques have been applied to compute environmental variables and get accurate estimations of the model, respectively. Results show the relevance of the climate conditions in the surroundings of the house for the rural tourism lodging market in La Gomera, and allow formulating some recommendations to public and private authorities in the design of promotional and investment policies in the sector. A similar procedure can be applied to other rural tourist destinations, where the required socioeconomic and geographic information is available

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