

RURAL TOURISM – A CHANCE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

Local communities in rural areas of Romania were affected by the evolution of history in recent decades. To these were added years of centralized economy and then transition to a market economy. Europe located in a continuous expansion, shows up also questionable in terms of economic and social development of rural communities. The set is accompanied by an increasing trend of the civilized world living on good terms with the environment, to spend more time in nature, to be closer to everything is clean and quiet living. The number of people seeking holidays in nature in rural areas is increasing across the globe. These forms of tourism are increasingly desired by the rich, but also by people eager to return to nature, the life of rural communities. These activities play an important role in the economic development of rural areas, which will further reflect on their future development

Keywords: rural tourism, sustainable development, economics, Romania

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism and agrotourism, are important factors of local and regional development based on the granting and use of resources in the most efficient way possible.

In recent decades, rural tourism growth path followed in its development activities and services to the tourism simple, today, more sophisticated and modern. Since the majority of European countries recorded economic performance higher income levels and leisure options of the population increased to higher standards. In response to new economic and social requirements, rural tourism has tried to become a viable alternative to mass tourism. The also develop ways of communication, means of transport, infrastructure has attracted particular important for rural tourism flows.

Romania has a picturesque rural setting offers great opportunities for rural tourism development in general, and especially tourism, farm houses and comfortable and airy, open and welcoming people who have a genuine cultural and artistic tradition

After 1989, a factor that clearly influenced the development of tourism, and in this case and the area was the establishment of associations of tourism service providers in rural areas. With their increased interest were established a number of small firms, local associations followed in time by national ones. Their main concern is to examine the tourism potential of these areas, identify potential accommodation (houses and pensions), the materialization of rural tourism products, development of tourism.

As you can see in the picture above (Fig1), rural tourism consists of four major essential components that are interrelated and form an integrated whole. The components of the natural and human resources give general tourism potential. Depending on the services and products offered to tourists, the population may have a higher degree of satisfaction or lower.

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2. THE BASIC CRITERIA AND OBJECTIVES FOR RURAL TOURISM

In recent decades, the EU regional development policies, together with Member States' national policies have encouraged tourism orientation towards rural areas, taking into account the positive social effects and implications. Studies by the World Tourism Organization show that rural tourism is developing at a pace faster than international tourism in its entirety.

Agrotourism, as economic and social activity should become a basic component of sustainable development based on the following principles thus apply:

1. Sustainable use of tourism resources;
2. Reduce wastage and tourist;
3. Maintaining natural diversity, social and cultural development of rural areas;
4. Supporting the local economy by supporting the initiative groups of tourism development;
5. Sustainable tourism development must be maintained through training, qualification, training, training of locals, civic training, appropriate sociological;
6. Promoting tourism marketing in the tourism market by studying the local area and queen or nationally and internationally;
7. Research and monitoring of rural tourism activities and actions to protect and conserve environmental resources and tourism.

Objectives need to manage tourism activities in rural areas can be separated into three categories: objectives that emphasize prevention population migration from rural areas to cities and stimulating to return to rural settlements; objectives that emphasize improving lifestyle and civilization in rural areas along extra income; objectives of environmental protection and conservation areas (Mitrache et al., 1996), therefore the green.

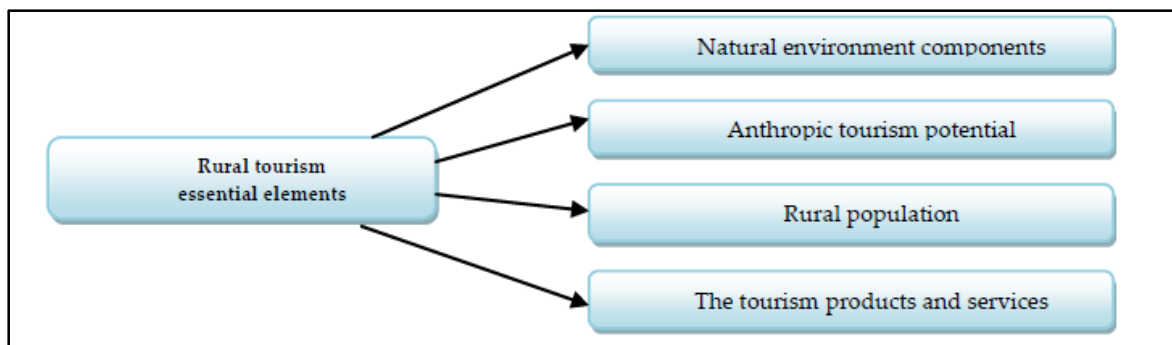


Fig. 1: The basic elements of rural tourism

It is worth noting that in the case of rural tourism and agritourism, economic targets are in close correlation with social objectives, a fact reflected in the growing concern of social responsibilities of agritourism farms and associations, responsibilities requiring 'some form of control, increased sensitivity to social issues.

In the long term strategy of social and economic development of rural areas, meaning and evaluation of all types of capital (natural, human, economic and environmental) is a very important issue. The expansion of tourism requires coordination between all sectors of agriculture - on the one hand and the other hand transport, trade, industry. The key factor in the development of tourism in rural areas is applying favorable marketing studies necessary for any national or foreign investor.

Characterized by socio-economic potential natural differential rural areas are likely small or large local economic diversification. Prerequisites complete approach related to tourism development involves theoretical, practical, historical, organizational, economic, environmental, social and cultural. It is a first step to indicate that rural areas have a real chance to increase its current development status.

3. EVOLUTION OF ROMANIAN RURAL TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM

Rural tourism is basically a new phenomenon and old at the same time. The interest in rural recreation began to manifest since the 19th century as a reaction to stress caused by urbanization and industrialization specific processes.

The beginnings of rural tourism are located around the 30s and is related to the mountain and spa tourism regions with a high potential for exploitation of the resources provided. It can remember such as Bran-Rucar locations, Olt Valley counties of Harghita and Covasna.

After the Second World War and the beginning of communism as a political system, tourism activity declined to extinction. Restoring rural tourism was conducted between 1972-1974, with the request of the Ministry of Tourism of identifying and ratification lanasare 'certain tourist villages and farms in all areas. The Centre International tourism promotion identified and selected 118 villages representative of Romania, which could be introduced in domestic and international tourist circuits. A year later, no less than 14 tourist villages were experimentally declared: Leresti and RucarArges county, bow and Şirnea in Brasov, VaideeniValcea County; Saint George, Murighiol and Crisan in Tulcea county, Sibiel Sibiu County, Tismana in Gorj county, PoianaSatara - Bacau County Racos - Timis, BogdanVoda - Maramures, VatraMoldovitei - Suceava.

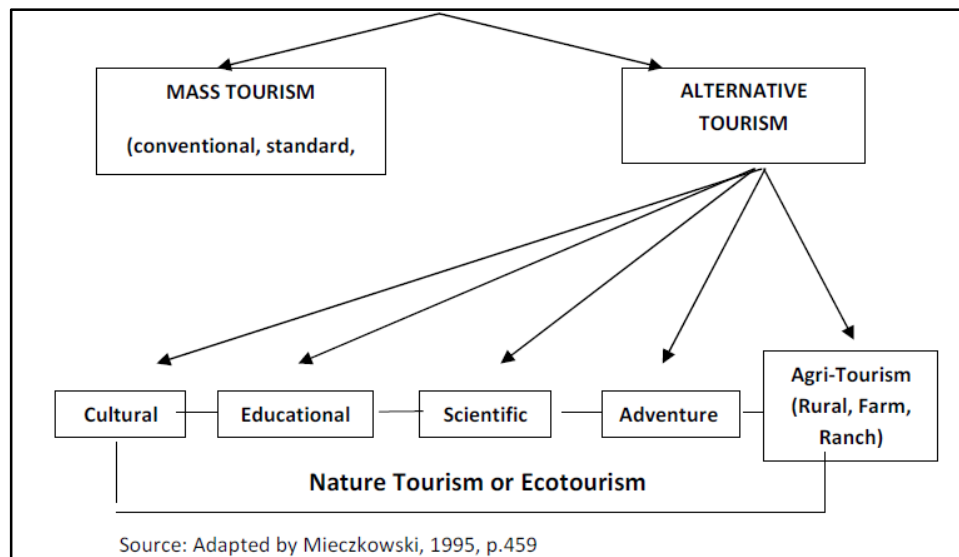


Fig 2. Agrotourism- an alternative form of basic tourism

Because in 1974 was banned by law in private households accommodation of foreign tourists, tourist villages remained inoperative for international tourism. Only a few villages (Rucar, Crisan, Murighiol, Sibiel) were able to establish foreign contracts by the National Office for Tourism Carpathian-Bucharest, thus managing to pursue international activities, but only in certain year. Organized rural tourism began to take shape only after 1989, with an emphasis on the mountains of the country, which has more than 600 thousand family houses

grouped around 2 500 rural villages and towns. After 1990, there was a clear trend to promote and encourage rural tourism and agrotourism in the local and national authorities and professional associations in the tourism industry.

Top households were listed in rural tourism scheme were those in the Moeciu-Bran, Barsa, Dorna, Maramures, the Apuseni Mountains. The opening time horizon establishment of various associations such as the Association of Romanian villages in 1988-1989. Romanian Federation of Mountain Development (1990), National Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism Association from Romania (1994), Romanian Countryside Agency (1995) and Innovation Centre Carpathian configuration and Development - CEFIDEC (1994), ANTREC (2007).

As can be seen in the image above (Fig.2), agritourism is a branch of alternative tourism, coming as a new specialty, with high potential for attraction of domestic and foreign tourists flows.

4. FLOWS BASIC ACCOMMODATION AND RURAL TOURISM

Following the evolution of accommodation rural tourism and agrotourism specific, until 2000, as reported by the Ministry of Tourism, are some details about specific tourist hostels and houses. This situation of accommodation involved in rural tourism and agritourism can not be evaluated. Only in 2001 there was a noticeable trend in terms of classification and certification of tourist guest houses and houses for agritourism.

Also the number of such accommodation units increased significantly between 2001 and 2014 despite support from local and national authorities was almost nonexistent on the organization. Evolution of the number of accommodation made after 2001 reveals an upward trend, the highest being recorded after 2006.

The tourism potential is not the same in all 8 development regions of Romania is thus clear that an unbalanced distribution of tourists between regions. For example, the South East has proven to have the highest capacity of tourist accommodation, easy to explain, because this may also include specific areas of the Danube Delta and the Black Sea coast. Normally, the Bucharest-Ilfov The values of the coefficient of supply tourist accommodation close to 1, which means that almost all tourist accommodation beds are available for tourists all year round. This can be explained by the fact that Bucharest whatever time of year is a destination for both leisure and business.

The table above provides precise information about the flow of accommodation 2007-2013. There may be differences between the rate of total tourism in Romania and tourism rate observed in rural areas in some regions in terms of tourist accommodation supply coefficient. At national level this index is slightly lower than in rural areas, and annual differences between them grew 0.03 - 0.09. However, in some specific regions can be observed in larger differences. For example, the number of bed-days in a year based on the total bed-days available is higher in rural areas (especially in the mountains areas, especially Central Region and North West), because here owners have noticed tourists wish to choose accommodation outside the cities regardless of the year.

But the mere fact that tourist establishment is open for tourism (the specific season or throughout the time) proves not exactly a success. If tourists as customers do not choose a specific accommodation, the decision to maintain open travel unit is wrong.

Table 1- Rural accomodation structure in Romania

Region	Indices	Year								
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Total in Romania	TC	102201825	101122155	99497540	99869110	100718465	103171265	104812670	103550865	
	ACF	50197142	51882465	50752061	51632254	53988640	54978838	56499904	57137649	
	ASC	0.49	0.51	0.51	0.52	0.54	0.53	0.54	0.55	
	North-East	TC	6476925	6194415	6303185	6557225	6271795	6832070	6923320	6721110
		ACF	4624149	4651154	4615011	4963421	5049680	5284817	5528821	5583470
		ASC	0.71	0.75	0.73	0.76	0.81	0.77	0.80	0.83
	South-East	TC	48939565	48199345	47490515	47811715	47761710	48532225	49114400	48516530
		ACF	12182282	13230614	13662439	13629556	13773608	13607971	13176447	12679083
		ASC	0.25	0.27	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.27	0.26
	South-Muntenia	TC	8188045	7782165	7831440	7931085	8210310	8136580	7601855	7579955
		ACF	6025288	6026895	5985126	5932849	6437757	6439038	6367284	6390074
		ASC	0.74	0.77	0.76	0.75	0.78	0.79	0.84	0.84
	South-West	TC	5582675	5593990	5422075	5515880	5086640	5355280	5407840	5554935
		ACF	3736220	3884937	3754676	3701284	3703416	3950168	4225992	4107399
		ASC	0.67	0.69	0.69	0.67	0.73	0.74	0.78	0.74
	Oltenia	TC	7935100	8138770	7369350	7560245	7689090	7771215	7819395	7463155
		ACF	5176336	5235647	4884721	5252211	5402123	5286047	5523811	5643851
		ASC	0.65	0.64	0.66	0.69	0.70	0.68	0.71	0.76
	West	TC	9324655	9196905	8964765	8876800	8970240	9496935	9787840	9783825
		ACF	6563339	6646761	6495284	6341574	6699830	7103463	7371338	7486729
		ASC	0.70	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.77
North-West	TC	12860775	12646520	12345395	11957035	12543225	12949835	13514125	12913700	
	ACF	9148858	9200653	8029645	8515519	9071902	9422258	9947604	10477251	
	ASC	0.71	0.73	0.65	0.71	0.72	0.73	0.74	0.81	
Bucharest - Ilfov	TC	2894085	3370045	3770815	3659125	4185455	4097125	4643895	5017655	
	ACF	2740670	3005804	3325159	3295840	3850324	3885076	4358607	4769792	
	ASC	0.95	0.89	0.88	0.90	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.95	
Rural touristic boarding houses	TC	662475	798620	947540	1194280	1953115	4070115	5311115	5638520	
	ACF	343559	460570	512338	696872	1233427	2528316	3188350	3625647	
	ASC	0.52	0.58	0.54	0.58	0.63	0.62	0.60	0.64	
	North-East	TC	103295	143445	178850	169725	267545	730000	940605	1042805
		ACF	61486	113876	121466	131971	212944	461209	649285	723247
		ASC	0.60	0.79	0.68	0.78	0.80	0.63	0.69	0.69
	South-East	TC	236885	267910	265355	303680	436540	574510	652255	654445
		ACF	43691	44984	53486	72182	133912	182387	220925	220367
		ASC	0.18	0.17	0.20	0.24	0.31	0.32	0.34	0.34
	South-Muntenia	TC	32485	62050	112785	163520	271560	382885	465375	443840
		ACF	24720	38308	57510	90564	129863	232021	272569	336302
		ASC	0.76	0.62	0.51	0.55	0.48	0.61	0.59	0.76
	South-West	TC	13870	18250	25550	47450	75190	141620	164250	198925
		ACF	10218	10586	11742	11170	22246	55267	76540	70255
		ASC	0.74	0.58	0.46	0.24	0.30	0.39	0.47	0.35
	Oltenia	TC	14965	31390	35040	71175	102930	171550	240170	277400
		ASC								

Source:ACFwereobtainedfromtheINSS

Note:

TC=totaltourist accommodationcapacity(expressed innumber ofbeddays)

ACF=tourist accommodation capacityin operation(in number of beddays)

AUC=coefficient oftourist accommodationsupply(in percent)

n/ a.=Data not available

In the image above (Figure.3) refers to the dynamics of accommodation in Romania, resulted in hostels and houses tourism specialization. It can be seen as their number grew most significant in the years 2009-2010, with a slight decrease in 2011. The trend the last few years indicate that national non homogeneous dispersion in terms of their number, most being centralized in mountain villages and counties renowned for their natural and anthropic tourism potential (Brasov, Sibiu, Arges, Suceava, Maramures, Vrancea, Tulcea, Constanta county) stay at tourist villages or rural farms can be organized and arranged in several forms, depending on the location and type of area (mountains, hills, beach, near national parks or lake delta areas). The means of access are maintained properly, the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful scenery, local culture and great architecture are maximized.

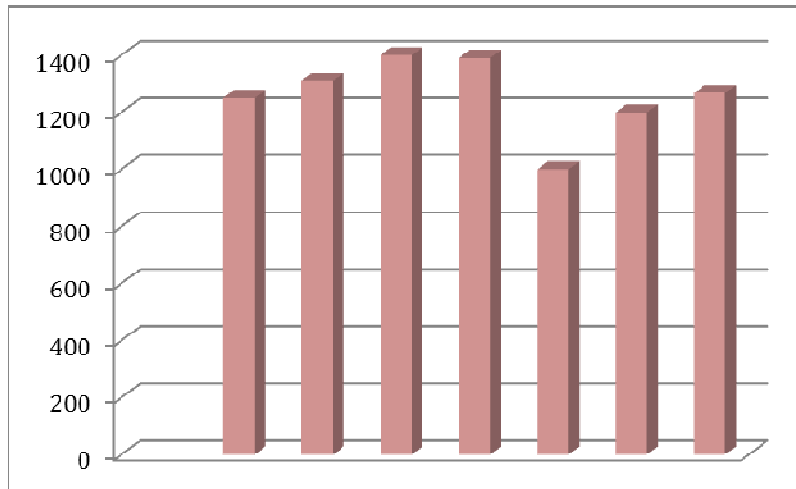


Fig.3. Dynamics of accommodation in Romania (2007-2013)

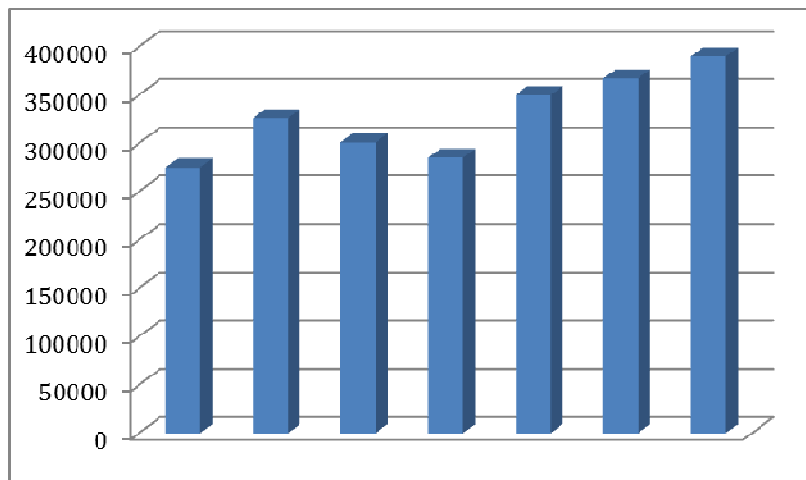


Fig.4. Evolution of the flow of tourists in rural tourism industry (2007-2013)

The flow of tourism confirms the continued growth in the number of tourists by 2008, after registering a slight decrease caused by the economic crisis, financial possibilities of low rural boarding-houses being employed especially for Romanian tourists and fewer foreign tourists. The phenomenon can be explained taking into account the lower quality channels of communication that provide access to most villages, recreational opportunities and leisure at modest prices that are not always a reflection of the quality of services. However, the trend shows a positive trend last year, with increases of up to 10% / year rate of tourists in this industry.

5. THE IMPACT OF RURAL TOURISM

5.1. Social and cultural

Development of rural tourism comprises on the one hand and social and cultural dimension, it is very important interrelationships traditional family-values, cultural, that can easily be negatively influenced.

The role of women in rural tourism also attracted interest as an economic activity late seasonal and highly unstable because tourism is one of the few opportunities taken up by women, but also contribute to the marginal status of women in power employment in rural

areas. Increasingly, native people involved in tourism to help meet their goals of independence and cultural survival, but tourism development carries risk reductions for them. There are also special problems in obtaining funding for projects with cultural sensitivity training, attitude towards work and service and communal decision making.

4.2. The economic impact

The economic impact of rural tourism has been an area of great interest for research from a number of social scientists, often emphasizing or appeal when the role of tourism as a panacea for all economic and social networks of the country.

According to sources in the industry rightly recognizes that rural tourism is not necessarily a solution for rural development, given its problems: volatility, low wages, labor and imported conservative investors. Time least beneficial to promote rural tourism is when the economy is already weak because tourism will create employment and income distributions very unbalanced.

4.3. The effect on the environment

Tourism development can't ignore the ecological dimension, so important for the sustainability of the natural resource and environmental. It is clear that tourism in rural context displays many characteristics of symbolic relationship that exists between tourism and the environment. It is imperative preservation of rural resources, halting mass tourism influences (e.g. pollution) and implementing new concepts on human-nature connection.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In parallel with the development of rural tourism tourists boosted cylindrical infrastructure elements, cultural elements and those on traditional occupations (including crafts), which have become factors of attraction areas. It can be seen now that the provision of sites in rural and urban areas are very similar, although it should local traditions, nature areas become iconic brands. Objective, rural tourism should not and cannot be separated from the element of space tourism village.

For Romanian village to grow and thus to achieve a solid base of rural tourism must meet several conditions, such as natural environment is just as attractive, with various monuments and reduced pollution, are targets of human nature (points museums, statues, monuments, ruins and castles, castles, old houses, monuments of folk architecture, etc.) are preserved cultural traditions, folklore and traditional customs; be a minimum of tourist infrastructure for the provision of accommodation, meals, recreational facilities and equipment and facilities to be made in a municipal - household.

Rural tourism is a good opportunity for farm-based communities, but setting objectives and final tourism development plan requires caution. For best results the full range of stakeholders should participate in the planning stage. Measures slow and stable needs this kind of planning in order conflicts and mistakes to avoid.

Rural tourism is invited to contribute, as a first step in maintaining and preserving agricultural services. Moreover, by strengthening and modernizing it, it will become a prerequisite for the development of local and regional socio-economic development.

Development of rural tourism in Romania will require a strategy based on the principles of sustainable development and integrated environmental protection, due to the use over certain natural and cultural resources, concentration accommodation and recreation structures. Despite the important current issues concerning the negative aspects of agriculture, low direct investment and financial resources for rural, low agricultural training, rural tourism and agro beginning to be appreciated in local villages in Romania.

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