

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN BIHOR COUNTY

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Abstract

Bihor County has at its disposal natural and human resources necessary for its development. However, the county has not developed at its full potential, a series of mistakes were done immediately after 1989, which currently affect its economical progress. We are referring to the privatization of some economic units that have gone bankrupt later on; mistakes have been done by cancelling the importance of some branches of activity that were profitable before 1989, making exports, and which have been closed due to a weak management concept; the appearance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) which have not been supported in order to develop, but, on the contrary, by applying a burdensome taxation have been compelled in many situations to quit their investments.

Key words: strategy, natural resources, human resources, development potential, perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Knowing the potential of natural and human resources of Bihor County, setting the county's perspective development strategies must be carried out, from our point of view, in a short and medium-term. Short-term strategies play a more important role because they satisfy the citizens' most pressing needs, on the existence of which the medium and later the long-term strategies will rely on.

In carrying out these projects the change of politics at European Union level, that will occur starting with 2014, should not mean a change of vision, but on the contrary their more powerful strengthening.

Elaborating the development strategies of Bihor County should provide unity in drafting the actions and decisions, so that they can be easily implemented in various fields of activity.

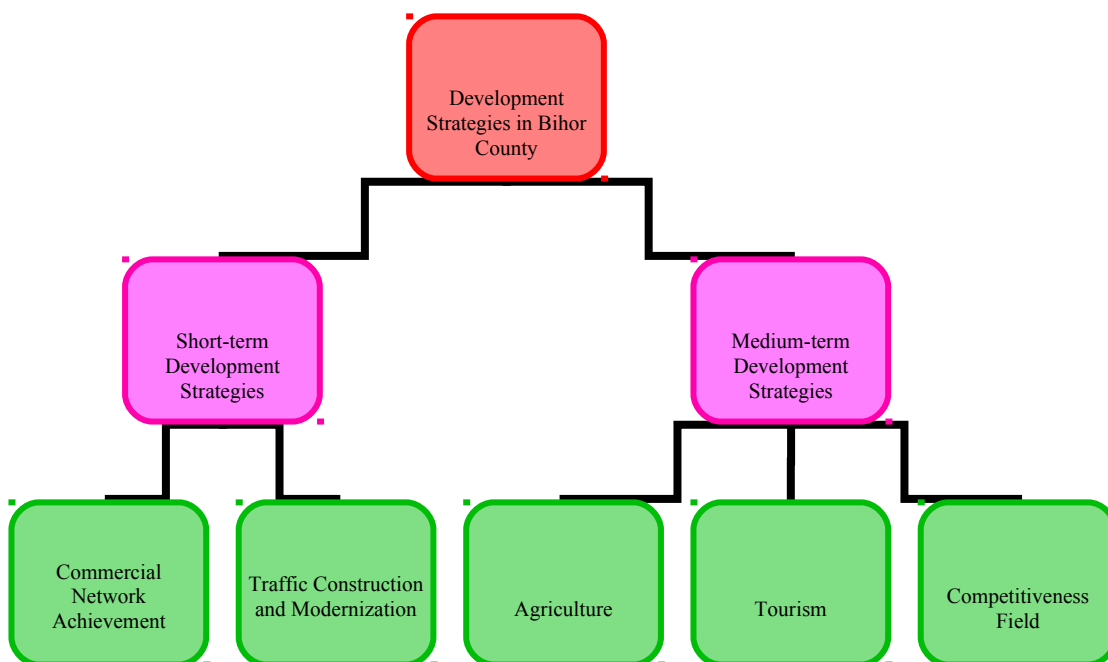


Fig. 1 Development Strategies Diagram in Bihor County

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the development of the county, *short-term strategies* should include the commercial networks achievement throughout the county and the construction and modernization of the traffic means. We can not think long-term unless the county's settlements – regardless of their rank – dispose of drinking water networks, sewerage systems, electricity network connection, heating homes possibilities, the existence of wastewater treatment stations, the existence of institutions for various services (postal service, bank, hospital) etc.

First of all, the means of communication should provide a good connection between the settlements, regardless of the form of continental relief where they are situated, and secondly it is known that the existence of modern and fast means of communication would facilitate the rapid circulation of goods and services, which finally would contribute to the development of the county. One could not conceive that the county has not even one kilometer of electrified railway, and the public roads, regardless of their status, have only a few hundred kilometers of modernization.

At the level of Bihor County there are settlements where the local authorities have understood the importance of minimum comfort existence for their citizens, and as a result, they have developed projects in this respect. For example, chosen at random, is the locality of Biharia, where for the development of the place, the following elements are taken into account:

- ✚ rehabilitation and upgrading of the road and exploitation networks;
- ✚ rehabilitation and modernization of pedestrian access;
- ✚ upgrading the water, electric power and gas systems;
- ✚ rehabilitation of medical centers;
- ✚ founding a thermal pool etc.

In Bihor County many settlements are grappling with the existence of a utility failure, of an inadequate infrastructure to carry out not only the daily living but also the economic activities. These issues should have been solved years ago by the local authorities who have never paid attention to community development as a whole. The influence of politics in the community issues has often had negative effects.

Each locality of the county designs a development plan which is only achieved in a certain proportion, because poor financial situation does not determine its complete achievement, and as a result a project initially designed to be accomplished in, for example, two or three years, is completed in five, sometimes even more years.

From our point of view, *medium-term strategies* should be focused on the development of agriculture, tourism and competitiveness field, because these economic sectors allow the production of some global income that could be later used to finance various projects. Please note that an important role is to attract European funds into the county, but also to have the ability to implement European Union requirements.

The development of *agriculture* would firstly ensure food security for the county's population, for the development region, being able to offer products to other markets that are grappling with a shortage of food. Considered a fundamental human right, food security may even represent a long-term development strategy.

The analysis of the current situation of agriculture in Bihor County reveals the fact that it fits in the overall development of agriculture and rural space in Romania. This fact indicates the need to accelerate the restructuring and modernization processes in agriculture and rural development, to ensure sustainable economic development of the rural space, in order to remove the gap between urban and rural space.

There is an excessive land parceling in Bihor County that has contributed to the formation of small-scale farms. Application of the principle of social justice for peasants whose lands had been forcibly collectivized proved to be a failure for the development of agriculture.

Being located on the border, Bihor County has numerous opportunities for leisure activities. A multitude of factors promote the development of *tourism*, of which the following are worth mentioning: geographical location, natural setting, and especially the limestone relief of the mountainous area, a history rich in events, impressive buildings

belonging to various styles, thermal waters with curative effects, customs and traditions, and last but not the least, gastronomy with various specifics: Transylvanian, Hungarian, German, Slovak.

First of all, Bihor County is well-known for its thermal waters that brought fame to these places. People practice bathing tourism, Băile Felix resort being the most famous balneary resort in Romania, and also the most modern one, thanks to the improvements carried out to raise the quality of its services.

A close analysis of the county's offer shows us that it has a great diversity of attractions, but only a tiny fraction is prepared for tourist development. A large part of these attractions are of local and regional interest, and the ones that are of a broader, international interest are insufficiently promoted or developed. For example, the Natural Park of the Apuseni Mountains represents the most valuable landscape of the county, having international attractions, but its exploitation is not developed in the marketplace in the form of some tourist products which can be fully valued.

In the competitiveness field it is good to keep in mind:

- to achieve economic growth, based on the attraction of more investments (domestic and foreign);
- the existence of a business environment that ensures the development of market economy;
- development of small industries and services;
- the existence of a fiscal system that allows investments and development;
- organizing consulting centers, businesses incubators and technological parks to provide assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME).

A considerable percentage of the investments made by economic units is achieved in communes: Drăgănești, Borș, Rieni, Suplacul de Barcău și Sânmartin have been the most important target of investment in Bihor County.

CONCLUSION

The county needs coherent strategies and perspective for moving forward and for enlivening the low level of development that has been lately reached (in the second half of the year 2008). The three areas in which we can build progress are tourism, agriculture and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME).

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