

**SATISFYING ALL THE ECONOMICAL, SOCIAL AND  
ESTHETICAL NEEDS OF THE ACTORS IN TOURISM  
MAINTAINING THE CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL  
INTEGRITY, THE BIOLOGIC DIVERSITY  
AND ALL SUPPORTS LIFE**

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**Abstract:**

*Tourism in protected areas should be done respecting the need for sustainable economic development in these areas and teaching the tourist to have a responsible behavior. Moreover, managers of protected areas should be supported to invest in a specific infrastructure to enable tourists to access these areas.*

*The sustainable tourism develops the idea of satisfying the current tourists and the touristic industry, and the same time, of protecting the environment and opportunities for the future. We take into consideration satisfying all the economical, social and esthetical needs of the actors in tourism while maintaining the cultural and ecological integrity, the biologic diversity and all the supports life. Eco-tourism focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on our vulnerable planet. Responsible cco-tourism includes programs that minimize the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the evaluating environment, and enhance the cultural integrity of local people.*

**Key words:** eco-tourism, sustainable develops, satisfying tourists, touristic industry

**INTRODUCTION**

Fundamentally, eco-tourism means making as little environmental impact as possible and helping to sustain the indigenous populace, thereby encouraging the preservation of wildlife and habitats when visiting a place. This is responsible from of tourism and tourism development, which encourages going back to natural products in every aspect of life. It is also the key to sustainable ecological development.

The sustainable development in tourism is a necessity, taking into account the fact that economy and the environment are facets of the same coin, in other words, the two are strongly linked and interdependent. The place of tourism in the sustainable development is given by its role as an industry which sells the physical and human environment as its products. Of course, the tourism is one of the industries which has to get involved in the sustainable development, as an industry of resources, dependent of nature's endowment and of the cultural heritage of each society; the tourism sells

these resources as part of its product, and, in the same time, shares certain resources with other users, including the local population.

Tourism is the wave of the largest industries in the world and at the same time, one of the most important factors in global economic development. Statistics says that one of fifteen employees working in the tourism sector, about 112 million people worldwide are involved in this sector.

Given that more evident is the relationship between tourism and sustainable development of human society, we understand with greater ease concerns for the preservation of nature values, especially the landscape and environment (WTTC). Since 1991, states that (Hans Kueng - Tuebingen University) *"if we continue to treat nature as before, we will jeopardize the existence of the following. We live today in a post-socialist and post-capitalist future and the economy will definitely be a social and green"*.

Saving the environment around you and preserving the natural luxuries and forest life that's what eco-tourism is all about. Whether it's about a nature camp or organizing trekking trips towards the unspoilt and inaccessible regions, one should always keep in mind not create any mishap or disturbance in the cycle of nature.

Whether it is to isolated beaches, tall mountain peaks, or the bright lights of a big city, the idea of leaving everyday life behind and "getting away from it all" is a siren's song more and more of us find irresistible. With bags packed and tickets purchased we are traveling to the far corners of the world, making tourism the world's, fastest growing industry.

Tourism often represents a huge boon to the economies it affects. Unfortunately, it often has a negative impact on the environments that support it. More travel leads to increased pollution from transportation and the construction of more facilities to house and entertain these visitors. Their sheer numbers can sometimes overwhelm a destination's carrying capacity.

As the pressures of urban living increase, more of these intrepid travelers are seeking pristine natural and cultural sites. The number of visitors to national parks, protected areas and rural communities continues to rise. And while nature or "eco" tourism is generally considered to have a lower impact than mass tourism – requiring less infrastructure and development – even small scale use can damage the natural resources that attract tourists in the first place.

Often the effects are not only ecological.

Tourism, especially in rural and undeveloped area, has displaced traditional customs and social interactions and, by fostering dependence on foreign income, made communities vulnerable to foreign economic conditions.

Still, it is hard to ignore the opportunities tourism presents for economic development in rural communities. Whether the primary impact is positive or negative largely depends on how this sector is managed. Management structures must be strengthened in order to sustain both environmental quality and a lively tourism industry. The challenge today is to promote tourism activities in natural areas, while minimizing the negative impacts on them.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

A number of initiatives have been introduced by international organizations and the tourism industry. A report on implementing Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry developed jointly by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), and the Earth Council sets out a systematic framework to make the tourism industry more environmentally responsible. It urges governments to work with local authorities and the private sector wherever possible to develop an environmental programme for management decisions regarding the industry and tourism destinations.

“Tourism can help the environment in many ways, especially by providing economic incentives to protect resources that have little other financial value, such as unique animal species, natural areas and cultural monuments” said WTO Secretary-General, Antonio Enriquez Savignac. Many international funding agencies have established programmes to encourage tourism that favors the protection of the environment.

The countries of central and Eastern Europe continue to search for means of economic development. The tourism industry presents a number of unique challenges and opportunities. Many CEE countries are actively wooing the world tourism market, and the number of visitors attracted is on the rise. According to a Council of Europe report, the CEE region was already attracting more than 17 percent of arrivals to Europe in 1993, with Hungary leading the way as one of the top five tourist destinations in the world. The CEE countries boast significant cultural heritage as well as many more untouched natural areas than in the West, presenting many opportunities for eco-tourism. But, as many of these countries continue to struggle with the process of privatizing lands and generating revenue, the pressure has mounted for the exploitation of natural resources.

The booming tourism industry requires careful management to avoid exceeding the carrying capacity of the areas it depends upon, leading to environmental problems. Because the tourism industry is in the relatively early stages in CEE, there are still opportunities to develop a comprehensive

management plan, rather than approaching it on an ad hoc basis. Let's see some examples.

Albania's tourism is being in an "embryonic stage" but emphasizes that it has been identified as an area where the country has an international competitive advantage. While Albania would be at the top of the alphabetical tourism "yellow pages", it is typically not the first place to come to mind when planning an eco-get-away. The ministry, with funding from the European Bank for reconstruction and Development, outlined a detailed set of guidelines for the tourism industry, which includes long-term plans for environmental protection. One of the development plans is the creation of national parks and protected areas. On the industry side, a Phare program for tourism in Albania is providing grants and loans to entrepreneurs who want to develop basic services, such as lodging. Potential foreign investors have also been quick to investigate development opportunities, particularly in the hotel industry in coastal areas.

To the north, Estonia's tourism industry faces a similar set of issues, but with an added public relations challenge. One initiative that has taken on the challenge of promoting travel in Estonia aims to develop tourism "the natural way". The Kodukant Ecotourism Initiative is committed to conserving Estonian wildlife and culture while finding alternative livelihoods for rural people through sustainable tourism. This initiative puts significant emphasis on the premise that tours to attractive rural areas must provide an economic benefit to the people living in and around them "striking a balance between profitability and sustainability". Rural tourism can promote local environmental development as well as cultural enlightenment.

The principle of involving local communities in the process is echoed in numerous international initiatives. A joint study by the WTO and the United Nations Environment Programme found this element to be essential to the success of eco-tourism "If eco-tourism is to receive a higher priority in government plans, especially in developing countries considerable effort must be made to effectively involve local inhabitants in the tourism activity" the report concluded. Closer economic links between ecological preservation and tourism are developing, but much remains to be done.

Ultimately, one of the most important goals of eco-tourism must be the preservation of nature. Education is key to reaching this goal. Tourists and their hosts should be taught about nature conservation and protection as well as respect for the culture visited. Often eco-tourists are eager to learn something from what they are seeing. Local inhabitants can play a large role in how the visitors view the destination. By becoming educated hosts and guides they can encourage tourists to see their communities as more than a site for recreation.

Sustainable rural tourism development should be promoted and facilitated, which means creating new jobs, preserving rural landscape, encouraging responsible employment of local resources, creating market for farm produce, basic or additional farm income, local, and state budget revenue.

## CONCLUSION

Romania Ecotourism is a form of tourism in which the main motivation for the tourist is the observation and appreciation of nature and local tradition in natural areas. Ecotourism respects nature and rural culture, minimizes the negative impact of tourism on these aspects of life, and contributes to nature conservation and protection. It supports local people, communities and businesses. It also has an educational component that creates awareness about nature and conservation both for tourists and local communities. The Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER) is committed to developing and promoting REAL ecotourism in Romania. AER trains members and others interested in preserving Romania's natural beauty and improving the quality of services to visitors who share our vision and has objectives:

- Promoting the ecotourism concept and principles at the local, regional and national level;
- Promoting ecotourism as a tool for nature conservation;
- Promoting the natural and traditional values that respect nature, as tourism attractions;
- Involving local communities in ecotourism services and infrastructure development;
- Promoting the ecotourism as a tool to generate income for local communities;
- Encouraging tour operators to use local services;
- Developing and maintaining a quality service system in ecotourism;
- Developing and enforcing a Certification system for ecotourism.

Most of Romania's ecotourism destinations are within protected areas such as the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, the birds paradise, the Zărnești-Șinca-Râșnov ecotourism zone focused on large carnivores (bears, wolves and lynx) around the Piatra Craiului National Park, the Retezat National Park, the oldest national park in Romania, and the Apuseni Mountains Nature Park.

Tourism Minister, Elena Udrea, is optimistic as regards the concrete national strategy for tourism development in Romania: „*We hope and we want development strategy of ecotourism to be ready by the end of the year*

*and this will be possible, given the fact that besides the involvement of the Ministry of Tourism we will have partnerships with those who have activities in tourism, with professional and promotion associations of tourism, with employers, managers of protected areas and involving a range of tourists.”*

At the press conference organized on this theme, Elena Udrea held to raise awareness regarding the need for this strategy: *“We have over 30% mountains, 30% large carnivore fauna, unique flora, unique species of birds in the Danube Delta, a natural resource which we should profit and promote a strategy which we will try to develop in the coming months”*said Elena Udrea.

*“It is about stringent action, which will run for one year, medium-term actions with duration of three years and implementation actions, on long term, which will take five years”*, declared Ovidiu Teodorescu, general director of the National Institute of Research - Development in Tourism. He also stated that the strategy will be structured on three segments of implementation.

In this context, the Tourism Minister explained the necessary conditions for creating a favourable climate for tourism in protected areas: *“tourism in protected areas should be done respecting the need for sustainable economic development in these areas and teaching the tourist to have a responsible behavior. Moreover, managers of protected areas should be supported to invest in a specific infrastructure to enable tourists to access these areas.”*

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