

RURAL TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM IN THE NORTH-WEST DEVELOPMENT REGIONS

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Abstract

The North –West developing region is a complex area because its territory includes all forms of relief and therefore has within it the possibility of developing several types of tourism, including the agritourism and rural tourism.

Being a new type of tourism that emerged after the events of 1989, rural tourism and agrotourism in the region knows important factors of development, however is not promoted at its true valences .

Key words *rural tourism, agrotourism, regional development, ethnographic heritage*

INTRODUCTION

Development regions in Romania occur in 1998 and represents Romania's regional subdivisions created to coordinate regional development necessary for our country to join the EU. These regions have no administrative status, they are not administrative territorial units.

Romania is divided into eight regions, named after the geographical location in the country: North-West, North-East, South-West, South-East, South, West, Central, Bucharest and Ilfov.

North-West Development Region is located in North-Western Romania and its vicinity in the West with Hungary, in the North with Ukraine in South with the Central Development Region and Western Region and on the east with the North East Development Region.

The administrative-territorial units of the region has 6 counties (Bihor Bistrita-Nasaud, Cluj, Maramures, Satu-Mare, Salaj), 43 cities, 15 municipalities, 402 communes and 1,800 villages (Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2010).

The NV Development Region is part of a larger system, holding an area of 34,159 km², which represents 14.32% of the country.

Through the development of rural tourism and agritourism with all problems encountered in rural development, NV Development Region benefits from resources and attractions for practicing this type of tourism because the ethnographic heritage of the region is well developed.



Fig. 1 Development Regions in Romania

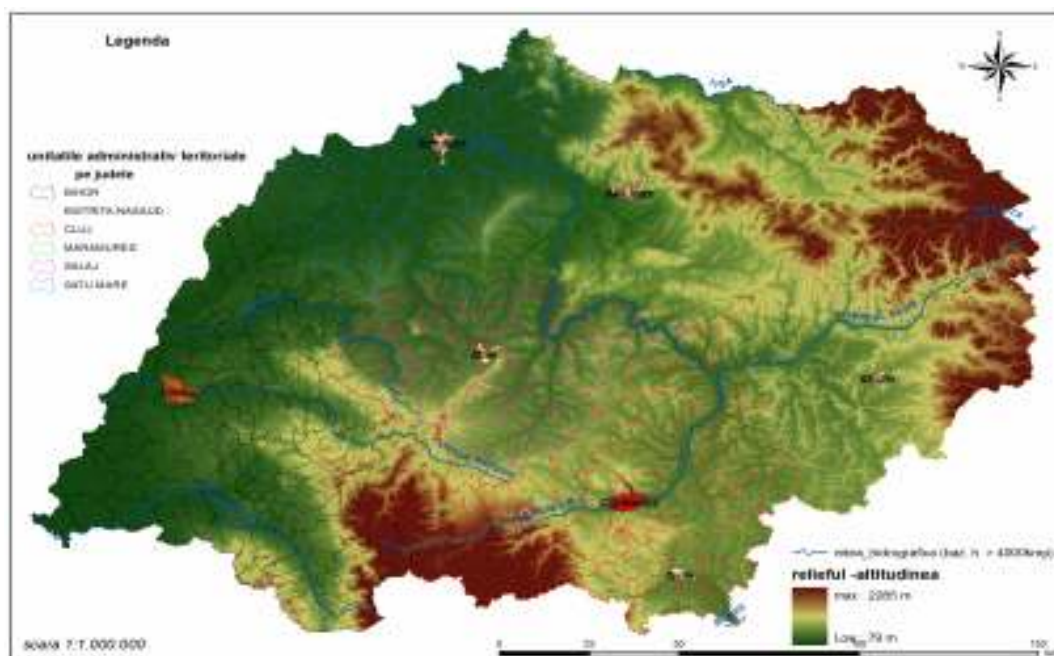
MATERIAL AND METHODS

The potential tourism of the NV Development Region is high due to the complexity of the landforms but also by cultural and religious objectives, customs and ethnographic heritage.

Ethnographic heritage is varied including religious objectives (churches, wooden churches, the famous Merry Cemetery in Sapanta, monasteries), but especially so-called "countries" or areas where traditions and customs are preserved in their original form to this day (Country of Oas , Country of Năsăud , Country of Lăpuș Country, Country of Beius).

Agritourism, as a form of rural tourism can best use the rural tourism product because of a close relationship between tourists, farmers and nature.

The natural resources within the region, are characterized by the existence within it of a part of the Apuseni Mountains, which are characterized by a large number of caves (Meziad Cave, Wind Cave, Cave Bears), gorges and defiles, the existence of volcanic forms in the northern



Carpathians (Oas Mountains, Gutai and Țibleș Mountains), and the presence of thermal and thermo resources.

Fig. 2 NV Development Region's landforms map

In the North-West region are the following ethnic and folk areas, each of them is unique in that it presents features that are determined by peasant handicrafts, costumes, traditions and customs:

Maramureș ethnographic area overlaps Depression Maramureș which includes villages like Moisei, Săcel, Dragomirești Borsa, Săpânța, Remetei, Salistea which are characterized by traditional architecture in wood construction, roadside crosses and entrance gates.



Fig. 3 Merry Cemetery in Sapanta

Oas ethnographic area that overlaps Depression Oas, consisting of settlements like Certeze, Vama, Orasu-Nou is known by its techniques and work tools, costumes, traditions and folk art.

Salaj county ethnographic area which includes Meseș-Plopiș Mountains, the Silvania area, the Almas-Agrij area and Someș area is recognized by the 77 wooden churches and related crafts manufactures of straw and rush.

Crisul Repede ethnographic Valley area, superimposed on some common from Cluj and Bihor counties, is famous by the traditional peasant furniture and interior but also wickerwork, wooden handicraft and manufacture items (tablecloths) from Izvorul Crisului.



Fig. 4 Crafts from Cluj County

Ethnographic area of Bistrița-Năsăud superimposed over Superior Somes Valley and Bârgăului and Șieului Valley.

Ethnographic area of Beius Country located on Black Cris is evidenced by pottery, making chests making costumes.

Tourism infrastructure is underdeveloped although tourism resources are complex. The poor development of tourist infrastructure is attributed to inadequate accommodation capacity, the poor quality of services and poor access opportunities.

Of the six counties that make up the region of development, the county with the greatest opportunities for rural tourism development is Maramures County, although its exploitation is not undertaken to its true values.

Maramures County has priority in terms of the possibilities for accommodation of tourists in rural areas, because it has the largest number of units specialized in this type of tourism in the region.

Table 1

Tourist reception with functions of tourist accommodation in rural northwestern region on July 31, 2008

NV Region	Tourist pensions	Agro pensions
Bihor	6	9
Bistrița-Năsăud	3	2
Cluj	16	95
Maramureș	35	110
Satu-Mare	3	5
Sălaj	4	4
Total	67	225

The table above shows that counties with the largest rural accommodations are Maramures and Cluj, which together accounted for almost 50% of the capacity region.

The tourists that are spending their holidays in the countryside in the region come from Romania and abroad. Local tourists visit the region's rural areas especially during important religious holidays of the year (Christmas, Easter), while foreign tourists are more interested about ethnographic heritage of the region which is preserved and unaltered.

For rural tourism can be developed as effective in the region it is necessary to focus on solving problems facing rural areas so that it becomes more attractive for tourists.

Therefore we must take into account:

- ✓ growth of the active population and particularly young people;
- ✓ protection and conservation of the natural environment;
- ✓ creating optimal conditions for entrepreneurs;
- ✓ stopping the migration of the rural population;
- ✓ improving the quality of tourism products.

Compared to other types of tourism, rural tourism and agrotourism has the advantage of its practice throughout the year, and also the advantage of low investment.

For rural inhabitants, rural tourism is also a supplement of household income.

CONCLUSION

The NV Development Region includes many places that have natural and ethnographic value and therefore can be included in rural tourism circuit.

Rural tourism is a mean of development in the rural community as a whole, and in particular can contribute in growing the living standards of rural residents.

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