

STRATEGIES OF DEVELOPMENT IN AGRO-TOURISM SERVICES IN MOUNTAIN AREA OF BRASOV COUNTRY

Gherdan Alina Emilia Maria*, Cozac Elena, Dudaş Gălăşel Anca Iulia*****

*University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru St., 410048, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: gherdanalina7@gmail.com;

**University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru St., 410048, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: iulia_dai@yahoo.com;

***University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, 26 Gen. Magheru St., 410048, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: elena_cozac@yahoo.com;

Abstract

The characteristics of the agro-tourism defined by the services sector, imposes the knowledge of its own evolution rendered by: the nature and the characteristics of the services in the rural area, which are shaped by forms. These forms give a certain specificity to several aspects, these being: the objectives and the evolution of the forms of services in Romania: the validity of these services (through intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability); specialization and diversity of rural services in Romania; the specific forms of the competition relations between the services market and the goods market in the rural area; the personnel providing services from the rural area; the role and behavior of the consumer, etc.

Brasov County, is the place where agro-tourism has its core and one in which the number of accommodation places in tourist and agro-tourism pensions is the most significant in the country.

The mountainous relief of the county allows the seasonal practice of winter sports, on the territory of Brasov county being three tourist resorts of national interest - Poiana Brasov, Predeal and Rasnov - all three being set up in the Postavarul Massif. According to the law, the non-agricultural activities specific to the mountain area supported by the state are: mountain tourism, agrotourism and ecotourism, through the specific services.

Key words: mountain tourism, rural services

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism in general and mountain agro-tourism in particular are considered as promising options for the future, because this way can be achieved an economic development of the localities with predominantly agricultural and forestry specificity, with favorable consequences on attracting and maintaining the population in the rural environment, boosting the agricultural activity. in the disadvantaged regions from the point of view of social and cultural development, limiting the effects of social isolation, especially for the inhabitants of the villages or mountain hamlets.

The rural tourist pension is characterized by a functional specificity of the agrotourism services, and for this reason the relationships and the policy of the chain of the rural agrotourist services, are focused on the

identification of the agrotourist supply chain (products / services, itineraries, economic agents, operations, flows). etc.), along with the analysis of the regulatory mechanisms within the chain in the assembly of the integrating system and the integrating environment in the rural area.

By law, for the development of tourism and agro-tourism in the mountain area, the Romanian state, provides investments in the tourism infrastructure and tourist leisure: renovation / rehabilitation of accommodation units, campsites / harbours / shelters / chalets, creation of new means for spending leisure time, marking the mountain tourist routes, creating the thematic routes / paths, placing the interpretive panels, as well as the indicators. In order to increase the economic potential of the mountain area, the Romanian state provides the financing of projects in the mountain area to promote ecotourism and agro-tourism activities in order to extend the global tourism offer and to favor the creation of jobs in these areas. In farms, sheepfold and agro-pensions, food for tourists, in the form of fresh or processed products, must come from their own farm or from other farms in the area, except those that cannot be made within them. Individuals, individual businesses and family businesses, authorized according to the law, which carry out tourism activities in structures of reception of the type of pensions and agro-tourism farms, can benefit from granting from the local councils of some areas of the available lands, according to the law, for their construction, development and exploitation. The young people from the mountain area can request and receive wood material to build tourist reception structures: agrotourism pensions, rooms and / or hosting apartments. Considering the fact that in this county the agrotourism is well represented, we thought of a strategy that does not necessarily mean an increase in the number of accommodation places but of the services offered by the pensions in the area.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For this work I used statistical data offered by the national institute of statistics and the statistical department of Brasov. The paper covers well the field of qualitative research, seen as a first-order alternative, but also as a necessary complement to the quantitative methods.

For the research method I used qualitative exploratory research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Accommodation infrastructure in Brasov county is represented by hotels, pensions (urban, rural and agrotouristic), inns and motels, villas and tourist cottages, bungalows, holiday villages, campsites, tourist houses, student camps.

Tabel I

Touristic accommodation capacity, existing in Brasov county (places)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Hotels	5740	6128	6652	7591	8791	9918
Hostels	0	125	147	207	445	962
Motels	429	316	343	431	748	772
Villas cottages	916	905	900	1010	1476	1764
Tourist cottages	655	612	682	801	752	1005
Bungalows	50	78	78	96	88	88
Holiday villages	106	106	106	72	72	72
Campsites	2196	640	1962	874	874	870
Tourist houses	22	0	0	0	0	240
Tourist boarding houses	2801	2996	3146	3556	3947	4719
Agrotourism pensions	2639	2772	2676	3067	4402	5024

Source: <https://statistici.insse.ro/shop>

Regarding the tourist accommodation capacity in the county, it is noticed an increasing trend starting with 2009, in 2013 registering with 73.3% more accommodation places. In 2013, the existing places in hotels increased by 12.82%, the pensions (tourist and agro-tourism) supplemented their places with 16.69%, the places in tourist villas increased by 19.51%, the largest extension registering the tourist cottages, whose places increased by 33.64%.

The number of places in the tourist and agro-tourist pensions has an increasing tendency during the analyzed years, considering that here is the most developed agro-tourist area, the Moieciu area.

The tourists arriving in Brasov county prefer, in proportion of over 60%, the hotels, aspect explained both by the superior accommodation capacity that they have, and by the various facilities made available to the clients. 23% of the tourists from Brasov county are staying in pensions (tourist and agro-tourism), the other types of accommodation units recording very little of the tourist circulation in the county.

The development strategy must be based on several key action paths, with an impact on the tourist activity:

- forming a team of members of the local authorities to remove the political and administrative barriers;
- the support of training institutions for tourism specialists;
- material support for the development of the county as a tourist destination;
- developing the capacity of tourist reception in accordance with the transport infrastructure,

- qualified human resource according to the requirements;
- setting up an agency around an important and experienced actor, with negotiating power, who will be able to support marketing efforts in order to attract the targeted market segments and to ensure customer satisfaction.

The main objective of the strategy is to increase the number of overnight stays and to increase the average length of stay in tourist and agrotourism pensions.

Ecotourism has grown in recent years, along with the awareness of the fragility and complexity of the environment. Although, at a general level, ecotourism is considered to involve only activities in nature (mountain climbs, hiking, nature observation, etc.), it also includes cultural activities. The most important aspect of ecotourism is obtaining the benefits for the local community: creating jobs, using local resources, involving the local community in making decisions regarding the development of the tourist activity. Thus, the rural areas of Brasov county, which also have cultural attractions, can be micro-destinations conducive to the development of ecotourism. Starting from the basic principle of ecotourism, responsible travel in relatively unaltered natural areas, it is found that Brasov county has several micro-tourist destinations exploited not properly and to its potential.

Although, at first glance, ecotourism cannot be a consistent source of income, given that it is a form of tourism that is addressed to individual tourists or small groups, it is a niche that must be developed coherently. Businesses in the sphere of ecotourism have a real chance of being successful in the long run if the laws of the market (applying recognized operating standards) and sustainable development are respected. A policy of ecotourism development in Brasov county must be developed, that emphasizes on educating tourists, conserving the environment, empowering and actively involving the local community. Thus, economic operators in areas close to the protected natural areas should be integrated into an appropriate management that combines the increase in the number of tourists with nature conservation and protection. The strategy for developing the ecotourism must start from consulting the local population, the investors, the tour operators, the NGOs active in the area. The main way of managing the natural areas should be to inform and educate the visitors, mainly at the destination, by: clear information messages, in an accessible language, qualified personnel, visiting leaflets, panels at the entrance to the protected areas. Obviously, attracting tourists for ecotourism must be done through targeted marketing actions within the tourism product promotion centers.

CONCLUSIONS

The natural environment, still slightly altered, formed, in a balanced way, from a high mountain step, one of the lower mountains and one of the valleys and depressions, is the physical support for the development of ecotourism activities. In the current territory of Brasov county there are a multitude of protected areas, some presenting elements of uniqueness, which justify the practice of ecotourism. Piatra Craiului National Park, whose territory overlaps with that of Zarnesti-Piatra Craiului ecotourism destination (according to the Criteria for the designation of Ecotourism Destinations in Romania elaborated on the basis of the European Ecotourism Certification Standard - The European Ecotourism Labeling Standard - EETLS and the Global Criteria for Sustainable Tourism). The park is notable for its spectacular rocky steep slopes (Zarnestilor Saddles) and the karst relief (Dambovicioarei Cave and Gorge), but also for rare or endemic elements of flora (*Dianthus callizonus*) or fauna (black goat). Near the city of Zarnesti there is also the only sanctuary for bears in Romania, LiBearty, dedicated to bears that have been rescued from captivity, but which can no longer be reintegrated into their natural environment. Both Piatra Craiului National Park and Bucegi Natural Park also contain anthropic areas, on the territory of the communes Fundata, Moieciu, Bran, where the meadows and scattered households create a typical landscape of mountain villages. This landscape is, in itself, an attraction for photography enthusiasts, which makes these areas, periodically, the "hosts" of tourist photography camps.

In the territory of Brasov county there are several areas propitious for the practice of ecotourism, both in terms of accessibility and diversity of natural and cultural heritage: the Bran-Moieciu-Fundata corridor, Buzau customs, Fagaras country, Bunesti area. A defining characteristic is the presence of the anthropic natural landscape, which generates an idyllic atmosphere: mountain or hill meadows, separated by forest or orchard curtains, the presence of sheep or cattle herds, maintaining traditional agricultural architecture and techniques.

The diversification of the services within the pensions could attract more tourists and could increase the number of days of accommodation for the current tourists.

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