

PERSPECTIVES OF THE EVOLUTION OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE NW DEVELOPMENT REGION

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Abstract

The analysis of the rural tourism phenomenon at the level of the North-West Region, as a field of independent activity, but in correlation with the other main economic and social fields (agriculture, industry), highlighted the major role of tourism in the development of perspective of rural communities.

After an inventory of the tourist resources of the region as well as of the current stage of affirmation of the branch, the need to elaborate a coherent strategy for the development of rural tourism in the short, medium and long term becomes possible and urgent.

Key words: perspective, rural tourism, development region

INTRODUCTION

The region is located in northwestern Romania and borders Hungary to the west, Ukraine to the north, is the longest natural border along the Tisza River, to the south with the Central Development Region and the Western Development Region, and in the east with the North-East Development Region.

The North-West Development Region includes 6 counties, respectively Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureș, Satu-Mare, Sălaj (fig.1).

The administrative-territorial units of the region are: 6 counties, 43 cities, of which 15 municipalities, 402 communes and 1800 villages (Statistical Yearbook of Romania).

Rural settlements in the North-West Development Region face the same problems at the national level: high mortality, low presence and sometimes even lack of public interest facilities, poorly developed communication networks in the territory, the aging and feminized population that determines the existence of arable land unused, etc.

The functions of rural settlements are mainly determined by natural factors, which condition primarily the profile of agricultural activities, but also of industrial activities.

The existence of rural settlements is influenced by local and regional economic development.

There are situations especially in the mountainous area where the aging population and the poor economic development can contribute to the disappearance of the respective villages.

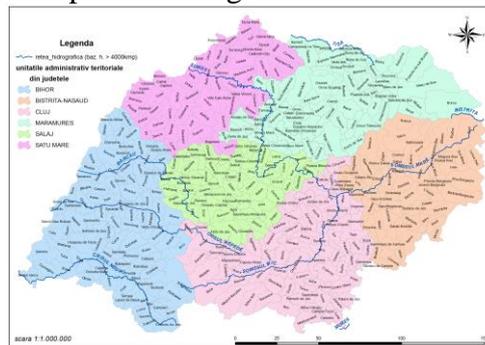


Fig.1 Map of the component counties from the NW Region

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The perspectives of rural tourism in the NW Region must start from **the priorities of rural development**, namely:

- adapting agricultural holdings to be able to ensure their economic viability in the context of sustainable rural development;
- improving and adapting production according to the market;
- increasing the quality of products;
- development of agricultural lending services;
- increasing the absorption capacity of European funds;
- reduction of production costs.

Economic dynamics will increase through **the enhancement of human, natural and cultural heritage**.

Rural tourism is poorly represented, compared to existing resources and as a result the tourism market has to suffer from inadequate basic infrastructure and lack of comfort facilities.

In order for rural tourism to be able to develop in the NW Region in the future, from my point of view it is necessary to focus on the following aspects:

- 1) the tourist potential that needs to be developed and modernized;
- 2) sustainable capitalization of natural potential and local resources;

- 3) highlighting the tourist objectives of heritage, culture and specific traditions through better information and publicity;
- 4) the existence of a well-prepared young human potential, which first of all wants to remain in the rural environment and is able to adapt to requirements corresponding to the needs of all categories of beneficiaries.

Many rural localities in the NW Region have natural and cultural values, which **can be integrated into national and international tourism**.

As a supplement to incomes for rural households, have developed, as complementary activities, rural tourism and agrotourism.

Although there are significant differences between these two forms of tourism, both emphasize an interconditioning of the traditional side with the requirements of modern tourism and imply a superior capitalization of the economic, natural and anthropic values of the area.

In the last 10 years, new houses have always been built in rural areas. Many of the new constructions can be the support for some tourist activities.

Rural tourism is a way of development and can contribute to increasing the standard of local living, primarily due to the fact that it sets in motion a wide range of local resources through several priority actions: modernization of the existing road network, ensuring water supply through pipes, sewerage for the perimeters with a higher density of dwellings, the realization of some means of district heating, the development of the activities of processing of the agricultural products.

Through the demand it manifests for a wide range of handicrafts, rural tourism offers **new perspectives of openness for the village crafts**.

Thus, the artisans from Maramureş are integrated in the tourism development strategy of the member villages of the various associations - the Maramureş Country Association and the Agro-Tur Foundation from Vadu Izei.

These associations are known for their orientation in favor of the village crafts, the orientation of the unemployed towards traditional crafts and tourism, the financing of small workshop projects.

The village's crafts contribute to the development of tourism also by triggering and retaining some tourist flows in certain areas.

It is especially about the ceramic centers, the exhibitions for sale, the ethnography and folklore collections, the demonstration lessons presented in front of the tourists, which determine the spatial distribution of the tourist flows but also the popularization of some touristic objectives.

The development of agrotourism is based on the need to find solutions for rural households, in the sense of increasing incomes by

capitalizing on their economic potential, developing services for hosting and capitalizing on their own and local products.

CONCLUSION

Rural tourism in the North-West of Romania **must first focus on the internal market and the markets in Central and Eastern Europe**, which are more accessible than targeting Western Europe or overseas countries.

Regarding domestic tourism, even if the current data show that Romanian citizens do not yet have a tradition in the field, there are evidences that viable tourism products can be developed.

The Central and Eastern European market has been neglected, although it has strong growth potential in the field.

The products should be sold to both individual tourists and groups insisting on the potential of the area for outdoor activities, accessibility and reasonable prices.

Markets in Western Europe and others more distant should be approached as a niche market for specialized tourists with the help of Romanian tour operators and seeking partnerships with international tour operators.

Another solution that can be considered for the development of rural tourism and agrotourism in the NW Region is the **flow of intellectual capital**, not financial.

Thus, the traditional command and control systems that are familiar to us must be replaced by more appropriate ones, including that of building networks between people and economic entities.

Effective management is not a matter of having more knowledge, but knowingness, ie how to use it.

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