

STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

Elena COZAC¹

¹ University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection, Oradea City, Magheru 26, 410087, Romania Institution

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

The center of the elaboration of national tourism development strategies must start from the idea that the development of tourism requires a specific market for goods and services, which is in continuous transformation and on which action must be taken constantly in order to satisfy the constantly changing motivations of tourists.

The Romanian tourist offer currently addresses a more internal than external demand, and this is because Romania finds itself in permanent competition with countries in the area, e.g. Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, which have much more efficient tourism promotion policies than our country and where investments in the tourism field have determined a qualitative increase in services.

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#Corresponding author: elena_cozac@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

Romania's tourism sector holds significant potential due to its diverse natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and historical landmarks. However, to enhance its competitive position and ensure sustainable growth, the country needs to adopt strategic approaches for tourism development. Below are key strategies that could drive Romania's tourism forward:

Infrastructure Development:

Improved Connectivity: Expanding airports, railway networks, and highways will improve access to key tourist destinations, especially in rural and less-visited areas. Better transportation connections to major international hubs would increase inbound tourism.

Modernizing Facilities: Upgrading hotel accommodations, restaurants, and tourist attractions to meet international standards will improve the tourist experience and promote longer stays.

Promotion of Sustainable Tourism:

Ecotourism: Romania has vast natural reserves, such as the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube Delta, which can attract ecotourists. Developing sustainable ecotourism practices can ensure the preservation of these areas while promoting tourism.

Cultural Heritage Preservation:

Promoting Romania's traditional villages, UNESCO World Heritage sites, and folk traditions will help maintain cultural authenticity while attracting cultural tourists.

Diverse Marketing Strategies:

Targeting Niche Markets: Romania can target specific tourism markets such as wellness tourism, adventure tourism (e.g., hiking, skiing), and religious tourism. Marketing Romania as a destination for these niche segments will increase its visibility.

Digital Transformation: Leveraging social media and digital platforms to showcase Romania's unique attractions and experiences can help reach a global audience. Tourism apps, virtual tours, and social media campaigns can attract younger and tech-savvy tourists.

Public-Private Partnerships:

Collaborative Efforts: Encouraging collaboration between the government, local communities, and private sector (e.g., hospitality, travel agencies) will ensure a coordinated and effective development of tourism infrastructure and services.

Investment in Tourism Projects: Financial incentives and grants for local businesses to develop tourism-related services, such as boutique hotels or local tour guides, can boost the sector.

Event Tourism:

Cultural Festivals and Events: Romania can organize and promote cultural festivals, music events, sports competitions, and culinary festivals to attract international visitors. Hosting events like the "Untold Festival" has already proven to be successful.

Conference and MICE Tourism: Romania can also promote itself as a destination for business conferences, meetings, and incentive

travel (MICE), capitalizing on cities like Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca.

Training and Education:

Skill Development: To maintain a high-quality tourist experience, Romania should focus on training and developing the local workforce in hospitality, guiding, and customer service. This would ensure that tourists have positive interactions with service providers.

Educational Programs: Establishing partnerships with universities and tourism institutes to train future leaders and professionals in sustainable tourism practices is vital for long-term success.

Branding and Image Enhancement:

Building a Strong National Brand: Creating a distinct tourism identity for Romania based on its history, folklore, and natural beauty will make the country more recognizable on the global tourism map. Emphasizing Romania's lesser-known but unique assets, like castles, medieval towns, and spas, can also help improve its image.

Tourism Ambassadors: Engaging high-profile figures or influencers as tourism ambassadors could boost the international appeal of Romania's tourism destinations.

In conclusion, Romania has the potential to become a leading tourist destination in Europe, but it requires a comprehensive and strategic approach. By focusing on infrastructure, sustainable practices, diversified marketing, and community involvement, Romania can effectively develop its tourism sector and create lasting economic benefits.

Romania's tourism potential is diversified and rich in tourist resources, characterized by the existence of accessible and harmoniously combined landforms throughout the country, a climate favorable to tourism throughout the year, rich biodiversity, a beautiful cultural and architectural heritage, meaning that Romania, through its wealth, can be included among tourist destinations internationally, not just nationally.

Tourism in Romania is mostly carried out in the following geographical areas: Carpathian Mountains, Black Sea, Danube Delta, Transylvania, Maramures, Moldova and Bucovina, Bucharest (together with Ilfov County) and certain rural areas. As a result, the country's tourism offer is represented by the following basic products:

mountain tourism, with great landscape diversity, complex tourist resources and high

possibilities for tourism exploitation. The mountains Bucegi, Vlădeasa, Piatra Mare and Postăvarul, Parâng, Retezat, etc. are worth noting. Here you can practice winter sports, mountain hiking, mountain climbing, ecotourism.

spa tourism, represented by the abundance of mineral waters, therapeutic muds, saline climate, phytotherapy, to which is added a qualified medical staff. The resorts of Băile Felix, Sovata, Băile Olănești, Tușnad, etc. are noteworthy.

Cultural tourism, represented by a rich cultural and historical heritage tied to Romanian history. Notable are the monasteries of Moldavia, Peleş Castle, Bran Castle, Hunyadi Castle, Sighișoara Fortress, etc.

Leisure and relaxation tourism.

Rural tourism, characterized by an ethnographic and folkloric treasure of great originality. Notable rural areas include Maramures, Bucovina, Oltenia, and Transylvania. In these villages, old crafts are still practiced, such as: woodworking, handicrafts, pottery, leatherworking, etc.

An important advantage that Romania has compared to other countries refers to the fact that important values for tourism such as natural landscapes, cultural and artistic values have not suffered much from human intervention.

In Romania, tourism can become an important economic sector, with a significant role in the economic and social development of the country, although it currently holds a rather modest share in GDP. The more modest development of Romanian tourism is influenced by the level of development of the general infrastructure, starting from transport and ending with the state of the technical and material base.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The bibliographic work focuses on tourism development strategy and is based on research of articles indexed in international databases (idbs). It aims to analyze and synthesize current perspectives and practices in the field of tourism, with the main objective of identifying the factors that influence the sustainable and competitive development of this sector.

By examining relevant articles, the work highlights global trends, effective policies, marketing strategies and the impact of technology on tourism. It also addresses topics

such as sustainability, local community involvement, climate change adaptation and the promotion of lesser-known destinations. The results provide a solid basis for understanding the complexity of tourism development strategy and for formulating practical recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

After 1989, the transition of Romanian economic life to a market economy, associated with a strong degradation of the Romanian tourist potential, led to a degradation of tourist goods and services, so that Romanian tourism faced a long period of stagnation and even regression. The result of these challenges meant a loss of tourists for Romania in favor of surrounding countries.

Two important elements contributed to the prolongation of the crisis in Romanian tourism, namely: the lack of a vision regarding the development of tourism and its correlation with other economic sectors, and on the other hand the existence of entrepreneurs who were now taking the first steps in carrying out tourism activities in a new context.

The main objectives that Romania must pursue for its tourism development refer to the efficient exploitation of tourism potential, to an efficient diversification and promotion of the tourism offer, to increasing the quality of tourism services, to increasing competitiveness, all these taking into account the protection and conservation of the environment.

The strategies that can contribute to increasing tourism activity in Romania are:

- increasing tourist circulation by attracting approximately 5% more tourists annually than the previous year. In Romania, by granting holiday vouchers, the state has supported domestic tourist circulation, but an important role for tourism development would be to attract foreign tourists who would spend enough at the destination.
- correlating Romanian tourism with European tourism trends;
- permanent improvement of the legislative framework;
- Enhancing professional training for the tourism industry. An important role is played by adapting the curriculum to the requirements of the tourism market and increasing the level of practice, even if this

implies increasing vocational training by several months. International cooperation in training the tourism workforce would be effective.

- salary increase in the tourism sector. In Romania, employees in the tourism sector have the lowest salaries compared to employees in other economic sectors because employers, under the pretext of tourist seasonality and sometimes considering that the employee also receives a tip, are not willing to increase salaries. This effect is sometimes reflected in the quality of service.

- the correlation between the quality of services and the prices paid by tourists;
- the existence of a favorable tax regime;
- encouraging free initiative in the tourism field;
- developing public-private partnerships.
- massive investments in tourism;
- the emergence of new tourist products, etc.

All these measures must be correlated with general investments in other sectors of activity because tourism activity is influenced by them. For example, it is useless to have attractive tourism resources if access to them is difficult and sometimes non-existent.

It would be effective for all measures to not only be established but also monitored during their implementation and for several years afterward in order to be able to track the effects they have produced through implementation.

Romanian tourism needs short and medium-term measures for its development, and the strategies applied aim to create tourist destinations capable of satisfying the increasingly sophisticated needs of tourists.

C. Developing tourism in Romania provides attractive opportunities for numerous suppliers of goods and services. Achieving positive effects requires governments to recognize the role of tourism in the country's socio-economic activity.

Existing and potential attractions must be aligned with the demands of tourists who are motivated by the possibility of exploring them. Given its resources, Romania can be successful both for individual tourists and tourists coming in organized groups, who opt for activities of active exploration of nature and culture and who seek to interact with the visited place.

CONCLUSIONS

Developing tourism in Romania provides attractive opportunities for numerous suppliers of goods and services. Achieving positive effects requires governments to recognize the role of tourism in the country's socio-economic activity.

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