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# STRATEGIES FOR THE DIVERSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE ROUA MUNTELUI, BAIA DE ARIES, ALBA COUNTY, ROMANIA

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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### Abstract

*Tourism has been seen by many as an alternative to the decline of traditional industries. This is the case for many localities where tourism can be an option. The current paper highlights the importance of diversifying services within accommodation units, especially in the case of tourist guesthouses, as a means of attracting tourists throughout the year. The case study was conducted on the Roua Muntelui guesthouse, managed by SC Turism Agreement SRL, located in Baia de Arieş, Alba County. Based on the results obtained following the use of a questionnaire on 60 tourists in 2025, the following diversification of tourist activities seemed one of the most appealing: capitalizing on local heritage by integrating traditional products and crafts into the tourist experience offered and improving existing service.*

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**Keywords:** (max. 5) strategies, diversification, tourism, Alba County, Roua Muntelui guesthouse

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### INTRODUCTION

Tourism is seen as an alternative to the decline in traditional industries such as agriculture in general, particularly in lagging or peripheral regions, where territorial policies promote diversification strategies. (McCann et al, 2015, Weidenfeld A., 2018) This is especially true for localities that rely on tourism as a key driver for economic diversification and revitalization. (Brouder P., 2017)

Given the constant changes in the tourism market, accommodation providers must continually diversify their service offerings in order to remain appealing to potential clients. Tourism businesses are increasingly required to innovate and expand their range of products and services to stay competitive.

This paper highlights the importance of diversifying services within accommodation units, especially in the case of tourist guesthouses, as a means of attracting tourists throughout the year. The case study was conducted on the Roua Muntelui guesthouse, managed by SC Turism Agreement SRL, located in Baia de Arieş, Alba County.

Alba County is in the central-western part of Romania, in the contact area of the Transylvanian Plateau with the Apuseni Mountains and the Southern Carpathians. It is the county that occupies 18.3% of the territory of the Central region, and the county with the most villages. The county is positioned between

the Apuseni Mountains - located in the west and northwest (with a maximum height of 1826 Muntele Mare), the Sebeş Mountains - located in the south (the highest peak being Vârful lui Pătru, with an altitude of 2,130 m) and the Transylvanian Plateau to the east.

The analysis of natural tourism resources highlights that the area offers diverse and attractive landscapes mountainous, sub-mountainous, and hilly - which strongly meet the primary criterion for evaluating the potential of a future tourist destination. (Călina, J. et al, 2025)

Alba County is a particularly attractive tourist destination, due to its rich natural, cultural, and historical potential. It manages to harmoniously combine rustic and modern elements, while preserving the authenticity of the rural environment. (Iancu, T. et al, 2024) Situated in an area with a diverse geographic environment, Alba County can enjoy many forms of tourism, considering the main destination, such as: mountain resort tourism, spa tourism, circuit tourism, urban tourism, and rural tourism. (Simina, E. A, 2020, Chereji et al, 2024)

Within the framework of the Alba County Development Strategy for the period 2021–2027, tourism and cultural heritage constitute a priority strategic area, targeted through a series of coherent and complementary directions of action. Thus, it is proposed:

- Protecting and sustainably valorising the cultural-historical heritage, including through conservation and restoration works, as well as

through the tourist integration of natural resources and the existing spa potential in the county;

- Modernizing and expanding the regional infrastructure dedicated to tourism activities, both in terms of accommodation capacity and leisure facilities, while improving the quality of the services offered;
- Supporting alternative and specialized forms of tourism (ecotourism, agrotourism, cultural tourism, etc.), along with stimulating related activities and integrating them into a coherent system of tourist offer at regional level;
- Ensuring a well-trained workforce in the tourism sector, through professional training and qualification programs, adapted to the current needs of the market and the increasingly diversified demands of tourists. (Alba County Development Strategy for the period 2021-2027 part II: Strategy Formulation, 2021)

Tourism relies heavily on the natural environment. The attractiveness of a region depends largely on climate and the type and integrity of ecosystems. (Chereji et al., 2022) The Romanian tourism sector has been undergoing consistent development, marked by a steady increase in the number of visitors attracted to the country each year. (Popescu, A., 2018)

Some authors highlight the fact that Considering the diversity of the existing accommodation structures at the level of Alba county, it can be said that tourists have the possibility to choose the accommodation unit that meets expectations and meets their needs in all seasons and in all tourist areas of the county. (Simina, A.E., 2020). At the same time, tourism in the area has also developed in rural areas. Pensions have developed in the households of the locals, constituting in many cases a secondary income-generating activity.

The purpose of the research was to identify and highlight ways to diversify the services offered by the Roua Muntelui Guesthouse in Baia de Arieș, in order to increase the company's income by adapting the activities carried out to the needs and expectations expressed by tourists.

#### **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

Given the purpose of the paper, an essential component of the research approach was the analysis of relevant specialized literature. This stage had the role of theoretically substantiating the study, by identifying the main concepts, theories, and approaches regarding the diversification of tourist services and its

impact on the economic and financial performance of rural accommodation units.

In addition to the theoretical framework, an applied analysis was carried out on the financial situation of the economic agent that manages the Roua Muntelui guesthouse, located in the city of Baia de Arieș, Alba County. This analysis aimed to identify and highlight the income obtained from the tourist activity carried out within the guesthouse, based on the accounting documents made available to the author of the paper by the administrator of the unit. The financial data provided an overview of the evolution of the guesthouse's economic performance in the period 2019-2024, thus constituting an important empirical support for the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

The main method used in the research was quantitative research, materialized by applying a structured questionnaire to a sample of 60 tourists accommodated during the period January - April, 2025. The purpose of applying the questionnaire was to identify the perceptions and level of satisfaction of the guests in relation to the current services offered by the accommodation unit, as well as to explore the felt need to diversify these services. The results obtained from the analysis of the responses provide a valuable perspective on customer expectations and can constitute a starting point for optimizing the tourist offer and, implicitly, for increasing revenues and consolidating the position of the guesthouse on the local market.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Baia de Arieș is a city located in the northwestern part of Alba County, in the Central Development Region of Romania. The town is in the heart of the Apuseni Mountains, on the Arieș River valley, at an average altitude of approximately 485 meters. The town is located at the intersection of important county roads and has road connections with the towns of Câmpeni, Turda and Alba Iulia.

After the decline of the mining industry in the post-communist period, the city underwent an economic restructuring, partly oriented towards tourism, services, and subsistence agriculture. Currently, Baia de Arieș is considered an area with potential for the development of rural tourism and ecotourism, benefiting from spectacular natural landscapes, well-preserved local traditions, and a natural setting conducive to outdoor activities.

The locality is located near natural and cultural sites of interest, such as the Vălișoarei Gorges, Mount Găina or the Scărița-Belioara nature reserve. This potential is exploited through the development of agro-tourism guesthouses and mountain trails, but remains insufficiently exploited on a large scale. Also, extensive agriculture, animal husbandry and traditional processing of agri-food products are practiced in the surrounding area.



Figure 1 Map of Alba County, locality Aries Bath

Source:<https://ziarulunirea.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/harta-judet-alba-cu-localitati.jpg>

Although Baia de Aries benefits from a special natural setting, the development of road and tourism infrastructure is modest. However, the city is accessible via the county road DJ 750, and the modernization of regional connections could support the attraction of investments and the increase in tourist flow.

The Roua Muntelui Guesthouse, located in the mountainous area of the Apuseni Mountains, enjoys a special natural setting, with high tourist potential, but faces high seasonality and relatively limited income outside the peak season.



Figure 2. Map of Baia de Arieș, positioning of the Roua Muntelui guesthouse

Source:Baia De Aries Map, Alba - streets, street view and satellite map

Diversifying economic activities thus becomes a strategic necessity, not only for

customer loyalty, but also for increasing the average length of stay and annual revenue.

At the regional destination level, innovative product and service packages often emerge through experimental approaches, typically resulting from collaborative efforts among tourism and non-tourism stakeholders across the business, public, and non-profit sectors. (Belini et al., 2017)

It is highlighted in specialized works that the creation of diversified tourist products that capitalize on the regional specificity is one of the options with a great potential for future development. (Dobre, CA et al, 2024)

The Roua Muntelui Guesthouse, completed in 2013, is located in the center of Baia de Aries, Alba County, and offers an authentic tourist experience, harmoniously combining rustic style with modern amenities. Its architecture is perfectly integrated into the natural landscape specific to the mountain area, contributing to creating a relaxing and welcoming atmosphere for visitors.

The total accommodation capacity of the guesthouse is 20 adults and 28 children, organized in 9 accommodation units: 7 double rooms and an apartment located in the main building, as well as an adjacent cottage, located in the vicinity of the guesthouse. This cottage was completely modernized in 2024 and offers optimal conditions for accommodating a family with two children up to 12 years old or for a couple who wants privacy and autonomy during their stay. The existing facilities, such as a kitchenette and a refrigerator, allow for individual organization of the stay, ensuring a high degree of comfort and flexibility for tourists.

The location of the guesthouse in an area with a great natural and cultural tourist potential makes it a strategic point for regional tourism. Nearby attractions include: Emperor's Beech, Lupșa and Sub Piatra Monasteries, the sunken village of Geamăna, Scărița-Belioara, Huda lui Papară Cave, Șipote Waterfall in Sălcuia, Turda Gorges, Turda Salt Mine, the Roman Galleries in Roșia Montană, the UNESCO heritage site of Râmetea, the Dragon Gate, as well as the famous Transalpina mountain road.

Considering the purpose of the work, we proceeded to analyse the financial statements of SC. Turism Agreement SRL for the period 2019-2024 and highlighted the main financial indicators as presented in table no. 1

**Table 1**  
**Financial analysis of SC Turism Agreement SRL, 2019-2024**

| Year | Turnover | Net profit | Total assets | Number of employees | Total debts |
|------|----------|------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 2019 | 328,306  | 134,504    | 1,053,881    | 3                   | 124,071     |
| 2020 | 328,518  | 118,775    | 1,039,077    | 2                   | 26,577      |
| 2021 | 424,716  | 131,647    | 1,030,694    | 2                   | 8,828       |
| 2022 | 471,918  | 137,769    | 587,915      | 2                   | 127,361     |
| 2023 | 441,597  | 52,213     | 749,383      | 2                   | 76,139      |
| 2024 | 509,215  | 33,003     | 793,155      | 2                   | 128,102     |

Source: Own processing based on economic agent balance sheets 2019-2024

Following the economic and financial analysis carried out based on the balance sheets of SC Turism Agreement SRL, the owner of the Roua Muntelui guesthouse, Baia de Arieș, for the period 2019-2024, the following general aspects emerged:

- Evolution of turnover and net profit - turnover has seen a constant increase, from 328,306 lei in 2019 to 509,215 lei in 2024, which reflects a development potential and a growing demand for the services offered. However, net profit has decreased considerably, from 134,504 lei in 2019 to only 33,003 lei in 2024, despite a higher turnover. This evolution indicates a decrease in profitability and suggests that the services offered in their current form no longer generate sufficient added value for the business;
- Total assets and resource capital - total assets decreased significantly in 2022, dropping from over 1 million lei to 587,915 lei, followed by a slight recovery in 2023 and 2024. This volatility may reflect a lack of investment, equipment depreciation or an operational restructuring, but also a possible lack of reinvestment of profits;
- Number of employees - the average number of employees has been reduced from 3 (in 2019) to 2 (starting with 2020), which limits the operational capacity of the guesthouse and may negatively influence the quality or diversity of the services offered. Diversifying activities would require a rethinking of human resources, either through hiring or through external partnerships (local guides, collaborators);
- Total debts - the debt level decreased considerably in 2020 and 2021 (historical minimum of 8,828 lei), but in 2022 and 2024 it returned to high values, close to those of 2019. This evolution may indicate an

increased dependence on external resources to support the activity, possibly due to inflation, rising costs or modest operational investments;

The analysis highlights a functional and stable company, but one that faces challenges related to declining profitability and resource optimization. Although turnover is growing, net profit has decreased significantly, indicating that the existing supply is no longer sufficient to maintain long-term competitiveness.

This trend highlights the importance of the need to diversify tourism services, which could contribute to: Increasing revenue in the off-season; Attracting a wider audience (families, active tourists, gastronomy enthusiasts, etc.); Loyalty of existing customers; Sustainable increase in net profit.

Although the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has had a major impact on the tourism sector, in the case of SC Turism Agreement SRL the negative impact was minimal. Due to its location in a natural environment, in the vicinity of the rural area and the specificity of the services offered, the Roua Muntelui guesthouse indirectly benefited from the reorientation of tourists towards more isolated and safer, outdoor destinations. The stable evolution of turnover and the maintenance of profitability in the period 2020–2021 confirm the resilience of the tourism model in the face of external shocks.

During 2020–2021, the tourism sector was one of the most severely affected by health restrictions, especially in large cities, international destinations, and large hotels. However, rural tourism and agritourism were less affected or even favoured at certain times, for several clear reasons:

1. Changing tourist behaviour. People avoided urban crowds and preferred isolated destinations, with outdoor spaces, less interaction, and accommodation in small units.

Pensions in rural areas (even though Baia de Arieș is a city, given its composition and neighbourhoods, when tourists talk about the pension, they describe it as being in a rural area) offered exactly this type of refuge: safety, clean air, natural distancing.

2. Selective relaxations

In Romania, in 2020 and 2021, authorities allowed travel to rural areas and accommodation in small guesthouses, with minimal hygiene and social distancing requirements. In contrast, city breaks or organized group tourism were practically blocked.

### 3. Support through support programs

Pensions that did not close completely were able to benefit from forms of support (technical unemployment, grants for SMEs, etc.) and, in some cases, managed to operate with lower costs and constant income.

☑In 2020 (the first year of the pandemic, starting in mid-March): turnover was practically identical to 2019, which shows remarkable resilience.

☑In 2021, even during the pandemic, turnover increased by over 29%, and profit returned almost to the 2019 level.

This confirms the hypothesis that guesthouses in mountainous areas (such as Baia de Aries) have indirectly benefited from changing tourism trends.

Although turnover has registered a constant increase from year to year, a series of significant investments have been made within the unit, including through the ElectricUP program, which allowed the installation of photovoltaic panels for heating the water in the pool and the purchase of a charging station for electric vehicles. These were added to the continuous investments made in the infrastructure of the tourist reception unit, namely the complete modernization of the accommodation unit independent of the guesthouse. However, the profit reported for 2024 has experienced a significant decrease, most likely because of these capital expenditures.

Considering the above, it becomes essential to diversify the services offered within the guesthouse, as a means of increasing income and consolidating long-term economic sustainability.

Therefore, a questionnaire was applied to tourists staying at the guesthouse, with the aim of identifying the aspects that require improvement and the priority directions for developing the services offered within the unit. The questionnaire was designed to capture both the degree of satisfaction of the customers with the existing services, as well as their preferences regarding potential additional activities or facilities. The analysis of the responses obtained allowed highlighting the real needs of the tourists and provided a concrete basis for formulating measures to diversify the offer, to improve the tourist experience and, implicitly, the economic and financial performance of the guesthouse.

Following the application of the questionnaire to several 60 tourists, during the

period January - March 2025, the responses collected highlighted a series of relevant aspects regarding the level of guest satisfaction, the perception of the services offered and the need to diversify the activities available within the guesthouse. These results are presented and analysed below.

Based on the responses collected from the 60 tourists who completed the questionnaire between January and April 2025, a clear profile of the typical customer of the Roua Muntelui guesthouse is outlined.

Table 2

| Age of respondents |     |       |
|--------------------|-----|-------|
| Age:               | No. | %     |
| Under 25 years old | 11  | 18.33 |
| 25-34 years old    | 8   | 13.33 |
| 35-44 years old    | 26  | 43.33 |
| 45-54 years old    | 8   | 13.33 |
| Over 55 years old  | 7   | 11.67 |
| total              | 60  | 100   |

Source: Own processing after questionnaires

#### Distribution by age group

Most respondents (43.33%) fall into the 35-44 age group, followed by the under 25 segment (18.33%). The 25-34 and 45-54 age groups are equally represented, with 13.33% each, and tourists over 55 years old constitute 11.67% of the total sample.

In terms of gender, 60% of respondents are women, while 40% are men. This structure suggests a slight predominance of female clientele, which may influence the orientation of services towards the preferences of this segment (e.g. creative activities, wellness, traditional gastronomy).

Table 3

| Gender distribution     |     |     |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|
| Sex                     | No. | %   |
| Male                    | 24  | 40  |
| Female                  | 36  | 60  |
| I prefer not to answer. | 0   | 0   |
| Total                   | 60  | 100 |

Source: Own processing after questionnaires

This distribution indicates that the guesthouse mainly attracts active adult tourists, during their professional and family life, a segment with medium or high purchasing power and open to relaxation and experiential tourism.

#### Main purpose of the visit

The data shows that an overwhelming percentage of respondents, 90% (54 out of 60), stated that the main purpose of the visit was relaxation or vacation. Only 10% (6

respondents) mentioned attending events such as weddings or baptisms, and other categories such as active tourism or business travel were not mentioned at all.

Table 4

| Purpose of the visit                                |        |
|---|--------|
| Main purpose of the visit:                          | number |
| Relaxation/vacation                                 | 54     |
| Active tourism (hiking, cycling, etc.)              | 0      |
| Participation in the event (wedding, baptism, etc.) | 6      |
| Business  | 0      |
| Other reason: _____                                 | 0      |
| Total   | 60     |

Source: Own processing after questionnaires

This result confirms that the Roua Muntelui guesthouse is perceived as a destination mainly oriented towards rest, tranquillity and escape from everyday life, not as a transit location or for organized active tourism. At the same time, it provides a solid justification for the development of complementary relaxation, wellness, local gastronomy, and leisure activities services, which would enhance the stay experience.

The creation of new packages of tourist and related services, adapted to the requirements expressed by the public, will play an important role in attracting tourists from various age categories and socio-economic profiles, thus contributing to the development of the area. (Firațoiu A. et al, 2024)

At the same time, there are authors who highlight the importance of choosing guesthouses that serve local products, highlighting the typology of agrotourism guesthouses: this type of village attracts tourists through a menu based on complex dairy products to which other egg, poultry, sheep, and cattle can be added and for shepherd's entertainment are organized shepherd's feasts. (Irimia-Iacob, CC, 2019).

Regarding the method of booking rooms, the respondents' answers highlighted the fact that most tourists found out about the guesthouse through online booking platforms (43.33%), followed by social networks (26.67%) and direct recommendations (23.33%).

Table 5  
Tourists' sources of information about the Roua Muntelui guesthouse

| How did you find out about our guesthouse? | No. | %     |
|--|-----|-------|
| Social networks                            | 16  | 26.67 |

|                          |    |       |
|--------------------------|----|-------|
| recommendation           | 14 | 23.33 |
| Online booking platforms | 26 | 43.33 |
| Other sources: _____     | 4  | 6.67  |
| Total                    | 60 | 100   |

Source: Own processing after questionnaires

The results confirm the importance of an active online presence, with a focus on optimizing the profile on booking platforms (Booking, etc.) and effective visual communication on social media. At the same time, the significant proportion of recommendations indicates an overall positive experience, which can be transformed into a loyalty and review-based marketing strategy.

Table 6

Evaluation of the services offered by the guesthouse

| Service                              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | total |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| Accommodation (cleanliness, comfort) | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 61    |
| Food and drinks                      | 0 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 60    |
| Staff (kindness, promptness)         | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 60    |
| Recreational activities offered      | 3 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 60    |
| Value for money                      | 3 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 6 | 60    |

Source: Own processing after questionnaires

The analysis of the responses regarding the quality of services offered by the Roua Muntelui guesthouse highlights a generally satisfactory to good level, with some areas requiring specific improvements.

The accommodation (cleanliness and comfort) was rated positively by most respondents (over 78% gave it a score of 3 or 4), but only 11% gave it the maximum score. The estimated average is 3.5, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction, with possible deficiencies in hygiene or facilities.

Food services recorded an average score of 3.8, with a significant percentage of good and very good ratings (66%). However, qualitative feedback suggests a desire for authentic traditional food and local products, which may represent a strategic direction for development.

The staff was one of the most highly rated aspects, with an average of ~4.1. Over two-thirds of tourists gave it a 4, and the total lack of very poor ratings (1) is an indicator of the professionalism and friendliness of the staff.

Recreational activities received the lowest scores: the average is only 3.2, with no 5-star

ratings and 25% of respondents giving scores of 1 or 2. This indicates a major gap in the guesthouse's offering, highlighting the need for diversification and development of leisure components for the cold season.

The quality/price ratio is perceived as balanced, with an average of close to 3.8. This reflects the fact that most tourists consider the services offered to be broadly proportional to the price paid.

Regarding the needs and preferences regarding the diversification of services, the following emerged:

Table 6

| Services offered by tourists  |    |
|---|----|
| Outdoor activities (guided hikes, horseback riding, cycling, etc.)  | 12 |
| Traditional workshops (cooking, crafts, etc.)   | 20 |
| Spa and wellness (sauna, massage, etc.)   | 5  |
| Thematic events (folklore evenings, tastings, etc.)   | 10 |
| Children's services (playground, entertainers)  | 6  |
| Others: Interactive cooking sessions with traditional recipes (including for children), Reading corner / library with books about the mountain, traditions, personal development, Painting, weaving, handicraft courses (for all ages), "Traditions Day" - with folk costumes, local stories and customs, "Technology-free Day" - outdoor and social activities, without phones/tablets | 7  |
| Total   | 60 |

Source: Own processing after questionnaires

Most respondents (46 out of 60, i.e. 76.67%) stated that they felt the lack of services during their stay, which clearly signals the opportunity to expand and adapt the tourist offer within the guesthouse.

Most requested activities:

Traditional workshops (33.33%) rank first in tourists' preferences - they want authentic experiences related to local culture, such as cooking according to recipes specific to the area, participating in traditional crafts or creative activities.

Outdoor activities (20%) – guided hiking, cycling, horseback riding – are frequently mentioned, suggesting that the mountain area offers valuable potential for active tourism, which is not yet sufficiently exploited.

Thematic events (folklore evenings, tastings) are desired by 16.67% of respondents - activities that can contribute to extending the average length of stay and building tourist loyalty.

Other specific requests include spa & wellness, children's facilities and educational-recreational activities (reading corner, "technology-free day", creative workshops), which indicates a diversified demand from various categories of tourists (families, couples, seniors, etc.).

The data shows a clear orientation of tourists towards experiential tourism, based on interaction with local traditions, nature activities and quality relaxation. The lack of these services limits the attractiveness of the guesthouse outside the peak season and may lead to the loss of important segments of the public (families, cultural tourists, weekend tourists).

The question regarding activities that would stimulate tourists' return or extend their stay highlighted clear preferences for experiential, active and interactive tourism, with an emphasis on local specificity and easy access to nature.

Table 7

| What types of activities would convince you to come back or stay longer? | No. | Total | % of total |
|--|-----|-------|------------|
| Traditional workshops (cooking, crafts, etc.)                            | 52  | 60    | 86.67      |
| Thematic events (folklore evenings, tastings, etc.)                      | 46  | 60    | 76.67      |
| Services for children even when they can't use the pool                  | 11  | 60    | 18.33      |
| Day without technology   | 26  | 60    | 43.33      |
| Organized excursions   | 23  | 60    | 38.33      |
| Possibility of bicycle rental  | 45  | 60    | 75.00      |
| Possibility to rent ATVs   | 45  | 60    | 75.00      |

Source: Own processing after questionnaires

The most frequently mentioned activities:

Traditional workshops rank first, being appreciated by 86.67% of tourists. They offer opportunities for learning, active participation and authentic connection with the cultural specificity of the area. They can include cooking according to local recipes, manual work (painting, weaving), as well as elements of handicrafts or folklore.

Thematic events (76.67%) – folklore evenings, traditional product tastings, culinary demonstrations – are perceived as attractive ways to spend time in an authentic and relaxing setting.

Rental services (bicycles and ATVs, each with 75% of preferences) indicate a clear demand for recreational mobility and exploratory tourism, on their own or organized.

Other valuable proposals include innovative activities such as the "Technology-Free Day", chosen by 43.33% of tourists, which involves digital disconnection and a return to simple, social, and nature-based activities – an increasingly sought-after approach in wellness and reconnection tourism.

Organized excursions in the surrounding area (38.33%) could complement the guesthouse's offer, especially if they are thematic (history, nature, ethnography).

Children's services, mentioned by 18.33%, suggest the need for alternative facilities when the pool is not accessible, to attract families also in the off-season.

The responses obtained support the need to develop a portfolio of diverse and personalized activities, which would transform the guesthouse into a space of experience, not just accommodation. Combining traditional, recreational, and active relaxation elements is the key to increasing tourist loyalty and extending the tourist season.

At the end of the questionnaire, open-ended questions provided valuable information on the aspects most appreciated and those that require improvement. Below are summarized the recurring themes identified in the tourists' responses:

At the guesthouse level, the following were appreciated: the natural location, the tranquillity of the area and the mountain landscapes, the friendliness of the staff, the general comfort of the accommodation.

What needs improvement (frequent themes):

Food by requesting authentic traditional dishes and local products (dairy products, vegetables, jams)

The cleanliness of the rooms and bathrooms requires greater rigor upon arrival of tourists. At the same time, a modernization of the bathrooms is necessary, and a possibility of more frequent towel changes is emphasized.

Regarding the information that tourists need to know, the importance of announcing events or parties organized in the guesthouse in advance is emphasized.

Repeated requests for bike/ATV rentals, visits to local farms, participatory cooking, and children's activities outside of pool season

The suggestions of tourists confirm the results obtained from the closed questions, highlighting the desire for authenticity, impeccable cleanliness, local involvement, and experiential activities. These aspects constitute

clear directions for the development of the guesthouse.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Roua Muntelui Guesthouse has considerable development potential through the diversification of services, especially in the direction of experiential, active and cultural tourism. Implementing strategies oriented towards the real needs of tourists can contribute not only to increasing the degree of satisfaction and loyalty of customers, but also to improving the economic and financial performance of the unit, consolidating its position on the tourism market in Alba County, in the analysed area.

Based on the results obtained, the following directions of action can be outlined: diversification of tourist activities through: introducing recurring thematic workshops and events, developing infrastructure for active leisure (bicycles, ATVs, guided hikes), organizing excursions to nearby areas of interest.

Capitalizing on local heritage by integrating traditional products and crafts into the tourist experience offered.

Improving existing services: adapting the menu to tourists' preferences (local food, traditional breakfast), increasing the standard of cleanliness, modernizing room and bathroom facilities.

Attracting tourists in the off-season through thematic packages, indoor activities, and personalized offers for families, couples, and groups.

This paper highlighted the importance of continuously adapting tourism services to tourists' needs and expectations, in the context of a constantly changing market. The case study conducted at the Roua Muntelui guesthouse demonstrates that diversifying the offer is not only a strategic option, but an essential condition for ensuring competitiveness and long-term economic sustainability.

By correlating financial data with the analysis of customer perceptions, the paper contributes to a deeper understanding of how innovation in rural tourism can support regional development, tourist loyalty, and expansion of activity outside the peak season.

We believe that the results presented can serve as a starting point for the development of local tourism development strategies, based on community involvement, capitalizing on local resources and creating authentic experiences, with a positive impact for both economic operators and tourists.



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