

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE BANAT AREA

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ABSTRACT

In the context of huge problems engendered by the European agricultural policy and related to rural area development, the rural area on the whole needs new perspectives to ensure a positive evolution of the human communities. Romania, a member of the European Union for over 5 years now, needs to valorise all its natural, human, and cultural resources of the rural area to be able to face a strong competition and to maintain biodiversity.

Keywords: rural area, preserving biodiversity, rural development strategy

INTRODUCTION

Operating tourism activities in rural boarding houses and on agri-tourism farms in better conditions needs the observance of two major conditions: **management and marketing** [*Programul Strategic de Dezvoltare a turismului la nivelul zonei formate din județele Timiș, Caraș-Severin și Mehedinți.* (2005). Uniunea Europeană – Prefectura Județului Timiș; *Stăncioiu Aurelia Felicia, Căescu S., Constantinescu Mihaela, Filip Alina, Ionescu F. T.* (2005). *Planificarea de marketing în turism – concept și aplicații.* Ed. Economică. București; *Țuclea Claudia Elena.* (2004). *Managementul întreprinderilor mici și mijlocii din turism și servicii.* Ed. ASE. București; *Benea M., Petroman I.* (2010). *Bazele turismului.* Ed. Eurostampa. Timișoara; *Petroman, I.* (2010). *Managementul turismului cultural în județul Timiș.* Ed. Eurostampa. Timișoara; *Petroman I., Petroman P.* (2006). *Turismul cultural.* Ed. Eurostampa. Timișoara].

Rural development strategy in Romania has benefited from **the Leader Initiative** designed to encourage the appearance and testing of new approaches **concerning integrated, sustainable development**, and the completion and recovery of the rural development policy in the European Community. The Leader Initiative has had three programme steps (from 1991 to 2006): Leader I, Leader II, and Leader +, reaching a level of maturity that allowed competent authorities and Local Action Groups in the Member-States to implement the Leader approach widely in the rural development programme.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

To conduct the present research, we documented specialty materials concerning the rural development opportunities in the Banat area, as well as certain European programmes such as LEADER concerning territorial approaches at micro-regional level that concern rural areas diversity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Leader approach is no longer a European Community initiative. It is the State that needs to define its strategic role in rural development policies guided by the strategic guiding outlines in the DECIZIA CONSILIULUI din 20 februarie 2006 privind orientările strategice ale Comunității pentru dezvoltare rurală (perioada de programare 2007-2013) (2006/144/CE) [DECIZIA CONSILIULUI din 20 februarie 2006 privind orientările strategice ale Comunității pentru dezvoltare rurală (perioada de programare 2007-2013) (2006/144/CE)]. The LEADER Initiative has been implemented in two large stages:

- **First stage: 2007-2009.** During this period, they selected the first pilot **Local Action Groups (LAG)** that supported the training process in order to select the 2nd LAGs before 2010. They thus set the bases for institutional construction and for skill developing in:
 - developing local development integrated strategies;
 - financing research/studies on rural areas and preparing support applications;
 - making up representative local development partnerships.

GALs play an important role in the reunion of all public, private, and civil society organisations that act within a certain territory and that create, gradually, common working methods and practices for common goals.

- **Second stage: 2010-2013.** It aims at implementing integrated development strategies through:
 - LAGs;
 - skill acquirement and territory animation;
 - implementing strategies developed during the first stage;
 - cooperation projects.

The support supplied by the Leader Axe also supplies the opportunity of combining the objectives below in the context of the development of local development strategies based on local needs and of strong points:

- life quality/diversification;
- competitiveness;
- environment.

Integrated approaches involving farmers, foresters, and other actors of the rural area can protect and improve local and cultural heritage and protected areas, and they can ensure increased awareness on the environment, investment enhancement, and service promotion in sustainable tourism and in fuel renewing resources.

The authorities responsible for the implementing of the LEADER Axis in Romania are:

- the Ministry of Agriculture, Forests, and Rural Development – a Management Authority for PNDR;
- the Offices for Agriculture and Rural Development as representatives of the Management authority at county level;
- the Offices for Payments in Agriculture and Rural Development as authorities of technical and financial implementing tools;
- the Local Action Groups as responsible for the development of local development strategies and for the project selection.

We need to say, as a conclusion, that the **Leader Programme is an instrument allowing the development of a territorial approach at micro-regional level aiming at preserving rural area diversity.** The real advantage of the Leader approach is its high ability of covering the complexity of the territorial system (*Figure 1*).

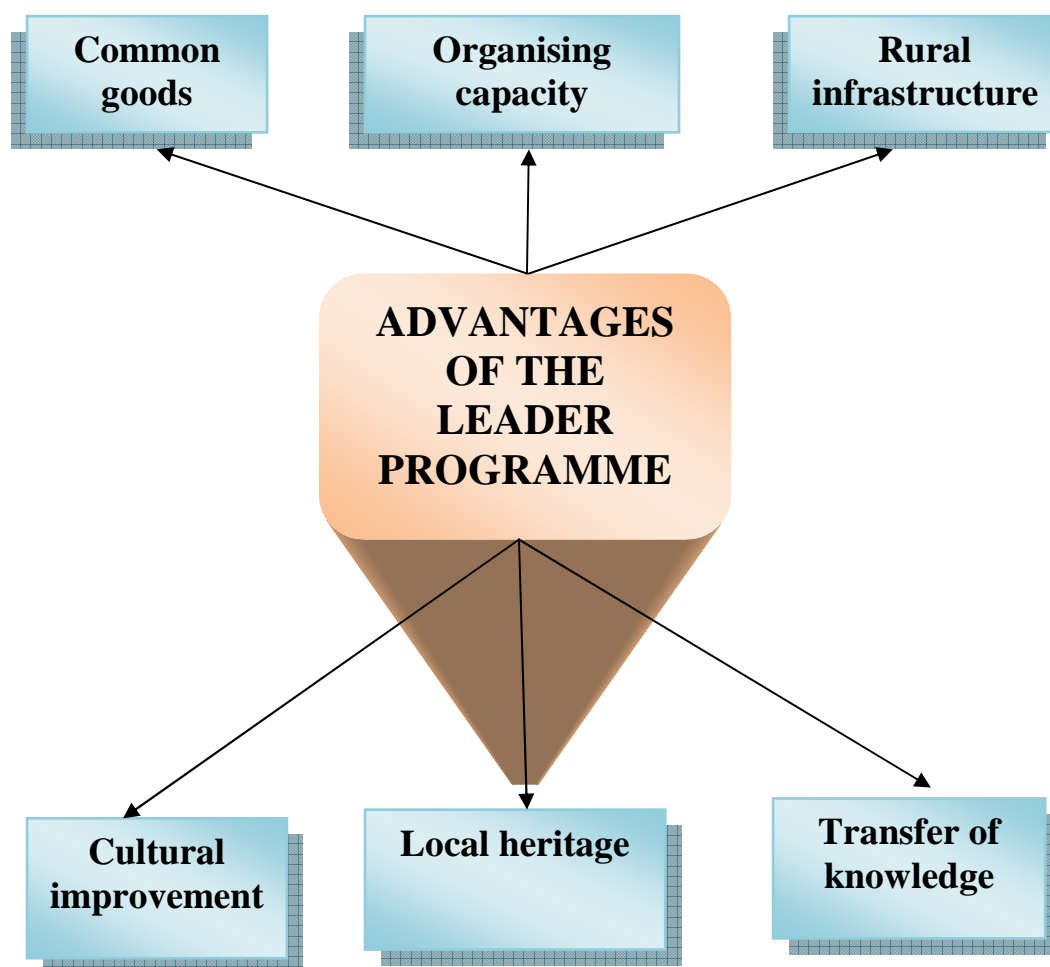


Figure 1. Advantages of the LEADER Programme

In order to meet the needs of **trained personnel and competent labour force** for hospitality and tourism, we need an institutional structure that supplies gradual institutionalised professional training programmes for students from the area and active involvement in hospitality and tourism in the area. For the Banat area, they suggested, in the **Master Plan for the Development of the National Tourism 2007-2026**, two centres: Timișoara and Băile Herculane. The new training institutions in the field of hospitality could be established by turning the existing tourism complexes or by activating inactive ones. **To train the necessary human resources in the field of hospitality and tourism to meet modern European and international standards and to increase competitiveness we need training courses for medium management focused on the following:**

- developing tourism information skills;
- training tourism guides.

High-school and academic institutions raining in the field of tourism in the Banat area are as follows:

- Universitatea Creștină Dimitrie Cantemir in Timișoara, specialising in:
 - Tourism and Trade Management;
- Universitatea Eftimie Murgu in Reșița, specialising in:
 - Marketing;
 - Tourism-Services;

- **Universitatea de Științe Agricole și Medicină Veterinară a Banatului in Timișoara, specialising in:**
 - Engineering and Management in Food Services and Agri-tourism;
 - Engineering and Management in Tourism;
- Universitatea de Vest in Timișoara, specialising in:
 - Tourism Geography;
 - Management;
 - Marketing;
 - Tourism-Services;
- Universitatea Europeană Iosif Drăgan in Lugoj, specialising in:
 - Tourism;
- Universitatea Mihai Eminescu in Timișoara, specialising in:
 - Tourism, Trade, and Hospitality Management;
- Economic High-schools in Reșița and Timișoara.

CONCLUSIONS

In this respect, we need to draw the conclusion that, in order to train the human resource necessary in the tourism and hospitality industry that meets modern European and international standards, and to increase competitiveness we need to develop training courses for medium level that:

- develop tourism information skills;
- train tourism guides.

LITERATURE

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