

## THE TERRITORIAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTED CROSS BORDER COOPERATION PROJECTS IN BIHOR COUNTY. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE 2007-2013 AND 2014-2020 PROGRAMMING PERIODS AND EXPLOITATION OF THE EU FUNDS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TOURISM

**Krisztina CZUCZOR**<sup>id</sup>

University of Debrecen, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development  
Planning, Faculty of Science and Technology, Debrecen, Hungary, e-mail: czkriszta93@mailbox.unideb.hu

**Gábor KOZMA**<sup>id</sup>

University of Debrecen, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development  
Planning, Faculty of Science and Technology, Debrecen, Hungary, e-mail: kozma.gabor@science.unideb.hu

**Zsolt RADICS**<sup>id\*</sup>

University of Debrecen, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development  
Planning, Faculty of Science and Technology, Debrecen, Hungary, e-mail: radics.zsolt@science.unideb.hu

---

**Citation:** Czuczor, K., Kozma, G., & Radics, Z. (2023). THE TERRITORIAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTED CROSS BORDER COOPERATION PROJECTS IN BIHOR COUNTY. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE 2007-2013 AND 2014-2020 PROGRAMMING PERIODS AND EXPLOITATION OF THE EU FUNDS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TOURISM. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 48(2spl), 798–809. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.482spl14-1080>

---

**Abstract:** Bihor County has remarkable and various tourism resources in the frontier area which could be exploited more efficiently considering the tourism development strategies on different hierarchical levels, opportunities for investments using non-refundable financial support and the multilateral trans-frontier relationships due to its territorial location and historical and ethnical background. This study gives an insight in the relationship and consistency of development strategies, in the importance and the territorial distribution of implemented projects within Interreg IV and V Hungarian-Romanian Cross-border Cooperation Programmes, that concern tourism development in Bihor. All projects regarding Bihor were categorized through content and comparative analysis based on public documentation of Interreg Programmes which contributed to establishing three main category of winner applications: tourism development projects, indirect tourism development projects and other type of projects. The county has an exceptional position due to its high share of the number of projects and the amount of gained aid within the examined programmes, although there exist multilateral territorial inequalities in the location of project partners, in the total amount of non-refundable financial support from European Regional Development Fund and in the gained aid per capita on the level of local governments of the county. Based on the territorial distribution, mostly the urban areas and their catchment rural settlements on the eastern, central and north-western part of the county benefitted from the Interreg VI and V in case of tourism development.

**Key words:** Bihor County, tourism development strategy, Interreg, cross-border cooperation, territorial distribution

\* \* \* \* \*

### INTRODUCTION

The Romanian current literature lacks a comparative analysis of how regional authorities and governments of counties consistently formulate development strategies regarding tourism priorities, also a comprehensive evaluation of cross-border cooperation programmes applied for Bihor County is required, however several studies examine tourism development projects only from the perspective of cooperation in Bihor – Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion. The territorial profile of tourism sector in Bihor has also changed in parallel with its general profile of territorial relationships within the county and its surroundings in the last decades (Szilágyi and Elekes, 2020; Szilágyi and Miklósné Zakar, 2021;) which fact also highlights the importance of the evaluation of multidimensional trans-frontier cooperation that directly or indirectly affects the development of tourism. Thus, the first part of this study contains the literature review regarding the aspects of the importance of tourism planning. In the second part, this paper analyses the hierarchical compatibility and significance of tourism in the development strategies for the selected periods at national, regional and local level. The third part focuses on Interreg IV and V Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes between Hungary and Romania within the framework of development strategies applied for Bihor County, concerning the territorial tourism development, illustrating the territorial distribution of the project types and the gained aid from the European Regional Development Fund.

The economic profile of a region highly determines the sector of tourism due to its high dependence on other economic activities although it is one of the most dynamically growing industry worldwide (Abubakirova et al., 2016; Draghici et al., 2015; Badulescu et al., 2018). The tourism development strategies and investments also affect several sectors such as basic public services, the building industry, education, transportation etc. generating remarkable spillovers (Banerjee et al., 2016;

---

\* Corresponding author

Jaliu, 2012) and bringing considerable advantages from the perspective of economic progression and increase of living standards (Draghici et al., 2015, Herman et al., 2017). Developed countries found tourism as a viable and sustainable choice for the development of their local economies, modernizing and/or diversifying the existing structures (Herman et al., 2017, Amir et al., 2015) even for regeneration and revitalization of rural (Liu et al., 2020; Badulescu and Badulescu, 2017) or peripheral border areas (Bădulescu et al., 2014). Sustainable tourism perspective highlights the enhancement of favorable impact of tourism development through reducing the negative consequences on economic, social and environmental areas (Tisca et al., 2016; Amir et al., 2015), protecting heritages in same quality for future generations, and at the same time it enables the competitiveness of the sector (Nicula et al., 2013). This could only be realized by consistent, coherent and integrated strategic development planning on macro, mezzo and micro territorial levels. However, the elaborations of tourism policy and strategy in national, regional and local level in Romania were highly influenced by the availability of cohesion and structural funds of the EU influencing effectiveness of implementation (Jaliu, 2012).

The national government plays a key role at the macro level in planning, managing and promoting tourism in a sustainable manner (in accordance with the principles of European Union regarding sustainable tourism development) and it defines the general regulatory framework in which the tourism service providers operate (Ruhanen, 2013; Badulescu et al., 2016). The Romanian National Territorial Development and Urban Planning (NTDUP in the following) is presented in the 350/2001 supplemented and republished law. The Government Ordinance no. 142/2008 contains the Chapter VIII of NTDUP - Areas with tourism resources, approved and supplemented by law 190/2009. These two laws include the national territorial tourism development plan of the country in compliance with the initiatives of the European Union. The assigned annex of the Chapter VIII provides the categorization of the counties territorial administrative units defining two kinds of areas: areas with high tourism potential and the others with a low amount of tourism resources. Regarding this annex, the development plan states that the national, regional and local development programs should promote the implementation of the specifically tourism-, technical- and environmental infrastructure modernizations, and tourism must be the primary promoted economic sector within the localities with high tourism potential.

The mezzo level is the regional, the Romanian Regional Development Agency represents an essential function in shaping the regional development strategy and implementing that by the regional operational programmes which priorities must follow the principles of regional strategy. The strategic planning and tourism development initiatives should be based on local environment in which they will be implemented (Palka et al., 2020; Bercu, 2015; Ruhanen, 2013; Badulescu et al., 2016), therefore the local county governments, representing the micro level in this case (we could also consider local administrative unit level as micro level, but this paper only discusses strategies developed by the Bihor county government), play a major role in analyzing of the particular resources, strengths and deficiencies, considering the attributes of local administrative units and stakeholders. Due to the existent multidimensional variety of natural and anthropical tourist resources in Bihor county (Dodescu and Botezat, 2018; Dodescu and Borma, 2017; Hent, 2013; Brata, 2015; Vofkori, 2006; Neacsu et al., 2016; Neacsu et al., 2011; Bădulescu and Bădulescu, 2006), even in the geographically isolated areas (Popviciu, 2010), there exists, on the one hand, a high potential for the development of tourism activities (Bădulescu and Bădulescu, 2006). On the other hand, a significant number of investments are required for noticeable outcomes, primarily in the general infrastructure, in the specific tourism infrastructure and suprastructure (Bădulescu and Bădulescu, 2006; Bántó, 2012; Brata, 2015; Dodescu and Botezat, 2018). Although there is a noticeable increase in the number of accommodation providers and other kind of tourist service providers since the turn of the millennium (Data of INSSE, 2020; Herman et al., 2017), there can be observed an inequality in their territorial division creating lack of accommodation supply mostly in the northern rural areas and partially in Apuseni Mountains (Dodescu and Borma, 2017).

A significant evolution could only be reached by major investments (Bántó, 2012; Bădulescu and Bădulescu, 2006; Szilágyi, 2019) for which the different type of operational programmes could provide the major partial financial background supporting the improvement of the weak points of tourism. Although, there were earlier intentions for cross-border tourism development, through the Phare Cross-Border Cooperation and Interreg Programmes (Soproni, 2007), taking advantages of variety of tourism resources targeting, the nearest and most easily accessible foreign target group for Bihor County. On the one hand, the cross-border cooperation in the field of tourism requires cooperative and collaborative tourism planning, it has become more valuable creating a trans-border social and cultural link between adjacent populations and also acting like a catalyst for multilateral development of communities (Dodescu and Borma, 2017). In the other hand, tourists are interested in visiting destinations not administrative regions, therefore trans-frontier tourism development could embody a unique potential for both sides of the border area (Badulescu and Badulescu, 2017; Badulescu et al., 2016).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The evaluation of the strategies has been realized by multidimensional qualitative comparative analysis focusing on the changes in structure of strategic priorities, context and order on macro and micro hierarchical level. In order to quantify the winner and implemented projects of the Hungary-Romania Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 (Interreg IV. HU-RO) and Romania-Hungary Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020 (Interreg V. RO-HU) a specific database was created for Bihor County through inventory method, based on the public documentations of the official websites of programmes (<http://www.huro-cbc.eu/> and <https://interreg-rohu.eu>) until the end of December, 2020.

Based on content and comparative analysis, all the projects were classified according to their main objectives and contents to direct tourism development projects, indirect tourism development projects and other projects categories. The direct tourism development projects counted those types, which objective served the improvement of the tourism infrastructure, sustainment of culture and preservation of resources, counting renovation of monuments and valuable buildings,

the conservation of natural areas and landscapes, the organization of cultural events, foundation of tourism business incubator, tourism marketing activities, trainings, consolidating partnerships etc. The aims of the indirect tourism development project type concerned the general infrastructural developments such as road network, public utility infrastructure and communication network constructions, maintenance and preliminary studies, environmental protection, the improvement of emergency health care solutions in mountains of Bihor County and disaster management. These investments not only contributed to the quality of life improvement of the local population, but they also create the basic conditions for tourism development activities and emerge environmental sustainability. The other projects type encompasses all the investments that concerned other development areas than the previously selected, abovementioned projects. The territorial distribution of project types and the amount of ERDF aid on LAU2 level have been analyzed by cartographical method based on the own designed database of direct and indirect tourism development projects. For establishing border values of data, the method of natural break could not be used because it can not handle the outliers, as Oradea appeared in each case of programmes and project types. In this regard, the border values have been settled proportionately by the number and amount of data. Moreover, for comparability of local governments in their success in accessing non-refundable ERDF aids, considering the differences between the number of inhabitants, the method of territorial distribution of aid in proportion of the population have been used, based on the official census data from 2011. It enabled the balancing of the size of rural and urban areas.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The regional and local development strategies implied for Bihor County from the perspective of tourism development initiatives**

There already closed two programming periods since Romania joined the European Union. The next considered hierarchical levels in this article are the regional and local (county) levels, where each administrative-development region and county has its own multilateral strategy. The North-West Regional Development Strategy between 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 show some difference but also main similarities regarding the tourism development perspectives. The 2007-2013 strategy defines an overall vision about a multidimensional economic development for the reduction of territorial economic, social inequalities and also in case of deficiencies in standards of living. There are five specific objectives where the tourism is not highlighted, but it is subordinated to the first objective about the development of the regional attractiveness, economic competitiveness and innovation activities. The 2014-2020 strategy overall vision and the first two specific objectives are the same with the 2007-2013 period's strategy but in 2014-2020 period the development of businesses and the research-development-innovation activities are in domination against the tourism development which is similar in the content with the previous and it is subordinated to the first specific objective fourth investment priority. The similarities between the initiatives regarding the tourism development refer to the fact that following the overall status evaluation of the implemented actions in 2007-2013 period was not sufficient in the case of achieving the objectives therefore it requires more effort focusing on the basic conditions which stands in the front of tourism competitiveness.

The development strategies of Bihor County for the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods show a significant difference in the structure of the documents which results difficulty of comparison of their content between them. The actual strategy's structure is basically corresponding with the regional document, but it is more local specific. The 2007-2013 strategy detailed more the tourism industry in a large chapter discussing the general objectives from the point of view of the tourism, taking in order the other highlighted priority sectors for the improvement of the general living standards and decrease of economic, social and environmental inequities. The main objectives are similar in these two documents, but the 2007-2013 strategy contains a reduced number of recommended intervention activities. The main difference of the objectives embodies that in the 2014-2020 document first appear the initiative of sustainable development of tourism in Apuseni Mountains initiative. It has created a great progress for the perspective of improvement of the mountain tourism, because it was not emphasized as a particular potential besides the natural-, cultural- and balneoclimateric tourism of Bihor County. The county is in the cross-border area with the Hungarian Hajdú-Bihar and Békés Counties, the tourism of neighbor country is partially based on balneoclimateric tourism which is highly developed in the cross-border area. It is recommended for Bihor to also emphasize the potential of the mountain tourism to create complementarity in the field of tourism product (Dodescu and Botezat, 2018) since Hungary is the fourth country in number of arrivals of foreign visitors in Romania and the neighboring counties do not have this kind of natural resource for tourism. The contribution of adequate development projects and marketing activities in the abovementioned field could emerge the attractiveness of Bihor and reduce its transit feature increasing the average overnight stay of tourists and creating complementarity in the supply of tourist attractions in the cross-border area. In the hierarchical view of strategies, in the period of 2007-2013, the regional strategy corresponds the NTDUP, because it placed the tourism development objectives below the economic improvement initiatives. The strategy of the county shows a greater structural difference in front of the regional strategy, but tourism is highlighted as the first priority sector and it contains the tourism development measures for other priority sectors which is in accordance with the general vision. The current regional plan and strategy of the county have a unified and transparent structure and hierarchically are compatible.

### **The Interreg financing programs in the Romanian and Hungarian border, regarding for Bihor County in the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods**

The cross-border cooperation between Romania and Hungary already existed before Romania joined the EU, building up trans-frontier relationships and creating parallel development possibilities among local governments through the pre-accession fund of Phare Cross-Border Cooperation Programme (Phare CBC in the following) alongside the Romanian-Hungarian border, even before 1998. The development of trans-frontier partnerships represents a basic role of EU

integration process based on common values and development areas (Soproni, 2007; Dodescu-Dodescu and Borma, 2014; Dodescu and Borma, 2017). The Phare CBC was intended for financial and technical support of organizations and institutions (Soproni, 2007) for Central and Eastern-European countries in the pre-accession phase with a total contribution of 135 million euro, enabling later accession to Interreg Programmes for Romania and Hungary (Zakota and Szilágyi, 2014). Romania obtained 28 million euros in the period of 1996-2003 (Breco, 2020). The Phare CBC 2004-2006 was implemented concomitantly with Interreg IIIA in Hungary (Breco, 2020). Although, for Romania, the Interreg IV 2007-2013 was the continuation of Phare CBC after joining the European Union (Zakota and Szilágyi, 2014).

The Interreg IV and V have been implemented since Romania joined the EU. Within the Operational Programme the EU provided financial support for tendered and winner projects from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The supported rate of the project budget covered the 85% of the eligible costs and the range of applicants involved public bodies, public equivalent bodies, non-profit private bodies and European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (CBC HU-RO, 2020; CBC RO-HU, 2020) both programme have had priority axes so far containing main initiatives, the applications could be submitted in accordance to these priority objectives. Eight neighboring counties could participate by cross-border partnerships along the Hungarian-Romania border, these are the following: Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiș from the Romanian side and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád counties from the Hungarian side. These cross-border co-operation programmes followed the Lead partner principle which required responsibility over the implementation of projects and financial transactions. The support was covered by the joint EU, with 85%, and national co-funding, that summed up to 10-13% of the eligible costs, and the own contribution was between 2-5% for the Romanian partners (CBC HU-RO, 2020; CBC RO-HU, 2020).

### The evaluation of the Interreg IV financing programme in 2007-2013 programming period

Within the framework of Interreg cross border cooperation the Hungary-Romania Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 (HU-RO Programme in the following) fastened the already existed relations by the realization of projects with similar interests within the eight neighboring counties along two priority axis: 1. The improvement of cross-border transport facilities, communication and protection of the environment; 2. Cooperation in the areas of business, R&D and innovation, education, labour market, health care and risk management. The 2.1.3, Key area of intervention, contained the initiative of tourism development, although some projects that were tendered within other subsectors served as direct or indirect tourism development investments. The total allocation of the programme counted 264.056 million euro. The minimum available support exceeded 20 000 euro and the maximum amount counted almost 6 million euro per projects (CBC HU-RO, 2020). The rate of implemented project types is shown on the Figure 1 regarding the tourism development investments in Bihor County. There were 453 winner and implemented projects in the eight concerned counties of which 179 projects received funding in Bihor County in co-operation with the Hungarian and other Romanian parties, that covered 39.51% of the total number of development projects, with 44.62% of budgets of total projects representing 42.78% of the total ERDF aid amount for the HU-RO Programme (CBC HU-RO, 2020)

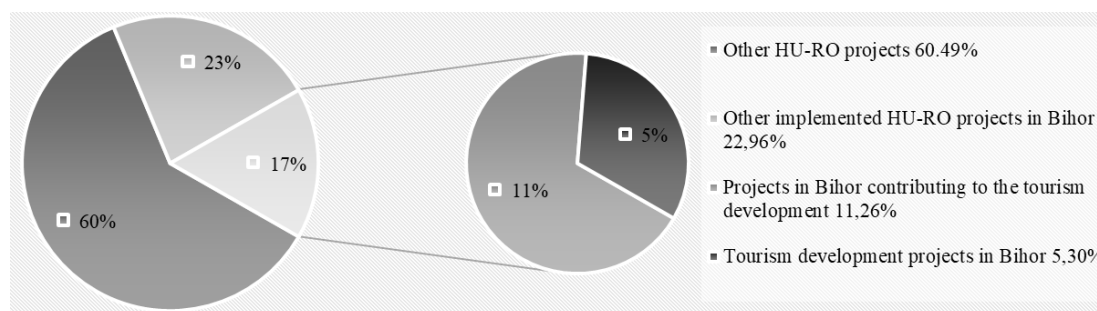


Figure 1. The distribution rate of number of HU-RO projects regarding the tourism development investments of Bihor County (Source: Own calculation based on own designed database, according to huro-cbc.hu 2020)

The number of winner applications summed up to 179 projects, which contained 24 direct and 51 indirect tourism development measures in the level of Bihor County, with a total budget of 117,817,818.4 euro of which 77.98% was financed by the EU. The share of ERDF aid of Bihor represented 22.73% of the total financial support of implemented projects within HU-RO and 53.14% of the cooperation projects in partnership, with a value of 48,824,375.7 euro. The direct tourism development projects were 5.30% of the total Programme and within Bihor it represented 13.41% of the projects with approximately 6.138-million-euro financial aid for the partners in the county, that covered almost 60% of the 10.231-million-euro total ERDF support. From the share of Bihor County, the ERDF aid part was 12.57% for tourism investments and 45.67% for indirect tourism development projects.

### The evaluation of the Interreg V financing programme in 2014-2020 programming period

The Romanian-Hungarian Cross-border Cooperation Programme between 2014-2020 (RO-HU Programme in the following), in contrast with HU-RO Programme, has had six priority axes, still focusing on common development interest for eight adjacent counties along the two sides of the border. The first axis contained the sustainable use of common values and resources with 25.66% share of ERDF aid, i.e. 48.5 million euro, it had two Specific Objectives: 1.1. Improved quality management of cross-border rivers and ground waters, corresponding with Investment Priority 6/b; 1.2. Sustainable use of

natural, historic and cultural heritage within eligible area, corresponding with Investment Priority 6/c and it belonged to the type of direct tourism development perspectives. The second axis focused on improvement of sustainable mobility and accessibility in cross-border areas containing two Specific Objectives with 18.51% share from ERDF aid, i.e. 34.99 million euro: 2.1. Improved cross-border accessibility through connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to TEN-T infrastructure, corresponding to Priority Investment no. 7/b; 2.2. Increase the proportion of passengers using sustainable – low carbon, low noise – forms of cross-border transport corresponding to Priority Investment no. 7/c. The third axis aimed the improvement of employment and cross-border labour mobility promotion containing one Specific Objective within Priority Investment no. 8/b gaining the 29.14% of ERDF fund, i.e. 55.07 million euro: 3.1. Increased employment within the eligible area. The fourth axis contained only one Specific Objective, it belonged to Investment Priority 9/a which earned 30.17% of ERDF fund, i.e. 57.03 million euro: 4.1. Improved preventive and curative health-care services across the eligible area. The fifth axis only Specific Objective corresponded with Investment Priority 5/b with 5.05% of ERDF aid, gaining 9.55 million euro: 5.1. Improved cross-border disasters and risk management. The sixth axis aimed the improvement of connection between institutes and citizens, containing one Specific Objective with two subsections for Investment Priority 11/b earning the 2.12% of ERDF fund, which was 4.01 million euro. The 6.1. Specific Objective was intended to intensify sustainable cross-border cooperation of institutions and communities within two lines: a. Cooperation for institutions; b. Cooperation for citizens (CBC RO-HU, 2020). The last axis b. subsection allowed the organization of different events in the field of sport, culture and leisure, contributing to development of local tourism and creation of long-run partnerships. The rate of contribution for projects was similar with HU-RO in the frame of ERDF and national co-funding.

The total budget of the programme was 232 million euro with national co-financing of which around 189 million euro represented the aid from ERDF which was approximately 81.47% of total. According to data update until 30<sup>th</sup> of December 2020, Bihor County appeared in 49 winner and contracted projects of the 104 projects within the RO-HU. The budget of 49 projects was 86,691,715.22 million euro of which Bihor gained 41,691,647.18 million euro ERDF aid, that was 61.78% of total ERDF aid for each partners along the border (CBC RO-HU, 2020).

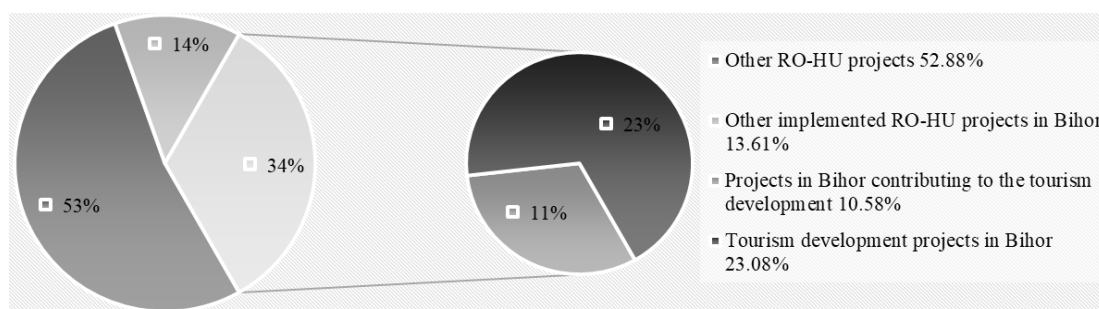


Figure 2. The distribution rate of number of RO-HU projects regarding the tourism development investments of Bihor County (Source: Own calculation based on own designed database, according to huro-cbc.hu 2020)

Figure 2 shows proportion of the three project types in partnership with Bihor within the RO-HU Programme. Based on the research, there were distinguished 24 direct tourism investment with 23.08% of number of projects, 11 indirect tourism projects with 10.58% and 14 investments in the other category with 13.61% of total 104 projects. Direct tourism investments had 33.91% of the total 49 project budget in partnership with Bihor, the share of Bihor from ERDF aid was 46.66%, i.e. 13.7 million euro. The indirect tourism development category contained 22.49% of the 49 projects with a total budget of 21.76 million euro, Bihor gained 18.2 million euro ERDF aid, therefore it had 76.85% share of financial support. There can be highlighted a relatively high level of overall ERDF share of partners and leaders in Bihor, and also in the case of indirect tourism investments, due to a large number of applicants per projects from the county, which impacted the statistical data.

## DISCUSSION

Regarding to the examined cross-border cooperation programmes, while 179 project concerned partners from Bihor County of total 453 projects in the 2007-2013 programming period, with 24 direct and 51 indirect tourism development activities, the 2014-2020 period showed 77.04% decrease with its total number of 104 winner projects of RO-HU Programme. Although, the share of Bihor increased, the number of investments decreased with 72.63%. In case of the latter Programme, the same number of direct tourism development projects were distinguished, whilst there appeared a diminution of 78.43% in the number of indirect tourism development project, from 51 to 11, in comparison with HU-RO.

RO-HU Programme, in contrast with the previous period, has had six priority axes of which the last was focused on fastening existed and creating new cross-border partnerships between the potential beneficiaries. During implementation of HU-RO Programme there existed problems in creating young trans-frontier connections of institutions, organizations and companies which reduced the effectiveness of the Programme (Badulescu et al., 2016) and it also caused territorial inequality of project applications in case of Bihor County. The most successful applicants based on previously consolidated partnerships, on the one hand they benefited from relationships through Bihor – Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion agreement, on the other hand the communities had benefit from already existed twin town relationships, both cases searching for similar development opportunities and problem solutions. The abovementioned have had an advantage in front of those territories in lack of relationships or even with differences in ethnical structure and language. These circumstances have also contributed to territorial inequalities in the distribution of projects. Figure 3 shows the scales and hierarchy of the 11

participant local administrative unites by number, displaying with bullets, and by the gained ERDF aid, illustrated with shading, for partners from Bihor County in case of projects for direct development of tourism within the HU-RO CBC. In contrast, Figure 4 displays the territorial distribution of the share of ERDF aid per capita of partners on LAU2 level within Bihor, that represents their comparison in proportion of the population to enables the evaluation of their success of accessing non-refundable aids within the cross-border cooperation regardless the differences in their size.

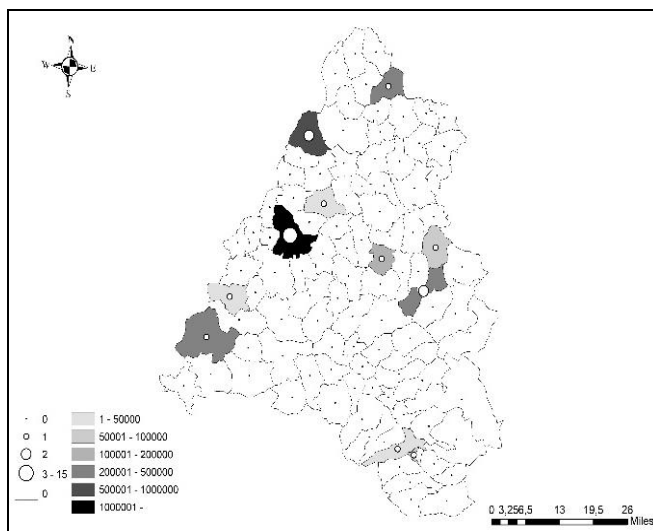


Figure 3. The distribution of number of tourism development projects and ERDF aids on LAU2 level for Bihor County within HU-RO CBC (Source: Own edit based on own calculation)

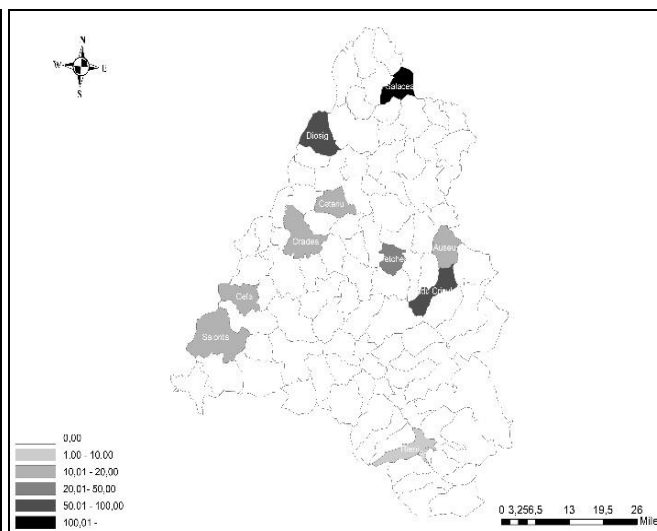


Figure 4. Territorial distribution of the share of partners in Bihor from ERDF aid per capita on LAU2 level regarding tourism development projects within HU-RO CBC

On the one hand, Oradea, as county seat, owned the major part regarding the number of projects, which represented 62.5% of total direct tourism development investments with a number of 15 projects and 4,127,157.15 euro total aid that constituted a share of 67.24%. On the other hand, considering the amount of ERDF aid per capita, the municipality was positioned in the fourth range, in proportion of its population Oradea summed up to 18.53 euro per capita. In this regard the county seat became the seventh of 11 participant territories. Although, we can not consider this ranking as the fact that Oradea had a moderate overall success in accessing non-refundable aids, because some other local governments did not benefit from other support, but the county seat could also account a significant amount of aid gained through other operational programmes during 2007-2013. Thus, Oradea had an outstanding position regarding the number and aid share, becoming an outlier, but considering the amount of aid per capita it had an average ranking due to the fact that mostly small-scale projects were implemented and also it had significantly higher number of inhabitants than the other local governments of the county.

Based on Figure 3, the second successful territory was Diosig with two projects, one for the promotion of heyduck's tradition and the another for the preservation and presentation of values of nature, it had an approximately 10.5% share of gained aid of this category, with 642,555.8 euro Diosig was the only local administrative unit on the second largest scale. On the third scale came Sălăcea, Vadu Crișului and Salonta. Sălăcea had the highest amount of ERDF support with one project for establishing inquiry house for the promotion of water history, it had a share of 7.37%, that represented 452,370 euro, afterwards it followed Vadu Crișului with two projects and 5.97% share, which accounted 366,262.33 euro for tourism business incubator and for coopeation in Crișul Valley. Salonta obtained one winner project that barely achieved the threshold limit of aid in the presented scale in front of the abovementioned two territories, it earned 217,574.5-euro non-refundable aid, for the improvement of value of cultural capital, which represented 3.54%. Țețchea was the only on the fourth scale with one project for cultural tourism development and an aid of 125,885 euro with 2.05% share. On the following category Ștei city and Aușeu appeared, both projects concerned cultural tourism development, the former local government with 53,329 euro and the latter with 51,382 euro, both below share of 1% of total aid for tourism development projects of Bihor. The latest scale counted territories that gained below 50,000 ERDF support. Above 40,000 were Cefa and Cetariu, the former had 44,786.5 euro for protection of natural values and the latter had 42,007.78 euro for promotion of natural values. On the last scale appeared Rieni with 14,702.87 euro funding for promotion of natural parks.

According to Figure 4, Sălăcea had the highest amount of aid per capita with 145.46 euro, becoming the only local government that earned above 100 euro in proportion of the inhabitants. The second scale contained two participant territories, Diosig with 90.97 euro per capita and Vadu Crișului with 90.61 euro per capita. Țețchea was represented on the third scale, having support of 38.79 euro per capita. Five local governments positioned at the fourth scale: Cetariu with 19.38 euro, Cefa with 18.95 euro, Oradea with 18.53 euro, Aușeu with 17.23 euro and Salonta with 11.22 euro. Ștei city and Rieni appeared on the fifth scale, the former accounted 7.18 euro and the latter 4.84 euro per capita.

Considering the investments in the indirect development of tourim within HU-RO Programme, Figure 5 presents the territorial distribution of the number of projects, that is marked with bullets, and allocated ERDF aid, illustrated by shading, and Figure 6 refers to the distribution of the amounts of non-refundable support per capita.

Evaluating the scale of local governments in case of the number and gained aid of projects, again Oradea became an outlier with 26 projects and a total 10,693,150.87 euro financial support. Thus, studying its position in case of distribution

of aid per capita, Oradea managed itself to the 10<sup>th</sup> place from 24 local governments positioning itself on the fifth scale, earning 48,01-euro financial support per capita. In this regard the county seat had a moderate success.

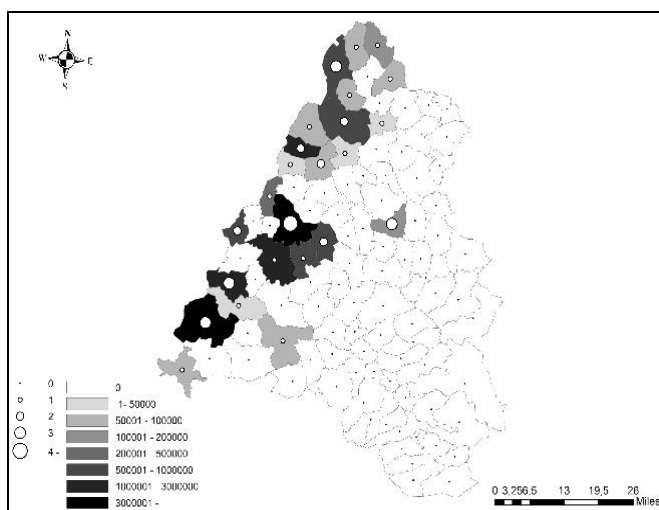


Figure 5. The distribution of number of indirect tourism development projects and ERDF aids on LAU2 level for Bihor County within HU-RO CBC (Source: Own edit based on own calculation)

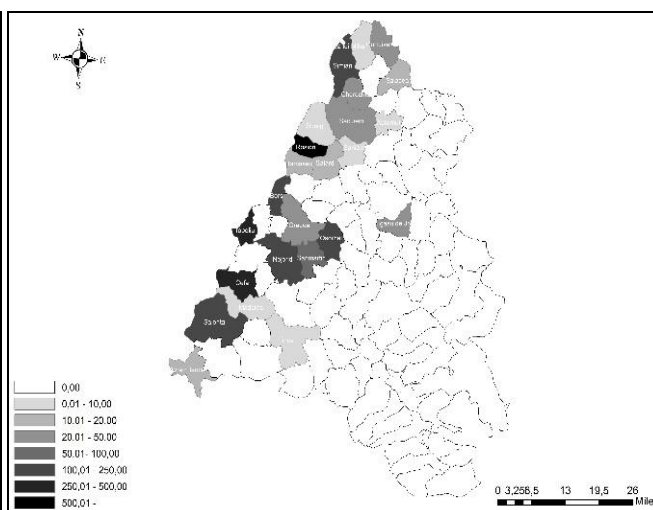


Figure 6. Territorial distribution of the share of partners in Bihor from ERDF aid per capita on LAU2 level regarding tourism development projects within HU-RO CBC

Although, Roşiori had two winner projects and it was the third with 2,349,506.82 euro total aid, this local government was undoubtedly winner in case of aid in proportion of the population, having 777,47 euro per capita, which major part was for road development and its 2.68% for study of recovering swampy areas. Prominent local governments were also: Cefa with tree projects of infrastructure and cooperation development got 1,164,509.06 euro total aid taking second place by gained 492.81 euro aid per capita; Toboliu commune with two infrastructure development projects, having 641,801.03 euro financial support and, due to its low number of inhabitants, became the third successful in accessing non-refundable aid per capita, which were 306.2 euro. On the third scale of aid per capita were Nojorid, Salonta, Şimian, Oşorhei and Borş communes. Nojorid earned 1,082,359.4 euro funding for a road development project, having 201.33 euro per capita, although it appeared on the second scale by total aid. Salonta city had a bicycle road development and two water management projects with a support of 3,025,328.5 euro that was 156.03 euro per capita and the city positioned itself on the first scale taking account the total gained financial aid. In this regard, Salonta had a better position than Oradea. Şimian gained 630,259.84 euro total aid for one project for infrastructure development and two other for environmental protection, being on the third scale by total support and considering its number of inhabitants it had 154.51 euro per capita. Oşorhei earned 846,787.99 euro, 124.41 euro per capita, for road construction and establishing information centers in protected areas. Borş had one project in this category for construction of cross-border cycle road earning 463,656.1 euro aid and 111.27 euro per capita.

Sânmartin follows the abovementioned local governments, which was on the third scale by total gained aid of 666,489.63 euro for one project for transport infrastructure development and it appeared on the fourth scale with 61.7 euro per capita. Săcuieni city has also been positioned on the third scale with 500,001.67 euro total financial support for two projects, but it appeared on the fifth scale in terms of aid per capita, having 39.44 euro. In the same category of gained aid per capita were also: Curtuişeni having 111,963.7 euro for one project, which was 28 euro per capita; Lugaşu de Jos with three projects with 101,603.95 euro in total and 27.84 euro per capita; and Cherechiu also managed in this scale due to its low number of inhabitants, getting 66,483.6 euro in total for one project, that was 26.71 euro in proportion to the population of the commune.

Sălăcea, Tămăşeşu, Avram Iancu and Sălard positioned themselves on the sixth scale considering the earned financial support per capita. Sălăcea had one realized project for establishing information centers in protected areas with 54,470.69 euro total aid which was 17.51 euro per capita. Although, Tămăşeşu had less than 50 thousand euro aid in total, namely 33,600.5 euro, and the commune ranking was seventh in this regard, it got 16.28 euro per capita for preparation of studies on road development. Avram Iancu earned 51,000 euro for one project on road construction studies, that was 14.72 euro in the proportion of the population. Sălard had two projects for realization of road construction studies with 63,355.43-euro aid, that was 14.09 euro per capita. The following local governments had one project, each for preparation of studies on road development, except Săniob, which had an application on cross-border connection building, and all of these local governments were on the seventh scale by aid per capita: Diosig with 65,080.55 euro in total and 9.21 euro per capita; Mădăras with 25,500 euro in total and 9.11 euro per capita; Abrămuş with 26,566.75 euro in total and 8.47 euro per capita; Săniob with 19,125 euro in total and 8.41 euro per capita; Valea lui Mihai city with 77,424.8 euro and 7 euro per capita; Tinca with 58,055 euro in total and 6.95 euro per capita. In case of RO-HU CBC, 16 local administrative unites participated through 24 tourism development projects, that means 45.45% improvement in number of participant local governments, and they had 13,716,097.8 euro aid in total, which was 123.46% higher than in the previous programming period. The territorial distribution of gained aid and number of projects are illustrated on Figure 7 and the distribution of gained aid per capita on LAU2 level is presented by Figure 8.

Oradea realized 12 projects and got 7,981,675.32 total aid being in the first scale based on Figure 7 which was 93.39% higher amount than in case of previous programming period. The the share of total aid of Oradea for tourism development

projects was 58.19% within Bihor that is 9.05% less than in case of HU-RO Programme for Bihor. Looking at the number of projects, the city owned 50% of total number of projects from Bihor, which, in proportion, is 12.5% less than between 2007-2013. Considering the financial support in proportion of the population, the rank of the county seat was on the fourth scale, it was the seventh of 16 local governments, being again on the middle scale, with 35.83 euro per capita, although it showed an increase with 93.36% than during the previous programming period. Within 2014-2020, Oradea became an outlier in case of the number and total gained aid, as in the previous period, with small and middle scale projects.

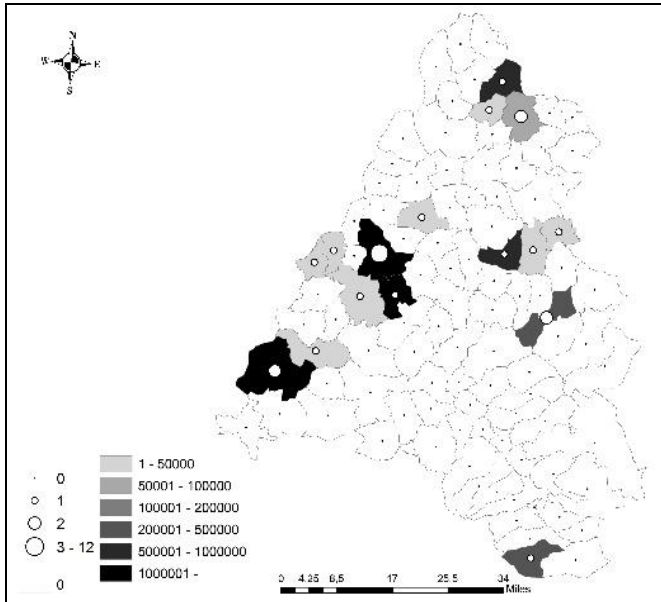


Figure 7. The distribution of number of tourism development projects and ERDF aids on LAU2 level for Bihor County within RO-HU CBC (Source: Own edit based on own calculation)

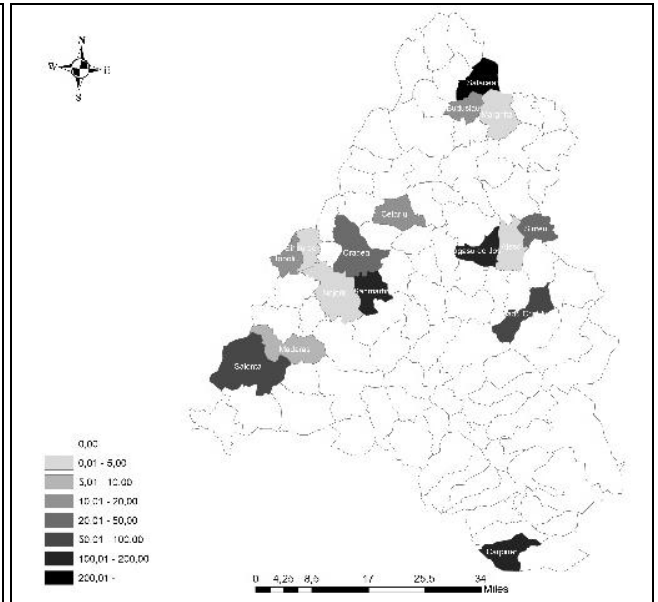


Figure 8. Territorial distribution of the share of partners in Bihor from ERDF aid per capita on LAU2 level regarding tourism development projects within RO-HU CBC

Sălăcea had one winner project for cultural development, the commune positioned itself on the second scale with 958,558.06 euro total aid and it kept its first position having 308.22 euro per capita, although this amount is more than twice higher than in case of HU-RO Programme. In this regard, Sălăcea has been one of the most successful local governments within the cross-border cooperation so far. Sânmartin and Salonta also appeared on the first rank with higher than one million euro financial support. The former had one high scale project for natural heritage conservation with 1,729,738.61 euro total aid, and it became the third by the distribution of aid in proportion of the population, having 160.13 euro per capita on the second scale. The latter had two projects, one small scale for cross-border cultural cooperation and one higher scale for environmental protection, gaining 1,528,980 euro non-refundable support. Salonta city appeared on the third scale with 78.85 euro aid per capita due to its higher number of inhabitants. Cărpinet had the second highest aid per capita with 191.25 euro, being on the second scale, though this commune has the second lowest population. Lugașu de Jos was on the second scale by total aid with one project, having 536,696.68 euro, and also on the second scale considering the aid per capita with 147.04 euro. Vadu Crișului had two projects as in the previous period, one for nature preservation and the other for cultural exchanges, although the total aid was 4.48% less in 2014-2020, it gained 349,851.16 euro. The commune positioned itself on the third rank by both its amount of financial support and aid per capita, which was 86.55 euro in proportion of the population. Marghita city was the only local government on the fifth scale in case of total aid. It had two small scale projects, both for cross-border community building, with a total aid of 76,500 euro, thus the city was the only one on the fifth scale. In proportion of the population, Marghita gained the fourth smallest amount, having 4.20 euro per capita on the seventh scale.

The remaining local administrative units earned less than 50 thousand euro for one project, positioning themselves on the sixth scale: Aleșd city gained 34,850 euro for cultural tourism development that was 3.09 euro per capita ranking itself on the seventh scale in this regard due to the higher number of population; Șinteu earned 31,025 euro in total for the preservation of multiculturalism which was 27.48 euro per capita, being on the fourth scale, because it has the lowest number of inhabitants; Buduslău gained 28,900 euro total aid for cultural and sport events which was 13.97 euro per capita positioning on the fifth scale; Cetariu gained 29,325 euro total financial support for preservation of traditions which was 30.19% less than in 2007-2013 and it had 13.53 euro per capita being on the fifth scale; Toboliu earned 25,925 euro in total for cross-border events that was 12.37 euro per capita thus, it appeared in the fifth scale; Mădăras had 26,970.5 euro aid for partnership building in field of tourism which was 9.64 euro per capita positioning on the sixth scale in this regard; Girișu de Criș gained 13,175 euro in total for the organization of cross-border events and it positioned itself on the seventh scale in consideration of financial support per capita, with 3.41 euro; Nojorid had the smallest amount of aid per capita, because the 13,175 euro was 2.45 euro in proportion of the population for realization of cross-border events.

In case of indirect tourism development projects, ten local governments were present as partners which was 58.33% less in number of participant LAU2 settlements than between 2007-2013 programming period and the total amount of non-refundable aid was 13,993,830.17 euro, i.e. 38.67% less than within HU-RO Programme. Figure 9 presents the territorial



distribution of number and total gained aid for projects for indirect tourism development on the level of local governments within Bihor and Figure 10 shows the distribution of aid per capita for these investments.

Oradea had eight winner projects within RO-HU Programme which showed 69.23% decrease in front of the previous programme, although the county seat had 8.46% increase in case of total gained aid, which was 11,598,064.12 euro. In this manner Oradea had participated to more high scale projects than in 2007-2013 period. The county seat was present in case of 72.73% of projects and gained the 82.88% of total aid within the studied category. This represents the importance of the municipality becoming again an outlier in this regard. Though, Oradea was the most highlighted local government based on the data used for Figure 9, it appeared on the third scale by aid per capita with 52.07 euro, being the third in line with 8.48% growth in front of HU-RO Programme. Mădăras earned the second highest amount of financial support, it appeared on the second scale with 549,936.4 euro in total which is more than twenty times higher than in case of HU-RO Programme. It was the only local government above one hundred euro aid per capita, it gained 196.48 euro in proportion of the population being on the first scale in this regard and Mădăras consequently was the most successful applicant of this category with one project for cross-border bicycle track development. Aleşd, Salonta and Diosig were on the third scale of ranking by the amount of total aid. Aleşd had two projects for improvement of health care services in emergency situations in mountain area of Bihor and one for disaster management with a total aid of 416,178.5 euro and the city earned 36.86 euro per capita, positioning itself on the fourth scale in this regard. Salonta city owned two winner projects for the same health care service improvement as in case of Aleşd and one for bicycle road development. The city gained 406,247.64 euro total, which was 20.92 euro per capita ranking on fifth scale, showing 86.57% decrease in front of HU-RO Programme. Diosig had one project for improvement of disaster management with 296,012.5 euro total aid which was 41.91 euro per capita, in this regard the commune appeared on the fourth scale on Figure 10.

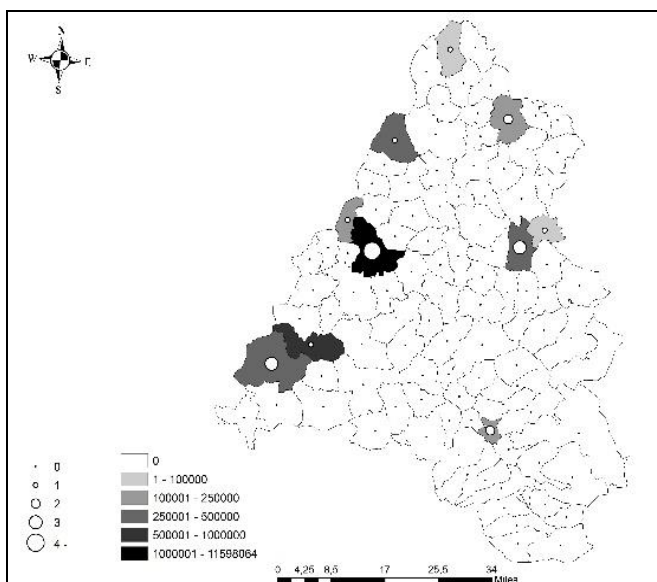


Figure 9. The distribution of number of indirect tourism development projects and ERDF aids on LAU2 level for Bihor County within RO-HU CBC (Source: Own edit based on own calculation)

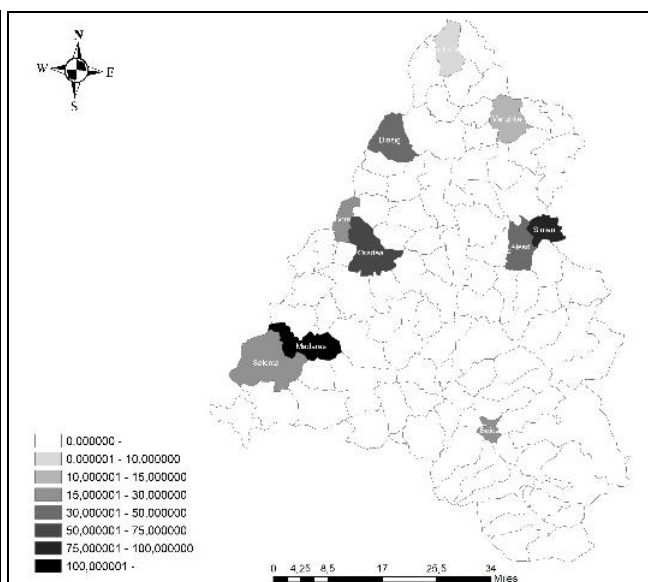


Figure 10. Territorial distribution of the share of partners in Bihor from ERDF aid per capita on LAU2 level regarding tourism development projects within RO-HU CBC

Three local government were on the fourth scale, Beiuş and Marghita with two projects and Borş with one. Beiuş had 235,188.64 euro ERDF financial support for development projects for the improvement of accessing emergency health care services in mountain areas, the aid was 20.5 euro in proportion of the population, being on the fifth scale. Marghita participated to the same projects as Beiuş with 230,981.04 non-refundable aid which was 12.67 euro per capita, in this matter the city appeared on the sixth scale according to Figure 10. Borş gained 103,827.5 euro aid for the improvement of drinking water quality, the commune was on the fifth scale with 24.92 euro per capita. Valea lui Mihai city and Şinteu commune were on the fifth scale having less than one hundred thousand euro aid in total regarding Figure 9. Valea lui Mihai gained 66,523.55 euro aid participating to the same project as Borş but with the lowest financial support, in addition the amount showed 14.08% decrease in front of HU-RO Programme, and the city had 6.02 euro per capita being on the seventh scale in this regard. Şinteu is an exceptional local government in this category due to the fact that it had the second lowest non-refundable ERDF aid, i.e. 90,870.24 euro, although the commune had the second highest financial support with 80.49 euro per capita. In proportion of the population, this commune had the lowest number of inhabitants between the participant local governments which caused that it appeared on the second scale by Figure 10.

## CONCLUSION

Bihor County owes several valuable resources for the development of tourism, which attractive elements could be exploited on a higher level and joined to the international and regional 'tourist circuit' in a complementary manner within the border area. The development of tourism has been highlighted for economic progression and enhancement of living standards of local communities in each level of strategies and also in accordance with development initiatives of cross-

border cooperation, based on common objectives of the eligible area. As far as the evolution and compatibility of strategies are concerned within the two studied period, the constant national objective was that tourism should be one of the most supported field of economic activities where the potentials are geographically concentrated. At regional level, the development of tourism was subordinated to economic priorities in both cases and the documents named similar initiatives which refers to the fact that earlier deficiencies and issues were not resolved and they require further investments. The strategy of Bihor County content more recommended intervention activities between 2014-2020 period, though the main objectives remain similar with the former one. The main difference and also progress was at the level of the county where the strategy for 2014-2020 programming period highlighted the sustainable development of tourism in Apuseni Mountains as one of the five strategic initiatives for the exploitation of tourist potential of Bihor, which formerly was neglected in front of spa and health, cultural and natural tourism resources. Although, as in accordance with previous researchers (ex.: Dodescu and Borma, 2017; Bădulescu et al., 2014 etc.), the county should benefit from complementarity building a competitive advantage for cross-border region focusing on common tourist package development and marketing activities through further Interreg programmes, thereby also increasing the overnight stays of tourists.

Within the framework of Interreg IV and V cross-border operational programmes, the former contained more small-scale projects which is also approved by the fact that for 453 project it had only 28.42% more ERDF aid than in case what Interreg V had for 104 projects. The aggregated share of Bihor from total aid was relatively high within both programmes, between 22-23%, the ERDF allocation for tourism development projects was 123.2% higher in case of RO-HU Programme for the same number of investments and for indirect tourism development Bihor gained 18.39% more financial support for 51 projects within HU-RO Programme, than RO-HU Programme for 11 projects. In conclusion, Bihor County performed well within both Interreg Programmes and it had more middle and higher-scale investment in the latter programming period that directly or indirectly concerned the development of tourism. In case of examining territorial division of local governments where the applicants were located, two types of inequalities can be observed. On the one hand we can talk about the inequalities of the location of participant local governments within the county, on the other hand there exists significant disproportions between the distribution of parties from urban and rural territories. Moreover, most rural local governments are also peripheral border territories or periphery of urban areas, although the former benefitted more from the examined Interreg cooperation programmes due to existed twin-city agreements, other preexisting connections, cultural and ethnical similarities etc. which also contributed to territorial inequalities of the studied categories of projects.

Firstly, there can be observed inequalities in case of tourism development projects within both examined programmes. In case of HU-RO Programme, five of eleven participated local governments are located near to Hungarian-Romanian border area, representing 45.45% of total number of local administrative units, with the 82.66% of total aid of parties in Bihor County. Besides, there appeared the most significant territorial inequality in case of the south-eastern area of the county, it had disadvantageous situation because only two local governments participated, Ștei city with the lowest gained aid among the cities, in proportion it had 0.87% of financial support for the tourism development projects of this category, and Rieni with the lowest gained aid from this group, earning the 0.24% share of financial support within Bihor. Furthermore, there exists the domination of urban areas, three of eleven applicants were from cities, that is 27.27% of participant local governments, with the 71.65% of gained aid for tourism development by the county. As far as Interreg V is concerned, same territorial inequalities can be observed in case of total distribution of participant territories. In addition, except of Cărpinet commune, all the other fifteen local government were from urban and the catchment areas of these urban centers. Consequently, the dominance of urban areas became significant again with the 70.15% share of ERDF aid of this category of projects. Oradea with its metropolitan area owed 71.11% of non-refundable support.

Moreover, considering the emphasis of local governments from mountainous areas, as the strategy of the county for 2014-2020 programming period highlighted its significance from the point of view of tourism development, five of eleven participant local governments can be enumerated in case of Interreg IV, that is 45.45% of the parties, with the 9.96% of aid share of tourism development project funding from Bihor, with 611,561.7 euro. Within Interreg V, the 25% of local governments are located in the mountain areas, four of sixteen, with less percent of share of non-refundable aid than in the previous period, that was only 5.56, but it was 25.33% higher amount of funding, i.e. 766,478.63 euro. Vadu Crișului was present in case of both programmes as a commune from mountainous area. Territorial inequalities are rather intense within indirect tourism development, however, there exist the most significant territorial inequalities in case of participant local governments within the Interreg IV. Except of Lugașu de Joș, the other 23 participant territories are located alongside the Hungarian-Romanian borderline, therefore the eastern and south-eastern part of the county was not represented within this category of projects in HU-RO Programme, consequently the mountainous areas were neglected in totality. Moreover, the dominance of urban areas was significant, they owned 62.65% share of gained aid of the category with 14,295,905.84 euro in total. In contrast with Interreg IV, the territorial distribution of this project type throughout the county were more balanced within RO-HU Programme, although the dominance of border areas is exceptional again with 60% of ten participant areas but 92.56% of total financial support, gaining 12,953,183 euro aid, therefore, within the distribution of studied project categories this is the most intense urban-rural inequality. In addition, two local governments were applicants from mountainous areas, Aleșd and Șinteu, having 507,048.78 euro aid which was only 3.62% of financial support of this category within Bihor.

Finally, ranking the most successful local administrative unites in accessing non-refundable financial support, in case of HU-RO tourism development projects Oradea, Diosig and Sălacea gained the highest amount of total aid, and Vadu Crișului was the fourth, although Sălacea, Diosig and Vadu Crișului had the highest aid per capita. The ranking for RO-HU Programme within the same category is Oradea, Sânmartin, Salonta, although Sălacea was the next, and for aid per capita the order is Sălacea, Cărpinet and Sânmartin. In conclusion, we can state that Sălacea was the most successful within this

category of projects, this commune was present in the front line in both programmes, it was the third and the fourth in case of total gained aid but the first in gained aid per capita for both periods. Diosig and Vadu Crişului were also in front line within HU-RO, and Sânmartin in case of RO-HU both in total gained aid and in aid per capita. Therefore, despite the dominance of urban areas and the outstanding position of Oradea, the rural territories became the greatest winners of Interreg IV and V between the applicants of tourism development projects considering their size.

For the type of indirect tourism development projects within HU-RO, the most successful were Oradea, Salonta, Roşiori, but Cefa and Nojorid was following them, and the ranking for the gained aid in proportion of the population was Roşiori, Cefa, Toboliu, after came Nojorid and Salonta. In case of the RO-HU Programme, Oradea, Mădăras and Aleşd gained the highest amounts of aid in total but Mădăras became the first, after came Şinteu and Oradea within the ranking of financial support per capita. As a result, in spite of the dominance of the county seat and other urban territories, the rural areas were also exceptional in accessing non-refundable funds. In addition, in proportion of the population, rural areas were more successful again in case of indirect tourism development projects as is case of tourism development projects category.

In conclusion, despite the problem of favoring urban areas (in accordance with Badulescu et al., 2016), the present research proved the significance of applicants from rural local governments within both programmes, considering their success in accessing financial aid not only in the level of aggregated sum but also in proportion of the population, balancing the differences between the size of localities. In case of mountainous areas that were often neglected, Vadu Crişului is an exception which was represented in both programmes with projects for the development of tourism. Also, Şinteu can be highlighted in 2014–2020 which had two projects, one for tourism development and another which indirectly enabled the development of tourism. Şinteu had the second highest aid per capita in case of the latter. Besides the above-mentioned communes, Cărpinet had the second highest aid per capita for its tourism development project within 2014–2020, although it had the second lowest number of inhabitants between the applicants.

Despite the fact that the strategy of Bihor County emphasized the sustainable development of tourism in Apuseni Mountains, the Interreg V did not highlight its importance and the implemented projects were not sufficient for implementation of objectives in a higher level. In this regard, further and higher-scale investments are required in the following programming periods. Focusing on the principle of complementarity within the cross-border region, more joint marketing activities and deliberate tourist packages are required for the trans-frontier area to promote it as destination, also for enhancing local knowledge and local tourism, in order to involve the tourist resources given by Apuseni Mountains and to enhance the compatibility of Interreg with the local tourism development strategy.

Due to the fact that this paper only contains the characteristics of the development of tourism through cross-border cooperation programmes, it is limited in giving a whole perspective of the implementation of strategies that concern Bihor. Further researches are required to study the field of territorial distribution of projects for tourism development and those which indirectly help its improvement, also the success of local governments in accessing non-refundable aid for tourism development, involving other tender opportunities, such as the Regional Operation Programmes between 2007–2013 and 2014–2020.

**Author Contributions:** Conceptualization, K.Cz.; methodology, G.K. and K.Cz.; software, K.Cz.; validation, K.Cz. and Zs.R.; formal analysis, K.Cz. and Zs.R.; investigation, G.K. and Zs.R.; writing - original draft preparation, K.Cz. writing - review and editing, K.Cz. and Zs.R.; visualization, K.Cz.; supervision, Zs.R. and G.K.; project administration, K.Cz., G.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Funding:** Not applicable.

**Institutional Review Board Statement:** Not applicable.

**Informed Consent Statement:** Not applicable.

**Data Availability Statement:** The data presented in this study may be obtained on request from the corresponding author.

**Acknowledgments:** The research undertaken was made possible by the equal scientific involvement of all the authors concerned.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## REFERENCES

- Abubakirova, A., Syzykova, A., Kelesbayeva, D., Dandayeva, B., & Ermankulova, R. (2016). Place of Tourism in the Economy of Kazakhstan Republic. 3rd Global Conference on Business, Economics, Management and Tourism, 26–28 November 2015, Rome, Italy, *Procedia Economics and Finance* 39 (2016), 3–6.
- Amira, S., Osmana, M.M., Bachoka, S., & Ibrahim, M. (2015). Sustaining local community economy through tourism: Melaka UNESCO world heritage city. The 5th Sustainable Future for Human Security (Sustain 2014), *Procedia Environmental Sciences*, 28, 443–452.
- Bántó, N. (2012). Forms of cross-border tourist co-operation in the Bihor – Hajdu-Bihar Euroregion, *The Annals of the University of Oradea: Economic Science*, 1(1), 229–235.
- Bădulescu, A., & Bădulescu, D. (2006). Some aspects regarding a tourism development strategy in Bihor – Hajdu-Bihar Euroregion, in Proceedings of the 18th Biennial Congress Tourism & Hospitality Industry 2006 New trends in Tourism and Hospitality Management, 1–7.
- Bădulescu, A., Bădulescu, D., & Simuţ, R. (2018). The Complex Relationship between International Tourism Demand and Economic Growth: An Analysis on Central and Eastern European Economies. *Amfiteatru Economic*, 20(Special No. 12), 935–950.
- Badulescu, D., & Badulescu, A. (2017). Rural tourism development through Cross-border Cooperation. The Case of Romanian-Hungarian Cross-border Area, *Eastern European Countryside*, 23 (1), 191–208. <https://doi.org/10.1515/eec-2017-0009>

- Badulescu, A., Badulescu, D., & Borma, A. (2014). Enhancing Cross-Border Cooperation through Local Actors' Involvement. The Case of Tourism Cooperation in Bihor (Romania) – Hajdú-Bihar (Hungary) Euroregion, *Lex Localis, Journal for Local Self-Government*, 12(3), 349-371. [https://doi.org/10.4335/12.3.349-371\(2014\)](https://doi.org/10.4335/12.3.349-371(2014))
- Badulescu, D., Hoffman, I., Badulescu, A., & Simut, R. (2016). Local Authorities' Involvement in Fostering Hungarian-Romanian Cross-Border Cooperation in Tourism, *Lex Localis. Journal for Local Self-Government*, 14(3), 337-385. [https://doi.org/10.4335/14.3.337-358\(2016\)](https://doi.org/10.4335/14.3.337-358(2016))
- Banerjee, O., Cicowiez, M., & Cotta, J. (2016). Economics of tourism investment in data scarce countries. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 60, 115–138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2016.06.001>
- Bercu, A.M. (2015). The Sustainable Local Development in Romania – Key Issues for Heritage Sector. in: *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 188 (2015), 144-150.
- Brata, A.M. (2015). Strategies to attract tourists in Bihor County, in: *Annals of the University of Oradea, Issue: Ecotoxicology, Animal Husbandry And Technologies For Food Industry, XIV/A*, 47-53.
- Dodescu, A.O., & Botezat, E. (2018). Similarity and complementarity in tourism development in a Cross-Border Region. The Case of Bihor – Hajdú Bihar, *Transylvanian Review*, Suppl 1/2018, 143-160.
- Dodescu, A.O., & Borma, A. (2017). Cross-Border Cooperation Impact on Regional Tourism. The Case of Bihor County, *The Annals of the University of Oradea. Economic Sciences*, Tom. XXVI (2017), 1, 107-120.
- Draghici, C.C., Pintilii, R.D., Peptenatu, D., Comanescu, L.G., & Sirodoev, I. (2015). The Role of SPA Tourism in the Development of Local Economies from Romania. 2nd Global Conference on Business, Economics, Management and Tourism, Prague, Czech Republic, *Procedia Economics and Finance* 23 (2015), 1573-1577.
- Herman, G.V., Deac, A.L., Ciobotaru, A.M., Andronach, I.C., Loghin, V., & Ilie, A.M. (2017). The role of tourism in local economy development. Bihor County case study, *Urbanism. Architecture. Constructions*, 265-274.
- Hent, E. (2013). A Few Considerations Regarding Development Potential Of The Transborder Tourism. Case Study: Bihor - Hajdú-Bihar County, *Revista de turism - studii si cercetari in turism / Journal of tourism - studies and research in tourism, "Stefan cel Mare"* University of Suceava, Romania, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, *Economy, Business Administration and Tourism Department*, 15(15), 35-40.
- Jaliu, D.D. (2012). The effectiveness of public policies and structural funds in enhancing tourism development. The case of Romania, in: *Theoretical and Applied Economics*, XIX (2012), 12 (577), 37-52.
- Liu, C., Dou, X., Li, J., & Cai, L.A. (2020). Analyzing government role in rural tourism development: An empirical investigation from China. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 79, 177–188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.08.046>
- Neacsu, N., Neacsu, M., Baltaretu, A., & Draghila, M. (2016). *Resurse si destinatii turistice in Romania*, Editia a III-a, reactualizata si completata, Editura Universita, Bucuresti, 393-404.
- Neacsu, N., Neacsu, M., Baltaretu, A., & Draghila, M. (2011). *Resurse si destinatii turistice- interne si internationale*. Editia a II-a revizuita si adaugita, Editura Universita, Bucuresti, 357-367.
- Nicula, V., & Spanu, S., & Neagu, R.E. (2013). Regional Tourism Development in Romania – Consistency with Policies and Strategies Developed at EU Level, International Economic Conference of Sibiu 2013 Post Crisis Economy: Challenges and Opportunities, *IECS 2013*, in: *Procedia Economics and Finance* 6 (2013), 530-541.
- Palka, G., Olivera, E., Pagliarini, S., & Hersperger, A.M. (2020). Strategic spatial planning and efficacy: an analytic hierarchy process (AHP) approach in Lyon and Copenhagen, *European Planning Studies*, 1-19.
- Popoviciu, G. (2010). An analysis of developments in the Bihor (RO) – Hajdú-Bihar (H) Euroregion, *Revue Roumaine de Géographie/Romanian Journal of Geography*, 54 (1), 61-67 .
- Ruhanen, L. (2013). Local government: facilitator or inhibitor of sustainable tourism development? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 21(1), 80–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2012.680463>
- Soproni, L. (2007). The Romanian – Hungarian Cross-border Cooperation in the Regional Press of Bihor County, *Eurolimes*, 3, 76-86.
- Szilágyi, F., & Elekes, T. (2020). Changes in administration, spatial structure, and demography in the Partium region since the Treaty of Trianon. *Regional Statistics*, 10(1) 101-119. <https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100104>
- Szilágyi, F., & Miklósné Zakar, A. (2021). Centrumok és perifériák mozgásban-Térszerkezeti változások a Partiumban Trianontól napjainkig. *Kisebbségi Szemle*, 4(4), 44-49, HU ISSN 2498-8049.
- Szilágyi, F. (2019). Partium - Reintegráció a magyar-román határvidéken, Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem, Állam- és Jogtudományi Kar, Budapest, 81-92.
- Tempo Online (2020). Romanian National Institute of Statistics. <http://statistici.inse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/inse-table>
- Tisca, I.A., Istrata, N., Dumitrescu, C.D., & Cornua, G. (2016). Management of sustainable development in ecotourism. Case Study Romania, 3rd Global Conference on Business, Economics, *Management and Tourism*, 26-28 November 2015, Rome, Italy, in: *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 39 (2016), 427-432.
- Zakota, Ed.Z., & Szilágyi, F. (2014). Partium. *Társadalom, Területfejlesztés*, Partium Kiadó, Oradea, 71-72.
- Vofkori, L. (2006). *Románia turizmusföldrajza*. ProPrint Kiadó, Csíkszereda, 174-180, 242-244.
- \*\*\* BRECO – Birou Regional pentru Cooperare Transfrontaliera Oradea pentru Granita Romania-Ungaria: Programul Phare CBC RO-HU 2004-2006, available online at: <http://www.brecooradea.ro/index.php/programe/phare-cbc>, accessed 25th of January, 2021
- \*\*\*CBC HU-RO, 2020 – Official website of Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013, available at <http://www.huro-cbc.eu/>, accessed on 15th of December, 2020
- \*\*\*CBC RO-HU, 2020 – Official website of Romania- Hungary Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2014-2020, available at <https://interreg-rohu.eu/en/home-en/>, accessed on 15th of December, 2020
- \*\*\* Government Ordinance no. 142/2008: Ordonanță de urgență nr. 142 din 28 octombrie 2008 privind aprobarea Planului de amenajare a teritoriului național Secțiunea a VIII-a - zone cu resurse turistice.
- \*\*\* The Romanian National Institute of Statistics, accessed 15th of December, 2020.
- \*\*\* The Romanian National Territorial Development and Urban Planning law number 350 of 2001: Lege nr. 350 din 6 iunie 2001 privind amenajarea teritoriului și urbanismul.