

AGRITOURISM, ONE OF THE MAIN FACTORS IN SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NE REGION

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Abstract

The paper describes the steps in projection of agri-tourism activity and presents several issues and opportunities that show the importance of agri-tourism activity as source of improvement the income of agricultural households.

The aim of the paper is to present a general overview of the tourism in NE Region area regarding the tourist development, to show how the physical and economic-geographical factors were blended, to emphasize the geographical landscape evolution as a result of the interaction of the genetic factors, to highlight the positive and negative action of the human and tourism on the natural frame and to propose measures for systematization of the territory from the NE Region. The paper has a strongly pronounced conceptual, methodological character, contains arguments in favour of development of tourism; it has practical information for experts, for travelling companies and for development of positive image of Romania in the world; it contains a number of conclusions and recommendations for the development of tourism in NE region of Romania as a component part of European tourism. The main aim is to have tourism marketing alternatives in tourism activity regarding the objectives, targets and marketing mix programs.

In this paper we started from the premise that national and international tourism is a real chance of recovery sustainable economic growth, development of market economy in Romania and the achievement of EU integration program. We gave priority to special study of tourism development in this region of the country, transcending traditional boundaries, considering that our integration trends have increased chances when ordered border barriers are overcome.

From the perspective of rural tourism and agri-tourism, NE region is of particular interest as it combines cultural and landscape qualities to be valued and protected. They are considered strategic points aimed at creating more attractions scattered in the region to attract tourists sensitive to culture and to promote the area properly.

The strategy of tourism development, developed by us in the paper, aimed at maintaining a number of tourists allowed social and environmental limits, the creation of attractive tours covering entire area, an adequate promotion of the area.

This paper attempts to highlight the region's agri- potential components of NE, in the current national and international context, when we became more and more aware that tourism should be turning the rural heritage of the Romanian village - mountain and sub-mountainous, unaltered and located in an unpolluted environment.

Steps taken by our analysis shows that the level of detail can be in the multitude of economic and agricultural activities to ensure optimum exploitation of the potential.

Key words: tourism, region, development, opportunity strategy

The Romanian rural area is, at present, in a complex proces of structural transformation, with strong economic, cultural and social effects (Ciurea I.V. et al., 2009). For these reasons, the research, improvement and development of this area has a special importance for a country such as Romania due to both the dimensions of the rural area and the weight of the population employed in production or services, such as agrotourism (Oțiman P.I., 2006). The study shows the importance of agrotourism as one of the mains factors in durable rural development in the North-Eastern region of Romania.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

As a methodology it has used careful statistical research, their confrontation with existing data at the local area, their processing and advancing a few assumptions and assertions in working groups and informal settings, and in some

meetings on academic, most of the debate took place at Ministry of European Integration, European Institute of Romania, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Minister of Environment and Water (Wallance Helen, 2005).

The central objective of this research is to analyze how tourism can contribute to a sustainable micro rural development that contribute to development of the region and also, at national level.

Knowledge of specific resources on the one hand, and needs in terms of travel-related services - recreation in the Bucovina area, on the other hand - allows us to formulate solutions for a higher recovery of the possibilities and existing conditions at home, in the household, farm or boarding-house travel.

Due to favourable conditions, places of beauty, purity of air, water, mountain areas in the

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counties Bacău, Neamț and Suceava, as well as cultural and religious heritage of inestimable existing North-East region has a relatively high tourism potential, which may be compared to other popular tourist areas in the country and abroad.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Of Romania's tourist attractions, the monasteries from Moldova there are seven points

of interest groups that were included in UNESCO World Heritage in 1993, including Voronet, Humor, Moldovita, Probota, Sf. Ioan cel Nou from Suceava, Pătrăuți churches and trees.

In the North-East Region, the distribution of county museums and public collections is as follows (table 1).

Tabelul 1

Distribution of County Museums / Collections / Guests

Region	Museum and public collection	Guests	Total cultural goods	Total area of exposure – mp
Bacău	21	45607	239556	8960
Botoșani	11	85074	327654	2974
Iasi	24	539930	163300	1014411
Neamț	28	433158	452245	18791
Suceava	30	632169	563526	48333
Vaslui	10	113227	140034	61867

Source: Regional Action Plan Tourism/RNE/2007-2013

The present quantitative information shows that there are three clear areas of cultural tourism at RDNE: Suceava, Iasi and Neamț. Although most museums have exhibits and collections, the exposure techniques are obsolete.

In general, they do not use modern exhibits and presentation techniques to offer visitors a pleasant experience and to educate at the same time, a situation that makes them less attractive and interesting for tourists.

On tourism activity in Northeast Region can identify the following key issues:

- Low capacity utilization index of accommodation in use (27.20%) compared with other regions and national level (33.40%) - 2010;
- lowest average length of stay of all regions (2.42 nights per tourist), below the national level (3.16 nights per tourist) - 2010;
- lowest average length of stay for foreign tourists of all regions (1.90 per foreign tourist nights), lower than nationally (2.31 per foreign tourist nights).

In Romania, the number of employees in the tourism industry in 2010 was 104700 employees, representing a decrease of 13.78% compared to 2007.

Table 2

The analysis of tourism services in NE region in the period 2007-2011

Thousands of persons	2007		2008		2009		2010	
	Absolute value	%	Absolute value	%	Absolute value	%	Absolute value	%
Employment in tourism in NE region	9.7	-	10.8	-	9.8	-	10.9	-
Total Employment in tourism services in NE region	370.6	2.62	370.2	2.92	366.9	2.67	380.5	2.86
Employment in tourism services all country	92.8	10.45	78.6	13.74	95.2	10.29	104.7	10.41

Source: National Institute of Statistics

The decrease was mainly due to the application of well-qualified workforce, but also gain levels without leave. Despite efforts to ensure a high professionalism of employees in the tourism industry, there are shortcomings in the quality of the workforce in tourism and in the attitude of employees towards visitors. During the analyzed period, the average number of persons employed in

tourism in the NE region was 10.3 thousand, with an average rate of increase of 4 %.

Also, considering the region's dependence on agriculture, the tertiary sector employment decreased progressively during the period 2007-2010, knowing a point of recovery in 2010, when it reached a level of 380 500 persons employed in services.

Table 3

Indicators of employed population in tourism in NE region

Anii	Absolute indicators			Relative indicators				Average indicators			
	Absolute chance	Dynamic indicators		Step of grow		Absolute chance		Dynamic indicators		Step of grow	
	y_i	$\Delta_{i/1}$	$\Delta_{i/i-1}$	$I_{i/1}$	$I_{i/i-1}$	$R_{i/1}$	$R_{i/i-1}$	\bar{y}	$\bar{\Delta}$	\bar{I}	\bar{R}
2007	9.7	0	-	1	-	0	-	10.3	0.4	1.04	0.04
2008	10.8	1.1	1.1	1.11	1.11	0.11	0.11				
2009	9.8	0.1	-1	1.01	0.9	0.01	-0.1				
2010	10.9	1.2	0.1	1.12	1.11	0.12	0.11				

Sursa: Institutul Național de Statistica

Table 4

Indicators on gross domestic product of tourism services in NE region

Years	Absolute indicators			Relative indicators				Average indicators			
	Of level	Absolute chance		Dynamic indicators		Step of grow		Absolute value		Relative value	
	y_i	$\Delta_{i/1}$	$\Delta_{i/i-1}$	$I_{i/1}$	$I_{i/i-1}$	$R_{i/1}$	$R_{i/i-1}$	\bar{y}	$\bar{\Delta}$	\bar{I}	\bar{R}
2007	771.58	0	-	1	-	0	-	605.59	-87.95	0.87	-0.13
2008	533.05	-238.53	-235.53	0.69	0.69	-0.31	-0.31				
2009	609.99	-161.59	76.94	0.79	1.14	-0.21	0.14				
2010	507.74	-263.84	-102.25	0.66	0.83	-0.35	-0.17				

Source: National Institute of Statistics

The most important result of the completion of privatization in tourism is increasing the turnover of hotels, other accommodations and restaurants included in the structures of these units and 2.3 times in 2010 compared to 2007. It noted a slight increase in the share of tourism in GDP (with approx. 18,600 billion lei in 2010 compared to 1999) and tourism receipts in foreign currency. However indicators remain very low compared to Romania's tourist potential.

With an average growth rate of 13%, the GDP created in tourism in the NE region in the period 1999-2010 was only 605, 59%. The region ranks last in Romania in relation to PIBR / place, due to low productivity, sub-national (except transport).

Reducing the total number of tourists from our country generates a negative trade balance and lower revenues. In 2007, trade flows of income earned from tourism amounted to only EUR 359 million.

The entry on the Romanian tourism market of the world tourism operators (Marriott, Hilton, Howard Johnson, Golden Tulip, Accor, Ibis, Sofitel, Best Western), reflected by the increasing number of places in hotels of higher categories, had a significant impact in strengthening of the development of Romanian tourism phenomenon, but also in the quality of tourism services.

Tabelul 5

The correlation between the degree of economic and social development of NE region and the evolution of tourism

Years	x (GDP)	y (PO)	xy	x^2	y^2
2008	13697.92	9.7	132869.82	187633012.33	94.09
2009	13858.01	10.8	149666.5	19204441.16	116.64
2010	15097.51	9.8	147955.59	227934808.2	96.04
Σ	$\Sigma x = 42653.44$	$\Sigma y = 30.3$	$\Sigma xy = 430491.91$	$\Sigma x^2 = 607612261.69$	$\Sigma y^2 = 306.77$

Source: National Institute of Statistics

Simple correlation coefficient:

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2] \cdot [n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}} = -0.33$$

Tabelul 6

Correlation coefficients of rank (Spearman and Kendall)

No.	Years	x (GDP)	y (PO)	rx	ry	d	d ²	rx	ry	pi	qi
1	2008	13697.92	9.7	2	3	-1	1	1	2	1	1
2	2009	13858.01	10.8	3	1	2	4	2	3	0	1
3	2010	15097.51	9.8	1	2	-1	1	3	1	0	0
						$\sum d^2 = 6$					

Source: National Institute of Statistics

$$S = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} = -0.5$$

$$K = \frac{2 \cdot S}{n(n-1)} = -0.33$$

The values of the correlation coefficient indicate an inverse relation, weak to moderate between the GDP created by total employed population in the region NE and tourism in the NE region. In other words, one of the indicators increased by 1%, the other will decrease by 0.33% (0.55%).

NE region is marked both by its dependence on agriculture, as well as near the border with Moldova and Ukraine. The same is true, to a certain extent, to the South, also dependent on agriculture and where the Danube acts as a barrier to trade across borders.

However, in the North East it can be noticed a large decrease in accommodation capacity, indicating the need for investment and tourism promotion. Making the most of the churches and monasteries of the region is a unique opportunity for North East Region to develop religious and cultural tourism, a form of tourism generating significant revenues and stimulate the development of crafts and souvenir industry in general, and those with religious themes in particular.

CONCLUSIONS

Actions proposed to be made to launch the world market as support on rural tourism in our country, will contribute effectively to the increasing number of foreign tourists who will visit Romania. At the same time we find a significant change in the structure of foreign tourists, to

increase the share of those who will travel in an organized manner.

In the NE region, GDP has created a significant decrease in services due to insufficient promotion of tourism, poor infrastructure, and the inconsistency of pricing and quality of services provided by tourist facilities.

The develop of Romanian rural tourism activities will lead to great effects on: links that will make between hosts and tourists, change assessment reports on how the value and the standard of living of the two participated in the tour, finding new ways of solving new situations, communication and exchange of ideas, the emergence of relationships that are established between the provider (host / host) and beneficiary (tourist / guest) etc.

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