

DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM IN ROMANIA BY IMPLEMENTING EUROPEAN PROGRAMS

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Abstract

The rural tourism becomes more and more attractive as the tourists become more mobile and look for a change from the city life. The rural tourism and agrotourism activities interfere, complement and support each other, forming a sector to be organized specifically taking account its geographical, economic, social specific etc., the specificity of its products and the role they should play in the development of the rural area. Based on these considerations, the present paper proposed an analysis of the implementation of the European projects to support the tourism activities in the rural area, by type of programs and their impact on socio-economic development in these areas given that in the period 2000- 2014, the number of tourist structures in the rural area increased from 3121 units to 6089 units with the accommodation potential and agrotourism activities. The analysis was made at the macroeconomic level, on total country and by development regions, quantifying the number of projects implemented in each region.

Key words: rural population, rural tourism, tourism potential, tourist structures

INTRODUCTION

The rural tourism is one of the most effective solutions to harmonize the tourism requirements with the requirements of environment protection and sustainable development. Compared to the classic tourism, it is significantly different in terms of space delimitation, features and holidays content. In usual practice, in order to designate holidays spent in the rural area the concepts of rural tourism and agrotourism are used. The two concepts overlap to some extent, have a common denominator, and particular elements [3].

The rural tourism and agrotourism have a motivational base, represented by: return to nature; knowledge of tradition and culture, the creation of various rural communities; health care; playing some sports - hunting, fishing, climbing, etc.; food and fresh fruit consume [7].

The rural tourism represents the tourism activities in the rural area and benefit from the fact that many main points of tourist attraction and heritage in Romania are in the rural area, such as the painted monasteries, wooden

churches, fortified Saxon churches, Dacian fortresses. Internationally known tourism brands of Bucovina, Maramures, Transylvania and Danube Delta are also especially in the rural area [7].

The concept of agrotourism is circumscribed at household or farm level. Therefore it consists in the organization of activities of tourists reception and all tourist services at agricultural farm level. The agrotourism may be appreciated by the economic effects on the farms. [4].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As research methods, we used documenting, the analysis and data processing from a secondary analysis. These methods are based on the synthesis processes, induction and deduction, analogy and comparative analysis. Once the information was defined, known and interpreted, the next step was the detailed documenting of the interest field. In the analysis activity, the study of the documentation available for the field or for the analysed system is a starting point. This allows in the analysis to obtain the first

knowledge and information. The documentation implied also the analysis of the legislation or the compared analysis of the various specialised sources.

The documenting, the analysis and the data processing and the information obtained from the following sources: monographs, scientific papers about tourism and agrotourism, informative data from the Statistical Yearbook, Annual progress Report on the implementation of the national program for rural development in Romania in 2014 on MADR website, information taken from the websites specialized on the European Programs implementation.[6].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In Romania, at the end of 2014, there were 6,089 tourist units compared to 3,121 in 2000, the increase being of 195.1% (Table 1). Analyzing the trend of evolution of the average number of tourist units, we find an annual average increase of 434 units travel in the rural area. In Romania, from 2008-2014, the number of tourist structures evolved under conditions strongly marked by the virulent global financial and economic crisis. The year 2012 shows the highest growing determined by the fact that funding of the European funds of several programs was unlocked, including those aiming the developing of the tourism infrastructure in the rural area. [9].

Table 1. Evolution of the main rural tourist structures, at the country level, in the period 2000-2014

Tourist structure type	Year	2000	2008	2010	2012	2014
Total of	no	3,121	4,694	5,222	5,821	6,089
which:	%	100	150.4	167.3	186.5	195.1

Source: Processed according to: INS, 2015, Tempo-Online, <https://statistici.insse.ro/shop/?page=tempo2&lang=ro&contxt=63>

By development regions, as regards the number of tourist structures with accommodation option, South East Region won the first place, recording the highest percentage of 31.3% of the total national level. The second place is Centre Region with 16.7%, followed by North East Region with

11.2% and North West Region with 10.8%. Bucharest-Ilfov Region has the smallest percentage with 3.3% (Fig.1).

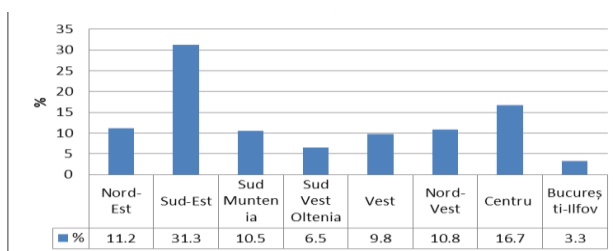


Fig. 1. Percentage on development regions of the tourist structures of accommodation, in 2014

SAPARD program, in terms of **enterprise creation** (criterion 1.2) contributed to the establishment of units of tourist and agrotourism guesthouses.

This program is interesting to see how the indicators were achieved for the accommodation created. Thus, by SAPARD funding in the period 2001-2009, the increase was made with over 11,200 places, of the accommodation units in the Romanian rural areas. If we refer to the contextual situation (Table 2), the data takes on a greater relevance, underlining thus that more than half of the seats/bed, created in Romania, from 2003 until 2009, were supported by SAPARD funding, demonstrating thereby, very good coverage that the Program had, especially in North West and Centre Region and good correspondence of the program to the general trend of the tourism sector [5, 8].

Supporting tourism in the rural area and agrotourism, was made somewhat chaotic, under SAPARD program, and thus, busy tourist areas appeared such as Moeciu, some have lost their charm, and in others, hostels were opened without potential customers, namely, the investments were made without economic dimension [2].

The rural areas with cultural or tourist objectives cannot exploit the potential without an adequate promotion, which could base on the existence of some studies and some projects made by the specialists. These projects can be chieved jointly, by the local administrations in the respective area, by associations of intercommunity development. The promotion of a comune and of its economic/tourist potential, can be made by

the existence [1], in the respective commune, of a tourist information centre.

Table 2. Investment Program in the tourism infrastructure, on development regions 2010-2014

Crt. No.	Specification	Projects number	Allocated sums	
			Million Lei	%
1	North-East Iași	16	108.38	8.2
2	South-East Constanța	24	126.53	9.6
3	South Muntenia Târgoviște	20	108.43	8.2
4	South-West Oltenia Craiova	18	230.74	17.5
5	West Timișoara	23	151.38	11.5
6	North-West Satu Mare	19	75.74	5.8
7	Centre Alba Iulia	52	511.12	38.8
8	Bucharest Ilfov	6	4.7	0.4
Total		178	1,317.02	100

Source: Processed according to:***MDRAP, 2015, Investment program in tourism infrastructure, according to GD no. 120/2010, <http://www.mdrt.ro/ro/turism/dezvoltare-turistica>

Regarding ROP: DMI 5.2 – creation, development, modernisation of the tourism infrastructure, the studies for the assessment of the regional operational program show that regio 2007-2013 had a positive impact for the funding beneficiaries, doubled by a propagation effect among the whole community, for the 5 major fields of interventions [2].

In the tourism sector, 2007-2013 Regio funds contributed to the accommodation increase, the number of tourists, the occupancy level and turnover – in the beneficiary units compared to the units that did not implement Regio projects. The number of the newly created accommodation and rooms increased: 28.25 newly created rooms/beneficiary SME and 50.42 accommodation places per beneficiary SME newly created, compared to similar units that did not benefit from intervention DMI 5.2.

The number of “arrivals” and “overnights” increased: private beneficiaries of DMI 5.2 recorded in 2014 compared to 2009, increases by 2-3 times of the number of “arrivals” (including arrivals of foreign tourists) and “overnights” (including foreign tourists). The occupancy level of Regio beneficiaries

increased as average from 37.44% to 45.63%, above the levels seen at the national level, about 25%.

The number of employees/ beneficiary SME increased, as turnover as: DMI 5.2 brought to each beneficiary SME with 12.40 more employees, an increase in the total turnover of Lei 1,122,536 and an increase in tourism turnover with Lei 933.995. These indicators were obtained from the analysis of 43 projects, finalized until 31st December 2014 [7]. The contribution from the European Regional Development Fund–ERDF FEDR: 68. Million euro.

Measure 313 of „Encouraging the tourist activities” of tourist activities development in the rural areas contributed to the increase of the jobs and alternative incomes, as well as to the increase of rural area attractiveness. Until 31.12.2014, 11 open calls for proposals took place, during which 1,175 projects were contracted [8].

Regarding sharing of the projects approved depending on the type of action, it is as follows: The highest percentage is the category “leisure infrastructure (tourist accommodation structures)” for 69.64% of all projects, with 818 projects approved with a total investment volume of Euro 291,256 thousand and a public value of Euro 109,901 thousand.

Category “Small scale infrastructure (tourist information centers)” holds a share of 29.95% of all projects, with 351 projects approved with a total investment of Euro 64,501 thousand and a public value of Euro 49,318 thousand.

Category “Development/ promotion of rural tourism services” has a share of 0.41% of the total projects approved, with 5 projects approved, with a total volume of investments Euro 627 thousand and a public value of Euro 514 thousand.

For the period 2014-2020, PNADR, provides that a main source of income and development for the eight regions will be tourism. The investments aimed at rehabilitating historic centers and cultural objectives belonging to the cultural heritage and their inclusion in the sightseeing tours. It is also wanted the rehabilitation and

modernization of resorts and accommodation infrastructure and the diversification of the tourist products

CONCLUSIONS

In Romania, at the end of 2014, there were 6,089 tourist units compared to 3,121 in 2000, the increase being of 195.1% with an annual average increase of 434 tourist accommodation units.

By development regions, as regards the number of tourist accommodation structures with accommodation options, South East Region won the first place, recording the highest share of 31.3% of the total national. The second place is Centre Region, with 16.7%

On Measure 313 "Encouraging the tourism activities" 1,175 projects were contracted: the highest percentage is the category "Leisure infrastructure (tourist accommodation structures)" of 69.64%; category "Small scale infrastructure (tourist information centers)" holds a share of 29.95%; category "Development/promotion of the rural tourism services" has a share of 0.41%.

The impact of the projects funded by DMI 5.2 of Regio is stronger at local and regional level, through the jobs created and taxes paid to the local budget, but also by stimulating other investment and related businesses.

The most effective projects are implemented in large cities and in tourist resorts of national and local interest.

The projects which have an "integrated" concept (in the modernization and expansion of the existing infrastructure and diversify the tourist product by developing a leisure infrastructure or adding such infrastructure or existing accommodation) have a higher impact compared to the investments made only in the accommodation infrastructure.

Tourism and rural tourism in Romania provided four priorities, namely:

(1)touristic programs complete: tourist routes, development of tourism spas medical tourism program for the development of cultural tourism and ecumenical (the specific architecture of the villages of the historical Romanian provinces, wood and stone, folk,

art decoration, events etnocalești și tradițional religioasă; târguri și expoziții de muzeu etnografic) program „Eco-bike Adventure”;

(2)carrying out marketing activities (engagement is needed at national and international tourism fairs, exhibitions, workshops tourism is the main way to promote tourism potential);

(3) human resources development and institutional framework in the field of tourism (tourism establishment of centers that strategic aim of increasing the number of tourists and the development of elements of national and European identity by highlighting all local traditions);

(4)development of infrastructures for tourism (marking and approval of tourist routes.

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