

ANALYSIS OF OBSTACLES ON WINE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Abstract

In this paper are analyzed Moldova's obstacles on wine tourism development. The actuality of this research topic results from the limited financial resources for the development of this sector, especially in insufficient of actions for the tourism visibility inside and outside the country. The purpose of the paper consists in the analysis of wine tourism in Moldova and in identifying its main problems for the future of elaboration of proposals. In elaboration of this paper were used the following research methods: analysis, comparison, grouping, SWOT analysis. The following results are obtained: identification and analysis of wine tourism in Moldova and elaboration of proposals in order to avoid the risks and uncertainties for the development of wine tourism.

Key words: wine tourism, tourism destinations, wine regions, SWOT analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is a part of the economy, consisting of a series of activities or more branches whose common function is meeting the needs of tourists. Worldwide, the travel and tourism industry is the most dynamic sector of activity and also the most important generator of job places. From an economic perspective, tourism is a major source of recovery of national economies of those countries with important tourism resources and exploit them accordingly. Both the tourism branch and wine industry contribute to attracting consumers of production of wine tourism, to the improvement and land planning, creation of new jobs, promoting tourism facilities in the Republic of Moldova. According to the legislation, wine tourism is a form of tourism oriented towards visiting economic agents that work in the field of wine and wine regions with the aim of combining the pleasure of tasting wine products with knowledge of the rural environment, lifestyle and local cultural activities [7].

Wine production has had an impact on the history, culture, and the territory that has numerous winemaking places that are part of the national heritage. Among these can be mentioned the only renowned underground

cities, such as Cricova, Milestii Mici, Branesti Cellars, Lion Gri. However, Milestii Mici wines have been declared the biggest wine collection in the world with 1.6 mln bottles, registered in the Guinness Book [14].

The role and economic, social, cultural, educational and political importance of wine tourism is manifested by increase of gross domestic product and national income due to the volume in tourism receipts. It rebalances the trade balance of payments due to the increase in foreign exchange earnings, with an impact on domestic export, and socially creates new jobs and emergence of new professions, in this way reducing unemployment. Cultural and educational role is manifested through visiting an area (country), which gives tourists the opportunity to acquire new knowledge of geography, history, art, literature etc. The political role is manifested by the fact that tourism is considered the "messenger of peace" that helps to promote a better understanding between peoples belonging to different cultures. The contribution of tourism to economic and social progress and its intensity varies significantly from country to country, depending on its level of development and the policy promoted towards it [13].

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analysis of wine tourism in Moldova and in identifying its main problems for the future of elaboration of proposals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main indicators used in this paper have been: the surface covered with vineyards and grape production in the Republic of Moldova. The empirical data were provided by the National Bureau of Statistics [1].

In elaboration of this paper were used the following research methods: analysis, comparison, grouping, SWOT analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the National Bureau of Statistics data [1], Republic of Moldova has 135.4 thousand ha of vineyards, of which 129.0 thousand ha bearing vineyards (2015). In 2010 the area of vineyards made up 144.9 thousand ha, of which bearing 132.8 thousand hectares. Gross grape yield in 2015 reached 598.7 thousand tons, and in 2010, the grape harvest has made up 482.0 thousand tons. The average yield amounted for 45.6 q / ha in 2015, and in 2010 was about 35q / ha. The wine industry is considered a basic and strategic branch of Moldovan economy, while about 80-90% of all wine produced is exported. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry of Moldova, export of alcoholic products for 10 months of 2015 amounted to 121.8 mln. USD, down with 18.1% (27 mln. USD) compared to the same period of the previous year. Exports of alcoholic products to EU countries amounted to 29.6 mln. USD and to CIS countries amounted to 57.8 mln. USD, decreasing from the same period of the previous year by 17.6% and respectively 28.2%. Also, Moldova has lost Ukraine among the largest consumers of Moldovan wine due to the geopolitical crisis from the neighboring country [10].

Republic of Moldova, with advantageous geographical location, natural-climate components and cultural-historical attractive, has all the prerequisites for the organization and development of wine tourism. Wine tourism sphere development for each country

and for the Republic of Moldova tends to attract more foreign tourists, which help promote tourism image of Moldova abroad, the development of national economy in general and of tourism in general. The wine tourism is a form of tourism that was quickly adapted and integrated in the global travel market requirements in the current context.

Law no. 352-XVI of 24 November 2006 [7] on the organization and conduct of tourism activity in the Republic of Moldova defines tourism as one of the priority areas of the national economy. Wine tourism is a sector to provide services that contribute to the economic development through the accumulation of capital within the approximately 12 types of specific activities for the sector, attracting in its work about 20 related branches with about 140 services related to the tourism sector: public alimentation, transport, production and marketing of goods, equipment, souvenirs, cultural activities, sports, leisure, medical services etc.

Development of wine tourism with all the infrastructure of wineries participating in the formation of tourism zones and routes is focused on the possibility of visiting wine cellars, wine tasting, accumulation of knowledge about wine, knowledge creation process of wine (knowledge winemaker, visit the cellars, manufactures, vineyards). Wineries, exhibition centers, tasting rooms, underground cellars, and wine production diversity represents a great potential for promoting wine tourism. Generalizing the above mentioned, we can mention that wine tourism is a form of tourism oriented towards visiting traders of wine and wine regions with the aim of combining the pleasure of tasting the products, enjoy wine culture, get knowledge about the eco aspects of the wine and also get acquainted with the local lifestyle, rural development and cultural activities [12].

Also, tourists can be attracted not only by the beauty of the wine, but also the relationship between price / quality of products and services and stimulation of interest in less known places, more unusual by crossing the roads of wine and knowledge of new and

interesting objectives, less known in tourism and closer to pure nature.

To determine the main directions of wine tourism development and winemaking in the Republic of Moldova, there is a need for a SWOT analysis. (Table 1).

Like other fields, the wine tourism faces a number of issues such as:

- a)lack of quality promotional materials in foreign languages;
- b)non-application of norms for wineries destinations, tasting spaces and tourism routes throughout the tourism circuits;
- c)marketing potential problems in shifting towards tourism markets;
- d)lack of an attractive service for tourists (organized and individual) at wineries, balanced distributed in the country;
- e) lack of business expansion projects in wine tourism;
- f) the staff is not highly qualified for specific guidance;
- g) little tourism marketing activities.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of the wine tourism in the Republic of Moldova

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
The advantageous geographical location. The climatic conditions, the landscape and soil composition allow to cultivate the different varieties of grapes and produce table wines in the richest assortment.	A destination appreciated by a limited number of foreign tourists [3-4]. Few visitors get to know Moldova through excursions.
The country has attractive cultural and historical components, and all the prerequisites for the organization and development of the wine tourism.	Reduced flexibility in the work agenda in the development of tourism packages for different categories of visitors. Republic of Moldova remains a country still unknown to Europeans.
The rich history of wine making and the wide range of wines.	Trip cost is quite high, and often on weekends, holidays, the price increases for purpose (for example the minimum price at a 3* hotel is 40 euro for a seat).
Wine heritage viticulture is made up of vineyards, wineries, exhibition centers, tasting rooms with exceptional architecture and national colors, underground cities, the diversity of production, specialized shops, all of which are representing a considerable potential for wine tourism promotion in the country.	Limited knowledge about the value of tourism heritage owned by the rural community [5-6]. Insufficient capacities for the management of the wine tourism sector. Lack of attractive service system for tourists (organized and individual) at different wineries balanced spread in the country. The staff is not highly qualified for specific guide and does not possess international languages. Lack in the infrastructure development for the wine tourism services. Poor potential use of the households that are producing grapes.
There is a legal and regulatory framework of tourism [3-6]. There are relevant policy documents: Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development, National Program Wine Road [11-12].	Inadequately applied and harmonized legal framework. Insufficient capacity to manage the tourism sector. Low-level cooperation with specialists in charge of tourism in the territory. The need to reform the wine tourism sector management. Lack of vision and clear strategies for attracting national and international tourist flows.
Viticulture and winemaking are basic sub-branches of the Moldovan	The legislation on the wine sector is outdated, contradictory, misfit to a

economy, generating about 15% of the annual budget.	market economy [2-6]. Limited financial resources for the development of the sector. Low share of non-budgetary funding and projects. Lack of projects in business expansion in wine tourism. Lack of actions for the tourism visibility inside and outside the country.
Republic of Moldova was included in the Guinness Book as the holder of the largest wine collection in the world, which is a strong point for attracting foreign tourists [14].	Financial support for projects in the field. Few tourism marketing activities, lack of promotional materials in foreign languages.
Participation of Moldovan wine companies in the most important international wine competitions and exhibitions in order to promote a positive image of Moldovan wines on world markets.	Insufficient financial resources to promote the field: exhibitions, promotional materials. A reduced cooperation with strategic partners, including in the territory. Poor development of special services for the creation of a service attractive to tourists in the company.
Conducting of the traditional holiday "National Day of Wine" which is one of the most significant events in the Moldovan wine industry agenda [8].	Abandoning the "City of Wine" project. Poorly trained staff for the qualitative Moldovan hospitality. Lack of actions for the tourism visibility inside and outside the country. Low degree of specialization of the wine tourism offer.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
The country is a member of representative international organizations (World Tourism Organization, the Danube Commission for Tourism, GUAM, etc.)	Existence of risks related to insufficient administrative capacity. Shortage of well-trained staff. Risks of political conjuncture. Territorial divide and differences in access to tourism services.
Increasing attention of central and local government bodies of the country to develop tourism in the wine country.	Instability of the economic development of the country does not allow targeting of financial resources required for the wine tourism sector. Slow deployment of the National Programme "Wine Route" [12]. Modest progress in the wine tourism.
Creating an attractive service system for tourists in the enterprise.	The staff does not have a high qualification for specific guidance.
Creating new job places.	Long migration of population and demographic risks.
Using the potential of households that produce grapes.	Insufficient financial resources to promote grape-producing households.
Improving the regulatory framework in the sphere of viticulture and wine tourism in order to develop this field in the country.	Inconsistency of the regulatory toolkit to enforce the law. Fragmentary application or abandonment of the regulatory framework.
Develop a strategy for effective and targeted development aimed at transforming the sector into a viable and profitable branch.	Incoherence of priorities and strategic actions in the absence of a vision of branch development. Lack of large-scale projects in the implementation of sector strategies.
Forming a clear vision and strategy to attract national and international tourist flows.	Lack of applying norms for wine destinations, tasting spaces and routes from the tourism circuit.
Attracting a large number of wine touristic products consumers.	Lack of an attractive service system for tourists (organized and individual) at wineries.
Renewal of vineyards with the planting of vines of modern type, using seedlings drained for main virus diseases, productive and high quality clones of grapes, which will raise the quality of the produced wines.	
Big opportunities insufficiently valorized through sporadic tours.	

Source: developed by the authors

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, for increasing the quality of tourism product of the Republic of Moldova in order to offer our visitors unique experiences, there

is necessary for support and assistance to wineries that provide or intend to develop wine routes and tourism services. The tourism industry was aligned around common values and objectives, supported by national tourism brand image "Tree of Life", a deep and powerful symbol that can help us to communicate more effectively about the Republic of Moldova as a tourism destination. Following the carried out analysis we can mention that Moldovan wine tourism has strengths and opportunities, as well as professional training and behavior of staff from this field, for promoting a positive image of the country internationally. But we also found that there are weaknesses, threats and risks faced by the wine tourism.

In order to avoid these risks and uncertainties for the development of wine tourism is needed:

- to improve the legal framework in the field of tourism in accordance with the requirements of the tourism market, while bringing it up to the European standards.
- promoting our country as a tourism destination, using for this purpose the national tourism brand as a platform for promotion;
- cooperation with the specialized media in tourism, including international media, but also online resources and social environments;
- organization of visits of foreign journalists to acquaint with the tourism potential of the Republic of Moldova;
- make the most of Moldova's image as an unknown and undiscovered land.

At the same time, promotion and development of the Moldovan wine tourism can serve as growth drivers for both the tourism industry and the wine industry, being also a powerful factor for regional development.

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