

IMPROVING THE CARST MELEDIC PLATEAU FOR DEVELOPING ECO-TOURISM IN THE BUZAU COUNTY

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Abstract

From a touristic point of view, the Buzau County is situated among the first five counties on a national level. During the past years, various territorial development initiatives have been finalized such as: roads, water supply and sewage systems, Roman castrums, spa resorts, touristic and agro-touristic board and lodging etc, that have increased the number of tourists attracted by the tourist attractions of the county. The hereby theme undertakes to study one of the most beautiful areas in the country which is very little known by tourists in the same time. This is the 'Meledic carst plateau' in the Buzau County. The aim of this study is to calculate the costs needed for improving the Meledic Carst Plateau for developing eco-tourism in the Buzau County. The first part of the study analyzes the present situation in the area, while the next part shows what we would like to improve and finally, the cost calculation of such an environmental initiative, regardless of who is going to substantiate it: non-governmental organization, local authority, private legal entity, etc.

Key words: Meledic Carst Plateau, eco-tourism, environmental initiative, improvement

INTRODUCTION

The Meledic carst plateau is situated in Mânzălești village, the Buzău county in the Curve Sub-Carpathians, in the upper hollow of the Slănic river (tributary stream of the Buzău river), between the Slănic river (in the south), the Jgheab brook (in the eastern part), the Meledic brook (to the north) and the Salty brook (in the western part). The Meledic plateau is situated 600 m high and it is made up of clays and slates on the brackish treacle of a salt massif.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Present Situation

The salt caves in Mânzălești form a necklace comprising: the cave in the Meledic plateau (the most important), the caves in the Jgheabului hollow integrating 35 big recesses out of which 26 are situated in the Meledic plateau (Image 1) and 9 in the Jgheabului hollow. The caves have a large diversity of shapes followed by a fascinating polychromy comprising immaculate white, yellow, pink, red, brown, grey. Stalactites go up to 1.5 m long and 30 cm thick on the bottom, often

changing their position from vertical to peaks arranged in broken line (aberrant stalactites). Stalagmites are short, only a few centimetres high and about 8 cm on the bottom. The scientific value is complemented by the existence in this area of the turtle and the scorpion in a mild climate area.

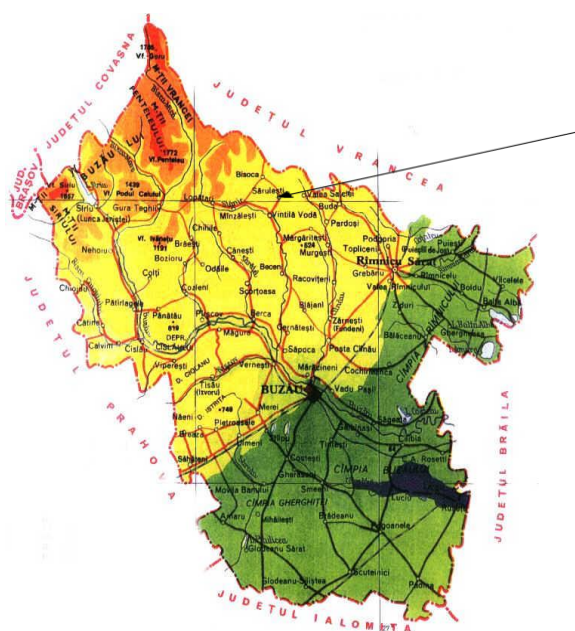


Fig.1. Location of the Meledic Carst Plateau



Photo 1 – The Meledic Carst area

The slopes of the Meledic plateau have deep canyons of 5-6 m, 0.5 to 3 m wide and slope failures of 2 m.

A marvellous place, perfect for those who are looking for relaxation.

Presently, the plateau in the Lacul Mare area (Big Lake area), under the property of Mânzălești village local authority, is occupied by the Meledic touristic complex which comprises 5 wooden lodgings, a dry toilet, a mess room with kitchen, a food store, a natural camping area, a stone fireplace, a platform for artistic events with an unfinished building, ground level designed for tiring rooms and platform enclosures.

On the natural slope of the glade in front of the platform, there are several rows of wooden benches for the spectators.

Annually, this is the location of the Slănicului festival that has reached its 39th edition, a cultural event that attracts thousands of visitors.

In the northern part of the lake, on a forest hidden plateau, there is the Meledic board and lodging, the only bed and breakfast place in the area. Just between the board and lodging and the glade where there is the touristic complex, there is a marked tourist track stretching to the north and driving you through the forest to three of the most important caves in the area, situated on the bottom of some sinkholes with fallen and insecure banks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Proposals sight the improvement and modernization of the tourist complex under

local authority's property, as well as making some tourist tracks for visiting the carst plateau.

The following improvement works will be carried out in the touristic complex area:

-The existing 5 wooden lodgings will be de-allocated due to serious ageing, as well as the dry toilet close to the border of the lake;

-The un-finished ground level building behind the shows platform will be consolidated, re-compartmentalized and modernized, turning it into a tourist center with the following tasks:

exhibition area with information desk – tourist information and shop for selling promotional items, maps and tourist guides, souvenirs and local handicrafts, administrative building and toilets for men and women tourists. The building will have a wooden framing roof and bolter cover, with a traditional, rustic aspect;

-There will be built a covered terrace on wooden frame on the western part of the existing mess room, oriented towards the lake (with a capacity of 30 seats) and toilets for both men and women, customers of the restaurant.

-There will be arranged a camping area in the eastern part of the glade, in the southern part of the visitors' centre, made up 14 wooden lodgings with 2 beds and a covered terrace, a camping platform with 7 lanes with 4 tent places, 4 double fireplaces, a pavilion for toilets and showers for both men and women where there will be a septic tank close by, BIOSYSTEM type;

-There will be a parking for 35 cars in the access area, between the mess room and the camping platform;

-There will be alleyways paved with concrete decorative ecologic tiles leading to all envisaged buildings in order to direct the traffic and to protect the landscape and flower improvements which will fill the areas between buildings.

The value of works and investment are presented in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1. Estimation of the Carst Meledic Plateau site works

	Name	Value on work category Lei
	I – Constructions and installations works	
1	Beds	
2	Constructions:resistance (foundations, resistance structures) and architecture (outdoor encasing, compartmentalisations, finishing works)	949,871.85
3	Insulation	
4	Electric installations	
5	Sanitary installations	
6	Heating, ventilation, air-conditioning installations, fire-fighting, TV radio, intranet	
7	Gas supply installations	
8	Telecommunications installations	
	TOTAL I	949,871.85
	II. Fittings	
1	Fittings, installations and technological equipments	
	TOTAL II	
	III. Procurement	
1	Technological units and equipments	
2	Transport units and equipments	
3	Facilities	74,210.10
	TOTAL III	74,210.10
	TOTAL I+II+III	1,024,081.95

Source: National Tourism Research and Development Institute- INCDT, Bucharest, Pre-feasibility study regarding the tourist furnishing and re-furbishing of some caves, pp. 143

CONCLUSIONS

During the past years, the touristic potential of the Buzau County has increased due to territory improvement initiatives in the tourist attractions area. There have been modernized the access ways to the tourist attractions that are unique both in Europe and worldwide, that is: the Muddy volcanoes, the oil mine in Sărata Monteoru, the living fires, as well as those to the wine yard, fruit-growing and spa resorts, monasteries, etc.

Following the territory improvement initiatives analyzed in the hereby study, presently too little known by tourists, this will lead to increasing the visitors number in the Buzau county.

Table 2. General estimation regarding the necessary costs for carrying out the furnishing of the Carst Meledic Plateau investment

	Name of the costs chapters and sub-chapters	Value (RON)
CHAPTER 1 Costs for land acquisition and furnishing		
1.1	Land acquisition	0
1.2	Land furnishing	0
1.3	Environment protection furnishings	0
	Total sub-chapter 1.3.	0
	Total chapter 1	0
CHAPTER 2 Costs for design and technical assistance		
2.1	Ground studies (topography, lighting)	25,000
2.2	Getting authorisations, agreements, permits	0
2.3	Design and engineering	49,868
2.4	Organizing the public bid procedures	6,000
2.5	Consulting	7,480
2.6	Technical assistance	14,960
	Total chapter 2	103,308
CHAPTER 3 Costs of the basic investments		
3.1	Constructions and installations	949,872
	3.1.1 Construction works and electric installations for furnishing	949,872
3.2	Mounting, technological units	0
3.3	Units, technological and functional equipments with mounting	0
3.4	Units without mounting and transport equipments	0
3.5	Furnishings	74,210
	Total chapter 3	1,024,082
CHAPTER 4 Other costs		
4.1	Site organisations	28,496
	4.1.1 Construction works	28,496
	4.1.2 Additional costs to site organisation	0
4.2	Commissions, duties, legal shares, financing costs	12,719
	4.2.1 Commissions, duties and legal shares	12,719
	4.2.2 Credit cost	0
4.3	Various, unpredictable expenses	56,370
	Total chapter 4	97,585
CHAPTER 5 Expenses for bringing into operation		
5.1	Training of the operation personnel	0
5.2	Technological tests	0
	Total chapter 5	0
	TOTAL GENERAL	1,224,975

Source: National Tourism Research and Development Institute- INCDT, Bucharest, Pre-feasibility study regarding the tourist furnishing and re-furbishing of some caves, pp. 146

The scenario presented by us has the following advantages:

- *On an economic level*, this will lead to the increase of the exploiting level and capitalizing the natural tourist resources;
- *On a social level*, this is aiming for improving people's living standard in the areas where tourism is developing;
- *On an ecological level*, this is aiming to recycling and avoiding the degradation of the

environment where the tourist activity takes place.

Following these aspects, we suggest establishing some priorities in furnishing and re-furnishing this objective for a tourist purposes, the selection criteria being the value of the investment, the amount of the tourist traffic, the importance of the attraction from the tourist resources point of view and the novelty and originality characters of the tourist destination. This way, by applying these criteria to the studied objective, we can come to the conclusion that the carst Meledic plateau represents a non-capitalized area, which is unique on a national level, amazing landscapes, inedited, easily accessible, fairly low investment value, without requiring underground investments.

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