SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL TOURISM

DEZVOLTAREA DURABILĂ ÎN TURISMUL RURAL

MONICA OGÂRLACI[1], NADIA POPA[1]

[1]The Christian University "D. Cantemir", The Faculty of Tourism and Commercial Management, Timisoara, Romania;
monicaogalaci@yahoo.com

Abstract: *Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of tourists and host regions, protecting and expanding the possibilities for the future. Tourism can bring both advantages and disadvantages in area. It can stimulate the development of other economic activities such as agriculture, local production of food and crafts, and help increase revenue. Tourism stimulates the development of new commercial and cultural facilities, which could benefit both locals and the tourists. Tourism collects the funds needed to conserve natural monuments, archeological and historical, artistic and cultural traditions and above all contribute to improving environmental quality. If not properly planned, developed and managed, tourism can cause congestion, pollution and environmental problems, uncontrolled use by tourists of natural and historical places can contribute to their deterioration.*

Key words: *sustainable tourism, rural tourism ,agro-tourism, green tourism, ecotourism*.

Tourism is an act that involves a trip that implies carrying out temporary and expenses. It is defined as a socio-economic phenomenon in a continuous expansion generated by human need for knowledge, recreation and physical and psychological recovery in the demanding conditions of a civilization.

It was observed that the civilized world is increasingly convinced of the need for sustainable development, the coexistence with the environment in good condition, the desire to spend more time in nature, to be closer to everything is clean, alive and quiet, and achieve a responsible economic

development, to ensure the satisfaction of society needs without jeopardizing future generations.

Tourism should be a means of exploitation of natural and cultural-historical heritage, according the principles of sustainable development and rural development by extending their specific supply and creation of income and employment in rural areas, other than basic ones, improving conditions life and increasing income of local population in balance with environmental protection. The number of tourists that requires travels in the middle of nature, in rural areas, is increasing throughout the world. In terms of observing and promoting the principles of sustainable development, tourism is a means of protection, conservation and potential recovery of cultural, historical, folkloric and architectural map.

Rural tourism and sustainable development

Rural tourism started from the idea gather together the traditional activities related to hospitality and rest and started from the following basic premise: agriculture is generally (if true major tourist areas in Romania) in a natural, unpolluted , framed in natural resources nutrition organic trend that has so sharply divided the European food markets in recent years and, finally, in an area potentially rich in traditions and ancestral customs, which, at least for foreign tourists, providing that the necessary dose the exotic and unknown to attract and convince the decision of leisure.

Rural tourism has a broader coverage such as: rural tourism is a concept that covers touristic activities conducted and managed by the local population and based on the potential of local natural and human, while rural tourism is a particular form of rural tourism, including tourism activity proper accommodation, hostel, tourist traffic, running programs, additional basic services and economic activity, usually agriculture, practiced by the hosts of tourists (productive activities for obtaining and processing of agricultural products in the household and their marketing to tourists, or business networks, and how to spend their leisure).

Both forms of tourism belongs the general concept, "soft tourism", are practiced without disturbing the natural balance from an area.

Among the features of rural tourism can include: proximity to nature, lack of crowds, peace, natural environment, locating in areas fundamental characteristic rural features, traditions and customs unchanged

for centuries, in conditions in which the world trend is globalization, and generalization smoothing, the traditional preserve of specific elements play an important role in tourism.

Tourist villages, basic component of rural tourism, rural settlements are situated in a picturesque and unpolluted, with the following advantages: unspoiled folk traditions and houses an ethnographic specific architecture, farms (with a certain degree of comfort) that are rented to tourists, cultural and historical monuments, museums and natural and cultural attractions that can be used in developing recreational, general infrastructure facilities (electricity supply throughout the village) water and sanitation, commercial facilities, sanitation and telecommunications; easy access to national roads and railways, road network, partially upgraded . This diversity of resources the village has led to different expression forms of rural tourism: agro-tourism, green tourism, ecotourism.

Agro-tourism is a specific form of tourism based on insurance in rural households, the services as: accommodation, meals, entertainment, etc. Real agro-tourism takes place in households that get closer to architecture and the traditional way of life.

Ecotourism is a form of tourism where the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature and local traditions related to the nature and must meet the following conditions:

- preserving and protecting nature;
- use local human resources;
- educational character, respect for nature - awareness of tourists and local communities;
- minimum negative impact on the natural environment and socio-cultural (established definition of the World Tourism Organization)

Green tourism is defined as an activity practiced in rural tourism, but also in sparsely population in coastal areas less involved in tourism activities, and mountain areas. At present, green tourism is stuck in rural communities that are in space or near national parks, natural parks, reserves.

Rural tourism in general, agro-tourism in particular can serve as catalysts for local development in many rural areas, stimulating traditional economic activity in the area, stopping the exodus from rural to urban areas and keeping, eventually, the spirit and traditions of once prosperous areas.

For rural tourism to become sustainable, it must keep, just to preserve the essential elements of rural areas: low population density,

agricultural areas, forest and large areas of grassland. Sustainable development for tourism as for other industries has three independent aspects: economic, social and cultural, environmental. Sustainability implies permanence, which means that sustainable tourism requires the optimal use of resources (including biological diversity), minimizing the negative impact of economic, socio-cultural and ecological, to maximize benefits of local communities, national economies and the conservation of nature. As a consequence, sustainability refers to the management structures needed to achieve these goals. Sustainable tourism cover all forms of tourism and hospitality activities, including conventional mass tourism, cultural tourism, business tourism, rural tourism, cruise tourism, religious tourism and sports tourism, urban tourism. Orientation process to sustainable must be normally coordinated nationally by the governmental factors and supported by local factors at the community level.

The aim of achieving sustainable tourism should be subordinated to national plans and regional economic and social development. Actions may cover for economic goals (income growth, diversification and integration activities, testing, development and zoning potentiating), social goals (poverty and inequality, improving income distribution, indigenous socio-cultural heritage protection, participation and involvement of local communities) or for environmental purposes (protection ecotourism functions, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity). Some experts prefer to speak about sustainable tourism development rather than on sustainable tourism, the first referring to all aspects of development, and the second in some aspects and components of tourism - such as long distance air transport that can easily simply is not sustainable under current technologies, even with the use of best practices.

The principles of sustainable tourism in the countryside:

- Development of rural tourism should be planned and organized so as not to cause serious problems in the socio-cultural and natural environment;
- Tourism has to offer residents jobs that lead to improvement and the quality of life of local communities and a balance between activating existing economic and tourism activity in the area;
- Tourism activities must be initiated by means of their local community;

- The quality of tourist services and tourist satisfaction must be maintained at a high level;
- Establishing a code of best practices for tourism, based on international standards already accepted;
- Development and implementation of educational and training programs to improve management in the protection of natural and cultural resources.

Advantages and disadvantages of the practice of rural tourism in the economic, social and environmental:

In time, tourism developed in rural "green" areas generates positive effects, but adverse effects are observed especially when no organic ecological features of the countryside are met. The benefits practice of rural tourism can be presented in several ways:

- **From a tourist point of view:**

Rest of the country run is an alternative to increasingly by the city people. Rural tourism is preferred by more and more Romanian and foreign tourists "saturated" the modernity of cities polluted and crowded major hotels. Refuge in the middle of nature is practiced by students with low and modest material possibilities on living conditions, but also more and more tourists from Romania and from abroad with a certain high standard of living like businessmen, intellectuals, diplomats, which makes rural tourism become a very important passage, which link between our country and the world. In addition to rest themselves, guests are invited to participate to local traditional festivals, such as measurement of milk, sheep shearing, folk costume parades, crafts or live stock fairs, visiting medieval castles, etc.

- **In terms of socio-economic:**

Creation and development of tourism is the consequence of social-economic change in the contemporary era. This economical branch stimulates economic development of other branches of national economy such as industry, agriculture, construction, transport, trade. Thereby can say the tourism stimulate other profitable national activities such as accommodation**,** catering activity, souvenirs, and crafts. Tourist activity is

beneficial and diversifies the local economy where agricultural development is the failure or irregular.

Tourism creates new jobs in tourist structures and the adjacent economic sectors (agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, trade) by developing local tourism businesses or related services. They lead to revenue growth, improving quality of life of residents. Also increase local taxes by allowing the development of infrastructure, facilities, equipment and services for the benefit of local community space - green spaces, recreational facilities, parks, municipal technical equipment, water supply, electricity, schools, dispensaries, etc. Of all these benefits both: local and tourist population.

The tourism often financed cultural activities as theater, music, festivals, meetings, exhibitions, sports competitions and also involves local people. This leads to higher levels of culture and civilization of the inhabitants of tourist area, broadening their horizon of knowledge, share knowledge and experiences between villages and towns.

Agro-touristic activities, due its complexity, contribute to the overall development of rural area and this in turn will lead to increased tourist traffic. Agro-tourism represents a real opportunity for the local economy, the main motivations in creating training and development initiatives, traditional activities of contention have been long neglected, of crafts, local art creations to satisfy tourists. All these activities stimulate local economic life. Tourist activity offers the landowner the opportunity to highlight the offer of accommodation, to exploit their products, to provide services. Tourism creates demand for fresh food products, lesser industry, handicrafts, and he is an amateur of trails, recreation, request services and stimulate landowner inventiveness.

After as noticeable, agro-tourism, a rural tourism component has great implications for the recovery of local tourism resources and its inhabitants raising the socio-economic development, the rural local community space in general and not least in protecting and conserving the natural and built environment in the context of economic activities on ecological principles (tourism incite to protect the environment). Therefore, the authority's interests and the local community space is to develop a strategy for organizing and developing and promoting rural tourism mainly the agro-tourism at local level by all the operators involve in this activities.

Another positive effect of touristic activity is determined by its multiplier effect. So the money from tourists are assigned into various

sectors of national economy, for the purchase of modern equipment, purchase of goods of outward, pay staff, resulting in new revenue and making investments that will benefit future visitors.

- **From a socio-cultural point of view:**

With activities and services of rural tourism is an interaction creating a series of social benefits, the advantages of both agro-touristic entity and the environment in which it belongs. It activates such as socio-cultural traditions activities, crafts, and folks. Also, the tourism contributes to public awareness and local authority's front of value and identity touristic area the presence of tourists in these areas is seen as a quality appreciation of the natural environment and their historical and cultural heritage that favors intercultural understanding and communication between people and tourists. As tourism is part of the justification and funding support for natural areas protection, support conservation and historic archaeological sites to attract visitors and residents on issues leading to environmental awareness and historical heritage. They materialized in: maintaining and developing traditional cultural events, support museums, theaters and other equipment for culture, preserve and protect cultural and historical heritage.

- **In terms of socio-political:**

Tourism increased stability phenomenon , but also restricting the emigration of rural population, thus maintaining its occupational diversification of the rural population, especially the youth, it keeping the existing socio-cultural patterns, the local traditions and architecture contribute to education for young tourist population widening horizon of knowledge of our rural country area, helps increasing life of local people, the gathering of friendly relations between locals and tourists, creates an external favorable image of Romania, by contacting foreign tourists with ethno-cultural and environment and the Romanian village.

We mention, too, and a number of disadvantages or negative effects generated by increased rural tourism, the effects are felt especially in the natural landscapes, natural parks, reserves and near tourist villages due to granting of facilities too large, lack of framework legislative and operational regulations that can enable the development of "hard" tourism

and did mass character in many natural reserves and parks close to the villages, the large number of tourists who, through movement and noise can disturb rural life area and flora`s and fauna`s natural life. Also there is a high number of trails and paths, traffic and access roads, visited in groups of more than 25-30 people in areas sensitive produce disturbance to the ecological balance. Practice on the existing areas, summer and winter sports, and sports with activities too much diversification can lead to destruction of soil, flora, fauna, etc. Rural tourism practiced intensive in an one area can make changes on the local life style of people and may promote pollution. As we can notice all these touristic activities have environmental and social and economic sectors environment impact.

Implementation of policies and strategies for sustainable development in rural tourism:

Implement policies and travel plans are a responsibility of both government and private sector. The public sector is responsible for setting tactics, planning and research, development of basic infrastructure, developing specific tourist attractions, establishing and administering rules for providing facilities and services, establish measures and recovery management planning and environmental protection, setting standards for training and upgrading tourism, maintaining public health and safety. The private sector is responsible for the development of accommodation services, foreign travel agencies, commercial enterprises with specific activity tourism, and is based on infrastructure, the development of tourist sites and promoting them through specific marketing activities.

Political commitment to develop tourism in a planned and sustainable manner is essential. Also, non-governmental organizations are increasingly involved in more aspects of tourism development.

Are used different techniques of implementation. Assembly logic programming and development projects and tourism action programs are also important. In tourism organizations must be effective, both the public and private sectors to ensure environmental protection and standards of tourist facilities. Specific tourism projects should be developed in a systematic manner by applying the critical path method. Financial support for projects for both public sector and the private sector is a very important condition. For every tourist activity should establish a funding strategy.

Human resources development for tourism should be a priority to provide quality services expected by the tourist market and requires a systematic approach to provide personal needs and determining how to provide necessary training qualified personnel in both public sector and in the private. If national and regional institutions specialized in training in hotel, catering and tourism cannot meet local needs, than set up locally as a specialized agency.

It is also important to use marketing techniques and methods tourist setting marketing objectives and strategies and implement a promotional program. Marketing activities must take place in the government tourism offices, the local tourist office and the private tourism sector that developing a positive image of the new potential tourist markets tourism sector is very important. Globally, recent decades have marked a focus on sustainable development, in almost every field, with particular emphasis on tourism, which is one most dynamic and potential profits in the hospitality industry. On the other hand, tourism is a consumer places and tourist resources, participate default degradation and environmental pollution potential of tourism, tourists either by direct pressure on the landscape, flora and fauna and other sights that may damage the partially or totally, or by misconception and recovery equipment in some areas, points or sights. Therefore, in accordance with the European documents is needed to promote sustainable forms of tourism based on deep knowledge of ecosystems and environmental carrying capacity in terms of tourism activities.

REFERENCES

1. **BĂLTĂREŢU ANDREEA** (2003) – Amenajarea turistică durabilă a teritoriului, Editura Sylvi, p. 53
2. **BRAN FLORINA, MARIN DINU, ŞIMON TAMARA** (1997) – Turismul rural. Modelul european, Editura Economică, p. 130
3. **GLĂVAN VASILE** (2003) – Turism rural, agroturism, turism durabil, ecoturism, Editura Economică, p. 147
4. **MINCIU RODICA** (2004) – Economia turismului, Editura Uranus, p. 175, 179

5. **MITRACHE SORIN, MANOLE VASILE, BRAN FLORINA., STOIAN MARIAN**, **ISTRATE ION** (2003) – Agroturismul şi turismul rural, Editura Fax Press, p. 11
6. **NEGUȚ SILVIU, SUDITU BOGDAN** (2001) – Geografie economică mondială, Editura Sylvi, p.190
7. **NISTOREAN PUIU** (2003) – Ecoturism şi turism rural, Editura ASE, p.145
8. **SNAK OSCAR, BARON PETRE, NEACŞU NICOLAE** (2003) – Economia turismului, Editura Expert, p.491
9. *** www.mturism.ro
10. *** www.romaniatravel.ro
11. *** www.infoturism.ro