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CONVIVIUM–BANAT: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROPOSED MODEL AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR THE COMPETITIVENESS OF ROMANIAN TOURISM

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Abstract: *This paper presents the conceptual framework of CONVIVIUM–Banat, a model for the integrated tourism valorisation of the extended historical Banat in the context of the European Region of Gastronomy 2028 title. Grounded in tourist attraction, destination and gastronomic tourism theories, it has six dimensions (inventory, narrative curation, marketable product, strategic communication, governance, community sustainability) and three time horizons (preparation, title year, legacy). Its core principle is that communication is effective only when it expresses a real, accessible and bookable experience. The model supports Romanian tourism competitiveness by linking product quality, communication and territorial effects, and is transferable to other Romanian gastronomic regions (Sibiu 2019, Harghita 2027, Dobrogea – candidate for 2029).*

• Introduction

Destination competitiveness is the ability to attract and satisfy visitors while using resources sustainably [5]. In emerging destinations the main obstacle is rarely the lack of resources, but their weak conversion into products that visitors can find, understand and buy [1;6].

In April 2026, the IGCAT international jury recommended Banat for the title of **European Region of Gastronomy 2028** [3]. The title opens a limited window of opportunity: it raises both visibility and visitor expectations.

Aim: to present the conceptual framework of the CONVIVIUM–Banat model and its relevance for the competitiveness of Romanian tourism.

• Material and method

Literature on destination competitiveness, tourist attractions, the tourism product, gastronomic tourism and event-led development, plus documents of the European Region of Gastronomy programme. Bibliographical method and conceptual modelling: theories compared, complementary elements integrated into dimensions, temporal axis added.

• Results and discussions

Theoretical foundations. The model integrates four strands:

- the tourist attraction system – nucleus, marker and tourist [4];
- the destination components model – structure of the inventory [1];
- the concentric model of the tourism product [6];
- gastronomic tourism research – food, identity, authenticity.

The name. Latin *convivium* – the communal banquet: a theme of the Danubian Horsemen reliefs of Roman Dacia, the Banat Sunday meal and *ruga*, and the “shared table” of the European bid.

Core principle. Promotion does not compensate for the absence of a product: communication is effective only when it expresses a real, accessible and bookable experience.

Figure 1. The CONVIVIUM–Banat model: six interdependent dimensions and three time horizons (authors’ conception)

D1 Knowledge and inventory
identify, classify, georeference and evaluate resources

D2 Narrative ordering and curation
select, rank and interpret; regional and subregional story

D3 Product core and marketability
packages, price, capacity, calendar, distribution channel

D4 Visibility and strategic communication
brand architecture, segmentation, digital performance, reputation

D5 Institutions, governance and capacity
partnerships, certification, training, funding after 2028

D6 Community utility and sustainability
benefit sharing, local participation, conservation

T0 – Preparation (2026–2027)	T1 – Title year (2028)	T2 – Legacy (2029–2032)
inventory, training, prototyping, brand architecture	delivery, visibility, real-time measurement, flow management	institutionalisation, standards, territorial extension
risk: premature communication	*risk: overcrowding*	*risk: post-festival exhaustion*

• Relevance for Romanian tourism

- links product quality, communication and territorial effects [5];
- differentiation through density of contrast: lowland, mountain and Danube cuisines within a 2–3-day route;
- umbrella identity and modular itineraries for longer stays;
- data-driven destination management;
- transferable to Sibiu 2019, Harghita 2027, Banat 2028 and Dobrogea (candidate for 2029) [2].

• Conclusions

- The model integrates inventory, communication and product engineering in six dimensions and three time horizons.
- The product precedes promotion.
- It supports differentiation, data-driven management and know-how transfer between Romanian gastronomic regions.
- The model is conceptual and will be tested empirically in the doctoral research.

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