

Environmental impact of rural tourism in the Mehedinti County

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry in general has a major impact on the economy of a country, given jobs and gains generated from this activity. But equally important is the impact that tourism has on the environment, both through the destruction of ecosystems, and through measures for their protection. Today, tourism development involves a range of new products, higher quality, and quantity. Therefore, I chose to analyse Mehedinti County environmental effects that occur with the development of tourism in general and rural tourism in particular.

Keywords: rural tourism, environment, touristic products, economy, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas is the support of many socio-economic activities due to agricultural land resources that are the source of raw material for other economic sectors. In terms of tourism developed in rural areas, it should be a sustainable without negative effects on the environment, but which has as main goal to maximize long-term profits by attracting tourists and optimum satisfaction.

Rural tourism is a great source of investment, by creating small, but numerous, generating labor. However, this growth must be controlled in order not to threaten one authentic cultural image on the developing rural tourism.

Rural areas is influenced by many factors such as:

1. Geographical factors, the characteristics of each form of relief (climate, soil, elevation, vegetation and fauna);
2. Economic factors (physiognomy villages which cause numerous possibilities for their exploitation);
3. Historical factors concerning the genesis and evolution of each rural settlements;
4. Policymakers and administration by the organization and management of rural areas (rural community size).

The promotion of rural tourism is often seen as a suitable form of economic development for rural areas, but for every positive argument put forwards in support of rural tourism there tends to be a counter argument.

Tourism is considered a very important area in the sustainable development of the region, investment in this area is a priority of the community. As a result of tourism development, the issue of compliance with the request of the balance between tourism and its capacity to absorb the environment. If the green (forests, parks and nature reserves), beaches, parks, zoos, water meadows and even cultural centers, historical and architectural monuments are exceeded maximum capacity in terms of sightseeing, tourist quality, their natural traits, damaged. The

main forms of tourism include : cultural, rural, health, business, sports, stay and transit, ecotourism, agritourism.

Table no. 1: Effects and Conflicts

Positive effects of rural tourism	Opposing argument
Job generating	Creates low wages and seasonal employment
Environmentally friendly	Degrades valuable and finite resources
Generates new demand in the local economy	Displaces existing demand
Generates new revenue sources for rural authorities	Tourism development is a fiscal burden for many small, rural governments, exerting a disproportionate drain on the local service base

Source: Nistoreanu Puiu. (1999) - "Rural tourism, a small business with great prospects", Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing House, Bucharest;

Tourism can cause a negative impact on the environment through: intensive use of water and land by recreational facilities, supply and use of energy resources, changes in the natural environment arising from infrastructure construction, air pollution and waste disposal, compaction and soil sealing (destruction vegetation) disturbance of wild fauna and inhabitants of the area (due to noise). The increase in the number of tourists and tourism development led to the assault by: wastewater from tourist facilities ; pollutants from transport (cars passing) pollutant emissions from thermal power plants ; uncivilized behavior Toward heritage values .

SOCIO-GEOGRAPHIC SIZE OF THE MEHEDINTI COUNTY

Mehedinti County is located in the south -west of Romania, on the left bank of the Danube, its laieşirea of the gorge. It has an area of 4933 km², representing 2.1 % of the country bordering counties Sise : West Caras -Severin, Gorj and Dolj north to southeast. To the south it borders with Bulgaria and Serbia.

County consists of mountains, plateaus and plains, presents itself in the form of an amphitheater that steps down from north- northwest to south- southeast. The highest level in the northwest, is made up of mountains Mehedinti and Cerna, middle level contains Plateau Mehedinti Motrului hills and high plains Bălăcița, the lowest rung, Blahnița Plain consists mostly of broad valleys of the Danube terraces Drincea and Blahnița. The presence of depression as Baia de Arama, Comanesti - Halânga, of broad valleys and Topolnitei Carpathian basin type provides housing and traffic conditions, including high areas of the county.

In terms of administrative organization, the composition of the county between 2 towns (Drobeta -Turnu Severin and Orșova), 3 cities (Baia de Arama, Strehaia and Vanju sea), 61 communes and 344 villages. Mehedinti is resident of 324 115 inhabitants, of which 49.1 % live in urban areas and 165,050 people (50.9%) are rural population. In towns, the population is concentrated as follows:

- Turnu Severin - 118 114 locuitorio Orșova - 15 589 inhabitants
- Strehaia - 12.564 inhabitants
- Vânju Mare - Baia de Arama locuitorio 7.074 - 5.724 inhabitants

Due to its border county is considered the gateway of the south- west and is crossed by European road E70 and several roads. Rhine -Main -Danube Canal, opened in 1992, located Mehedinti county, DrobetaTurnu Severin, in direct contact with all European cities on the Black Sea to the North Sea. Bridge hydropower and navigation system " Iron Gates " linking Drobeta Turnu -Severin and Belgrade (300 km), Istanbul (700km), Athens (950km) and Rome (2000km)

Regarding the employment of labor, employment rose by 113,200 lanivelul employees, of which only 1000 working in the tourism industry¹.

CASE STUDY: BAIA DE ARAMA, MEHEDINTI COUNTY

In 2012 the county Mehedinti Baia de Arama was asked to conduct an environmental agreement investment objectives regarding "Creating a public infrastructure and tourism development functionality in Baia de Arama " Investment in tourism infrastructure and recreation is very important for the local community which aims to develop the tourist village.

Baia de Arama is in a favored position in terms of access possibilities and visiting the many natural attractions but also for mountain tourism, cultural and recreation. In the summer, the area can practice various sports : swimming, horse riding, cycling, motorcycling, climbing, hiking trail, winter following to create the necessary facilities ski, sled, etc. Currently the accommodation capacity is relatively weak because the area was not promoted. Although the appeal of such sites is extremely high, infrastructure greatly hampered the access road.

Table. No 2: Environmental factors interaction

Environmental factor	Cumulative effects	Environmental factors that interact	Potential interactions
Water	The cumulative impact is determined by the effect of water pollution by accidental spills from machinery and the rainwater. The overall impact is negative cumulative allowable limits	Flora and fauna, human health.	Effect on Valley City Water
Air	The impact will be well below the limit values given that it will implement the measures set for emissions. The cumulative impact is negative in the allowable limits	Biodiversity, flora and fauna, human health	Effect on vegetation and ecosystems. Specific pollutants emissions are dependent on the state road infrastructure equipment.
Soil	The cumulative impact on soil and land use is considered to negative over the allowable limits for the period of execution.	Population, biodiversity, flora and fauna, landscape, material values	-
Noise and vibrations	The cumulative impact on biodiversity and is considered to be negative populatței acceptable limits.	Population, biodiversity, material values	Impact on biodiversity, wildlife and people. Prevention and appropriate management of work will greatly reduce the potential

¹ www.mehedinti.insse.ro

Environmental factor	Cumulative effects	Environmental factors that interact	Potential interactions
Biodiversity flora and fauna	The cumulative impact will be to alterations of the landscape, which is considered as insignificant negative impact. Implementation of the measures of biodiversity will cause significant attenuation effects	Landscape, soil	Habitat change affects biodiversity, landscape and the use of land
Population	The main impacts are: improvement of social and living conditions of the population in the short, medium and long term.	cultural heritage, architectural, material values	Project implementation will lead to changes in land use, the socioeconomic status of the population, landscape and infrastructure
Waste Management	The cumulative effect through action on water, air, soil, biodiversity, population. Appropriate waste management and waste technology can reduce the total impact on the environment Insignificant negative impacts	Water, soil and subsoil, air, population, biodiversity, material values, landscape	Water, soil and subsoil, air, affecting the fauna and flora, people and landscape. Implementation of the project will not have a noticeable effect on the community that will meet the waste management plan
Landscape	Form regarded as insignificant negative impact on the local scale.	Form regarded as insignificant negative impact on the local scale.	Biodiversity, flora and fauna are directly influenced by the natural elements of the landscape, which are essential components of habitats. Impact on the landscape can generate some impacts on wildlife.

Source: Assessment of Environmental Impact “ Creating a public infrastructure for tourism and tourism development functionality in Baia de Arama”

For the purposes of tourism development in the northwest of the County initiated Mehedinti County Council have restored a series of national and county roads that now allow more tourists to come to ease but is now the necessary infrastructure development and housing creating opportunities for spending holidays in good condition, both winter and summer. Investment itself was divided into nine main objectives:

1. Artificial path
2. Swimming pool
3. Snow path
4. Rink
5. Connections and external networks
6. Planting site
7. Land arrangement for training site
8. Environmental protection facility

9. Site organization

CONCLUSION

European Union policy in the field of environment, as found in the European Community Treaty is aimed at achieving sustainable development by including environmental protection in EU sectoral policies. Touching this objective requires the introduction of high environmental standards and respect some very important principles, such as "polluter pays" principle "polluter liability for damage caused", combating pollution at source and sharing responsibilities between all operators and local actors - local, regional and national levels.

In our country, after attending the Summit in Rio de Janeiro and after joining the EU, environmental awareness has increased significantly and were taken to address these problems. Furthermore, the Association Agreement between Romania and the EU states that development policies in Romania should be based on the sustainable development principle and to consider their potential effects on the environment.

Policy makers in tourism development should consider its sustainable development in environmental, sustainable and profitable economically and ethically fair and socially for the local community. This requires integrating tourism to the natural, cultural and human and respect the fragile balance, characteristic of many tourist destinations.

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