

RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN NORTH WEST OF ROMANIA

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Abstract

Rural tourism in Romania is growing, but must be supported by various actions to align standards held by developed countries. North West of Romania's tourism potential is complex and natural and anthropogenic valuable, which is the premise, the fundamental factor and the offer in promoting rural area. The case study followed the evolution of tourism indicators (number of accommodation structures, accommodation capacity, number of arrivals and the number of overnight stays, average length of stay) for the period 2006-2013. These indicators were correlated with two other statistical indicators related to rural population (population, migratory movement of population and employment rate of rural population, grouped by age).

Keywords: rural tourism, socio-economic development, sustainable development

Introduction

Rural area in Romania is characterized by underdeveloped infrastructure, inadequate social services and housing and by serious socio-demographic pressures, such as aging and poor level of education of the population. Rural development strategy aims mainly improves the living conditions of the population in rural areas and participation in raising overall quality of life. Rural tourism development cannot take place without a recovery in agriculture, because most people in this area ensures its existence through its practice.

The main strategic objectives for agriculture and rural development are (Moga and Radulescu, 2005):

- Strengthening of private property by going to the formation of medium size holdings.
- Supporting differentiated farmers in promoting elements performance.
- Support the development of agri-environmental measures are applied.
- Training and upskilling of farmers and young people targets.
- Improving the structures for processing, marketing and implementation quality control.
- Adaptation and development of rural areas.

With these objectives, rural tourism can grow sustainably, which means that the labor force will have a consistent training and nutrition system will be generated by the organic crops, exactly what we want to promote.

Rural tourism and agrotourism, by their specific national food consumption in households where there were made, has an important economic function potentiating capacity farms. If foreign tourists who spend their holidays in Romanian pensions, rural tourism and agrotourism export a form of " internal " food products. Since most foods consumed in tourism activities come (or should come) from own production of household determines, on the one hand, the profitability of agritourism is high and the prices are below the prices charged in other forms of tourism. Of calculations travel services specialist that price a

breakfast in all households is lower by 40-50 % compared to a breakfast served in a tourist hotel restaurant network (the same level of classification). The explanation for this difference in price is easy. Prices of agricultural products produced and consumed in the guesthouse (household) does not contain added agritourism business, VAT, excise, transport, storage etc. Meat, meat products, eggs, cheese, milk, butter, jams, pickles, wine, brandy, cherry, blueberry, etc., prepared by traditional processing methods, its production come from farms directly agro tourist mass consumer. On the other hand, rural tourism services (accommodation, services, etc.) do not bear additional indirect costs (overhead, commissions, etc.) that makes agro product price to be much lower than in urban tourism product.

1.Literature review

Doing a review of the literature, we started from a premise of the study " *Demographic strategy in Romania* ", published by Mărăcineanu F., Constantine E., Luke E., and R. Manea in *Agriculture-science and practice Magazine*, no 3-4 (71-72) / 2009 which mentioned some relevant ideas for the study:

Rural labor market has regional differences. Agriculture as the main occupational activity decreased in importance in the north- west and center of the country. Rural labor force in these regions is increasingly, focused more on industry and services. However, the share of agriculture in total occupancy was maintained or even increased in other regions.

Emerging trends in the composition of rural incomes indicates, however, that there is a diversity of activities, revenues from both pensions and wages increased in real terms and as a share of total rural income and agricultural income exceeding importance in nature, which recorded some decline.

According to the *National Strategic Framework for Development of the food and the countryside in 2014-2020-2030*, Romanian rural economy is mainly agrarian, because in Romania the agricultural economy itself has a weight of 60.5 % in its structure to only 14.1% in the EU. Profoundly distorted structure of Romanian rural economy causes a similar structure of the rural population employed by sector (primary sector 64.2%, of which 56.6% agriculture, 18.5% secondary sector, the tertiary sector 17.3%). Romanian - scale rural non - farm economy (SMEs industrial profile, services, rural tourism) has a low weight and rural tourism in all its variants, except for a few areas (Bran -Moeciu, Apuseni, Maramureş Bukovina) and the Danube Delta is almost nonexistent (11,000 beds in about 1,600 rural locations).

Creating an environment conducive to investment in rural areas, the expansion of SMEs in rural non- farm economy and processing of primary agricultural products, should become a permanent local authorities, by realizing the economic decentralization and subsidiarity decision in rural areas (or rural) labor surplus of micro industrial village with county or regional financial support by equipping them with the necessary industrial activities (electricity, heat, gas, water, sewerage, roads and internal telecommunications, etc.), the model created long, in rural areas of the EU countries.

According to the study conducted by Otiman. (2011). Romanian rural economy alternatives: agricultural development and rural food insecurity and severe desertification. Agro services represents a rate of only 0.1% of rural economic structure, while in Europe the equivalent is 4,4%.

2. North-West Region – natural and touristic potential

Northwest Region was created by the voluntary association of counties Bihor, Bistrita - Năsăud, Cluj, Maramures, Satu Mare and Salaj. The surface area is 34,160 km², representing 14.3% of the Romanian territory. North West stands as 4th nationally in respect of the area or place 29 among the 271 regions of the EU.

In the national arena, the North-Western part of the Macro 1 (NUTS1) and is bordered to the South West region (Banat), in south -east and east central region of North-East region (Moldova).

Northern Transylvania home to some of the most beautiful national parks and reserves in Romania. With a varied flora and fauna and unique relief structures in Romania, these parks offer numerous trails for mountain lovers : Rodna Mountains National Park - the largest park in the region, Apuseni National Park - the park 's caves, Emil Racoviță National Park, Maramures Mountains - park springs.

Anthropic tourism potential, the variety and value, directly binds long evolution of human civilization and cultural interference of specific ethnic mosaic Transylvania.

As a result, there is a series of groups of targets, each with different weights in the various tourist areas identified in the region: historical vestiges(Roman forts, castles, ancient and medieval cities); religious objectives (churches, cathedrals, monasteries, cemeteries); monuments; dams and lakes; cultural objectives (museums, memorial houses); ethnographic manifestations; regions with traditional Romanian culture and civilization, represented by " countries" and lands : Oas, Maramures Country, Lăpuș Country, Chioarului Country, Năsăud Country Stone Country, Beiuș Country, Silvaniei Country, lands of Bârgaiei or Codrului.

Are famous wooden churches of Maramures, Salaj, Lăpuș and historical museums, ethnographic (Outdoor Sectional), music, costumes, singing and traditional cuisine.

Types and forms of tourism: curative tourism and recreational water; recreational mountain tourism; ecotourism; winter recreational tourism; cultural tourism; religious tourism and monastic; ethnography, folklore and folk art items; traditional cuisine; business and events tourism.

Rural Tourism and Agrotourism. Areas with significant rural tourism are: Beiuș Country, Chioarului Country, Lăpuș Country, Maramureș Country, Năsăud Country, Oaș Country and Silvaniei Country.

3. Statistical indicators Analysis

Non-agricultural rural economy in the EU is 75 % of the rural economy, while in Romania it has a share of about two times lower (40 %). Large discrepancies are noted in terms of non-agricultural rural economy due to much lower share of services (non-agricultural) in rural areas and, especially, rural tourism, in Romania practically contributes almost zero in the rural economy.

3.1 Data on population

Table 1 Population by location and development regions

Location	Development Regions	YEARS							
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
		UM: Number of people							
Total	TOTAL	21610213	21565119	21528627	21498616	21462186	21413815	21355849	21305097
	NORTH-WEST REGION	2729181	2729256	2724176	2721468	2719719	2717532	2712188	2707926
Rural	TOTAL	9684035	9650776	9656357	9663516	9643516	9635620	9618389	9623597
	NORTH-WEST REGION	1283886	1270093	1269764	1271511	1269864	1270951	1270353	1272146

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania

In 2006 the North West population represent a percentage of 12.6 % of the total population of the country; 47 % of the 2,729,181 inhabitants were living in rural areas. These proportions have not changed until 2013.

Table 2 Employment rate by age the rural area of the north-west region

Age	Period
	1 st Quarter, 2014
	UM: Percent
	Percent
15 - 24 years	30%
25 - 34 years	70,4%
35 - 54 years	75,8%
25 - 54 years	74%
55 - 64 years	44,4%
15 - 64 years	60,2%

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania

From the above table it is observed that, predominantly, employment in rural areas in 2014, falling in the age group 25-54 years, young people up to 24 years have a lower percentage of 30 %, which means that rural youth migrate for education or job to the city or outside the country.

Table 3 Settlements by location and development region

Location	Development region	Years						
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
		UM: Number of people						
Urban	TOTAL	176100	175666	185948	166853	236502	164019	181194
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	16798	18667	17708	16167	22768	15935	17524
Rural	TOTAL	157925	198490	203306	163819	222493	160607	191003
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	18345	23385	23892	20303	28768	20574	24430

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania

In the period 2006-2013, from the total number of inhabitants in urban areas, 9.5 % were those who had migrated to establish their domicile there. Regarding the rural areas the percentage is 11.6%, which means a small difference that cannot be a trend.

3.2 Data on rural tourism

Table 4 Tourist reception with functions of tourist accommodation on the types of structures by the development regions

Types of tourist accommodation structures	Development Region	Years							
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
		UM: Number							
Total	TOTAL	4710	4694	4840	5095	5222	5003	5821	6009
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	543	554	585	645	658	650	730	709
Farmhouses	TOTAL	1259	1292	1348	1412	1354	1210	1569	1598
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	193	200	225	259	266	206	252	231

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania

In 2006, the number of tourist accommodation structures in the North West is 11.5 % of the total the country. Of the 543 structures in North West, 193 are farmhouses (ie 35 %). Nationally, the number of farmhouses in the North West is 15 % of the total. As a share situation does not change much until 2013, but in 2010 (when the number of farmhouses was 266) was reduced by 15% by 2013.

Table 5 Tourist accommodation capacity in operation by type of tourist accommodation structures in development regions

Tourist accommodation structures	Development Region	Years								
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
		UM: mil. Places/day								
Total	TOTAL	56	57	59	91	64	68	74	77	
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	7	7	7	7	8	8	9	9	
Farmhouses	TOTAL	3	3	4	4	4	5	7	8	
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	0,65	0,72	0,80	0,96	1,10	1,05	1,27	1,35	

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania

Accommodation capacity in farmhouses from Northwest, is 12.5 % all total capacity in the country, receiving such structure. By 2013 this percentage increased to 17 %, an numerical increase of 106 % in the period 2006-2013.

Table 6 Arrivals of tourists in structures with functions of tourist accommodation facilities, by development region

Tourist accommodation structures	Development Region	Years								
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
		UM: Number of people								
Total	TOTAL	6216028	6971925	7125307	6141135	6072757	7031606	7686489	7943153	
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	780554	889707	908076	732474	702838	799774	852523	899370	
Farmhouses	TOTAL	217020	288508	357617	325686	289923	360696	447113	501746	
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	50452	74305	100558	72666	52321	50506	67434	77260	

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania

Table 7 Overnight stays of tourists in structures with functions of tourist accommodation facilities, by development region

Tourist accommodation structures	Development Region	Years							
		2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
		Tousands nights							
Total	TOTAL	18991	20593	20725	17325	16051	17979	19166	19362
	NORTH-WEST REGION	2362	2549	2536	2098	1884	2084	2111	2113
Farmhouses	TOTAL	459	592	743	673	604	741	906	996
-	NORTH-WEST REGION	99	142	195	140	103	102	137	148

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania

The number of arrivals in farmhouses in the North West increased by 53% in the period 2006-2013. Share of the number of arrivals in the north west farmhouses is presently 15%.

For the same period (2006-2013) the number of overnight stays of tourists in farmhouses increased by 50 %, and presently account for 15% of total overnight stays in farmhouses in the country. Reporting the number of overnights to the number of arrivals we obtain the average length of stay. For farmhouses, in 2006, the average length of stay was 2 nights / stay, remain constant until 2013. For total number of care facilities, regional (North West), average length of stay is 3 nights / stay.

Conclusions

At this time, although there are some positive signs of expansion of rural tourism and agrotourism, however some restrictive factors limit their extension to the capacity offered by the landscape and traditional culture. Limiting factors (restrictive) are: infrastructure (roads, railways, banking, postal, telecommunication fast and reliable) ; poor housing conditions (unsuitable no less demanding tourists) offered by most farms ; insufficient instruction householders (minimum knowledge in tourism, gastronomy specific local quality, knowing a foreign language) ; insecurity, personal insecurity tourists etc. The fact that only 0.1 % of Romania's rural economy comes from tourism compared with 4.4% in the EU, is an economic indicator illuminating to characterize the state of insecurity Romanian rural tourism. It follows from these figures that require substantial investment (education, finance, infrastructure, etc.) in the agri-mountain, for the enhancement of rural tourism resources.

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