

RESEARCHES ON AGROTURISM AND THE NEED FOR DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Agrotourism can be considered an attractive and at the same time important land both locally and regionally, which exploits the surplus of household accommodation. It can be prepared and arranged especially for guests, and it assumes the existence of a set of goods and services offered by the farm for the consumption of the people / tourists. It is also of particular importance, changing in a positive way the life of the locals, increasing the living standards resulting from the use of specific own resources, transforming the structure of agricultural crops to meet the need of tourists. Agrotourism is employment solutions that prevent "rural depopulation," revitalizing crafts and harnessing agricultural products, spreading income sources, facilitating the expansion of investment for tourism, combating environmental pollution by removing sources and preserving conditions living in rural areas, and last but not least the development of sectors: agriculture, forestry, zootechnics and agro-tourism. In order to analyze the services and activities, the agrotourism evaluation indicators, which are expressed by the number of agrotourism hostels, the number of tourists, the number of jobs, the value added of the constructions obtained through the arrangements, the amount of the complementary incomes.

INTRODUCTION

The agrotourism approach from the perspective of rural development is even more necessary than in the case of other non-agricultural activities carried out in rural areas, given the double direct contact of the agrotouristic activity with the environment, namely: as a tourist activity itself and as an economic activity, generally agricultural, to obtain the products offered to the tourists. The rural tourism richness, its landscapes and the great effort made by local communities to offer quality accommodation and varied leisure activities, added to the warmth and quality of "peasant-style" reception, make the rural area come back attractive destination for Romanian and foreign tourists. The Romanian rural environment offers, in its diversity, beauty, tranquility, comfort for the entire population, possessing a great wealth of flora and fauna as well as an important part of the cultural heritage.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The following indicators are favorable for the characterization of agritourism:

Result indicators:

- number of farms arranged for agritourism;
- number of tourists / year;
- the number of new jobs created or maintained.

Impact indicators:

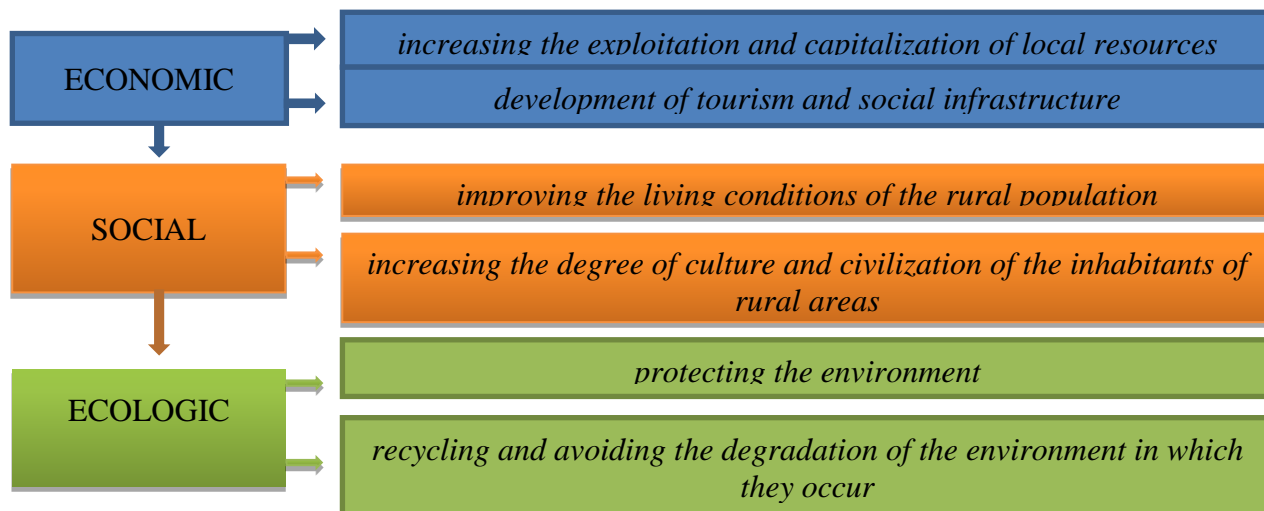
- the value-added of the constructions obtained through fittings;
- complementary revenue volume.

The impact of tourism development has as a result the regional development which is oriented according to the studies on the following aspects: increasing the size of households, technical endowment of households, which is a condition for increasing

resource efficiency, professionalisation and education, as a lever to improve the level the living of the inhabitants through an efficient use of resources.

CONCEPTS AND DELIMITATIONS

The effects and results of agrotourism development in the Romanian rural area should be analyzed and quantified on three main plans (Fig.no 01):



The rural development process is given both by its specificity as an activity that uses the physical and human environment to produce its products, as well as the sharing of resources with other users, such as agriculture and industry. The global agrotourism development strategy must take into account a number of developmental principles such as:

a) Establishment of environmental limits and standards, according to which it is necessary to promote values that encourage standard consumption, consumption that falls within the limits of possible ecological. This "ecologically possible" must become a benchmark for all agri-tourism activities.

b) The economic growth, according to which the redistribution of economic activity, the reallocation of resources and the satisfaction of the essential needs of life in agritourism must ultimately result in present and future economic growth.

c) Resource control for the population, according to which the existence at a given time of a population in a given space must be correlated with the productive potential of the ecosystems.

d) Conservation of basic resources, according to which sustainable development should aim at protecting the natural systems that sustain life, namely: air, water, soils, creatures, etc.

e) Forecasting, which seeks to find and discover new resources, as well as new technologies for their capitalization, long before the current resources are exhausted or technologies "aging".

f) Effective charging of ecosystems, according to which the ecosystem load capacity must be within rational limits and at the same time the production and revenues are constant over time. The capacity to load ecosystems is determined by taking into account indicators such as: the average number of tourists, the average duration of the stay, the relative preference of the tourists, the number of days / tourists, etc., as well as the use of an appropriate methodology for measuring the tourist traffic, correlated with the determination of resource capacity.

g) The existence of a reservoir of resources, which refers to the necessity of a minimum rate of consumption of irrecoverable resources;

h) To minimize the impact of agro-tourism activities on the integrity of ecosystems, which aims to minimize adverse impacts on air, water and other natural elements.

i) Economic viability, according to which local policy must pursue the economic well-being of the community and at the same time respect the governmental policies that set the limits of economic growth.

j) Rural-level control, which relates to the control exercised in relation to development decisions affecting local ecosystems and which must be unique to all activities carried out, in order to ensure a balance between these activities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural tourism is an employment alternative for the rural labor force, a way of diversifying the rural economy and a source of alternative income for rural residents. An important component of Romanian rural tourism is agrotourism, usually practiced by farm owners or in rural households, as a secondary activity, complementary to agriculture. As a result, it can be appreciated that supporting rural tourism in general and agro-tourism in particular as well as recreational activities related thereto helps not only to diversify rural activities but also to create opportunities for integration of young people and women on the labor market. The precarious income situation of rural residents fully justifies the need to develop a diversified rural economy, building on the current development potential of the non-agricultural sector as a sustainable source of decent living for the rural population, as well as development of the rural economy.

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