

## ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN SUCEAVA COUNTY

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### **Abstract.**

*The substantiation of the concept of sustainable development has appeared as a necessity determined by economic growth in all indicators. Theoretical economic concepts and also issues related to the relationship between man and environment, economic development and resources, environmental and economic results underlie economic growth. International concerns related to the analysis of the uncontrolled economic development without monitoring the impact upon environment are reflected in the UN initiative, which decided to create a Board of Directors for the United Nations Environmental Program, and also other international bodies such as UNESCO, FAO, PNUD, etc., which monitor the effects of deteriorating the ecosystems balance. The reports of the Club of Rome specialists support the careful management of resources and avoidance of waste.*

**Key words:** *sustainable development, management, environment, tourism, resources.*

**JEL Classification:** *Q01, L83*

### **I. INTRODUCTION.**

Being a major activity and having a complex content, tourism involves a vast material and human potential with profound implications on economic and social dynamics and on international relationships.

As a result of these interdependencies and trends, tourism stands currently among the most important components of the global economy, participating with almost 12% to the achievement of the gross world product, with almost 8% to the labour employment, representing the most important capital of international trade and mobilizing about 11% of the population's consumption expenditure (according to WTO statistics from 2013).

At the country or regional level, the effects of tourism should be analysed in general, starting from their relationship with the fundamental objectives of the entire economic system, thus determining the contribution of tourism to economic growth, pricing, the balance of payments, the fair distribution of national income and the full use of labour. Both at regional, national and international level, trends in the global economic evolution, both the positive ones expressed by the increase of production and on this basis of general prosperity for the increase of international exchanges and the expansion of cooperation between states, as well as the negative ones, such as crises or periods of economic recession, the extension of poverty and unemployment, inflation and environmental damage have quantitatively and structurally influenced tourist activity, stimulating travels of any kind, but also their spatial diversity.

### **II. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORLDWIDE**

Sustainable tourism in the vision of World Tourism Organisation is defined as it follows: "Sustainable development of tourism meets the current needs of tourists and of the accommodation segments, protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. The management of all resources must be conducted in a manner that would allow the satisfaction of the economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems" (WTO, 1995).

#### **Contribute of sustainable development.**

The definition of sustainable development was first launched at the Conference of the World Commission of Environment and Development in 1987, and it was approved in Agenda 21, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. At the World Conference on sustainable tourism in

Lanzarote in 1995 the same definition was confirmed. Sustainable development requires environmental conservation while increasing tourist traffic from the following point of views:

a) Environmentally friendly –it does not affect the ecosystem, it does not destroy the air, water, soil, vegetation and fauna quality.

b) Economic –it contributes to the economic development of the region exploiting resources both with immediate and long-term results.

c) Socio-cultural –it valorises and promotes traditions, customs, language and local culture.

Sustainable development is possible if the following conditions are met:

- the local development is integrated into national and international strategy for sustainable development of tourism,

- planning and arranging tourist areas is carried out with the participation of all environmental factors, economic agents, educational and cultural institutions, local authorities, legal and legislative institutions, NGOs, population, other environmental factors,

- the tourist management of a region, of tourist areas, corresponds to the strategic development plans made at the national and international level.

Sustainable development is an impetuous requirement of the modern, contemporary world, within the context of over-engineering and computerization.

### **The impact of sustainable development.**

The concept of sustainable development has been designed, debated and approved at the UN Conference on Environment in Stockholm, 1972, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the Madrid Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002, the Copenhagen Summit, the International Conference of the World Tourism Organization in Bucharest, 5 - 7 July 2013 (Romania holds the presidency of the WTO, as founding member and in recognition of its exceptional tourism potential starting from November 2012 until 2016) emphasizing the three aspects the sustainable development is based on: environmental, economic and social.

Specialists in Sustainable Development of Tourism, both in academia, and businesses and politics environment are considering a number of issues, phenomena that may cause difficulties on medium and long term, such as: globalization, global warming, technological era, terrorism (Georgescu, 1995).

Thus, the role of the state, through its sustainability policies at the local, regional, national level increases considerably. The most recognized forms of sustainable tourism are: ecotourism, (Nistoreanu, 2000), youth and volunteer tourism, tourism for poverty eradication and balancing of regions, slow tourism. Sustainable development can be an alternative to social uncertainty trying to improve the risk situations through service economy (Ionciă, 2005).

Sustainable Tourism has become a continuous concern both for specialists in the academic environment and for specialists in economics and political class.

Concerning the Sustainable Tourism, the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, together with the National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism conducted the National Strategy for the Development of Ecotourism in Romania, which provides:

- Development of infrastructure specific for ecotourism inside and around protected areas of local, national and international interest;

- Development in the next year of at least 10 ecotourism areas / destinations recognized at the national and international level;

- Increase of revenues from ecotourism at the local community level of at least 7% in the next 10 years;

- Over 10 years, 2% of the tourism revenues achieved by the ecotourism destinations to be used for environmental protection;

- Increase of the minimum length of stay (Minciu, 2007) from 5-7 days for foreign eco-tourists and 3-4 days for Romanian eco-tourists.

### III. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL TOURISM AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Locally, the cultural and religious tourism develops simultaneously as part of national and international tourism. This form of tourism harmoniously fits with other current forms of tourism practiced at the local level taking into account the natural, socio-cultural, economic, demographic, political and legal environment.

Religious and cultural tourism is an integrant part of Sustainable Development contributing to the preservation and awareness of the population on the existence of original spiritual and cultural values.

#### **Priority of sustainable development.**

The Sustainable Development at the local level includes:

- preservation of the environmental quality both for the resident population and for visitors;
- information and attraction of the local population in the tourism development of the region;
- harmonious distribution of investments and expenditures for tourism;
- encouragement of private investments;
- participation of the resident population in planning for local development of tourism;
- assessment of the impact of implementing sustainable development projects at local level;
- highlighting the importance of natural and anthropogenic resources in the region;
- increase in the population welfare in the area of interest;
- attraction of the population in developing new tourist programs and their involvement in the jobs created;
- creation of jobs in the region;
- development of cultural exchanges with tourists;
- provision of fair distribution of mutual benefits.

The perspectives for sustainable tourism development in the Suceava County consider the ecological, socio-cultural and economic perspectives. The concrete evaluations of sustainable development consist of assessments of the economic environment, tourism assessments, and assessments of the population.

#### **Directed of sustainable development.**

In order to strengthen the local religious and cultural tourism within the context of sustainable development we propose the following measures:

- Establishment in each commune of several tourist information centres for promotion and awareness;
- Establishment at the national level of associations for sustainable tourism with branches in all regions;
- Promotion of local accommodation places and accommodation to the local population;
- Organization of training and specialization courses at local level;
- Efficient communication with official bodies at local, regional and national level;
- Development of local projects for fundraising,
- Promotion of the respect for flora and fauna;
- Promotion of the respect for religious and cultural objectives;
- Organization of hiking in nature;
- Teaching the students the concepts of cultural and religious tourism, sustainable tourism;
- Cooperation with students and local population in the recycling activity;
- Development of religious - cultural and sustainable tourism camps;
- Involvement and training of youth in sustainable development;
- Forecast of the effects of religious - cultural tourism and sustainable tourism development;
- Provision of travel books collecting the visitors' opinions.

There is hope that in Romania great strides will be made towards sustainable development of tourism, in promoting religious and cultural tourism, so that some regions become famous.

Religious-cultural tourism, extremely well represented in Suceava, is the most established and practiced form of tourism. This is due to religious cultural attractions of inestimable value, which themselves represent great attractions both for knowledge and also for rest and recreation, but equally or even more they represent religious attractions, such as St. John Monastery of Suceava with relics that generate one of the largest pilgrimages in the country on 24.06 of each year when the patron saint of the monastery is celebrated. Pilgrims chose the monasteries where they can pray quietly, in generally isolated places, such as convents in the mountains (Rarau Convent) or in places where there are holy relics, miracle-making icons, etc.

Religious-cultural tourism harmoniously interferes with other forms of entertainment depending on the structure of their free time, on the participants' age, their social status, etc.

Religious-cultural tourism worldwide has the following trends:

- Integration of the Romanian tourism supply to the external one and its promotion;
- Optimization of the tourist flows towards great attractions in order to avoid overcrowding;
- Monitoring and evaluation of services;
- Increase of the service quality and diversification;
- Improvement of the organization and management service system;
- Limitation of excessive development trends of some forms of tourism;
- Settlement of a priority place of tourism in national economies;
- Consideration of tourism as a new social dimension of living standards;
- Consideration of tourism as an indicator of living standards;
- Consideration of tourism as a powerful activator factor of other economic sectors;
- Training of specialists worldwide;
- Tourism reflects the level of economic development of a country;
- Harmonization of modern and efficient management;
- Integration into national and international marketing;
- It has double efficiency both on the country economics and especially on individuals;
- It determines the development of photographic industry, press, promotion of certain areas or tourism attractions;
- It leads to the increase of consumers' demands and to the education of their tastes;
- It increases the cultural level of tourists and residents;
- It leads to the increase of the number of jobs and to the delay or avoidance of diseases;
- It has prophylactic effects on health;
- It seeks to avoid overcrowding and deterioration of the ecosystem;
- It is a factor to avoid conflict situations between countries;
- It involves minimal efforts for a united Europe;
- It leads to the disappearance of countries borders;
- According to the Manila Declaration, 1980, tourism contributes to the growth of population's income, to the development of the area, to the attraction of tourists in certain areas;
- Creation of institutions measurement of the economic and social effects, and training of tourist guides;
- Strengthening of the consultant role of specialized institutions for tourism products

Sustainable Development of religious-cultural tourism determines the approach of a strategic management based on the following directions:

- development of all economic sectors that significantly contribute to the development of religious cultural tourism tourism;
- development of road and rail-way infrastructure (construction of a highway connected to Transylvania);
- modernization of airports (Salcea-Suceava) and their internationalization;
- modernization of parkings with modern rest rooms, gas stations, etc.
- creation of tourist information centers around the tourism attractions of national and international interest to be functional with permanent employees;
- modernization of transport means and use of the most modern ones for tourists;
- use of qualified guides both for tourist information and of those dealing with the spiritual program;
- modernization of accommodation spaces within monasteries, of other worship places (pilgrimage type);
- creation of catering opportunities within guesthouses around monasteries or other worship places;
- providing fasting menus at the guesthouses, given that pilgrims assume fastening;
- creation / constitution of a complete religious tourism programs for a diversified demand for visiting diverse religious attractions, churches, monasteries, tombs, relics, chaplains, religious programs, patrons, consecration services, commemorations, etc .;
- creation of opportunities for sharing / discussions on tourism programs developed through workshops in dedicated facilities, conference rooms, libraries, where pilgrim tourists express their opinions / views on the visited attractions and on the feelings experienced, making proposals for improvement of tourism activity and spiritual ascension;
- invitation of personalities from certain tourist programs sections, journalists, TV reporters, scholars for debates and cultural and spiritual enrichment
- creation of accommodation possibilities for tourists who prefer guesthouses or monasteries to be accommodated in;
- use of two group leaders, the tourism specialist and a priest for tourists who want it;
- creation of the possibility for choosing programs by attending services, or other forms of leisure trips by variants of programs or sections of tourist programs for micro-groups created;
- realization of opportunities for development of religious camps for Christian moral education of children and young people with participation both in recreational activities and in religious ones;

- development of camps for young people with participation in household activities, cultural recreational activities, but also in moral Christian activities with guests;
- the possibility for tourists / pilgrims to express thoughts and feelings both by offering small gifts to churches and monasteries such as flowers, candles, tablecloths, towels, incense, small amounts of money, but also by the acquisition of books, icons, crosses, small icons, cards, etc.;
- staff training in monasteries (guides) providing tourists information appropriate to their age and to their understanding abilities, proving understanding and friendship; training of several guides able to provide information in case several groups of people arrive at once and individual tourists from other countries requesting it;
- knowledge of foreign languages and history of the place by the guides within religious attractions;
- attraction of pilgrim tourists towards religious attractions by tolerance of the tourists' dress styles and conduct and their progressive education or providing decent equipment (gowns, aprons);
- strict compliance with the moral values by the monasteries Christian staff: obedience, asceticism, modesty, lack of assets, not-showing their tendency to defect.

Influences of religious tourism on tourists, but also on national economy have implications in all the activity sectors.

The development of religious cultural tourism often interferes with other forms of tourism, globally leading to the development of all forms of tourism.

The implications of tourism services upon tourism are critical, but in case of religious cultural tourism these ones matter in a lesser extent because tourists who prefer it and pilgrims are not demanding.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS.

The specialists' concerns on Sustainable Development worldwide are increasing and expanding to all forms of tourism. Tourism resources represent the raw material for the tourist industry and the care it is managed with is proven by the strategic programs for tourism development. In the Suceava County, the concerns for sustainable development of tourism, particularly for the religious and cultural tourism as a form of consecrated tourism represent a priority and a constant concern of all stakeholders, decision makers, and business service providers, aimed at: careful and continuous monitoring of economic development of the region, economic analysis of progress, social impact analysis.

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