

## THE COMPETITIVENESS OF TOURISTIC PRODUCTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIAN TOURISTIC SPACE

### **Abstract**

Within the concept of sustainable development, tourism has a key role to play since it has a significant contribution to the economic recovery of Romania. Raising the tourism product to the level of outlined by the standards and preferences of foreign tourists supposes to start and to promote actions that include, on the one hand, education and creation of an appropriate mentality for the current type of development, and on the other hand, focusing on sustainable development in tourist receiving areas. Departing from these aspects, this paper aims to establish how to design tourism products in order to respect the sustainability principles.

**Keywords:** tourism product research, development, competitiveness, space travel

**JEL CODES:** L83, Z32

## IMPORTANȚA COMPETITIVITĂȚII PRODUSELOR TURISTICE ÎN VEDEREA DEZVOLTĂRII DURABILE ÎN SPAȚIUL ROMÂNESC

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### **Rezumat**

În cadrul conceptului de dezvoltare durabilă, turismul trebuie să joace un rol un rol-cheie, deoarece are o contribuție semnificativă la redresarea economică a României. Creșterea produsului turistic la nivelul prezentat de standardele și preferințele turiștilor străini presupune să se înceapă și să se promoveze acțiuni care includ, pe de o parte, educația și crearea unei mentalități adecvate pentru tipul actual de dezvoltare, iar pe de altă parte să cadă accentul pe dezvoltarea durabilă în zonele turistice. Pornind de la aceste aspecte, această lucrare își propune să stabilească modul în care să proiecteze produse turistice, în scopul de a respecta principiile de durabilitate.

**Cuvinte cheie:** turism de cercetare, dezvoltare, competitivitate, destinație.



Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> Administration and Public Management International Conference  
"Policy and Organizational Change in Public Institutions"

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an industry that benefits from highly optimistic forecasts for the future, his reputation became increasingly larger, so global, regional, and local levels. Another aspect that should be emphasized is that tourism, as a phenomenon, and that activity is very unique in that dependency by which manifests the environment, social and cultural environment of values. Due to these reasons it can say that tourism has an undeniable interest to ensure their sustainability. In other words, tourism products offered must be carefully designed so as to not damage the environment and good development of tourism activities.

## 2. THE INFLUENCE OF TOURISM ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRODUCTS

Sustainable tourism entails all forms of tourism development, management and marketing of tourism that respects the integrity of the natural, social and economic environment to ensure the exploitation of natural and cultural resources for future generations (Commission of the European Communities, 2008). Developing competitive tourism products lead to the creation of new jobs, both directly - in the sphere of production and distribution of travel - and indirectly through the multiplier effect on related branches. Launch tourism products will lead to special effects to be achieved on the links between hosts and tourists how to appreciate the relationship between values and standard of living of the participants in the act of travel, communication, exchange of ideas etc. The localities which runs tourism product thus created will become spaces where they will assemble all the local sustainable development. Another effect would be the emergence of concern with improving infrastructure, building a spiritual life of the localities concerned (Holden, 2010). Undoubtedly, complex tourism product exerts an influence on the overall economic development of localities considered. It will achieve such strategic objectives that consider ensuring and protecting human factor, technical features and heritage conservation grouped into three strands as follows:

1. - Stopping migration of certain disadvantaged population (ex. Rural) and encouraging the return, at least part of the population to these areas;
  - Ensuring living conditions and civilization in those environments, boosting the stability of the active population in these environments;
  - Conservation and protection of the natural environment - factor of attraction of domestic and foreign population.
2. Rural tourism, mountain, ecological and cultural tourism product launching to the international market will become a cultural ambassador educational tool constant and not expensive - for example the continuation of economic activity in a weak productive environment (ex. Apuseni

Mountains), prevention rising unemployment, major contribution to raising general civilization of broad categories of the population, particularly by improving hygienic and sanitary conditions, social behaviour and cultivating aesthetic taste (Stănculescu, 2009).

### 3. DETERMINATION PROFILE FOREIGN TOURISTS - ROMANIA VISITORS

During 2016, in the National Tourism Authority of Romania were presented studies by a number of specialized institutes from 11 countries in which Romania Tourism Promotion Offices: Austria, Germany, Italy, Finland, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, UK, Spain, France and Denmark. The studies were commissioned by Romanian offices and had as main objectives to almost all countries: Romania it is perceived as a potential tourist destination by tourists from each of the 11 countries; the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Romanian tourism products and is Romania's image as a tourist destination on the market in each country; the Romanian specific tourism products would be most interesting for travellers from 11 countries; As Romania is perceived as a tourist destination compared to other East European countries in terms of natural potential services, value for money etc. (Commission of the European Communities, 2009). From all the studies reviewed that Romania has considerable natural resources, with great potential for tourism development. Most examples mentioned by the French concern: mineral water or thermal treatments in spas and tourism in seaside resorts. Romania also benefit from the diversity of natural landscapes (natural environment strongly contrasting) and the warm welcome of the foreign population made and recognized by everyone (Verheugen, 2008). Interpress study conducted by the Spanish market that Romanian tourism market potential is big enough to be made known in Spain diverse and complementary tourism resources (culture, nature, sports and ethnography); character "Latin" with a common origin and language with certain cultural traits that together the two countries; Spain in relatively close geographically (less than four hours by plane); the recent establishment of air links that can promote tourist travel between the two countries; the presence of increasingly large Romanians in Spain, which led the Spaniards to want to know a country whose situation hardly knew anything before; well preserved nature in some cases original and highly attractive (especially the Carpathians and the Danube Delta); enormous cultural riches, architectural and artistic ("the biggest jewellery - monasteries, castles, churches and traditional villages in Maramures and Bucovina should be harnessed", says interviewees). Danes emphasize that Romania has the potential to provide many opportunities for a family holiday with children. In addition to the adventure and family values, many former Danish tourists say it is cheaper to visit Romania. Without intending to present Romania's values, as they were perceived by tourists or tour operators from all 11 countries, it drew attention to the opinion expressed by the British. According to the study "Romania in

the UK Travel Market - Product Image and Perception Analysis" conducted by TripVision in February 2010, Romania's strengths are degraded nature; country life; heritage; multiculturalism; diversity; smaller towns or larger, beautiful and undiscovered (except Bucharest); lifestyle (outside the capital); child safety; deep orientation towards family; organic food in rural areas (good for vegetarians) etc. There are also other British travelers, strongly motivated by a desire to see new things and discovering new places. TripVision called these types of individuals "Explorers" and he considered consumer segment with the greatest potential for Romanian tourism market (Ispas, 2009).

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The investigation carried out revealed that of those surveyed, 32% indicated holidays, as the primary reason for visiting Romania, 37% business, 23% say they visit friends and relatives, while 8% indicated another reason.

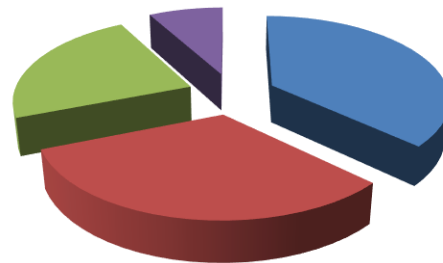


FIGURE 1- MOTIVATION TRIP

But note that tourists visiting Romania amounting to holiday with those who visit her to visit friends and relatives resulting 57% of those interviewed, which means that they might be willing to mountain hiking with great sightseeing attraction.

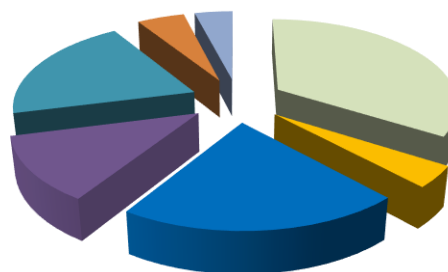


FIGURE 2 - VISITED AREAS IN ROMANIA

The investigation carried out showed that 34% of all tourists surveyed indicated as a tourist destination visited Bucharest in Romania and only 4% indicated Bucovina. It notes that, in ascending order preferences interviewed tourists bound for Transylvania (21%) and the Carpathian Mountains (12%). So it may be a combination of tourist areas for achieving a tourist product.

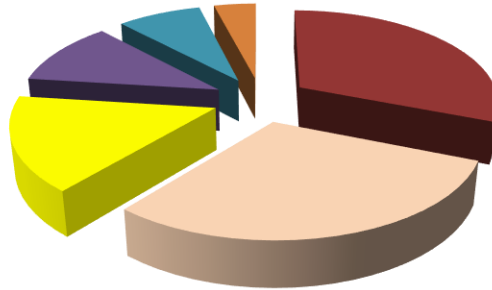


FIGURE 3 - TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION PREFERRED BY FOREIGN TOURISTS

Preference tourists in terms of type of accommodation used shows that 31% of respondents opted for boarding, and are next in the order of 4-5 star hotels, with 30%. In a very small percentage who are camping preferred by 8% of tourists interviewed this because there are very few of these ships functionally and high quality. Regarding tourists view the quality of tourism services following completion of research were recorded the following average values (on a scale from 1 to 5 very bad -Excellent 6 do not know) It is observed that the best medium of Romanian tourism services to best serve tourists expressed in the research conducted is in place / museums 2.13 and B & B type where the calculated average is 2.14. All other services are considered by tourists as the average between good and satisfactory. Following this research can achieve a profile of foreign tourists in Romania, or a picture of his preferences from which one can achieve a tourism product that corresponds to the wishes expressed by tourists interviewed.

## CONCLUSIONS

Following this research can draw some interesting conclusions, meant to attract attention on the competitiveness of Romanian tourism space based on supply and demand. The quality and competitiveness of tourism products contribute to developing and maintaining sustainable tourism. In other words, a well-developed tourism product based on research, can influence the development of disadvantaged areas: attracting a flow of foreign tourists in the area; upgrading and expanding infrastructures: accommodation, food, transport so as not to affect the existing natural environment; creating new jobs and developing local human resources by improving employees; preserving continuity of traditions and spiritual values in the area. Romanian Sustainable Tourism Development must follow

directions well defined, true keys to promote tourism products as follows: information and awareness of travel agencies and tour operators on the importance of creating competitive tourism products to determine the achievement of sustainable tourism in the area ; State involvement by providing facilities such travel agencies that promote Romanian tourism products in areas economically disadvantaged; employed by tour operators and travel agencies specialized personnel who have higher education in the field.

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