

## ABSTRACT

*Key words: rural development, complementary activities, rural scene, touristic offer, legislation, agriculture exploit, rural communities, touristic promotion, agrotourism, seaside, Costinesti, Danube Delta, sustainable development, ecological environment.*

### **RURAL TOURISM. AGROTOURISM**

The rural tourism, as a whole, includes numerous ways of accommodation, of activities, events, festivals, sports and entertainment, all together taking part in a rural typical environment. It is a concept connected with the organized touristic activity, and conducted by the rural local people. It has a close connection with the natural and human environment.

The agrotourism is the complementary activity, which gives value to the surplus of accommodation within the rural housing, prepared and special fitted out for the guests. It is composed of an assembly of goods and services offered by the rural housing for persons' consumption.

The farm is still a strong symbol for people living in the rural space, considering the farmer's house, the countryman who knows the secrets of nature, the one who finds the best places for fishing, and for picking up the best mushrooms for the consumers. It is the place where they grow up domestic animals; the townsman has no contact at all with that. It is the place where you can find fresh fruit, the place where for generations they live a specific life, in a specific place.

The village is a special place in the townsman's image, meaning the human dimension, the specific local animation; it evokes the village's hall, the pub, the school, the church, all places that put a sign within the people's life for centuries. Here there are the handcrafters, the merchants, the tradesmen, and the local actors, who make life easier in the countryside. It also represents the nativity of the most beautiful celebrations, of the most beautiful wedding, christening, or winter specific customs.

The farm, the village and the rural space, all together or separately, constitute the glamour of the rural tourism, by attractiveness. The rural tourism must be understood as an

activity, which assures the urban population with the most adequate conditions of therapy against stress, caused by the speed of the daily life. This form of tourism is strongly influenced by the psychological factors, and it is recommended to the lovers of nature, to people who know how to use it for improving their health and relaxation, without destroying it.

The agrotourism activity has three main interdependent elements:

- The attraction for the natural beauties, for ethnography, for the novelty, the glamour and the specific events in the countryside;
- Accommodation and meals, which, even if they do not have the hotel's standards, must be of quality and be offered with hospitality.
- The transportation toward the rural space is vital for getting the continuous flux of tourists.

### **THE RURAL TOURISM – ENVIRONMENT RELATIONSHIP**

The rural tourism, more than any other domain of activity, is dependent of the environment, which represents “its main substance”, of the object and the domain of activity, and of developing tourism, which is its frame support, the bearer of its resources.

The relief, the forests, the rivers, the lakes, the sea, the natural or the art and architecture monuments, the air or the mineral waters etc, as components of the environment, constitute themselves as agrotouristic resources, which support the development of agrotourism, for resting and entertainment, for balneary treatment, etc. The most varied, complex and non-altered the resources, the greater touristic interest can be got. The activities are more valuable and attractive, being proper for varied touristic reasons.

Under such circumstances, the rural tourism-environment relationship has a specific significance, while the development and the protection of environment represent the sine qua non condition of agrotourism; any alter of environment can damage the touristic potential by diminishing and even canceling its resources.

### **THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISTIC FITTING OUT**

The elaboration of strategies for rural touristic fitting out must take into account a series of factors, as the following:

- The natural and anthropic touristic resources, and their degree of valorization;
- The material, human and financial resources relevant for tourism;
- The economic and political objectives on short, intermediate and long terms;
- The realization of touristic activities, related to reception structure, touristic traffic and the economic-social results.

Considering the elaboration and the application of touristic fitting out strategies, the specific literature indicates the following principles: the principle of harmonious integration of

constructions, the principle of flexibility or the evolving structures, the principle of correlation between main activities and the secondary reception, the principles of interdependence between networks, the principle of optimal functionality of the whole network, and the principle of direct and indirect rentability.

## **THE TENDENCIES OF AGROTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA**

Within the tourism space, the agrotourism has a quite little weight than the other categories, but by qualitative improvement of offer for this domain, and by extension of agrotourism practicability zones toward the South-East of the country (the Danube Delta and the Black Sea seaside), there are hopes for improving systematically some weight.

Taking into account the study made during 2002-2007, it can be said that the number of touristic pensions is net superior that of agrotouristic pensions in 2002, and in 2007 either. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that several touristic pensions are not homologated.

From the point of view of the comfort, the agrotouristic pensions are numerous, in 2002, and so is in 2007; they are of 2 stars, those of 4 and 5 stars do not exist practically, and their weight is quite little in tourism either.

Taking into account the number of accommodated tourists, the same sources indicate a significant development of 6 times, and the number of checking-in grew of 8 times.

In order to improve this situation, it is necessary to realize programs of sustainable development, which can put into value efficiently this resource, a very important one for the Romanian economy, by attracting some local or foreign financial sources that can get a better correlation between the extensive and the intensive development within this field, related to the infrastructure development, the usage of modern promotional techniques, the recycling of information and qualification courses for the stuff of these unities, the creation of associations that can assure a varied scale for the living population's standards.

## **THE MANAGERIAL STRATEGY FOR TOURISM**

For the management of an agrotouristic pension, the strategy of services distributed to the consumers constitutes the plan of action meant to assure the obtaining of positive economical results, while it confronts its competitors.

In order to elaborate his/her strategy, the manager should take into account the following aspects: the investments, the touristic product and the necessary equipment; the way he/she would like the pension to appreciate its services, the systems of promoting the touristic products; the competitors; the beneficiaries of offered services.

The information quality and the capacity to analyze it, the quality of the elaborated plans using these bases, their revision and adaptation can maintain or improve the firm's position.

The successful strategy is measured by the improving of sales volume, of the benefit, by amplifying the gained market's segments and by continuing an efficient activity.

### **THE MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY FOR TOURISM**

The adoption of a management of quality system by an organization that performs an agrotouristic activity represents a strategic decision having long terms implications, which can bring to it advantages such as: the improving of the clients' satisfaction, the costs' reduction, the improving of competence, the strengthens responsibility, and the staff 's satisfaction considering their work.

The village, as a territorial-administrative unity, must be analyzed both from the economic function's dimension dominated by the geographical landscape, and from the agriculture dimension, on which it always rely on.

### **THE ANALYSIS OF THE AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL FOR THE DOBROGEAN TOURISTIC VILLAGES**

For an agrotouristic study it is necessary to take into consideration the complex of dimensions of developing for this domain, such as: the economical dimension, the social dimension, the cultural-educational dimension, the organizational and institutional dimension.

On the level of the rural communities (community and village), the significance of the indicators concerning the land content, the animals and the agricultural equipment is can be considered a significant one.

The analysis and the interpretations can be directed in the following way:

- The agricultural surfaces for the main categories of usage, in Constanta county, both for the community, and the village are bigger than the level of the entire Region of South-East development, considering that the arable intermediate area is almost double at the level of community and village, and the fruit-growing/wine-growing surfaces are much bigger.
- The average of animals' exploitation is relatively uniform for the community and the village.

The economical function of the rural community, referring to agriculture, offers also sources for the agrotourism in the zones of the seaside.

On the micro-territorial level of the seaside zones it is necessary to know the usage of the existent agricultural surfaces for individual agricultural exploitation.

Into the structure of the land content and of the main cultures of the arable soil in two counties of Dobrogea, considering the quantum of the number of individual agricultural exploitation, and the afferent surfaces, it results that the arable soil is predominated for the majority of the housing, preponderantly being the cereals for grains.

Agriculture remains one of the most important within the Region of South-East development, because the land capacities are favorable.

There is a diverse relief with plains for the grains cultures, and hills for fruit growing and wine-growing.

The well-known centers for producing the wines, such as the wine-growing lands at Niculitel (Tulcea), Ostrov or Murfatlar make famous the Dobrogean geographic area.

Both Constanta county and Tulcea county have a wine-growing land patrimony, which surpass the average of counties in the whole country.

Within all the phases of the economical transition of the rural space, the animals agricultural production realized represented elements of notoriety for the territorial development appreciation. The analyzed zone underlines the most important and in the same time representative animals agricultural production. It studied the dynamics of the years 2006 and 2007, for total meat production (flesh weight tone), total milk (thousands of hl) and honey extracted (tones):

- The meat production in Constanta County represents 34,2% of the total Southeast region in 2006, and 36,9% in 2007.
- The milk production is 23,5% and 24,5% respectively;
- The extracted honey production draws attention over the apiculture potential; the honey quantity represents 14,8% in 2006 and 23,7% in 2007, considering the total production in the Southeast region. It can be added to that the special quality of this product, which is appreciated and categorized by the foreign partners as being ecological honey.

Producers in private farms obtain the majority of these productions, meat, milk and honey.

## **THE TOURISTIC POTENTIAL WITHIN THE GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE OF THE LITTORAL**

In order to obtain a complete study of the agrotourism development at the seaside, we have to consider not only the agricultural potential, but also the natural and touristic potential of the studied zone.

The Black Sea littoral represents the East borderline of Romania. The position of the littoral in the Southeast of the region, the sun shining for 10-11 hours/daily in summer, the constant daily temperature, the sea water, the curative mud, the sea breeze, together with the fact that the Black Sea is a closed continental sea are factors that transform the Romanian littoral into a very attractive zone.

From Constanta to Southern part there are the watering places Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Techirghiol, Costinești, Mangalia Nord, Olimp, Neptun, Jupiter, Cap Aurora, Venus, Saturn,

having an accommodation capacity of almost 100000 places, several sanatoriums, balneary medical cabinets, entertainment equipments etc.

Mainly the Danube River represents the hydrologic network, which is in Northern-Eastern, and when poring into the sea it forms a delta. The Danube Delta has three main channels: Chilia, Sulina and Sfantul Gheorghe, all including almost 4000 km<sup>2</sup>.

The specific rural tourism imposes the analyzing of specific forms, considering the camping, and the vacation unities, touristic pensions (including both the urban and the rural ones), the holiday villages, the agrotouristic pensions, the touristic halting place, and the accommodation places. All these unities of touristic reception represent only 8,8 - 9,0% of the total of Constanta county; the number of registered agrotouristic pensions is almost non-existent.

### **THE AGROTOURISTIC OFFER OF S.C. SOSHIDO S.R.L. COSTINEȘTI**

The company S.C. SOSHIDO S.R.L. COSTINEȘTI was founded in 2003, and it has tourism as the objective of activity. Its own reduced financial resources and the impossibility of assuring the guarantee for a long-term credit bank have determined the adoption of strategies for slowly improving the construction of a small pension. The obtained financial resources plus the obtaining of external financing would develop the business.

The first realized objective was the SORINA pension, built in Costinesti resort, Dolphin street, no 56, and 3 small houses having 3 rooms (bathrooms included), built on the available ground around the pension.

The manager's preoccupation was that to get a high degree of occupation during the summer season, and to get incomes during the extra season. So there was a permanent contact with the tourism agencies in the country, and with the student environment, and the prices applied were of 5-10% smaller than other pensions in the same zone.

For the extra season period there were agreements signed with Vodafone, RomTelecom, for accommodation of their staff working around.

The strategy of developing business has to take into consideration the following principles:

- Put good use of the opportunities for Dobrogea area, and of the tendencies that manifest: agrotourism and ecotourism;
- The diversity of the offered services package, and the assurance of the optimal report quality/price;
- Improving the concurrencies force;
- Implementation of the Standards of Quality, which can permit to draw the attention of foreign tourists;

The consequence of applying these principles must be found in the extension of the business figure, and in improving the rentability of the activity.

1. *Construction of a floating ecological small hotel*
2. *Construction of two pensions, having the dimensions of the existing one*
3. *Bus acquisition* for tourists' transportation to Tulcea, so as to get on the floating hotel, or for other touristic itineraries.
4. *Founding a micro-farm.* This project aims to introduce in pensions the self-preparing meals for tourists, using fresh and ecological products.

The financial resources needed for sustaining the investment projects can be partially assured by individual funds. After prospecting the financial market, it was chosen the financial solution using the individual funds, together with the external non-refundable funds, which include the ways of supporting the tourism.

#### **BUILDING OF A SMALL FLOATING HOTEL WITH AN ECOLOGICAL NAVAL MODULUS FOR PASSANGERS TRANSPORTATION WITHIN THE INSIDE WATERS OF THE DANUBE DELTA**

The realization of an ecological modulus creates firstly a competitive advantage, plus it represents a project of interest for external non-refundable financial funds. The project is part of the long-term strategy, which has as main objective the integral satisfaction of demands by diversification of the touristic products and improving their quality as well.

The documentation for funding was made in conformity with the Guide for Funding Funds, published on the site of Ministry of European Integration, and it includes essential data about the firm's history, the project's objectives and its future development. As the projection of future financial fluxes are presented in the Guide, generally speaking, it was used the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), recommended for PHARE, SAPARD, ISPA programs, etc, previously used in Romania. The initial term for realizing this project was the first part of the year 2007, but taking into consideration the uncertainty of accessing the European funds, it was decided to postpone it for 2008.

The main legislative norms taken into consideration were the Regulations 1083 and 1080, elaborated in December 2006 by the Ministry of European Integration, which put agreement between the inside legislation with the communitarian one, and it refers to general norms referring to accessing the *EU Structural Funds*, respectively the *European Funds for Regional Development*.

The Regional operational program for 2007-2013 includes between priorities the "*Developing of regional and local tourism*". It was studied the norms of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), concerning the implementation of

phase II (2007-2009), the implementation of the communitarian legislation for the environment, and the implementation of phase III (2010-2014) of finalizing the environment programs.

The co-financing funds are non-refundable, but they imply obligations on average terms concerning the project's development.

Description of the project:

The company has a boathouse that can be transformed into a floating hotel (4 stars), as accommodation for the tourists in the Danube Delta. This hotel will have a capacity of 22+3, and it can assure all services needed for realization of organized tourism. This boathouse, on which the hotel will be built, will be transported in the interest zones for the tourists, plenty of flora and fauna, for them to feel the coming of nature.

Also, another objective of this project is the construction of an ecological ship for the tourists, who would like to spend their holidays in the Delta.

It will have a capacity of 22, being an easy boat, having small size, and being able to enter the labyrinth of Delta.

The strong point of such an investment is that it uses as fuel the energy of 2 electrical accumulators (replaced after 4 years), and the boat has march autonomy for 6 hours. Also this type of 100% electrical motor is noiseless, the main demand for organizing ecological and attractive tourism in zone.

*The results and the impact to the environment:*

- The realization of ecological tourism in the Reservation, by eliminating the phonic pollution and the damages, which would have been made by motors consuming conventional fuels;
- The applying of the most modern non-polluted techniques and technologies;
- The realization of a filter system for residues within the floating hotel.

By these investments, the company will impose itself on the inside and the external plans for its new offered services. Taking into account the financial aspect, the financial emitted fluxes will sustain the implementation of the future projects.

Financially speaking, the firm can support this effort, the evidence being the financial projection, which was done both for the previous activity, and for the future activity, taking into account the new financial target to be supported.

Hence the fact that it is possible to offer the tourists these new services will prolong the period of staying at the Delta, and to put maximum good use of the touristic season at the Delta and the littoral, considering the *complex agrotouristic offer*:

- Accommodation in Costinesti sea resort,
- Touristic itineraries in Dobrogea, using the own transportation,



- Holiday at the Danube Delta, including the visiting of the natural reservations by personal ecological boat, and accommodation

- The agrotouristic element, represented by the possibility to assure some food by using the personal farm in Limanu.

The implementation of this project will get:

- Creating of accommodation and ways of ecological transport in the zone,
- 18 new jobs directly shaped, 39 new jobs indirectly shaped in the region,
- The support of the project at the end of external funding is realized in agreement with the financial projection and the firm's budget of incomes and outlay.

- The improving of the quality of services and of working productivity by using the organized and ecological tourism,

- The reducing of costs with approximately 60% for the offered services by elimination of the intermediate chains,

- The improving of the business figure with 31% in the first year of activity,

- Minimum 3960 persons will profit by the services offered in the first year.

### **BUILDING THE COMPLEX OF PENSIONS SORINA 2 AND SORINA 3**

By these investments, the company will impose itself on the inside and the external plans for its new offered services. Taking into account the financial aspect, the financial emitted fluxes will sustain the implementation of the future projects.

Financially speaking, the firm can support this effort, the evidence being the financial projection, which was done both for the previous activity, and for the future activity, taking into account the new financial target to be supported.

The realization of the investment will lead to put good use of the opportunities and to diminish the weak points and the threatening.

By this project, S.C. SOSHIDO intends to build 2 pensions in Costinesti sea resort, so as to put good use of the opportunities.

The company owns a land having a surface of approximate 1000 meters, placed in the A zone of Costinesti sea resort. The soil has an opening of 24 meters, the main way of access in the resort, and it is placed perfectly from the beach (30 meters), and from the other objectives of touristic or business interests (which are separately described in a chapter of the present plan of business).

The land has all utilities needed for developing touristic activities: power energy, water, sewerage, telephones and internet-cable networks. On this land the enterpriser intends to build two pensions; each of them has 10double rooms and a restaurant.

The construction of this complex of pensions means a 1,3 millions euros investment, from where 100.000 euros represents the land (already bought), and 1,2 millions is the construction itself. The phases of realization of this investment and the capital allocation will be developed during one-year period. The complex of pensions will be easy for accessing by every ways of transport.

The stipulated results and impact:

- Assuring the accommodations conditions on the level of demands and exigencies of the international tourism;
- Improving the degree of comfort will stimulate the improving of criteria and degree of occupation, the business figure, both during the season, and extra season, while showing a directly effect on the development of the staff's number for services.
- Reducing with 30% the costs for sportsmen tourists, groups of pupils, and students.

*The results and the economic impact:*

- Reducing with approx. 60% the offered services due to elimination of the intermediate chains,
- Improving of business figure with 31% in the first year of activity;
- Minimum 500 persons will profit by the services offered in the first year.

## **THE MICROFARM**

The implications of this project are very complex, while it aims:

- Developing the scale of services offered by the complex of pensions by preparing the food. The obtained products are ecological, and that is the strong point, especially for attracting foreign tourists.
  - The costs for production are administrated directly by the firm, and they are more reduced than the prices on the market applied by intermediates.
  - The quality and freshness of products are guaranteed; they are picked up in the day of using.
  - The position of the farm on the Shore of Limanu Lake permits the fitting out of a boathouse for fishing and campfires in the evenings.
  - Close to this microfarm, there are two sheepfolds and a cows farm, and by contacting their owners, the tourists of the pensions can visit them, so as to attend the spectacle of milking and preparing the diary-produces.

This project can fit the tendencies that manifest within the international tourism: eco and agrotourism. The consequence of its realization will mean the significant improving of the

market rate, mainly external, with incomes, which permit supporting the development on long terms.

*Income and Outlay Estimation:*

This type of project is conceived as part of business, not as a single one. Consequently, from the financial point of view, it acts over the income and the general outlay of the firm.

*Incomes*

The realized products and the extra-offered services it is said to determine an improvement with 30% of the business figure of the complex of pensions. It is not taken into account the incomes provided by services offered to tourists who get accommodation in other pensions and hotels; that is considered as casual activity used only when circumstances when there are no demands from their own tourists.

Total annual pensions incomes: 453.600 EURO

Project Incomes:  $453.600 \times 30\% = 136.080$  EURO

The project has as effects the diminishing of the outlay determined by vegetables supplies, and that leads to improving the pensions' general outlay with 5%; that represents incomes for the project and it determines an improving with 30% of the business figure, and reducing the supply's costs with approx. 50%, in comparison with the market.

The specific *feature* of this project is that it does not realize direct incomes, but it helps the general activity, the receipts and the costs being supported by the pensions.

The SWOT analysis presents the synthesis of the main trumps and perils, which glide over an economic activity. The knowledge of that is essential for conceiving a strategy that can turn account of the very strong points, and it can combat the weak ones.

The analysis underlines a very good organized activity, with positive economic-social results, but also a series of perils. Their elimination is guaranteed by the firm's development, and its consolidation on the touristic market. That is the reason why I considered adequate the analysis of the previsions, taking into account the benefit provided by this project.