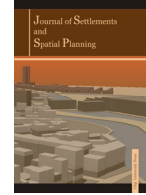




Centre for Research on Settlements and Urbanism

Journal of Settlements and Spatial Planning

Journal homepage: <http://jssp.reviste.ubbcluj.ro>



Sustainable Development and Implications of Rural Tourism in the Development of Călărași County

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Keywords: *rural area, rural tourism, tourism, agriculture, sustainable development*

ABSTRACT

Our work aims to contribute to a better knowledge of how the countryside in the south of Romania and, in particular, in Călărași County, the existing values stored here, as well as those ignored or forgotten address the complex issue of rural tourism in an area with tourism potential but poorly known and promoted. Integrating agriculture into the market is ensured by strengthening the private type of economic organization in which natural processes go hand in hand with economic mechanisms in a manner that creates a balance of organic demand – demand. For this purpose, open development strategies are needed that exploit the advantages created by the dominant share of private ownership in agriculture and ensure intensive development to achieve competitive supply of agricultural products and an expanded market for all types of farms, with wide access to market products and production factors. Our paper makes a diagnosis of the evaluated space arguments and outlines a possible strategy to develop tourism in the studied area. Sustainable development and the implications for the tourism development concept is put into a complex, multidimensional perspective, while the contents of general tourism and of rural tourism, in particular, is integrated into this development. Seasonal and permanent tourism activities can be provided by exploiting the rational development of settlements and the existence of equal opportunities for development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge, research and sustainable development of rural areas are vital activities for a country, both in the rural dimension, expressed through the area owned and through the share of employment in productive activities, in social services, in cultural tourism, and in environmental protection.

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee of the Council of Europe welcomes the report of the European Charter on the countryside. Rural areas of Europe represent 85% of its total area and affect, directly or indirectly, more than 50% of the continent. Economic growth, at a global level, forces

national economies and local communities to adapt, to maintain and to develop social and economic competitiveness through restructuring, both in rural areas themselves and in how to use and exploit them.

In this context and as a result of Romania becoming a member of the European Union, we will present the situation in Romania, with Călărași County as case study, in terms of rural tourism and agrotourism.

2. THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

In this context, the paper entitled “Sustainable Development and Implications of Rural Tourism in the

Development of Călărași County” aims to contribute to a better understanding of how the countryside in the south of Romania and, especially, of the Călărași County, the values stored here, often ignored or forgotten address complex issues of rural tourism in an area with great tourism potential, but poorly known and promoted.

Research undertaken on the role of agrotourism has shown that it has an important impact on social, cultural and especially economic development of the area.

The idea that we followed throughout our scientific approach was to research this subject in a systemic manner, to use an organic blend of theoretical statements and references to the investigated reality taking into account that the south of Romania may be driven by agrotourism. On the other hand, we tried a pertinent analysis and one applied to the situation of the phenomenon, placing it within the broader context of sustainable development and of the importance given to Romanian rural tourism, considered a strategic

sector of the European Union. Our paper makes a diagnosis of the evaluated space arguments and outlines a possible strategy to develop tourism in the studied area.

We suggested ways of obtaining brand tourist products that express awareness, to support the preservation and promotion of local identity and a competitive offer.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Features and scope of agrotourism. Rural areas through their components satisfy a wide range of motivations: recreation and leisure, knowledge, culture, sports, bathing, hunting and fishing.

Tourism provides a large area of coverage leisure opportunities (fig. 1). Thus, agrotourism is a means to fully achieve its rural agriculture, tourism, human, technical, and economic potential.

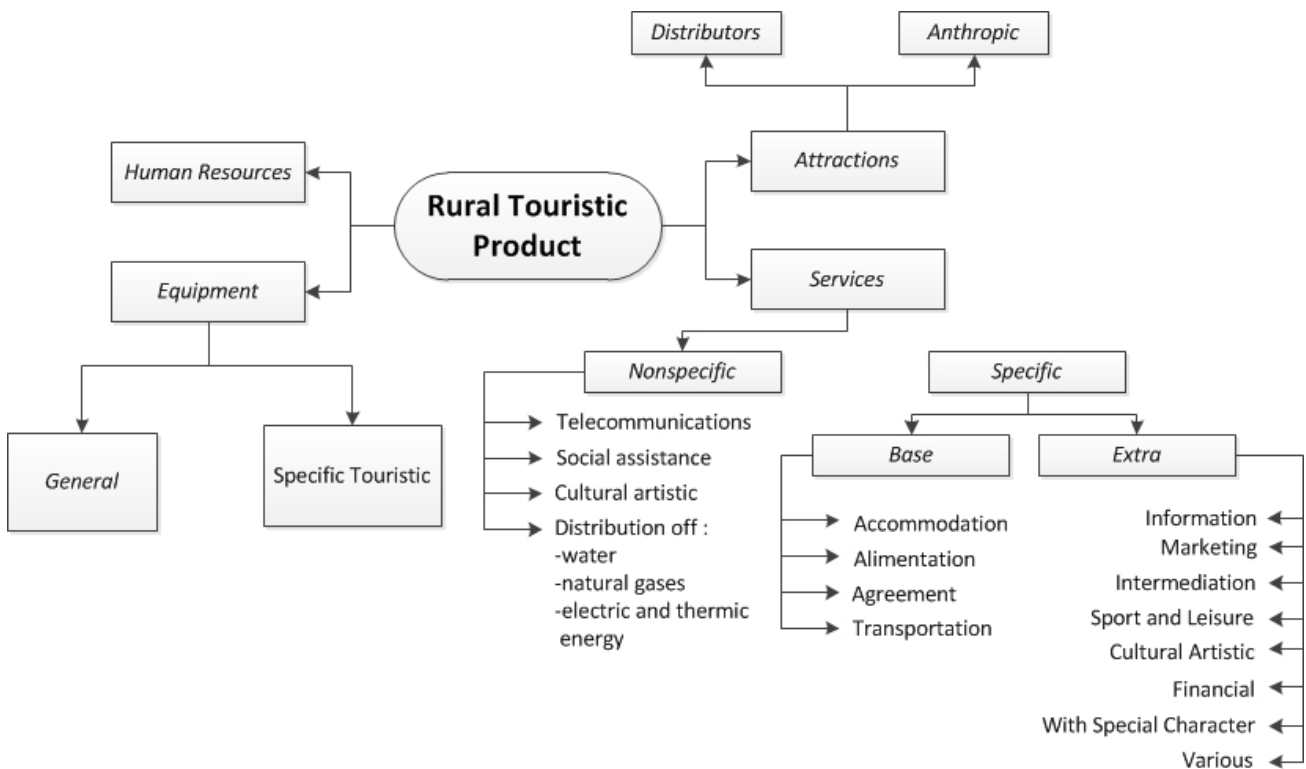


Fig. 1. Components of rural tourism products [6].

Călărași County is in south-eastern Romania, on the lower left bank of the Danube, at the Bulgarian border. In the central part is intersected by the parallel of 44° North latitude and the meridian of 27° East longitude. The county has 5,088 km², representing 2.13% of Romania.

It has 2 municipalities, 3 towns, 50 communes, and 160 villages. The administrative centre of the county is the city of Călărași, with a total of 70,000

inhabitants. The total population of the county is of 324,617, representing 1.5% of Romania. The urban area has 120,270 inhabitants (37% of the county population) and the rural area has 204,410 inhabitants (63% of the county population). Population density is 64 inhabitants/km².

In Tables 1 and 2 and in Figure 2 we showed the evolution of production and agricultural services and its dynamics, the total industry and sectors in the period

occupied by vineyards and 5 hectares of pasture, the difference of 93,602 ha was arable land. Although in most of the towns in the county the operating system was land lease and associations (e.g. Cuza Voda - 74% and 9% in rental association, Lupșanu - 78% and 14% in rental association, Ulmu - 95% in association, Ulmeni - 81% and 9% in rental association, etc.), there were communities where over 50% of the agricultural land was operated in individual systems (e.g. Căscioarele -

85%, Tamadau - 65%, Belciugatele - 60%, Fundulea - 61%, Budești - 59%, Frumușani, Nana - 58%, etc). With the current size of individual farms in Romania, rational use of land lease requires stimulation of the partnership and ownership concentration by buying farmland.

Current legislation allows local increase in the size of farms and encourages land use directly by the owner or the tenant.

Table 2. The dynamics of agricultural production of goods and services, in Călărași County. Thousand lei current prices.

Year UM	Total		Vegetal		Animal		Agrarian Services	
	thousand lei	(%)	thousand lei	(%)	thousand lei	(%)	thousand lei	(%)
2002	779,705.9	100.0	548,646.7	100.0	208,718.8	100.0	22,340.4	100.0
2003	747,892.4	95.9	391,184.5	71.3	330,687.1	158.4	26,020.8	116.5
2004	918,565.7	117.8	553,370.0	100.9	339,917.8	162.9	25,277.9	113.1
2005	1,688,465.0	216.6	1,218,727.0	222.1	434,645.9	208.2	35,091.8	157.1
2007	1,738,264.0	222.9	1,336,817.0	243.7	364,199.0	174.5	37,248.0	166.7
2009	2,041,731.0	261.9	1,514,423.0	276.0	488,767.0	234.2	38,541.0	172.5

Note Agricultural production of goods and services is according to Eurostat methodology on "Economic Accounts for Agriculture".
Source: Statistic Research – County Statistics, DADR Călărași.

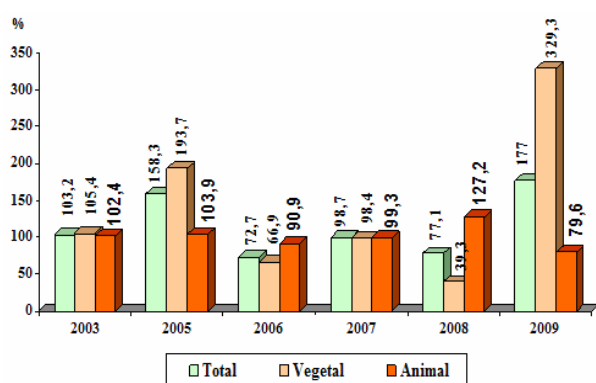


Fig. 3. Dynamics of total agricultural production and industry sectors (previous year = 100) [7].

4. CONCLUSIONS

Non-agricultural activities conducted in farms in the Călărași County were defined by, on one hand, specific territorial and non-agricultural activities, and on the other hand, village and farms located in a permanent evolution. In the units with legal personality they also reported the existence of such activities but, unlike individual holdings, they are in lower number but with a much higher capacity.

The natural conclusion is that the complexity of non-agricultural activities in the area studied is still small. All this shows a shift in the implementation of non-agricultural activities in farms in the Călărași area

to which reference may be made especially for the sale of vegetables, pork and beef, milk and milk products, which is precisely where the production of raw material has high potentials.

Attractions and local attractiveness. Currently, in agritourism many entrepreneurs work often in isolation, at the individual household level, lacking a unified concept in the preparation and launching of attractive touristic offers.

Forms of cultural and religious tourism. Religious buildings are the main objectives (e.g. monasteries and churches). Very few settlements disappeared in the rural area. Thus, rural settlements in Călărași show a continuity of living in this region. Rural tourism is one of the key factors of the economy in the analyzed area having significant tourism potential.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research that we are realizing is enshrined in the "Project Alborán: territorial development in Northern Morocco", financed by AECID (A1-036023/11).

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