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ABSTRACT

Keywords: *marketing, strategy, projects, agro pensions*

Agrotourism in Romania represents one of the main types of tourism with the highest potential and, its development represents for rural environment a way of sustainable development, both on economic level and on social and cultural level.

The last years had shown the fact that the capitalization for the tourism purpose of the natural, cultural and anthropic potential from some rural areas represents an important chance for economic revival and a solution for new job opportunities, as well an opportunity to promote Romania on international level.

Bucovina is one of the Romania's main touristic areas due to its favorable relief conditions which it owes, to its beauty of landscapes, purity of air, waters, mountain, rural traditions and customs preserved up to present, to its Moldavian gastronomy specific, and not last to its well known hospitality of the inhabitants.

Bucovina also represents the land of monasteries inherited from Moldavia's brave rulers, but as well favors the practice of a lot, different ways of tourism such as: mountain tourism, balneary tourism, cultural tourism, equestrian tourism.

Although various inhabitants of Bucovina touristic areas understood to capitalize the existent resources in this area and to contribute to the development of accommodation infrastructure through transformation of their own houses into pensions or through building of new pensions, the real potential of this area isn't intensively capitalized.

Most of the times, the main issues are related to quality and standards of the offered services, hosts' engagement in agrotouristic activities, lack of collaboration between local authorities and pensions' administrators., but of course, infrastructure and the financing resources, as well as in many other areas in the country, are the most critical of all issues.

Doctoral thesis "Research regarding the efficiency of agritourism activities of Bucovina" approaches subjects such as development level of agrotourism in the studied area and the possibility of its growth, local public authorities engagement in agrotourism supporting and promoting and it presents some solutions for the efficiency of agrotouristic activities both on pensions level and entire region.

The present paper is set-up in seven chapters and it has as goal the identification of the



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resources and factors' comprehensive grasp which can lead to furtherance of efficiency and development strategies of agrotourism activities in Bucovina area.

In **chapter I** it is presented the actual status of the researches in agrotourism domain under the conceptual approach aspect, of agrotourism actual development status in some European countries and in Romania, of agrotourism development in Bucovina, and it is presented the importance of marketing in agrotourism.

Presently, agrotourism is one of the most dynamic type of tourism practiced in most of the European countries, as well as in our country, inducing/ stimulating economic development through capitalization of local resources from rural environment.

This kind of tourism offers the possibility to locals to supplement their income through capitalization of traditional home made products and it compensates the rural lack of jobs, contributing this way to human resources development.

The advantages of this type of tourism have stirred over time the interest of researchers and specialized organizations to define the elements which characterize this concept, in the first part of the chapter being presented definitions taken from specialized literature concerning the rural tourism activities and agrotourism.

According to World Tourism Organization, rural tourism is defined as being “a kind of tourism which includes any organized touristic activity and lead in rural space by the local population, capitalizing local touristic resources (natural, cultural, historical, human), as well as subsidies, structural touristic, including pensions and agrotouristic farms”.

In the specialized literature, one can find the following definition for the agrotourism concept: “welcoming and hospitality activity accomplished by individual agricultural entrepreneurs or associations, as well as by their families utilizing their own establishments (houses, exploitations)” or a rented one, thus the performed activity to be in a complementarity report with afferent activities land cultivation, forestry and animal breeding, these being required to furthermore be main activities (**Ceccacci, 1999**).

In this chapter there are also presented aspects concerning the evolution of rural tourism and agrotourism in some European countries like Austria, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Ireland also, as well as the evolution of agrotourism in Romania and of the studied area.

In the European countries there were facilitated the creation of associations and organizations to promote the rural tourism, such as EROTER network, established in 1990



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which gathers 35 professional organizations from 28 European countries, including Romania. In the most developed countries of Europe, these organizations got involved in national programs and laws to support and to develop the agrotourism activities, these being role models for the other state members.

In Romania, beginning with the 70's, there were undertaken actions in order to study and to promote rural tourism and agrotourism, however these were restrained by the political period and the restrictions of those times, it was only after 1990 when have started the promoting actions of rural activities and agrotourism on organizational, legislative, research and international cooperation level.

Bucovina's touristic evolution, area known as touristic center since XIXth century, is presented in this chapter from historical point of view, from the point of view of its potential and touristic views, of its peculiar elements which characterize the village of Bucovina, as well as of the effectuated researches for touristic characterization and promoting of this area.

Chapter I ends with the presentation of marketing importance in agrotourism development, presenting some theoretical aspects which need to be applied in achievement of promoting strategies of this domain.

Part II of the doctoral thesis consists of 6 chapters and deals with the obtained results and their interpretation.

In **chapter II**, there are presented the goal, the objectives and the research methodology, the scientific accomplished steps having as ground the factors knowing which can lead to supporting of some efficient and development strategies of agrotourism activities in Bucovina region. For this, there were approached aspects related to economic development, infrastructure's development, social and cultural aspects as well as touristic potential in the studied area.

The main hunted objectives were knowing of the national and European context the agrotourism is practiced, characterization of the main touristic indicators concerning the evolution of the rural tourism and agrotourism in Bucovina, diagnostic analysis accomplishment of the studied area's touristic potential, evaluation of the projects and marketing implemented strategies for agrotourism promoting in Bucovina in order to identify some efficient solutions of agrotourism activities.

The methods, techniques and the used instruments to accomplish the above mentioned objectives refer to accomplishment of an economic analysis through statistical data analysis, SWOT analysis comparison method and direct observation through accomplishing a monograph



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and a social-economic inquiry.

Research methodology respects the accomplishing elements of the doctoral thesis concerning data searching and gathering, conjectures forming and their confirmation through research results, display of conclusion and proposals touching the studied area.

Within the scientific intercession, there were accomplished case studies concerning rural touristic and agrotouristic pensions of Bucovina, through implementing of a questionnaire to a number of 30 proprietors of rural touristic and agrotouristic pensions, case study concerning the streamlining possibilities of agrotouristic activities from Vama commune, Suceava county and accomplishment of a compared study concerning the evolution of the economic efficiency indicators at Bucovina Lodge pension.

Chapter III deals with characterizing elements of the natural background, organizational and institutional of the studied area such as: geographical disposal, surface, population, administrative- territorial unities, hydrographical network, climate, relief, natural resources and soils. Also, in this chapter there are presented data concerning economic activity in the studied area, peculiar characteristics of the rural area, culture, population and territorial arrangement.

Bucovina as studied area, mostly overlaps Suceava county, which is situated in the North-East of Romania and in North has neighbors Ukraine, Botoani county in East, Iași county in South-East, Neamă and Harghita counties in South, Mureș county in South-West and Bistrița-Năsăud and Maramureș counties in West.

From the point of view of surface, Suceava county is the second as surface after Timiș. The high size of the county explains the geological variety of the landscape as well as the natural resources.

Related to the highest geographical unities of the country, the county's territory partially overlaps Oriental Carpathians and Suceava table land and it is composed of 65,4% mountain region and 34,6% table land and subcarpathian hills. The East side of the county has a continental climate and the West side, a moderate continental climate, average air temperatures increasing from South-West towards North-East.

In **chapter IV**, “Diagnostic analysis of the touristic and agrotouristic offer in Bucovina” is presented in a synthetic way, the diagnostic analysis of the agrotouristic potential which, first of all highlights the favoring factors for tourism development in the studied area, characterizing this way a series of elements such as: geographical display and relief conditions, agricultural and forestry potential, touristic and agrotouristic potential and the evolution of the main touristic



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indicators.

As regards the restrictive factors over tourism development which diagnostic analysis highlights, these were analyzed in comparison with tough points and the opportunities within SWOT analysis, to highlight the compensation of their effects with positive elements of the studied area.

For the actual status presentation of the agrotourism development in Bucovina, there were worked out data concerning the main statistical indicators considered relevant for the touristic welcoming activity with touristic accommodation functions.

The results show that Suceava county is situated on rank 3 (273 accommodation structures) after Constanța county (679 accommodation structures) and Brașov county (537). The number of touristic welcoming structures has increased in 2011 with 11,4% compared to 2010 and with 15,7% compared to 2007. From the total number of touristic welcoming structures, the agrotouristic pensions hold a pith of 40%, compared to 25% which represent touristic pensions and 12% hotels.

Quality analysis concerning rural and agrotouristic pensions was accomplished through a questionnaire for 30 administrators, out of which 15 proprietors of rural touristic pensions, 11 proprietors of agrotouristic pensions and 4 touristic pensions. Out of these accommodation structures, 44,8% were ranked with 3 daisies, 37,9% with 2 daisies and 17,2% with 4 daisies.

For a better image accomplishment over its results, the questionnaire was structured on 5 themes, as follows: description of the touristic accommodation unity, data concerning tourists, promoting activities, rural and agrotourism tourism, agrotouristic business.

The main conclusions from the questionnaire's results shows that:

- there is a low training level of hired personnel within pensions, in over 66% of them there is only a specialized person in tourism services domain;
- over 86% of analyzed pensions are open all over the year and only 13% work during warm season;
- over 63% out of the agro alimentary products achieved within the pension are used to serve the tourists;
- out of the 30 touristic pensions analyzed, only 8 (26,7%) collaborated with the tourist agencies;
- most of the people who answered the questionnaire (70%) have a seniority 5 times higher in the agrotouristic business domain, and 58,6% consider that their business is profitable,



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and only 41,4% think the business could be profitable, but it isn't yet;

- as regards the perception of the pensions' proprietors over the development level of the rural tourism and agritourism in the studied area, the opinions are shared almost equally between those who consider that the agrotourism is developed (50%) and those who think it is weak developed (40%) and very weak developed (6,7%).

Chapter V “Projects and marketing strategies for rural tourism and agrotourism promoting in Bucovina area” presents the main implemented marketing projects by the local authorities to promote agrotourism and an evaluation of these compared to the evolution of the main touristic indicators. Out of the most important projects were “Christmas in Bucovina,” “Easter in Bucovina”, “Pilgrim in Bucovina” or “Bucovina’s Round dance”, with visible results over the increasing tourist number and a better promoting of the area on national level as well international.

In this chapter, there was also accomplished the tourism development analysis in Suceava county in the context of European funds accessing which shows that in 2011 it was ranked on 2nd place next to Arad county concerning the number of projects submitted and financed within Measure 313 – “Facilitation of the touristic activities”, for agrotouristic pensions construction or arrangement.

In **chapter VI**, called “Opportunities for efficiency of the agritouristic activities in Bucovina” it is presented the case study in Vama commune which encloses in the first part the description of the commune from the point of view of the agrotouristic potential, and in the second part the SWOT analysis of the analyzed commune, taking into account a series of aspects such as: the general tourism development environment, product policy, general infrastructure, tourism infrastructure, price policy, promoting policy and distribution policy.

In order to capitalize this analysis, there was accomplished a complex marketing strategy which watched over the development and stabilization of the intern tourism through promoting of the ethno-folkloric popular art elements of Vama commune, in order to increase Bucovina's attractiveness as a touristic destination.

Efficiency of agritourism in Vama commune was presented within Bucovina Lodge agrotouristic pension, in which there were analyzed the main economic indicators which can show that the practicing of the agrotourism activities in Vama commune can be an important source of income, as well as an important element for job opportunities and a socio-economic development of the entire community.



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The last chapter of the thesis presents the conclusions resulted within the effectuated research and the recommendations concerning some measures of efficient agrotouristic activities in Bucovina.

The european experience in the field of agritourism and studies and research in this area in some developed countries in Europe constitutes for specialists and people with decision factor in the tourism industry in our country an important source of information and successful models that can be applied in regions with tourism potential in rural areas.

The statistical data shows an evolution of the main indicators characterizing the tourist activity of accommodation who developed their activity in Bucovina in 2010 and 2011 or that were created in the last year considered, hence the conclusion that projects implemented to promote tourism in Bucovina, have made a significant contribution in this regard.

The possibilities to increase the efficiency of agrotouristic activities of Bucovina were highlighted through a case study on Vama, chosen because of high tourism potential and the geographic place in the "heart" of Bucovina. Were thus described elements such as history, geographical location and the natural environment of the village, administrative-territorial organization and the socio-economic and agrotourism issues in this area. For creating efficiency strategies and agritourism development should be aware of all these issues and achieve a SWOT analysis in this area.

Agritourism can become an important source of income for both the inhabitants of the commune Vama who want to turn their household into a structure with accommodation and meal, as well as for those who want to invest in building new agrotouristic pensions. From the result of this activity would benefit the local community through taxes paid annually by the administrators of pensions, and local producers which could find possible outlets for traditional and natural products. A very important element is the creation of jobs in the area, which would solve one of the biggest problems facing our society in the this period.