

PECULIARITIES OF DEVELOPING RURAL TOURISM AND AGRITOURISM IN THE MOUNTAINOUS ZONE OF BACAU COUNTY

S. Brezuleanu, Carmen-Olguța Brezuleanu, I.V. Ciurea, Mihalache Roxana

*University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Iasi
e-mail: stejarel@uaiasi.ro*

Abstract

Rural tourism and agritourism is both a result and a premise of the rural economy development in the mountainous zone of Bacau county, as it is under-privileged is acquiring a cost effective agriculture. These two activities can fully contribute to reaching an equilibrium in the development of the analysed zone. Thus, we have in view the following: the possibility of becoming a support for new businesses and new jobs; encouragement of local traditional activities, especially handcrafting, but also those which can determine the development of specific commerce and creation new jobs; increase of the income of the inhabitants of the rural localities which can result from the selling local resources and ecological agro food products for tourist consumption. The practice of agritourism in each administrative unit from the mountainous zone of Bacau county is possible in 2-6 pensions; their income gained by renting apartments and selling natural resources or involving tourists in agricultural or domestic activities can substantially contribute at increasing the civilization and living standard and fixation of the youth in rural localities. We consider that there must be given a certain importance to the promotion of the tourist rural product which need: the publication of some information bulletins, setting up a magazine in this field, setting up an office for informing and spreading the tourist information.

Key words: Bacau county, rural tourism, development, rural localities, administrative units

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The mountainous areas of the county Bacau has always attracted and will attract tourists, because it has something to offer and that can satisfy some reasons of people interested in tourism businesses: attractive landscapes, historical and cultural vestiges, diversity and culinary quality, recreation opportunities, hunting, fishing, winter sports etc.

The quantitative and qualitative differences of tourism resources in the mountain area of Bacau county required detailed analysis, identifying the opportunities for interdisciplinary effective realization of tourism potential existing unilateral and partial information about this work in particular regarding the physical side of the phenomenon (ie the number of settlements with private pensions, places of accommodation, the seats in hostels and even the number of tourists stay) were collected from the National Commission for Statistics, directly or indirectly through the Statistics of Bacau county, National Authority for Tourism through Tourism Licences and

Control, National Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism (ANTREC), Bacau branch.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Agro-tourism is a combination of agricultural activities with tourism services inside the farms, which is a complementary solution for supplementing the income from agriculture, with positive effects such as economic and social activities involving contact with the tourist economic, and providing partial feeding of local products.

Within the agritourist pensions there must take place at least one activity related to agriculture, animal husbandry, cultivation of different types of plants, orchards, etc.. The basis for investment in the feasibility study and supporting statement should be noted the specific activity of the beneficiary, i.e. crop farming, fruit growing, livestock farms, etc..

In the mountain area of Bacau County there are about 59 000 private farms with an average of 1.5 hectares per household agriculture, which 70% are subsistence. Most

of the population is based on agriculture and other activities such as rural tourism, handicrafts, small industry, wood processing and different services. Agricultural production goods obtained in this area is of good quality products and can be used for direct consumption or for industrialization. The breeding and cultivation of plants is extensive, with relatively preserved traditions and agricultural technical level is very low with a low productivity.

The place and role of the mountain region of Bacau county is increasingly important in rural tourism development conditions, as an alternative to raising living standards of inhabitants of this area. Agritourism and rural tourism is an evolving activity and movement of the rural tourism is a growing. This growth of agritourism activity was not followed by an appropriate methodological training in line with the requirements necessary information required by the need for research and especially economic and policy makers. This has led to a paradoxical situation in which many people have assumed a dynamic and risk making major investments in the development of private boarding houses, making the people with different occupations, managers in rural tourism. The development of service sectors, as auxiliary or complementary activities to the production of goods, increased the importance of tourism as an independent activity in Bacau, particularly in resort towns along Slanic Valley (Slănic Moldova, Tg. Ocna). Benefits to tourism and rural tourism have led to these settlements to increase their efforts to develop, they are rightly regarded as extremely important factor of regional development belonging to the services on the rise.

Recent developments in rural tourism and rural tourism in villages located in mountainous areas of Bacau county make an increasing number of tourists, who used to spend holidays in spa tourism, to move to agro tourism.

The potential for this type of tourism is represented by several factors: the original architecture of the pensions, the richness and beauty of the countryside, the variety of housing, natural environment, monasteries and churches in the area, and not lastly traditional cuisine.

The hosts are known for their hospitality, and products offered to tourists on their behalf (Pălincă or brandy, house wine or certain gifts at departure).

Also, folk art and traditions of the place are parts that can not be ignored.

Rural tourism and rural tourism in villages in the mountainous areas of Bacau County are regarded as promising options for the future, as it can achieve economic development with specific localities predominantly forestry, with favorable effects on attracting and retaining population in rural areas, boosting business favored agricultural regions in terms of natural resources and social and cultural development.

Support for tourism development is another motivation and that have multiple facets within Bacau County for carrying a varied and complex travel, fostered by the existence of interesting terrain, suitable for practicing trekking, winter sports (Nemira mountains), rest and recreation (resorts Slănic Moldova and Poiana Sarata) for tourism-treatment (Slănic Moldova, Tg. Ocna, Poiana Sărată, Doftena) weekend tourism practiced in all villages in the mountainous areas and rural tourism, supported by existence of a picturesque natural environment, the countryside with folk and cultural valences of historical values (Slănic Moldova Oituz Asău, Tescani, Zemes, Agas, Berzunti, Ghimeș-Faget, Doftena, Moinești, Tg. Ocna and Comănești). In conclusion, including tourism and agro tourism area in the tertiary sector of the economy is fully justified by the fact that the activities of interest, despite the complexity and heterogeneity of services, are the excellent work benefits. However, due to interference with other tourist services productive and unproductive activities in the tertiary sector, the economic indicators used to characterize the volume of tourism revenues are not expressive enough to allow accurate determination of the share of tourism in the third sector and its place in the overall economy.

In the context of the economic situation in the mountain area of tourism and agritourism Bacau county needs a change of attitude and strategy for the achievement of targets to revive this area and develop it to

European standards. In these circumstances, upgrading and promoting the local tourism product is one of the objectives of the employers from tourism and catering operators in Bacau County - ASOTUR, which through its work with its members and thus became its establishment until today, an active presence in relations with decision makers involved in the smooth operation of economic and social life in order to increase the competitiveness of tourism supply Bacau.

Agri-tourism is an industry whose raw material is the environment and attractive areas generate a wide range of forms, able to respond to various tourist motivations. Mountainous areas of Bacau County has a high tourism potential for both domestic investors and for foreign ones. However, this area has not witnessed an appropriate development, both because of the burdensome tax system, particularly for micro and tourism sector because of low coverage. Saving solution is fiscal relaxation, which would contribute to increased investment and attractiveness of the area, as international tourist destination on the national market.

An area with a rich agro-tourist potential is the Slanic Valley, well known by tourists mainly because of mineral springs and spas of Slănic Moldova.

The geographical position of Slanic Valley met, in addition to environmental quality with favorable effects for ensuring the functionality of a city spas and a number of anthropogenic factors.

Slanic Valley is fully humanized, but especially the bottom, where the rate of afforestation is lower and the land is used mostly for hay, pasture and crop production specific mountain area (potatoes, cabbage, etc.) Rural settlements are the diffuse type, linear valley cores stabilized slurry concentration on cones or pods narrow terraces below: Cireșoia, Cerdac, Satu Nou. The basic occupation of the rural population is farming, followed by petroleum, mining industry field and forest economy. Agricultural activity takes place in small individual households. Agricultural works are mostly by means of animal traction. The social context of Valley Slanic is represented by a number of 5388 inhabitants, 2913 men

and 2475 women, with a population density of 120.3 inhabitants per km².

Management area is 44.8 km² Slanic Valley, encompassing a total area of buildings, including residential units in 132,543 common units.

Of the total number of dwellings, some 98.6% are privately owned, while state ownership has only 0.8%.

The particularity of closed basin (hollow) to open only the lower basin to the confluence with Trotuș, influenced the development of communication lines on a single route. Road is frequently organized with the vehicles Tg Ocna till Slănic Moldova. The route Slănic Moldova-Poiana Sărata from Oituz valley is occasionally circulated by mechanical means of traction used in the fields of forestry and oil. The roads have an unfavorable position for localities along Slanic Valley which was built to the west, southwest, on the direction of air currents with the highest frequency for them.

Slanicului Valley's natural tourism resources are those, which over the years have been preserved in some form, untouched by human activities. It is well known that the geographical position gives Slanic Valley the status "Pearl of Moldavia", because the three natural elements defining the structure of landscape and territory: Mountains Nemira, mineral springs and salt.

The latest data recorded at service development and integration of the Bacau County Council, in Slanic Valley and its surroundings there are over 250 beds in network agritourism - Households and pensions. Settlements in which tourists can enjoy rustic rural tourism services are Berzunti, Slănic Moldova Așău, Poiana Sărata, Targu Ocna, Doftana and Oituz.

In the area studied, namely the cities of Slanic Valley we identified the following types of agritourist households: households made for their needs, households built their own needs and alternative rural tourism and rural tourism, households constructed particular purpose Agritourism available of all equipment and facilities necessary to meet agritourism needs.

Development of rural tourism, agritourism, ecotourism will lead to sustainable economic development of rural areas due to the multiplier effect of this

activity. It will feel positive influence on the environment, agriculture, transport, construction and food processing industries, services in various fields.

To diversify the tourism offer, on the one hand, and to enhance trade in souvenirs, on the other hand, an important development that is expected to experience the arts and crafts a characteristic of rural areas in the past. As a component of rural tourism product will be done to influence the amount of popular customs and traditions and for greater choice in cultural and educational activities.

Supporting development of rural tourism and agritourism activity by the local bodies has resulted in improved dialogue with social partners, by providing transparent tax legislation and procedures, providing information for public, professional and civic attitudes and behavior, seeking to create or strengthen positive public relations and at the same time realistic.

Co-financed projects carried European funds and / or government funds at county level during the period 2001-2009 have focused areas: improving the professional performance of the tour operators, including owners of pensions, improve business infrastructure, improving social services , infrastructure in towns county for easier access for tourists and beyond, promoting the county's image and tourist infrastructure. Thus in tenders organized by SAPARD, PHARE (with its subcomponents), ISPA RICOP or government funding programs, local governments in Bacau County, in partnership with operators of private or NGO sector have obtained funding which allowed the resolution of priorities of development programs.

Measure 313 'encouragement for tourist "to fit the axis III - Improving quality of life in rural areas and diversification of rural economy and overall development aims of tourism activities in rural areas to help increase jobs and alternative income, and more attractive countryside.

According to the applicant to access the guide Measure 313 - encouragement for tourist "version 03 of September 2009 under the PNDR benchmarks refer to: create and maintain jobs through tourism activities, particularly youth and women, adding value the travel industry, creating, improving and

diversifying tourism services and infrastructure, increasing the number of tourists and the duration of visits.

The specific objectives are accompanied by a series of operational objectives which include: increasing and improving of tourist small-scale information systems development and promote tourism, create recreational facilities for access to natural areas of tourist interest.

Beneficiaries eligible for support through measure 313 are micro-businesses, individuals (not registered as economic agents) who will be employed as to the date of signing the financing contract to authorize with a minimum status of authorized person and to function as micro, municipalities through their legal representatives in accordance with national legislation, and made only intercommunity development associations between common and established under national legislation (Law no. 215/2001 on local public administration with subsequent modifications and Government Ordinance no. 26 / 2000 on associations and foundations, with subsequent modifications) as well as NGOs, as defined in national legislation.

Financing a project undertaken by the Measure 313 is addressed by PNDR of tourist areas in accordance with the classification provided for in national law (Order of the Minister for Small and Medium Business, Commerce, Tourism and Liberal Professions no. 636/2008 for approving the methodological norms on classification of tourist)

For new investments, modernization and expansion of tourist for rural non Agro, comfort level and quality of services offered by the project must achieve a minimum quality standard of 3 daisies / stars. Investment in agrotourist reception structures will meet the definition of rural tourism in this file date and level of comfort and quality of services offered by the project must achieve a minimum quality standard of Margaret.

The beneficiary or legal responsibility to prove ownership of project management skills marketing or business agreement proposed by the project (experience / training courses completed - at least at the initiation, qualification courses, etc.) Or to acquire up the last payment.

Beneficiaries who had proposed an income-generating activities, must declare on their honor that the total amount of public aid grant access to it does not exceed 200,000 euros over a period of up to 3 years to tax.

According to detailed procedures for the classification of tourist, agricultural and tourist reception facilities will be made up to 8 rooms. Other types of tourist with accommodation will have a maximum of 15 rooms on completion of the investment, regardless of the type of investment proposed by the project (modernization, expansion, new investment).

For investment in structures other than interest receipt of agritourism, comfort level and quality of services offered by the project must achieve a minimum standard of 3 daisies calitate7 / stars, and for investment in rural tourism of tourist, comfort level and quality of services offered by the project must achieve a minimum quality standard daisy.

Types of eligible investments and expenses relating to: investment in infrastructure of tourist, investment in recreational activities, investment in tourism infrastructure bookmarks, etc., develop and / or marketing of tourism services related to rural tourism.

Investments such measures must comply with the Government Decision no. 224/2008 on setting the framework for implementation of measures co-financed by European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

For investments in public non-generating profit, the intensity of public support grant will be up to 100% of the total eligible costs and will not exceed the amount of 200,000 Euro / project, and for investment profits, the intensity of public support grant will be up to 70% of total eligible costs and will not exceed 70,000 Euro / project for investment in rural tourism projects or 50% of total eligible costs and will not exceed 200.000 Euro / project for other types of investment in rural tourism.

CONCLUSIONS

Agro-tourism has developed in recent years in good conditions in the localities in the mountain area of Bacau county having a

favorable tourist potential, with results that can be considered meritorious: approval, classification and certification hosts and their connection to national associations (ANTREC, ASOTUR).

Between agritourism and economic and social development of settlements in the Slanic Valley inter-relationship exists: the specific nature of the territory puts his mark on the scale and intensity of tourist traffic and the presence of rural tourism in this area stimulate its economic and social development.

The fact that in carrying on agritourist activities has set a number of relationships between tourist and host, or the places they visit, making travel in the area studied phenomenon is strongly influenced by the particular territory, which constitute material support for the work.

We recommend diversifying and improving the quality of agritourist pensions current bidders and the creation of a data bank and monitored by specific indicators to highlight new opportunities to support the business of agritourism.

REFERENCES

- [1] Brezuleanu S., Brezuleanu Carmen Olguța, Moraru R.A.: Methodologies used to assess the development of rural and agri-tourism in the NE of Romania, Universitatea de Științe Agricole și Medicină Veterinară, Facultatea de Zootehnie, Lucrări Științifice, Suport CD, ISSN 1454-7368, 2008.
- [2] Brezuleanu, S.: Studies regarding the sustainable development of rural tourism and agri-tourism in the Vatra Dornei microzone, Suceava County. Universitatea de Științe Agricole și Medicina Veterinară "Ion Ionescu de la Brad", Iași, România, Cercetări Agronomice în Moldova, 42, 2009.
- [3] Ciurea I. V., Brezuleanu S., Ungureanu G.: Posibilități de dezvoltare a spațiului rural din zona Oituz – județul Bacău, sat Poiana Sărată, Lucrări științifice, U.A.M.V. Iași, seria Agronomie, vol. 41, 1998.
- [4] Tacu Al. P. și colab: Turismul rural românesc. Metode și tehnici de cercetare, Editura Pan Europe, Iași, 2002.
- [5] * * * : Ghidul Solicitantului pentru accesarea MĂSURII 313 – „Încurajarea activităților turistice” Versiunea 03 din septembrie 2009.