

ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE MOUNTAIN AREA OF DAMBOVITA COUNTY

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Abstract. *Currently, it's necessary to develop a sustainable tourism that doesn't disturb the quality life of tourist destination population and which contribute to preserve the local culture and traditions. A project who aims the developing of tourism in the Dambovita County is related to the one's that concerns the Ministry of Tourism: development and modernization of the ski area in the center of Romania. In this way, Dambovita County Council has initiated two projects: "The mountain tourist Resort Padina Cave" and the "Eco-turist Leaota Resort" which will be concreted in collaboration with the Arges County Council. The development of the two resorts will contribute to the conservation of mountain environment, respecting the scientific nature of protected areas.*

Keywords: sustainable development, sustainable tourism, development projects, protected areas.

1. The principals of the sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism development it satisfied by the needs of present tourists and host regions and at the same time protects and enhances the opportunities for the future.

The relation between the tourism and the environment can be developed in a way that will sustain, on long term, the touristic activity. At his turn, tourism it's encouraged to not affect thru his functioning the degradation of the environment.

From the middle of 9th century, the sustainable development of tourism has become an important priority for the European institutions. In "*Working together for the future of European tourism*", the European Commission has proposed to "promote sustainable development activities in tourism field in Europe through the interpretation and implementation of 21 Agenda". This proposal has received a strong support from the European Parliament institutions, European Council of Europe, the European Socio-economic Committee and the Regions Committee.

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The recent European Commission Communication "*Basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism*" (Fundamental directions regarding the sustainability of European tourism) it's proposing several measures to strengthen the contribution of State Members of the community regarding the sustainability of European tourism.

The generic concept of sustainable development has been put into light in the document "Our Common Future" - our future, a future of all (widely known under the title The Brundtland Report) published in 1987. In this document, sustainability was defined as: satisfying the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs [1]. This means that sustainable development ensure to the future generations sufficient resources in terms of an acceptable quality of life. Long term planning and involvement of all people in development is essential.

The World Tourism Organization, Asia-Pacific Tourism Association, World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) are among the international and regional organizations ready to develop policies and guidelines relating to the conservation and protection of natural resources.

Sustainable tourism it's an alternative form of tourism based on minimizing the negative impacts of tourism activity over the local community and its members, to achieve social sustainability. At the present, it must develop those forms of tourism that doesn't disturb and don't interrupt the daily lives of the tourist population destination and contributes to preserving local culture and traditions.

Sustainable tourism is defined as: ... "*a positive approach intended to reduce tensions and friction created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, tourists, natural environment and local communities that host the tourists*" [2].

The sustainable tourism products are operated in harmony with the environment, the community and local cultures in such a way that they are in fact beneficiaries and not victims of tourism development.

In "2010 Tourism", the publication of the World Tourism Organization, sustain that the 21 Century faces two major problems [3]:

1. A great responsibility and a profound respect for the host destination populations and their culture;
2. A great responsibility offered by the people who are traveling reflecting new ways of consumption, an increased attention given by tourists to education.

Therefore, sustainable tourism reflects 3 major aspects:

- a. **quality** - sustainable tourism provides a valuable experience for visitors, while in the same time improving the quality of host communities life and protecting the environment;

b. **continuity** - sustainable tourism ensure the continuity of the natural resources and a continuity of host community culture with satisfactory experiences for visitors;

c. **balance** - sustainable tourism provides a balance between the needs of the tourist industry, environment partisans and the local community.

Sustainable tourism means the ability of the tourist destination to remain competitive against all problems, to attract visitors for the first time and make them loyal customers thereafter to remain unique in terms of culture and to be in a permanent equilibrium with the environment.

The main objectives of sustainable tourism are:

- To improve the quality of host communities life;
- To provide fairness in and between generations;
- To protect the environment by maintaining biological diversity and ecological systems;
- To ensure cultural integrity and social cohesion of the community;
- To provide experiences for high quality visitors.

In the world Tourism Organization publication "Tourism 2010" it's specifies the following: *Sustainable tourism develops the idea of satisfying the needs of present tourists and the tourist industry and at the same time it's protecting the environment and making opportunities for the future.* It has to satisfy all the economic, social, aesthetic needs of the tourism "actors" while maintaining the cultural and ecological integrity, the biological diversity and all the systems that are supporting life.

Consequently, there was the need for a new professional tourism leadership that it's able to attract more government partners and private and public sector partners based on principles of sustainable development, namely:

1) **minimizing the impacts on tourist activity over the natural environment** in order to obtain ecological sustainability, contributing to the maintenance and improvement of conservation by returning a part of the incomes to the protected area. I mean the use of tourism forms that does not affect the natural environment.

2) **minimizing the negative impacts of tourist activity on the local community and its members to obtain social sustainability.** I mean the development of those forms of tourism which are not interrupting everyday life of the tourist destinations population.

3) **minimizing the negative impacts of tourist activity on local culture/traditions/customs communities** in order to obtain cultural sustainability. The development of a capable tourism to determine the authenticity and individuality maintaining of local cultures and who it's able to avoid the saturation with foreign cultural influences.

4) **maximizing economic benefits to a local level as a result of tourism development** in order to obtain economic sustainability. This is one of the most important principles of sustainable tourism.

5) **education, training, information.** Educating the tourist (in order to improve his personal attitude) to a better understand of the impact it has on the environment and the ways to reduce impacts. It includes an environmental educational component for visitors, locals, local government, the rural, urban population etc.

6) **local control, the basic principle in sustainable tourism.** The local community participates and is consulting in everything regarding sustainable tourism development, as an active decision. The key is the local ownership of tourist infrastructure elements (eg: housing structures) and more. Local community and governments are involved and have the financial control.

2. Short presentation of the mountain area of Dambovita

Dambovita is part of the South area with a surface of 34,453 km² (Dambovita having an area of 4054 km²), representing 14.5% from the Romania's surface, being number 3 in size within the 8 regions. It is located in the central-southern part of the country, focused on the upper courses of Ialomita River and Dambovita.

The relief is varied, containing three forms (mountains, hills, plains), from north to south, the difference being 2400 m (from 2505 m to Peak Omu in Bucegi Mountain, at 120-125 m in Titu Plain).

Dambovita County is a tourist area of great interest due to the following aspects:

- many vestiges of the historic past, monuments of art of an considerable value;
- unique nature beauties represented by picturesque valleys of Dambovita and Ialomita with many limestone forms (Ialomicioara Caves, Zanoaga and Tatarul Keys, etc.) and the beauty of Leota and Bucegi Mountains;
- the spiritual silence in the large Orthodox monasteries;
- the cure and treatment spas at Pucioasa resort;
- the agro tourism from the rural localities as Runcu, Moroeni and Pietrosita.
- Across the county a surface over 2000 hectares is occupied by natural reserves:
 - the "Tatarului" Keys Resort;
 - the mountains and "Zanoaga" Keys;
 - the "Babele" Resort with the most spectacular forms of natural modeling - such as Astral and Sfinx;
 - the botanic resort "Peak Omu";

- the Resort “Turbaria Laptici”;
- the Resort “Grohotisu Mountain”;
- the botanic reserve “Poiana Crucii”;
- the paleontological reserve “Plaiul Hotilor”;
- the natural reserve “Rateiului Cave”
- the natural reserve “Bucegi” (Dambovită, Moroeni): natural complex reserve (32,663 ha, in Dambovită, Prahova, Braşov). Alpine and subalpine climate with ski potential (over 800 ha) and an important hunting zone. Here you will find old pine forests protected by law and reserves as “Ialomita” Cave (400 m long - the most important karstic form of Bucegi Mountains), “Ursului” Cave, “Orzei” and “Dobreşti” Keys.

The Mountains from the north zone occupies approximately 10% of the surface, being formed from “Bucegi” Mountains (Babe and Sfinx) and “Leaota” Mountains.

The fauna, rich and diverse, is represented in the mountain area by: bears, deers, wild boar, lynx, mountain roosters and on the Bucegi picks the black goat.

The kills have as a dominant fauna: rabbits, marten and squirrels. Often encountered is the deer, and from the carnivores the wolf. In the mountain and hill waters rivers you will meet a diversity of fishes: trout, nase, chub, barbell, grayling etc.

In this splendid and natural context it’s habituating a number of species of plants and animals with status protection and conservation such as corner flower, Canterbury bells, wild orchid, the globe-flower, black goat, mountain rooster, brown bear, wild cat, Carpathian deer.

The tourist attractiveness is completed by the large ski potential of the area. In the same time the cleaning climate effects it’s beneficial for treatment of respiratory and pulmonary diseases (TB Sanatorium from Moroeni).

In the area are many accommodation possibilities: hotels (Hotel “Pestera”, Hotel “Cota 1000”), touristic lodges (Babele, Padina, Zanoaga, Bolboci and Scropoasa) and student camps (Caprioara, Cerbul and Vanatorul).

The localities that form the mountain area of Dambovită County and who have the greatest potential for tourism development are: Moroeni, Runcu, Pietroşiţa, Fieni and Pucioasa.

3. Prospects for sustainable development of Mountain Tourism in the area of Dambovita County and the impact on the environment. Development projects

The mountain area of the Dambovita County presents a natural and anthropogenic important potential that's offering to the tourists the possibility to visit in different purposes: recreation, tourism, educational and scientific. The beauty of the landscapes, complemented by keys, caves, cliffs with curious forms (many of them natural monuments), the wonderful valley of Ialomita its tributaries, the forests that are surrounding the mountains are making from the Bucegi mountains area, one of the most picturesque in the country, visited annually by many tourists.

In the Dâmbovița County most housing units are concentrated on the two major rivers valleys of the county: Dambovita and Ialomita. Ialomita river has its source in glacial circuses under Obarșiei Stone (2450m) as follows:

- On Ialomita valley – Pucioasa, Runcu, Pietroșița and Moroeni localities.
- On Dambovita valley – Dragomiresti and Voinesti localities, village Lunca, Pietrari, Valea cu Flori, Caprioru, Tatarani, Dragodanesti, Candesti Deal, Valea Mare, Valeni - Dâmbovița, Barbulet, Pucheni. There is a concentration of hostels located on the Dambovita River because the area isn't polluted. Most hostels are classified in 2 and 3 daisies category.

The current situation in this area is:

- access area is hampered by the insufficient or the bad condition of the access roads, although there are forest roads, they are damaged;
- insufficient accommodation spaces and catering;
- lack of sanitation facilities (waste management, public toilets, showers, points of drinking water etc.).
- lack of camping space;
- lack of commercial food items, pharmaceuticals, health, points of tourist information;
- lack of markings that delimit the protected areas and some important information on them;
- The area isn't ready from a structural or organizational point of view to manage existing tourists that during the summer are almost 2000-3000 daily;
- The tourists can use the cable that ensures access from Bucegi Cave Hotel to the Bucegi Plateau only during the summer time, the route continues to Busteni, providing the connection with the touristic sightseeing from Brasov County.

In the mountainous area of Dambovita County the housing units have its own restaurants and parking areas, offering a wide range of other facilities (bar,

telephone, TV, games room, etc.). Also, hotel “Pestera” and camp “Vanatorul” own conference halls needed in the business tourism or tourism school.

Only hotel “Pestera” is equipped with pool and bike rental service. Pensions in the area offer additional services: trips, sledging, walks with horsemanship and carriage.

Also it’s predominant the housing structures with low degree of comfort: there are 3 hotels of 2 stars and 8 hostels, of which 5 has 2 daisies and 3 with 3 daisies

Dâmbovița County faces of the urban environment with particular problems:

- purifying sewage waste water, given the low efficiency of municipal water purification stations and inadequate evacuation after cleaning in the surface water;
- traffic pollution (frequent exceeding of the polluting concentrations from the air in the city Fieni);
- Lack of ecological waste landfills;
- The recycling of various wastes.

In the Dambovită rural environment, the phenomenon of uncontrolled storage of domestic waste in the rivers has a notable contribution to the phenomenon of pollution diffuse sources in the surface water, despite the efforts of local councils to arrange controlled storage spaces.

If will be planned and managed according to the principles of sustainable development, tourism will contribute to the conservation of mountain environment, respecting the scientific nature of protected areas. Specifically, the requirements of sustainable tourism are:

- close cooperation with the authorities that manage protected areas;
- the touristic operators and guides who operate in the protected areas must have solid knowledge on ecology and environment protection;
- the touristic operators must contribute financially to the conservation of protected areas, while respecting the rules of visiting them;
- the implementation of practical solutions for waste disposal and waste water.

The project that aims to develop the Dambovită county tourism are linked with one of the Ministry of Tourism preoccupation: the development and modernization of the ski area in the center of Romania (see Table 1).

Tabel 1. The value of tourism development projects in the north of the Dâmbovița county

<i>Crit. No.</i>	<i>Project name</i>	<i>Total project value</i>
1	The eco-touristic „Leaota” system – the touristic arranging of Leaota mountain combining Arges county with Dâmbovița	41.500.000 Euro
2	Infrastructure – The national olympique center or Winter sport Padina - Pestera	6.800.000 Euro
3	Infrastructure facilities for the sports center of national Olympic winter sports Padina – Pestera	6.020.000 Euro
4	Municipal infrastructure of the eco - touristic Leaota resort	17.800.000 Euro
5	Infrastructure facilities for sports eco - touristic Leaota resort	9.090.000 Euro
6	Touristic rehabilitation of the “Voievozilor Road” infrastructure in the South Muntenia Curtea de Arges – Campulung -Targoviste route	8.300.000 Euro
7	Information and tourist assistance center “La maison du patrimoine”	2.000.000 Euro

Source : Dambovita County Council

In the "National Program of skiing in the Carpathian Mountains" initiated by the Ministry of Tourism, for the Dambovita county following proposals were made:

- "The tourist mountain Resort Pestera – Padina"
- "The eco - touristic Leaota Resort"

From the natural touristic potential analysis for natural mountain tourism development, it results the need to implement a draft of expansion and modernization of the immediate areas for skiing and the winter sports, facilities for people transportation with cable and other types of facilities and equipment for practicing winter sports.

3.1. The tourist mountain Pestera – Padina Resort

Padina-Pestera area it's located in the Bucegi Natural Park being one of the best known and used from a touristic point of view. The area is situated in the genesis point of the river Ialomita and presents, because it's natural attractiveness, an area of high tourist interest. In the past, the spaces of the landscapes haven't enjoyed attention or necessary facilities of a mountain resorts. The management of this area must take into account the legal regulations concerning the Bucegi Natural Park.

The development of new tourist resorts in a mountainous area of great natural value, which although populated for a long time it's not known yet important flow of tourists, is an action of great responsibility taking into account not only

the global regulations on environmental protection, but special for the Romania to provide a sustainable development.

Through the General Urban Plan of the Moroeni village approved and endorsed by the law was limited a area of special interest in the planning or management activities for tourism development in the summer and winter of mountain sports. Situated at about 1600 m altitude, in an area with large alpine landscape at an unpolluted space, but open to less organized tourism for a long time, it offers outstanding development opportunities. The length of these cable facilities will situate Pesteră - Padina Resort as one of the most equipped resorts for winter sports in Romania.

Developing Urban Area Plan for the two touristic areas of interest: Pesteră and Padina from Bucegi Plateau is determined by the intention of achieving the tourist reception structures varied in correlation with the types of tourism practiced in Bucegi Mountains. Located in the northern part of Dambovită county, the less or larger-scale intervention, of integrated type, depending on allowed permissions in each area, will have a special influence in the urban area in the mountainous Dambovită county and in nearest counties: Prahova, Argeș and Brașov.

The development project proposed by PUZ, entitled "The mountain tourist Pesteră – Padina Resort", having as beneficiary the Dambovită County Council, it's extremely ambitious and its achievement may lead to an important attraction for mountain sports lovers and more. The main problem of the project, which is in terms of sustainable development and the compliance of Environmental Protection standards and norms, it's that all facilities, buildings and developments should respect the existing natural environment, especially the one located in an area with a special sensitivity, as the Bucegi Natural Park.

The tourism it's influencing in a favorably way the economic situation of local communities but we can talk also about a negative impact on them, especially on the environment and even on the traditional activities unless there is a coherent plan of development area.

Because the Pesteră and Padina areas are located in the Bucegi Natural Park, the most important plan that must be correlated with the development project of the Padina-Pesteră Resort it's the Management Plan Administration Bucegi Natural Park for tourism development in the area. The realization of touristic mountain Pesteră - Padina Resort joins the effort of Bucegi Natural Park Administration to implement the strategy of sustainable tourism.

Bucegi Natural Park is one of the major tourist attractions of Romania, its national and international value may increase in the future, so that's way it's necessary to be planned and managed to be sustainable and to represent a positive force.

Development of the two mountains raises multiple issues regarding environmental quality. To eliminate disruption regarding the quality of the environment,

the present project present proposals and urban rules concerning:

- functional zoning;
- the reduction until the eliminate of the pollution sources;
- purifying waters;
- waste management;
- recovery of degraded lands;
- organization of green spaces - areas for recreation, sport
- demarcation of protected areas;
- the landscape restoration and urban rehabilitation;
- prevent natural or human risks;
- eliminating the disruptions from the roads field.

3.2. "The eco-touristic Leaota Resort"

Leaota Mountain covers the administrative villages Moroieni and Runcu in Dambovita and Arges County. Leaota landscape is particularly charming and picturesque, but the tourism potential is not used to its real value, here there is only one pension.

The ascension in the Bucegi Mountains area is pretty easy, being many access ways (some of them not accessible during the winter): marked tourist paths, auto roads, forest roads, Babele - Pestera cable.

Dambovita County Council initiated the project "The eco-touristic Leaota Resort", which fallows to be developed in cooperation with the Arges County Council, the Felix-Domo Bucharest Foundation and Obstea Mosnenilor Dragosloveni, until 2012, to put in value the tourist potential of the Bucegi area, which extends into the both counties. The project, estimated at 50 million Euros, funded by the EU, provides the arrangement for a pilot tourism base in Leaota Mountain, with two adjacent resorts, located at 1600 and 1750 meters altitude, the communication between them will be done with cable and roads, through the modernization of the two forest roads. The finalization of the project will be particularly beneficial for accelerating rural tourism in the northern part of Arges County, on the route of Campulung, Dambovicioara, Lerești, Rucar, Dambovita Bridge and Bran.

The project provides mountain construction of hotels and motels, Ski slopes, swimming pools and drinking water systems, lighting systems.

The project proposes an infrastructure and a superstructure built into the natural environment with a minimum intervention that would not adversely affect the specific microclimate, taking place a tourist resort in a season time.

Through the General Urban Plan of the Moroieni village was limited an area of particular interest to develop tourism and mountain sports in which it's included Leaota Mountain.

Analyzed the existing situation, considering the major failures have been made through PUG following environmental proposals and urban intervention:

- Reducing to elimination the major sources of pollution (emissions, discharges, etc.);
- All household waste arising from the resorts functioning will be properly transported and stored so the area will not be polluted;
- Development of impact studies for all sites and all outside equipment of resorts that are part of the Eco-touristic Leaota Resort to obtain Environment authorization;
- The main criterion for the buildings and facilities location of all sites will protect surfaces covered with forests and alpine gaps;
- Develop specialized education for the correct delimitation of areas with natural foreseeable risks and develop programs to achieve specific tasks, before investment;
- Organization of green spaces within the resort will be made to achieve the continuity with the natural landscape were isn't only involved forests cleaning operations;
- All proposed sites will be addressed as areas for landscape restoration, and the buildings and facilities will fit into the natural landscape.

Conclusion

Expanding tourism infrastructure in natural areas it's to coordinate conservation and highlighting of the cultural and historical, environment, landscape, representing a range of related objectives of complex approaches on restructuring and conversion of rural and urban areas. In this context, protected areas should not be regarded as isolated areas, the efficient management of these areas assuming their social and functional integration with other areas, with beneficial effects in terms of reducing the maintaining and protecting costs.

Tourist facilities may often be conflict with the conservation objectives. If the tourism it's planned and managed to be sustainable, it represents a positive force, bringing benefits to protected areas and local communities.

Tourism is welcome in or near the protected areas if they meet the particular nature of the protected area.

The development projects mentioned provides a harmonious development in relation to the conservation objectives of the national parks. Ensuring

the sustainability of the projects will be made through the measures that are achieving the following objectives:

- Keeping the wild genetic resources;
- Protecting the species that are very sensitive to habitat destruction;
- Providing habitats for feeding, resting or reproducing species;
- Providing incomes and employment through tourism;
- Maintaining precious natural vegetation.

Because sustainable tourism is a goal, it must be understood that any type of development which includes development of tourism gives rise to certain changes in an area. However, these changes should be maintained acceptable limits, so the aim of sustainability to be achieved. Sustainable tourism can be achieved through careful planning, developing and conducting a proper sector tourism based on principles of the sustainable development.

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