

RURAL TOURISM IN THE BORDER AREA ROMANIA- SERBIA

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Abstract

Rural tourism is an important factor with significant implications in the economic sphere of any region that provides favorable development of this sector in its various forms. Border area between Romania and Serbia covers the south-east of the Carpathian Basin and includes the counties of Timis, Caras-Severin and Mehedinti from Romania and Borski districts, Branicevski, South Banat, North Banat and Central Banat from Serbia, an area over 39,000 km² with a population of about 2.3 million.

Rural tourism can develop only to the extent that their tourism activity as a whole forms a strong market. The most important elements underlying the design of economic activities are armed with permanent market analysis and implementation of various tourism products marketing.

Keywords: *rural tourism, economic development, border areas, cooperation program.*

Introduction

Rural tourism is an activity that takes place in rural areas, specially designed structures promoted by valuing the local tourist resources, and tourism facilities and equipment, revenues thus obtained are permanent and are provided by a service and specialized staff. Need to promote rural tourism comes also from the existence of isolated rural settlements, which are unable to support many services, but still have travel items. Economic support for farmers is also a major problem. Average income of farmers can be increased by selling specific products household, offering various forms of accommodation, by making visits to farms that have various functions of interest (horse, wine, vegetable). To ensure this source of income is not enough just attracting customers but also adapting to the dynamics of tourist expectations. Rural tourism has the advantage that acts to open up new investment opportunities that may be beneficial through their rural community: jobs, infrastructure and services.

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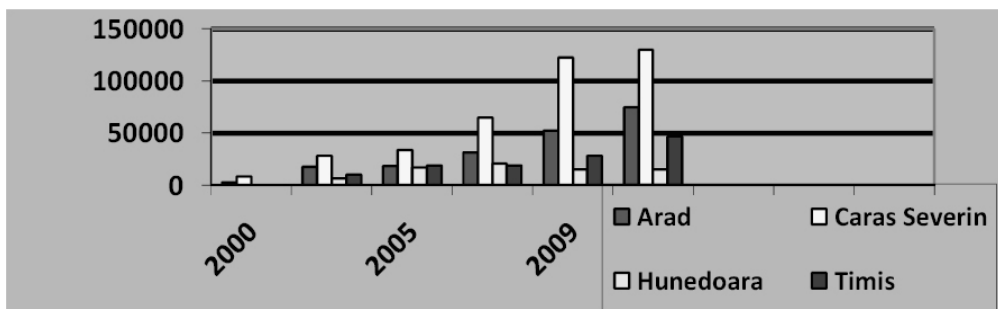
Possibilities for tourism development in Romanian border areas.

Currently, the Roumanian tourism is undergoing a deep crisis, caused mainly by restructuring some improperly applied, resulting indicators are representative of this. As a result of this situation, the pace of expansion of rural tourism in our country remained slow compared to other European countries. An extension of rural tourism growth rate could be influenced positively by facilitating collaboration between agencies and organizations involved in rural tourism development in Romania and similar bodies in other countries with traditionally rural tourism through participation in international activities and by carrying out promotional activities to form a suggestive image of rural tourism both in terms of tourism potential, as well as social and cultural characteristics.

In these actions is important presentation reflected the uniqueness of elements in a diversified relief in unpolluted natural environment and cultural characteristics - folklore, monuments, customs, traditions. At the same time require that the range offer the tourist, from those with low incomes to those with incomes high enough. Rural tourism in our country always existed, but spontaneously, by chance, especially unorganized.

In terms of rural tourism development strategy in our country and the Ministry of Tourism ANTREC opted for quality over quantity. As a representative of the area attractions contact with Serbia, Romania can build cross-border tourism development primarily through the sights of the Mehedinti County: Great Cave from Soroniste, Lake Zaton, Ponoarele Cave Museum, Iron Gates Natural Park, Cave Mouth Ponicoava. Also in Caras-Severin showed no tourism potential through the following objectives: Caransebes City Museum, resort Semenice Cerna Mountains, Poiana Rusca Mountains, Nera Springs Reservation. Reserve Caras Gorge National Park Semenice. Tourist accommodation capacity in Romania's western region a significant increase in Caras-Severin, number of seats-days increased from 7962 in 2000 to over 130,000 in 2010. The same can be said of Timis county, stating that in 2005 compared to 2004 there was almost a doubling of the number of seats in agro pensions to over 18,000 in 9000.

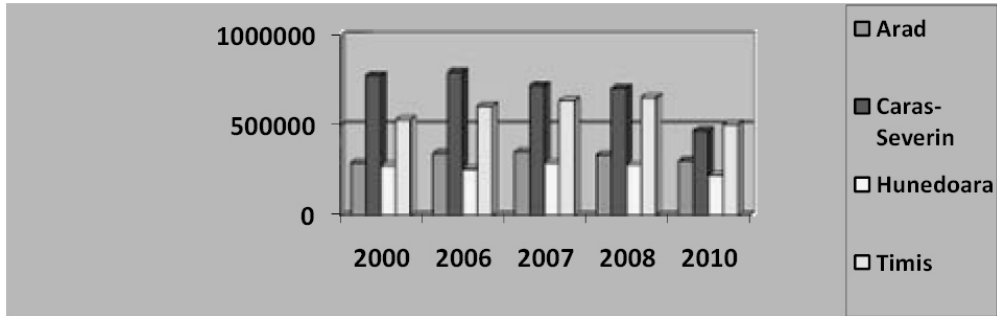
Figure no. 1 - Farmhouses accommodation capacity in the counties of western Romania



Source: Data processing www.insse.ro

Overnight in tourist reception facilities in the Western region Arad and Hunedoara is approximately equal number of overnights, registering a growth rate of 2-3% per year, in 2010 the number of overnights over 300,000 in Arad 220,000 in Hunedoara. In Caras-Severin, however, there is a decrease in the number of overnights, from 780,000 in 2000 to 470,000 in 2010.

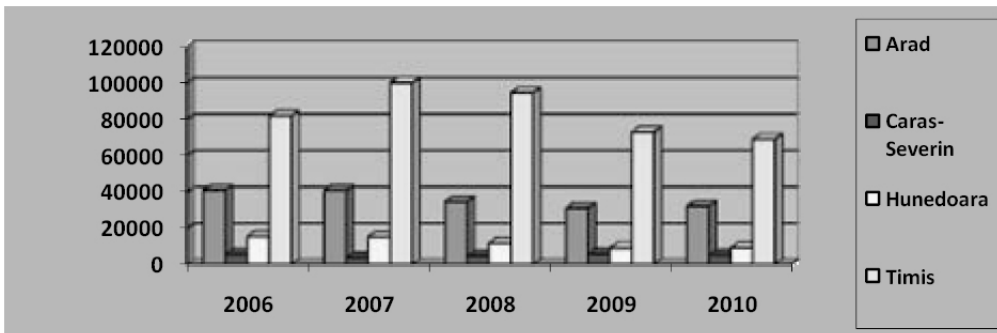
Figure No. 2 .- Overnight in tourist reception facilities in western counties



Source: Data processing www.insse.ro - accessed on 10/09/2011

Arrivals of tourists in the tourist reception on types of tourists in the counties of western Romania foreign tourists. In Timis county, in 2007, compared to previous years is an increase in the number of foreign tourists, reaching over 100,000 people. In the next period, there is a decrease in 2010 is recorded a total of about 70,000 people.

Figure No.3-Arrivals of foreign tourists in tourist facilities in Western Romania



Source: Data processing www.insse.ro

Potentials for tourism development in border areas of Serbia.

Serbia's rural economy is not sufficient diversification, despite having favorable natural resources. Rural tourism can help lead the way to a more diversified rural economy while creating jobs and increasing income After 2000, tourism began to recover, and in 2007 Serbia saw more than 2 million international arrivals, 33% more than in 2006. In terms of revenue and GDP, international tourism receipts increased from \$409 million in 2006 to \$531 million in 2007. According to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer of October 2008, there is potential to build on recent growth by developing rural tourism

internationally, given that global trends increasingly favor rural tourism. From 2006-2007 domestic rural tourism grew by 12%.

Although strong data on the impact of the current economic crisis on tourism will be available after the summer season, some statistics already indicate a decline in visits. The number of tourists in Serbia fell by 6% to just under 136,000 in January 2009 compared with January 2008 (official statistics).²

Contact area which belongs to Serbia includes districts: District Borski, Branicevski, South Banat, Central Banat. Borski district is in eastern Serbia. It includes the following municipalities: Bor, Kladovo, Majdanpek and Negotin. It has a population of 140,367 inhabitants. In the vicinity of Bor is Prince Alexander Palace, built in 1856. This city has the reputation of the center's largest copper mines in Europe, its modern exploitation began in 1904.

Branicevski district with a population of 253,492 inhabitants are located in the north-eastern Serbia. Some of the places of cultural importance in Pozarevac are: National Museum and Milena Pavlovic-Painting Gallery. Zrenjanin city's economy, the Central Banat residence is diverse but is predominantly industrial food processing, part of the Agricultural Industrial Combine "Servo Mihalj". Serbia has very favorable conditions for rural tourism development: natural areas, protected, clean environment, rivers and lakes, flora and fauna. For rural tourism development, tourism centers have been created (Device, Brankovina) and tourism associations (Kosjeric, Ivanjica, Knic). Offered activities are: walking, sports, excursions to nearby. Tourists interested in agricultural activities may be involved in farm work. Most important segment of rural tourism products in Serbia, especially in areas with undeveloped economy is agro-tourism. The development of this type of rural tourism, which is best represented in Serbia, and depends on two factors: - the household income that comes from agricultural production, the existence of tourism resources. Rural tourism in Serbia is prone to market. Foreign tourists, in a lesser extent, mostly from former republics of SFR Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia).

IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Romania-Serbia is financed by the EU through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), cross-border component and the program co-funded by the Partner States: Romania and Serbia. The program aims to increase economic competitiveness of the Romania-Serbia border and improving the quality of life in the border communities of both countries. The overall aim of the program is to use cross-border joint projects and joint actions by stakeholders in Romania and Serbia as a starting point to achieve a more balanced socio-economic development and sustainable in the Romanian-Serbian border. The participating countries were divided into two program objectives:

-Global Competitiveness in the border area. The goal is to provide a coherent and agreed to partners in Romania and Serbia as a way to benefit from the added value of joint

² <http://www.undp.org.rs>

actions by addressing common problems affecting the competitiveness and supporting measures which will support competitiveness in the border region as a whole.
 -Improving quality of life for communities in the border area.

Serbia Tourism Product SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths -diversified tourism product; -hospitality of people; -rich cultural heritage</p>	<p>Weaknesses -few professional operators; -tourism infrastructure in rural areas.</p>
<p>Opportunities -development of activities and sport; -rise the activities in tourism;</p>	<p>Threats -the infrastructure development for tourism projects; -lack of appropriate regional structures dealing with promotion of tourism.</p>

Conclusions

Although the tourist potential of Romania-Serbia border area was and is considered to be promising, as well as the foreign, rural tourism is still in development and rehabilitation. The way to the performance, this activity should adopt a global mindset and take into account existing international competition.

Among the most important aspects considered in the development tourism sector in the Romania-Serbia border, have pointed following: strengthening communication and collaboration between business and public authorities increase efforts to promote tourist image of this area, greater emphasis an rural tourism, ecotourism and cultural tourism.

The tourism activity in rural areas can get many advantages and the most important are:

- Stabilize population by setting labor - consequences for rural areas facing depopulation phenomenon - the creation of new jobs, working which will default to the development of activities related to the sale of food, handicrafts, transport;
- Developing additional activities besides the core activity
- Increasing comfort in the buildings that have rooms available for rent
- Attracting new investment, diversification of activities in a favorable economic context.

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