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**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AFFAIRS MARKETING
IN RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

Abstract: In Romania, the agro and rural tourism started as potential sources of living and become an alternative for the classic tourism.

As we rise up on the presented papers in 2003, even if there is a significant development of the rural tourism, it is not very attractive to the Romanian people.

The study made on County Dambovită area, shows that an important reason of the poor attractiveness of agro-tourism in mountains rural area is the less proper marketing of the services.

Based on these conclusion and taking advantages on the public administration area, it was started a program of public and private marketing of rural tourism.

The main stages of the programme were: 1) the evaluation of specific indicators of rural tourism like staying overnights, net using capacity in function and quality of provided services; 2) provide information and advertise the area facilities and natural environment using the public administration infrastructure; 3) make the link between the owners of tourism capacities and public servants by a briefly marketing training; 4) re-evaluation the indicators mention above.

The results of the programme implementation prove that the public and private marketing, used in partnership by local authorities and of rural tourism services providers, could be a tool of better development.

Never the less, the win-win situation rise up from the benefit of general economic development of the area obtained due to a larger flux of domestic and foreign tourists.

Key words: tourism, development, public, private affairs, marketing

INTRODUCTION

Based on the previous evolution of the agro-tourism in the studied area, it was our understanding that both, public authorities and the owners, should joint the efforts to promote better the area potential.

Due to the fact that the touristic potential of the area is really one of the most powerful in the country, this is an asset that can strongly contribute to the economic development of the area.

Starting from the conclusion that a marketing programme about the potential of the area could by a plus in increasing the tourists interest, there were settled some steps to be followed.

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1. THE EVALUATION OF SPECIFIC INDICATORS OF RURAL TOURISM

All the strategies should be designed according with the picture offered by an analysis of the existing stage. This was the reason to start with an evaluation process of the existing facilities.

The main aim of the analysis was to collect information in order to calculate some indicator and rural tourism.

The evaluation of specific indicators of rural tourism taken into account were staying overnights,, net capacity in function, rate of usage the capacity and quality of provided services.

After an inventory of net capacity in function the rural tourism hold, in the selected village about 120 places on the rural households in addition to the over 200 places on the hotels and pensions. According with the declaration in the hotels and pensions all most the capacity is in function. These are as a result of the rehabilitation or new capacities. On the other hand the rural touristic capacity was much more difficult to be estimated as volume and also as capacity in function.

So, if there are possibilities of 120 accommodation places, it is hard to estimate if there are in function or not because there are not 100% separated inside of the household. In this case we estimate that at a certain moment about 80% could be in function.

The rate of usage is about 40-45% per year with seasonal fluctuation. The capacity is fully used on the holiday time. That means that the most profitable periods of time are in summer from end of May until middle of September, Christmas and Easter holidays.

Regarding the quality of the provided services is very hard to estimate it on the rural tourism. The hotels and the pensions are following the standards and they are

quoted as two or three stars or two daisies. In our estimation we consider that the quality of the provided services in the pensions is according with the standards and we used the same criteria for the rural tourism.

The capacity is about 30% similar with two daisies category and 70% similar with one daisy.

The tourists are informed mainly directly from previous on direct questioning at the arrival in the interested area.

The rural touristic capacity is not advertised, not included in data bases, not exposed as offer.

2. PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ADVERTISE

The information about the touristic potential in the area is very important for the decisional process.

From the internet all tourists could have some information regarding the most important touristic attraction as Bucegi Natural Park, **Ialomicioara Monastery**,

Figure 1. **Bucegi Natural Park**



Source: www.ici.ro/romania/tourism/

Bucegi Natural Park, with an area of 32.663 ha is under the jurisdiction of three Counties: Prahova, Dambovita and Brasov, most of the area belonging to Dambovita County.

One of the most important attractions is Ialomita's Cave placed at about 32-36 km from the cross road (from S turn left in Moroieni village at the Sanatorium, from N turn right to Paduchiosul). Both roads meet and follow their way through north, alongside Bolboci Lake and Tatarului Gorges to the monastic complex Peștera. Ialomita's Cave (1600m) is at few km from the well-known Babele Peak (2200m).

The Ialomita River flows down through the Ialomita valley. Its spring is in the Bucegi Mountains, at the foot of Mountain Omu. The entrance to Ialomita Cave opens near the spring.

The shelter of this huge portal has been known since ancient time and it was used to build an Orthodox monastery. The church and the monks' cells were built of wood, and burned down four times in the last four hundred years. Always rebuilt, the last construction was made during 1993-1996.

This is the most suggestive example of a natural and built monument, belonging to the studied area and proper marketed by its neighborhood. All the promotion materials of Prahova Valley refer to the Ialomita Cave and Pestera Monastery.

Figure 2. **Ialomicioara Monastery and Ialomita Cave entrance**



Figure 3. **Ialomicioara Monastery**

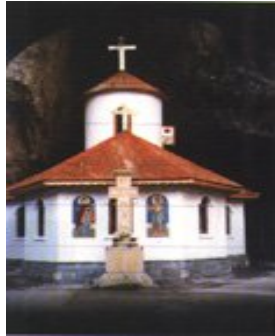


Source: www.ici.ro/romania/tourism/

Nearby the springs, at the entrance in the Ialomita cave, the faithful ones and the monks from the neighbouring villages (Pietrosita, Moroeni, Bran, Moieciu s.a.) have built Orthodox monastic dwelling several times. The churches and the cells, being made from wood, have had burned out four times during the four centuries of existence. The last fire had destroyed everything in 1961.

Starting from 1993, August the 1st, the whole complex was completely rebuilt, being now an astonishing place, charming our hearts and souls.

Figure 4. **Ialomicioara Church**



Source: www.ici.ro/romania/tourism/

The Scropoasa hydro power station uses a water barrage on a lake with more than 65 square km. surface and 0.6 mil cubic m. volume.

Also you can find the purest water here at the “Seven Springs”, places kept secret before 1990. The local legend said that this water has secret powers and names it “long life water”.

Searching the South of the studied region, at 14 km is Pucioasa, a balneary and climatic resort with natural springs of sulphurous water.

At 40 km tourists may visit Targoviste City, with the Ruins of the Royal Court and the Chindiei Tower from XIVth century.

Figure 5. **The Altar from the Ialomicioara Cave**



Figure 6. **Waterfall in the Cave**



Source: www.ici.ro/romania/tourism/

In the mentioned area there are a lot of other natural touristic places less known than the ones mentioned above. The beauty of the area is based on the wild places that offer surprises also to the persons very familiar with mountain regions.

Examples of such places could be:

Figure 7. **Orzei Gaps**



Figure 8. **Tatarului Defile**



Source: www.ici.ro/romania/tourism/

We have several meetings with local householders to present them that what they are considering as normal and well known is not the perception of the tourists. So they understand the importance to talk about the natural beauty they have in the area.

Later we explain to them that it will be better to present some how the facilities of accommodation they could offer at a time. The ambient and the rural life experience could be an asset as well tourism.

The experiment gives to the house holders some ideas about what could be interesting for potential tourists and how they can increase the attraction of the area.

Referring to the survey made in 2004 and the conclusions we present, the reasons of non development of rural tourism in the area were as follows:

- the reasons and the influential facts for a poor offer in the studied region:
 - low level of knowledge about managing and marketing agro-tourism
 - wrong understanding of agro-tourism business
 - insufficient house space – there is the tendency of approaching it as an industrial business, meaning specially designed accommodation spaces and facilities as: individual rooms with bath, swimming pool, restaurant etc.
 - fear of investing: first because of lack of funds, second because of uncertain return due to a low number of customers
 - no answer to questions as:
 - Am I and my house proper for agro-tourism?
 - Do I disturb the tourists with my presence?
 - Shall I invest money? Do I have it?
 - Did somebody hear about me?
 - How much will I earn?
- the marketing influence in developing agro-tourism on the studied area should cover the following issues:
 - a. *firstly*, the marketing shall take the role of information marketing and promote the agro-tourism business as “Tourism made in rural household or farms” so the local people must be convinced that they do not have to build a special location, they only have to use the extra space;
 - b. *secondly*, the officials should make a promotion program to attract more tourists in the specific area and highlight the natural landscapes, historical sites etc.
 - c. *thirdly*, all the householders should join their efforts in promoting the tourism services they are offering and to develop in the future entertainment facilities.
- at present, the reasons for insufficient marketing are:
 - a. low knowledge
 - b. no money
 - c. poor communication facilities.

3. MAKE THE LINK BETWEEN THE OWNERS OF TOURISM CAPACITIES AND PUBLIC SERVANTS

To the marketing training organised with the householders without specifying that, to not be frightened, the public servants attended. So it was a reason to briefly train them in marketing techniques with an important role in socio-economic development.

They decided to issue some small leaflets with the natural, historic and cultural attraction from the area and to distribute them with all occasion of a stranger presence (official delegation, people in transit, so on).

Another part of the leaflets should be distributed to the householder to offer them to their visitors.

On the other hand they agree to make efforts to have the site of the mayor hall and to place all the information on it. The information should be available also by phone or direct.

We consider that a great step was made by the understanding that they should cooperate and the civil servants should play an active role in promoting the area.

Of course at the beginning seems that the public authority's involvement is without result and the public servants efforts are without any return.

We were successful in our experiment that both parties agree to start a new approach and to put it on a mutual confidence base and to aim mutual benefits.

4. RE-EVALUATION THE INDICATORS

The re-evaluation of the indicators is irrelevant due to the fact that the experiment took place this summer and we believe that it is a necessity to offer support for the Christmas holiday in order to be sure that they understand what they have to do.

The most probable results could rise up sooner after the Easter holiday.

Never the less we are confident that the ice was broken and a kind of rural public-private partnership in rural tourism shows its potential.

Also, the win-win situation is offered by the possibility of changing the mentality of the public servants regarding their implication and on the other hand the mentality of the householders that the local authority's is not interested in supporting and assisting them.

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