

**RESEARCH REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RAU DE MORI  
COMMUNE. PROPOSING A DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
THROUGH RURAL TOURISM**

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***Abstract:** The commune of Rau de Mori, analyzed in this study, is one of the Romanian communes endowed with resources from numerous categories, both natural and anthropic, but the vast majority of them are insufficiently exploited and do not bring that "welfare" much dreamed for the local community. Thus, it is necessary to carry out a development plan, of the analyzed commune, regarding the possibility of capitalizing local resources through rural tourism. The success of this proposed plan is ensured by the involvement degree of inhabitants and local authorities, and by the extent to which they are aware of the importance of this capitalization possibility.*

***Key words:** development plan, rural tourism, local resources, Rau de Mori*

**INTRODUCTION**

The development of the rural area is an activity of vital importance, both by the size of the rural area, expressed by the area owned, and by the share of the population employed in various activities. A sustainable community is one that controls the development process, the decisions it elaborates and adopts, ensuring sustainability at the local level [12,13,14,15]. This sustainable community possesses an active social structure-actors, groups, associations and institutions capable of mobilizing for long-term common actions and assuming responsibility for this continuous development process. Rural tourism can play a very important role in rural area, [9,10,11] in terms of supporting its development [1,2] in a sustainable way, obviously with benefits for both tourists and local residents of the community in question [3,4,5,6,7,8,].

Rau de Mori commune is located in Hunedoara County and is considered the most important commune from Retezat National Park, because many spectacular tourist attractions can be found on its administrative territory. The commune is made up of 11 villages, the most important being Rau de Mori, which is also his residence. The commune includes the following villages: Rau de Mori-the residence village, Brazi village, Clopotiva, Ohaba-Sibisel, Ostrov, Ostrovel, Ostrovu Mic, Sibisel, Suseni, Unciuc and Valea Dilji.



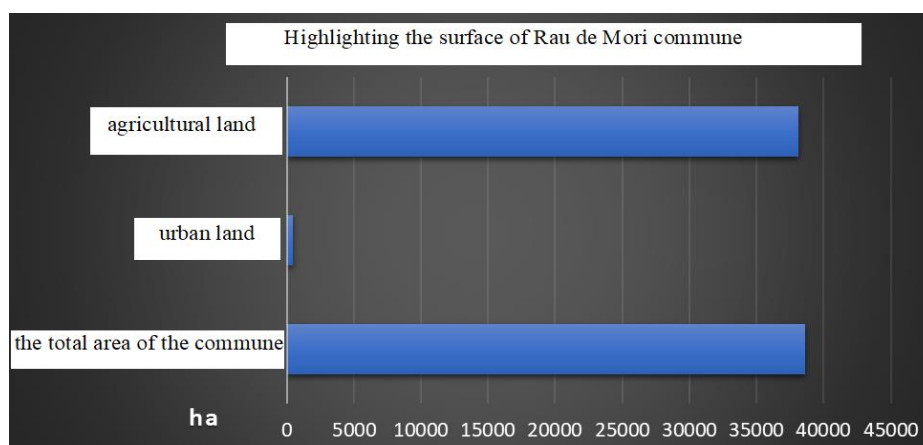
**Figure 1. Rau de Mori Commune-presentation image**

*Source: own album*

On the territory of the commune is found Retezat National Park, declared as a nature reservation in 1935, being the oldest national park from Romania, with special

natural values, it has an important area from the territory of the commune out of the total area of 38,049 ha.

Economic activities specific to the commune are agricultural and tourist activities. According to the data centralized by the National Institute of Statistics, the total area of the commune is 38,612 ha, the urban land representing 464 ha, and the agricultural land 38,148 ha. The main agricultural crops are: potato, corn, wheat, barley, rye. The forest fund occupies 21014 ha. The forest and other lands with forest vegetation occupy 42.84% of the commune's surface and have a weight of 1.46%.



**Figure 2. Highlighting the surface of Rau de Mori commune**

*Source: own creation*

The rural demographic potential of Rau de Mori commune is characterized by the statistical magnitude it registers, constituting one of the fundamental arguments of the specific rurality of this area. From a demographic point of view, the area is characterized by the large share of the rural population.

**Table 1.**

**The evolution of the rural population in the analyzed area (number)**

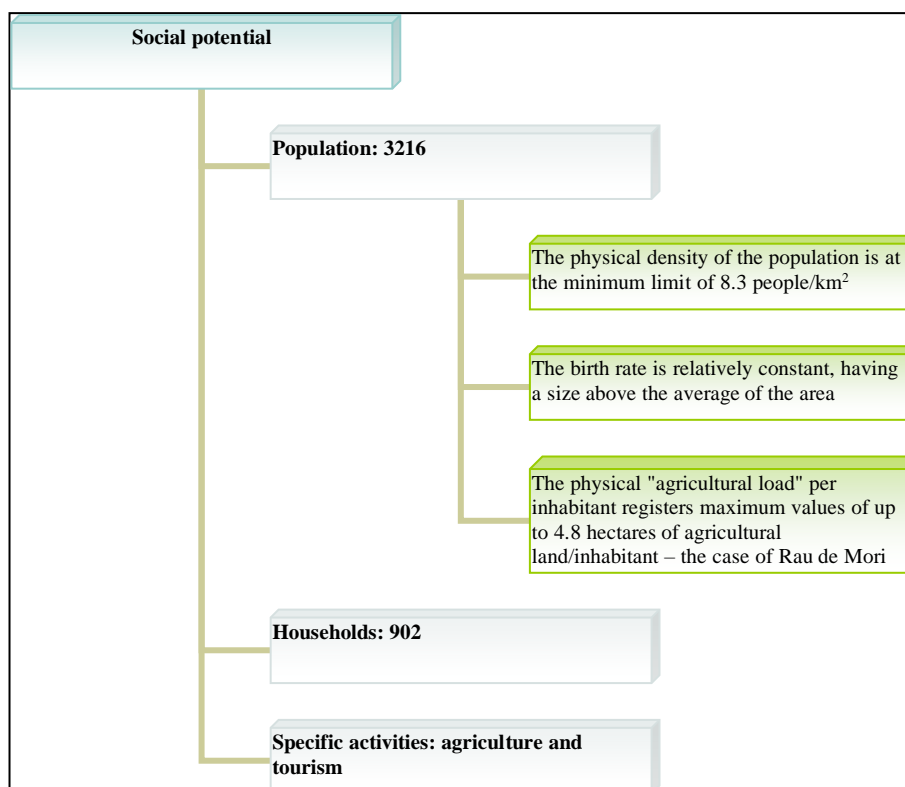
The commune	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Rau de Mori	3530	3464	3423	3408	3357	3232

*Source: data processed after INS – Tempo online*

The tendency to reduce the physical density was not uniform, significant fluctuations were registered at the level of the communes. There is a rural typology depending on the dynamics of density, defined by two categories:

- the category of municipalities with relatively densely populated spatial models: Totesti, Santamaria Orlea and General Berthelot, with relatively significant values and slightly increasing;
- the category of communes with sparsely populated spatial patterns: Baru, Bretea Romana, Densus, Pui, Rachitova, Rau de Mori, Salasu de Sus, Sarmisegetusa, with a tendency of decreasing physical density.

Analyzing the physical density of the population, from Hateg area, the minimum limit of 8.3 people/km<sup>2</sup> is recorded in Rau de Mori commune.



**Figure 3. Social potential-succinct conclusions**

*Source: own creation*

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main purpose of this research undertaken is to achieve some research regarding the development of Rau de Mori commune in order to propose a development plan through rural tourism.



**Figure 4. Objectives taken in consideration for this research**

*Source: own creation*

### RESEARCH RESULTS

The extremely diverse natural resources and high landscape quality, the wealth of historical and natural monuments, the multitude of parks and nature reserves, the existence of a relatively stable population over time, numerically and qualitatively, the agricultural land fund, especially the natural mountain meadows, the forest fund of high quality and diversity, the existence of an impressive number of historical, paleontological, biodiversity, economic and sociological studies and research, a hydropower system and a potential to expand the production of non-polluting green energy, constitute potentialities for general economic development and sustainable rural development, and in the same time represents the sine qua non conditions for the development of a strategy for the development of the rural environment through tourism.

Table 2.

Development plan of Rau de Mori commune through rural tourism activity-proposal

Purpose of the plan	The specific objectives related to the proposal	The necessary measures on each specific objective	Actions related to each measure
Development of Rau de Mori commune through rural tourism activity	<i>Centralization of existing resources</i>	Making an inventory of natural resources, human resources, ethno-folkloric resources	- Identification of resources that can be exploited through rural tourism
			- The centralization of the aspects that highlight the local identity and the prioritization of their use as local values in the tourist product
			- Verification of the rules for carrying out tourist activity within UNESCO reserves and monuments
		Centralization information related to the tourist infrastructure	- Centralization of tourist accommodation units willing to work in partnership to achieve the specific product of the commune
	- Identifying the possibility of making the commune known by means of flyers with preliminary information about the "assets" of the area and about the accommodation possibilities		
	<i>Attracting all the local residents of the commune to actively participate in the capitalization of their own resources through rural tourism activity</i>	Stimulating the emergence of local residents' interest in capitalizing on their own products through rural tourism	- Identifying the gastronomic and handicraft products from craftsmanship that represent the local specificity and the establishment of partnerships between producers and the owners of tourist structures
			- Making unique local products with an emphasis on traditional cuisine, ecological products, old traditions, natural resources from the commune
	<i>Creating the possibility of carrying out an integrated rural tourism activity</i>	The interest of the locals in the orientation towards rural tourism activities by preserving the ancestral lifestyle	- The introduction into the tourist circuit of old houses, which create the specific atmosphere of the commune, properly arranged to support the tourist activity
			- Preparing the locals to carry out tourist activities
		The establishment of integrated tourist services, accommodation + food + leisure, fully provided in the commune	- The orderly specialization of some locals only on the accommodation side, others only on the food side and some on the leisure side
			- Training of local residents on the conduct of activities in partnership
	<i>Providing consultancy in the field for those directly involved in carrying out the activity</i>	Bringing specialist consultants	- The provision by local authorities of consultation centers
- Ensuring periodic meetings			

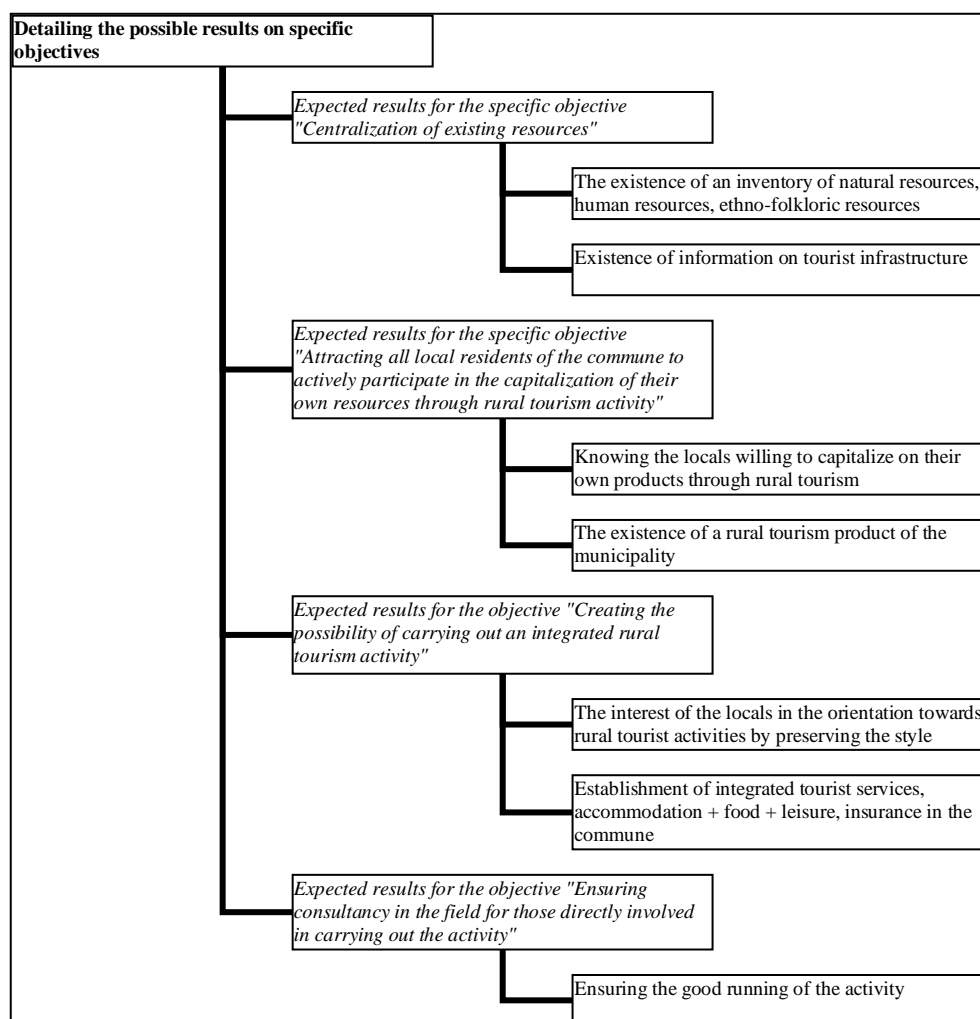
Source: own proposals

The existence of a plan for the development of the analyzed commune through tourist activities will generate the possibility of phasing the necessary actions and measures and will ensure the possibility of tracking and quantifying the results and possible weak points, with the possibility of correcting them in time. For the development plan of Rau de Mori commune through the proposed rural tourism activity, the following were taken into account in this research:

- description of the specific objectives pursued by the plan;
- detailing the possible results;
- establishing the time interval related to each individual action;
- identification of financing possibilities.

Regarding the first specific objective "*Centralization of existing resources*", following its implementation it is expected to create a database on natural resources, human resources, ethno-folkloric resources specific to the commune under analysis regarding the tourist infrastructure. In this way, the real possibilities of the area can be known, and the activities

can be started. At the same time, it can be decided which assets will be promoted. It can also be determined which of the objectives need special preparations/arrangements to be included in tourist circuit.



**Figure 5. Detailing the possible results on specific objectives**

Source: own creation

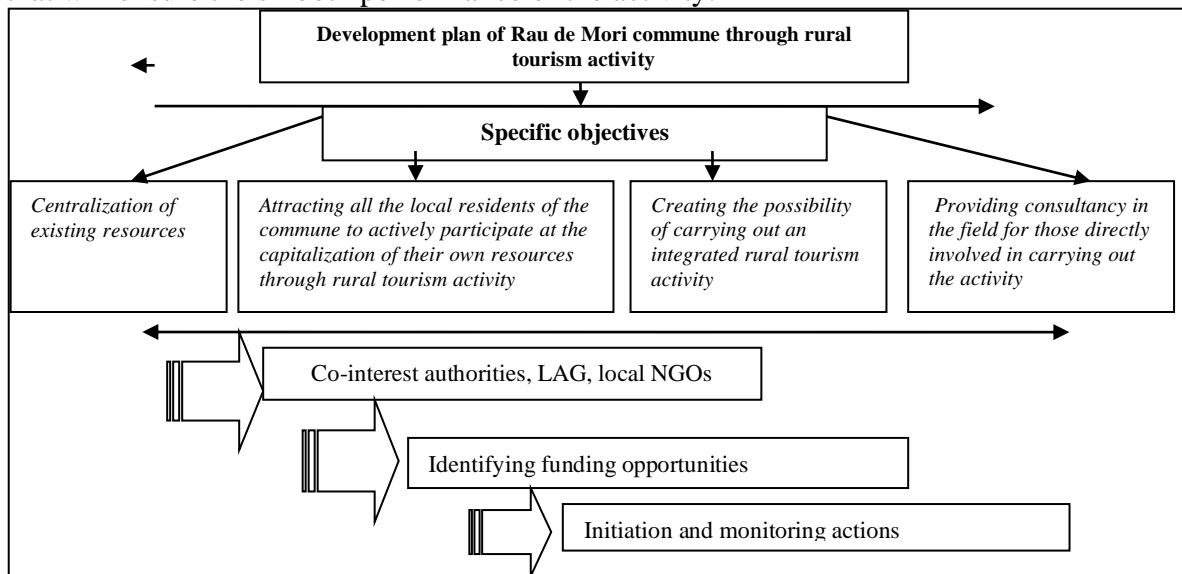
Regarding the second specific objective "Attracting all the local residents of the commune to actively participate in the capitalization of their own resources through rural tourism activity", once implemented, it is ensured that local residents are willing to valorize their own products through rural tourism, which means that they can be advised more far to know the tourism field, and why not co-interest in creating the "community brand" rural tourism product. The benefits of implementing this objective, in addition to directly supporting rural tourism, refer to:

- ensuring the further transmission of crafts and products that give individuality to the area;
- increasing the attractiveness of the commune both for the locals and for other people, thus stimulating migration from the urban environment to the rural environment of the analyzed commune;
- incentive for local producers by creating new markets.

The consequences of the third specific objective "Creating the possibility of carrying out an integrated rural tourist activity" implementation assume the attraction of local residents in the orientation towards rural tourist activities, which will ensure the

preservation of the ancestral lifestyle, and along with the existence of all the resources for the three elements of the tourism product, it will be possible to establish integrated tourist services, accommodation + food + leisure, provided in the commune. The benefits of implementing this goal are multiple, both economically and socially, and on long term, so sustainability is being discussed.

The fourth specific objective "*Ensuring consultancy in the field for those directly involved in the performance of the activity*" within the proposed plan, is in fact a necessity that will ensure the smooth performance of the activity.



**Figure 6. Staging the implementation of the proposed directions**

Like any plan also the proposed plan in this research, it involves a hierarchy in time of the proposed directions, the goal being the knowledge of the stages that need to be completed and subsequently the possibility of verifying their implementation, and this phasing is illustrated above.

## CONCLUSIONS

Rau de Mori commune, analyzed in this study, is one of the Romanian communes endowed with resources from numerous categories, both natural and anthropic, ensuring a varied touristic potential, but currently insufficiently exploited. Thus in conclusion do not bring that "welfare" much dreamed by the inhabitants and authorities of local community.

Among the ways to capitalize on these resources, the rural tourism activity is perhaps the most accessible, or in other words the one that on long term can be the most sustainable, by the fact that it can ensure the capitalization of all categories of local resources, and the benefits acquired are repaid to everyone involved, but also to the community as a whole. Why is Rau de Mori commune worth capitalizing on through rural tourism? Because:

- the beginning of tourist activity was confirmed by the appearance of accommodation units;
- abundance of natural and human resources, some included in the UNESCO Heritage;
- local, gastronomic and agricultural products are not sufficiently exploited.

As future recommendations, which should be taken into account in a future possible implementation of the plan could be mentioned:

- Transposing local rural resources into a quality tourist product, so that the simplicity, and at the same time the beauty of the concept of "country life" make the tourist not only to come here, but also to "want more".

- The transformation of rural tourist activity into an interface that generates income, jobs, the satisfaction of desires in a positive sense, sustainable capitalization of the natural world.

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