

DIRECTIONS FOR CAPITALIZATION THE RESOURCES FROM ARAD RURAL AREA THROUGH RURAL TOURISM – PROPOSALS

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Abstract: *The development through tourism of Arad rural area, and implicitly the capitalization of local resources through this type of entrepreneurship, requires an action plan, with a certain sequence of stages and actions and with a certain period of achievement in time. The purpose of this article is to analyze the main factors which influence rural tourism activity and to propose some development directions.*

Key words: *rural area, resources, capitalization, rural tourism*

INTRODUCTION

As we enter the new millennium, we become increasingly aware of the complexity, fragility and inestimable value of our planet. At the same time, tourism tends to become an increasingly popular expression of this consciousness. Tourism represents one of the largest industries in the world [4,12,13,15] and at the same time one of the most important factors of global economic development. Sustainable tourism develops the idea of meeting the needs of current tourists and the tourism industry and, at the same time, protecting the environment and opportunities [2,3,5] for the future. [7,8]

On the territory of Arad County, several tourist areas [9] can be distinguished, differentiated from each other, depending on the specifics of the natural and anthropic potential, the types and grouping of touristic objectives, the ways of tourist capitalization of the potential held, the possibilities and the quality of the access infrastructure. But in order that the tourist offer from the rural environment to have a high value, it is necessary that the economic value of the adjacent activities is also at a high level. [1,6,10,14] This principle does not only cover the attractiveness of the rural environment, but also the activities specific to country life.

The proposal considered by us during the present research undertaken involves the exploitation of rural resources specific to the analyzed environment through tourist activities. This proposal derives from several realities:

- there are different ways of accommodation that can be used;
- the existence of numerous resources such as: crafts, traditions, natural resources, gastronomic products, etc. what can be exploited through various tourist activities; [11]
- capitalization of local resources in a sustainable way, aiming at the sustainability of Arad rural environment.

The considerations on which the capitalization of local resources through tourist activities is based are related to a number of factors:

Factors related to space and accessibility of the area. Accessibility to some resources/tourist areas is a necessity. Even if some isolated areas have numerous tourist resources, the impossibility of access to the tourist consumption of these resources is a restrictive factor that can negatively influence the development of an area through tourism.

Integration of rural tourism activity within local activities. In order to ensure the complex capitalization of local resources through tourism, a correlation with the other activities is necessary to ensure an efficient valorization.

The infrastructure and technology part. The development of the tourist activity requires the existence of an appropriate infrastructure, both specialized and general, and if we refer to the current period, the technologization of the tourist activity is a necessity.

Qualified personnel for carrying out the activities. Supporting the insertion of tourism resources into appropriate tourism products requires a skilled workforce. In fact, carrying out the tourism activity in the full way requires personnel with a certain education and qualification.

Emphasis on local architecture. The local architecture is an asset of the studied area, therefore its capitalization through tourism is a necessity both for tourism and for the area, ensuring the preservation of the elements of originality.

Financial resources. Identifying and accessing the financial resources necessary to support the capitalization of local resources through tourism activities.

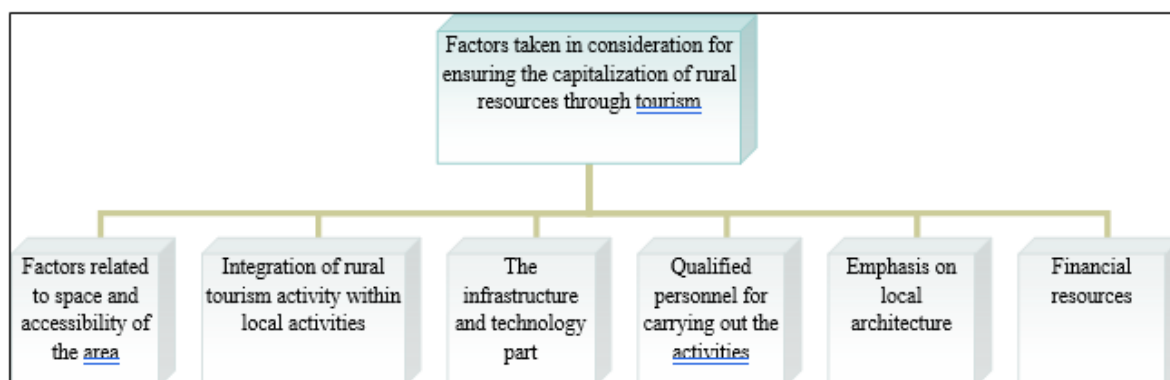


Figure 1. Factors taken in consideration for ensuring the capitalization of rural resources through tourism

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The purpose of this research is to identify the necessary directions to capitalize on the resources from rural area of Arad, and for its implementation, the qualitative research method was applied.

The directions for capitalizing the resources of Arad rural area through tourism could include:

- the creation of the tourist product by incorporating in it the original elements with local character and specificity;
- supporting an original tourist product, capable of competitiveness on the domestic tourist market;
- emphasis on the creation of a specific tourist infrastructure that can support the tourist activity;
- supporting the tourist activity through an appropriate promotional activity.

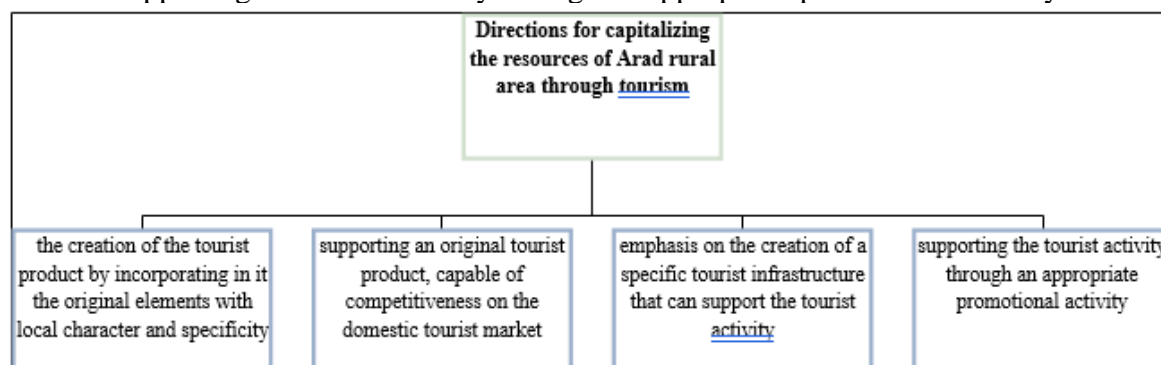


Figure 2. Directions for capitalizing the resources of Arad rural area through tourism

RESEARCH RESULTS

Possible rural tourism products-proposals, priorities

In the creation of emblematic tourist products for the Arad area, it is necessary to go through two stages:

- supporting and stimulating the inclusion of local tourist resources in the tourist product;
- stimulating the conservation, promotion and perpetuation of the rural resources of Arad with an original character;
- identification of those resources that should be included in the tourist activity in the case of the studied area.

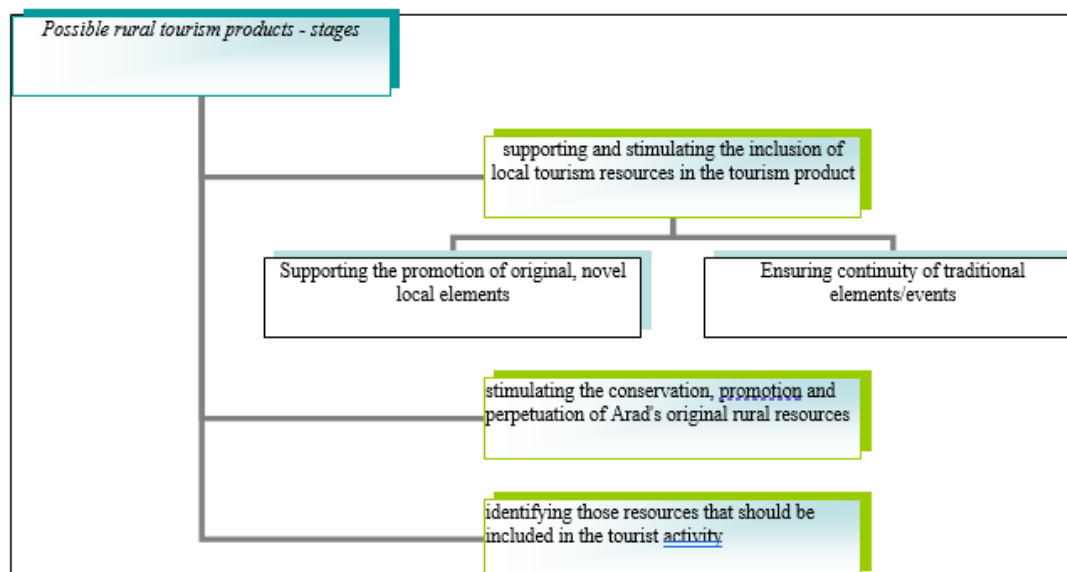


Figure 3. Possible rural tourism products-stages

Once the stages mentioned above have been completed, and the "necessary base to support the tourist activity" has been identified, meaning those resources that can be capitalized through tourism of major importance should be the issuing of proposals for the capitalization of these resources through rural tourism or agritourism.

Such proposals for capitalizing on the resources of the Arad rural environment through rural and agritourism activities can be:

- "Local farmer's pie" can be such a product through which certain local gastronomic resources can be exploited;
- "Let's learn to weave and sew-with particularities of Banat area" is the tourist product through which information related to local crafts, that are still preserved in certain villages, can be transmitted to the tourist, thus ensuring their transmission to the next generations and emphasizing the profitability of their practice for the locals;
- "Arad rural traditions - let's learn to carol" is another tourist product proposal, specific to the winter period, which could be successful in certain villages;
- "Peasant party on the farm" can be a valuable tourist product through which valuable information can be transmitted to the tourist both about life on the farm and about life in the country;
- "Let's learn to live healthy" can also be a current tourist product, with a double meaning: to emphasize the benefits of life on the farm and to capitalize on certain local gastronomic products.

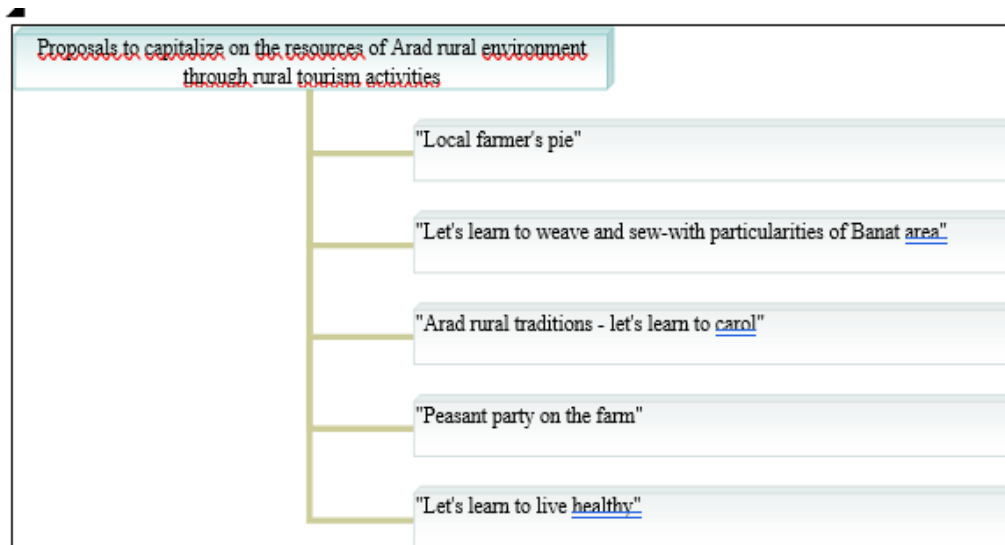


Figure 4. Proposals to capitalize on the resources of Arad rural environment through rural tourism activities

We believe that any of the products mentioned above can be successful tourist products, and through their prism, the capitalization of the original resources of Arad rural area can be ensured.

The specific tourist infrastructure necessary to carry out the activity - necessary actions and measures

The exploitation of Arad's rural resources requires the existence of a material base, both a specialized one and a general infrastructure. In this sense, we believe that a series of future actions and measures are necessary:

- ensuring access to rural specific tourist resources involves actions such as: cataloging existing resources to ensure a first record of them, appropriate arrangement of resources for tourist visiting, improvements of the road infrastructure to facilitate access to these resources;

- improvements related to specific tourism infrastructure would be another necessary direction and would involve several measures such as: the modernization of accommodation possibilities, directing the owners of tourist structures to reinvest the profit in improvement works, increasing and diversifying the leisure possibilities;

- the highlighting by all means of the possible advantages for the tourist, following the choice of the area studied by us, as a holiday destination, would, in our view, imply: adequate signage, promotion by various means, actions to set up some visitor centers, the possibility carrying out some free time activities.

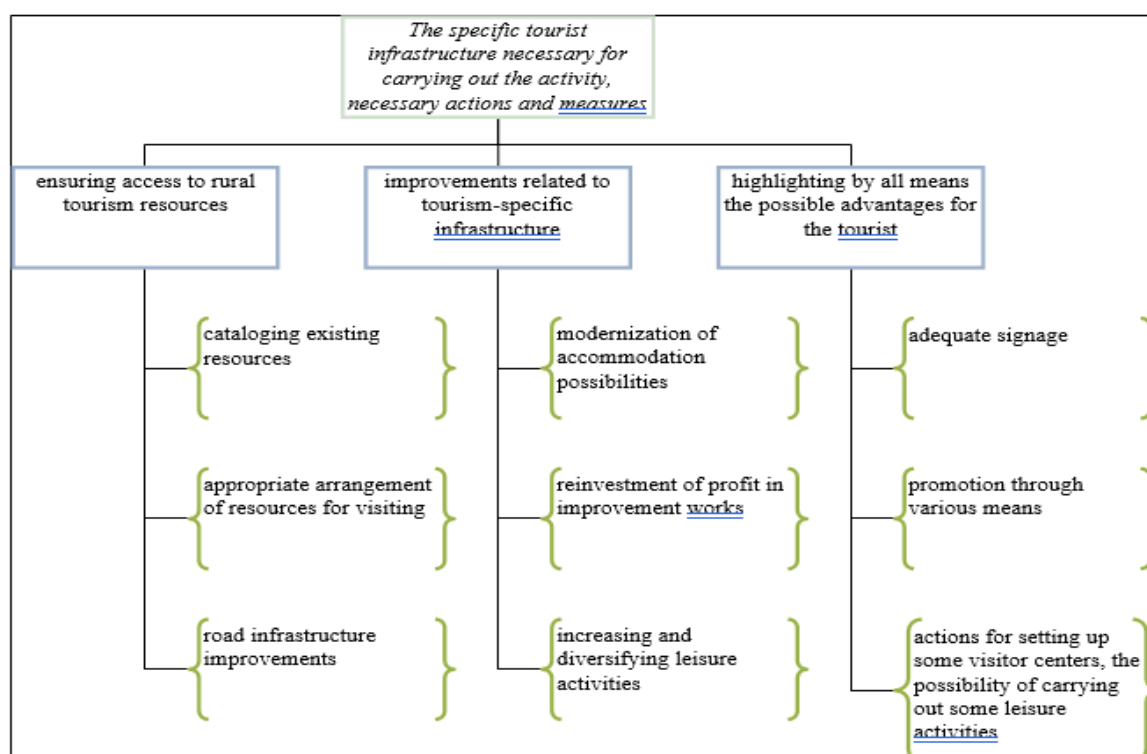


Figure 5. The specific tourist infrastructure necessary to carry out the activity - necessary actions and measures

Directions to be followed at the institutional level to ensure the capitalization of Arad's rural resources through tourism

Obviously, the existence of rural resources in a territory, or the co-interest related to them from tourist part, is not enough. Even if we add the interest from the owners of rural structures, possible entrepreneurs, the complex problem of capitalizing rural resources through tourism is not solved. Intervention and support from local institutions is also necessary.

From this point of view, we believe that it is necessary to make improvements in the direction of human resources, of the promotion part, in partnership.

1. Human resources department

- Consultancy for the owners of tourist structures, especially regarding the creation of the tourist product;
- Access to different courses on rural tourism entrepreneurship.

2. The promotion part

- Creation of a brand product for the studied area;
- Highlighting through promotion the representative characteristics of local tourist products;
- Involvement from local authorities, through local pages where the tourist resources and assets of Arad rural area are added, to ensure their promotion.

3. Partnership between actors involved in the tourism field

- Stimulating a good collaboration through partnership between entrepreneurs in the tourism field and the local administrative part;
- Ensuring a good collaboration through partnership of local institutions with those specializing in tourism;
- The creation of a collaboration between all entrepreneurs from rural area, tourist or not, in order to attract them in the creation of a unique touristic product.

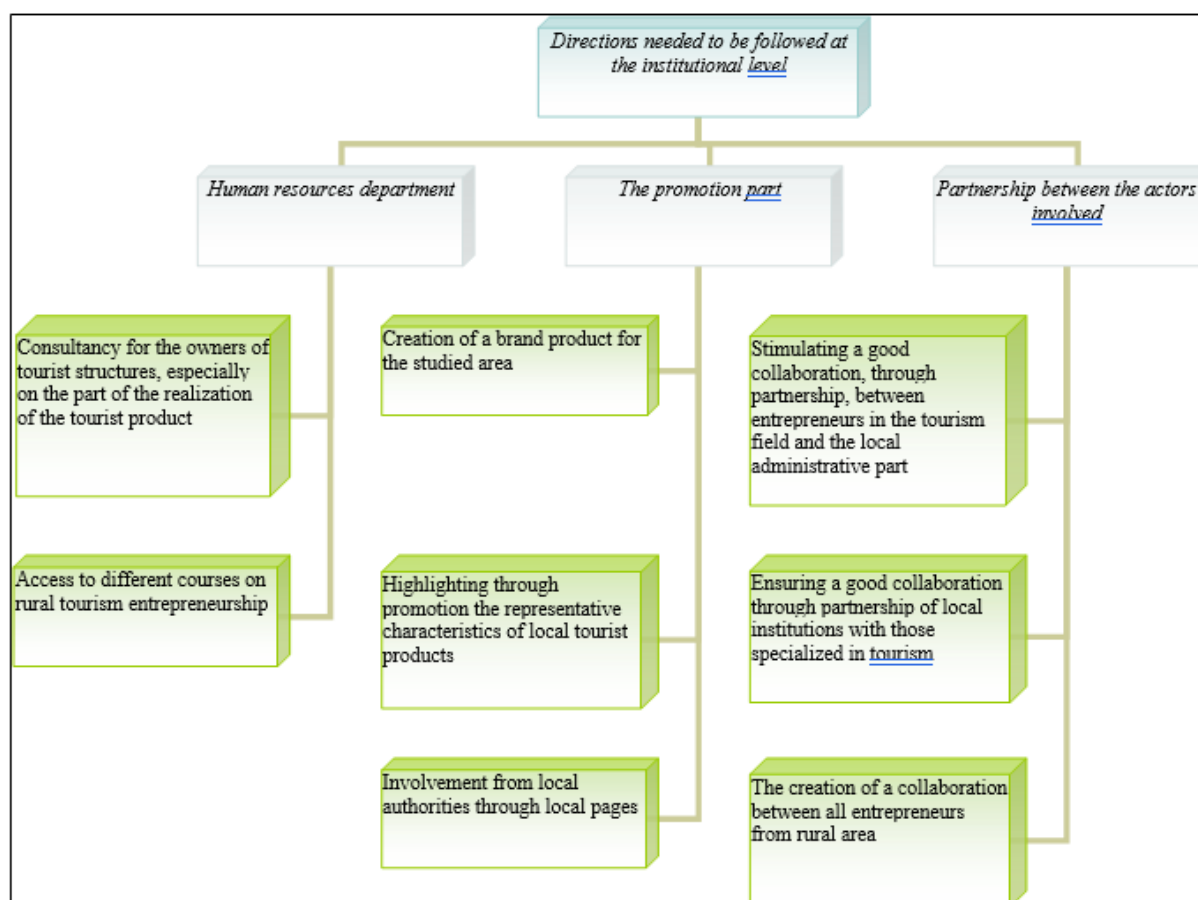


Figure 6. Directions to be followed at the institutional level to ensure the capitalization of Arad's rural resources through tourism

CONCLUSIONS

The existence of rural resources with a unique character, and with great power of attraction among tourists from different categories is a certainty, but in terms of capitalizing them through tourist activities, there is still work to be done.

A possibility of capitalizing local resources through tourist activities would be the creation of a weekend product involving the inclusion of local values in this product. The proposed tourist product implies an emphasis on what the rural world means, meaning those original elements that give uniqueness to the Arad rural environment.

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