

## ROLE OF CREATING AN AGROTURISM NETWORK IN SUPPORTING THE AGROTURISM IN THE MOUNTAINOUS AREA OF CARAȘ-SEVERIN COUNTY

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**Abstract:** *Caras-Severin, formerly known as "the engine of Romanian economy", as well as one of its main miner-metallurgical areas, turned into a less than mediocre development area with strong and steady decline in all economic activities without immediate prospects and serious demographic problems. In these circumstances, looking for alternatives to the economic recovery, the agrotourism presents undeniable advantages.*

**Key words:** *agrotourism, network, tourism offer, development of rural tourism*

### INTRODUCTION

The agrotourism can provide superior capitalization of surplus of the farms, which often degrades through disuse. This is especially important because natural products are more natural, made without pesticides, so of the highest quality. Taking into account the fact that the Caraș-Severin County has the floristic composition with great value, the only one in the country that compete Bucovina (Vatra Dornei), food taste very good, being appreciated abroad, which increases the quality.

Agrotourism is a beneficial element for the local population, who wants to spend their holidays in areas other than daily, but modest income does not allow expensive routes; agrotourism prices are more affordable than classic tourism, promoting the development of mass tourism.

The development of this activity would allow knowledge of Caraș areas, agrotourism can become an ambassador invisibly, facilitating the attraction of investors to this branch of the service sector and other sectors of the economy.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors of the paper were used as methods of work: data collection, processing, analysis, observation and their interpretation.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The network covers the entire system agrotourism organizationally and business management organization and promotion of tourism offer. The agrotourism network has three objectives, namely: agro agent program and the tourist offer and organizational management.

Depending on the level to which it relates, the tasks and functions of different parts and different organizational objectives are specific to each echelon of work skills, such as:

#### **1) At the regional and county level:**

- identification and certification of households;
- education and training of agrotourism;
- technical assistance in the development and modernization of housing investment to be compatible with the requirements of the agrotourism activity;
- developing the necessary documentation and cataloging of agrotourism facilities certification and channeling them towards the agrotourism circuit in the area;

- oversight of the continuing level of comfort;
- development of tourist routes to areas where there are sights and material basis and appropriate infrastructure.

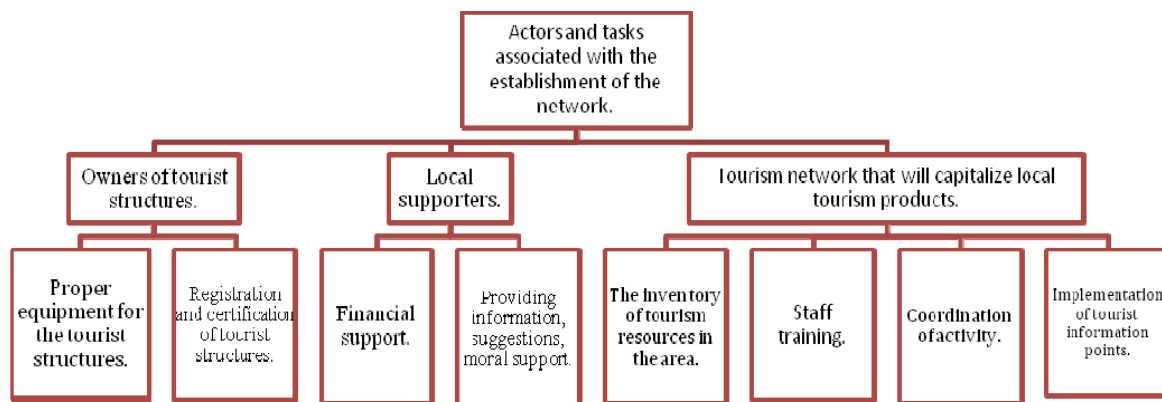
**2) At the local level:**

- contacting and establishing links with specialized bodies in rural tourism and agrotourism; in our case involving ANTREC would be the best solution;
- organization of meetings and debates in which there shall be presented to the householders the steps they need to go through in order to provide agrotourist services;
- providing advice and approval phase classification in terms of agrotourism households;
- disclosure to residents of changes in legislation and how they can benefit from these changes;
- contacting companies / organizations able to provide advice on human resources;
- developing projects that take into account the development potential of agrotourism;
- establishing exchanges with rural communities in other areas / countries which successfully agrotourism;
- training of tour guides among locals;
- maintenance of common areas of interest;
- involvement in organizing folk holidays;
- promoting / advertising to reach potential consumers of agrotourist products.

Organizing a local agrotourist network is, in our opinion, a necessary goal for development of rural tourism in the area. The agrotourism, being a more particular tourism form, we must consider several issues:

- agrotourism activity overlaps "organizational structure" of farms (each family member has their own responsibilities in the household);
- to practice this form of tourism, farmers change their way of life, something that has some implications;
- there may be some problems in project implementation of agrotourist network, due to disagreements between those who will implement the project and other community members who did not participate in its realization, or between staff from outside the village and rural community.

Each actor in the framework of this activity, the creation of an agrotourist network, has a number of responsibilities.



**Fig. 1 - The actors and tasks associated with the establishment of local agrotourist network**

An important first step in setting up the network is the awareness of local actors, particularly the owners of guesthouses in the mountains, the need to set up the network.

If this had succeeded, the authorities involve which must carry out the necessary steps to establish a legal network. Local guesthouses owners must understand that by working together they can achieve greater benefits, and may bring to light this area by creating tourist programs to exploit local resources.

After setting up the network it is intended the certification of farmhouses / guesthouses by criteria established by law.

For local guesthouses owners, the requirement to obtain patents and licenses in tourism, proving both the existence of specialists in the coordination and delivery of services and the minimum conditions to be provided by economic agents forming rural tourist network is a necessity.

An important step aims to design a competitive agrotourist product, based on the conditions offered by farmhouses in each area. This step will take the form of “the realization of agrotourist product which will include the inventory, approval and classification of minimum facilities/equipment of accommodation; identify opportunities for dining; setting up and valuing, developing equipment / traditional leisure; emergence of signal, routes and equipment”.

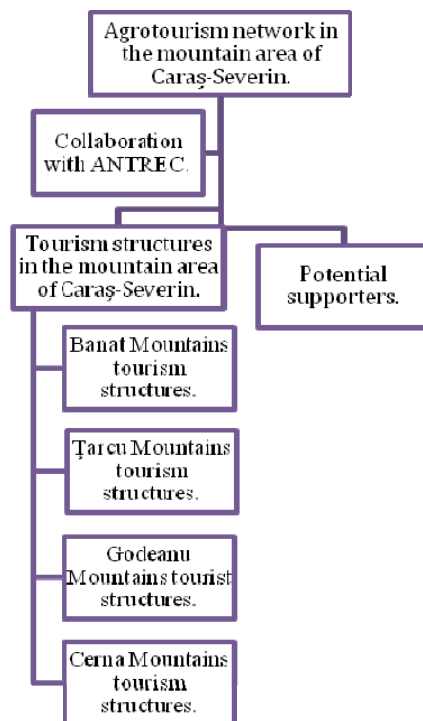
To the constitution of local agrotourist product must be taken into account some specific features of rural mountain community, features which must be highlighted by their inclusion in the tourist product offered:

- Participation in village life (agricultural works, life at the farmhouse);
- Consult the "elders";
- Participation in the spiritual life of the village (weddings, religious ceremonies);
- Participation in community celebrations of any kind;
- Fairs, festivals;
- great laic and religious holidays.

The advantages offered by setting up an agrotourist network starts from the possibility of agrotourist product design, as a unit, by integrating farmhouses / guesthouses practicing agrotourism into unitary system of organization.

The inconvenience that may occur arises from the incapacity of local authorities/city hall to meet the managerial requirements imposed by the creation of such a project and the lack of desire for cooperation from owners of tourist structures. The main reason is the mistrust that comes from householders compared to the notion of association. Another major obstacle would derive from the way of setting up the organizational structure of the network: who will coordinate the managerial activity and in which measure the farmhouses involved will be subordinated to the strategies required.

Shaping an agrotourist network of the mountain area of Caraş-Severin County can contribute to rural development and create a brand image for the mountainous area so appealing and inviting.



**Fig. 2 - Agrotourist network model of organization in the mountain area of Caraș-Severin**

## CONCLUSIONS

Shaping of an agrotourist network at the level of Caraș-Severin County, can contribute to rural development, creating a brand image for the region, so appealing and inviting. At the county level, there are currently few representative households, proving the interest of the inhabitants of this activity and their desire to work in this field. Thus, very special are the Miniș households, two in number, one at Canicea (belonging to famous folk musician Stana Izbașa) one at Brebu Nou, one at Vîrciorova and one at Căsoaia. They benefit from the convenience that one tourist may wish, having that peasant extra ambience, specific, so appreciated currently in Europe. They are taken into the attention of the National Tourism Agency in order to classify them internationally. It should be noted that comfort is not always the most requested aspect in agrotourism. Thus, in some articles in the German press in 1999, analyzing the potential of agrotourism of Banat, it was outlined that the agrotourism offer includes holidays in the countryside, home meal for tourists who do not want the stress of big cities, but a quiet holiday in a natural setting. For them, the Romanian village offers even more back in time, close to the Middle Ages, a tourist attraction that Western countries can not offer. This proves beyond bitterness classification that we can transform precisely the lack of infrastructure and modernization in an advantage over the European countries. The novelty of the agrotourism of Caraș-Severin County product, existing conditions, technical and material culture of the inhabitants of rural folk, coupled with hospitality, interest and motivation, can impose the village on the tourism market and can consecrate it. The optimism that is released after considering the tourism potential of the region is determined by the natural and anthropogenic outstanding advantages of this region compared to others in Europe and

neighboring countries, by the way it was preserved the rural area in the county and the material basis of the existing population.

The launch of the agrotourism of village on the tourism market is possible and necessary, thereby offering a viable alternative for rural development of Caras-Severin County, reorganization economic and social life and cultural existence today.

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