

THE ANALYSIS OF THE STRONG AND WEAKNESSES OF THE BANAT AGROTOURIST SECTOR

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Abstract: *The Banat agrotourism sector presents a number of strong points that can have positive effects long-term on the local and regional economy, so were identified as strengths the following: diversification of the fields of activity of the production and tourism companies, the ability to communicate in other languages of international circulation, nature largely well preserved and unpopulated, but also customs, traditions and crafts with multiple ethnic cultural influences that attract tourists from abroad. But beside all strengths identified, this sector also faces with some problems: poor quality management and low entrepreneurial training, poor quality of tourism services, especially recreation, modest quality of rural endowment.*

Key words: *strong points, weaknesses, agrotourism, Banat*

INTRODUCTION

Researchers from agrotourism field have found that there are three major elements that are found in agrotourism as a form of alternative tourism: *the desire for independence* (with its good parts - jobs for family members and extra income - and bad - loss of government programs to support agriculture, income fluctuations), *the possibility of contributing to the welfare of the community* (appeared from the desire to have success as other farmers involved in agrotourism, from the desire to meet the needs of the tourist market, the need to socialize with visitors and the desire to educate consumers) and *the possibility to diversify their products* (for the full use of resources, in order to benefit from deductions of taxes) [3,7].

Practiced at a small-scale, with a relatively small cultural, economic and social impact, and centered on education, agrotourism covers a range of activities that are most varied and unexpected for those unfamiliarized [1,2,6]. Activities classified as "agrotourist" must meet the following criteria [4,5,8]:

- to be carried out in rural areas or on a farm;
- to bring benefits to the agricultural industry;
- to be based on activities or products offered by agricultural producers;
- to involve contact between the agricultural producer or agricultural products and tourist;
- to assume economic activity between agricultural producer and tourist;
- to be complete, meaning to include activities, accommodation and table - items offered.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Analyzing the Banat agrotourism sector, we found a number of strengths that can lead to an increase of this activity but also an economic growth of the space in which they are taking place, but besides these strengths we have identified a number of weaknesses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the Banat agrotourism sector, I have resorted to analyzing this area from several points of view: from the economic point of

view, the share of agrotourism, rural tourism, services and trade and historical-cultural resources, and we found the following:

1. From the economic point of view, we find the following:

Strong points:

- the development of new branches with a high degree of processing and the diversity of the tourism sector;
- diversifying the fields of activity of the production companies and tourism companies;
- the existence of a diverse range of local raw materials;
- the existence of an infrastructure to support economic activity: Economic Development and Promotion Agencies, Chambers of Industry and Agriculture, Consulting firms, Business Incubators, Industrial Areas etc.;
- qualified workforce in tourism - the existence of special faculties;
- the significant share of SMEs in employment;
- geographical position - situation in the western extremity of the country, a node of national and European importance in the road and railway network;
- industrial tradition, particularly in the machinery industry, light industry (food, footwear, textiles) and in the processing industries (wood, construction materials, metals).

Weaknesses:

- the existence of production areas inappropriate to the requirements of the market economy;
- the reduced range of banking services for SMEs outside urban centers;
- the lack of a stimulating system for the setting-up of SMEs in poor economic sectors and tourism;
- poorly developed traffic infrastructure;
- insufficient development of the infrastructure meant to support economic activities, especially outside the municipalities in the rural area;
- insufficient utilities necessary for the construction of some industrial areas in small towns and in rural area;
- lack of correlation between supply and demand for labor and low investment in human resources;
- the lack of an adequate information system for obtaining the necessary data for carrying out market studies for the diversification of services and productive activities;
- poor quality management and low entrepreneurial training;
- low demand level on the domestic market,
- the low share of companies that have introduced ISO quality systems for products and services;
- the low share of industrial sectors with new technologies in the top fields;

1. From the point of view of agrotourism and rural tourism

Strong points:

- the ability to communicate with other inhabitants but also other languages: Hungarian, Serbian, Bulgarian;
- the existence of special urban and rural leisure areas;
- the existence of wooden churches, historical monuments, nature reserves (Faget area);
- the existence of public catering establishments and diversified services;
- road infrastructure (modernized national and European roads and geographic position favoring the development of transit tourism and business tourism);
- nature largely well preserved and unpolluted;

- customs, traditions and crafts with multiple ethnic cultural influences attracting tourists from abroad;

- the hospitality of the population;
- geothermal and mineral water resources;
- landscape variety (the alternation hill - plain - mountain).

Weaknesses:

- poor quality of tourist services, especially recreation;

- poor cooperation with tour operators from tourism;

- progressive degradation of cultural and artistic heritage (old houses with thermo windows);

- non-modernized roads;

- insufficient urban infrastructure in agrotourist areas (water, sewage and telephony networks, sewage treatment plants);

- insufficient promotion of local attractions and programs and activities of tourist interest;

- insufficient agrotourist markings;
- insufficiency of tourism promotion organizations;
- lack of information and tourist maps;
- lack of access infrastructure to some tourist attractions;
- lack of garbage collection services in rural and tourist areas;
- lack of recreational spaces arranged in wooded areas;
- not knowing the communication techniques of those involved in rural tourism;
- insufficient promotion of tourism resources and opportunities of tourist services.

1. From the point of view of services and trade

Strong points:

- the appearance of large shopping centers (Bila, Metro, Selgross);

- the emergence of youth facilities (computer clubs, discos, recreational areas in the pool);

- the strong development of the private sector in trade and services;
- the large number of foreign investors in the field of services and commerce;
- improved public nutrition services;
- diversified financial-banking services;
- developed computer services (access at the Internet);

Weaknesses:

- poor quality of services in public administration;

- modest quality of rural amenities (parking, recreation and recreation areas, children's playgrounds, street furniture, traffic signs);

- modest quality and low density of public catering establishments along the main roads;

- concentration of the main services in municipalities in detriment of small towns and rural localities, especially in hilly and mountain areas;

- lack of infrastructure in order to provide quality services, especially in rural areas;
- poor quality services in public nutrition in rural area;
- poorly accessible banking services in rural areas.

1. Historically and culturally point of view

Strong points:

- the existence of cultural institutions (libraries, theaters, memorial houses, museums, ecclesiastical settlements, historical monuments, natural sites, commercial roads);

- the existence of multi-ethnic cultural traditions (artisan crafts, music, traditional harbors, folk theater, gastronomy, pastoral activities);
- cultural, historical, ethnic and folk traditions old and well-established.

Weaknesses:

- low access of the population to cultural activities in rural areas;
- poor promotion of actions with cultural character in rural area.

CONCLUSIONS

From an economic point of view, there are found also as strong points: the geographical position due to the situation in the western extremity of the country, is a national and European hub on the road and railway network, but also an industrial role, in the machine building industry, the light industry (food, footwear, textiles) and in the processing industries (wood, construction materials, metals).

Among the weaknesses of this area we mention: the lack of an adequate informational system for obtaining data necessary for market research, in order to diversify services and productive activities but also for poor quality management and low entrepreneurial training;

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