

PROPOSALS FOR CAPITALIZATION OF RURAL RESOURCES THROUGH RURAL TOURISM. PRIORITIES AND ALTERNATIVES

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Abstract: *One of the trends in the development of the tourism industry is the return to nature. For the huge tourist potential of our country, rural tourism is one of the most attractive tourist offers and this from a multiple perspective: on the one hand, the tourist, Romanian or foreign, who will demand more and more intensely this type tourist service; on the other hand, the inhabitants of the villages who will use all their energy and skill to integrate in what will become as a result of the efforts of the profile associations a network that will cover the whole country. Tourism can solve some of the economic and labor problems in which the rural population is involved. The aim of the paper is to follow the features and particularities of the rural tourism field, as well as proposals for capitalization through rural tourism for the rural environment, priorities and alternatives for capitalization of rural resources.*

Key words: *rural resources, proposals, capitalization possibilities*

INTRODUCTION

The need to develop rural tourism[12] activities and capitalize on rural resources involves taking into account aspects that include [2,3,4,5,6,7,8]:

- Various offers for accommodation;
- The use in tourist activities of some resources from the category of agri-food products, traditional folk art, crafts and folklore of the rural community;
- Natural resources and ecological requirements make rural tourism activities compatible with sustainability.

The general perspectives of the development and extension of the rural tourism activities are based on several considerations [1,9,10,11]:

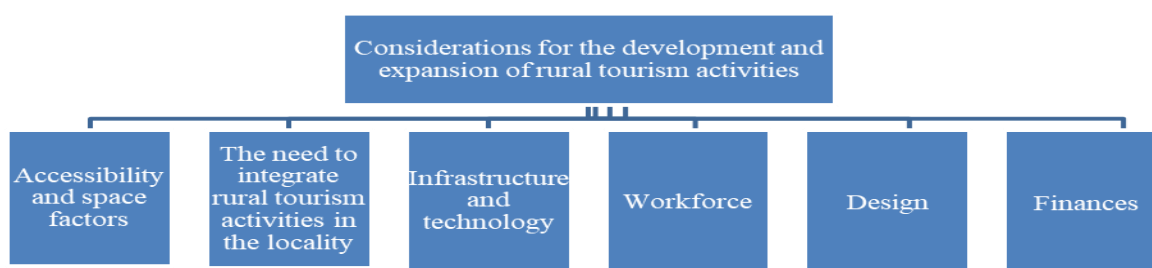


Figure 1. Considerations of the development and extension of rural tourism activities

Accessibility and space factors. For some individual businesses in rural tourism, facilitating accessibility is essential, because distance, isolation is advantageous.

The need to integrate rural tourism activities within the localities. The integration of the rural tourism business within the localities must be the result of a complex exploitation of the territory, of the activities of the fields with which the tourism comes in direct or indirect contact.

Infrastructure and technology. The programs for the establishment and development of rural tourism businesses [13] must take into account the costs and benefits of the strategy of concentration or dispersion of modern technology and technology.

Workforce. Flexible programs, including distance education, off-season opportunities and economic incentives, are needed to support and meet rural operators.

The design. Heritage conservation is one of the purposes of rural tourism because many of the old buildings can be adapted for modern use.

Necessary finances. Businesses in rural areas have to deal with unique conditions that are not found in the city, which is why they need financial resources.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of the paper is to follow the features and particularities of the rural tourism field, as well as proposals for capitalization through rural tourism for the rural environment, priorities and alternatives for capitalization of rural resources. To do that we undertake several steps: data collection, processing, analysis, observation and their interpretation.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In order for this potential to be exploited through rural tourism activities, it is necessary to establish some objectives and measures, the implementation of which will ensure some future development.

Identifying possible directions for the development of rural tourism

The future lines of development of rural tourism should be:

- supporting the improvement of the rural tourism product by putting a price on local products;
- ensuring to a certain extent the competitiveness of the rural tourism product on the tourist market;
- improving, where possible, the tourist infrastructure and beyond;
- to work on the promotion activity and obviously on the marketing part.

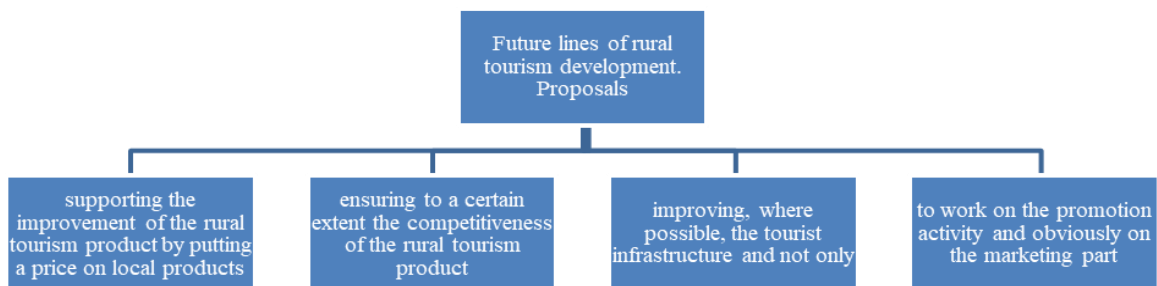


Figure 2. Identifying possible directions for the development of rural tourism

The objective of these proposals is to support the capitalization of local rural resources through tourism activities and ensure the future sustainability of the rural environment.

Proposals for future possible representative tourist products for the rural environment

Forms of rural tourism are based on close human relationships, small spaces, but original, authentic, and a multitude of resources. In order to be able to achieve the development of tourist attractions and to ensure the creation of specific complex tourist products, it is necessary to identify the existing resources and subsequently support their capitalization through tourism [14].

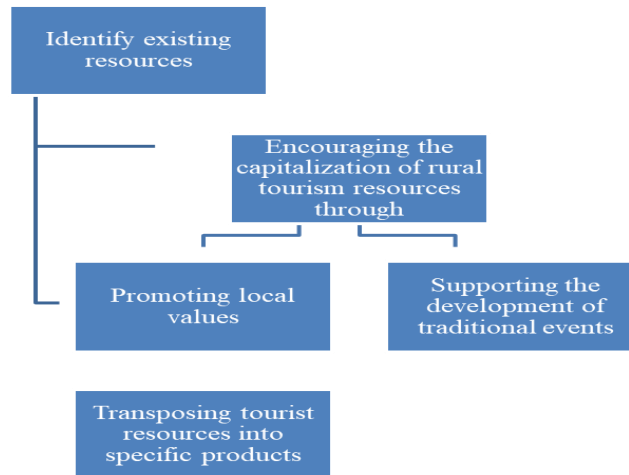


Figure 3. Proposals for future possible tourist products representative for the rural environment

In order to create or make tourist products, several aspects must be taken into account, of which:

- first identification of existing resources, or a good knowledge of them;
- this knowledge alone is not enough, restoration measures are also needed to be introduced in the tourist circuit;
- identification of resources with curative or treatment potential and implementation of rehabilitation actions;
- identification and restoration of heritage buildings, with value for rural tourism activity;
- emphasis on the creation or modernization of various leisure possibilities, otherwise deficient in rural areas;
- at present a big minus is the lack of local museums, through which the “specific way of life” of the rural environment can be illustrated, although the resources for their creation are abundant;
- establishing, as a matter of priority [16], the resources that can and should be included in the rural tourism product in the area under study.

As rural tourism resources have been identified and "listed in the inventory", several possibilities can be outlined for inclusion in various agritourism product proposals. For the inhabitants of the urban environment and not only, from crowded environments in general, to watch the sunset, or to enjoy a tasty organic preparation, or to participate in different daily activities on the farm, it can represent an authentic attractive offer. The specific resources of life in the rural area that must be "highlighted" by the rural tourism product must emphasize the beauty, why not the simplicity and originality of life in the village.

We have made some proposals for future possible agritourism products, as products representative for the rural environment, namely:

- the possibility to benefit from the quality of food on the farm through "Sweet products to make and taste";
- exploring the secrets of local rural crafts with the help of the product "Let's craft with the support of local folk craftsmen";
- knowing the roots of local culture and civilization through "Let's know the traditions of winter holidays in rural area";
- knowing the way of local fun through "Party at the farm ";

- cultivating the way to live healthy and why not to plant the desire to return to the farm through.



Figure 4. Proposals of agritourism products for the rural environment

Measures related to general and tourist infrastructure

Supporting the possibility of carrying out any tourist activity presupposes the existence of an adequate infrastructure, starting from the possibility of access, providing basic services, and later the possibility to reach relatively easily some tourist resources in the studied rural area, aspect, we consider very important for agritourism.

We conclude that in order to ensure the possibility of carrying out rural tourism activity, some measures related to the general and specific infrastructure are necessary:

- Actions to improve the degree of accessibility to rural tourism resources;
- Actions to consolidate and improve the public roads on which the tourist activity in the rural area is supported;
- Increasing the degree of interest and obvious investment in specific rural tourism infrastructure, so as to ensure the increase of the capacity of the rural accommodation and food infrastructure;
- Identifying possibilities to improve recreational opportunities in rural areas.

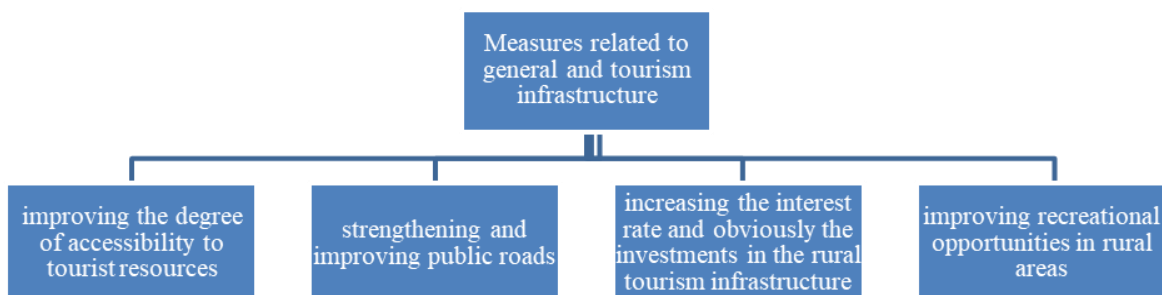


Figure 5. Measures related to general and tourism infrastructure

Due to the fact that the leisure part is an important element of the rural tourism product, a special emphasis must be placed on improving the accessibility of tourist resources, in terms of consolidating and improving public roads, in this sense the steps must be put on: road rehabilitation at national, local and county level.

The increase of the degree of interest and obvious of the investments in the rural tourist infrastructure supposes the organization of the accommodation facilities, a “must” for the support of the rural tourism development. The rural tourist accommodation structures must be well arranged and with superior facilities, in order to meet the minimum

necessary as a necessary level of comfort. The food sector of the rural tourism product must also be supported, a real and sustainable way of support being the emphasis on capitalizing on local products.

Improving the recreational possibilities in the rural area is a minor chapter in recent years, the development of this aspect being primarily responsible for the local community, a community that knows best local resources so that it can ensure the development of the community in a sustainable way.

Proposals related to institutional issues

In order to support the development of tourism in rural areas, the owners of tourist structures need some measures, of an administrative nature, which can ultimately lead to the creation of a competitive tourism product, or facilitate contact between tourists and rural areas. This support could consist of several aspects: offering land, why not in concession, or reducing the value of the tax, or promoting the tourist offer at a certain level, facilitating access to specialized advice, guaranteeing to a certain extent loans, etc.

The necessary support at institutional level, as well as possible and necessary proposals for the future, could be grouped in several directions:

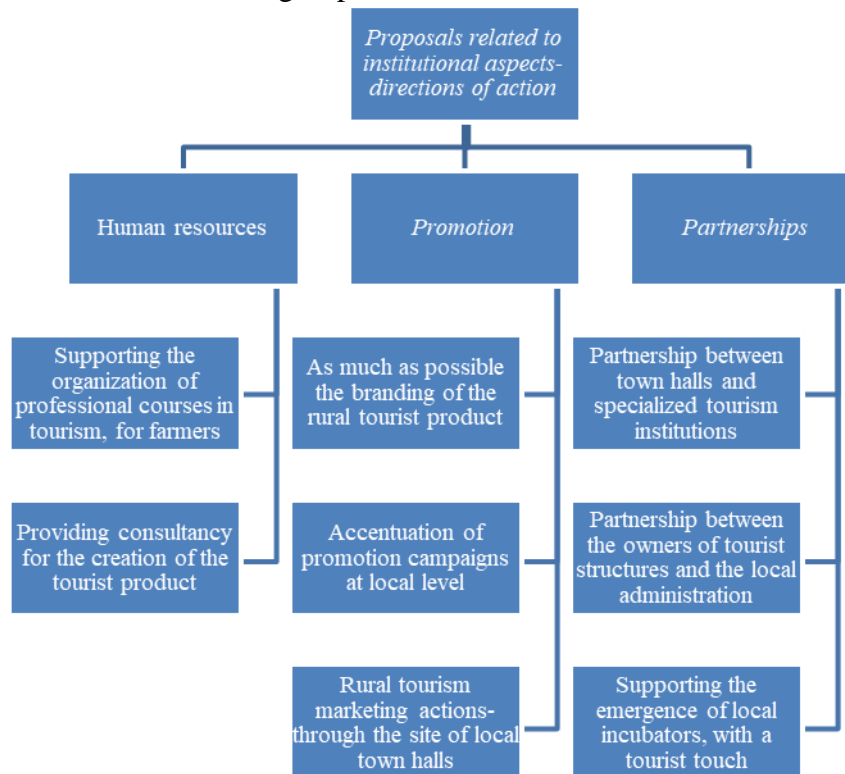


Figure 6. Proposals related to the institutional aspects that need to be improved

1. *Human resources*

- Supporting the organization of professional courses in the field of tourism, for farmers;
- Offering consultancy for the creation of the tourist product.

2. *Promote*

- As much as possible the branding of the rural tourist product;
- Accentuation of promotion campaigns at local level;
- Rural tourism marketing actions-through the site of local town halls.

3. *Partnership*

- Partnership between town halls and tourism institutions;
- Partnership between the owners of tourist structures and the local administration;
- Supporting the emergence of local incubators, with a tourist touch.

Obviously, the proposals for future support for the improvement of the institutional aspects can be numerous, but we consider that the previously mentioned ones will really contribute to the “growth” of the rural tourism activity in the future.

We can conclude that tourism in rural areas can be a sustainable way to support both local development and a way to benefit consumers [15] but for this goal to be put into practice is not enough just the private initiative, but also support from local institutions, or simply the emphasis on public-private partnerships for staged support for development.

CONCLUSIONS

The tourist activity specific to the rural environment represents a field with a potential future growth. If we discuss about rural area, as a research area, then bringing into question this field of activity is an urgent need of the future, imposing itself as an economic and social stimulating activity of the rural environment, due to several aspects:

- Supporting new businesses, primarily with social benefits for the local community, especially by providing jobs;
- The capitalization of the local crafts, of the traditions, aspect that has as consequences both their preservation and the stimulation of their further practice, or the attraction of the young generations;
- The possibility of obtaining additional income by selling own local products;
- The possibility of ensuring a high standard of living in rural areas, and implicitly of achieving another issue, that of migration to urban areas.

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