

## THE PERCEPTION OF ROMANIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### **Abstract:**

*Motto: "Ecological and economic deficits are now shaping not only our future, but our present. The future is here." Lester R. Brown (World on the Edge)*

*After 50 years of communism, of values destruction, of chaotic real estate evolution, of a kitsch tourist image perceived by those visiting our country, of values reversal, of values dilution, all of us who love our country and tourism wonder what and how to do to transform Romania into an attractive destination.*

*We all know that we have marvelous places, we know that they are not promoted, but why those authorized to do so, don't do it, we don't know! Recently, the ones from National Geographic Traveler (the travelling publication with the widest audience, having over 8.5 million readers) have given us a ball of oxygen, have shown us a ray of hope by classifying Maramures in the Top 20 mandatory tourist destinations for 2015, summing up a series of criteria: authenticity, sustainability, cultural richness, etc. Maramures has all these qualities. But it remains a micro region, and the rest of the country (with small exceptions) has not attracted attention or tourists...*

*The perception of Romania as a tourist destination is unclear; it has not got a good reputation as a bona fide destination for occasional tourists. This is caused partly by: deficiencies in the destination marketing, the absence of governmental support in tourism, the unprofessional practices in the business tourism sector, the low standards of the services for the visitors, the deficient infrastructure, improper facilities and pass-time activities, etc.*

*The re-launching of tourism from Romania, of the tourist destinations and the attraction of a larger number of foreign tourists could bring supplementary benefits, but with many necessary changes, in the tourism managers' opinion. "Two elements are essential in the tourism industry system: how to make use environmentally, sustainably of the tourism potential of the landscape and the anthropogenic potential." [1].*

*The following are dedicated to them. Why ecology in tourism? Why ecology of hospitality? Why ecology of tourism? These are questions that I have partially answered and the article tries to bring to the attention of tourism phenomenon lovers issues, thoughts, experiences...*

**Keywords:** perception, destination, sustainable development, tourist, attractions.

**JEL Classification:** J6, H, ZOO, Z1, D8.

### **1. Introduction**

Tourism is a growing market, especially in Romania, where it started to grow increasingly bolder wings. This makes room for everyone, but seeks out the best. The difference is not given by the hotel offered to the tourist, or by the program.

Tourists are becoming more educated, more responsible and savvier. The tourist knows what to ask and to appreciate what is offered. Therefore, the difference lies in attitude, awareness, and the ability to listen and to know how to solve the most relevant wishes of guest that steps into one's agency. Only if you know how to provide a nuance in addition to paid services, will you be sure that the tourist will entrust his holidays to you again or to others ever, for it is known that a satisfied tourist brings another 10 with him!

When asked "who is responsible for the suffering of many in the tourism industry?" the response of the era is abstract and impersonal, "system logic". Really? Perhaps the solution would be the recognition of responsible, green, smart tourism opportunities and I could add more synonyms for the concept of ecotourism.

Although some details vary, most definitions of ecotourism reflect a distinct form of tourism that meets four basic criteria: it takes place in natural and cultural areas, it involves conservation measures, it encourages local community involvement and it supports local welfare.

- ✦ **Ecotourism can be seen as a business opportunity.** An ecotourism business can succeed on the long term if it is a responsible business, abiding both by market laws and of sustainable development.
- ✦ **Ecotourism is a sustainable version of tourism in natural areas**, while also including elements of rural and cultural tourism. In addition to the principles of sustainable tourism to which it subscribes, ecotourism has specific principles: actively contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage; includes local communities in planning, development and operation activities and contributes to their well-being; involves a full and interesting explanations for visitors on the natural and cultural resources; is intended mainly for individual visitors and small organized groups.
- ✦ **Ecotourism is a market niche within tourism in natural areas**, which has recorded an impressive growth in recent decades. It tends to become an independent market segment under the influence of factors such as: population aging, the preference of travelers to choose educational holidays, which enrich their existence, their desire to escape in nature, to be active and to spend quality time with family and friends, etc.
- ✦ Local, regional, national and international organizations, in whatever form of organization, have a determining role in promoting and spreading ecotourism worldwide.

**Romania, integral part of the European Union**, of the European tourism market is and remains a special case of analysis for any lover of the tourism phenomenon, especially since the economic crisis, the rampant globalization, and not only, provides new opportunities, new metamorphosis to the tourism product, to the attractiveness and to the image of Romanian tourism, to which we all must work to improve it, to give it authenticity and uniqueness, to promote it in a Europe which disputes in a fast rhythm the tourism symbol areas.

This article: *The perception of Romania as a tourist destination into sustainable development* - is a real synthesis, a diagnosis and prognosis of Romanian tourism phenomenon. The study aimed at knowing the characteristics of tourism, its multiplying effects, both quantitatively (human potential, density, structure, tourist traffic, territorial mobility), dynamic (manpower resources involved in this field, the degree of skill, professionalism) of rural communities, and qualitatively (tourism products). This article has many practical facets, the situations presented in this study, (Romanian tourism) as the new proposed strategy being able to be the basis of the political orientation for sustainable organization of the Romanian tourism by the institutions involved in these tasks. The scientific structure and value of this article is doubled by a multitude of items with practical, efficient, quality applicability, sustainable subscribed in the topic's broad context.

Global trends and priorities are changing: more than ever, the challenge for the tourism sector is to remain competitive and sustainable, recognizing that long-term competitiveness depends on sustainability. In particular, climate change is now a fundamental aspect that also requires tourism industry to reduce its contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, and destinations to adapt to the demand and types of tourism offered. The dynamics, depth and extent of changes in all sectors of economic and social life is reflected, among other things, in the changing of economic structures, in the classification of components in accordance with the requirements of scientific-technical progress, with rational exploitation of the full potential of resources and increase efficiency, with the requirements of improving the quality of life[2].

We must avoid the trap of “preconceived ideas” (which often seem to be false) such as sustainable development is strictly the “business” of industries that process it. Why false? Because global warming and pollution are directly aimed at the tourism phenomenon, too: climate change, for example, has an impact on changes in seasons, therefore a direct incidence in the seasonality of tourist phenomenon; the freeze-thaw phenomena damage, deteriorate infrastructure; the recent, publicized floods in exotic areas of high tourist attraction do nothing but alter travel experiences in this environment.

- In terms of pollution and environmental degradation, unfortunately, tourism has its share of responsibility if we are to take into account the millions of trips either by plane or by car, the use of space and resources, not to mention the “production” of waste with harmful consequences even for practitioners of the tourism phenomenon. However, an over-exploited tourist resource indirectly means loss of attraction, which brings with it the loss of customers!

- It is clear that the tourism industry also needs to change, in self-interest, how to “manifest” in the environment, in order to maintain the attractiveness and sustainability of its potential components (natural and anthropogenic).

- **Sustainable tourism is not and should not be just a “panacea” of governors.** Sustainable tourism interests everyone from:

- **various levels of government:** regulations, protection of landscapes, legislation, etc.;
- **associations and NGOs in the field of tourism:** sustaining the tourism phenomenon, examples of good practices, animation for environmental protection, etc.;
- **industrial objectives** – to adopt new non-polluting and environmental protection practices;
- **tourists:** to know and apply the **Ethical code of tourists** (prepared by the WTO), to be responsible towards the environment and tourist destinations, to highlight and their value. Also to be noted is the **Ecotourist's Guide** drawn by the Public Policy Unit of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, which prepared this guide which presents simple and concrete practical tools, available for every tourist or any citizen to reduce the negative environmental impact; to have an eco-responsible

behavior we must change our attitudes and habits at individual and group level.

- **local population:** which needs to show hospitality, knowledge of the tourist's code, it itself being involved in actions to safeguard and enhance the environment;
- **up to all components of the tourism industry:** starting with the tourist destination, regardless of size, to the types of tourism.

• **Sustainable tourism** seeks not only the protection of the environment. When we say sustainable development we say impacts (either environmental or socio-cultural, etc.), and sustainable development requires sustainable management of these impacts. It is a matter of achieving balance and harmony in an durable (even thriving) view on the long run.

• **Sustainable tourism is not a tourism product** that can be sold to tourists. Sustainable tourism is a way to design, plan and manage sustainable tourism activities. At the same time it implies a change in the management style, in behavior, attitudes and habits[3].

There are no “recipes” for success in the development of sustainable tourism, but we can take into account several “tracks” of intervention:

- ☞ promoting an action plan in partnership with “key” players in the development of the tourism phenomenon, including the involvement of industry leaders;
- ☞ demystifying the meaning of sustainable development;
- ☞ communication in sustainable development;
- ☞ integration of sustainable development as a factor in the capitalization of the tourism industry and betting on the strong links between quality and sustainable tourism;
- ☞ integrating sustainable development into the training of future “managers” of the tourism phenomenon;
- ☞ recognition and promotion of successful cases of sustainable development;
- ☞ tourism education for sustainable development to make the best choices in the development of the tourism act.

Continuing the education work in the spirit of ecotourism and sustainable tourism must be achieved through the development of ecological awareness of the population, twinned with feelings of love and respect for nature, historic sites, monuments of art and architecture over time[4]. This should be supported by actions related to “the inestimable value of the environment” and tourist potential in the development and becoming aware of communities of the beneficial development in the spirit of ecotourism. Based on the principles of the sustainability triangle and related fields of action, under which players react, the discussion on sustainable tourism is taking shape. The themes belonging to the main field of sustainable tourism or “sustainable tourism development” can be actually divided into sub domains. Here is a non-exhaustive list of fields of action (figure 1).

All players must meet a specific task to give the necessary strength for sustainable tourism development and for each of them to benefit by maintaining an attractive tourist environment that at the same time protects the environment.

Local people, tourists, authorities responsible for tourism and private sector management are key players. How they can provide the necessary dynamics of this process depends on own goals and vision of the outcome, on the ownership structure, on their financial means and influence they exert. We think at the following activities to ensure sustainable tourism:

- regarding the implementation of sustainable tourism, tourists pay more attention to contacts with local people and show a more respectful attitude towards nature, environment and the surrounding areas;
- tourism sector invests especially in its economic capital, achieving in this way mainly technical improvements in the environment; however, this does not imply a low attention paid to the human capital (e.g., staff);
- authorities managing tourism have a central, very important role in the management of tourist destinations and hence in the development of tourism related products, while having the responsibility to proportionally promote the environment, population and economic significance which tourism offers the region; they must share these resources in all areas;
- local population for which sustainable tourism is essential in the long run is the social context.

This article, itself opened to major scientific reflections, has tried to explain the role and importance of the analytical approach of sustainable development in tourism in the territory, having the function to restructure, rebuild and even redevelop it into a better direction, because sustainable development itself complies with the sense of future-oriented history. There is no single model universally applicable to the sustainable development of a territory. In this regard, the different actors involved in the inseparable binomial: **Sustainable Development – Tourism**, are required to build in these areas **a specific tourist offer** to meet, on the one hand, multiple or individual applications, and, on the other hand, to respond to local crises (economic, political, social, etc.).

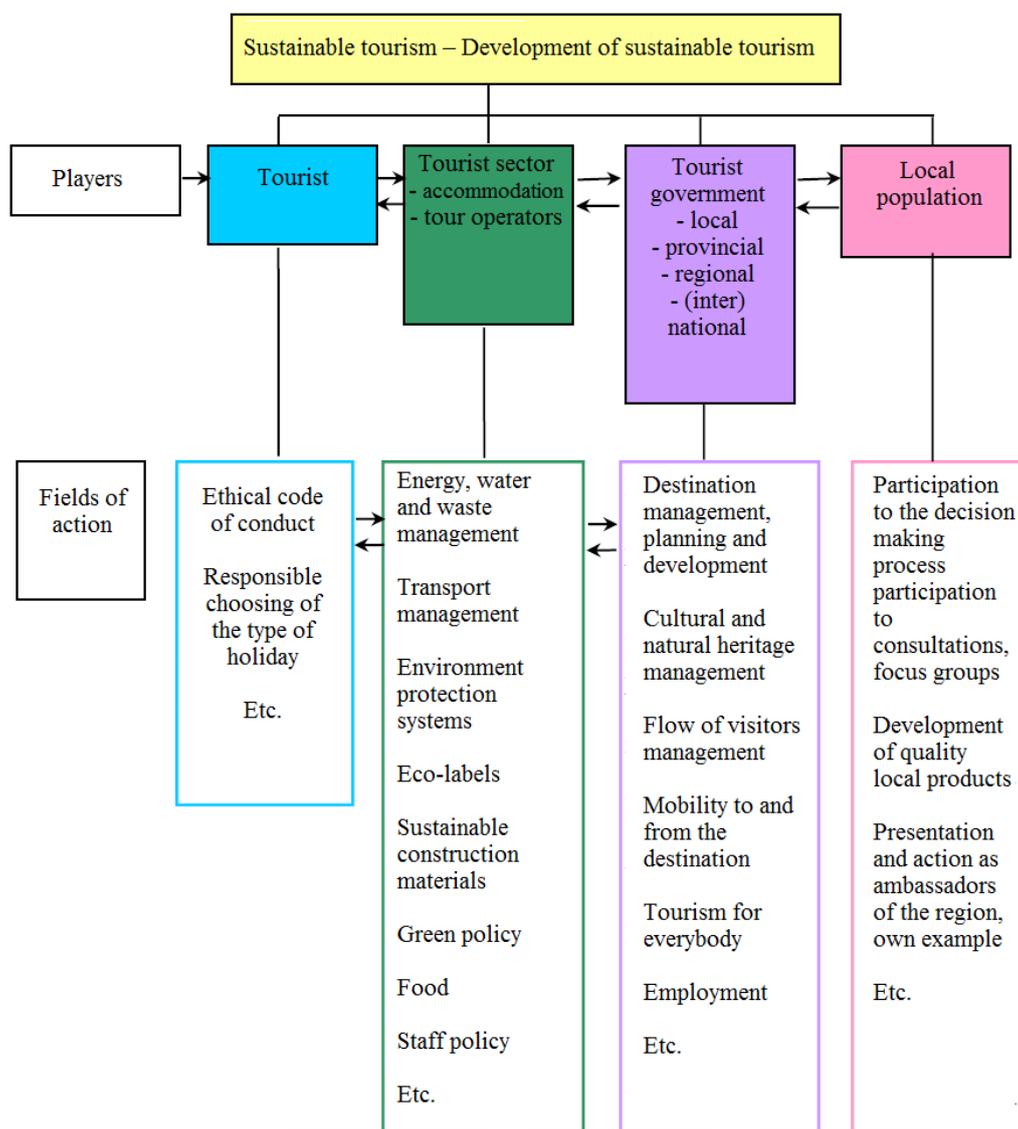


Figure 1. Fields of action of players in sustainable tourism  
(Source: adaptation and creation by the author in the teaching)

Tourism can contribute to sustainable development of territories because the territories themselves fall into an interactive, integrated and responsible relationship with the economic, social and natural environment of which they are dependent. Of course, much remains to be done, because the unbalancing, destabilizing (see fig. 2) and resistant to change effects, unfortunately, still persist, despite the massive involvement of the local community to a sustainable development. In sustainable development, tourism plays a vital role contributing highly to the economic relaunching and recovery of Romania. Raising the tourism product from the consecrated values to those corresponding to standards and preferences of foreign tourists means to initiate and promote actions to include, on the one hand, the undergoing of education and training processes of a mentality appropriate to the current type of development, and, on the other hand, increasing sustainable development in tourism regions.

In a global world one must live globally. Or integration is impossible without learning the rules of world tourism, without learning and observing the code of conduct. Especially one is not allowed to ignore that the effect of tourism looks only to the future. The present's sensations get sublimated, memories are of the past: a past that will determine future action. Tourism is not only a school for others, but determines how we live with others, what attitude we have. Our world, the one created by the producers of tourism is a global one, a single ethnicity: the human race presented in its specificity, item by item for diversity[5].

With a past, present and hopes. Any mistake can lead to incurable trauma. And this on a mass of people called tourists.

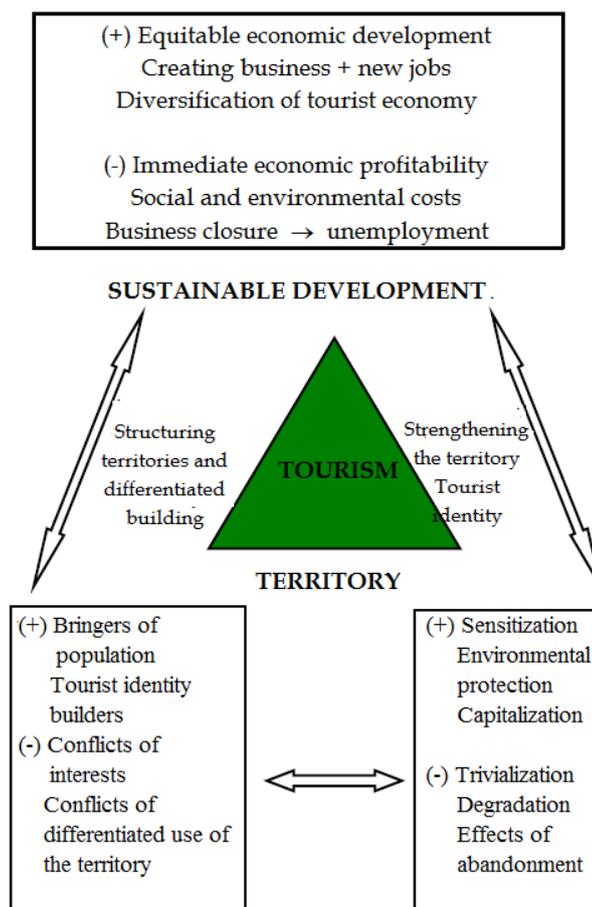


Figure 2. Stabilizing (+) and destabilizing (-) effects of tourism on sustainable development  
Author's adapting after Oliver Bessy – Sport, Loisir, Tourisme et développement durable des territoires, PUS, 2008, Cedex, p. 44.

The concept of sustainable development is today environmental. On the other hand it forces us to ask ourselves of the social purpose of our acts and of the future of the planet, taking into account permanently the economic system affected. It, as sustainable development, appears to us as a pioneer to new reflections, new actions, thus dedicating a mindset, even of government, unusual, based on cooperation and negotiation with all stakeholders in the implementation of sustainability in the territory [6]. (see fig. 3).

On the other hand, sustainable development can be revealed to us as an alibi, even a utopia maintained voluntarily by political and economic players, anxious to legitimize and prove their economic logic but also to preserve the economic strength already acquired. I believe that to resolve this situation it would be enough to adapt socio-economic and ecological systems of this globalization “given”: **Sustainable development.**

In fact, this ambivalence reflects perfectly the state of our society harassed back and forth between a dominant liberal model organized around “market” but also to a welcome closeness, regulating in the environmental and human level.

The goal of achieving sustainable tourism should be subordinated to national and regional plans of economic and social development. Actions may cover for economic goals (income growth, diversification and integration of activities, control, development potentiating and zoning), social goals (poverty and income distribution inequality improvement, indigenous socio-cultural heritage protection, participation and involvement of local communities) or environmental goals (protection of ecotourism’s functions, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity)[7].

Finally, the contribution of tourism to sustainable development is part of a social and political process in progress. It also clearly shows us, on the one hand, the growing importance that tourism registers today, despite the global financial crisis, and, on the other hand, the major stake represented and offered by this form of development – sustainable development – on all territories worldwide [8].

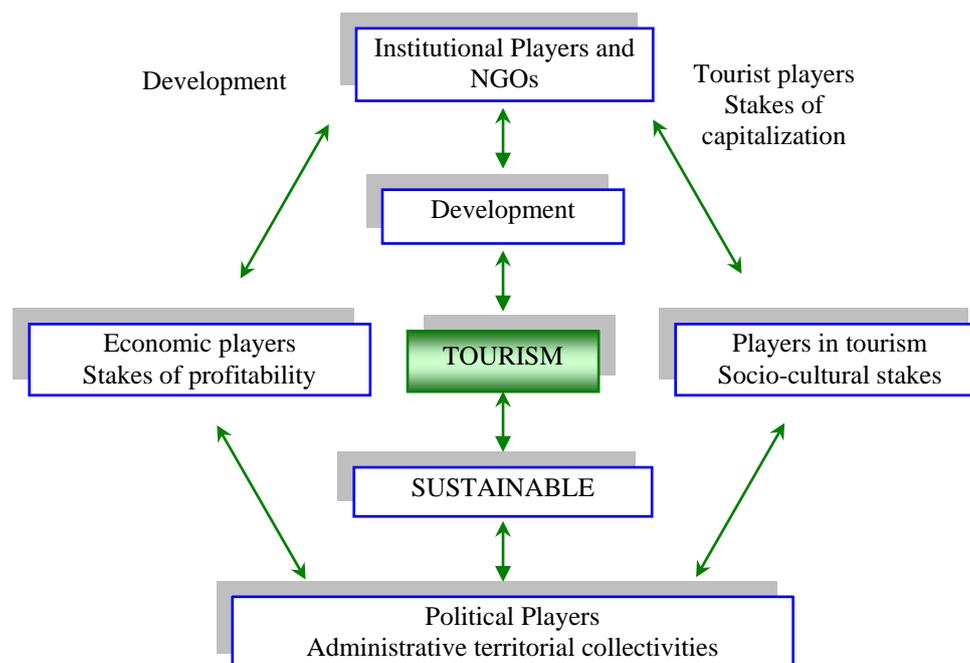


Figure 3. Foreground stakes of the different local players in the action for sustainable development of tourism  
(Source: adaptation of the author in the teaching)

Given this complexity, but also to give a pragmatic sense to their intervention, communities, especially those at the regional level, have – perforce – entered in a specific process of territorialization of their policies. Each declines, globally or by specific sectoral policies, the priorities over a territory, whose functional area fluctuates from one community to another[9].

## 2. Ecotourism, as a business opportunity in times of crisis

Ecotourism initially emerged as a business opportunity created by the growing interest in the fate of the planet. At first glance, the two concerns are incompatible and yet an ecotourism business can succeed on the long-term if a business is responsible, observes market and sustainable development laws alike.

As an EU member, Romania will certainly enjoy a number of advantages but will face a number of disadvantages which will not be easy to overcome without research and a realistic anticipation.

We are taking into consideration:

- ✍ simplifying travel formalities which, of course, will result in possibly import growth of tourism, and amplification of illegal immigration. In order not to face an even greater imbalance of the tourist balance it is necessary, in order to reduce imports of tourism, that Romanian tourist resorts increase actions to increase competitiveness offering Romanian tourists compatible services at better prices than in the Romanian outbound destination country.
- ✍ tourism professionals will have more opportunities to work in other countries with the likely effect on the labor market, with particular reference to employment in tourism.
- ✍ Romania will benefit from a series of structural funds for tourism development, but for their use a series of projects will have to be developed that will seek support from the private sector for their financing.
- ✍ Romania as a tourist destination but also as a destination for capital investment will have an increased number of visitors, which will be able to use “low cost” airline services.

Ecotourism is strongly dependent on the commitment of entrepreneurs in applying a single set of operating standards that have evolved continuously over the past decade. The fact that there is no international regulatory body and that the standards of ecotourism are difficult to assess, it allowed operators and governments to promote ecotourism in an uncontrolled manner. Many businesses and organizations have tried to take advantage of the popularity of “ecotourism”, using it to promote their products, but without complying with the simplest principles or, in some cases, misunderstanding these principles. This problem, known as “greenwashing”, has damaged ecotourism, as it brought disappointment and distrust among fans of this form of tourism.[10]

International conferences, seminars and publications appeared in recent years have played an important role in educating ecotourism operators and governments, but misunderstanding the term is still a problem.

Following the debates that took place in the World Ecotourism Summit, participants made a number of recommendations to governments, private sector organizations, NGOs, research institutes, development agencies and local communities. The most important recommendations aimed the private sector (travel agencies and tour operators, owners of units of accommodation and food, entertainment equipment and land of ecotourist interest, etc.):

- ✍ ecotourism businesses must be profitable for all involved stakeholders alike: owners, investors, managers and employees, local communities and conservation organizations in the natural areas where they are carried out;
- ✍ design, development and business leadership should lead to negative effects minimization, contribute positively to the conservation of fragile ecosystems and the environment in general, should bring direct benefits to local communities;
- ✍ entrepreneurs must ensure that the design, planning, development and operation of ecotourism facilities incorporates sustainability principles such as the harmonious integration into the landscape, water, energy, non-renewable materials conservation and access to all categories of population without discrimination;
- ✍ cooperate with governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in protecting natural areas and conservation of biodiversity, ensuring that ecotourism operations are conducted in accordance with management plans and regulations in that area, so as to minimize any negative effect and to act to increase the ecotourism product quality and financial contribution to the conservation of natural resources
- ✍ conduct business using more local materials and products, and local human resources and logistics to maintain authenticity of the ecotourism product and increase the proportion of benefits that remain in the community. To achieve this, private operators should invest in training the local workforce;
- ✍ promote ethical behavior among customers toward ecotourism destination visited, for example through environmental education and encouraging voluntary contributions to support community initiatives and of conservation and ESTABLISHMENT OF A REAL ECOLOGY IN HOSPITALITY;
- ✍ ensure a fair ecotourism income distribution between tour operators, local service providers, local community through appropriate instruments and strategic alliances;
- ✍ formulate sustainable development policies to be implemented in all areas of hospitality.

Given these recommendations, it is clear that ecotourism business development needs, from design phase until the operation itself, to satisfy a combination of factors reflecting the natural environment and local community importance.

Another key aspect for long-term success of an ecotourism initiative is time.

Ecotourism is most often an alternative source of income for local people, a new activity, different from what they were used to. For this idea to be understood and accepted by all sectors of local society, it takes time and patience from all parties involved. Although the phenomenon of tourism itself has known worldwide consecration for decades, ecotourism is just about taking its first steps of assertion as a fundamental model of controlled, balanced, sustainable development. Ecotourism is a form of conscious and responsible tourism for nature, community and its values, in regard to themselves, the tourists[11].

**Sustainable management of destinations**<sup>1</sup> is essential for tourism development, especially through the efficient use of space and land planning and controlling development and investment decisions in infrastructure and services. Ensuring that new tourism development is, by scale and type, appropriate to the local community and natural environment, sustainable management can enhance long-term economic performance and competitive position of a destination. This requires a support framework involving all stakeholders at regional and local levels, and an efficient structure to facilitate partnership and effective leadership.

A basic requirement for tourist destinations is to remain competitive. Actions taken for this purpose should be considered as part of creating a sustainable character, which is one of the most important competitive advantages.

Therefore, in order to ensure competitiveness, viability and long-term prosperity, destinations should put more emphasis on full integration of sustainability concerns in decision-making and the management practices and their instruments.

An important role in this process have services and associations supporting tourist destinations<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, to register visible progress, the demand, both from the market, recreational activities and tourist destinations, should send stronger and more consistent signals.

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<sup>1</sup> Mazilu Mirela, *Sustainable Tourism of Destination, Imperative Triangle Among: Competitiveness, Effective Management and Proper Financing, Sustainable Development - Policy and Urban Development - Tourism, Life Science, Management and Environment*, Chaouki Ghenai (Ed.), ISBN: 978-953-51-0100-0, InTech, DOI:10.5772/28062, Available from:<http://www.intechopen.com/articles/show/title/sustainable-tourism-destination-an-imperative-triangle-between-competitiveness-performing-management>

<sup>2</sup> Mazilu Mirela Elena, Roxana Marinescu, *The Competitiveness of the Romanian Tourism-a ghost or sustainable reality?*, in *Annals of Faculty of Economics, Oradea*, 2009, vol.4, Issue 1, pages 367-372, [http://econpapers.repec.org/article/orajournal/v\\_3a4\\_3ay\\_3a2009\\_3ai\\_3a1\\_3ap\\_3a367-372.htm](http://econpapers.repec.org/article/orajournal/v_3a4_3ay_3a2009_3ai_3a1_3ap_3a367-372.htm)

Awareness of tourists is necessary to be able to develop and strengthen the ability to make choices for sustainable development. Awareness of sustainability and ethics can facilitate the emergence of attitudes and practices of the responsible individual tourists. Consumers' increasing understanding of sustainability could influence companies to show interest in this direction and to act accordingly to functionally benefit hospitality ecology [12].

The main results obtained from studies are that the **perception of Romania as a tourist destination**<sup>3</sup> is unclear; it does not have a reputation as a bona fide destination for occasional tourists.

This is caused in part by:

- *Weaknesses in destination marketing*
- *The absence of government support to tourism*
- *Unprofessional practices in the tourism business*
- *Low standards of services for visitors*
- *Inadequate tourism infrastructure, facilities and ways of spending time.*

The most positive perceptions towards Romania are among Israelis, over one quarter of them have remarked the beauty of the landscape "as the best impression and only 2% have observed "poverty".

There is a considerable difference between the attitudes of those who directly lived the Romanian tourism experience after having visited the country and those who did not<sup>4</sup>.

The first have a much stronger understanding of Romania than the second group. To give you an example, Hungarians who visited Romania noted that the tourist facilities and beautiful landscapes of the countryside and the warmth and the hospitality of people exceeded their expectations, by contrast, those who have not visited Romania yet, have a negative perception regarding the road, accommodation units, public safety, hygiene and service level. Research in Austria showed that visitors were "pleasantly surprised" on their journey to Romania. Even among the French, the finding was that Romania receives positive feedback in terms of its image. But visitors in Romania have also noted the low level of environmental protection and the large amount of garbage, etc.

Synthesizing the models proposed in the studies, a possible model of competitiveness of the tourist destination is presented in Figure 4.

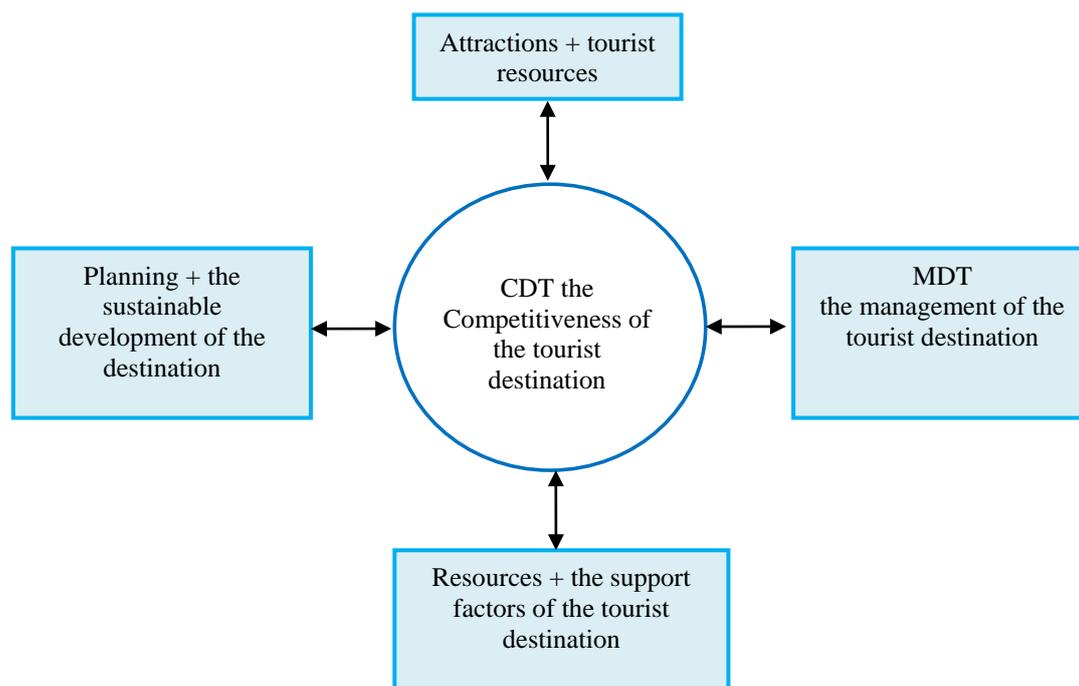


Figure 4. Determiners in the competitiveness of the tourist destination  
(Source: adaptation of the author in the teaching)

<sup>3</sup> Mazilu Mirela Elena, Marinescu Roxana, *Perceiving Romania as a Sustainable Tourism Destination*, publicat în vol. Proceedings Book of the 4th World Conference for Graduate Research in Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure, organizată de Anatolia Journal: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research, 22-27 aprilie 2008, Antalya, Turcia, ISBN 978-975-96260-4-4, pag. 320-330. <http://www.anatoliajournal.com/4.conference/uluslararası.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Mazilu Mirela Elena, Ispas Roxana, *The Tourist Experience and the challenges on the environment*, published in Timișoara Journal Economics, vol NR2(6), 2009, ISSN: 1842-7340, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, [www.tje.uvt.ro/index.php?option=com...view...](http://www.tje.uvt.ro/index.php?option=com...view...)

The model includes six determiners: the attractions and the tourist resources that the respective destination has; the support factors and other resources; the situational conditions/determiners; qualifiers; amplifiers; the conditions of the demand; the policy; the planning and the development of the destination; the inventory/the management of the tourist destination[13]

The attractions and the tourist resources existent at the level of a tourist destination include: the geographic position, the natural and anthropogenic tourist resources, the organization of some events, the relaxation and animation activities, the tourist equipments, and the commercial network dedicated to the tourists.

The success of a tourist destination is determined by the way in which this one manages to guarantee and at the same time to ensure its visitors, through its entire offer, an experience that can equal or exceed the multiple alternative destinations.

Building a cult for quality in tourism is a difficult process that needs the professional qualification of the personnel and an ethic education for the change of mentalities.

In order to achieve this, an education and motivation program of the staff is necessary divided on groups of professions and especially for the managerial levels, differentiated for those who will directly take part in the creation of a proper quality climate within the team, as well as showing attention, the desire to satisfy the needs, to answer to these needs as well as possible.

This means among others: to apply the quality management, to completely involve the personnel of the unit regardless of the job and the qualification, to implement systems of evaluation and rewards, to elaborate rules and to educate the personnel etc.

The success of a tourist company, the effect of its competitiveness are determined by the process of attraction, winning, satisfaction of the clients' needs, and especially by gaining their loyalty, offering good quality services and products. Following this pattern, the company will record the expected profit, following the effects of cooperation for the achievement of the competitiveness of a tourist destination[14]. (Figure 5)

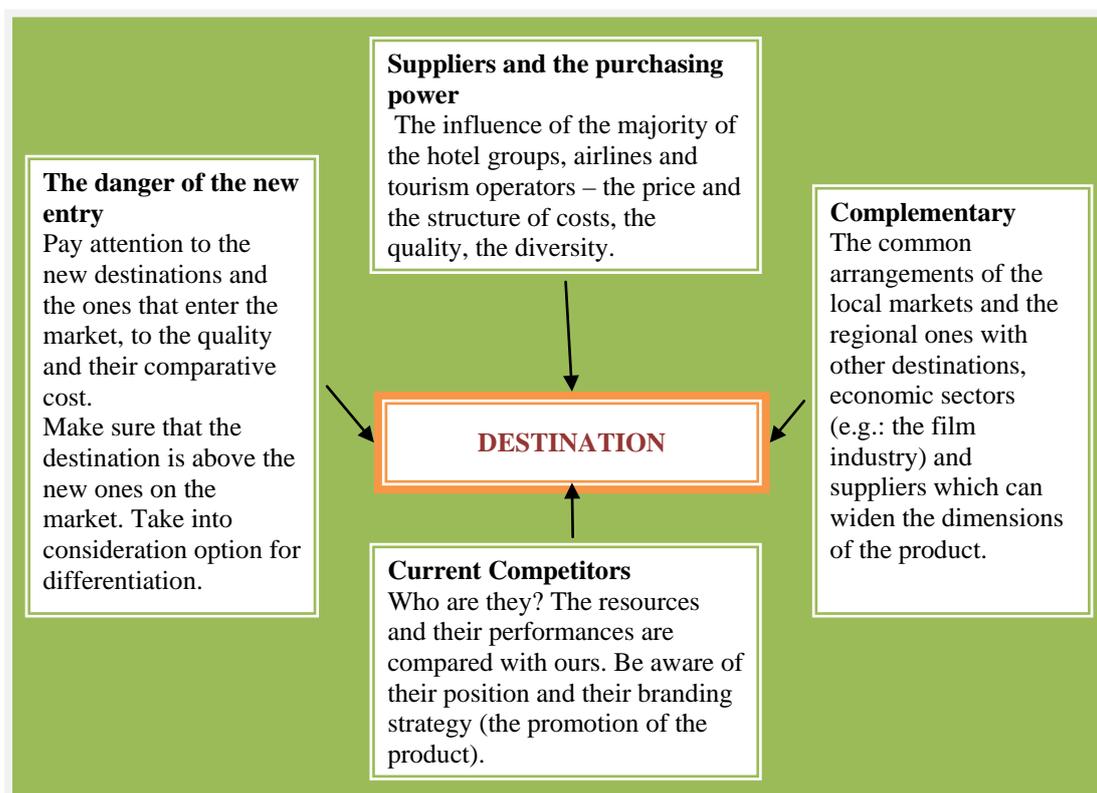


Figure 5. The effects of the Competitiveness of the Destination  
(Source: adaptation of the author in the teaching)

The quality management is defined according to ISO 9000 as being “the assembly of activities of the general function of management which determines the policy in the field of quality, the objectives and the responsibilities, in order to implement them within the system of quality through specific means like: the planning of quality, the control of quality, ensuring the quality and the improvement of quality”.

### 3. Conclusions

Romania concentrates at a continental scale “the natural and cultural interfaces of European size” of a large diversity, supported by a generous geographical frame: mountains, hills, fields, lakes, the Danube Delta, the Black Sea seaside etc. It is a well-known fact that the picturesque Romanian natural areas, completed by real cultural treasures - sometimes of universal interest - constitute as many motivations for tourism.

Major changes in the models of economic growth take place at the same time, through directing the intensive types towards the fields of sustainable development, globalization and integration. In this context, tourism is manifesting as a social component, with a significant participation in the general progress and, not least, as a promoter of globalization and a factor of the sustainable development.

The essential objective of quality management is the achievement in conditions of maximum efficiency of those products which: entirely satisfy the client’s requests, are in conformity with the requests of the society, with the standards and the applied specifications, take into account all the aspects regarding the protection of the consumer and of the environment, are offered to the client at the price and the deadline agreed together.

Tourism has assumed a vital role in the development of destinations around the European area and the world.[15]. In most cases, culture is a major asset for tourism development as well as one of the major beneficiaries of this development. Sustainability is a major factor in the attractiveness of most destinations, not only in terms of tourism, but also in attracting residents and inward investment.

Among the imperative objectives of tourism defining Romania as a sustainable tourist destination after the economic crisis, in 2015: (these will be achieved if the Master Plan is successfully implemented) we mention:

- Creating a positive perception of Romania as a tourist destination both at national and international level, as well as a brand of country
- Ensuring the sustainable development of tourism to promote the natural and cultural potential, but also its preservation for future generations
- Ensuring the recognition of tourism as key to the development of economy and as a generator of new jobs
- Creating awareness on the Romanian people on the tourism potential of our country and their desire to present it to the visitors

In conclusion, we may assert that the Romanian tourism covers a broad range of products and destinations and involves many different stakeholders, both public and private, with much decentralized areas of competence often at regional and local levels.

Maybe, all these in collaboration with the specialist's conscience, doubled by the actual training to whom reality should prove once more that the well done thing will always last, will show us that Romania, as a tourist destination is not a ghost, but on the contrary a tourist area with unknown values which wait to be reevaluated by a trained hand and by an imperative Destination Management, rigorously elaborated, but especially rigorously applied.

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