

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT IN THE BRASOV REGION

Ruxandra-Gabriela ALBU
“Transilvania” University of Brasov, Romania

Abstract. Beside other economy sectors (such as agriculture), tourism represents an economic activity which directly depends on the undertaking of a sustainable management. No tourist wants to spend its holiday in a polluted environment, unattractive or with a hostile population. Tourism focuses on issues which are special, beautiful, valuable or unique. Thus, tourism highly depends on preserving the natural beauties, on the hospitality and the positive attitude of the local communities. The beneficiaries of the tourism activities should not only be the tourists and those who directly work in tourism but also the whole population of the region, which could take advantage of the effects of the tourism development, such as: general infrastructure modernisation, working places offer increase, life quality improvement etc. Tourism could facilitate the processes of attitude and mentality changes and in the meantime contributes to a better cooperation and understanding between people and regions.

The paper “Sustainable Tourism Development Management in the Brasov Region” intend to demonstrate that tourism could become an undisputable model of sustainable management strategy, and the actors involved in the tourism activity should be directly interested in its implementation.

Keywords: management, sustainable, tourism, strategy, region”

The tourist development represents one of the highest hopes of Romania nowadays and thus a priority on a national, regional and local level. The tourist resources with which our country has been blessed must, as any other resources, be durably administered to avoid their draining following a poor management. As the tendency for decentralising continues, the accent must lie on the regional tourist development, which has proven efficient on a European level. As a consequence, this type of development constitutes a present-day concern of the leaders of Romanian tourism.

The tourist regions mustn't be defined by administrative reasons according to the territory's surface but according to the following criteria [1]:

-*the tourist offer* present or prospective, that must coincide with the minimum estimated demand, the serving of potential tourists from the region or from adjacent areas (its surface depends on the one side on the population density and on the other side on the existent tourist objectives and facilities);

-*the distances between the tourist objectives from the region*, that must fit into certain limits, according to the ways of communication quality and that must allow their going through in a reasonable amount of time (maximum 2

hours) thus making possible the organization of one day tourist tours, multiple destination trips, etc.

The general objectives of the regional tourist management must be, in our opinion, the following:

1. Establishing a tourist strategy destined to ensure the sustainable tourist development on a regional level.
2. Establishing the suitable forms of tourism for the studied region: rural tourism, ecological, transit tourism, etc.
3. Identifying the demands for services and promoting the offer to the following groups:
 - The locals already involved in the tourism activity (financial counselling, publicity, etc.);
 - New entrepreneurs in tourist activities (information, consoling, courses);
 - tourists (who will be directed to destinations more suitable with their desires and possibilities);
 - local authorities (like the City Councils) that are and must generally be interested in a sustainable development but also in finding solutions for some particular problems, such as diminishing tourist

- pressure from some zones (like the Daffodils' Glade in Brasov County) by creating buffer zones etc.
4. The solving of possible emerging conflicts:
 - between the local population and tourists – there are well known conflicts, for instance in Great Britain, between travelers (ramblers) and the rural population [2];
 - between the locals involved in tourist activity and those not involved – as seen in Bran area (some conflicts between the City Hall and Bran Imex);
 - those already integrated on the tourist market and the new-comers etc.
 5. Determining the ways for a sustainable touristic development through:
 - Establishing the spatial distribution of the tourist potential (charting the tourist resources) in the analysed region.
 - The analysis of the tourist areas existing in the region and integrating them into categories, in relation to the frames suggested by the different models of tourist development (Miossec, Butler, Plog and others).
 - Identifying the areas in crisis or pre-crisis (in the decline period from the Butler model) [3].
 - Establishing the causes of the tourist decline and the measures to improve this situation.
 - Finding similar areas with those touristically developed at present, in comparison with the present or initial tourist potential.
 - The analysis of the possibility to redirect the tourist circulation; for instance towards the “aged” resorts, that became unattractive for the “allocentrics” of the Plog model, can be oriented the “phycocentrics” [4, 5], while the first will be encouraged to discover new areas.
 6. Drawing up the most efficient strategies to optimise the relationships between the social groups involved in tourist activity, conducting their attitude shifting:
 - Identifying social groups and sub-groups directly or indirectly involved in tourism. On a first analysis these seem to be:
 - locals involved in tourist activity;
 - locals that will get involved in tourist activity;
 - the personnel belonging to classic tourist structures already existent in the region (employees from tourist resorts, from hotels, etc). Related to this group we must mention the need for their preparation and perfecting;
 - the people from the region that will not be involved in tourist business;
 - the tourists, divided into sub-groups according to social status, age, preferences, etc.;
 - The locals already involved in the tourist activity must be convinced to support the suggested initiatives and at the same time to actively get involved in the process of touristic planning and developing of the region.
 - The locals of the areas with an unturned to good account tourist potential, must be convinced to get involved in tourism. Some of them will be reticent facing an unsure investment in a quasi-unknown field. The most suitable ways will have to be sought to modify their attitude towards risk, in general, and towards starting a business, in particular, among which we can foresee:
 - a brief and simplified presentation of the analysis done that led to the conclusion of the existence of a tourist potential in their area;
 - Arranging for organised group trips in the areas of the region where the involvement in tourism has already led to prosperity etc.
 - The specialists and the other employees in tourism will have to be stimulated to have a positive attitude towards the new initiatives in tourist development. Some of these will be asked to lecture at preparation programmers with the people from the above mentioned group.
 - The region's people not involved in the tourist activity must be convinced of the advantages it brings to everyone. First of all, it must be showed that compared to other branches of the economy the tourism has a low negative impact on the environment, keeping it unaltered being an internal demand of tourist development and not an external, imposed condition. Plus, the tourism will bring, by taxes and revenue taxes new

income to the local budgets which could mean more and better schools, hospitals, roads for the whole community. But also the tourism development will bring about new business opportunities (a market for food, for the artisans' products, etc.).

- The groups involved in drawing up and putting into practice the regional tourist development strategy will need a good and multilateral specialty training (in economy, psychology, etc.) but also a proper attitude towards the social groups they interact with.

In the 80's the problem of the negative effects on the environment caused by the uncontrolled economic growth were presented by the media a lot, trying to find viable solutions to lead to the minimising of these effects.

The entire world became aware of the fact that the risk caused by human activities over the environment is still unappreciated and neglected.

Changing the way of life, the attitudes and the mentalities could be an answer to this problem. In fact, the beginning of the concept of sustainable development comes from this awareness of the people's need to change themselves, their way of thinking and reporting to the other elements that make up the general ecosystem.

The principles of sustainable development must be respected and followed by any tourist development strategy, including the strategy for tourist development of the Brasov region. We must mainly consider the following aspects:

- *the ensurance of inter-generations equity* [6], meaning the possibility of the future generations to benefit from the same possibilities as today, maybe even improved;
- *the ensurance of intra-generations equity*, by social equity and reducing poverty; for this idea we can remember the PPT (Pro-poor-Tourism) initiative and the ensurance of a good life style for the local communities in the tourist developed regions or with a worthy tourist potential. The benefits from these tourist activities don't have to be oriented exclusively towards certain social categories to the prejudice of others;
- *encouragement* of partnerships in all the major decisions in the life of the communities, encouragement of participation in the decision making

process;

- *precaution concerning the actions that may have a negative impact on the environmental factors*, determining the negative impact on the natural, cultural social or economic environment that the tourist activities may have, the attempt to diminish the risk and the uncertainty of the actions done;
- *environment protection* must be seen as a component of economic development; economic development without the preservation of the environment resources can no longer represent a viable alternative;
- *the use of renewable resources* in the same measure as the non-renewable ones;
- *the constant monitoring* of the economical activities' effect over the environment and drawing up clear and measurable standards to help in this monitoring process, making sure, at the same time, of their enforcement and respecting;
- education in the spirit of protecting the resources of any nature.

We consider that the sustainable tourist development strategy applicable to the region of Brasov must focus on the following elements [7]:

- *the improvement in the cooperation between the groups of interests from tourism*, meaning: the tourist industry, the community, the local authorities, the tourists, etc.;
- *the improvement of the quality-price relation* through investments in the tourist infrastructure, the importance given to human resources management in tourism, recruiting, selection, motivation, perfecting, the change in the attitudes of the tourist employees, the increase of the tourist offer;
- *the quality system alignment to the European norms on tourism*, obtaining recognition from the international organisations;
- *the scientific, detailed market analysis* (the analysis of tendencies, motivations, tourists, determining target groups, etc.);
- *the improvement of the area's image* as a part of the national offer, investments in promoting, very good quality material

printing, participations at fairs and exhibitions, encouraging exchanges and contracts with tour-operators, tourist agencies, companies (hotels, motels, other types of tourist structures) from abroad. Drawing up travel guides, a calendar of local tourist events, as a component part of a European events calendar, etc.;

- *the increase in local tourist product quality by practicing an adequate management* (strategic management, marketing, tourist services management, human resources management, financial management, quality management, etc.);
- *the improvement of general infrastructure* and of the tourist one, by well directed investments (foreign investments, joint-venture, regional investment plans from funds allotted by the local budget, etc.);
- *the improvement of the tourist services' offer* by qualifying and perfecting the human capital working in tourism, organising human resources exchanges with similar companies from other regions with experience in tourism, the change in attitudes and mentality of the workers in tourism, diversifying the offer in tourist services, etc.

- *promoting alternative forms of tourism* (Pro-poor Tourism, Community based Tourism, Nature-based Tourism, Ecotourism, etc.).

References

1. Albu, R.G.: *Sustainable Tourism Management at Regional Level. Theory and Applications*, "Infomarket" Publishing House, ISBN 973-8204-682, Braşov, 2005, p. 179 (in Romanian)
2. Bateman. D.: *Walking for CPRW*. Rural Wales Magazine. Available at: <http://www.cprw.org.uk/artdirec/batwalk.htm>, 2000
3. ***: www.cprw.org.uk/magartcl/artind.htm. Accessed 24-03-2000
4. Butler, R.W.: *The concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution: Implications for the management of resources*. Canadian Geographer, 1980
5. Pearce, D.: *Tourism development*. Longman Scientific & Technical, Harlow, ISBN 978-0582014350, 1991
6. Pearce, D.: *Tourism Today. A Geographical Analysis*. Longman Scientific & Technical, Harlow, ISBN 978-0582228221, 1995
7. McKercher, B.: *The Unrecognised Threat to Tourism: Can Tourism Survive Sustainability*. Tourism Management, vol. 14 /2, pp 131 – 136, 1993
8. Albu, R.G.: *Sustainable Tourism Management at Regional Level*. PhD thesis, Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi, Romania, 2004, p. 159 (in Romanian)