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THESIS

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM

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Table of content

Introduction	5
CHAPTER 1 - THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN ROMANIA	8
1.1. Rural area and tourism development in the current context of the Romanian economy	8
1.1.1. Definition of rural space	9
1.1.2. Characteristics of rural space	10
1.1.3. Functions of the rural area	13
1.2. Rural tourism and its development in the current context of the Romanian economy	15
1.2.1. The concept of rural tourism and rural tourism product	15
1.2.2. Rural Tourism in Traditional European Countries	19
1.2.3. Rural Tourism in Romania	21
1.2.3.1. Theoretical foundation of the concept and characteristics Romanian rural tourism	22
1.2.3.2. Natural and anthropic natural resources	26
1.2.3.3. Implications of rural tourism in the process of economic growth	36
1.2.3.4. Legislative regulations and Romanian initiatives regarding rural tourism	50
1.3. Rural tourism vector of sustainable rural development	54
CHAPTER 2 - METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	57
2.1. Objectives of the research, defining the main research directions and the hypotheses of thing	57
2.2. Research methodology, data collection and sample structure for achievement study.	59
2.2.1. Research methodology	59
2.2.2. Data collection methodology	60
2.2.3. Quantitative Data Analysis	64
2.2.4. Analyzing Qualitative Data	68
2.2.5. Identifying Good Practices	69
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TOURISM	70
3.1. The concept of sustainable development	70
3.1.1. Definition and History	70
3.1.2. Challenges to Sustainable Development	75
3.2. The Concept of Sustainable Development in Tourism	80
3.2.1. Considerations on Sustainable Tourism	83
3.2.2. Contemporary Approaches and Challenges of Sustainable Tourism	85
3.2.3. Sustainable development of tourism business	88
3.2.4. Environment, tourism and sustainable development a tourism	95
CHAPTER 4 - CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPING THE MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION	
4.1. Econometric modeling in Romanian tourism under the impact of development sustainable	100
4.2. Evaluation of tourism activity in Romania and its impact on the environment social economy	103
4.3. Development of an econometric model for the sustainable development of rural tourism	108

4.3.1. The continuous adaptation of the modeling of the sustainable development of rural tourism to the new ones changes requirements	110
4.3.2. Mathematical Modeling of Sustainable Development of Rural Organizations tourism.....	111
CHAPTER 5 - ECONOMETRIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MODEL a RURAL TOURISM IN SIBIEL LOCALITY	123
5.1. Quantification of the impact of tourism activities on sustainable development a community	124
5.2. Verification of the Model on the values of Sibiel	137
5.3. Orientation of sustainable rural development policies to the specificities of the Romanian village subordinated to sustainability principles	144
CHAPTER 6 - CONSEQUENCES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS	146
6.1. Conclusions on the sustainable development of rural tourism in Romania	144
6.2. Conclusions on the Quantification of the Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism in Romania	151
6.3. Conclusions on the quantification of the sustainable development of rural tourism in the locality Sibiel	

INTRODUCTION

The sustainable development of rural tourism and of the rural community is a complex and ever-present research theme, because it is based on two fundamental elements in close interdependence: the source of sustainable resources that can generate development and the inhabitants of the rural area that represent both the factor both action and consumption being the beneficiaries of development. The sustainable development of rural tourism coupled with the general urbanization tendency influences the evolution of the human society at both structural and functional level, which must be achieved by ensuring a balance between the requirement of preserving the economic, ecological, social rural space with the natural tendency of modernization of rural life. It calls for an active involvement of the rural community in the development, adoption and implementation of the most relevant measures for the superior capitalization of landscape resources belonging to a certain area. The European Rural Spatial Charter stipulates that the specific conditions of a given area must be taken into account in the development of sustainable development policies for rural tourism. Therefore, the basis of the present thesis is the idea that the sustainable development of rural tourism implies the knowledge, development and improvement of the specific problems for which complex activities are generated, the solving of which can not be solved in the short term, with durable effects.

For the success of this thesis in the research carried out, based on the study of the specialized literature in the field of sustainable development of rural tourism, I will approach the following research axes: diagnosis of tourism activities in the village of Sibiel; quantifying the impact of tourism activities on the sustainable development of the community; assessing the sustainable development potential of rural tourism in the village of Sibiel; promoting the need for sustainable development of rural tourism and a system of educating entrepreneurs and consumers with regard to it; developing an econometric model for the sustainable development of rural tourism.

The paper titled "Contributions to the Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism" will present obvious approaches from the literature to reflect in a relevant way the stage of knowledge, complemented by points of view. This doctoral thesis is based on an extensive reference material for the field of both national and international province, characterized by thematic variety, fundamental works, profile studies, casuistic, statistical, international, national, regional and local information.

The doctoral thesis will combine the theoretical aspects approached in the literature with personal opinions and conclusions that will result from the application of the applied research. The study on the current state of development of rural tourism in Romania will highlight the interest expressed by the European Union in the issues addressed through the elaboration of policies and strategies accordingly, as well as the effort made by our country in adapting and adopting policies and strategies through which rural tourism supported by an infrastructure capable of harnessing the landscape resource to a higher level according to its richness. At the same time, it will present the main features and functions of rural space, reinforced by the explanation of rural tourism concepts, sustainable rural tourism, and the sustainable development of rural tourism.

The methodological framework of research highlights decisive aspects for the subsequent approach of the research based on the research objectives, the definition of the main research directions and the working hypotheses. The research methodology will include: "secondary analysis of statistical data and relevant literature (reports, strategies, studies, monographs), PESTEL analysis, SWOT analysis, respectively".

Research on the sustainable development of tourism will highlight the maturity of the issues addressed, although the first concerns have been signaled more than four decades ago with the occasion of the Stockholm (1972) Conference of the Environment Conference. It will also show that tourism makes a major contribution to achieving sustainable development, primarily due to the dynamism and growth of this sector, and secondly because it is based on a direct link between consumers (tourists), industry, the environment and local communities. It will be emphasized that at EU level the sustainable development of tourism is a priority for the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee. Most national governments and local authorities on the continent have paid particular attention to sustainability issues in developing strategies and action plans for tourism development.

Contributions to the development of the sustainable development model of the rural tourism organization are the focus of the paper and will highlight the importance of quantifying the sustainable development of rural tourism, the complexity of which is due to the large number of indicators that make up the life aspects: economic, social, linking human, environmental or economic capital. The need to quantify the sustainable development of rural tourism is based on the accelerated tourist development of recent decades that tends to affect the balance between satisfying tourism demand and its ability to be absorbed by the environment. It is highlighted the existence of a pressure that affects tourism resources or the component of tourism potential (natural and anthropogenic); ie the social component, ie the impact on the resident population of those areas. The chapter will reveal the specificity of creating an entropic model, ie the mathematical model of the sustainable development of rural tourism in the current economic and social context that aims to quantify the uncertainty regarding the impact of tourism activities on the sustainable development of rural tourism organizations. The implementation of the econometric sustainable development model of rural tourism in Sibiel is the case study of this doctoral thesis and aims to quantify the uncertainty regarding the impact of tourism activities on the sustainable development of the community. The research will be matched by the introduction of a new concept - the collaborative economy which will require a connection to a specific platform - the platform created by Airbnb.

From a structural point of view, the work is composed of six chapters that follow in a logical order. The logic of the paper seeks to retrieve the information, process it, to base the results in a model, and finally to decant the values obtained in a series of pertinent conclusions.

CHAPTER 1 - THE STATE OF DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN ROMANIA

1.1 Objectives:

- Analysis of the current state of development of tourism in the Romanian rural area.
- Define the terms and concepts underpinning doctoral theses
- Studying documents, articles from national and international publications dealing with concepts such as rural space, rural tourism, natural and man-made resources and the implications of rural tourism in the process of economic growth.

1.2 Structure:

The first chapter of the doctoral thesis is structured in three subchapters.

- The first subchapter takes theoretical concepts from the literature and establishes the understanding of the doctoral student on the concepts of rural space, characteristics of the rural space as well as the functions of the rural space.
- In the second part of this first chapter we analyzed the rural tourism and its development in the current context of the Romanian economy. It also emphasized the defining elements of tourism in the Romanian rural area.
- When the third subchapter analyzes, based on concrete data from national official statistics, rural tourism as a vector of sustainable development of rural space.

1.3 Content elements

In this first chapter the paper synthesizes a realistic mirror on the realities of existence in the Romanian rural area. The chapter logically follows the definition of the rural area, followed by the highlighting of the rural tourism terms, the characteristics of the rural tourism in Romania, as well as a detailed analysis of the natural and anthropogenic resources on geographical areas.

Analyzing the data presented by the National Institute of Statistics, the paper presents a detailed evolution of rural tourism in the last 15 years.

An important part of this chapter presents the Romanian legislative regulations defining the rules of operation and initiative regarding rural tourism in Romania.

In the final part of the chapter the work is of particular importance that tourism can have in the sustainable development of rural space.

CHAPTER 2 - THE METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

2.1 Objectives:

- Establish research objectives
- Define the main research directions
- Highlighting working hypotheses

2.2 Structure:

The second chapter is structured into two subchapters:

- The first subchapter sets out the objects of the research, defining the directions of the research and the working hypotheses.
- The second subchapter sets out the research methodology of data collection and sample structure for the study.

2.3 Content elements:

In this part of the paper we find the main elements and directions necessary for a scientific work. In this chapter we announce that the main objective is the elaboration and

implementation of an econometric model of sustainable development for rural tourism. To achieve the overall objective, the thesis sets out four specific objectives:

- ♣ Adaptation and improvement of rural tourism forms / services to the motivations for which the Romanians prefer the Romanian village.
- ♣ Quantification of the impact of tourism activities on the sustainable development of the rural community and the orientation of rural development policies to the specificity of the Romanian village subordinated to the principles of sustainability.
- ♣ Promoting integrated rural tourism activities that will lead to the sustainable development of the rural community, reduce disparities between urban and rural areas, improve the quality of life.
- ♣ Increase and stabilize the income of the rural population as a result of the diversification of the tourism supply subordinated to the principles of sustainability and the adoption of the concept of a collaborative economy as an alternative to the promotion and development of rural tourism.

Also in this part of the paper are the five hypotheses that will be validated or not after the processing and interpretation of the collected data:

Hypothesis 1: If at the basis of the sustainable valorization of tourism potential we set the specificity of rural space through a bottom-up approach, will the premises of a sustainable development of the community through tourism be created?

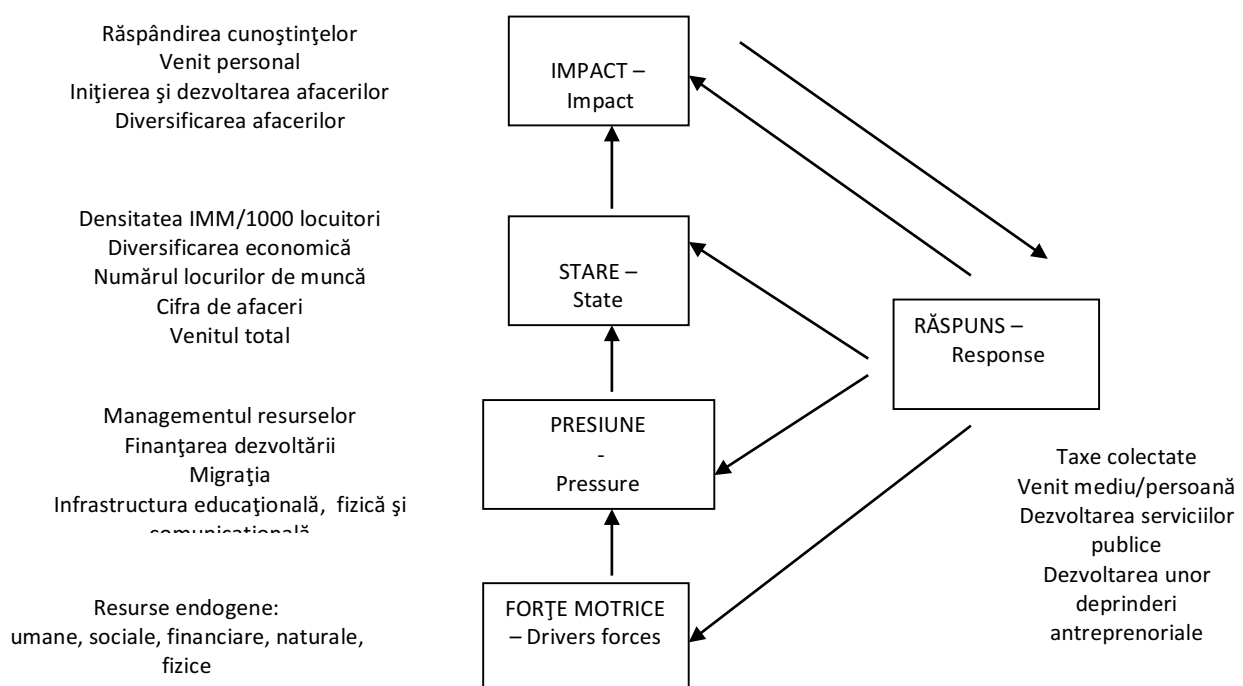
Hypothesis 2: If knowledge among local stakeholders and members of the rural community on rural development programs involving tourism is promoted, then do we witness the manifestation of a dynamism in tourism activities in the studied rural area?

Hypothesis 3: If we rely on an econometric sustainable development model for the efficient use of the rural tourism potential, will we intensify its sustainable development?

Hypothesis 4: If the entrepreneurial initiative is encouraged through educational, financial, material and technical support, is the catalysis of the sustainable development of rural tourism?

Hypothesis 5: If the strategy for ICT expansion is adopted, the sustainable development of rural tourism is intensified?

The final part of this chapter presents the data collection methodology: interview, observation, secondary data analysis, case study as well as sampling techniques



CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

3.1 Objectives:

- Analysis of the concept of sustainable development
- Analysis of the concept of sustainable tourism development

3.2 Structure:

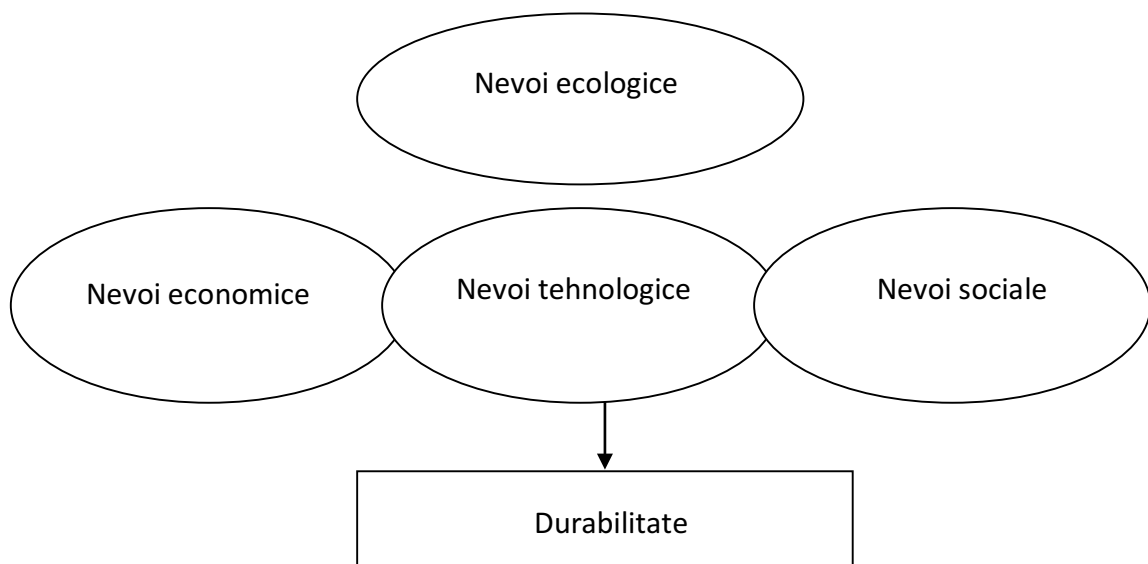
The third chapter is divided into two subchapters:

- The first subchapter analyzes the concept of sustainable development both from the perspective of the many existing definitions and the history of the evolution of the term.
- In the second subchapter there are extracted from a rich bibliography the elements that define the concept of sustainable tourism development as well as contemporary approaches to sustainable tourism

3.3 Content Elements:

In this chapter the thesis analyzes in detail how the term of sustainable development and sustainability emerged in the contemporary discourse. Given the specificity of the doctorate theme, this part of the paper has become imperative to clarify what is meant by the term of sustainable development and especially sustainable development in tourism.

Fig. 3.1 Sustainable development



CHAPTER 4 - CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF RURAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION

4.1 Objectives:

- Establishing a number of relevant indicators for the sustainable development of rural tourism organizations
- Developing a logical sketch for the location of indicators from a mathematical model perspective
- Development of a model for sustainable development of the rural tourism organization

4.2 Structure:

This chapter is structured in three subchapters:

- The first subchapter presents the necessities of developing a mathematical model that quantifies the main elements of sustainable development
- The second subchapter evaluates the tourism activities in Romania and their impact on the economic and social environment
- In the third part of this chapter there is conceived and presented a model on the sustainable development metric of the rural tourism organization

4.3 Content Elements:

This part of the paper is the most important because it manages to synthesize in a complex mathematical formula an econometric model of sustainable development. After an assessment of Romania's tourism activity and its impact on the economic and social environment it was necessary to establish the general elements of a mathematical model for the sustainable development of rural tourism.

It must be taken into account that the balance of sustainable development must take into account a triple set of economic, socio-cultural and ecological elements. After analyzing the current global situation in the work, there was added another component, namely the security component.

Due to these considerations, it was possible to synthesize the general elements of a mathematical model for the sustainable development of rural tourism (see Figure 4.1)

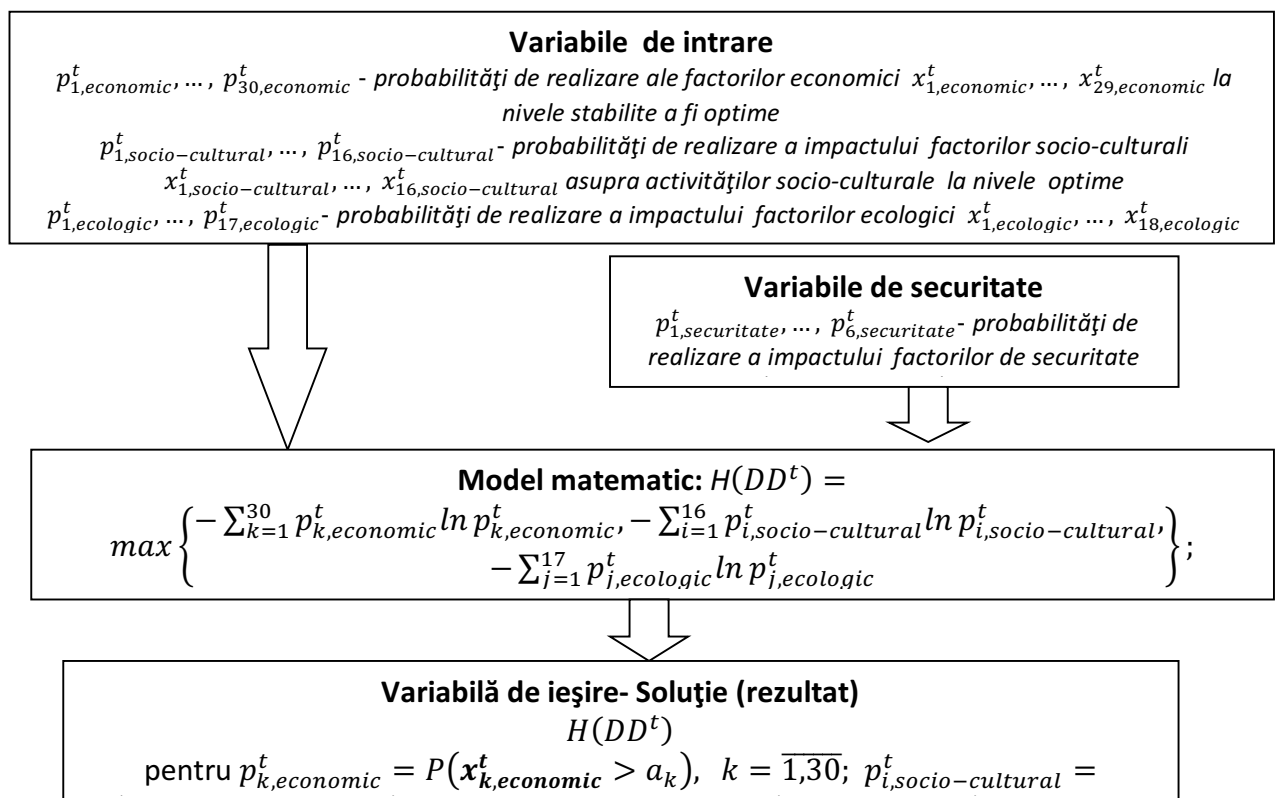


Fig.4.1. General elements of a mathematical model for the sustainable development of rural tourism

In order to achieve the model, it was necessary to define and identify not less than 30 economic indicators, 16 socio-cultural indicators, 17 environmental indicators as well as 6 security indicators.

The resulting economic model has the following formula:

Modelul economic rezultat are următorii formula:

$$H(DD^t) = \max \left\{ \begin{array}{l} - \sum_{k=1}^{30} p_{k,economic}^t \ln p_{k,economic}^t, \\ - \sum_{i=1}^{16} p_{i,socio-cultural}^t \ln p_{i,socio-cultural}^t \\ - \sum_{j=1}^{17} p_{j,ecologic}^t \ln p_{j,ecologic}^t \\ - \sum_{s=1}^6 p_{s,securitate}^t \ln p_{s,securitate}^t \leq \alpha, \end{array} \right.$$

$$p_{k,economic}^t = P(x_{k,economic}^t > a_k), k = \overline{1,30}$$

$$p_{i,socio-cultural}^t = P(x_{i,socio-cultural}^t > b_i), i = \overline{1,16}$$

$$p_{j,ecologic}^t = P(x_{j,ecologic}^t > c_j), j = \overline{1,17}$$

$$p_{s,securitate}^t = P(x_{s,securitate}^t > d_s), s = \overline{1,6},$$

$$p_{1,economic}^t + p_{2,economic}^t + \dots + p_{30,economic}^t = 1$$

$$p_{1,socio-cultural}^t + \dots + p_{16,socio-cultural}^t = 1$$

$$p_{1,ecologic}^t + p_{2,ecologic}^t + \dots + p_{17,ecologic}^t = 1$$

$$p_{1,securitate}^t + p_{2,securitate}^t + p_{6,securitate}^t = 1$$

$$a_k, b_i, c_j, d_s, \alpha \geq 0$$

Verification of the model can be done by successive application at several times t . The model has the advantage that it can be easily understood and applied by those who do not have a mathematical background. Constants of the model proposed in this chapter can be chosen by the management of organizations according to their specifics and objectives and according to the professional experience of the managers.

CHAPTER 5 - ECONOMETRIC MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN SIBIEL LOCALITY

5.1 Objectives:

- Analysis of the tourist realities of the rural Sibiel site
- Quantification of all the indicators described in chapter four of the existing Reality in Sibiel
- SWOT analysis of the results

5.2 Structure:

Chapter Five is the structure structured into three subchapters as follows

- The first part analyzes the tourist activities on the bed of the community
- In the second part we introduce the real values of the indicators needed to capitalize on the sustainable development model in Sibiel
- The last part of the chapter establishes the orientation of sustainable rural development policies to the specificity of the Romanian village

5.3 Content Elements

This chapter highlights aspects related to Sibiel's tourist capacity as well as the typology of the tourist who has spent his stay or wants to spend a stay in Sibiel.

In this part of the thesis, most elements of Investigation appear, considering that we find here the centralization of the questionnaires as well as all the values of the indicators.

Following this obtained information that proved to be relevant, a SWOT analysis on the sustainable tourism development opportunities in the town of Sibiel

CHAPTER 6 - CONSEQUENCES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 Objectives:

- Formulation of conclusions on the sustainable development of rural tourism in Romania
- Quantification of the sustainable development of rural tourism in Romania
- Recommendations for action directions for strengthening sustainable tourism activities in rural areas

6.2 Structure:

This chapter is divided into three subchapters as follows:

- Conclusions on the sustainable development of rural tourism in Romania
- Conclusions on the quantification of the sustainable development of rural tourism in Romania
- Conclusions on the quantification of the sustainable development of rural tourism in Sibiel

6.3 Content Elements:

The aim of the research was to identify both the problems and the potential for sustainable development of tourism in order to contribute to a better orientation of the strategic measures for the sustainable development of the community through tourism.

To achieve the overall objective, four specific strategic objectives were set:

- ♣ Adaptation and improvement of rural tourism forms / services to the motivations for which the Romanians prefer the Romanian village
- ♣ Quantification of the impact of tourism activities on the sustainable development of the community and the orientation of the rural development policies to the specificity of the Romanian village subordinated to the principles of sustainability.
- ♣ Promoting integrated rural tourism activities that will lead to the sustainable development of the community, to reduce disparities between urban and rural areas, and to improve the quality of life.
- ♣ Increase and stabilize the incomes of the rural population as a result of diversifying the tourist offer subordinated to the principles of sustainability and adopting the concept of collaborative economy as an alternative to promoting and developing rural tourism

Possibilities to support the development of tourism by Saliște City Hall for Sibiel area

Strategic directions:

1. Safety

- The decisive implementation of legal measures to prevent risks to the safety and health of tourists,
- Increasing the awareness of the tourists and the inhabitants about the hazards and the mountain security measures,
- Maintenance and marking of mountain routes,
- Improving the critical response time (Rescue / Rescue, ISU)

2. Quality,

- o Improving public utilities networks and access routes to areas of interest,
- o supporting investment in tourism infrastructure,
- o Monitoring and research of target markets and other potential markets and trends in tourism (both from the bidder's point of view and from consumer) and the dissemination of information to stakeholders,
- o Attracting and absorbing funding from structural instruments and complementary funds,

3. Cultural Patrimony

The main objective is to capitalize on cultural and material heritage and has the following strategic priorities:

- Recovery, rehabilitation, tourism valorization and preservation of existing cultural heritage
- Improving the cultural tourism act as well as developing and promoting cultural institutions
- Increase the support of local authorities in the development of cultural events that have a consistent impact on tourism activity

4. Access to tourist information

The main objective is to increase the accessibility of information on the tourist destination of Sibiu and the main priorities should be:

- The support of the tourist accommodation units in the city increases the presence on the Internet
- To disseminate as detailed information about Sibiel through traditional methods but especially through modern ones - mobile applications, online promotion, partnerships with various people with influence in the online environment.
- Allocation of budgetary funds for the promotion of the Sibiel area at the entrance points in the county as well as the area of the airport, railway station or bus station
- development of partnerships with the traffic junctions and the neighboring airports

5. Improve and strengthen Sibiel as Brand

- Any form of association of Sibiel with the term open tourism representative for Lala Romania
- A unitary image of the brand at all levels of the tourism industry
- Achievement of a number of strategic and adequate elements that will allow the development of partnerships beneficial to tourism development

6. Emphasis on professional development and encouragement of professional training of responsible persons

- Any form of support for the professional training of people working in the field of tourism by organizing courses, debates, computer support, diplomas that recognize excellence in tourism
- A permanent information to tour operators in the area on the realities in the tourism economy both locally and internationally
- Resource search in order to provide tourist support to know how

6. Partnerships

The main objective is to combine effective collaboration between the public sector and any entrepreneur pursuing a tourism activity

- Partnerships can be developed at national level but especially at the local level, with the main purpose of developing and promoting tourist services
- Developing projects to encourage the involvement of community members in the development of quality tourism products
- Any element that provides professional training, the preservation of the specific cultural elements of the area as well as the economic development through the involvement of the local authorities

7. Increasing the institutional capacity of Săliște City Hall

- Establishment of a liaison department among the key stakeholders interested in tourism growth in the administered area
- Specific training for the employees responsible for the tourism activity of Saliste City Hall employees
- engaging in partnerships with associations or NGOs promoting rural tourism
- Increase transparency in decision-making at the level of public institution in any activity that has an impact on tour operators

8. Safety of practicing tourism

- The focus on preventing dangerous situations in practicing tourist services
- Supplementing the number of volunteer firefighters to increase safety
- opening a medical facility in Sibiel
- Training the main tour operators on the procedures to be followed following a dangerous event (accident, fire, flood)
- Increasing the safety of tourism will certainly lead to an increase in the quality of tourist experience as well as to increase the confidence of tourists in making stress-free stays

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