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Statement of Purpose

The *International Journal of Responsible Tourism (IJRT)* is a publication that aims to offer, through scientific papers, a better understanding of the responsible tourism within the tourism promoter environments, to explain the consequences of applying these principles for the Romanian society and for the entire world and open a communication platform for successful international concepts and practices.

IJRT will include scientific papers submitted to the International Forum for Responsible Tourism program that have passed the peer-review stage and have been debated in the forum, considered to be important documents for understanding and developing responsible tourism.

IJRT intends to become a reference journal in the field, being the first initiative of this kind in Romania, and will be published exclusively online and quarterly by the Amphitheatre Foundation. The Journal will include applicable notes on the meaning of responsible tourism and methods of increasing the touristic potential by preserving cultural and social identity, the natural and anthropic environment, elements to be integrated in responsible tourism, along with an adequate education in the field.

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PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF TOURISM POTENTIAL. ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

Ph.D. Nicolae Neacsu¹

Abstract

Tourism is considered a rapidly growing phenomenon and it has become one of the largest industries in the world and its impact is extremely varied. On one hand, it plays a significant role in the socio-economic development and also, in some cases, it can contribute to a more detailed understanding of cultural area, trying to raise awareness of local communities through respect for cultural diversity and lifestyle (Neacsu, N., Baron, P., Snak, O., 2006).

On the other hand, the accent is focused on trying to minimum the negative effects and maximize the positive effects of tourism. Environmental security issues, and the more private, responsible tourism, are part of the latest issues on the European academic debate as a result of the opening of last decades to analyze the long-term consequences of reflexive created in modernity.

Responsible tourism development meets the requirements of tourists and areas that receive them in the spirit of conservation and improvement opportunities ahead.

Responsible tourism has been developed in all over the world and it offers a balanced and constitutes a viable solution for maintaining, protecting and putting the worth of our inheritance defining the major problems who facing the tourism industry and suggests possible tourism initiatives to help solve these problems.

Keywords: environment, destructive actions, sustainable tourism, tourism planning, resources

1. Protection and conservation of the environment, objective requirement for tourism development

Like any other industry that wishes to be competitive and prosperous, tourism uses a certain “raw material” meant to satisfy the quality requirements to meet this challenge. For all tourism providers, the “raw material” of this industry is the environment. Thus, keeping a high level of quality for the natural resources is the most important requirement for perpetuation and continuous development of tourism consumption.

The **quality of the environment** is affected, in general, by two categories of essential factors: objective factors that result from the manifestation of bad natural

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phenomenon and subjective factors, caused by human activities. Among the many activities through which man can contribute to environment destruction are tourism activities, done irrationally and uncontrolled, in territory. However, unlike the harmful results for the environment that other human activities may have (eg. Industrial activities) whose effects can in the best case scenario be limited, tourism has his own contribution, significant, not only for the ceasing of natural degradation, caused by activities, but also for the protection and conservation of the environment, through the adoption of a certain set of efficient regulations.

The relief, the hydrographic network, the landscape, balneary natural resources, natural monuments etc. to which we add the **anthropological resources as monuments of art and architecture, the archeological and historical sites** and so on are all components of the environment and form the resources for the offer of touristic attractions, encouraging for the development of many tourism forms: from backpacking, comfort and relaxation, to health and cultural tourism etc. The more varied and complex these resources are, and especially unaltered and unaffected by destructive activities, the more powerful their attraction is, generating diverse activities which correspond to different touristic needs.

Therefore, **the tourism-environment** relationship is of particular importance, environmental protection and conservation represent an important condition for the progress and development of tourism. Any destructive intervention or change of its primary properties might harm the tourism potential, by reducing or canceling its resources and ecological balance, and could jeopardize furthermore the health or even the mere existence of future generations.

This point was emphasized repeatedly in meetings dedicated to protecting and preserving the environment such as: Conference of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in **1967** from Spindlesy Mlyn - Czechoslovakia, international symposia on the topic of protection nature, organized in Cluj-Napoca (**1968**), Arles (**1971**) and Copenhagen (**1973**), United Nations environmental Conference in Stockholm (**1972**), Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Helsinki (**1977**), World Conference Tourism in Manila (**1986**) etc.

Since **1980**, after the publication of “**global environmental strategy**” by the IUCN, many countries began to cooperate to satisfy requirements in this area. Thus, in **1987**, “World Commission on Environment and Development” was founded, whose original strategy was developed globally and subsequently focused on new bases, national administrations at different levels of government. Development occurring in viable resource management domain has been accepted as a logical way of achieving the desire for conservation and also development of the environment.

A new stage for the environment, according to the vision of this strategy, is of great relevance in all countries, principally in Western Europe. Environment,

considered alongside socio-economic environment and cultural phenomena, has certain restrictions regarding tourism development. But modern tourism demonstrates that human activities in the field, begin to modify or “manipulate” the environment both positively and negatively, and the consequences are not easily predictable. **Uncontrolled tourism** can contribute to environmental destruction and thus to its self-destruction. Therefore, Swiss Professor J. Krippendorf pointed out: “**If we lose, then we reconstruct capital in other areas of the economy, the same thing does not happen in tourism, where the basic substance - landscape and land - once lost, is irretrievably lost**” (Krippendorf, J., 1977).

It is more and more obvious that the perpetuation of a tourism that considers legitimate to ignore the environment is impossible to remain valid on a long term.

2. Aspects of environmental degradation caused by tourism

Destructive actions of tourist activities occur mainly because of the misuse of the environment for the purpose of recreation and leisure, along with brutal human intervention on the landscape and the natural resources. These harmful practices occur mainly in highly attractive areas, located in populated areas or in close proximity to large urban agglomerations. Also, the absence of regulations on visitor behavior, followed by a monitoring of the touristic areas or objectives, encourages activities that affect the environment and endanger the **integrity** and **conservation** of touristic objectives. Such cases are found more frequently in the following situations:

a. Touristic areas or objectives that are outside marked and specially designed trails, which attract many visitors, mainly during **weekends**, and where there is an *uncontrolled tourist flow*. The damage inflicted is deep and can often be **irreversible**. Some examples are: the destruction of vegetation and flora, of trees and especially of seedlings, the destruction of natural sowing, the detachment of rocks, poaching, etc., which ultimately results in preventing the regeneration of plants, the movement - terrain offset, disturbing animal specific habitats and generally fauna, causing even species extinction. It is also important to note the flora species extinction caused by improper collection of flora, especially of plants declared natural monuments, and also the lack of tourists understanding of the serious implications that uncontrolled actions can have on environmental factors. In this situation there are a series of species protected by law and which are endangered, such as **edelweiss, garofita de munte** (*Dianthus tenuifolius*) with its variety of Garofita de Piatra Craiului etc.

Uncontrolled tourist flow in natural or anthropogenic sights causes, most often, irreversible destruction of some of the elements that make them tourist attractions, and which also provide intrinsic value, sometimes with unique character.

Intensive visiting of historical, architectural and art monuments in poor conditions (lighting by candles, lack of technical equipment for ventilation or pollution etc.) led to

the **degradation of valuable frescoes** in monasteries, paintings from historical and art monuments, the destruction of karst formations from caves etc.

Here we can also take into account **the lack of precise demarcation** of camping areas in touristic areas (or along paths). Stopping for picnics or installation of tents in highly attractive areas for tourists inevitably causes the **degradation of the landscape** and of other components of the environment as a result of soil compaction and particularly because of random residual traces left by tourists. Such situations usually occur in areas for tourism and recreation purpose, around urban centers and especially on mountain meadows, near the huts, on the banks of rivers or lakes etc.

b. Environmental pollution has grown along with the penetration of automobile tourism in areas until recently inaccessible to this mode of transport. Deviating from routes designed for access, tourists take side roads, stopping in picturesque meadows and damaging the lawns, the shrubs and the flora generally by crushing it or by exhaust, oil spills, etc.

The harmful effect of automobile tourism is felt through the increased circulation in spa areas. In the absence of access restrictions in these cities, of parking areas, automobile tourism affects air quality or alters the treatment factors, negatively influencing specific spa treatments.

c. Misconception about the exploitation of natural resources, especially natural cure factors affecting the tourism potential by exploiting its unscientific and irrational and inadequate achievement of objectives for tourist investment, which is reflected by:

- **oversized resorts** in terms of capacity and receiving treatment compared with potential capacity for a rational use of resources;
- **breach** of general principles of protection and exploitation of mineral spas, especially thermo-mineral water, such as reserves against deposits limit approved mineral spas, works according to the geological surveys and special projects, avoid exploitation fields to exhaustion, protect and prevent other actions that may lead to the degradation factor treatment (eg therapeutic mud), health insurance and hydro resources perimeters against pollutants etc.

d. Unregulated development of tourist destinations, particularly resorts, defect characterized by:

- **poor design** of nature tourism investment objectives;
- establish tourist sites **inappropriate** for the touristic material;
- unaesthetic constructions, not adapted to ethnographical characteristics traditional architectural and natural area;
- **too many touristic** constructions in the area, etc.

All these actions lead to **overburdening the area** with touristic installations, distressing the ecological balance, leading to the urbanization of the resorts.

e. **Poor facilities for visiting caves** - highly attractive tourist objectives, executed without observing specific technique. The effects were the degradation, in whole or in part, of these caves, such as **Muierii** (Parang Mountains), **Ialomiței** (Bucegi Mountains) etc.

3. The concept of sustainable development in tourism

A landmark event regarding the concept of sustainable development was the UN report “Our Common Future” published in 1987, which raised the issue of ecological development and the relationship between rationalization and development of production and consumership (Camarda, A., 2008).

This report issued for the first time a **definition of sustainable development as that form of development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**

In recent years the tourism industry also adopted the concept of “sustainable development”, already used in other sectors. In tourism, the concept was stated by IUCN as (Florica, S.T.B., 1998):

“Sustainable development is a process that takes place without destroying or depleting resources, ensuring development. Resources must be exploited at a rate identical to their renewal, giving up the service when resources regenerate very slowly, to replace it with one with greater power of regeneration. All resources must be exploited in such a way as to bring benefit to future generations as well.”

There are three major principles of sustainable development:

- **Environmental sustainability**, insuring a supportable development while maintaining all essential ecological processes, especially the diversity of biological resources;
- **Social and cultural sustainability**, which guarantees favorable economic development in society, consistent with the culture and values of the existing culture and civilization, preserving community identity;
- **Economic sustainability**, with a role in ensuring efficient economic development; resources are managed so they would exist in the future as well. In other words, the economic sustainability of tourism is defined as a development model which guarantees:
 - **to improve** the quality of life in human settlements that receive tourists;
 - **the possibility** to provide top quality visitor experiences;
 - **to maintain** environmental quality, which is essential for visitors and hosts.

From the point of view of environmental protection, *the advantage of promoting sustainable tourism* lies in the following aspects:

- **sustainable tourism** promotes understanding the effects of tourism on the natural, cultural and human environment;
- it **ensures** the planning and zoning of the territory, allowing tourism development to be adapted to the carrying capacity of ecosystems;
- it **directs** the realization of amenities and recreational facilities, which can be beneficial for the local population too and can thus contribute funds to preservation of archaeological sites, historic buildings and artifacts;
- **favors** cost-effective use of land with low agricultural yields;
- it **respects** and **ensures** environmental protection requirements, proving the importance of natural resources, cultural and historical, to increase economic and social wellbeing of local communities.

The **Global Conference on Business and Environment** held in Vancouver (Canada) in 1992, experts from over 60 countries have presented the major changes occurring in the tourism industry in the last decade.

These changes were aimed at all aspects that can address the tourism industry, namely:

a. Policies, legislation and regulations:

- **creating** institutions and framework for implementing sustainable tourism;
- **ensuring** the conservation and protection of basic tourism resources;
- **mobilizing** sectors of the tourism industry to carry out sustainable tourism in line with environmental requirements;
- **establishing** a legal framework to support travel agents, regional and local authorities, for correcting the tourists' attitudes towards the environment.

b. Research and technology:

- **to identify** the basic natural resources, with touristic characteristics;
- **to identify** cultural resources, with touristic characteristics;
- **to establish** future demand in tourism and comparing it to supply capacities to secure it;
- **to create** databases and monitoring through indicators highlighting new opportunities and support new planning decisions and development of the tourism industry in terms of protecting the environment;
- **to use** advanced technologies to design a tourism responsive to environmental problems, applying architectural, engineering, construction and endowments, environmentally safe solutions and specific to the areas;
- **to provide** technical and practical management of tourist traffic to protect the ecological balance and avoiding environmental degradation.

c. Economically and financially:

- **to include** environmental costs in revenues levied for tourist activities; the polluter should pay certain fees related to the forms of pollution, and thus contribute indirectly to environmental conservation;

- **to prepare** reports on the degree of implementation of the proposed projects (international, national, regional), of actions and changes related to adapting to environmental requirements of the tourism industry;
 - **to use** the influence of the domestic and international market for the identification of new tourism markets, complying with environmental requirements and implementing joint partnerships to apply the new concept of ecotourism - a support for sustainable tourism;
 - **obtaining** benefits from environmental marketing, developing and selling tourism products compatible with their value.
- d. In communication and training:
- an **open attitude** among employees of tourism businesses and local people towards environmental issues;
 - **developing** employee handbooks for the tourism industry, standards for environmental credit, to mitigate impacts;
 - **influencing** tourism demand and travel motivations, by increasing supply and providing better information for tourists, applying ethical codes;
 - **evaluating** past positive results, to establish new sustainable development proposals, by transmission of projects and positive experiences through national and international bodies.
- e. **Other aspects:**
- **practicing** an active education about protection in other sectors too, which benefit from natural resources and cultural tourism industry; providing understanding for environmental issues;
 - **establishing** collaborative relationships with other sectors involved in environmental protection (forestry, agriculture, regional planning etc.).
 - **creating** models and projects to support the sustainable development of tourism, presenting the application models and possibilities.

4. **The main actions to protect and conserve the environment and tourism potential**

The protection and preservation of the tourist potential and the environment

is emerging as a separate activity with specific problems which require the collaboration of experts in various fields. This can have a satisfactory efficiency only by ensuring an ongoing and appropriate legal and administrative framework, to impose administrative organization, the existence of economic resources, efficient legislative support and civic education activities (Glăvan, V., 1995).

Internationally, countries with experience in tourism **adopt a national plan to protect touristic resources** based on preserving their own touristic resources. In view of the development of sustainable tourism, they considered three main objectives:

- **economic** - essential in identifying, harnessing and increasing exploitation of tourism resources;

- **social** particularly creating a permanent population, increasing the degree of labor force occupation, supporting the practice of some traditional occupations and attracting the population towards tourism;
- **ecological** - important to avoid environmental degradation, pollution and ensure a balanced and long-term exploitation of tourism resources.

In accordance with these requirements, it is necessary to **develop and adopt national tourism development plans** designed to allow the conjugation of experience and key economic positions: public administration, organizations, associations and professional organizations, social workers, specialists in research Profile etc.

Tourism development plans which are based on long-term global estimates, in accordance with external market trends and concrete plans made in the medium term (four to five years) or short (one to three years), developed for regions, areas or forms of tourism, are based on European standards regarding touristic resource exploitation, and developing and upgrading of tourism services.

Developing estimates and plans for tourism development is the main support strategy for achieving sustainable tourism which includes among others:

- **conservation** of natural and anthropic resources in order to continue the use in the next period;
- **raising** living standards of local communities;
- **better knowledge and awareness** of both the local population and visitors about the idea of environmental conservation.

Tourism planning is a form of control of the future planning strategy related to the environment. Environmental planning involves monitoring and analyzing all aspects of the environment, in order to determine the most appropriate development and land use models.

Key estimates and development plans at the national level provide **guidance, information** and **assessment** of future prospects. Through the direct support of the state, the overall framework for resource protection, determining the exploitation or achieving outstanding investment can be estimated.

Medium and short term plans are beneficial especially for the of support local and regional development.

Basically, regarding the tourism potential of Romania, the main actions aimed at protecting and preserving the environment and tourism resources are reflected in the adoption of the following measures:

- rational, **scientific exploitation** of tourism resources so that their exploitation rate should not exceed their recycling and recovery rate and the intensity of direct or indirect relations with the environment in tourism must not exceed their carrying capacity;
- **resource exploitation** in tourism is to be solved in the context of the exploitation of all natural resources and environmental protection, based on studies of territorial planning, scientific management plan

components, rational and efficient planning - the main instrument of local governing bodies;

- **planning and proper organization** at superior levels as well of the areas, trails and touristic objectives;
- rational touristic **organization** and **exploitation** of national parks and nature reserves, ensuring their protection. Similarly it will lead to arranging for visiting and exploitation of caves, the special objectives designed to enrich and diversify the Romanian touristic offer of new tourism products;
- **proper organization of mountain areas** for future development of mountain tourism by localizing all attractive landscapes and all ski areas, designed to provide the basis for the future design of tourist facilities (trails, signage, accessibility conditions in parts difficult, spatial of panoramic view points, equipment for winter sports, mountain huts and refuges, cable transport systems, etc.) under the conservation and replanting of forests;
- **making touristic arrangements** in areas, towns and tourist routes, in order to provide tourist equipment for a proper and environmentally competitive tourism;
- **the development of environmental awareness** among the population and the feeling of love and respect for nature in historical sites and of monuments of art and architecture created over time. This can be achieved through environmental and tourism potential education, which is to be done at national level by instilling an attitude of respect and responsible behavior towards natural resources.

Environmental education for the conservation of nature and tourism potential should be permanent, and begin as early as **childhood** and be strengthened in **educational institutions** of all kinds and grades. Subsequently, it can improve through the media within the circles of "**friends of nature**", through various specialized publications or by guides and companions, during trips, etc.

By analyzing all aspects of the environment, regarding tourism potential, it can be established that the protection and preservation of it is made through a concept in the overall economic development of the country, located at the same level as overall economic development issues.

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THE RISK OF SOCIAL MIRAGE. HUMAN RESOURCE NEEDS TO SUPPORT NATURAL RESOURCE

Ana-Maria Savu

Abstract

Tourism, in its development, uses fragmentary funds, natural constituents, social, cultural, urban and rural environment through the systematic approach that can pollute, damage or devastate the environment. Responsible tourism comes as a viable solution that tries to have a minimal impact on the environment and local culture. All these have emerged as a result of the tourism industry which is quite difficult to control because it can afford to limit trade flows, even if the future affects their local community.

Responsible tourism offers a completely different system that aims to educate and make people aware regarding the importance of environmental systems and it leads us to focus on truly significant change - the efficiency and sustainability, which is realistic to support stability and release without excluding anyone.

Keywords: Responsible tourism, local communities, society, effects, influence factors.

Tourism - A Contemporary Phenomenon

Contemporary tourism is a mass phenomenon with global implications for economic, social and cultural areas, and its evolution over a territory represents a source involved in the social and economic development.

The challenges of society in which we live are increasing more and more and the sustainable development is at present a historical opportunity for contemporary society to catalyze an economy. Therefore, we must acknowledge that sustainable development is no longer an option, it has become a necessity.

Exploitation and promotion of the most inherited tourist zone is based on the combination of types of tourism and tourist activities, all in the context of regional and local economic growth.

Tourism Focuses on Society

Social values of our society that have manifested through a continuous rebellion, corruption, unjust laws, social stratification, environmental destruction and a class leading indifferent, profit-oriented are the result of collective ignorance of the two most basic perceptions that individuals may have about reality-changing appearance of natural and symbiotic laws. (Şerban, 2008)

We need to understand and acknowledge that all systems are changing. This means that we must be open to new information all the time, even if it threatens our current system of beliefs. Unfortunately, the contemporary society was unable to understand that and established institutions continue to paralyze the maintaining of outdated social structures.

Today, the society is composed of a series of institutions- from political, legal or religious institutions to social class institutions, family values and specialized occupations. Profound influence is evident on these structures in shaping our perspectives and understanding. Despite de fact that social institutions and systems are direct and conditioned us, it appears that there is no system treated with more detachment as environment system. Therefore, responsible tourism is an alternative that contributes to the protection of natural resources and to the economic development of tourist activities. These two aspects support stability between the local community and the adepts of the environment.

Risks in the last period of modernity produce consistently irreversible damage; its effects are not instantaneous and very rarely to be viewed, affecting people and organizations both - spatially (some geographical areas being more exposed to certain types of risk than others) and temporally (some of the effects of such acts can affect generations later). (Şerban, 2008)

Therefore, it is important to bring a revolution in the human mind, a radical revolution, which can no longer accept the old rules and practices. Specifically, you must keep in mind that the tourist heritage provides development opportunities on many areas and may be seriously threatened. Responsibility should constitute an important segment in any tourist activity.

Responsible Tourism and Local Communities

The responsible tourism concept is an approach to the vision of travel which aims to progress a symbiotic connection with physical and social environment. Practicing a responsible tourism would reduce the adverse effects of the tourist activities. Local community could be stimulated in protecting the environment and in understanding that this is in their best interests, and also, in the interest of tourists. The purpose of responsible tourism is to limit the negative impact in the areas concerned, on local communities and local population of the destination host. (Băltăreţu, 2004)

Environmental safety issues and, in particular, responsible tourism, are part of the latest topics of academic debate, as a result of the long-term consequences generated in and by modernity.

Unfortunately, developments of an integrated environment are often viewed with confusion. The solution is to build a society without the old superstitions. A company in charge of promoting and practicing responsible tourism represents a

viable approach to contemporary generations who tries to stop many processes of deterioration of environment and tourism resources.

The development of a sustainable tourism meets the demands of tourists and places that are getting in the spirit of keeping and improving future opportunities. Sustainable development requires the intervention of a particular share for tourism, because this approach depends on the attentions and the endearments on the natural setting of the region. (Băltărețu, 2003)

The responsible tourism proposes a completely different system which intends to mobilize and to educate the world about the importance of the environment and which leads us to focus on the really significant change – the efficiency and stability of sustainability, which has the realistic maintenance to sustain and release without excluding anyone.

Responsible Tourism in Romania – A Necessity, not an Option

Like all late modern societies, Romanian post-revolutionary society faces also with a range of social issues and risk factors whose effects lead or may lead to blockages in the operation of the entire assembly.

Most global processes carrying structural risks, had found Romania not ready strategically and logistically to cope with them. From the literature and from the inventory of the most significant societal risks, it seems that the environment is one of the most affected areas. This happens because branch of all socio-political interventions carried out in the world for the production and preservation of the welfare and economic development is accompanied by rising risk societal, all working with one purpose- maximizing profits regardless of costs on society and the environment over time. (Snak; Neacsu, 2001)

The practice of responsible tourism comes as an alternative to establish a point of view that works, because the development of this concept can transpose by a resource management to approve the economic and social requirements implementation of the ecosystems.

Responsible Tourism - The Balance between The Positive and The Negative Effects of Tourism

Tourism, as economic activity, must join the concept of sustainable development, being an industry dependent by resources of nature and cultural heritage of every society that sells these resources as part of its products and at the same time, it shares some resources with other users, including local communities.

In its development, tourism, consumes or uses, mostly, natural components and resources. Tourism and the environment of the region are in a total interdependence because natural environment offers important resources. Their recovery will involve

safety regulations and concrete actions for the development of a sustainable tourism. (Băltărețu, 2004)

On the other hand, the development of tourist products of certain insurance and travel services can pollute, degrade or destroy the environment with its natural resources.

Changes that have occurred in the environment contributes to the increase or decrease of competitiveness in tourism.

Positive effects are these that improve the quality of the environment and enrich the landscape, architecture and the establishment of protected areas.

The negative effects of the development of tourism on the natural environment are multiple: intensive urbanization of the area and its degradation pressures on agricultural land, modification of terrestrial ecosystems etc.

Factors Involved in The Development of Responsible Tourism in Romania

Currently, Romania is trying to empower local communities in environment of the Danube Delta by carrying out courses and seminars to inform locals who are involved in various activities. The need for responsible tourism in the Danube Delta is beneficial for ecosystem and also for human communities.

Taking place on an area of about 3.450 km², the Danube Delta is considered biosphere reserve and it has belong to UNESCO heritage since 1991. Today in the Danube Delta there is no less than 10 protected species of birds and some are declared monuments of nature: Pelican, Egret, little deer, songbirds etc. The diversity of animals and flowers make the Danube Delta a unique place in Europe due to its unparalleled landscapes. This transforms the region into a true monument of nature.

Romanian post-revolutionary society is faced with a series of social and environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, ozone damage, wastes, all these because our community has not been trained strategically and logistically to disprove it.

Despite these obstacles, it is time for a new system that would reflect the knowledge that people have today and the formality which aims to protect the authentic heritages. A concrete example is that we have an impressive virgin-forest area in a pure configuration.

Virgin Forest constitutes the area devoted for some unique species of animals and flowers that are kept in their natural expression, excluding any individual imprint. Romania is noted at European level through the virgin forests which covers an area of 250,000 hectares; this represents 65% of the remaining virgin forests in Europe. Only 18% of the total funds of virgin forests have been protected to ensure the conservation of ecological integrity and biological variety.

The rest of the forest fund is in an uncertain situation, being treated with much indifference and devoid of any initiative to protect it. In addition to the inaccessibility, the only protective shield represents the absence of economic benefit, but through to the expressive frame current fluctuating economic and social, the existence of these natural resources may arouse interest in any context. The result is a monopoly based on financial and corporate power. Therefore, by applying measures to contribute to responsible tourism we can support full protection from the virgin forests of Romania.

According to tradition, rural tourism is a contemporary phenomenon which looked into the whole. It represents a form of tourism which takes place in the countryside and local resources; because it is an alternative to traditional tourism, as well as economic and social activity. For that reason, rural tourism must become a component of responsible tourism. (Responsible Tourism an Territorial Development - Strategic guideline document for French Public Aid for Development, available on http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/IMG/pdf/Responsible_tourism.pdf)

In Romania, rural tourism is practiced in the depiction of sustainable development, taking part in operation and it protects the rural, cultural and natural heritage. This can be accomplished by examining the requirements related to harmonic economic progress caused by rural tourism and the protection of cultural and natural environment. This would assume that the entire system will be directly conditioned by the level of responsibility of the operators of tourist area, the local community, but also the social connections. (Băltărețu, 2004.)

As a **conclusion**, today, development on the environment can not be separated from the major trends in world politics in this era of globalization. At a time when the attention seems to be open to a redefinition of global threats, with a focus on increased cooperation in combating international terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the international environment and expanded external input have a significant impact on regional developments.

This requires that we should design our culture and our values, and when we understand the meaning of the responsible tourism, which is the only one that gives freedom of humanity and it intensifies the standard of living, then we will realize that we must focus on the interest of natural resources management to persist on the prosperity.

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WILDLIFE - WATCHING TOURISM OF ROMANIA AND ITS IMPACT ON SPECIES AND HABITATS

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Abstract

Wildlife-watching tourism from Romania starts to become more popular among foreign tourists, who want to see the large carnivores from Carpathians or the rare birds of the Danube Delta.

Romania is a privileged country, as the second largest population of large carnivores in Europe is concentrated in the Carpathians (Predoiu, 2010), and the Danube Delta is a paradise of birds. Romania occupies the second place in Europe after Finland among countries in which can be practiced bear-watching (Wildlife Worldwide, 2012).

The high biodiversity and the untouched habitats from these “sensitive” areas, makes the impact of the tourism to be more stronger, so it is required the sustainable management of this type of ecotourism. In order to have a healthy management of this tourism type, it is necessary to understand the behavior of species, habitat requirements of species and area limits where tourists can interact with certain species, so that neither species and nor tourists does not suffer.

Keywords: wildlife – watching tourism, biodiversity, ecotourism, biodiversity conservation.

Introduction

The extent wildlife-watching site in Romania is still low, although our country's potential is high. It is known that the highest levels of biodiversity are found in less developed countries, which offer the best destinations for wildlife-watching (Higginbottom, 2004).

Now many tourists prefer to see and interact with wildlife inside their habitat near as possible to experience authentic habitats. (Shackley, 1996).

Romania's main problem is that this type of tourism takes place generally punctual in two important areas of the country: the Danube Delta, Bucegi and Piatra Craiului. These locations are already transformed in brands of the wildlife watching tourism from Romania, those locations are getting increasingly affected by tourism in general and this kind of tourism in particular. Soon tourists eager to see specimens of wild animals will find habituated specimens similar to those from circuses or zoos, accustomed to the presence of people. Human influence on species changes the behavior first and then their natural adaptations, leading to degenerate specimens which are not longer a sample of emblematic species of the Carpathians and the Danube Delta.

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Wildlife watching tourism is a controversial issue. Some conservationists say that this kind of tourism adversely affect species and their habitats, while others argue that if well managed, this kind of tourism can be a tool for biodiversity conservation, (Corazon & Sinha, 2001).

The aim of this article is to discuss the basics of wildlife-watching tourism from a geographical perspective, by showing in which situation is this kind of tourism into Romania and assessing impact on species and habitats in regions where such tourist activities are carried out.

What is wildlife and wildlife watching tourism?

Wildlife tourism has emerged as a way to ensure sustainable economic benefits, while supporting local communities and wildlife conservation, (Shackley, 1996). Wildlife tourism is the type of tourism based on encounters with non-domestic animals (non-humanized). These encounters with animals can take place either in the wild or in captivity. This kind of tourism can also be classified as of consumption (examples: hunting or capturing wildlife and recreational fishing) or non-consumption (examples: wildlife watching, photographing, feeding), depending on the reasons of entertainment of visitors and the level of interaction, visitors – wild animals, desired (Corazon & Sinha, 2001).

Wildlife-watching tourism, being also the subject of this article will be among more detailed below. The term wildlife is a general term but from a technical standpoint it covers both fauna and flora, but used into popular meaning of this term refers particularly to wild animals. Wildlife-watching tourism is centered on wildlife viewing, free into their natural habitat, this fact just makes him different from other forms of wildlife-based activities such as hunting or fishing. Wildlife viewing is essentially an observational activity, although in some cases may involve interactions with animals seen as touching (caressing) or feeding them. This kind of tourism relatively easy to perform, has grown rapidly in recent years (Tapper, 2006), as proven by a simple internet search, after which you will have many examples of travel companies that are either focused on wildlife-watching tours or promote their tourism offers through wildlife-watching as an optional activity which may be enjoyed by their customers.

The tourism industry it tends to use the term of “wildlife tourism” instead of “wildlife-watching tourism”. In most of the cases the two terms have identical meaning, but wildlife tourism is sometimes used to refer to tourism focused on hunting and fishing, and sometimes is used for tourism based on observation of wild animals in captivity, where animals no longer live a wild life.

The way in which this kind of tourism and wildlife-watching is taking place in the context that is made, is variable and could be included the following activities:

- Accidental encounters with wild animals in protected areas (eg National Parks, Natural Parks), without any direct involvement of tour operators.

This is a popular wildlife watching method in the USA, Canada, Australia and some parts of Europe, here being included also Romania ;

- Specialized wildlife watching tours, such as bird - watching, bear - watching, safari tours;
- Visit of local attractions that sheltering a high density of wild animals, such as colonies of bats in caves, migration corridors of mammals or birds, feeding areas and breeding of wild animals (areas of reproduction of stags, nesting places of Western Capercaillie, etc.)
- Tours based on nature walks which include wildlife observation (a national park tour, tour of some protected areas, hiking areas with specific habitats (alpine, coniferous forest), which includes the component of wildlife;
- Tours of research, conservation or education involving wildlife, offered by organizations whose main aim is not tourism (examples: universities, schools, environmental NGOs and public institutions or private activities that interact with wildlife);
- Sightseeing tours that involves accidental encounters of wildlife;
- Accommodation in areas surrounded by wildlife (sheepfolds huts, shelters, farms, etc.) and other tourist activities (climbing, trekking, volunteering) which take place in areas surrounded by wildlife.

Notice so that wildlife tourism has various direct and indirect forms of expression, but the scope of this article is those direct, those are intended principally observing the wildlife in its natural habitat, wildlife-watching tours that specialized.

Wildlife-watching tourism of Romania

Still at the beginning, wildlife watching tourism is developing continuously and rapidly in Romania, with currently over 30 tour operators who are specialized in wildlife watching tourism, which are intended Romania. As figure 1, over half of them are foreign tour operators, mostly in Britain.

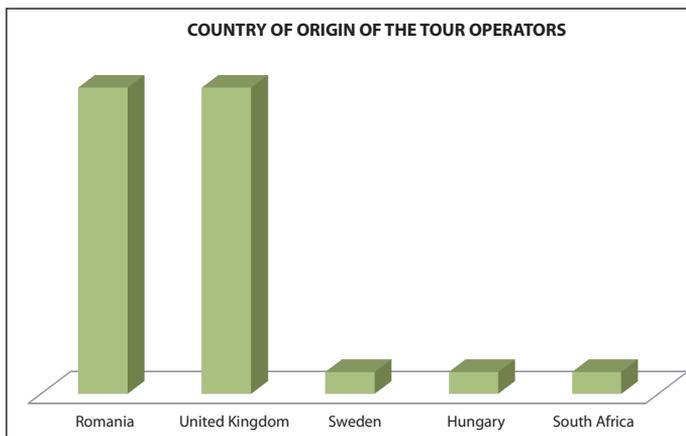


Figure 1

Wildlife watching tourism of Romania involves several interest groups (stakeholders). For wildlife watching tourism is among the stakeholders: local community, public institutions and private companies that manage the areas where it takes place wildlife-watching tourism, NGOs with interest in biodiversity conservation, tourism industry representatives here being included: tour operators, local operators, guides, suppliers of services (accommodation, meals) and of course tourists.

Each group, according to Table 1, has its own interests and responsibilities, and the tourism made on a medium to long term is highly dependent on the interest groups that must play their roles.

Stakeholders and their interest in to wildlife-watching tourism	
Stakeholder	Interest in the wildlife-watching tourism
The local community	Protect the environment and goods belonging to them, minimizing social and cultural disruption; Potential to gain benefits through tourism: improving local services and infrastructure, jobs, local business opportunities for income generation.
Administrators of public or private hunting grounds , conservation NGOs	Protection of wildlife habitats, biodiversity and the environment generally; Potential to generate revenue and greater public awareness through tourism to support conservation and demonstrate the importance of conserving habitats, local and public administration.
National and local government	The potential economic and tourism development at national, regional and local level.
Tour operators	Development potential of the company and development of a market based on wildlife-watching. This depends not only on market demand, but also the local conditions: infrastructure and access to site, lodging and meals, if there are local trusted business partners who provide services (guiding, accommodation, meals).
Operators and local guides	Development potential of a tourism market products based on wildlife-watching . This can be done only for a local or regional market, but to reach the international market, local operators should build links with international tour operators offering tours worldwide.
Accommodation	Wildlife-watching is a potential tourist attraction, thus increasing the number and length of stay.

Stakeholders and their interest in to wildlife-watching tourism

Tourists	Interest in activities of wildlife-watching, memorable experiences, good translators /interpreters and guides. For some tourists, this kind of tourism is an opportunity to experience local culture and interact with the local community, elements that should be considered in such tours.
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Table 1: Stakeholder groups and their interests in wildlife-watching tourism

Two areas stand out as the main destinations of Romanian tourism of wildlife-watching: the Danube Delta and the region of Brasov - Zarnesti with Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Mountains.

Romania has managed to create two major brands that are a “must do” for foreign tourists interested in wildlife in this country, they are bears and the birds of the Danube Delta. These two elements rare in Europe are the two strengths of the Romanian tourism.

It is noticed that most tour operators do not address the Romanian tourists but the foreign tourists, the offers and web pages are written exclusively in foreign languages: English, French or German rarely translated into Romanian. This is understandable, Romanians living in this wild country, but few of them enjoy the beauty of nature. Another reason is the high price of this kind of specialized tourism, ranging to around 1000 euros for 7 days.

For these amounts the tourists amateurs of wildlife can choose specialized tours: bird watching, bear watching, large carnivores watching, on the tracks of wild animals, combined ecotours.

The offer of tour operators is diverse, tourists can choose to observe in Romania between: 337 species of birds, 23 species of amphibians, 36 reptiles, 86 species of mammals, 140 species of butterflies and moths, 84 species of dragonflies, 50 species of trees and over 1500 species of flowers. Many of them are rare and protected species concentrated in protected areas and buffer zones strictly restricted.

Tourists can choose what species they want to see, so will enjoy personalized tours in different locations. The map in Figure 2, tours manage to cover so much biodiversity, only visiting the following locations: Bucegi Mountains – Piatra Craiului Mountains - Danube Delta - Black Sea Coast.

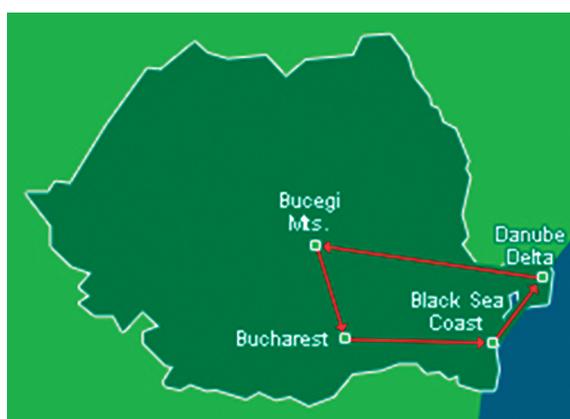


Figure 2: General wildlife watching tour from Romania

Most of the tours are conducted by the following scenario: start in Bucharest Henri Coanda International Airport, where the tourists are taken by the staff of tour operators. Then they are transported into Brasov or Zarnesti to the mountain where they can see birds of prey daytime and night, songbirds, chamois and bears into observatories of Zarnesti. Accidental wolves or lynx can be found, that are more rare and difficult to see which is due to their ethology, repulsive to man. After several trips in Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Massifs the group of tourists is heading to Tulcea where they will enjoy the bird paradise of the Danube Delta.

The tour continues on the Black Sea coast (Laguna Razelm – Sinoe Vadu and Histria) making observations on the avifauna. The tour ends with floral and bird observations into Macin Mountains and Babadag Plateau following then the return to Bucharest.

Since these areas have high biodiversity, the impact of tourism on them is also high. We will discuss in the following pages, strictly on the impact of wildlife-watching tourism without to consider another kind of tourism that would increase the list of impact on species and habitats.

No.	Tour Operator	Area Offered	Headquarters	Activities	Natural Attractions Offered
1	Roving România	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Podișul Târnavelor	Bod, RO	Large carnivores watching, Birdwatching	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey
2	IBIS Tours	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Delta Dunării	Tulcea, RO	Large carnivores watching, Birdwatching	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
3	Absolute Carpathian	Piatra Craiului, Bucovina, Delta Dunării	Zărnești, RO	Large carnivores watching, Birdwatching	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
4	AVESTOURS	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	Odorheiul Secuiesc, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
5	Romania Travel Centre	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	Tunbridge Wells, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers

No.	Tour Operator	Area Offered	Headquarters	Activities	Natural Attractions Offered
6	Naturetrek	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	Hampshire, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
7	Atu Travel	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	București, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
8	AviFauna	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	Morbylanga, SE	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
9	Tour Dust	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării	Tring, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
10	Papyrus Tours	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	East Yorkshire, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
11	ResponsibleTravel	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării, Dobrogea	East Sussex, UK	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
12	EcoTours	Bucegi, Delta Dunării, Litoral Marea Neagră	Budakeszi, HU	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
13	Carpathian Nature Tours	Bucegi, Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării (partener)	Sat Măgura, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers

No.	Tour Operator	Area Offered	Headquarters	Activities	Natural Attractions Offered
14	CENTRE FOR MOUNTAIN ECOLOGY	Bucegi, Piatra Craiului, Leaota	Moeciu, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Large carnivores, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl
15	DELTA TRAVEL	Delta Dunării, Retezat	București, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl
16	Fundatia Adept	Târnava Mare	Saschiz, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers
17	INTER PARES	Transilvania, Dobrogea, Banat, Bucovina	Sibiu, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers,
18	KALNOKI GUESTHOUSES AND ESTATE	Brasov, Valea Oltului, Sighișoara	Micloșoara, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Large carnivores, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, herbivores
19	TRIFOI GUESTHOUSE	Munții Nemira, Ciuc, Vrancei	Oituz, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds and plants
20	PROFESSIONAL TEAM	Piatra Craiului	Brașov, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, chamois, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, insects, flowers
21	TIOC NATURE & STUDY TRAVEL	Delta Dunării, Retezat, Dobrogea	Cisnădie, RO	Birdwatching, wildlife watching, nature tours, combined ecotours	Bear, wolf, lynx, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, mountain birds, songbirds, waterfowl, insects, flowers

No.	Tour Operator	Area Offered	Headquarters	Activities	Natural Attractions Offered
22	Avian Adventures	Delta Dunării	Stourbridge, UK	Birdwatching,	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
23	Birdfinders	Delta Dunării, Bucegi,	Cheselbourne, UK	Birdwatching,	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
24	Indri Ultimate Mammal Voyages	Bucegi, Piatra Craiului	Cape Town, ZA	Mammals Watching	Lynx, bear, wolf, badger, stag, roe deer, wild boar
25	Limosa	Delta Dunării, Coasta Mării Negre	Stalham, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
26	Ribble Bird Tours	Transilvania	Blackpool, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
27	Speyside Wildlife	Piatra Craiului, Delta Dunării	Aviemore, UK	Birdwatching , bear-watching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl, bear
28	Sunbird	Bucovina, Delta Dunării, Coasta Mării Negre	Potton, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
29	The Travelling Naturalist	Delta Dunării, Coasta Mării Negre	Dorchester, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
30	Wildlife Travel	Delta Dunării	Great Cambourne, UK	Birdwatching	Diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl
31	Exodus	Piatra Craiului, Bucegi	London, UK	Mammals Watching	Large carnivores, herbivores, diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey, birds alpinesongbirds

Table 2: Tour operators of wildlife - watching of Romania and customer service

Tourism impacts of wildlife watching on species and habitats

Wildlife tourism can bring benefits to conservation of biological diversity, but also can generate many adverse effects. These can arise either directly caused by wildlife-watching activities or indirectly through the development of tourism infrastructure. These side effects can be avoided or minimized through effective management and development of this kind of tourism, the activities should be checked and should be set a limit of tourists. For example, limiting the number of

visitors and escorting groups of visitors by the guides, helps to minimize the direct impact on species and habitats.

For proper operation, wildlife-watching activities must be well planned, managed and monitored, so they will have a minimal effect on species and habitats which are observed by visitors and will also bring benefits of local communities.

Wildlife tourism operators must ensure that through their activities do not affect species and habitats because their business depends on them.

Negative impact

Wildlife watching tourism can have many negative effects. These may vary from short-term changes in physiology or behavior of the species to long-term effects such as increased mortality, reducing the rate of mating and habitat degradation. These effects occur not only to species on which the tourists focuses on, but also to other species, less charismatic, that have no interest for tourists.

Species that are disturbed will spend less time feeding or resting, and will use more energy to go away from sources of disturbance, they can often leaving the areas rich in food, can be affected by higher competition with other species, and may be more vulnerable to predators in areas where retreat to escape the tourists.

At the same time the species that hibernates may change hibernate behavior, when animals are lured to feeders near observatories, because the existence of food resources, animals do not hibernates or diminish their hibernation. Also because of their feeding some species become habitual and no longer hunts it apperas unavoidable disturbances in the ecosystem.

Disturbance of wintering sites of species that hibernates can cause serious physiological changes which can lead to death. For example induced awakening of bats from hibernation, it consumes energy that would have been necessary still for 50 days of hibernation, leading to death of individuals (Thomas, 1995).

Species are also affected during the mating periods, mating rituals elicit just such a special interest, for example the mating ritual of stags or of the mountain cock. Disturbance of the species during the breeding season has the effect of reducing populations and on long term, endangering the survival of the populations.

There are species with offspring, when disturbed by tourist activities, they will be forced to leave their offspring and they are exposed to hazards (starvation and predators), resulting also in diminishing of populations.

Recent studies have found physiological changes of species, generated by tourism activities, these changes relate to alterations in blood chemistry, due to high stress (Tapper, 2006).

Some sensitive species are susceptible to diseases carried by humans, diseases that they have not developed immunity. Interactions with tourists can arise the risk of disease transmission to these animals which are observed.

The destruction and disturbance of habitat occurs when are large flows of tourists, which produce large amounts of waste, illegally can collect rare plants, produce noise, emissions and light pollution.

Potential effects of wildlife watching tourism on species and habitats	
The factor involved	Effect on species and habitats
Tourist overcrowding	Stress and behavior change of animals
Excessive development of tourism	High density of human structures, unsightly development
Recreational activities: <i>a) Boat</i> <i>b) Trekking</i>	a) Disturbance of wildlife of their natural feeding behavior, mating and resting, noise pollution. b) disturbance of wildlife, destruction of vegetation and soil erosion on trails.
Pollution: <i>a) Noise</i> <i>b) Waste</i> <i>c) Vandalism</i>	a) Disturbance of natural sounds of certain animals (callings), the quiet of the wildlife. b) Degradation of the natural landscape, endangering the lives of wild animals and risks on the health of the travelers. c) natural attractions mutilation, removal of plants for private gardens.
Artificial feeding: <i>a) Feeding by tourists.</i> <i>b) Create artificial feeders</i>	a) wildlife behavioral changes, decreased confidence, danger to tourists. b) High density (which is not natural) of wild animals, destruction of vegetation in the area
Vehicles (speed, night driving and off-road driving)	Accidental mortality of wildlife, soil degradation and vegetation, wildlifedisturbance, air pollution.
Infrastructure: <i>a) Roads</i> <i>b) Power lines</i> <i>c) Storage of waste</i> <i>d) Supply of firewood</i>	a) Disturbance of wildlife, barrier effect, loss and fragmentation of habitats,aesthetic effects. b) loss of vegetation, aesthetic impact. c) The emergence of problem wild animals (habituated) which use to eat from garbage, health risk, danger to tourists. d) Disturbance of habitat, mortality among creatures, changing the biogeochemicalcircuits.
Other factors: <i>a) Collection of souvenir</i> <i>b) Introduction of alien species and plants</i>	a) extraction of natural attractions, encourage poaching, interruption of natural processes. b) competition with native species, habitat alteration, public confusion

Table 3. Source: Adapted from Thorsell, 1984

The positive impact

Wildlifewatching tourism is a good way of raising funds for conservation of species and habitats. Numerous economic studies have shown that wildlife-watching tourism brings economic benefits significantly higher than the capture and killing of certain species for meat, fur or trophy (Tapper, 2006).

In order to contribute to biodiversity conservation, wildlife watching tourism, must be applied some certain conditions (Tapper, 2006), for each area where is practiced:

- Cover the costs:
 - For tourism management in order to avoid or reduce to a minimum damage;
 - Insurance and maintenance of adequate facilities for tourists;
 - To increase awareness among tourists of the importance of conservation practices, and encourage a behavior that helps conservation;
 - To restore the damage that wildlife watching tourism it causes;
- Generate additional revenue from tourism, which can be used to support general conservation activities;
- The demonstration through wildlife tourism long-term an economic importance of the conservation, both nationally and locally, by generating real benefits for local communities, for example, jobs and stimulate private sector.

The main ways in which wildlife watching tourism can bring benefits to biodiversity conservation are schematized in Figure 3. This diagram shows the links between key components: wildlife, people and money. The ways in which wildlife tourism can bring benefits to conservation can be classified into several categories:

- Biodiversity management and supporting research. The involvement of operators and their clients in conservation activities of species and habitats as part of tourism activities.
- The use of income resulting from wildlife-watching tourism to fund conservation projects. Funds resulting are being used by operators to improve the conservation status or by organizations that have such initiatives.
- The provision of socio - economic inducements for conservation. Operators involved in wildlife watching tourism and communities that have economic benefits from this kind of tourism will assist nature conservation a resource on which depends their business.
- Educating the visitors, so that they support and increase conservation. This can be enhanced through political support and pressure for conservation by tourists and thereby influence the behavior of visitors to biodiversity, or prompting them to donate or volunteer for conservation.

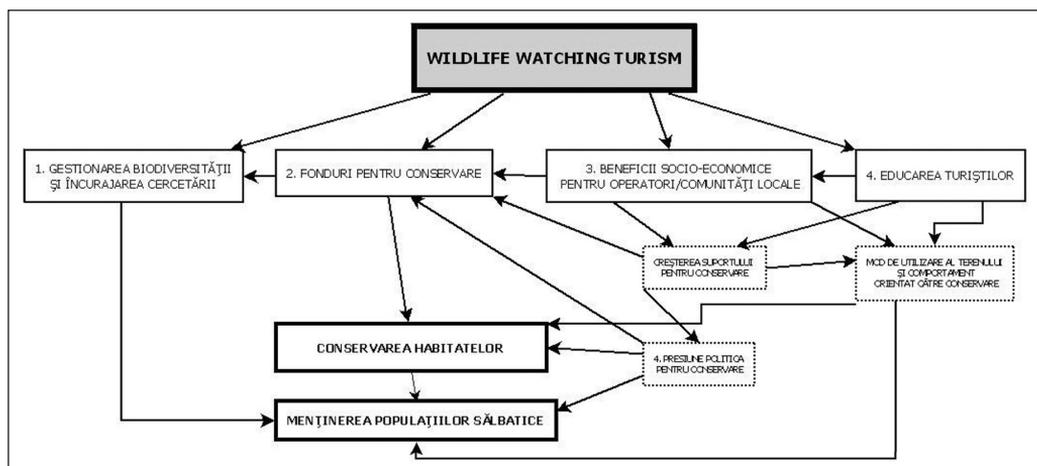


Figure 3: Positive consequences for wildlife – watching tourism , adapted from Higginbottom, 2003

To direct more funds to conservation from wildlife tourism we should limit the access to the sensitive habitats and we can use the following mechanisms:

- Entrance fees
- User fees
- Concessions and rentals
- Charges commercial activities
- Taxes
- Volunteering
- Donations

Most of the funds are made through entrance fees in areas where you can see a high density of wild animals (eg protected areas), user charges for those who practices certain activities in nature (eg, riding, cycling, use of wildlife watching observatories, etc.) and rental fees and concession of Infrastructure and sites, for tour operators who organize tours for wildlife watching (Higginbottom, 2004).

In areas with high tourist flow gathers significant funds for conservation, donations from visitors and the travel companies that offer some of the profit obtained from activities carried out in the area. Volunteering tourism (where tourists pay to participate in research, monitoring and conservation of species and habitats under the guidance of qualified persons), makes a double contribution to conservation, both financial support and volunteer manpower involved in activities conservation.

It is clear that there are a large variety of mechanisms by which wildlife watching tourism contributes to conservation, but it is hard to quantify these contributions on species and habitats, although there is an economic indicator of the scale at which it operates. However it is clear that it brings major benefit of wildlife conservation through tourism watching in Romania benefits is generally resumed to education and awareness of visitors.

Conclusion

This article showed that the impact of tourism in general and wildlife-watching tourism in particular on species and habitats is observable but is still less widely understood. The specialized literature studying this domain presents few quantitative studies, which are based on generalizations about the impact of wildlife-watching tourism on species and habitats. Most of the studies are descriptive and theoretical.

By searching for specific data, I wished to do a quantitative analysis of wildlife-watching tourism in Romania by identifying all the tour operators that offers tours of wildlife – watching in Romania and to create a realistic picture of the magnitude that has this kind of tourism, identifying the species and the habitats that are affected together with species identification I made a statistic about the geographic location where the touristic tour operators carry out the wildlife observation tours.

Continuous destruction of natural habitats and extinction of species within the habitats are serious environmental problems increasingly discussed. Many of these ecosystems in decline represents the development of tourism (beaches, deltas, mountains, forests, wetlands) and tourism activities (skiing, trekking, wildlife-watching). Through this article we showed that wildlife-watching activities overlap with these fragile areas with a high density of wildlife that is why these areas are very vulnerable to anthropogenic activities. We have shown that biodiversity is essential to ensure continuity of wildlife watching - tourism, resource which depends on.

I realized that this kind of tourism requires careful planning to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity, many of the factors causing biodiversity loss (land use changes, topoclimate change, pollution, etc.) is due to tourism development.

At the same time we have shown that tourism development driven by the principles of ecotourism can have positive effects on local communities and can contribute to biodiversity conservation.

A correct management of tourism, to ensure social and environmental benefits, requires a durable, collaboration between public institutions, private companies and local communities.

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URBAN CULTURAL TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Cultural tourism plays an important role in shaping the environment to meet the needs of consumers. The growth of cultural consumption (of art, fashion, music, history, etc.) and the industries that cater to it has fuelled the “symbolic economy” of cities. Today, the attractiveness of a city becomes based, both on physical, tangible assets, and a series of experiences built around those assets, generally extending to the “living culture” and the local atmosphere.

This paper focuses on the role of cultural tourism in the socio – economic development of urban areas, with emphasis on marketing principles and practices.

To achieve this paper, an analytical – descriptive methodology and gradually approach were follow and starts with examining the nature of urban cultural tourism and discusses approach to defining it, continues with the presentation of the principles of sustainable cultural tourism in the urban areas, followed by exposing the variety of ethical issues and social responsibility challenges which face organizations in the urban cultural tourism sector and ends with presenting the methodologies that were developed for the identification and the evaluation of the cultural assets that have proved important tools for developing tourism marketing strategies.

Keywords: urban cultural tourism, sustainable development, ethics and social responsibility, identification and evaluation of the cultural assets

The demand for urban tourism has increased greatly in the last decades. While many people travel to other cities than those of residence for business purposes or to participate in congresses and conferences, others travel to spend time learning about other cultures, developing specific interest and/or in search of entertainment.

On the other hand, culture is an essential element of the tourism industry (Urry, 2001; Richards and Wilson, 2006). Cultural tourism is also frequently quoted as being one of the largest and fastest growing segments of global tourism (growing since the 1990s at rates twice faster than overall tourism industry, according with WTO, 2004), this form of tourism may still be in its formative years but it already

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designed as one of the fastest growing segments of tourism in the world and the most rapidly growing form of tourism in Europe (Klein, 2001).

Moreover, in the last decades, territories that had lost their mainstay activities under the impact of changes in the field of energy, technology and economics have been turned their attention to cultural resources to explore new ways of development. Thus, some Western cities that have suffered as a result of the recession and mutations in the world economy, have made effort to invest in restoring heritage buildings and have been setting up cultural districts devoted to production, exposure and consumption of art. And today, many developing countries are hoping to use cultural tourism to meet their financial needs.

1. Defining issues and context of urban cultural tourism

The diversity of approaches on the relationship between tourism and culture underlines the problems of definition which faced this field. Because culture touches every aspect of human life, we can argued that everything is cultural. According to this point of view, all forms of tourism might be considered as 'cultural tourism', because "all movements of persons...satisfy the human need for diversity, tending to raise the cultural level of the individual and giving rise to new knowledge, experience and encounters" (UNWTO). This broad approach is not very useful because it does not allow us to identify those manifestations of culture which are particularly important for tourism, and vice-versa.

Richards (1996) suggested that early approaches to the relationship between tourism and culture were based on the sites and monuments as cultural attractions. Gradually, a broader view of culture – tourism relationship emerged, which included the performing arts (Hughes, 2000), crafts (Richards, 1996), cultural events, architecture and design, and more recently, creative activities (Richards and Wilson, 2006) and intangible heritage (UNESCO) (Figure 1).

FORM OF TOURISM	PRIMARY TIME FOCUS	PRIMARY CULTURAL FOCUS	PRIMARY FORM OF CONSUMPTION
Heritage Tourism	Past	High culture, folk culture	Products
Cultural Tourism	Past, present	High culture, popular culture	Products and processes
Creative Tourism	Past, Present and Future	High, Popular and Mass Culture	Experiences and transformations

Figure 1: The characteristics of heritage tourism, cultural tourism and creative tourism (Source: Richards, 2001)

This has stimulated at the same time, the transition from a default definition of culture and of cultural tourism, based on the product to one based on the "way of life". More and more tourists visit new places to experience the lifestyles, everyday customs of the people from destinations they visit.

In many cities of the world can be identified important relationships between creative industries and/or cultural and tourism industry. And tourists are increasingly more educated have exceeded previous preoccupation limited to landscapes and natural resources and become more involved in symbolic and sensory consumption of the images and ideas associated with particular destinations. People want to visit cities which are associated with particular famous people, special events, ideas, or they want to experience the sights, sound and tastes of the cities they visit.

This expanded notion of cultural consumption of tourists (as expansive trend, without distinguishing between tourists and other visitors) makes the definition of cultural tourism or culturally – motivated tourism increasingly difficult.

However, we will consider as a working definition of cultural tourism that formulated by the World Tourism Organization, that is:

Cultural tourism includes “movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art.”

When we talk about cultural tourism we must underline the link between urban cultural capital and socio-economic development in urban area. This requires special attention to the different types of assets, values, and stakeholders involved.

For the tourist industry, “heritage cities” have become destinations that offer visitors a mix of cultural and leisure attractions in a unique framework (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), the supply gradually changing from “product” to “service” and then to “experience”. Today tourism plays an ever greater role in the economic life of cities, historical city competing not only among them but also with other cities trying to keep the number of visitors or to develop a particular market segment.

It is also important to recognize that the experience of urban cultural tourism in term of quality and competitiveness of destinations for such a form of tourism, depend on more than the qualities of the cultural resources. We need to consider cultural resources in the context of the complementary resources and infrastructure support.

The wide variety of facilities offered by a city, but also the fact that they are not the exclusive products for consumption by tourists but for a wide range of users, make urban cultural tourism to be a complex phenomenon.

Shaw and Williams (2002) suggest that the urban area itself, with all its attributes, is a leisure product. And this product can be decomposed into multiple items (Law, 2002) by identifying the key components of urban tourism (Figure 2).

Primary elements are those which constitute reasons for tourists to visit a city. Secondary elements and additional ones are, however, very important to the success of urban tourism, but they are not the main attraction for visitors. So that all elements (primary, secondary and additional) must be carefully examined when we are going to made a plan for the development of (cultural) tourism in an urban area.

On the other hand, for those who decide in a city, offering visitors the desired quality and, in the same times, supporting the environment and the identity of the city at a high level, often involves maintaining a delicate balance where the priorities are frequently changed.

We also have to take into account the fact that a city is a complex system, with functions, such as: residential, historical, artistic, scientific, educational, economic, and so on. And for each of these functions are attached to different values. These values, however, are not always easy to assess, especially when we consider the tangible and/or intangible cultural assets.

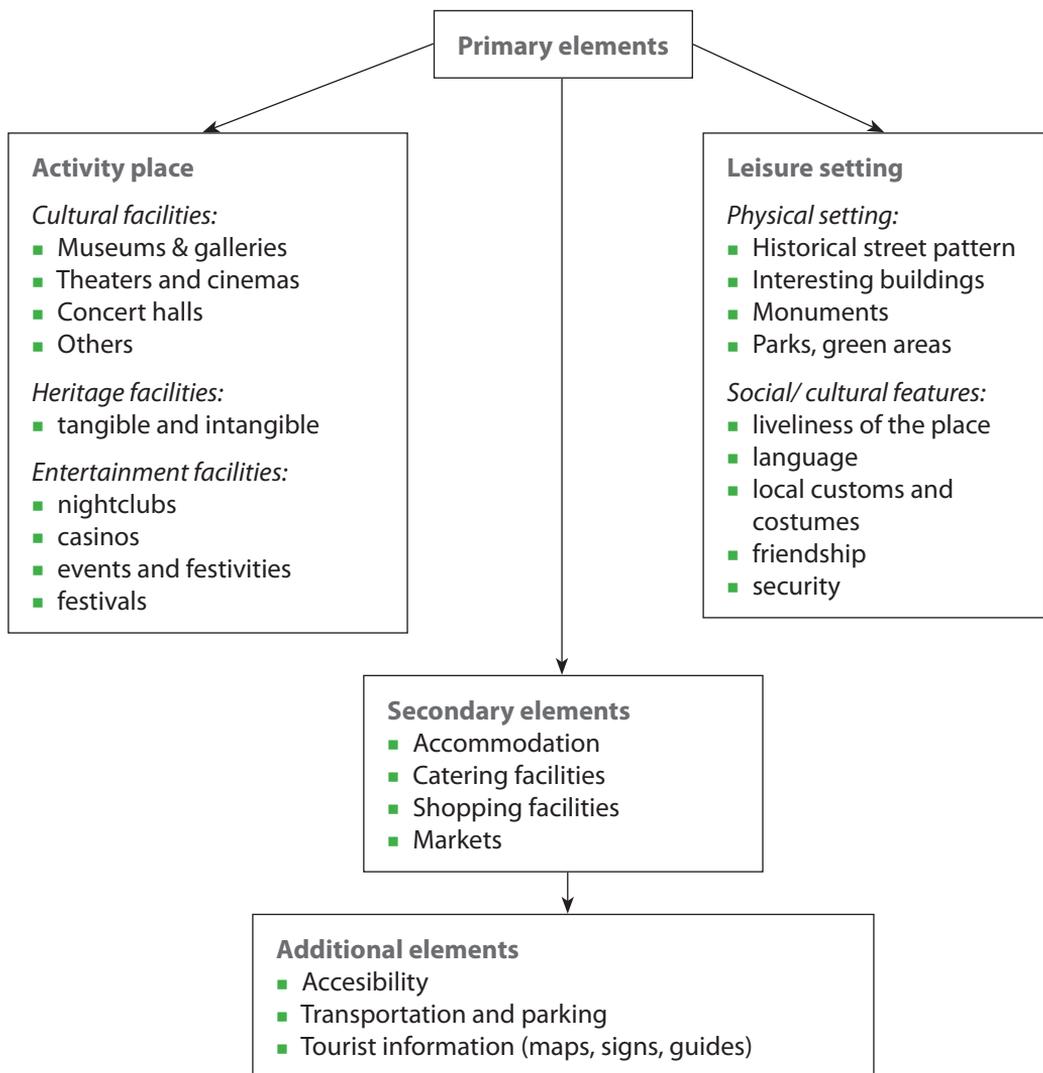


Figure 2: The relationship between primary, secondary and additional elements of urban touristic resources

The importance of urban cultural tourism for the economic revival of communities or regions is given by “wave effect” on other socio-economic field of the community. Among these may be identified:

- Cultural heritage (in tangible or intangible form), enhances the tourism value;
- Local business development, increase revenues;
- Decreased unemployment;
- Raising the standard of living;
- Increased tax receipts;
- Increased resources invested in infrastructure, facilities and services;
- Increased competitive strength;
- Attracting new residents by the labour market opportunities and by the quality of living standards ;
- Increase the property value;
- Strengthen the identity and the cohesion of the community;
- Increasing the residents’ satisfaction;
- Enhancing the quality of life.

Therefore, cultural assets – tangible or intangible – demonstrate their importance for the tourism industry and for the attractiveness and competitiveness of cities. And the most successful destinations are those that can create a positive impact by culture – tourism synergy. But this synergy does not occur automatically. It must be created, managed and developed with responsibility.

From this perspective, OECD (2005) identifies several criteria which are important for the developing a positive relationship between tourism and culture. These criteria include:

- the permanence of cultural activities;
- the participation of the local population, in addition to the tourists;
- the ability to produce all goods and services required for this occasion.

The organisational capacity of a place is also an important factor. From this perspective the management of relationship between tourism and culture is very important. If the success of a city is based on its multi-functionality and balance, the tourism must be considered as one of the functions of the city and to be treated in this context. If the cultural tourism is necessary to monitor its impact on the city, in particular the impact on intangible capital (social capital and symbolic capital). It is also requires a rigorous evaluation of tourist visits to cultural heritage. Local evaluation is important both economically and sustainable development. In fact, sustainability issues are often ignored in marketing research from the urban area, especially in terms of intangible cultural heritage. Often sustainable development approaches tend to be limited to natural issues even if the cultural heritage assets are involved too. And, in a globalized world, it’s necessary and even natural that

each city to consider local resources (especially cultural heritage) in order to face global competition in a manner which complies with the principles of sustainable development.

2. Principles of cultural tourism sustainable development in urban areas

The concept of sustainable development emerged in the 1970s in the debate which was determined at that time by the report of the Club of Rome that drew attention to the environmental consequences of rapid economic growth. But the concept did not take more substantial shape until the publication in 1987 of *Our Common Future*, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Through this document, the Commission stressed the possible long-term consequences of failing to take action and advocated the adoption of policies aimed at achieving sustainable development, defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987).

Sustainable tourism is an approach to the development of the tourism industry designed in order to create a context that can guide choice, bring together stakeholders so that they can work towards a common interest and help decision makers in finding the balance between positive and negative effects for the present and future.

Thus, sustainable tourism can be defined as that form of tourism developed and maintained in an area (community, city, region, etc.) in such a way and at such a level that it remain viable indefinitely and not to deteriorate or alter the environment. This definition includes several imperatives that should serve as a guide for action:

- prudent use of resources;
- reducing poverty and gender inequalities;
- enhancing the quality of life;
- conservation of biodiversity;
- preservation of indigenous knowledge and ways of life based on respect for different traditions ;
- strengthening responsibility bottom-up capacity for participation and better decision making at local level.

Based on these assumptions and taking into account the characteristics of cultural and urban tourism we can establish a set of principles for sustainable development of urban cultural tourism. They can be both general and specific.

The general principles include:

- climate issues are an serious problem worldwide and should be given priority to certain forms of cultural tourism to reduce carbon emissions, conserve rare and precious resources and avoid waste production (especially non-biodegradable);

- tourism is an important economic activity and urban cultural tourism should contribute to an integrated global program for sustainable development;
- urban cultural tourism have to meet the needs of access and aim to provide experiences and benefits of high quality visitors;
- impact of tourism should be reflected in the prices for consumers and producers, prices which reflect the real cost to society and the environment;
- use of a quality labour provided by the local community and formed by specific education and training;
- urban cultural tourism marketing must be a responsible one and ensure visitors a high-quality touristic experience;
- management and development of urban cultural tourism should be responsive to change.

The specific principles of sustainable development of urban cultural tourism lie, first of all, in the similarities between the cultural and natural capital:

- both forms of capital is a legacy of care requires a fee for the present generation;
- the similarities existing between the functions of natural ecosystems in supporting and maintaining the natural balance and the functions of cultural systems in supporting and maintaining the cultural life and vitality of human civilisation. Moreover, on one side, the notion of diversity so important in the natural world, has a significant role to play within cultural systems, and, on the other side, a characteristic of the most cultural good is the uniqueness.
- From this point of view, Throsby (2001) identified a number of principles of sustainable development which should guide the users of cultural capital. These principles are:
 - Intergenerational equity principle: refers to equity distribution of welfare, utility of resources between generations. It is used in the context of the economic, psychological and sociological concept or idea and means of fairness or justice in relationships between children, teenager, adults and the elderly in particular as regards the treatment and interaction. In accordance with this principle development must take a long-term view and not be such as to compromise the capacities of future generations to access cultural resources and meet their cultural needs. This requires special concern for protecting and enhancing the tangible and intangible cultural capital because heritage represents “a future for the past” (Peacock, 1994).
 - Intragenerational equity principle. This principle asserts the right of the present generation to fairness in access to cultural resources and to the benefits flowing from them, viewed across social class, income, group sex, ethnicity, and so. The idea of equity or fairness continues to play an important role in economic and social policy, although it has

become overshadowed in recent years as a result of preoccupations in policy-making with questions of economic efficiency. We can suggest that in the cultural arena matters such as the distribution of cultural resources, access to cultural participation, the supply of cultural services for minority or disadvantaged groups, etc. are all aspects of equity or fairness in the conduct of cultural life that may be overlooked in the pursuit of efficiency-related outcomes. The intragenerational equity principle requires such focused attention on these issues, if sustainable use of cultural resources is to be achieved.

- Maintenance of diversity principle: cultural diversity is very important in maintaining cultural systems. The diversity of ideas, beliefs, traditions and values yields a flow of cultural services which is quite distinct from the services provided by the individual components. For example, in so far as works of art are inspired by the existing stock of cultural resources, a greater diversity of resources will lead to the creation of a larger variety and more valuable works of art in the future.
- Precautionary principle. This principle states that decisions which may lead to irreversible change should be approached with extreme caution and from a strongly risk-averse position, because of the imponderability of the consequences of such decisions. Thus, the destruction of a cultural asset may lead to irreversible losses in the event that the item is unique and irreplaceable. In this situation the precautionary principle would be applied especially if the cultural item were considered of sufficient value to warrant it. The principle does not assert that irrevocable decisions are never to be taken in regard to cultural capital, but rather that it is necessary to pursue a higher level of care in cases where irreversibility is involved, taking into account other principles of sustainability in the decision.
- Interconnectedness principle: economic, social, cultural and environmental systems should not be seen in isolation, rather, a holistic approach is required, i.e. one that recognises interconnectedness, particularly between economic and cultural development. This principle provides the opportunity to identify the role of cultural capital of any asset as part of what could be called the cultural infrastructure of the city and attract the attention of both the economic and cultural benefits and costs that you might create as a result of this role.

In the sustainable urban cultural tourism approach, policy makers should consider the following aspects:

- Defining the product. The product may include heritage, other attractions and facilities, human resources, etc. The elements must both work individually and come together as a coherent whole to maximise the benefit to the place and provide a unique tourist experience

- Keeping the distinctiveness of the city. Cities – in general – and historic towns – in particular – have a local distinctiveness and a well defined identity. Properly managed tourism can help local people to understand and value what is distinctive about respectively city.
- Resources and climate change. Cultural tourism cannot afford to ignore its potential impacts on resources and on the environment, in general. It must identify and take advantage of all the opportunities arising for developing products and environmental practices.
- Optimise benefits. Cities face the challenge of trying to optimise the benefits of tourism, for example, by attracting foreign investment.
- Competition. European cities face global competition and to deal with it they need to understand how the markets are changing, providing quality experiences for domestic and international visitors to remaining competitive.
- Support and funding. Despite the economic importance of tourism it cannot ensure the full financing of the cultural resources management. The consequence is that many elements of culture may be insufficient resources to ensure product quality and cultural tourism, to preserve the distinctive character, etc.

Given the complexity of urban tourism and cultural specificity of each city it can be assumed that it will rarely be possible to comply with all of the principles of sustainable development. However, policy makers will have to find and take measures to ensure balance between the positive and the negative impact of tourism activity. Taking into account the problems which underlie these principles, a structured approach to sustainable urban cultural tourism can be defined by considering:

- needs, aspirations and wellbeing of visitors;
- the need for companies in the industry to be profitable;
- respecting the values and quality of life of the local people;
- preservation of the cultural and physical environments.

It is unlikely that they have equal weight in importance. Perhaps the priorities will vary from one case to another, the interaction between city and cultural tourism is always dynamic.

In conclusion it can be said that the notion of urban cultural tourism on a sustainable basis requires trying to maintain a relationship as more productive and more harmonious between host communities, visitors and environment (Savage et al., 2004).

3. Ethics and social responsibility

Ethical and social responsibilities are closely related to sustainable development and are characterized by vast subjects with many elements (Figure 3):

The below figure illustrates that some ethical dilemmas and social responsibility issues that are related to the internal environment of firms of urban cultural tourism sector, while others are related to their external environment.

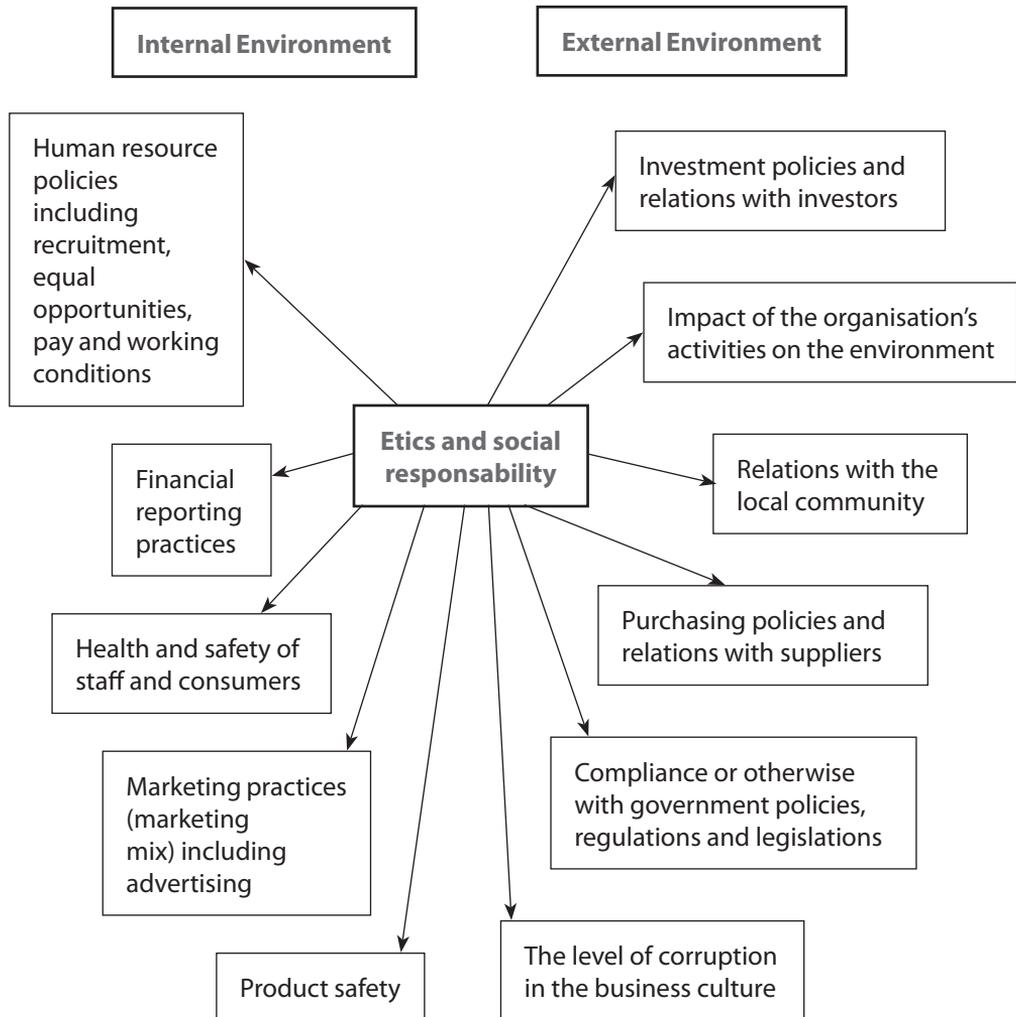


Figure 3: Aspects of ethics and social responsibility

The following part presents a series of ethical dilemmas and social responsibility issues of some urban cultural tourism sectors. However, it should be specified that they are only examples, because these issues can be more and more diverse in reality.

- The cities keen to attract tourists spend vast sums of money on marketing and infrastructure, for example. This money usually comes from taxation which is levied on the community as a whole. However, in many such cities, only a minority of the population will rely on tourism

for their livelihood, directly or indirectly. These hidden subsidies distort the pricing system on which all private-sector marketing concepts are predicated.

- The degree to which public money is spent on develop/promote tourism rather other sectors of the economy and society is a contentious issue in many developing countries. So money spent on tourism instead for sectors like health, education, housing etc. can create local resentment towards tourists. This resentment can reduce the quality of the holiday experience and lead to a decline in visitors' number.
- The existence of a discrepancy between short and long term perspectives in the development of destinations. Trying to major short-term benefits of tourism can lead to tourism development which is too rapid and uncoordinated. In the longer term this may lead to social and economic problems which will make the destination less attractive who may go elsewhere. So the destination can be left with huge capacity which is under-utilised.
- The link between cultural tourism and cultural heritage is not always the expected one. In many cases, tourism activity can accelerate certain processes that destruct cultural heritage. Overuse and defective use of archaeological and historical sites can lead to damage. Also, vandalism of tourists can lead to mutilation, destruction and loss of the irreplaceable historic and cultural values. Similarly, an intense marketing can generate degradation of local cultural heritage and destruction of cultural identity through the loss of the authenticity elements and adulteration of cultural practices etc. Except for the entry / access fee, direct benefits for heritage conservation are limited and difficult to quantify. The proportions in which a cultural heritage element should or not be included in the tourist circuit, the intensity of how this item is use for tourist activities, etc. constitute grounds for disagreement between conservationists and economists. This can affect the attractiveness of the city.
- Another dilemma is the subvention given to protect cultural resources and their introduction in tourist traffic. The problem is the obvious visibility of the costs in the local and national budgets, while benefits are not so obvious and often more nuanced, intangible and difficult to capture in conventional terms. The only clear benefits remain the visiting toll revenues.
- The important cultural tourist attractions can be used as much by tourists as locals may not have easy access to them. This can lead to hostility from the locals towards the development of tourism in their town.
- In the museums sector there is a dilemma of how to handle controversial and politically sensitive historical events, religious, etc. (i.e. Jews and Nazis,

the presentation of minority groups such as Basques, Corsicans, gypsies, transvestites, etc.). Speaking of a taboo can lead to adverse publicity, reduced visitor numbers and the creation of a climate of conflict. On the other hand, ignoring such issues can lead to the idea that is being told not offering a true picture of history, reality, society, etc. It may also discourage some potential customers from visiting the museum.

- The question of zoos and whether it is right to keep animals in captivity for the entertainment of visitors is a long-standing debate. Many zoos, recognising growing public distaste for traditional zoos, have responded by changing their promotional message. They now sell the idea that their main purpose is education and conservation, rather than entertainment. Moreover, it is interesting to note that one of the first tourism-related applications of virtual reality that has been talked about is the idea of the animal-less “Virtual Zoo”.
- Another problem leads to certain cultural institutions that attract / encourage the participation of an audience that is not normally motivated by high culture. Often this is done by modifying the offer, making it easier to assimilate, which displeases “the elitist” who sees it as a dilution or trivialize of the pure art form.
- Another dilemma arises from a good public status of cultural heritage, a major concern of economists representing the externalities (when an item of cultural heritage attracts large crowds, the local retailers, restaurants, hotels, etc. will benefit from it and we can name externalities the tourist expenses as well as the generated jobs, etc.). Externalities are benefits such as: strengthening national identity, the education or for future generations. The question is how can the owner of cultural heritage element to achieve these benefits? Which is how to internalize externalities of the site?
- Many people can benefit from a conservation investment of heritage buildings without having contributed any money. On the other hand, the investment can generate a negative externality by attracting large groups of visitors. This can cause some damage to surrounding buildings and can create discomfort to locals without offering any compensation
- On the other hand, tour - operators live in a competitive business environment which contains many ethical dilemmas and social responsibility challenges, including:
 - How honest they should be in their promotional activities? Frequently, tour - operators have a poor reputation for honesty in their brochures, for example. The hotels location is often said to be “just five minute from the attraction X” (one of the main attractions of the city) when this would only be

possible by helicopter. Tour - operators are reticent to take a lead in honesty in brochures in case they suffer competitive disadvantage if their competitors do not follow suit. However, in Europe there is EC Package Travel Directive, forcing the tour - operators to certain honesty in legislation.

- Many tour - operators do not provide adequate advice for their clients on potential hazards and inconvenience in case such information might discourage them from purchasing the product. This might cover everything from diseases that are prevalent in particular cities of destination to the risk of deep vein thrombosis for long flights for example or the annoying insects from Scotland or Scandinavia, the risk of tick bites in Vienna, transmitters of encephalitis, or street crime in some cities and so on. In the longer term these omissions of warnings may lead to customer dissatisfaction and loss of business.
- Some tour - operators provide incentives to the travel agency staff (e.g. free holidays), which can lead to unfair counselling to clients. While the agency may lose customers, these can use modern technology which allows them to access travel products without needing travel agents.
- Some travel agencies use restrictive sales promotions to attract customers. For example, to qualify for promotion customers must purchase and insurance policy from the same agency. Ensuring to the specified agency could be more expensive than other agents. This could be seen as a form of unfair, unscrupulous sales promotion that could bring bad reputation for the tourism agency as an impartial intermediary.

The actors involved in urban cultural tourism can take a number of responses of a wide variety to ethical issues, from total denial - “there is no problem” - to a complete ideological conversion leading to a major change in marketing policy they adopt. Most known answers are somewhere between these two extremes. Some, for example, may find social responsibility issues threatening and they will seek a change in policy and marketing practices in order to - reduce their vulnerability to criticism.

Regardless the adopted position for achieving responsible urban cultural tourism is necessary to follow several steps:

- Valuation of the potential. Valuation of what the community has to offer in terms of attractions and visitor services, capacity, ability to protect resources and marketing ability
- Planning and organizing. Ensure efficient use of human and financial resources. Setting priorities and objectives.

- Preparation to receive visitors, protection and resource management. Ensuring that today choices will have positive long-term effects for the community
- Market. Research and intelligence target market. Develop a marketing plan to address the target market. Knowledge of local partners and competitors, as well as the regional, national and international ones.

4. Methodological approaches for the identification and valuation of cultural resources for a sustainable valorisation

The identification and valuation of a city’s cultural assets are important tools in developing urban marketing strategies. We can use - for this - several methods/models which include:

■ **Sustainable Tourism Model**

According to this model, the cultural assets are classified for high, medium and low tourist use at a national, regional and local scale. The model uses visitor participation as a tourism indicator, identifies those assets with the greatest potential for further development and highlights attraction groupings and gaps in cultural provision. It is depicted, graphically, in a grid (Figure 4).

CURRENT TOURIST USE	NATIONAL	REGIONAL	LOCAL	COMMENTS
High (100.000 plus)				
Medium (20.000 – 100.000)				
Low (below 20.000)				

Figure 4: Sustainable Tourism Model

■ **Sieve Format**

This model ranks a city’s cultural assets into the following categories:

- built heritage: archaeological sites, listed buildings, conservation areas, industrial heritage, etc.;
- cultural products: museums and galleries, handicrafts, folklore, festivals, food and entertainment, historic transport systems, etc.;
- natural assets: outstanding nature areas, local nature reserves, sites of special scientific interest (Figure 5):

Each asset is then given a weighting for four criteria: heritage significance, tourist appeal, accessibility and management.

The weighting consists of scores of 1 to 3 for each cultural asset and depending on the tourism significance at local, regional and national levels where:

National = 3

Regional = 2

Local = 1

The scores obtained show the opportunities for the development of cultural assets with a local or regional focus into assets with a greater significance and more visitor appeal through the place marketing strategies.

ASSET	HERITAGE	TOURISM	ACCESS	MANAGEMENT	TOTAL
Conservation Areas					
...					
Listed buildings					
...					
Museums & galleries					
...					
...					

Figure 5: Sieve Format

■ ASEB Grid

The ASEB model was developed by Beeho and Prentice in 1995, having as a starting point a SWOT analysis applied to museums from United Kingdom.

This method focuses on identifying benefits and experiences gained by people as a result of cultural products “consumption”.

The ASEB Grid is used as an important tool of consumer-oriented marketing.

It helps inform product development (i.e. Design) and promotional messages as well as other elements of the marketing mix (7Ps: product, price, place, promotion, people, processes and physical evidence).

The method takes as a starting point for improved and SWOT analysis is based on a qualitative assessment of the benefits the consumer, using your own words and answers, being useful in understanding consumer behaviour and control of cultural products in the evaluation of the benefits obtained as a result of their consumption, cultural assets assessment depending on the degree of satisfaction they offer and attempt to provide consumers of products different cultural experiences that they want. In this way, the method proves to be, in addition one of the evaluation and a tool necessary knowledge and expectations of consumers, product development, planning and promotion as give special attention to the benefits of visitors following the consumption of cultural products.

From the design point of view, the method is a grid form that focuses on four areas of interest of the culture consumers:

- Activities: relates to the motives for visiting and visitor experiences with the activities under-taken at the destination;
- Settings: is understood in terms of which activities take place and what are the expectations of the visitors, including social, environmental and management settings.

- Experiences: of the hierarchy represents the customer's experiences when visiting a destination;
- Benefits: shows the social and psychological benefits which people experience when visiting a cultural asset.

And the rows are represented by the SWOT analysis components (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) for each column. (Figure 6).

	Activities	Settings	Experiences	Benefits
Strengths				
Weaknesses				
Opportunities				
Threats				

Figure 6: The ASEB Grid

When we use the ASEB model, focus is on introspection of consumers experience rather than the benefits of quantitative measurement.

To assess the cultural asset, their visitors (consumers) are interviewed about their motivations, satisfactions and experiences gained from consumption.

The advantages of the method include:

- the collected data is presented in a efficient way to get a general idea about the strengths and weaknesses of the attraction which has been analyzed;
- provides an efficient way to evaluate the qualitative approach of an cultural asset focusing on the experiences and benefits gained by consumers;
- It is a useful tool for a better improvement of the cultural asset, and any disparity between the experiences and expected benefits of the consumers of cultural goods and services can be identified and further reconciled with managers providing these services by using this method.

And the limitations of the method include:

- It's valuable resources - consuming (time, people, etc.) when collecting the data;
- It's a challenges to articulate 'benefits' in terms of weaknesses and threats seems illogical;
- Also, experiences and benefits can be difficult to distinguish.

Application of these methods can bring an audit of that city's cultural capital; a city's cultural profile and an evaluation of the importance of the analyzed cultural

capital is considered a sustainable tourism development and urban renewal through responsible marketing strategies.

A better valorization of cultural resources in a city can be achieved if their development and protection processes are made so they support each other; if people involved in taking decisions see tourism as a tool that leads to a goal rather than a goal in itself. Tourism is just one of the ways that can be used to achieve sustainable development in economic, social and cultural point of view.

5. Conclusions

A definition or usage of cultural tourism development strategy to be useful in urban areas requires a very detailed analysis and precise identification of demand characteristics and services necessary to satisfy it while also protect the resources and the local population.

At the same time, the link between cultural tourism and socio - economic development should be carefully considered. The continuing growing studies have a slight tendency to exaggerate the potential positive economic effects of cultural tourism in urban areas or to omit the presentation of possible negative effects on destinations. But the reasons for success or failure of development strategies and urban regeneration based on cultural tourism are complex and require detailed analysis, identification and verification of all determinants parameters.

A special attention should be paid to the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), because beyond certain limits, the tourism activity can become a negative element in terms of conservation and use of this heritage. For this reason, especially cities in developing countries should originate projects to protect the heritage and establish a territorial distribution strategy for investment in tourism promotion.

An important element is the need to integrate cultural projects with intervention programs for socio - economic development and local promotion. Without being part of an integrated development plan, urban cultural tourism can not produce benefits for society and can not be sustainable for long periods of time.

At the same time, to deal with ethical dilemmas that arise and to take social responsibility, cultural tourism areas should regard certain principles such as:

- Local community education about the importance of cultural resources that promote understanding and appreciation of local culture;
- Management of potential conflicts between those working in tourism sector and conservationists;
- Planning of cultural tourism as to provide high quality visitor experiences;
- Ensuring the contribution of tourism to promotion and protection of heritage (natural and cultural).

Moreover, Throsby (2001) identifies three “golden rules” for the development of cultural tourism planning to ensure benefits to both sectors and lead to a sustainable development of the area:

- determining the right value for cultural assets;
- the need to be clear about the sustainability principles and sustainable development of local economy;
- The importance of a rigorous analytical methods to be use for studying tourism/ cultural interaction at both micro and macro levels.

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DRIVING VALUES AND VISUAL IDENTITY IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE TOURISM BRAND DESTINATION FOR DANUBE DELTA

Ana-Florina Fecioru¹

Abstract

The process of developing a brand identity represent the first step in promoting Danube Delta like a destination dedicated to responsible tourism activities. Danube Delta is famous due its biodiversity, being also a place for adventure tourism ecotourism. The Lippova-Russians cultural pattern plays an important role in defining the story behind the brand. In Danube Delta the community lives closely to the nature respecting its cycle, being a resource for cultural tourism. In this paper the creation of this brand prototype represents the stage of a creative marketing exercise. The visual identity is expressed by: the brand name, the logo and the baseline. A powerful brand has a clear position in the mind of potential tourists; the positioning is made by the brand engagement based on the target group, key values and key differentiators, the frame of references, brand personality and the arguments. Danube Delta is a well delimited geographical unit, so it can be considered a marketable product: it has tangible and intangible attributes, and is offering a series of emotional and rational benefits to the tourists.

Keywords: biodiversity, brand, Danube Delta, indentity, tourism

1. Introduction

For this study my purpose is to develop the visual identity for the Danube Delta, having in mind the driving values of the region, that are essential for every process of branding a touristic destination.

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve has a surface of 5, 800 kmp, being divided in six regions: the Delta between Chilia, Sulina and Sfantul Gheorghe branches, the Razim-Sinoe lake complex, the maritime sector of Danube between Tulcea and Galati cities, the floodable area of Isaccea-Tulcea, the Murighiol-Plopu saltwater lakes, and the coastal region of the Black Sea between Danube Delta and Razim-Sinoe.

One of the largest deltas in all Europe, and the best preserved wetland in Romania, it was formed at the contact between Danube River and Black Sea, being in a continuous evolution. Due its natural patrimony Danube Delta was included into the International Biosphere Reserve Network, and declared Wetland of international significance, on the Ramsar Convention List and on the UNESCO List of Natural Patrimonies. Being a biosphere reserve management Danube Delta

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was divided into four functional areas: areas with total protection, buffer zones, economic and ecological reconstruction areas. From the areas with total protection are forests: Caraorman, Letea, lakes: Raducu, Rotundu, Potcoava.

Danube Delta is famous due the reed plants that form here the longest compact surface in the world. In fact the forests of Caraorman and Letea form the northern limit of the Mediterranean vegetation, for example the Mediterranean creeper, *Periploca graeca*.

Flora and fauna meets in this wetland giving birth to a diversity of ecosystems. The image of Danube Delta is consisting in the multitude of submersed aquatic plants, the white and yellow lily, and the water caltrop. On the mellower land we can find small forests of white and grey willow, and on the higher lands with sand dunes wall-climbing plants live together with shrubs, oaks and ashes. The forest are inhabited by many rare species of animals: the European mink, the otter.

A unique feature is that in Danube Delta is concentrated the biggest colonies of European Common Pelican; this space is preserving also many others species of birds like the Dalmatian Pelican, the pigmy and Large cormorant, the Red-Breasted Goose, Ibis bird, wild duck, large Egret, the spoonbill, birds of prey (the white-tailed eagle), storks, and swans.

Danube Delta offers to the potential visitors attraction different from what a wetland means: not only natural resources but also cultural ones; from the cultural heritage the most significant are the fisheries, The Church of Chilia Veche, the lighthouses from Sulina and Sfântu Gheorghe, the cemetery from Sulina, and the wind mill from C.A. Rosseti.

Lippovans houses impresses by its own architectural style, and that blue color that make it so popular. The materials used for building the traditional Lippovan House are: wood, clay and reed. Houses are small, with simple wood decoration. (Pârâu, S., 1996). Their clothing is simple, so their traditional attire colored in white and blue.

The cultural pattern of Lippovans is centered on religion and faiths strongly connected with the nature, beliefs that are applied in their working activities like agriculture, fishing, reed harvesting.) One example is when it is draught all the inhabitants of the village pray together with the priest, in the church and outside of it. (Pârâu, S., 1996).

The human has its own role in developing a responsible tourism in Danube Delta: from the point of view of the locals, and of the tourists. A number of twenty five villages appeared to the good conditions for living in the reserve, being inhabited by the ethnical group of Romanians, Ukrainians and the Lippovans. We can avoid mass tourism in Danube Delta by offering to the potential tourists a wide range of activities and types of tourism: ecotourism, recreation tourism, and rural tourism (based on local traditions, gastronomy, ethnography,) and cultural tourism (ruins, churches and festivals).

2. Methods

The creation of this branding elements result by searching in tourism literature, branding literature, and papers that study biodiversity and local communities from Danube Delta. I used the methods from the “Politici promotionale in tourism” and created by own graphics using the steps described in the Tourism Brand Manual of Romania. In my point of view is very important that each region from Romania to be branded under the umbrella of a stronger brand, in this case the National Tourism Brand Strategy. For creating the graphics and the images I used writing and editing programs like Office Word, Corel Draw and Photoshop.

3. Discussion

This study regarding Branding in Danube Delta is structured on three parts: analyzing the proposed visual identity, brand positioning, attributes and benefits and the brand structure.

In the next lines I explain step by step the creation of the visual elements that forms the Danube Delta identity, the wordmark, or the brand name, the mark or the logo, and the baseline (the slogan).

Analyzing the proposed brand identity

Destination branding is a process used to develop a unique identity and personality, different from all competitive destinations. (Cosma, S.; Urcan, A.; Bota, M, 2010).

The five elements of the brand identity are: the brand name, the font, the logo, the colors used, and the baseline.

For this brand I choose the brand name of Danube Delta.

The font used for creating the wordmark match perfectly with the values and emotions transmitted by the logo and the baseline. Letters makes alive the mark and it can be characterized by a single word: simplicity. A logo is a symbol that best describes the brand character, name and identity. (Dumbraveanu, D., 2008). In the process of creating the logo I choose a bulrush and the sigh of a waterflow, inspired by the fact that in Danube Delta the reed plants that form here the longest compact surface in the world.

For a correct representation of the brand identity the perfect color is blue, green and Golden Sand Medium. That’s why I created two prototypes for the brand, using different color of green, and blue, but keeping the sandy color. When I choose these I have tooked advantaged of the psychological effect of the colors over the people mind. We all know that almost all the people make a choice about their travel package, travel destination, and other products and services over the effect of the colors used in the promoting program. In my mind green means purity, nature, rural, fresh air, forests, biodiversity, while blue is connected to Danube, its branches

and the multitudinous of lakes. And for expressing simplicity, which is a main feature of the brand personality, I have attached these colors, inspired by nature.

Danube Delta

Delta Dunării

Figure 1: Brand name

In the buying process the consumers must choose a products from different options, having many attributes and meanings for each color, so they will have different attitudes and behavior regarding the travel destination. Green color is making the connection with sustainable tourism, blue with water, and golden sandy color for the coastal beaches. Using these colors I show to the potential tourists what Danube Delta is offering, so they will know if their expectations will be accomplished after arriving here.

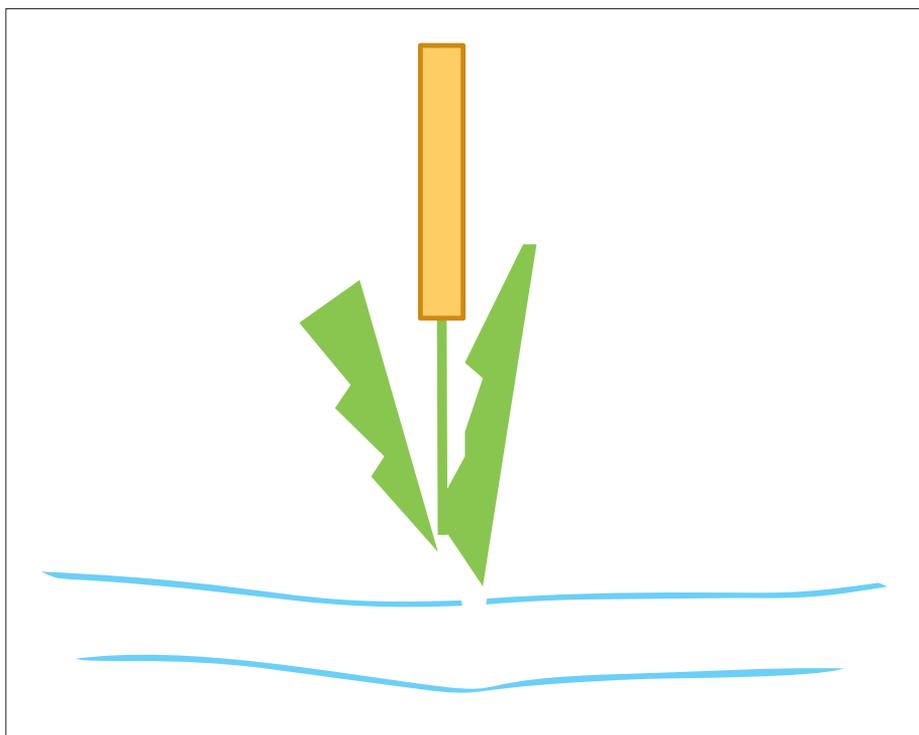


Figure 2: The logo

The baseline

I created two slogans that fit the logo and brand name; one is English for the International Market: Living with nature, and other in Romanian Language: In armonie cu natura, for the domestic market. The baseline must be choose very carefully because it is the first element that makes a straight communication to the target group; the words are part of the story and so these are making a clear position in the mind of to future tourist: Danube Delta is compatible or not with is needs and wishes regarding a travel destination. More than that a baseline has the role of describing the logo and the destination itself; so the baseline is strongly connected to the brand promises. Saying that people of Danube Delta are living harmoniously with the nature, we must be sure that during the touristic activities, the consumers will experience these kinds of emotions, express by the brand.

Brand Baseline properties. Each baseline has a number of fourteen properties that make it powerful and successful on the tourist market (Dumbraveanu, D., 2008). The slogan does not contain the brand name, and it is not competitive because can be used in many others tourism campaigns.

Living closed to nature is a short proposition that can be easily learned and remembered after the year passes; so our baseline is memorable. It is emphasizing the guarantee, working as a key quality brand; arriving in Danube Delta the tourist will see a community with special traditions that lives for centuries with and for the nature that raises them. The baseline hightlights the brand personality, saying that people are closed to the nature are living a simple and authentically life, for our modern days. Using words as nature, harmony, I'm attaching a series of positives emotions to the brand. When creating the baseline I had in mind that is must reflect the brand personality. Every brand is like an idéa materialized after the needs of the consumer. During the implementation the brand becomes also a character in its own story. The brand becomes more credible when it is human and has its own emotions and attributes. People can easily imagine a brand like a person, with a different behavior that him, and his own attitudes and unique personality. These propositions are formed by few words, easily to be learned, understand, and use, being also simple and original. Being in line with the statement, the baseline is part of the strategically plan of marketing. Living closed to the nature offers clarity to the visual identity; it is also credible due the popularity of the destination; much more is a good standing support for the brand.

Living with nature

În armonie cu natura

Figure 3: The baseline

Brand Positioning

For establishing its position in the market each brand has six core differentiators: the target group, their expectations, what is unique about Danube Delta tourism destination, and the arguments that make the brand valuable.

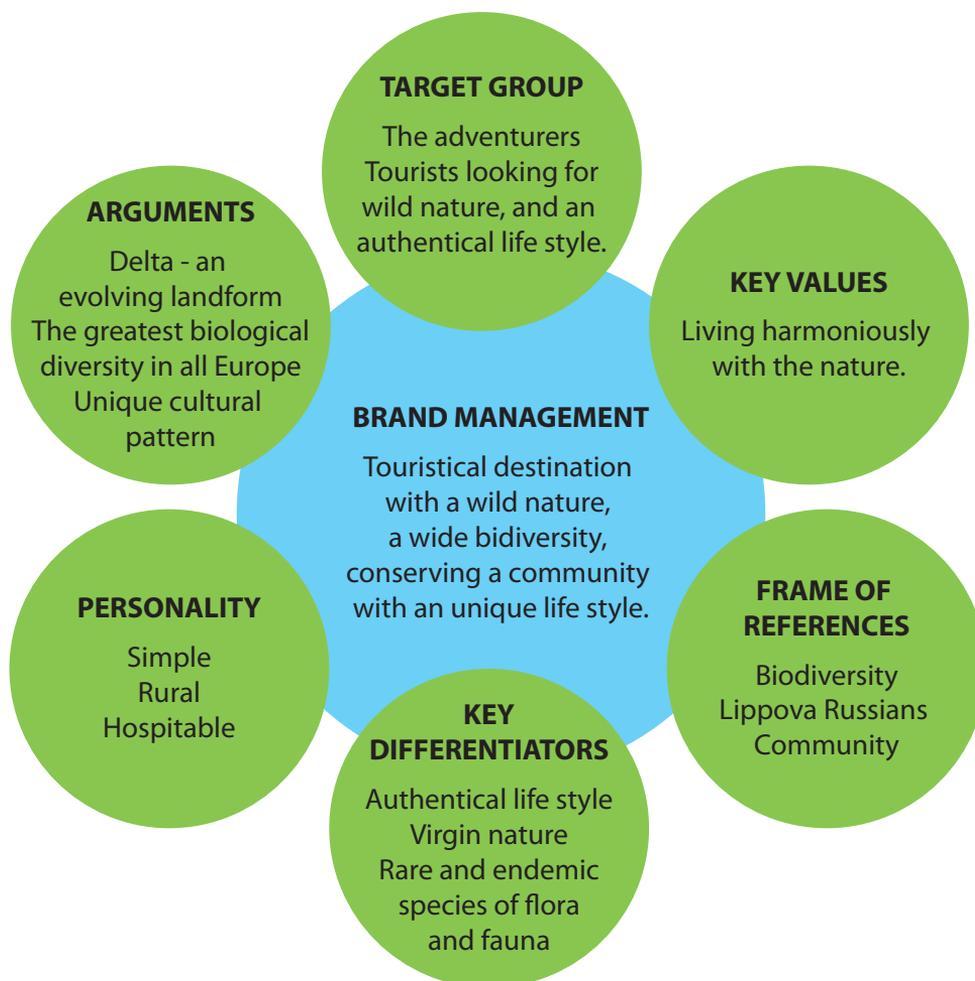


Figure 4: Brand positioning

Source: Created after the model of the Romania tourism brand destination (Romania tourism brand. Driving Values and Visual Identity.)

a. The Target group is represented by the adventurous tourist, who is looking for different experiences, wanting to explore the wild nature, unknown places. To avoid the development of mass tourism, the brand is promoting green and responsible tourism. Simplicity becomes the essence of this brand, due the community who lives here, being for always connected to God and nature.

b. Key values. The main key value of the brand is the harmony between man and nature. The baseline used is inspired by the main value of the brand: Living harmoniously with the nature (see Figure 4).

c. Frame of references contain the answer to that question “what benefits will obtain the tourists by visiting Danube Delta?”. In this sector I present the expectations of the target group, and what the destination in study is offering for. Visiting Danube Delta the potential tourist discovers a new world, with people living in connection with the nature cycle, respecting their faith and beliefs for centuries of history. Another part of the frame is the biodiversity.

d. Key Differentiators. Danube Delta is a unique place in Europe, and all around the world.

e. Personality. Analyzing the personality of the brand, we can compare it with a person. If someone’s personality is compatible with us will become friend with him, and will pay him visits more often. So this psychological law is applying in tourism brand destination. If we are searching for a simple, and hospitable place, Danube Delta will become our travel partner in vacation. The main features of our brand are: simple, rural and hospitable. The rural character of the brand is given by the lifestyle of the inhabitants: fishing, livestock breeding and agriculture.

f. Arguments are necessary to explain if the brand is credible and the statement behind the baseline can be valuable. The arguments can be divided in three parts: natural, cultural and authentically.

Attributes and benefits

Attributes and benefits represent the core differentiators of the brand, or what make the difference in the front of the competition. In our days to have a solid position on the market share is very important to have unique qualities, that makes the product (in our case the geographical entity) valuable for the potential consumers.

The differences between Danube Delta and other touristic region are made by the benefits and attributes offered to the tourist. The benefits can be classified in emotional and rational, and the attributes are intangible and tangible. Emotional benefits are relaxation, nature-knowledge and learning. The rational Benefits that can be obtained during a vacation in Danube Delta are: a rural life-style, a nature escape, observing the way of life of a unique community and tasting the local gastronomy. From the wide range of attributes which are rewarding the brand the main are authenticity, hospitality and the free spirit, part of the intangible attributes. Danube’s Delta Brand tells an authentically story due the Lippovans cultural pattern: history, faith, beliefs and ethnography. The tangible attributes are: the unique landscapes, the biodiversity, the chance to explore the wild nature and to live in the middle of the Lippova-Russian community.

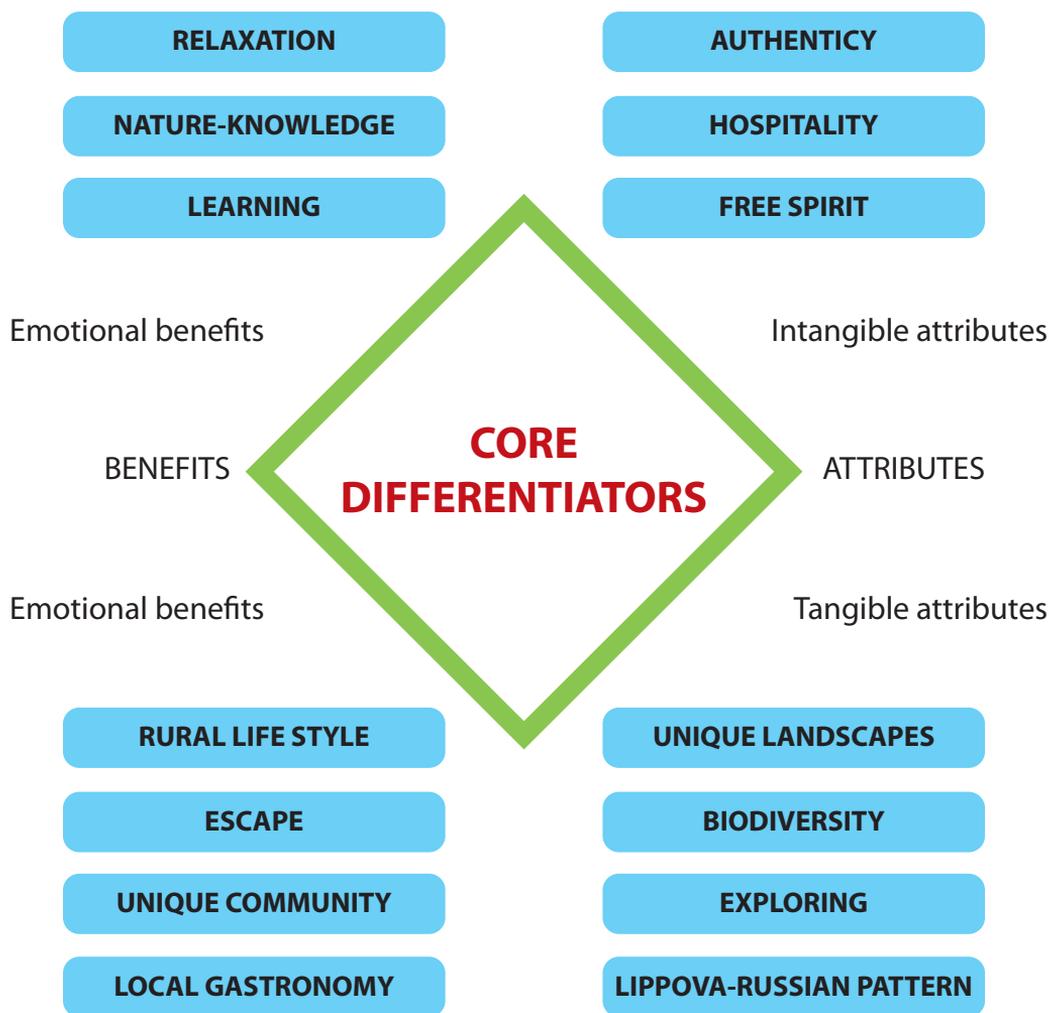


Figure 5: Attributes and benefits of the brand destination
Source: Created after the model of the Romania tourism brand destination
(Romania tourism brand. Driving Values and Visual Identity.)

Brand structure

Creating the logo I choose some emblematic symbols for the life style of the inhabitants, expressing the way that Danube Delta is known all around the world. The set of elements that form the brand identity must be compatible with the intangible side of the brand like the guarantee, the mission and the purpose.

The brand structure is represented by six components: brand identity, the vision, the mission, the guarantee, the purpose and the image. (Dumbraveanu, D., 2008). Brand identity means that set of tangible elements like brand name, logo and baseline that are sustain the story behind the brand.

The vision that stays back of the visual identity is known also as the long term willing, or in marketing terminology, the strategically plan. In this study case the vision is to promote Danube Delta. The Mission or the tactical marketing plan represents the objectives of the brand, and is promoting the benefits and the driving values. The Guarantee (or the Statement) expresses what our brand is promising to the target market; in this case the guarantee is synonymous with the brand engagement and is delivering what the visual identity says. The Purpose is the same thing with those values which are driving the tourist activities promoted in Danube Delta; it is offering meaningful emotions and an aim to the brand creation. After all these components are implemented the final one makes the most of it; the image is the perception of the potential tourist regarding the destination.

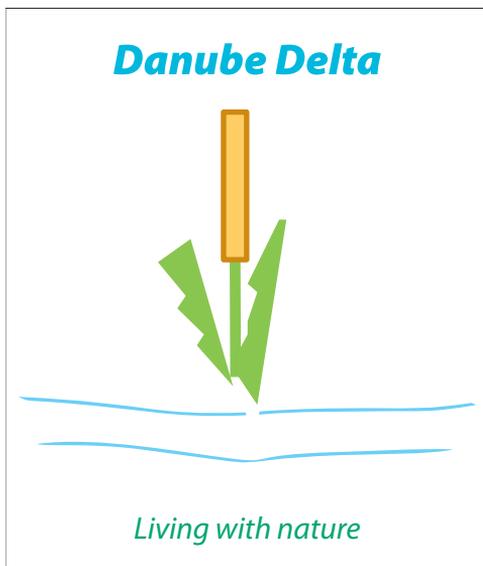


Figure 6: Brand identity - Prototype 1



Figure 7: Brand identity - Prototype 2

4. Conclusions

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve represents a unique landform for Romania and all Europe. For protecting this wetland together with the wide range of biodiversity, things in tourism must be changed. One step is to promote Danube Delta in the mind of the potential tourists like a destination for responsible and durable tourism. The local communities play an important role in the story. The created brand makes the connection between land, nature and the human activity. Brand Identity is important for a clearer image on the market. Blue and green are perfectly working with the idea of delta. In fact the two baselines complete the story. Living harmoniously with the nature is the starting point for a new type of making tourism in Danube Delta: a travel closed to the nature, and responsible for Danube and its community.

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