

RESEARCH ON THE MANAGEMENT OF RURAL TOURISM RESOURCES IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF ROMANIA

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Abstract

In the present study we will try to offer an overview of the immense treasure of Romanian touristic resources and to contribute to a better knowledge of rural tourism of Romania and, in particular, of Călărași county.

Research goals of this chapter – The market integration of the touristic product is ensured by strengthening the private business organization, where the natural processes go hand in hand with the economic mechanisms in such a manner, able to create an organic balance between the supply and demand.

Expected results - this paper represents a diagnosis of the evaluated arguments, presenting a possible strategy for the development of rural tourism, in the Southern part of Romania.

Keywords: *agriculture, rural tourism resources, development, management, rural tourism, market, tourism potential*

JEL Classification: Z32.

1. Introduction

The knowledge, research and development of rural areas represent activities of vital importance for a nation, both with respect to the rural dimension, expressed as land owning, but also with a view to the population involved in productive activities, social and cultural services, and tourism.

On a global level, economic progress forces domestic economies and local communities to adapt, in order to maintain and develop economic and social competitiveness, through restructuring, not only in the rural areas, but also with regard to the way it is operated and capitalized. All these changes, together with the latest news in the field of leisure time spending, represent the bases for the development of tourism in

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the rural areas. All these aspects have increased the mobility and independence of tourists, from urban areas. The conversion of rural areas into tourist destination should be made progressively.

In recent decades the EU regional development policies, corroborated with the national policies have guided tourism towards rural areas, taking into consideration the positive effects and implications of such a plan. From the analyses accomplished by the World Tourism Organization becomes evident that rural tourism develops at a faster rate than the overall international tourism.

2. Methodology

Lately, a certain number of Romanian and foreign tourists oriented towards rural tourism recreation areas. The explanation lays in the multitude of advantages offered by these new recreation and refreshment opportunities, with a lower level of service charges, farther from the noise and stress of the civilized world.

But the development of rural tourism requires a major tool for the development of rural areas, meaning that all these activities need to be managed from an economic/managerial perspective. Only this way we can emphasize the theoretical and practical aspects for the development of rural tourism, but also Romania's options of European integration through rural tourism.

Rural tourism, as an economic option, can contribute to the sustainable development on local, regional and national level, through activities labeled as strategic objectives, such as:

- Sustaining the use of touristic resources;
- Maintaining the natural, cultural and social diversity of the rural areas;
- Integrating rural tourism into the strategic planning of national, regional and especially local development.
- Sustaining local economies in the socio-economic development of communities, but also in protecting the environment and its cultural values;
- Involving local communities in the tourism sector, through support groups of initiative, for the development and promotion of local tourism;
- Consulting specialists, authorities, and members of the local communities, in the development of rural tourism and local economy.

The development of rural tourism, in the rural areas of Romania is mandatory, both on an economic and social level. Effectively, rural *tourism contributes to the economic life of the village*, by developing the village on the long run, in a close connection with agriculture, local infrastructure, environmental protection and the diversity of jobs, all these aspects being able to boost the development of rural tourism (Alecu, 2006).

2.1. Brief presentation of Călărași County

Along the years, Călărași County experienced all stages of development known by the human civilization. The material evidence brought to light by accidental and systematic archeological excavations, as well as the documentary attestation, all are the proof of Romanians long existence into this region, as well as an evidence of the unit in

time and space of indigenous people. From the material remains of the Neolithic culture, from Boian and Gumelnița, as well as archeological discoveries from the Geto-Dacian population, until the beginnings of the Middle Ages, experts concluded that on the major river valleys, as well as around the important lakes of the county, there have been built powerful human settlements, which continue their development even today, compared to the territories in between the river banks, which have started being populated only in the modern times, especially after the agrarian reforms of 1864 and 1921.

Positioned on the South-Eastern extremity of Țara Românească (Muntenia) region, Călărași County was involved in the political and military events of the times, in the fight for freedom and independence of the Romanian nation. Thus, during the reign of Michael the Great, the inhabitants of this area recorded the fact that Romanian armed forces attacked, in the winter of 1594-1595, in Dobrogea and the Balkans, the Turkish towns. The nobleman Preda and Radu Buzescu attacked Hârșova, while counselor Mihalcea attacked Silistra, in January 1595, passing through Lichirești (the old name of the municipality of Călărași), attacked Turtucaia, and crossed the frozen Danube river at Oltenița, (settlement certified by documents since 1523). Later, in the 17th century Constantin Brâncoveanu created a cavalry detachment, at the gates of Silistra, at Lichirești. The settlement, which later took the name of the detachment (Roșiori), had an ascending evolution, becoming the administrative residence of Ialomița County, in 1883, being transformed into a town. At the same time, modern history of Romania records important economic, social and political events related to Călărași. Today, we can say that the most developed branch is agriculture, because of the extended agricultural areas and the use of the rotated cultures of plants. Finally, large quantities of grains and products of animal origin are exported through the harbors of Oltenița and Călărași (Alexandrescu, 1980). Yet, we can speak about an extensive industrial development after the First World War, the most important economic points in Călărași being the Ștefan Vineziu Systematic Mill, while in Oltenița we can find similar institutions, such as Dunărea Mill, with 196 employees.

Călărași County is placed in the South-Eastern part of Romania, on the left bank of Danube river, on the border with Bulgaria; in the southern part it intersects the 44° north latitude parallel, and the 27° eastern latitude meridian. The county has 5088 square kilometers, 2.13% of Romania's surface (Iova, 2012).

The administrative organization of the territory comprises 2 municipalities, 3 towns, 50 townships and 160 villages. The residence of the county is the municipality of Călărași, with a population of 70.000 inhabitants. The overall number of inhabitants of the county is 324.617 people, which represents 1.5% of the country's population; the number is distributed as follows: 120.270 people in the urban area, representing 37% of the county's overall population, and 204.410 people in the rural area, the equivalent of 63% of the county population. The population density is 64 inhabitants/ square km.

The Romanian Plain (Bărăganul), represents the dominant relief; we can observe the widely developed river meadows and terraces, along the Danube and Argeș rivers. The lowest relief is represented by the Danube's Meadow (Lunca Dunării) and Balta Ialomiței. As far as the weather is concerned, summers are extremely hot and dry, while the winters are cold, with strong blizzards. In the Danube's Meadow (Lunca Dunării),

summers are hot while the winters are warmer than the rest of the plain. The absolute values registered have been of +44° Celsius on August 10, 1991 and +31°Celsius, on January 9, 1938, which are a proof of the temperate continental climate.

The hydrographic network of the county is completely tributary to the river Danube. Besides the rivers Argeș and Dâmbovița, which, with their lower sector, can drain the South-Western part of the county, the other less important rivers belong to the inland network of rivers. Among the minor rivers we can mention Mostiștea, with its springs in the Ialomița County, Berza and Zboiul.

Călărași County rivers are usually of an anthropogenic nature, being represented by ponds, mostly spread in the Mostiștea valley, and its tributaries, on Rasa, Luica, Zboiul, Berza and Pasărea. Among the natural lakes we should mention mainly the river estuaries, placed along the Danube's banks, as well as the lakes Mostiștea, Gălățui and Potcoava, positioned on the lower valley of the Berza River. Meadow lakes, which were more numerous in the past, are represented today only by Ciocănești and Iezer Călărași, in the Danube's Meadow, Mitreni in the meadow of the Argeș River, and Tătarul in Dâmbovița's meadow.

The main natural wealth is represented by the agricultural land, representing 84% of the County's overall surface. The county's soils are mainly in the category of carbonated black earth (7,1% of the tillage), semi-carbonated black earth (19,5%), cambic black earth (34,9%), clay illuviated chernozem (5,8%). All these categories of black earth belong to a category of soils with good and very good properties, allowing agriculture at a large scale, especially for grain crop production. The alluvial soils are present especially in the river meadows.

As far as the flora is concerned, the steppe is the vegetal formation that once covered most of the surfaces, grasslands being sought by shepherds during winter time. At present, the patches of forest re made up of species of oak, *Quercus cerris*, a species of oak, *Quercus frainetto*, and maple, while the groves, along the Danube River, include species such as poplar and willow.

On the Danube River, between the km 368-400 there has been developed a deposit of mineral aggregates (sand, gravel, cobble), which is exploited according to Law 61/1998, Mining Law. The deposit is generated annually according to the level of Danube's waters. In the North-Western part of the county, in the village of Ileana, there is an oil field in exploitation.

The forest vegetation, covering 4.3% of the County's overall surface is made up especially of species of: Euro-American poplar, acacia, gray oak, white willow, field ash, *Quercus robur* oak, elm, linden, and Tartar maple. An important natural resource is represented by fauna, with its multitude of species, with great hunting potential. The fauna is extremely varied, specific for the vegetation zones: the rabbit, gopher, ferret, rat and field mouse, quail, partridge, skylark, a wide range of insects, deer, wild boar, fox, otter, and numerous wading birds. Ichthyofauna includes: carp, pike, catfish, perch, bream, tench, etc (Alexandrescu, 1980).

Affected by the restructuring process, affecting the entire Romanian economy, the economy of Călărași County, has a potential for recovery, based on the following strengths: agricultural potential, technical potential; water resources able to favor fisheries

development, commercial, industrial and tourism activities on the river Danube and the inside rivers; geographical positioning on the country borders and on the intersection of transit routes between Eastern Europe and Asia, direct access to the water ways.

But probably the most important strength of the area is the fact that it benefits from human resources, perfectly trained in the following fields of activity: metallurgy, pulp and paper industry, shipbuilding, building materials, textile industry and food industry.

The industry is mainly oriented towards manufacturing activities. On the county level, main industries are: food and drinks industry, textile industry, pulp and paper industry, nonmetallic minerals industry, metallurgical industry and metal products industry, transport activities industry. As far as manufacturing is concerned, food industry is the most important, during the first six months of the year 2009 contributing by 59.1% to the industrial production of the county, followed by the textile industry with 19.7%, pulp and paper industry with 9.8% and the nonmetallic minerals industry, with 4.2%.

Agriculture represents the main economic activity. The background is represented by the agricultural area 420.780 ha, the equivalent of 2.9% of the domestic agricultural area, Călărași county being the 8th county in point of size in Romania. Out of this area, the agricultural land represents 413.135 ha, the equivalent of 4.4% of the national agricultural area, on the 5th position in Romania.

Transportation: The main double, electrified railway Bucharest - Constanța passes through the county, with the main rail hub at Ciulnița, while on the South-Western part it is the Bucharest- Oltenița sector. Besides the national roads Bucharest – Lehliu – Călărași and Bucharest – Oltenița, of great importance is the Bucharest – Fundulea- Fetești – Constanța highway. Actually, in Călărași, there are eight transportation routes converging, road, rail and river routes, covering a wide geographical array, ensuring the direct connection between the places from the Eastern part of the Romanian plain and Dobrogea. The river freight and leisure transport on the river Danube is made through Călărași and Oltenița harbors.

2.2. The analysis of the natural potential and of the agricultural structures in the rural areas

The integration of agriculture into the market economy is ensured by a strengthening of the private sector and an economic organization where natural processes combine with economic mechanisms in such a way that they create an organic balance between supply and demand. For this purpose, we need strategies for an open development, able to capitalize the advantages created by the dominant share of private property, ensuring at the same time an intensive development for the accomplishment of a competitive offer of agricultural products and an extended market for all types of agricultural holdings, with a wide access to the products' market and productive factors (Antonoaie, 2002).

As an immediate effect of the application of the Land Law, in the agricultural activities of the Călărași County, the modification of the configuration of the farming units, with a preponderance of small individual agricultural lands, diminished the positive outcomes of the privatization process, generating an economic model less viable in terms of resources and efficiency of activities. These structures determined an intensive use of

the labor force, which in turn determined an extensive layoff of the labor force in other sectors of activity. In the agricultural sector this meant the formation of small agricultural producers, producing both for their own consumption and for sale on the rural market.

From the presented figures we can observe that the overall cultivated area oscillated, with records of 410080 ha in 1995, 392909 ha in 2004, 414803 in 2005, reaching the level of 408548 ha in 2009.

The sunflower crops and those of vegetables have registered the same fluctuations as those of legumes, while the potato crops are on a descending trend, from 1151 ha in 2000 to only 391ha in 2009. It is worth mentioning that beginning with 2005, the cultivated area with green fodder increased year by year, from 12346 ha in 2000 to 21449 ha in 2009.

On the same descending trend is also the orchards surface, which was reduced from 311 ha, to 172 ha, while the vineyards surface, reduced during the same period from 5246 ha to 4965 ha.

By village, the significant mutations regarding the tillage are registered in the big villages such as: Grădiștea (from 15580 ha to 14752 ha), Borcea (from 30363 ha, to 29680 ha), Jegălia (from 10476 ha to 9992 ha), Modelu (from 9887 ha to 9438 ha) etc., while an increase of the tillage is registered in the villages of Budești, Căscioarele, Ulmeni, Vasilați etc., but in a smaller proportion than that of the reduced surfaces. By category of use of the agricultural land, it is significant to observe that certain villages increased their vineyard surfaces even five times, as in the case of: Borcea, Chirnogi, Ciocănești, Cuza Vodă, Jegălia, Dorobanțu, Radovanu, Nicolae Bălcescu, Unirea etc., the only village with a reduced surface of vineyards being Al. Odobescu, from 189ha to 105ha. With regard to the orchard surfaces, we can observe that many of the county villages abolished this crop, even if we observe a significant number of hectares covered with orchards, such as: Lupșanu- 26 ha, Jegălia - 25 ha, Dragalina – 17 ha, Lehliu – 27 ha, Al. Odobescu and Valea Argovei with 16 ha etc., the same villages increasing the surfaces occupied with pastures and hayfields, followed directly by an increase in the number of animals in individual farms than in agricultural associations.

Table 1. Structure of the land fund, by use

Specifications	2003		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009	
	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%	ha	%
The overall land fund	508785	100,0	508785	100,0	508785	100,0	508785	100,0	508785	100,0	508785	100,0
Agricultural surface	426780	83,9	426780	83,9	426696	83,9	426632	83,9	426238	83,8	426230	83,8
Tillage	415779	81,7	416029	81,8	416030	81,8	415966	81,8	414831	81,5	414821	81,5
Pastures	5310	1,0	5281	1,0	5235	1,0	5235	1,0	5954	1,2	6130	1,2
Grasslands	134	0,0	134	0,0	134	0,0	134	0,0	156	0,0	142	0,0
Vineyards and vineyard nurseries	5246	1,0	5120	1,0	5120	1,0	5120	1,0	5118	1,0	4965	1,0
Orchards and orchard nurseries	311	0,1	216	0,0	177	0,0	177	0,0	179	0,0	172	0,0
Forests and other lands with forrest vegetation	21995	4,3	22001	4,3	22001	4,3	22001	4,3	22349	4,4	22052	4,3
Lands occupied with buildings and gardens	14080	2,8	14634	2,9	14718	2,9	14782	2,9	15020	3,0	15531	3,1
Roads and railways	13521	2,7	13158	2,6	13158	2,6	13158	2,6	12923	2,5	12962	2,5
Water and ponds	30215	5,9	29906	5,9	29906	5,9	29906	5,9	29965	5,9	29723	5,8
Other surfaces	2194	0,4	2306	0,5	2306	0,5	2306	0,5	2290	0,5	2287	0,4

SOURCE: Statistical research, DADR Călărași

From the overall surface of de 292154 ha, 112895 ha are exploited in an associated system, 93609 ha are exploited on lease and 85650 ha represent individual exploitations. By land use category, we can observe that in individual farms, from the 85650 ha, 77646 ha represent tillage, 7750 ha vineyards, 198 ha are pastures and hayfields and 56 ha orchards. On the associative holding (S.A+S.C.+A.F.), from the 112895 ha, 112777 ha are represented by tillage, while 118 ha are covered with vineyards; on this type of structures we do not observe orchards and pastures and hayfields. The same situation is met on the trading companies leasing the land, from 93609 ha to only 2 ha of vineyards and 5 ha of pastures, the difference of 93602 ha being represented by tillage. Although most of the county villages use the agricultural land in holdings leasing the land, such as the villages of: Cuza Vodă - 74% on holding and 9% leasing, Lupșanu – 78% holding and 14% leasing, Ulmu – 95% holding, Ulmeni – 81% holding and 9% leasing etc. Yet, there are villages where 50% of the agricultural land is exploited individually, as in the case of: Căscioarele – 85%, Tămădău – 65%, Belciugatele – 60%, Fundulea – 61%, Budești – 59%, Frumușani and Nana – 58% etc. Given the current size of individual holdings in Romania, the rational exploitation of land requires a stimulation of the leasing system, association and concentration of property, through the acquisition of the agricultural land.

The legislation in force allows the increase of the land size of agricultural holdings and encourages the direct exploitation of the land by owner or leaser (Crețu, 2012).

2.3. The analysis of the human potential

The demographic aging of the rural population, as well as that of the overall population, has multiple implications on the agrarian structures, on the quality of the human resources and managerial leadership, on the production units and type of technological progress. In terms of key demographic indicators, the population of the Călărași County presents a series of characteristics which generally gives a balanced character to the evolutionary structures and processes (Tindeche, 2004).

2.4. The evolution and demographic structure of the human resources

Regarding the overall population, the county is on a descending curve, from 341631 people in 1990 to 312879 people in 2009. The same behavior can be observed for the overall population, on environments: urban-rural, as follows, urban population reduced from 131260 people in 1990 to 120483 people in 2009, while the rural population diminished from 210371 to 192396 people, during the same period. That is how the overall population of the county registered a steady decrease. Figures can be found in table 2.4. and are relevant for this situation.

On the general demographic aging trend, the share of population remained relatively constant, with slight variations from 63.0% in 2002 to 6.1% in 2003, while in 2009 it reached 61.5% from the total population; if we refer to the population structure on age groups, we can observe an increase of the segment of people over the age of 60 and over, from 16.6% in 2003 to 17.31% in 2009 (fig. 2.4.), while the population of the 0-14 segment registered a descending trend.

The demographic aging of the rural population, as that of the population in general, has multiple implications upon the agricultural structures, quality of the human resources, managerial leadership, production management and types of technical progress. On the total population, sex distribution is relatively normal: 49.0% men and 51.0% women, with a similar proportion on domestic level (Tindeche, 2004).

2.5. Strategies for the rural tourism development of Călărași County

For the analyzed territory, tourism represents an essential component of the service sector of the rural population, a branch with high development potential in this area. All these, and the fact that rural tourism is part of the tertiary sector, being made up mainly of services provision, determines a natural dynamic, which is also specific for the present conditions of the analyzed region.

We should also mention the fact that tourism industry is characterized by a structural complexity, with multiple services options. This is the main reason why the implementation of the long-term strategies in the field of rural tourism/ rural tourism offers the premises for an accelerated development, both for Călărași County, but also for the economy in general.

It is a necessity to launch a guiding direction in the rural tourism activities, to attract investments and foreign partners (what has been done during the period 1995-

2004), in order to develop a tourism structure, able to raise the living standards of the rural area from South-Muntenia. In order to accomplish this task, we need an adequate strategy, where rural tourism could become an important factor for local development, backed up by a series of priority conditions which need to be defined, such as:

- Maintaining the optimal balance between the ecological, socio-economic and cultural systems of an area, when a developmental process is introduced, to change an area;
- Ensuring additional revenue sources for the local population;
- Diversifying the economic activities by increasing the offer of local products and services, all these leading towards an increase of the tourist attraction in the region;
- Promoting cultural exchanges between people, through mutual respect and understanding, as a key factor for the social cohesion;
- Favoring a coordinated policy for the spatial planning, allowing an improved competitiveness of the economic activities from the disadvantaged areas, as well as improvement and equipment of the infrastructure, both for local population, but also for the visitors in the region;
- Signing partnership agreements with specialized domestic, regional and local organizations, able to facilitate access to the European Union funding policies, for the development of the rural tourism;
- Signing partnership agreements between regional institutions, both in the country and abroad, because only in this manner they can communicate the flux of information regarding the mutations in the field, they can accomplish a mutual promotional campaign of the tourist offer, they can collaborate in training staff and promote a communal point of view;
- Attracting specialists able to offer consultancy on marketing problems, improving the accommodation and catering facilities, on improving the communication with clients, information systems;
- Including a possible list of catalogues or guides, realized by the National Authority for Tourism and the National Association of Ecological, Rural and Cultural Tourism, with regard to the rural tourism offer, including folk, religious and cultural events in the area, which could become arguments for attracting tourists and individualizing regional customs and traditions;
- Financing training and education programs for specialists on traditional crafts and related activities;
- Educating tourists regarding the biological diversity of the region, ways of preserving the nature through the elaboration and publication of rules of conduct for tourists.

In a synthetic manner it can be showed that the strategic planning of the future tourism activities of the region requires knowledge and the implementation of certain perspective elements such as:

- Understanding and satisfying the needs of the new tourist, framed both as real client, but especially as potential client in the respective area;
- For the specific case of Călărași County, the implantation of new strategic objectives for the consolidation of the present markets and development of new areas of rural touristic markets, on national level, but also on the level of the European Union.

- Consolidation of the financing rural tourism activities in the region;
- Constant promotion of a touristic development, by focus on the strengths of the region (Crețu, 2012).

2.6. Strategic frame regarding the modifications/ adaptation of the systems in the Călărași County rural tourism

The trends on a national level, regarding the strategic frame on rural tourism can also be found on a regional level in the Călărași County. These coordinates are determined and stimulated by the following aspects, such as:

- The existence of many villages;
- Maintenance of the rural functionality;
- Preservation of the rural infrastructure;
- Preservation of the traditional lifestyle;
- Preservation of the cultural identity specific to the analyzed area.

For the specific situation of the strategic objectives of the rural tourism region South-Muntenia, of the Călărași County, this meant knowledge and evaluation of the pre-existent situation, according to the objectives of the domestic development of tourism. For a fast adaptation to these initiatives/ directives, one needs knowledge of the specific structures in accordance with the specific frame on national level, for the period 2007-2026. This frame includes:

- Administrative structures for the coordination of the rural tourism activities/ rural tourism (regarding the role and function of the regional and central institutions, framing rural tourism);
- Planning and infrastructure; this coordinate comprises: access and infrastructure, planned development, implementation to comply to the international standards (for accommodation, tourist facilities, etc.);
- Development of the human resources (through campaigns for awareness of the importance of tourism, combined with training on the attitude towards tourists, both in the public and private sector, on all levels);
- Improvement of the rural touristic products (with special regard to accommodation and local attractions, which require a sustainable development and coordination from the public sector);
- Emphasis on the form of cultural tourism (which in the special case of Romania has an important impact, on the level of cultural events and folk events, religious sites, which require a special collection and transmission of information);
- The activity of the tourist information centers (through signaling systems and tourist centers), statistics and research (connected to a supplementary research, able to complete the requirements of the Tourism Satellite Account system. Thus, we can offer a better evaluation of the general economic impact of tourism, allowing comparison in point of performance with other tourist destinations), destination marketing (an understanding of the marketing mix of the current promotional activities, targeting the specific strategic objectives);

- The environment (the negative practices posing a threat to the country's image);
- Investment policies (it is necessary that the OMT should organize a series of Tourism Investment Forums, with the aim of attracting wider scope investments);
- The legal frame (these frames should be united all together, to remove the abnormalities, so that people could understand easier and increase their possibilities of implementation).

All these trends are mandatory for the formulation and implementation of strategic alternatives.

2.7. Strategies and objectives in the rural tourism of the South-Muntenia area of the Călărași County

With regard to the sustainable development strategy for rural tourism in the analyzed area, it is considered mandatory to know and respect important aspects such as:

- Reduction of the environmental degradation;
- Preservation of the natural and anthropogenic resources;
- Providing additional income for the people in the rural communities with touristic potential;

In order to schedule the development of tourism in the county of Călărași, the following strategic objectives need to be considered:

- The development of touristic products based on the specific characteristics of the area;
- Investments in infrastructure and touristic equipment;
- Continuous training and development of the human resources in tourism;
- Rural touristic promotion and marketing.

Based on these elements, the following general objectives can be delineated, for the strategic development of rural tourism in the region of Călărași:

- The promotion of modern concepts for touristic development;
- The implementation of a modern management, regarding the improvement of the tourist services quality;
- The development of national and regional programs and projects, for the development of tourism;
- Revamping of the tourist offer, increase of the competitive capacity and attractiveness of the domestic and international tourist market;
- The development of a favorable image, backed up by an aggressive promotional policy, with the purpose of increasing the rural touristic demand;
- Ensuring the quantitative and qualitative training of staff;
- The development of new specific rural touristic products, on local and regional level, attracting new segments of tourists;
- The adoption of regulations in the field of rural tourism, on the request of the European Union;

- The evaluation of the fiscal policies regarding their effect upon tourism;
- The adaptation of tourist activities to the domestic and international policies in tourism;
- Sustainable development of rural tourism;
- The promotion of the Călărași area as a tourist destination, highly attractive on international level.

Based on these general objectives, the set of specific rural touristic objectives can be developed, in accordance with the regional character of the Călărași County. They can be considered developmental targets for rural tourism, which can be addressed through common actions, unanimously accepted, focused on the following items:

- The economic development of the rural areas through: restructuring of the businesses in the rural areas; improving the performances of the existing companies, supported by technologies involving production based on alternative agriculture; increasing the sale of goods and services through active marketing techniques.
- Magnification of the infrastructure network in the analyzed area: maintenance of the road network, facilitating access of tourists in the rural areas; extension of water supply and sanitation system; protection of the natural environment and improvement of the quality of life in rural areas;
- Increase of the rural touristic activities;
- The need for an update of the tourist offers;
- The development and improvement of the quality of regional tourist products/services;
- Qualification and training of the labor force. Regarding the human resource training objectives, the following issues need to be addressed: support and facilitation of the employee and unemployed training; support for the establishment and consolidation of NGO-s an initiative group;
- Knowledge and stimulation of intervention ways such as: specific activities by own forces; indirect facilitation of other organizations and institutions activity; attendance to other institutions activities (development agencies, foundations, etc.).

In the Călărași area rural tourism has an important potential for development. There is a wide variety of hospitality industry options, based on a clean environment, high quality gastronomy and folk rituals in the area. Considering the lower level of basic infrastructure in the rural area, this type of tourism encounters difficulties about international competitiveness. There is a series of strategic objectives that can be suggested, for the development of this type of tourism, in the mentioned counties through:

- Improvement of the general infrastructure in the rural areas, this being an indispensable condition for the promotion of a competitive rural tourism. At the same time, there is considered the rehabilitation and promotion of heritage monuments in the area. Besides the development of the tourist infrastructure, there is also considered the possibility of a financing for rehabilitation projects and development of road infrastructure, as well as utilities.

- Signing of partnership agreements with different specialized organizations, allowing the facilitation of access to the European Union funding scheme, for rural tourism;
- The inclusion of the Călărași County tourist offers into the ANTREC catalog or the tour guides realized by the public authority for tourism, able to individualize the specific of the region;
- The development of the rural tourism offer, by introducing in the tourist offer other villages with high development potential, besides the ones along the Danube River bank.
- The organization of permanent exhibitions in the town of Călărași, where tourists could get in touch with the traditional local art and receive informative fliers about the regions of the Călărași County with the highest potential for development.
- Improvement of the overall degree of attractiveness and accessibility of the localities in the region, through the building or rehabilitation of investment objectives in different profiles (hospitals, schools, shops, etc.);
- Increase of competitiveness for the places that could be taken into consideration for their business potential, by improving the business support infrastructure and foundation of SMEs.
- Increase of the economic and social role of the bordering urban centers upon the rural areas, by the building/ rehabilitation of public spaces and implementation of integrated development programs.
- Enlargement of the directions for the promotion of the cultural and religious tourism, through the Office of the Romanian Patriarchate Pilgrimage and pilgrimage centers such as “St. Parascheva” of the Moldavian and Bucovina Mitropoly and “St. Nicodim” of the Oltenia Mitropoly (Crețu, 2012).

2.8. Ways of influencing and implementing the action lines in rural tourism, in Călărași County

Strategic objectives permanently undergo adaptive changes bi-dimensionally: on the one hand the requirements of the rural touristic market, and on the other, the perceptiveness of the agricultural exploitation towards the rural touristic potential. For the South-Muntenia region analyzed, the problem is to understand the ways rural communities could be influenced by the public administration towards an implementation of the ago touristic activities.

These paths can be separated as direct and indirect.

- a) The direct influence paths are used mainly by the public administration through:
 - Regional factors (infrastructure, public utilities, delimitation of the price levels, etc.);
 - Labor force factors (the stage and improvement of the local experience, qualification and training of staff, etc.);
 - Local taxes (levels)
- b) The indirect paths influence, used by the public administration:

- The development of a positive image of the South-Muntenia region and of the tourist areas;
- Administrative efficiency, by an increase of the rate resulting from the volume of services provided at municipal level;
- Improvement of the quality of living, through facilities for rural tourism households, offered by the public administration;
- Promoting recreation and cultural facilities;
- Ensuring the high quality of schooling in the village;

For the accomplishment of all these objectives we need to know the key factors for a sustainable development of the rural areas of Călărași County. Thus, the delimitating elements, able to favorably influence the implementation of the overall rural tourism objectives, such as:

- The promotion of rarity of the natural elements, which sometimes are unique, in the rural environment;
- Enhancement of the level of rural touristic activities, which are still at a reduced scale;
- Boosting the diversification of activities which need to be made without replacing the traditional activities;
- Rural touristic activities need to be considered as an instrument able to solve the rural tourism services and/or mitigate certain problems of the rural communities;
- Preservation of the traditional elements of the community and environment;
- Getting the benefits from the rural tourism activities, given the existence of a local control, leading towards a strengthening of the local communities.

Implementation of the rural touristic strategic objectives requiring long term efforts, with effects on the agricultural activities with high rural touristic potential. As a specific of the analyzed area, the ways of implementation can be structurally achieved by means of:

- Approval of the policies and tourist plan, as an official document, and for the development of rural tourism in the South-Muntenia region;
- Structuring of development on a 5-year period – programming of the development projects and needed actions (generally called programs of action for rural tourism);
- Efficient organization of the public and private sector, maintenance of a strong coordination between the public sector, the private one and non-governmental institutions, where they are involved;
- The adoption and application of the most appropriate legislation and of the regulations needed for the development of rural tourism on local level; all these include regulations regarding the facilities, standards and general services, but also specifics of rural tourism;
- Protective measurements for the environment, development standards (generally included in the regulations regarding local development) and the

design of touristic guides, with detailed presentation of the rural touristic facilities;

- The establishment of the guided tours and important objectives;
- Efficient and systematic financing of the individual tourist projects;
- Financing of the public sector, for the development of tourist attractions and infrastructure. In specific cases, for this financing, foreign assistance might be needed;
- Attracting investments in the private sector, for the development of rural touristic facilities and services (through investment bonuses);
- Training and improvement of employees, in all tourist activities – the development of the potential human resources for rural tourism;
- Involvement of the local communities in the development of rural tourism;
- Knowledge about the promotional campaigns and efficient implementation of tourist marketing, for the entire region and rural guesthouses;
- Efficient and sustainable management on micro- and macro territorial of the rural touristic level.

3. The use of the SWOT analysis in drawing the strategic objectives of rural tourism

SWOT analysis is a method of analysis for prospect situations, which gives us the chance to know more about the perspectives for the strategic objective of Călărași area. On community level, SWOT analysis is frequently used for the strategic planning.

In the region analyzed with the SWOT analysis we can determine the present situation, focusing mainly on the rural tourism development strategies. The analysis model for the SWOT methodology searches for the delineation/ finding of answers to the possible questions regarding the long-term strategy for the development of rural tourism in the region:

- a) Strengths: which are the advantages for the development of rural tourism in the South-Muntenia region? What should we do in the rural South-Muntenia region in order to develop tourist activities? Which do the favorable characteristics existent in the region at the moment, for the development of certain rural tourist activities?
- b) Weaknesses, which need answers to the following questions, what is badly done in the rural touristic activities? What are doing the others (other rural guesthouses) to improve the situation? Which are the main disadvantages unfolding in the rural tourist activities?
- c) Opportunities of accomplishment of the favorable objectives: which are the positive/ favorable tourist exchanges for the rural touristic guesthouse? When/ how do we find the most favorable opportunities?
- d) Threats, related to answers to the following questions: which are the main requirements hardly to accomplish? Which are the changes that can become a disadvantage for the rural touristic activities, and one cannot compete with?

* Strengths are based on knowledge about the factors that refer to the following: natural resources of the region, which can become a significant asset for the rural touristic development of the region; the accomplishment of connections with the surrounding areas, and other regions from the South-Muntenia area, the localities being crossed by different road routes, accessible to tourists; the existence of numerous cultural-historical and religious edifices; natural resources and climate conditions favorable for the development of rural tourism services (modern but also ecological), backed up by other non-agricultural activities (small local industry, craftsmanship); increase of the accommodation capacity but also of the standards of quality for the services offered; procurement of high quality agricultural products (organoleptic and green), backed up by the Romanian traditional hospitality; labor force relatively well trained and cheap; the existence of processing capabilities for the agricultural and non-agricultural commodities.

* Weaknesses can delineate the following factors: insufficient financial resources; the existence of insufficient and temporary promotion conditions for specific rural tourism activities (in the regions with real and high tourist potential); depopulation of the villages and towns; use below the capacity level of the rural tourism units; the existence of a transportation network still underdeveloped; weak and low level of professional training, in the field of tourist services, which results in a lack of certification for tourist services on rural guesthouses; lack of consultancy services for prospect investors in rural tourism, with regard to the lack of tourist information centers and travel signs; on specific regions there can be observed a lack of involvement from the local authorities regarding the preservation of the environment;

* Opportunities can be delineated from the following factors: the existence of a natural environment, of attractive tourist objectives and of the cultural-historical and religious heritage, which represents the basis for the development of rural tourism (because the rural tourism development programs include specific sub measures); increase of tourist demand for rural destinations; courses organized by ANTREC; development of event and festival tourism; development of the pre-existent rural touristic packages; promotion of the destinations with a long history in the tradition of traditional food products; international acknowledgement of the rural tourism development of the analyzed area; improvement of the infrastructure and utilities of the region; encouragement of new types of tourism (recreation, rural, green); expanding the network of farms and authorized households, for the rural touristic practices; availability of further resources, to be accessed by European Union funding policies (with regard to the possibility of accessing structural funds).

* Threats, with reference to the following elements: lack of facilities able to stimulate possible investors and lack of guarantee that they will not lose their investments (for example tax exemption during the first decade of activity); reduced number of tourists for certain areas from South-Muntenia region; improper modernization of rural housing; migration of young people towards the developed areas; improper unfolding of rural tourism programs; reduced initiative of the local institutions to the changes and challenges of present day society, leading to a decrease of competitiveness in the region, in favor of other areas; tourist migration towards other regions which operate more efficiently their potential; competition with other tourist destinations already famous; stagnation of economic development on local, regional and national level. (Alec, 2002)

By controlling these four elements presented in the SWOT analysis and grouping them in twos, we can delineate strategies adapted to the specific case of Călărași region, such as:

- S-O (Strengths - Opportunities): pursuing opportunities for services in rural regional tourism, which better fit to the regional strengths;
- W-O (Weaknesses – Opportunities): overcoming weaknesses signaled in the rural tourism activities and pursuing of opportunities;
- S-T (Strength – Threats): identification of the ways to use strengths in unfolding the rural tourism activities, in order to reduce vulnerability to external threats;
- W-T (Weaknesses – Threats): establishment of a defense plan, in order to a situation when the weaknesses become extremely vulnerable to external threats, in the rural tourism activities.

These strategies can be adapted to the Călărași County rural tourism, by placing on local level, not only policies and economic and social strategies, but also operational regional programs for the implementation of services, agricultural/ non-agricultural technologies, use of the labor force, etc. SWOT analysis allows the identification of the internal and external factors able to affect the rural tourism guesthouse, quantifying their impact upon it.

3.1. The tourist village, strategic objective for Călărași region

The complex issue of village functionality, of the traditional and cultural lifestyle of the rural space represents the premises of the implementation of an rural touristic strategy.

Among the basic strategic objectives which need to be adopted in agreement with the requirements imposed by the European Union and the immediate realities of the Romanian rural context. All these can be solved with the help of rural tourism which turn Romanian village into a more functional environment. The strategic objectives are based on the following items:

- The development of a type of rural tourism association, in rural communities, where all the owners have their own initiatives;
- Diversification of the agricultural and non-agricultural production;
- Adoption of the most adequate measures, in order to preserve the natural heritage, specific to the area including the popular and ethno-historical heritage (thus, raises the question of the maintenance and recovery of viable traditional values);
- The adoption of a strategy inside/ outside the European Union, imposing knowledge and adjustment of the Romanian village to the realities of present day life.

Thus, we can say that the strategies for the development of the traditional Romanian village represent an adaptation to a model, created for the real needs of present day Romania. The market niche can be accomplished through the multitude of alternatives, such as:

- The product itself, the South-Muntenia region village, with its multitude of ethno-folkloric manifestations, specific gastronomy, specific natural and anthropic elements;

- The price, with the most advantageous price/ quality ration;
- Convenient access, needed in order to create a competitive advantage for the territorial infrastructure.

Customizing these issues, we can say that the Călărași region village needs to meet the following requirements, in order to become a tourist product:

- delineation of objectives, capitalization of opportunities and remedy of deficiencies, in order to become a real attraction;
- the existence of an internal communication (with regard to the persons interested by the development of the village) and external communication (media and the press, business environment, potential clients, etc);
- coordination of activities as part of a multi-disciplinary team, comprising specialists in different fields of activity, who have a single common task;
- all those involved in these activities need to know and avoid unnecessary risks;
- implementation of an adequate quality standard by assessing the implementation of activities;
- tendency towards a cost decrease by efficient resource allocation.

An important role in the projection of the tourist village of is played by the local community who needs:

- to clearly define the strategic objectives for the tourist village;
- to manage the changes, from the patrimonial rural area into a tourist destination;
- to choose the most appropriate methods;
- to overcome the risks and uncertainty;
- to accomplish the multidisciplinary teams, able to realize the change of the project.

In the analyzed county, such strategic objectives can be launched through a project called: “Vatra Valahă” holiday village, arguing the opportunity, as part of a Traditional Romanian Tourist Village Model. This project is aimed at facilitating access to the authentic traditional Romanian culture, for all those wish to see and experience the healthy lifestyle, traditions, customs and hospitality of the Romanian people from the region of Muntenia.

The pleasure to visit, even only part of these rural settlements, during these present times of intense labor for the urban employer, is hardly possible, especially in today’s struggling times. The stay could be centralized only visiting a single representative site for the Romanian village, encompassing in its structure as in a living picture, the Romanian village from the most flourishing period of its existence, Romanian hospitality and traditional peasant architecture, made up of:

- 1) The ethno-touristic village with a double function, of accommodation and as landmark, with the following components:
 - A number of authentic houses of patrimony, called “the authentic core”, traditional Romanian houses restored and moved to a new protected location. They are moved to the holiday village and are some of the houses which were in an advanced degree of degradation, doomed houses because of the social and economic factors of today’s Romanian society;

- An estate with an cottages built in the traditional peasant architecture, made up of distinctive houses, ecological accommodation facilities with bathroom, built in accordance with the local architecture representative for the historical Vlach region, identical replicas of homes which once were characteristic of our culture, featured on the list of historical monuments of the region, but because of numerous reasons they disappeared, called “replica assembly”.
- 2) The annexes of each house made up of:
 - An annex of the house where there are raised each species of domestic animals (hens, ducks, geese, rabbits, etc.).
 - A craft workshop (woodwork, metalwork, shoemaker, harness, tailoring, pottery, glassware, distiller, bread oven, etc.) and tillage, where traditional agriculture, 100% green is practiced, taken advantage of at the restaurant of the mansion or manor of the Craftsman’s Culture and Creativity Center. At the same time, each house will have a watching dog, taken from the community center (Popescu, 2009).
 - 3) The village center, where the Mansion can be distinguished (the administrative building comprising the reception and the big hall for serving the meals), the Church “of a single wood” (religious service), Turret Tower resting place Cula type (guesthouse), “Draw-well” (wishes well), “Ox cart” (traditional means of transportation), etc.
 - 4) The center for related activities, called the Center for Vlach Popular Creations, where the following tourist objectives could be distinguished: Tavern, Bee (traditions), the village dance (customs), Iocan’s Meadow, which will have the function of a Creative Camp, Meetings hall (meetings with the writers, popular artists, craftsmen), meetings and conferences, book release, popular music auditions, festivity hall, film gala, accommodation and restaurant facilities, “The Millpond” (fishing), “The Village Pub”, “Rounders ground” (rounders – national sport), The sheepfold from the hill (green products), other activities, etc. heating will be 100% green. Waste collection and sewerage are according to the standards required by the gradual Ecolabeling, Green tourism (Bran, 2005).

In order to build a rural tourism guesthouse, comprising all the regional details (Moldavia, Muntenia, Transylvania, Oltenia, Dobrogea) the following elements are necessary: materials, technological and building systems, types of roofing, decorative items for columns, decorative wooden porches, decorative elements for the exterior decoration of the houses.

All these elements lead towards the fundamental strategic objective for the present day rural tourism, in the Calarasi area, that of changing today’s Romanian village into a “tourist village”, integrated into the ethnographic zone”. Thus, we can create a new tourist product, extremely original, comprising the cultural, historical, gastronomic and curative sub-products (Crețu, 2012).

3.2. Non-agricultural activities – strategic elements in the development of the tourist village activities

Identifying the vocation of the rural tourism region, through traditional food products, requires more and more strategies adapted to the food symbolism of the Călărași County. Framed as strategic objectives, well founded to the analyzed rural tourism region, one poses the question of identifying the legal frame for the agricultural exploitation, acquiring traditional products, but which can also provide rural tourism services.

Further on, the aspects regarding the forms of presentation of traditional food products offer are concerned. On regional-territorial level, in the structure mentioned under the aspect of structural types of products (SC, PFA, AF, AP), we can signal the differences between the offers (quantitative/ qualitative, time/ space).

Or, for the efficient valorization of products and successful launch of the offer, one needs to know how to formulate a strategy aimed at specific targets, such as:

- The development of an infrastructure, needed for the economic support and capitalization of the traditional products, by knowledge on the specific types of framing as culinary recipes, adapted to tourists' behavior;
- Supporting the promotional campaigns for traditional food products, specific for different tourist areas, but with a strong vocation on certain traditional food products (as a specific element for regional identity and an economic advantage, competitive on national level and EU level);
- The possibility that the offer be presented in a local traditional shop, where a special relationship between the seller and buyers can be developed. Small producers of traditional products, as representatives of the rural tourism exploitation, meet directly with the consumers and explain them about the products.

As part of the rural tourism activities, traditional products offer represents a solution not only for the potential tourist, but also for the producer.

It is worth mentioning that the production of traditional food products requires farms to fulfill the requirements regarding: work environment, sources of raw materials, water supply; the existence of facilities for the sanitation of containers used in the transportation of raw materials, equipment and devices used in the production process; the staff getting in touch with the raw materials and food products should respect the rules of personal hygiene (Bran, 2005).

An important role in the certification and registration of Romanian food products is played by the logos. The criteria for their use are determined by:

- Identification on the market of the agricultural products or food products recognized as STGs.
- The informative use on communication and information support;
- The property rights belonging exclusively to MADR.

After acquiring protection on community level, the national logo can be used together with that of the community backing up the following rural tourism strategies:

- To identify on the rural tourism market the denomination (IGP/DOP) for the products acquiring protection on national level;

- After acquiring protection on the community level, the national logo will be used together with the community logo;
- National logo can be used as informative or for publicity.

Thus, Călărași County region can also be attractively represented with the help of such traditional products.

With regard to the outcome of the rural tourism services, we can say that, for the owners of the small workshops and small factories from the rural area, it is mandatory that they develop a set of viable strategies, such as:

- The status of a “shop owner” in the rural tourism regions, who are not craftsmen, but owners of the workshops producing products for sale (as well as small factories).
- The existence of shop and small factory owners who were not born in the region and do not live there with the entire family;
- Cases when the craftsmen who were not born in the village or town, but own property and agricultural land give the land on lease or association, in order to develop rural tourism activities;
- The focus and aims of the craftsmen from the rural tourism region are to develop a business (craftsmanship/ rural tourism), and that is why sometimes they have to cope with obstacles in their activity;
- Certain craftsmen have children who are even bachelor students; others wish that their children graduate university and takeover the business from their parents. Some other times the children have already graduated faculty, work in big cities, and are strongly helped by their family to start a business in the new town where they live.
- In most cases, craftsmen have the tendency to develop their business, where more important than satisfaction is achieving the goal (enlarging the business).

We can conclude that the strategic objectives should be to appreciate the values of each village or small town from the South-Muntenia region. We can make an inventory of all these, in order to help guesthouse owners and tour operators to find more about the crafts, laces and interesting activities in the region. A way of preserving the structural evidence of these sources is presented in Table, below.

Table 2. Names of products and places that can be nominated as strategic touristic objectives in the south-Muntenia region of Călărași and Giurgiu County

Type/ group of products	Name of the place	Geographical localization	Items that can be purchased
Pottery	Pottery shop, villages located on rivers.	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Vases, bowls, pitchers
Wooden objects	Carpentry workshop, wood carving	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Tools / woodwork
Stone objects	Craftsmen workshop	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Crafted stone objects
Carpets and rugs	On the road, at the workshop where they are manufactured	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Carpets and rugs
Popular fabrics	Fabrics workshop	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Popular clothing
Dairy	Pen space market	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Processed dairy products (cheese, traditional creamy cheese)
Fruits and fruit-derived	Kiosks, stores, at the producer	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Jam
Spirits	Kiosks, stores, at the producer	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Brandy
Bar and restaurant	In the villages, on the tourist routes, inside the farm.	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Food "specialties", various menus, cards
Ethno-folk events	Open space or community center	Most localities in the county of Călărași	Show viewing.

Source: self-processing

4. Requirements and new systems for the development of a reference frame in supplying services in. the Călărași County

In a very short period of time, rural tourism became a certainty in our country, being presented as a complex and well-structured activity, able to satisfy the economic, social, cultural and spiritual needs.

Thus, a new way of spending free time is targeted at four different fields of experience that need to be offered simultaneously: exploration experience, biotic experience, social experience and optimizing experience.

According to these concepts, the need for the development of a strategy on rural tourism became a must, if we take into consideration the requirements, application systems, and the development of a reference frame for the delivery of tourist services.

For the specific case of Călărași County, the requirements and systems for rural tourism services delivery are based on providing a system with three categories of services:

- The system of production of rural tourism services, which represents a managerial function starting from the level of the guesthouse, toward the other levels;

- The support system for rural tourism services, considered as a managerial function, on all levels of coordination, with involvement of the contact staff and operational staff;
- The distribution system (delivery) of rural tourism services, dealt with by the company staff.

All these strategies are based especially on the system of rural tourism services delivery. They are used to assess the interaction with staff and material resources, which can be structurally rendered as: spatial (where the activity takes place), temporal (when do they take place), structural (with reference to the material and social realities that require adjustment in order to comply with the needs of the touristic consumer) (Honțuș, 2005).

The strategies permanently need to follow a process of creativity in ago tourism, which can be accomplished through successive stages, such as:

- The instinctive phase of search, which is placed in the unconscious sphere, without a predetermined scope or design;
- The intuitive phase, when the different forces of the environment are determined, and the connections determining the interferences are observed;
- The awareness, considered the third phase, when the ideas are sorted and selected, and those that are not feasible or cannot find applicability will be eliminated from the rural tourism guesthouse; those procedures or services considered efficient will be kept;
- Logical definition of the new ideas, aimed at developing strategic objectives. These can be continued through operational processes, associated with the analysis of the economic aspects needed in the implementation stage (with reference to the possibilities and costs of implementation and advantage appraisal).

Thus, the need for further strategic knowledge on the implications of the rural tourism activities at the provider and consumer level is created:

- a) The provider takes into consideration the following:
 - The existence of a fair report between the quality and level of classification and price;
 - The creation of a specific, personal environment, for each tourist product;
 - The unfolding of a high standard activity, which will be compared with that of the competitors, included in the itinerary.
- b) The consumer, the client- tourist can benefit from things such as:
 - Possibility to meet new people, different customs and traditions;
 - Different forms of behavior, the hospitality in different regions;
 - The degree of perceptiveness on offering suggestions.

By knowing all these functional characteristics, an efficient strategic frame of development of rural tourism can be created in our country, assuming the existence of a set of economic policy measures, among which we can mention:

- The development of a budgetary mechanism, able to support financially the fixed objectives through a development strategy;

- The creation and continuous training of a legislative frame able to support rural tourism guesthouses;
- The development of a monitoring mechanism, on national, regional and local level, able to follow the sustainable development indicators;
- Improvement of the local capacities in using management and organizations instruments, such as the area and spatial planning, not only for the protected areas, but also for the buffer zones and all the other areas with real rural tourism potential;
- The use of guiding lines, known and used on European Union level, in order to put into application, the quality of services system of certification;
- Support for the agricultural areas, included in the research programs on rural tourism and sustainable development.

This way we can explain the strategic objectives of the rural tourism marketing activities, in the Călărași County, structured as follows:

- Improvement of the activity of the existent products, especially for those related to rural tourism/ food.
- The development of new tourist products, able to capitalize especially the potential offered by the area around these counties;
- The development of a positive, identifiable image, using all the promotional methods and techniques, to satisfy the needs and wants of the tourists, during their stay;
- The qualitative and quantitative improvement of the promotional material and distribution networks;
- The promotion, during the same touristic product (tour) of two or more types of tourism (there can be developed tourist arrangements that can contribute to the wellbeing of the tourist on his/ her stay on the rural tourism guesthouse, in the South-Muntenia region, combined with travel itinerary, with cultural values) either for two or more complimentary tourist destinations.

In order to reach these targets, a county tourism office needs to be set up, which could boost the entire activity in the field, cooperate with the parties involved, and offer the necessary financial support. Human resources are also essential, because developmental programming requires operational activities, with predefined tasks and objectives.

Table 3. Monthly correlations regarding the arrival influence (x) on overnight accommodation (y), on the rural tourism guesthouses in Călărași County

No.	Month (according to the period 2007-2010)	Function	Correlation coefficient
0	1	2	3
1	January	$Y = -1354 + 4,88x - 0,00197x^2$	0.93
2	February	$Y = 1695,55 - 2,105x + 0,00186x^2$	0.68
3	March	$Y = 1426,16 - 1,33x + 0,00124x^2$	0.99
4	April	$Y = 7,69 + 1,808 - 0,00026x^2$	0.96
5	May	$Y = -694 + 3,098x - 0,00081x^2$	0.96
6	June	$Y = 475,31 + 0,738 + 0,00017x^2$	0.98
7	July	$Y = -112,21 + 1,802x - 0,00018x^2$	0.98
8	August	$Y = 320,98 + 1,262 - 0,00002x^2$	0.95
9	September	$Y = 233,17 + 1,388x - 0,00019x^2$	0.9
10	October	$Y = 4300,06 - 5,768x + 0,00281x^2$	0.92
11	November	$Y = -561622,4 + 1218,117x - 0,65418x^2$	0.82
12	December	$Y = 2029,93 - 1,167x + 0,00104x^2$	0.94

Source: self-processing

By interpreting the influence of arrival (x) upon overnight accommodation (y), the different values of the correlation coefficient, rendered in table 3, outline two aspects:

- A lower corrective lever for the months of February and November (the values being between 0.82 and 0.68), which can be translated into weaker relationship between arrival and departure;
- A stronger connection between the other months (with values varying between 0.90 and 0.99), in which case the arrivals strongly influence the departures (Tindeche, 2004).

5. Conclusion

Rural tourism demands a better knowledge of the present structures. The main types of tourism practiced in Romania, in accordance with the regulations of OMT, can be structured according to the types of classification after tourist origin, source of the tourist service offered, degree of mobility of the tourist, means of transport, travel motivation, socio-economic characteristics of the tourists (Popescu, 2009).

According to the degree of complementarity and specificity, tourist services can be classified as: specific services, direct services, unspecified services, considered connected.

The complex character of tourism requires knowledge about all economic, social and ecological components. Rural tourism services are extremely diverse, according to the characteristics of the area, season, and traditions.

The characteristics and scope of rural tourism differentiates it from traditional standard, tourism, due to the services, structure of the offer, complimentary activity of tillage, compatibility with mass tourism, etc.

That is why it is absolutely mandatory that a direct coordination line for the rural tourism activities need to be developed, in order to attract investments and foreign partnerships, so that a tourist structure be raised, to improve the living standards of the rural areas of South-Muntenia region, of the two counties.

For the status of the strategic rural tourism objectives of the South-Muntenia region of Călărași and Giurgiu counties, this meant an evaluation and understanding of the present situation, according to the objectives for the national development of tourism. In order to adapt to these strategic initiatives, it is necessary knowledge about the specific structures, in accordance with the national coordinates for the period 2007-2026. They regard:

- Administrative structures for the coordination of the rural tourism / rural tourism activities;
- Planning and infrastructure; these comprise: access and infrastructure, planning of the development, implementation in order to comply with the international standards;
- Development of human resources;
- Improvement of the rural tourism services;
- Focus of cultural forms of tourism;
- The activity of the tourist information centers, statistical and research offices, and marketing of the destination;
- Environment;
- Investment policies;
- Legal framework.

By summing up all these factors we can conclude that rural tourism can add value by: development and support of the rural areas with real touristic potential; the accomplishment of a real touristic product, a regional sustainable development of the region.

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