

THE REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM

Professor Ph.D. Romeo IONESCU

“Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, Romania

Abstract

The paper deals with methodological and gnosiological clarifications connected to the partnership between the enterprises, the institutions and the organizations which are able to promote the sustainable development of the tourism.

A distinct part of the paper analyses the rural tourism in Romania as a solution of the sustainable local and regional development.

The paper offers a complex image of the different strategies and of the actors, which promote, organize and influence the public-private partnership in tourism, as well.

We conclude that the rural tourism represents a challenge for Romania and we argue that using a SWOT analysis.

Key words: *sustainable tourism, knowledge management in tourism, consumers' expectations.*

JEL classification: *M14, O18, R11, R51, R58, R59*

1. INTRODUCTION

All Member States recognize the importance of regional knowledge management. The tourism represents a field on which this management type is very useful.

The supporting of the tourism under the regional sustainable development can't exist without a partnership between the enterprises, the institutions and the organizations which are able to attract and to mobilize the specific existing resources. This paper tries to offer methodological and gnosiological classifications connected to the necessary partnership for the promotion and the tourism sustainable development. Moreover, it introduces a new paradigm in the analytical context.

The specific knowledge management and its specific partnership are usually presented using the creation, the implementation and the obtained results.

The decisions are adopted using a post-factum analyze and comparing the activities and the objectives to the effective results. This framework doesn't emphasize the dynamics and the complexity of the specific tourism processes. It analyzes the tourism only into a contextual manner.

Under the present globalization, the tourism development in every country of the world is possible only under an optimal public-private partnership.

As a result, we try to offer a more complex imagine of the different strategies, actors and institutions which promote, organize and influence the public-private partnership in order to realize a sustainable development of the tourism.

2. THE CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM

The classical model of the knowledge management in tourism is a linear one, based on the processes and the instruments which are regulated by the different plans and strategies. Practically, this process is formed by: the initiative, the conception, the cooperation and the learning.

Moreover, it is necessary to realize the differentiation between the planning and the spontaneous characteristics of the public-private partnership in order to understand the impact of this partnership on the regional development (Osthol, Svensson, 2002).

Under the present conditions, we propose a different new model of regional development which is able to ensure a sustainable tourism development (Figure 1).

The model can be applied to every country of the world.

According to the Figure 1, the main promoters of the tourism sustainable development are: the capital, the entrepreneurship, the innovation and the specific services. All these elements are the result of an optimal partnership between the educational and research institutions, the technological and consulting institutions, the enterprises, the public authorities, the trade chambers and the union trades.

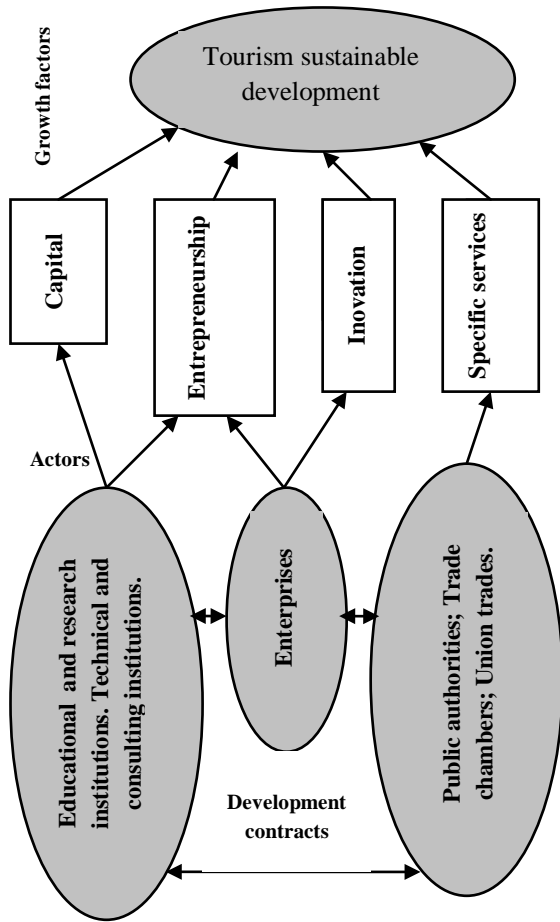


Figure 1 - New model of the tourism sustainable development

Between these regional actors are established the rules of the game and are concluded the development contracts which have as common objective the promotion of the sustainable tourism.

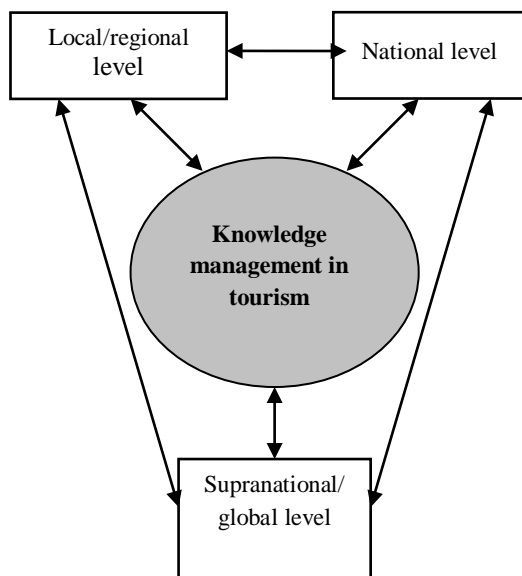


Figure 2 - The innovative system of the tourism framework

This approach is inefficient because the tourism can't be thrown out from the global context. As a result, the next step of the knowledge management in tourism innovation is the enlargement of the innovative system (Figure 2).

The public and private administrations operate at local/regional level under the framework of some specific policies, as the decision, consulting and financial entities.

The tourism is the object of the specific national programs, policies and strategies which are accompanied by adequate implementing, monitoring and quantifying instruments, as well.

The supranational/global level is covered by the specialized organizations that promote the knowledge, including the tourism.

Practically, we must discuss about a new model of global partnership connected to the promotion of the sustainable tourism. The beginning of this new partnership is the cooperation in order to achieve the common objectives, like the following: the tourism infrastructure development, the intercultural changes, the religious tourism, the balneary tourism, the relaxation tourism, the shopping tourism, the historical tourism, the safari tourism and so on. This cooperation has, as main actors, the public and the private administrations, the educational and research institutions and the specialized enterprises (Figure 3).

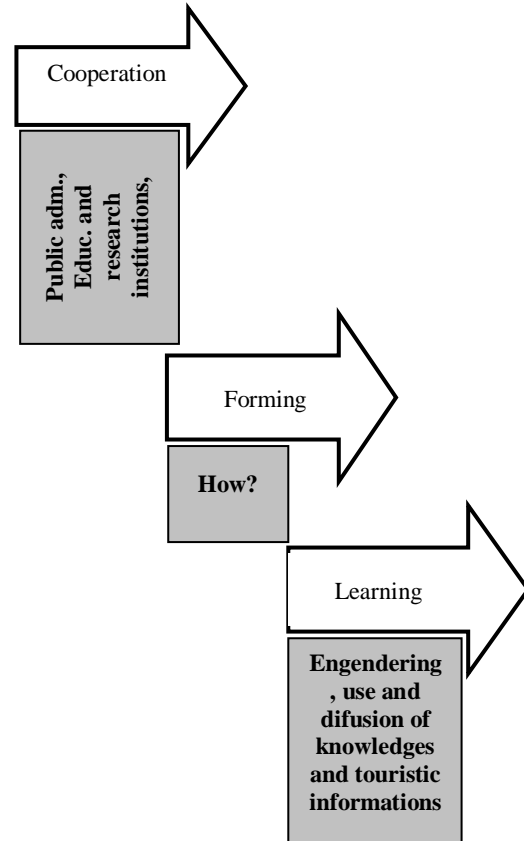


Figure 3 - The new model of the partnership in tourism

The partnership in tourism can be achieved only if the partners have the same framework on the political, administrative, managerial and informational inputs which belong to this economic sector.

We talk about the natural environment, the history, the traditions, the culture and the economy, the regional development and the urban regeneration and the political element, as well (Figure 4).

Positive impacts on the tourism development have the universities, the R&D institutes and the import of the good practices from other countries.

The partnership strategies in the tourism management can operate at social or cognitive levels.

Under the social level, the trainer will be focused on the sustentation of some social variation degrees and on the other actors' attraction in the same partnership. It means the implementation of more flexible agreements, as the reflexive agreements (Federighi et al, 2007).

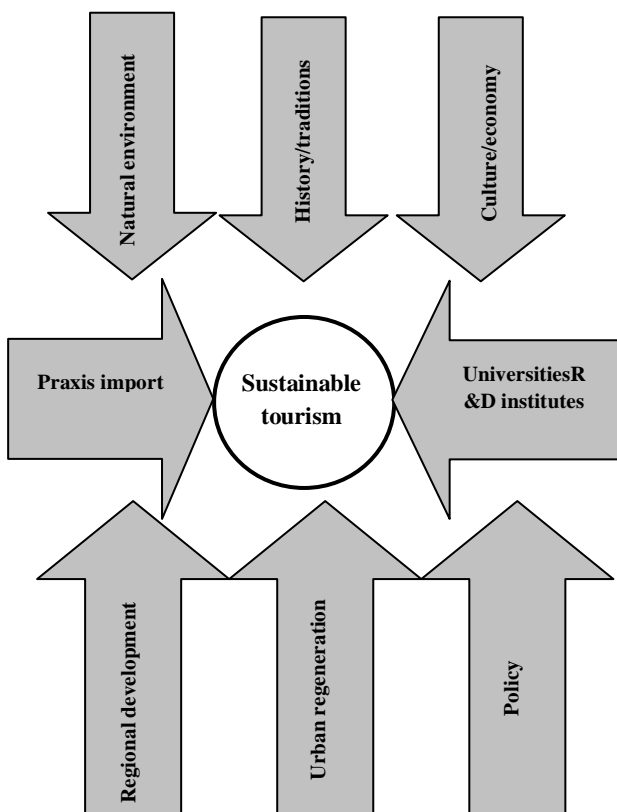


Figure 4 - Tourism-inputs connexion

The cognitive strategies are focused on the implementation of the ideas and the perceptions which are able to induce the sustainable tourism partnerships' success or breakdown. These partnerships have to be finalized with the touristic services consumers' satisfaction.

On the other hand, these consumers have particular expectations from these partnership activities, which can be divided into three categories:

- fuzzy expectations: into their schematically, emotional and ideological acceptance. These expectations are focused on some punctually objectives and follow the resulted changes, but they don't have an exactly representation of the concrete manner of achieving. Moreover, these expectations strive to become unrealistic;

- explicit expectations: they are connected to the concrete contents and the solutions of their achieving. These expectations are or are not communicated to the other network members, even that they are not compatible with the expectations of the other partners. This expectations category is a realistic one;

- implicit expectations: they come from past experiences or are the result of some structural factors or other factors which are connected to the cultural level of the tourism services consumer. These expectations are evident for every partner (Figure 5).

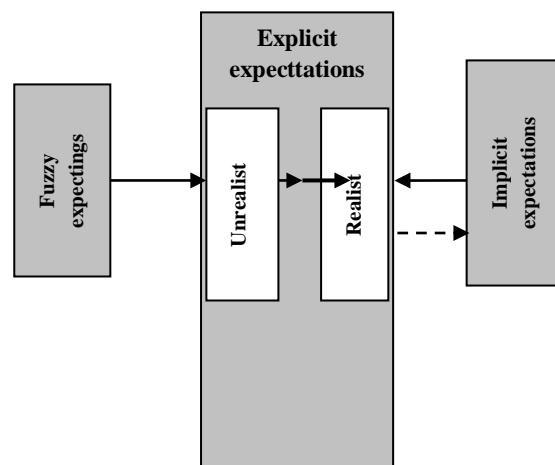


Figure 5 - The model of the tourism services consumers' expectations

Source: adaptation after Ojasalo J., 1999.

On the other hand, the fuzzy expectations present a great risk to be unachieved. These expectations are based on the direct or indirect past experiences.

When the tourism partnership will be more innovative, these past experiences will have just a little support for the partnership's success.

The explicit expectations can become unrealistic because of their innovative or experimental characteristics. Moreover, these expectations are influenced by the tourism development programs promoted by the managers and by the political factor, as well. As a result, these expectations must reorient to the realism as soon as possible.

The implicit expectations have to be clarified even that whether they are realistic or not.

In time, the explicit expectations can transform into implicit expectations and they can go out of the control.

3. THE MANAGERIAL PARTENERSHIP IN ROMANIAN RURAL TOURISM

Such a managerial partnership is very useful for Romania, in order to develop a sustainable tourism. The objective of such a partnership can be the rural tourism as element of the local and regional sustainable development.

In 2009, 93.7% from the Romania's surface is rural and 47% from its inhabitants live in the rural areas.

As a result, a viable rural tourism partnership in Romania has to focus on a better access to the European Funds.

During the present financial perspective (2007-2013), the rural and the regional tourism in Romania will benefit by 500 million Euros (under the ERDF) and 87 million Euros (from the national sources). These financial allocations will be focused on two particularly programs.

The first one is oriented to the turning to existing touristic resources and those which don't enter into the touristic circuit yet. The program is focused of the new jobs' creation, the growth of the tourism revenues and the creation of new revenues sources for the isolated areas which have touristic potential.

The second program is oriented to the growth of the tourism economic efficiency in order to decrease the disparities between Romania and the European average.

The potential of the Romanian tourism is very high. The accommodation capacity of the touristic pensions was 22061 tourists in 2005, for example. 50.5% from this capacity belong to the rural areas (INS, 2006).

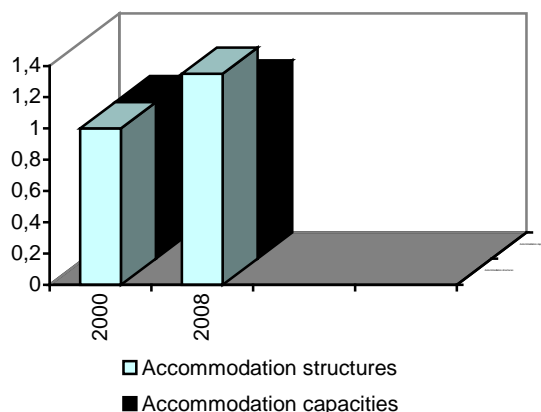


Figure 6 - The evolution of the rural tourism

The distribution of the rural pensions on the Romanian developing regions is the following: Bucharest-Ilfov 0.5%, West 4%, South-West 4%, South-East 8.9%, South 10.3%, North-East 14%, North-West 14.8% and Centre 43.5%.

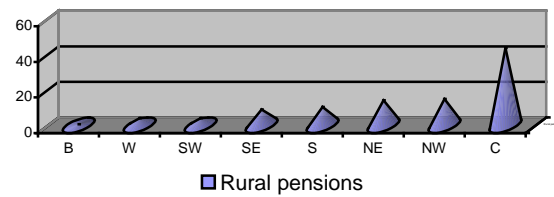


Figure 7 - The regional distribution of the rural pensions (%)

The Romanian rural tourism is influenced by the rural development, including the farms' economic activities.

As a result, it is necessary to modernize, to develop and to improve this kind of tourism.

The Romanian rural tourism is affected by an inadequate management, the lack of the promotional information, an inadequate dissemination of the touristic centers and the little number of these centers that operate in the local areas.

The SWOT analysis of the Romanian contemporary rural tourism presents pertinent information in the Table 1.

Till 2007, the Romanian rural tourism was financed by the pre-adhering funds like SAPARD and PHARE.

During 2007-2013, the rural tourism is an objective of the 5th Axis of the Regional Operational Program. This axis is focused on three action directions.

The first one deals with the sustainable use of the cultural patrimony the improvement of its infrastructure. The financial support for this action direction is 235 million Euros.

The second direction is focused on the creation, the development and the modernization of the touristic infrastructure in order to use to advantage the natural resources and to improve the touristic services' quality. This action direction benefited by 29 million Euros in 2007 and 35 million Euros in 2008.

At least, the third action direction deals with the tourism infrastructure and it will benefit by 150 million Euros during 2007-2013.

The support for the touristic activities development across the rural areas represents a distinct measure (3.1.3.) in the National Program of Rural Development in Romania.

Table1 - SWOT analysis of the Romanian rural tourism

Weaknesses	Strengths
- the inadequate promotion;	- the natural environment;
- the absence of a partnership for the rural tourism development;	- the historical and the cultural heritage;
- the absence of a efficient management;	- the existence of the natural reservations and the objectives under UNESCO's patrimony;
- the bushy legislation;	- a high creative and intelligence stock;
- the absence of the cooperation between the neighbour counties ;	- the adhering to the E.U.;
- the regions haven't competences in the regional management	- the geographical location of our country;
Threats	Opportunities
- the low development of the transport and accommodation infrastructure;	- the transformation of the rural development disparities into attractive elements for those tourists who enjoy "returns in time";
- the disproportionate report between the prices-tariffs and the services supply;	- the possibility of an easy combination between the mountain tourism, the seaside tourism, the cultural tourism and the ecumenical tourism;
- the low accession to the particular European Funds	- the possibility to simplify the dedicated legislation;
	- the existence of some brands (Dracula, Danube Delta, the monasteries from Moldova, Maramureş)

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Romanian tourism and the rural tourism in particular, represent real challenges, even if some viable projects were implemented. The rural tourism in Romania is not supported by an adequate infrastructure and a sustainable rural development.

The success of the rural tourism initiatives is little and can be observed especially on local areas, because the revenues and the economic power of the Romanian farmers are little, as well.

The Romanian rural tourism needs a consistent financial support and a new approach on the specific international markets.

Unfortunately, we do not have a real public-private partnership in tourism. Moreover, the institutions which are abilities in creating a new education and a new comportment which are able to support the sustainable development of the Romanian tourism are not efficient.

The only solution is that connected to the sustainable macroeconomic development, which can be achieved only on long term (Ionescu R., 2008).

The present solution is the fight for survival on a very dynamic competition market. Under the present crisis, the rural tourism has to maintain its accommodation capacities and to improve its services. The real benefits will be achieved later.

It seems to be the only solution in order to prevent the change of the Romanian rural tourism into safari tourism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Federighi, P., Cornett, A., Ljung M. (2007), *Regional Knowledge Management*, Polistampa, Firenze, pp.72-73.
2. Ionescu, R. (2008), *Dezvoltare regională*, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București.
3. Ionescu, R. and Oprea, R. (2008), *Lifelong learning policies, creative industries and regional development. Study case: Romanian South-East region, county Galatz*, Partners for Quality in Higher Education: Enhancing the Employability of Graduates, British Council, Editura Agata, București, pp. 51-56.
4. Ojasalo, J. (1999), *Quality Dynamics in Professional Services*, Managing Service Quality, 11(3), pp. 200-212.
5. Osthol, A., Svensson, B. (2002), *Partnership Responses-Regional Governance in the Nordic States*, Institute for Growth Policy Studies, Stockholm, p.14.
6. *** Institutul Național de Statistică (2006), *Anuarul Statistic al României*, București, editie on-line.