CHALLENGES FOR ROMANIAN ECOTOURISM DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

Within this paper we present the top ten ecotouristic destinations in Romania and thus we argue the opportunities that our country has to develop and gain from this industry. Ecotourism is a type of tourism that encourages the interaction between local population and tourists, as a real interest to protect natural areas, not only in receptor sites, but also in the transmitter ones. In the first section we point out the characteristics of ecotourism and we emphasize the core values of this concept. Throughout the second part of the paper we review the principles of ecotourism and provide examples how these worked in several cases. The third section of the paper systematically emphasizes the specific behaviour features of the ecotourist in distinct stages, like searching for the destination, preparing the voyage and undertaking the voyage. Another important section of the paper refers to Romanian ecotourism destinations and presents their specific activities and purposes. The final section of the paper analyses the trends in the evolution of ecotourism and medium term and long term perspective.

Key words: ecotourism, ecotouristic destinations, ecotourism principles, tourist, tourism trends.

JEL Classification: Z32, Z38, M21.

I.CHARACTERISTICS OF ECOTOURISM

From a widely acknowledge perspective through ecotourism we try to minimize negative impacts on the local environment and natural and on the population. The areas where it is practiced are considered of great interest and this allows the imposition of special hardship rules, with beneficial effects on the traditionally lifestyle of the local population. This type of tourism can encourage interaction between local population and tourists, as a real interest to protect natural areas, not only in receptor sites, but also in the transmitter ones. (Roman et al. 2008)

According to the National Strategy of Developing the Ecotourism in Romania (edn 2016) lately has been strongly expressed a tendency to develop the tourism industry, through its return to nature and authentic cultural values. Ecotourism is actually the most valuable manifestation of sustainable tourism. This form of tourism is aimed mainly to focus on environmental conservation and education of tourists regarding environmental protection and conservation. Even if currently there is no unanimous definition addressed, there are agreed definitions and predominantly accepted, adopted and used. After a long period of international meeting and debates, the most important institutions have agreed on a unanimous defining set of elements for this type of tourism. (Quebec Declaration, UNEP/OMT, 2002) In accordance with that agreement 'ecotourism' is a form

of alternative tourism to define and include the following:

- -The product is based on nature and its elements;
- -Environmental management serving a minimal impact;
 - -Contribution to conservation;
- -Contribution to the welfare of local communities;
 - -Environmental Education.

The convention was to agree on a set of values/principles/ key elements because each geographical area has a different perspective on ecotourism. Thus, in North America ecotourism develops natural pristine areas, where human intervention is minimized. This perspective changes in Europe, where the natural landscape is generally linked to human presence and local community connections quite close between ecotourism and rural tourism, the two forms of tourism can hardly be separated from one another. In the last decade in Europe has started to attach greater importance to landscapes, to support biodiversity and ecotourism.

Also the National Strategy of Developing the Ecotourism in Romania (edn 2016) presents the official definition for ecotourism, which is the one used in the Romanian legislation and that is very similar to the one previously presented:

Ecotourism is a form of tourism in which the main objective is the observation and awareness of the value of nature and local traditions and must meet the

following conditions: -to contribute to the conservation and protection of nature; -use of local human resources; -have educational, respect for nature - awareness of tourists and local communities; -have insignificant negative impact on the natural and sociocultural.

Thus at national level the focus is also on harnessing the natural environment as it is considered one of the fundamental requirements of ecotourism. This statement leaves the door wide open actually for a variety of activities, provided that they meet the conditions mentioned above. From this perspective ecotourism interferes with other forms of nature-based travel.

More analytically, ecotourism is considered part of the tourism segment "nature tourism", along with adventure tourism. It also has strong links to cultural and rural tourism, because many ecotourism products and activities involve activities in these areas. See figure 1 for an overview of ecotourism as a market segment in relation to other types of tourism. (Strasdas, 2001, 2002)

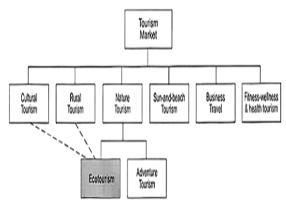


Figure 1. Ecotourism as a market segment Source: (Strasdas, 2001)

According to our main reference, the National Strategy of Developing the Ecotourism in Romania (edn 2016), the ecotourism activities may include:

-different types of adventure activities (eg rafting, canoeing, equestrian tourism on routes, skiing, bike trips on arranged paths);

- -trips / guided organized hikes;
- -tours to the observation of nature (flora and fauna);
- -experimentation trips to the conservation of nature:

-excursions to local communities (visiting cultural attractions, visiting traditional farms, watching traditional cultural manifestations, eating traditional food, purchase non-food traditional products).

With respect to the concept of "ecotourist" we have identified also a series of characteristics supported by the recent specialty literature. For instance, an ecotourist may be a person who during their stay in a resort buys an ecotouristic program for

one day to a national park nearby, even if this action lasts for a short time in their holiday. Activities that take place in nature and that obviously have a negative impact on the natural environment or socio-cultural (eg off-road activities) cannot be considered ecotourism activities. (Fennel, 2015; Nistoreanu, 2003)

II.ECOTOURISM PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

According to World Tourism Organization (WTO) dedicated definition, 'ecotourism is a form of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature and local traditions relating to nature and must meet the following conditions:

- conservation and protection of nature;
- educational, respect for nature awareness of tourists and local communities;
 - use of local human resources;
- minimal negative impact on the natural and socio-cultural.' (Minciu, 2004)

Starting from this definition and essential characteristics, there were formulated a series of principles and 'golden rules' to be promoted and respected widely.

These principles are agreed and promoted by the Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER) and are based on two international models: Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program developed by the Association of Ecotourism in Australia and Nature's Best, the accreditation system promoted by the Association of Ecotourism in Sweden. From the perspective of Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER), these principles must be applied both by those who develop ecotourism products, and by those planning the development of a based ecotourism area.

As the first principle of ecotourism to be discussed we chose the one of (1) focusing on natural areas. Ecotourism focuses on direct and personal experience in nature that takes place within nature and relies on its use or geomorphological characteristics, biological, physical and cultural aspects of it. Thus the focus on the natural area is the core issue in the planning, development and management of ecotourism. (Blaj, 2014)

The second principle we bring to attention is (2) interpretation of ecotourism product. This refers to the fact that ecotourism offers opportunities for experiences in nature that lead to a better understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of discovering and preserving local nature and traditional culture for both visitors and the local community. Ecotourism products are of interest for the tourists who want to directly interact with the natural environment and, to varying degrees, want broadening their knowledge, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment. Those who develop or coordinate ecotourism activities should provide an adequate level of understanding of the natural and cultural values of

the areas visited, usually using properly qualified guides and providing accurate information both before and during the experience. The level and type of interpretation is planned, designed and elaborated in such a way as to meet the interests, needs and expectations of customers, with the inclusion of a wide range of possible interpretations both personal and non-personal. (Blaj, 2014, Blumer et al 2013)

The third on the list of Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER) is the principle of (3) Sustainability from the perspective of protecting the natural environment. Ecotourism activities and their planning should provide best practices of tourism and planning from the point of view of nature conservation and sustainable development. Tourism activity should be planned and carried out in order to reduce the impact on nature. Ecotourism product is conducted and managed so as to preserve and highlight the natural and cultural environment which runs through the recognition and implementation of sustainable tourism practices characteristic. (Blaj, 2014)

(4) Contribution to nature conservation is the fourth principle which should be implemented in ecotourism.

Ecotourism contributes positively to the conservation of natural areas. Ecotourism involves the conservation of visited natural areas, offering constructive ways for good management and conservation of these natural areas (eg providing financial aid actions for the rehabilitation of natural areas, waste collection left by tourists or contribution to conservation organizations).

A very sensitive issue is being approached through the principle of (5) Constructive contribution to the development of local communities. Ecotourism must ensure sustainable contribution on development of local communities. The local community is often an integral part of the ecotourism product. The benefits of ecotourism should return largely to local communities. There are many options in order to generate benefits for the locals, like using local guides, buying local goods and services and using local facilities. Ecotourism activities and their planning should ensure a reduction in the negative impact on the visited local community and on their lifestyle, while providing long-term constructive contributions of these communities. Therefore, ecotourism must highlight the cultural component of the visited area and contribute to maintaining it.

Principle no. (6) The degree of satisfaction of tourists has a great impact on the whole ecotourism development. The major scope of ecotourism should be to meet tourists' expectations and further more to surpass their expectations and delight the tourists. In developing ecotourism products should be considered that in general, potential tourists in this area have a high level of education and expectations. Thus, the degree of satisfaction related to ecotourism product is essential, given the experience fulfilling or exceeding the level of expectation tourists.

One more principle, certainly not the least important, is (7) Fair marketing. This principle implies for the agents to aim at achieving a correct marketing, leading to realistic expectations. The marketing of ecotourism offers customers comprehensive and responsible information leading to the enhancement of the natural and cultural environment of the areas visited and the degree of satisfaction of tourists. Fair marketing should be considered compulsory or there will be no other second chance to do it in a specific destination.

Both scholars and practitioners in the domain provide many other sets of principles, models, guidelines or strategies. Minimizing the negative impact on nature and culture that would impact and could destroy tourism destination. (Coria and Calfucura, 2012)

- Educating tourists about the importance of conservation.
- Highlighting the importance of responsible operators, which cooperate with the population and local authorities, to meet community needs.
- Providing funds for conservation and management Protected Natural Areas.
- Emphasizing the need for regional tourism zoning and planning tourist flows to regions or natural areas that will become ecotourism destinations.
- The need to use social and environmental studies, as well as some Long-term monitoring programs to assess and minimizing the impact.
- Fight to maximize the economic benefits of the host country of communities and local companies and especially of its residents and protected natural areas.
- Ensure the development of tourism that does not exceed a certain limit the change of socially and environmentally limit the researchers determined in collaboration with the residents
- Use a developed infrastructure in harmony with the natural environment and cultural, minimizing the use of fossil fuels and conserving local vegetation and fauna. (Wood, 2002)

A large part of the literature analyzing the links between biodiversity conservation and community development assumes that nature-based tourism managed by indigenous communities will result not only in conservation of natural resources but also in increased development. In practice, ecotourism has often failed to deliver the expected benefits to indigenous communities due to a combination of factors, including shortages in the endowments of human, financial and social capital within the community, lack of mechanisms for a fair distribution of the economic benefits of ecotourism, and land insecurity. (Coria and Calfucura, 2012, p.47)

III.PROFILE OF THE ECOTOURIST BEHAVIOR

When preparing the voyage, the ecotourist undergoes a series of specific activities. First is choosing a travel agent or organization which are concerned with minimizing the impact of tourism activity on the environment. Then comes the choosing of a promoter or a travel agency that offers a training meeting about how they should behave at the place of destination or use equipment to protect the environment. To continue with there must be achieved a specific awareness of the natural habitat and cultural values of the area. And finally, adapting own behaviour and code of conduct to visited area values. (Buckley, 2010)

In most cases, a very important element which significantly influences the quality of services in a travel agency, in addition to those related to product or service selection, is the employee's selling behaviour. (Buckley, 2010) The attitude of the workers in the commercial area can inspire confidence and total openness from customers, but, well, it can have unimaginable effects on the perception of tourists. Low motivated employees, who adopt a hostile attitude in relation to customers, or who don't know to do their job are some aspects that may strongly discourage the customers in becoming tourists. (Hapenciuc et al, 2015)

From other sources we discover a more analytical approach of the ecotourist behaviour when preparing the voyage. Actually the steps are almost the same with respect to the tourist behaviour but there are further rules which have to be implemented within the visited are. Thus the code of conduct for an ecotourism area may include: banning of unauthorized access in public areas; respect for markings; inform tour operators, authorities and visitors to the violation of any rules that may affect the natural habitat and cultural. Another dimension to consider is the respect for flora, fauna and their habitat. In this regard special attention has to be awarded to actions like: moving calmly, without disturbing the natural environment; keeping a considerable distance from animals to not bother them; avoid feeding; avoid intervening in natural habitat; avoid areas where there is a large number of animals; banning of moving animals or plants break; avoid purchasing plants or animals that are endangered or found in small numbers in a certain area. A series of regulations have to be respected in order to reduce environmental impacts when visiting ecotouristic destinations. For example: adopting behaviour to reduce all types of pollution (chemical, biological, visual, olfactory and audible); promoting travel in small groups; awareness of the impact their actions on the environment; maintenance of motorized equipment in good condition; the use of low-polluting or non-polluting equipment; choosing sustainable products, biodegradable and reusable; waste storage areas designed strictly for this purpose; favouring transport means that have none or minimal impact on environment. (Blumer et al., 2013)

In addition to the dimension of respect towards nature there is added the human and social dimension which regards the respect of local communities. This attitude is reflected throughout: appreciation of the uniqueness of the population accessed; compliance with customs, local traditions and cultural differences; openness to learning; supporting the local economy by purchasing goods and services; respect people's privacy and private property; adapting to local culture; adopting a respectful behaviour towards other visitors. (Coria and Calfucura, 2012; Fennel, 2015).

IV.ROMANIAN ECOTOURISM DESTINATIONS

Recently during a great national event, the Romania's Tourism Fair which took place on November 17th, the National Authority for Tourism has nominated several new destinations of ecotourism in our country. The National Authority for Tourism has granted the following certifications "Hateg-Retezat Land" as Ecotourism Destination (in Romanian Țara Hațegului - Retezat - Destinație de Ecoturism) and "Aurochs Land"- ECOtouristic Destination (in Romanian Ținutul Zimbrului -Destinație ECOturistică). The new areas join two other certificates awarded in 2014: Zărnești - Stone Mountains (in Romanian Zărnești - Piatra Craiului) and Mara - Cosau - Rooster's Comb (in Romanian Mara - Cosau - Creasta Cocosului). Being awarded these certifications implies that the representatives of these destinations should further make efforts and work towards growing their activity. At national level, the effort to build a national network of ecotourism destinations is financially supported by the Romanian-American Foundation and the Partnership Foundation - Polgár Alapítvány-Tarsia. (Nițescu, 2016)

Following we consider relevant to present briefly the top 10 ecotourism destinations in Romania in terms of their specific label and characteristics. As we acknowledged at the National Conference for Ecotourism in March 2016 these are ten most significant destinations in our country.

- 1. "Haţeg-Retezat Land" as Ecotourism Destination (in Romanian Țara Haţegului Retezat Destinaţie de Ecoturism) this area offers opportunities for the following activities: hiking, cycling, winter activities, photo tours, cultural tours. (Nitescu, 2016)
- 2. "Aurochs Land"- ECOtouristic Destination (in Romanian Ținutul Zimbrului Destinație ECOturistică) this area is suitable for hiking, cycling, observation of fauna and flora, photo tours, cultural tours. (Niţescu, 2016)
- 3. "Zărnești Stone Mountains" (in Romanian Zărnești Piatra Craiului) this area offers opportunities for the following activities: hiking, cycling, difficult tours of mountain bike, birds'

observation, photo tours, cultural tours. (Nițescu, 2016)

- 4. "Mara Cosau Rooster's Comb" (in Romanian Mara Cosau Creasta Cocoşului) a destination for ecotourism where visitors can relax within a mesmerizing natural landscape. There are a series of activities which can be developed for improving physical condition like mountain bike but also other opportunities of enjoying traditional food and beverage, participating to local fairs, and assisting local people for traditional crafting, old since centuries ago. (Nitescu, 2016)
- 5. "Danube Delta" (in Romanian Delta Dunării), is a world class reference objective for our country. This ecotouristic area provides opportunities for water activities, going by boat, observation of fauna and flora, photo tours, cultural tours, eating fish courses. (Nitescu, 2016)
- 6. "Sibiu Surroundings" (in Romanian Mărginimea Sibiului), is maybe the most famous area for ecotourism due to the fact that Sibiu County was European Cultural Capital in 2007 and with this occasion it was highly promoted at international level and received the attention of worldwide tourists. Specific activities are cultural tours and plenty opportunities to taste local delicious dishes. The beautiful landscapes attract tourists to take numerous photos as everlasting memories. The natural sights are suitable for trips, hikes and cycling in the summer and for winter sports in the cold season. (Nitescu, 2016)
- 7. "Transylvanian Hills" (in Romanian Colinele Transilvaniei) This ecotouristic area provides opportunities for hiking, trips, observation of fauna and flora, photo tours, cultural tours, equestrian tourism, cycling, and enjoying tasting traditional dishes. (Niţescu, 2016)
- 8. "Tusnad Balneums and Surroundings" (in Romanian Baile Tusnad si Imprejurimile) represents a destination where you can discover beautiful landscapes, welcoming people and unique local customs. Especially in the summer tourist may go on trips and observe the fauna and flora. During the rest of the year the tourists may do cycling, rafting and kayaking on Olt River and also specific winter sports. The destination is provides many options for cultural tourism too. (Niţescu, 2016)
- 9. "Dorna Land" (in Romanian Tara Dornelor) is a mountainous ecotouristic destination. Taking all day long trips and hikes or cycling and rafting on Bistrita River are some of the activities tourists may apply for with no second thoughts. The specific of the area is to do equestrian tourism and riding horses over the beautiful hills and forests. Observation of unique and rare fauna may be more relaxing activities at any moment of the day. (Niţescu, 2016)
- 10. "King's Forest" (in Romanian Padurea Craiului) is an ecotouristic destination that provides quite rare options, like sightseeing of old caves and grots. Observation of savage fauna and flora mustn't be overlooked especially in this area. Cultural circuits

may offer unique experiences and also the common activities are also available (trips, hikes, cycling and rafting). (Nitescu, 2016)

V.ECOTOURISM TRENDS AND PERSPECTIVES

The tourism is invert commerce (the consumer goes to the ware), and the culture is the main element of the motivation, it's important to have a clear idea concerning the structure of the culture and the phenomenon that affect this field, for understanding the causes of the lasts mutations in tourism. If a cultural product like world wide web can be consumed home, it can determine the decision of a travel for effective consumption (to the place presented in www) or maybe it can become a "virtual trip", a sick tourism, in the case of persons touched by the "Internet syndrome".

As a coincidence at the cultural revolution with the ones from informatics and communication, the tourism passes from service packets to selling life experience, actually art, culture or a part of life time, of existence for the subject (the tourist), blended through the intimate process of culture and the object (raw material in the tourism activity). For example as a reinforcement of this information, we mention the fact that the tourist who goes in a tourist agency isn't asked where he wants to leave, but what kind of destination he desires: a family environment, adventure, sport, for youth, or an exotic or classic one. Unlike rich countries, for a tourist from a transition country, the first question it refers to the allotted budget. (Hapenciuc and Kyfyak, 2007)

It is now widely acknowledged the idea that tourism has become one of the major socio-economic sectors. It recorded a steady expansion over time, with a growth rate of 5-10% in the last half century. Tourism is not only an increase in the number of tourists, but it has also showed that activity turn into more diverse and complex ones. Although mass tourism remains the predominant form other types of activities related to culture, environment, education and health have emerged. They reflect preferences for environmental quality and a more vigorous and participatory form of recreation. Skiing, hiking, cycling, and canoeing activities have become much more enjoyable than ever, satisfying the need to be close to nature, exploring and learning through motion. (Lewis and Jim, 2013)

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) identified the main trends of this tourism at international level:

-since 1990, ecotourism has grown annually by 20-34%;

-by 2004 Ecotourism was developed globally 3 times more than the global tourism industry;

-international market of nature-based tourism is growing currently by 10-12% annually;

-classic tourism market in the tourist resort was mature and its growth will remain constant;

-in contrast, tourism based experiences -

ecotourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism - are among the sectors that can develop very quickly in the next two decades; most of the expansion of tourism takes place in and around natural areas;

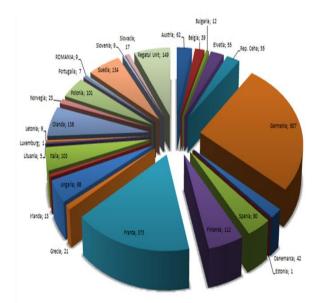
-sustainable tourism could grow, reaching 25% of the global tourism market over the next six years. (National Strategy of Developing the Ecotourism in Romania, edn 2016)

Tourism for cycling catches increasingly more contour also in Romania. It is a pleasant, active, simple and (generally) cheaper alternative to discover places, people, customs and traditions of a particular geographic area / administrative-territorial / culture (more or less extended). Regarding the infrastructure, this is a better alternative because it facilitates access to people in the communities. In a study conducted by the General Directorate for Internal Policies of the European Parliament, published in 2012 - "The European cycle route network - Eurovelo" shows that the estimated number of cycle-tourist visits in Europe is 2.295 billion / year. These lead to an estimated economic impact of nearly 44 billion Euros.

From these graphs we can observe that France, Germany and the UK dominate the top at both cyclotouristic visits and at their economic impact. Furthermore we may observe the thin slices, of which one is allocated to Romania for 9 million visits / year with an economic impact of 180 million Euros / year.

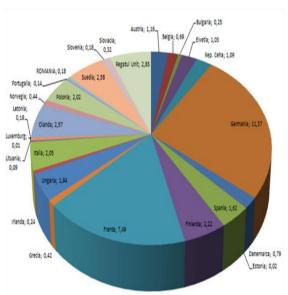
In our country we may observe the increasing demand for ecotourism by analysing the evolution of figures in accommodation structure within the timeframe 2005-2013.

In table 1 it can be observed an evolution of the rural guesthouses in the country. Also we can see that with lower interest are approached the touristic guesthouses, their number has been 1335, less than rural ones. Those two types of accommodation structures are the most accessed ones by ecotourists at national level. The number of touristic guesthouses grows in mean from one year to another by 17,41% and the number of rural guesthouses has a mean grow of 6,63%.



Graph 1 - Estimated Daytrips by country, in millions / year

Source: http://smartatletic.ro/cicloturismcalarasi/motivatie



Graph 2 - Total spent by country, billions/year

Source: http://smartatletic.ro/cicloturismcalarasi/motivatie

Table	1. Accommodation structure evolution
in Romania.	within the timeframe 2005-2013

m Romama, within the timerrame 2005-2015										
Accomm	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
odation	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	
structures										
Hotels	11	12	12	12	13	13	15	16	16	
and	79	20	31	64	61	97	03	06	60	
motels										
Hostels	33	75	79	81	97	11	14	17	18	
						4	5	8	5	
Roadside	11	9	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	
inns										
Touristic	11	11	10	11	12	13	14	14	15	
chalets	3	6	8	6	3	4	7	6	2	
Camps	84	12	11	10	10	10	71	93	12	
and box-		1	1	9	1	0			4	
types										
unites										
Touristic	10	10	97	98	10	10	75	86	87	
villas and	21	40	4	2	12	35	3	3	0	
bungalow										
S										
Student	15	12	11	11	11	92	69	70	62	
camps	1	8	5	1	1					
Touristic	59	70	73	78	87	94	10	12	13	
guesthous	7	2	6	3	8	9	50	00	35	
es										
Rural	95	12	12	13	14	13	12	15	15	
guesthous	6	59	92	48	12	54	10	69	98	
es										
Tourist	29	31	30	31	30	32	41	39	35	
stops										
Holiday	3	2	3	3	4	4	5	6	6	
villages										
Accomm	9	7	9	7	6	7	5	10	10	
odation										
on ships										
Total	42	47	46	48	50	52	50	58	60	
	26	10	94	40	95	22	03	21	09	

Source: http://www.revistadestatistica.ro/supliment/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/RRSS 6 2015 A05.pdf

VI.CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL REMARKS

Ecotourism can and in most of the cases should be viewed as a business opportunity. A business in ecotourism can have long-term success if it is developed responsibly in a law-abiding market.

Many opportunities arise from the fact that ecotourism is a version of sustainable tourism in natural areas, including at the same time elements of rural and cultural tourism. Besides subscribing to the principles of sustainable tourism, ecotourism has its specific principles: actively contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural; it includes local communities in planning, development and operation and contribute to their welfare; full explanation involving and interesting for visitors, on natural and cultural resources; it is designed primarily for individual visitors and small organized groups. (Mason, 2016)

The globally increasing importance of tourism has been explained throughout literature in many ways. It is obvious that tourism (and ecotourism) is developing into a powerful process influencing all parts of the world. Studying the evolution of tourism

phenomena we notice how important it was in past societies. The first major growth in consumer spending was in home ownership, then in car ownership and then in accessing tourism and international travel. Actually the activity of international travel is a defining feature of the consumer society. Even if the car has given more people access to tourism and leisure opportunities within their own country (domestic travel), the low-cost tickets for flying have made international travel and tourism products and services more widely available. (Page, 2015, p.3)

We notice that ecotourism is a niche market in tourism in natural areas, which increased impressive in recent decades. The trend is to become a market segment that reacts independently from the influence of factors such as the aging population, the preference of travellers who choose tint educational vacations that enrich their existence, their desire to getaway in nature, to be active and spend quality time with friends or family. (Mason, 2016)

In conclusion we provide the representation of which we consider the most important elements in planning ecotourism at community level. When speaking about gaining benefits from ecotourism at a community level there are some principles that must be respected in order for the local community to develop in a sustainable manner. Figure 2 presents the elements of a participative planning which should be a good option from the point of view of local communities in ecotouristic area. Thus, we may argue that activities which are not carried out in line with the objectives, the principles and the characteristics of ecotourism, they cause damages in environmental, economic and socio-cultural fields. Therefore, in order to provide sustainability in the ecotourism, it is necessary to be aware of environmental, social and economic effects of ecotourism activities and to consider these effects during the planning of ecotourism.



Figure 2. Essential elements for ecotourism in community setting

Source: (Kiper, 2013, p. 796)

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