

## STUDIES REGARDING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM AND AGRI- TOURISM IN THE VATRA DORNEI MICROZONE, SUCEAVA COUNTY

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**ABSTRACT** – The investigations conducted at the Vatra Dornei microzone, Suceava County, which is made up of 11 administrative-territorial units (Broșteni, Ciocănești, Cîrlibaba, Crucea, Dorna Arini, Dorna Candreni, Iacobeni, Panaci, Poiana Stampei, Șaru Dornei and Vatra Dornei Municipality) have shown that all these localities had similar conditions as concerns soil and climatic conditions, social-economic development, high touristic potential and relatively low density of population (below 45 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>). Our studies carried out in the Vatra Dornei microzone on the sustainable development of rural tourism and agritourism showed that in the investigated area there was a specific form of agritourism, corresponding to the mountainous area, which had specific features in every village and commune. The basic element of the sustainable development within these localities was represented by a new orientation of the farm development. The agritouristic pensions from the studied area have two stars, while at Dorna Candreni, there are three star-pensions (Poiana and Poiana Izvoarelor Pensions).

**Key words:** objectives and strategies, rural tourism, sustainable development

**REZUMAT - Studii privind dezvoltarea durabilă a turismului rural și agroturismului în microzona Vatra Dornei, jud. Suceava.** Cercetările efectuate în microzona Vatra Dornei, jud. Suceava, alcătuită din 11 unități administrativ-teritoriale: Broșteni, Ciocănești, Cîrlibaba, Crucea, Dorna Arini, Dorna Candreni, Iacobeni, Panaci, Poiana Stampei, Șaru Dornei și municipiul Vatra Dornei, demonstrează faptul că toate aceste localități au condiții asemănătoare în ceea ce privește condițiile pedoclimatice, nivelul de dezvoltare economico-socială, potențial turistic ridicat și o densitate relativ mică de populație (sub 45 locuitori/km<sup>2</sup>). Cercetările întreprinse în microzona Vatra Dornei privind dezvoltarea durabilă a turismului rural și agroturismului au dus la concluzia că, în arealul cercetat, există o formă specifică de agroturism corespunzătoare zonei montane, care îmbracă forme particulare în fiecare sat și comună. Elementul de bază al dezvoltării

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durabile în cadrul acestor localități se realizează printr-o nouă orientare a dezvoltării exploatațiilor agricole. La nivelul unităților agroturistice studiate, gospodăriile agroturistice sunt amplasate dispersat, la nivelul satelor componente, și sunt clasificate cu 2 margarete, iar la Dorna Candreni, funcționând două pensiuni, clasificate cu 3 margarete (pensiunea Poiana și pensiunea Poiana Izvoarelor).

**Cuvinte cheie:** dezvoltare durabilă, obiective și strategii, turism rural

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism consumption is largely influenced by the policies of regional development, by the objectives and strategies coming from the affiliation to the local community, the technical-economic parameters of the local economic potential, but also the real needs for consumption of the population that arise from the traditions and the accessibility to different locations.

The sustainable development of rural tourism and agritourism should observe some economic, ecological and social requirements that can be noticed by increasing the exploitation level and turning to good account of the natural and human resources, preventing the environmental degradation or by increasing the number of jobs and traditional crafts, through the attraction of the population towards the rural tourism and agritourism. Taking these into consideration, the complex development of localities and the income increase, by the superior utilization of the own products, are

necessary for new prospects of rural development in the Vatra Dornei microzone, in order to reach a higher economic level.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sustainable development can be achieved by the management of all the resources, in order to be able to respond to economic, social and esthetical needs, preserving, at the same time, the cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and the systems that sustain life.

We have used the monographic method, the diagnosis analysis and the method of alternatives for an efficient valorisation of some natural and human resources, in order to analyse the agritourist potential of the Vatra Dornei microzone, made up of 11 communes, to which the town of Vatra Dornei was included.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sustainable development is a complex and multidimensional concept, while the rural tourism and agritourism, although components of the same concept reflect the very diversity, valorising the resources of the zone. In this context, the rural tourism and agritourism must bring supplementary sources of income to the inhabitants of the Vatra Dornei microzone, being developed within some ecological parameters by observing the millenary traditions and customs, the different way of living from other areas, highly valorising the places, historical and natural monuments and the architecture of

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localities and their surroundings (Brezuleanu, 2008).

Within the concept of sustainable and integrated rural development, the rural tourism and agritourism of the Vatra Dornei microzone could ensure the preservation of the structures and of the rural way of life, contributing to the maintenance of its specific traditions and attractions.

Our studies were carried out in the Vatra Dornei microzone, made up

of 11 administrative-territorial units: Broșteni, Ciocănești, Cîrlibaba, Crucea, Dorna Arini, Dorna Candreni, Iacobeni, Panaci, Poiana Stampei, Șaru Dornei and Vatra Dornei Municipality. We noticed that all the localities had similar conditions as regards soil-climatic conditions, level of social-economic development, high tourist potential and relatively reduced population (below 45 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>) (*Table 1*).

**Table 1 - The number of inhabitants and the population density in the administrative units of the Vatra Dornei microzone – 2006**

Administrative-territorial unit	Number of inhabitants	Population density inhabitant/km <sup>2</sup>	
		< 40 inhabitants	> 100 inhabitants
Broșteni	6795	16	-
Ciocănești	1875	22	-
Cîrlibaba	2055	8	-
Crucea	2750	15	-
Dorna Arini	3200	22	-
Dorna Candreni	4705	12	-
Iacobeni	2048	22	-
Panaci	2381	18	-
Poiana Stampei	2452	13	-
Șaru Dornei	4520	24	-
Vatra Dornei	17340	-	118

**Source:** Department for Agriculture and Rural Development of Suceava

The natural and historical conditions have influenced the gradual development of the localities from Vatra Dornei microzone, but they could not entirely valorise through agritourism the various natural resources, springs of mineral waters, agri-food products (meat and milk), fruits, mushrooms and trout. There are also great areas of degraded

meadows and hayfields, which require improvement measures.

In some areas with high tourism potential (Dorna Arini, Dorna Candreni, Pana, Ciocănești and Poiana Stampei), there is a large discrepancy between the number of dwellings, agritourist households and modernizing households for agritourism (*Table 2*).

Table 2 - The situation of the agritourist locations in Vatra Dornei microzone (2008)

Administrative territorial unit	Agritourist households		Households identified for agritourism		Modernizing households		Agritourist households under construction	
	Certified	Accommodation places	Certified	Accommodation places	Certified	Accommodation places	Certified	Accommodation places
Broșteni	3	24	5	30	1	6	1	10
Ciocănești	8	30	9	70	5	24	2	24
Cîrlibaba	2	14	7	40	-	-	-	-
Crucea	1	6	2	10	-	-	1	10
Dorna Arini	20	78	5	22	6	25	3	20
Dorna Candreni	2	20	15	56	4	20	2	10
Iacobeni	3	12	15	38	-	-	-	-
Panaci	8	40	7	30	3	15	2	20
Poiana Stampei	6	30	4	20	2	10	2	10
Șaru Dornei	3	21	8	40	-	-	2	14
Vatra Dornei	40	325	10	40	8	50	7	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>198</b>

As we noticed, most of the agritourist households were situated in Dorna Arini, Panaci, Ciocănești and Poiana Stampei, to which we added 40 locations of Vatra Dornei Municipality with 325 places, which offer the tourists the conditions of thermal and balneal tourism.

Within the studied agritourist units and households that are dispersed in the villages, we found two and three-star pensions in Dorna Candreni (*Poiana Pension* and *Poiana Izvoarelor Pension*).

The communes, which generally gather 3-5 villages, are spread across the valleys or on the hill slopes and in depressions, reaching 1300 m in height. In the villages scattered across

the valleys, the farming activity prevails, and in those found on the alpine plateau, the main activity is the exploitation of meadows, hayfields and forests. The animal husbandry (sheep and cows) on meadows is a traditional activity in this part of the country (Ciurea et al., 2004).

The Vatra Dornei microzone has a significant weight in the economic development of the Suceava County and some of their products are on demand all over the country and abroad.

The main economic branches are based on the local resources (wood industry and mining at Șarul Dornei and Broșteni) and focus on the labour force in the rural area.

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The farming area occupies 13% (1% of the arable land), while the meadows have the greatest percentage (23% grasslands and 31% meadows).

The private sector that is dominant in this area occupies 91% of the farming area, 99% of the arable land, 81% of the meadows and 99.7% of the hayfields.

Generally, the craftsman activities are well represented in the Vatra Dornei microzone, each locality having at least a non-farming activity that covers a part of the available labour force from mining and wood industry and which could be the starting point for the development of high quality agritourism (*Table 3*).

**Table 3 - Situation of the units processing the non-farming products in the Vatra Dornei microzone**

Administrative-territorial unit	Wood	Stone	Pottery	Handcraft	Other activities	No. of jobs
Broșteni	18	-	-	3	6	133
Ciocănești	5	-	-	2	3	45
Cîrlibaba	7	2	-	-	3	128
Crucea	24	-	-	-	1	280
Dorna Arini	35	2	-	7	2	400
Dorna Candreni	28	-	-	8	4	950
Iacobeni	6	2	-	3	2	70
Panaci	22	-	-	10	1	216
Poiana Stampei	38	-	-	5	2	125
Șaru Dornei	15	-	-	1	1	90
Vatra Dornei	11	1	-	6	3	219
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3076</b>

The natural conditions and resources of the Vatra Dornei microzone are various, representing the main advantage for the sustainable development and practice of rural tourism and agritourism. We could also mention some resources that are insufficiently valorised: the Pleistocene deposits of Vatra Dornei with important oligotrophic peat bogs, sulphurous deposits of the Călimani Mountains, uranium deposits from Crucea, iron and pyrite oxides from Cîrlibaba, mineral springs of Vatra Dornei, Poiana Negri and Șaru Dornei, resources of construction materials, etc.

Besides these subsoil resources from the mountainous area that belong to the studied area, a very important role in the sustainable development of the economy is played by the large areas of grasslands and meadows, which high nutritive value and valuable flower mixture have determined the specific and secular tradition of sheep and dairy cattle husbandry.

Another advantage of the Vatra Dornei microzone is the social-cultural tourism objectives, grouped, according to their specific: architectural monuments, historical objectives, folklore and traditional art,

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museums and memorial houses. The concentration of these cultural elements in some intensely inhabited areas (Ciocănești and Panaci) attracts more and more tourists from Romania and abroad.

The developing agritourism finds in the Vatra Dornei area, a remarkable potential, due to the quality of the natural and socio-cultural environment, the habitat standard and the diversity of economic and traditional activities. Theoretically, all the rural farm households from the Vatra Dornei microzone have potential for the rural tourism and agritourism. However, the development of these two forms of tourism is influenced by the quality of natural landscape, valorisation of traditional farming products from households or by some cultural factors (Matei, 2005).

### CONCLUSIONS

The studies carried out in the Vatra Dornei microzone regarding the sustainable development of rural tourism and agritourism have shown that in the analysed area, there is a specific form of agritourism for the mountainous area, that has particular forms for every village and commune. The fundamental element of the sustainable development in these localities is ensured through a new vision on the farm development. This new orientation stimulates the complex development of the localities, at the same time with multiple qualification, income

increase by superior valorisation of the own products in agritourism, which influences the general development of the area.

It is necessary to identify the agritourist potential of the Vatra Dornei microzone that can harmoniously combine the material, natural and spiritual factors, from both hosts and tourists' point of view. The agritourist potential will be evaluated in accordance with the area, existence of a minimum infrastructure, environment and possibilities of achieving agritourist programmes that could activate old traditions, which will be an attraction for the tourists.

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