

DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN PETROȘANI AREA, HUNEDOARA COUNTY

GABRIELA CORINA SLUSARIUC, CIPRIAN NIMARĂ *

ABSTRACT: *Mountain tourism specific to Petroșani Depression, includes a wide range of recreational, spiritual and economic activities taking place in various mountain areas. For Petroșani town, tourism could be an important economic source for the local community, generating jobs and income, ultimately, allow local organization and continuity of living in accordance with their own cultural traditions and origins. This paper aims to highlight the mountain tourism potential of this area and to give some alternatives for sustainable development.*

KEY WORDS: *sustainable tourism, Parâng Ski Resort, tourism marketing, Petroșani.*

JEL CLASSIFICATIONS: *R0, R1, Z3.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Romania is part of the international tourist circuit with unique touristic resources both natural and anthropogenic, whose smart recovery could substantially strengthen the role of the tourism industry in the national economy, with positive effects on the entire society. Currently, in Romania, tourism has an indirect contribution of 6.3% of GDP and 3.1% of employment and the direct contribution of 5.2% and 1.9%.

For several years, Romania has been kept somewhat separate from international tourism system for political reasons. Now with the help of sustainable tourism strategies, Romania can reap the benefits of tourism to avoid mistakes that have been made in other areas. Bear in mind, however, that tourism can not guarantee to resolve all the problems from protected areas (Câdea et al., 2003).

* *Assoc. Prof., Ph.D., University of Petroșani, Romania, ellaslusariuc@gmail.com
Lecturer, Ph.D., University of Petroșani, Romania, ciprian.nimara@yahoo.com*

Petrosani Depression is considered a low compartment into the Carpathians, being limited to the North by mountain ranges: Retezat and Șureanu, South and Southeast of Vâlcanului and Parang Mountains. NNE-SSW has guidance about having a length of about 45 km and a width ranging from East to West between 9 and 12 km. It includes six settlements with their localities: Petrila (Lonea, Jieț, Cimpa), Petroșani (Dâlja, Livezeni), Aninoasa (Iscroni), Vulcan (Dealul Babii, Paroșeni), Lupeni, Uricani (Valea de Brazi, Câmpu lui Neag), with a population in 2020 of 132 185 inhabitants, the largest town being Petroșani with 40 970 inhabitants (figure 1).



Figure 1. Position of Petroșani Depression and the largest town

2. FEATURES OF THE MOUNTAIN TOURISM FROM PETROȘANI

Romania receives annually about 1.5 billion dollars, while Hungary, for example, which hasn't the potential of Romania, receive 5 times more. The major problems of tourism in Romania are reflected at the local level, affecting the socio-economic areas with high tourism potential.

To the geographical and historical province of Transylvania, Hunedoara county, recorded a total number of 194 245 tourists in 2019 and 71 723 in 2020 (less tourists because of SARS CoV₂ pandemic), ranking it as number 6 of the 10 counties. Of this total, approximately 70% were oriented into ski areas in Petrosani and Lupeni. So, as a first conclusion, we can say that today the main form of tourism in Petrosani Depression, is the tourism for winter sports.

According to some authors, mountain tourism as the concept of the tourism industry, is a form of "interference" tourism, derived from:

- winter tourism, a form of individualized tourism based on the criterion of seasonality, which shows two distinct characteristics, as the reason for making the trip, namely for snow tourism and sun searched in the winter (Hall & Higham, 2005);

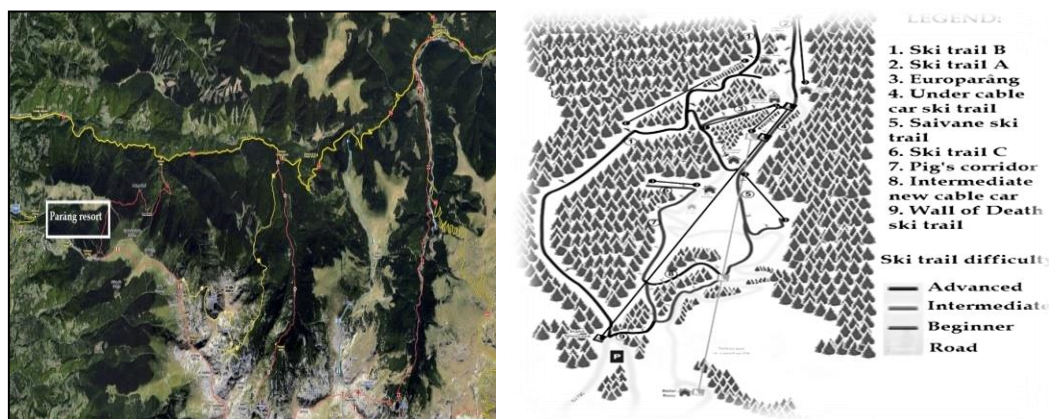
- leisure tourism or recreation, sports tourism - individual tourism forms depending on travel motivations;
- tourism packages, which depending on the time available for travel can be a long stay, medium or short.

It must not forget that it is essential for tourism to be politically accepted as a priority, without compromising the durability. Without support and political commitment for sustainable tourism, tourist programs based on the principles of sustainable development will not be implemented.

Parâng Mountains are the highest mountains situated between Olt, in the eastern part and Strei-Jiu, in the West after their maximum altitude (peak Parângul Mare, 2519 m), ranking the second place in the Romanian Carpathians after Făgăraș Mountains. Morpho-structural complexity, large glacial and periglacial relief development (the largest expansion in the mountain sector and which print to the northern central sector an alpine aspects), hypsometric and genetic peculiarities represents indices of landscape individualization to others mountains that make up the group.

The snow which last quite long (above 1500 m elevation snow is maintained even over 3 months per year), favorable conditions for training and keeping snow and could sometimes find in the highlands of early October until the first part of May (Nimară, 2020).

At over 1500 m altitude average thickness of snow cover exceeds a meter, the highest accumulations can be done in the last decade of February and beginning of March. To this, add valuable tourism potential represented generated by river valleys and Jiu's tributaries: *Jieț, Galbena, Jupâneasa, Taia* etc.



Source: www.cniptpetrosani.ro

Figure 2. Parâng resort (Petroșani, Hunedoara county)

Parâng national interest resort is located at 15 km from the town of Petroșani, access to which is provided by the road DJ 709 F. The ski slopes have a total length of 8 km and assigned in all levels of difficulty: beginner, intermediate and advanced (as shown in Table 1 and Figure 2).

Table 1. Features of ski trails from Parâng resort

No.	Name	Length (m)	Difficulty
1	Ski trail "A"	350	advanced
2	Ski trail "B"	3200	advanced/ beginners
3	Ski trail "C"	250	intermediate
4	Ski trail "Under chairlift"	367	intermediate
5	Ski trail "Saivane"	900	intermediate
6	Ski trail "EuroParâng"	600	intermediate
7	Ski trail "Pig's corridor"	750	intermediate
8	Intermediate new chairlift	-	advanced
9	Ski trail "Wall of death"	-	beginners

From the nine ski slopes above, only six are approved in 2010, as follows: A, B, C, Poiana, Chairlift and Europarâng.

Tourists can choose for accommodation in the Rusu area and in the Parâng alpine area, with a total of 22 accommodation units classified according to the National Tourism Authority, in 1-3 stars, two of which belong administratively in Petrila (Jieț gorges), and the remaining 20 belong to Petroșani (Parâng Mountains - zone B and C, the area Rusu).

In the last ten years, it can be noticed a significant increase in the number of accommodation units and also in accommodation places. Thus, in 2011 there were 6 accommodation units with 485 places, and in 2021 there were 23 accommodation units with 836 places. In other words, the number has doubled since 2018 (table 2).

Table 2. Accommodation units and places in Petroșani (town and Parâng Ski Resort)

Indicator	Years									
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Accommodation units	6	7	5	7	7	19	25	24	27	23
Capacity accommodation	485	552	394	464	464	819	899	809	904	836

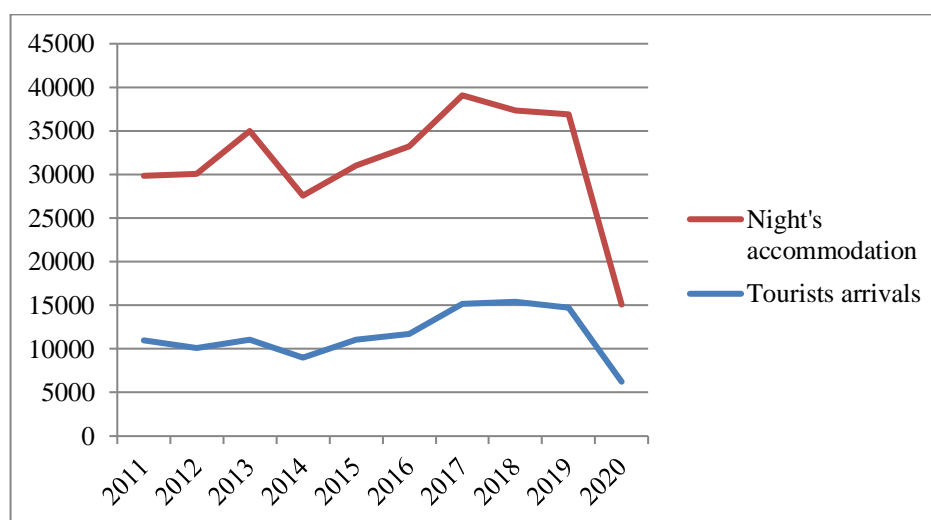
The number of tourist arrivals has started to increase progressively since 2011 (table 3), after which there is a regression and a certain capping for a period of three years (2014-2016) after which there is a significant increase starting with 2017 (202944 tourists per year) until in 2020 when the pandemic begins, but the number of arrivals is still above the level of 2014 (121655 tourists per year).

Table 3. Tourists indicators from 2011-2020

Year	Indicator		
	Number of places-days	Tourists arrivals	Night's accommodation
2011	143597	10989	18844
2012	151982	10118	19963
2013	166495	11041	23933
2014	114975	9026	18575
2015	118269	11020	20004
2016	115264	11710	21499
2017	202944	15152	23929
2018	203918	15404	21943
2019	201581	14746	22191
2020	121655	6237	8851
2021	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.

n.d. - no data

Regarding the number of overnight stays, the maximum value is reached in 2013 (23933), and the minimum value is reached in 2020 due to the pandemic (8851), the lowest value recorded in the last 10 years (figure 3).

**Figure 3. Tourists arrivals and night's accommodation**

Regarding the number of places-days, the maximum value is reached in 2017 (202944), and the minimum in 2014 (114975). In the first year of the pandemic, the registered value was 121,655 places-days per year.

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PETROȘANI

The concepts of sustainable tourism suggest as development an alternative: if the locals would be financially encouraged to hold tourist facilities developed after the renovation of traditional houses or new buildings, it would create a number of additional advantages. First, the residents would be strongly motivated to remain in the area and maintain traditional activities. Locals and thus would increase the horizon, acquiring skills and knowledge they will need training courses in tourism management, which can be sustained mainly by teachers of the University of Petroșani. As an example, we mention the communities from the Petroșani area (Dâlja, Slătinoara, Sălătruc) and Petrila (Lonea, Roșia, Răscoala), which, we say, in terms of financial stimulation, would have more interest to renovate existing buildings rather than build new ones that probably would not fit in the context of existing areas.

By developing a pattern resort it is lost the uniqueness based on nature and landscapes, reason why the policy-makers should focus towards the promotion and development of circuits that contain natural sights or special cultural, failed to now it could carry out thematic tourism or adventure tourism.

Dependence on a single tourism activity, which in turn is conditioned by climatic factor, given that at present local authorities are geared only toward developing mountain and here we refer to the ski area. Given that tourism is a competitive industry with a "trend" that can change very quickly, local communities may face serious problems if only heavily rely on the tourism market. To remain a stable economy, the tourism must encourage original, functional and authentic cultural scene.

Thus, local producers of traditional foods tend not to be addicts of fluctuating tourist flow because they can be marketed and indigenous community in specially designed booths. Revenue from the sale of food and non-traditional products can similarly become part of conservation tools.

Promotion is an activity that requires a high professional expertise without which the entire strategy may fail. The essential element is the *person* making the promotion campaign. It must have a high degree of specialization, have imagination, vision and understand specific market niches that take account of the special qualities of the promoted area.

Behind every tourist attraction is a story, which is not always true. The story is more detailed and better anchored in place, the number of tourists interested in coming to visit the tourist attraction that will be higher. So we can say that the soul of natural or cultural tourist attraction is the "*story*", the story that will sell the tourist attraction on tourism market.

4. CONCLUSIONS

To achieve sustainable tourism in Petroșani area, it takes an open approach, partnerships with stakeholders. The success of the partnership depends on the goodwill and flexibility of stakeholders, requiring a long-term approach, working hard to achieve in a rapidly changing modern world.

Partners can be public, private sector and non-profit stakeholders. Partnership implies: the involvement of the media, public education, training for employees involved in tourism, policy planning, marketing, development of regulations and waiving when needed, finding a system to stimulate new ideas by sector public and other sectors.

Development and planning of tourism at the local or regional should be designed so that the society members to be the main beneficiaries of the revenue from this activity.

Sustainable mountain tourism is a way to conceive, plan and manage sustainable tourism activities in Petroșani area. At the same time it requires a change in management style, behavior, mentalities and habits. There is no "recipe" for success in the development of sustainable, although we propose several lines of intervention:

- creating policies and general proposals at local, regional and urban ensuring proper integration of tourism in the life of these structures and provide specific proposals for architectural and urban works;
- promoting adventure tourism and tourism themes;
- implemented policies in this area should be based on social and economic rational, grounded in a rigorous need of the community and the requirements of environmental protection;
- recognition and promotion of sustainable development success stories;
- education for sustainable development to make the best choices in developing tourism act;
- integrating sustainable development into the training of future managers of the tourism phenomenon.

So, the sustainable mountain tourism from Petroșani should aim at achieving a balance between development and conservation, to find the best tourism activities taking into account the elements of ecology and social and economic consequences. In this way would diminish the negative migration and depopulation trends, helping to fight poverty and ensure a fairer distribution of the benefits and revenues from tourism services to all.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. **Câdea, M.; Erdeli, G., Simon, T.** (2003) *Potențialul turistic al României și amenajarea turistică a spațiului*, Editura Universitară, București
- [2]. **Hall, M.C.; Higham, S.E.J.** (2005) *Introduction: Tourism, Recreation and Climate Change, in Tourism, Recreation, and Climate Change* (Hall M C, Higham S E J, edit.), Channel View Publications
- [3]. **Nimară, C.** (2020) *Analysis of climate indicators with a specific role in tourist activities from the Petroșani Depression. Case Study: Thermal Regime*, Annals of the University of Petroșani, Mining Engineering, 21

- [4]. **Slusariuc, G.C.; Bica, M.** (2015) *Mountain tourism-pleasure and necessity*, Ecoforum Journal, Suceava
- [5]. **Stănciulescu, G.** (2004) *Managementul turismului durabil în centrele urbane*, Editura All Beck, București
- [6]. *** *Strategia de turism durabil a României*, proiect. (2009)
- [7]. *** (2011) *Protocol privind Turismul durabil la Convenția Cadru privind Protejarea și Dezvoltarea Durabilă a Carpaților*, Bratislava
- [8]. *** (2010) *Master Planul pentru Dezvoltarea Turismului Național 2007-2026 (MPDTN)*, Organizația Mondială a Turismului
- [9]. *** (2003) *Convenția Cadru privind Protecția și Dezvoltarea Durabilă a Carpaților*, (CCPDDC) Kiev