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INFLUENCE OF EFFICIENCY FACTORS OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND STRUCTURAL FUNDS ON FACILITATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

INFLUENȚA FACTORILOR DE EFICIENȚĂ A POLITICILOR PUBLICE ȘI A FONDURILOR STRUCTURALE ÎN FACILITAREA DEZVOLTĂRII TURISMULUI

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Annotation: *The author studies: national strategies for the development of tourism in Romania, sustainable development, the development of the southern part of romanian coastline, the organizational Program for 2007-2013 and later periods and the possibilities of increasing competitiveness of Romania on the international tourism market.*

Adnotare: *Autorul studiază strategiile naționale pentru dezvoltarea turismului în România, dezvoltarea durabilă, dezvoltarea părții de sud a litoralului românesc, programul organizatoric pentru perioada 2007-2013 și perioadele ulterioare și posibilitățile de sporire a competitivității României pe piața turistică internațională.*

Keyword: *the state economic policy, strategies of tourism development, of sustainable development, projects of promoting touristic potential, potential of development of the southern marine coastline of Romania.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *politica economică de stat, strategiile de dezvoltare a turismului, dezvoltarea durabilă, proiectele de promovare a potențialului turistic, potențialul de dezvoltare a litoralului maritim sudic al României.*

Introduction

Strategies for tourism development in Romania are in a close correlation with the processes taking place in public administration.

The first official programmatic document drafted by Romania after the accession of membership of the European Union, and which established the main directions of development of tourism was the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. The work is a joint project of the Government of Romania, through the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), National Center for Sustainable Development.

National Strategy for Sustainable Development has played a major role in the further development of programmatic documents specific to various forms of tourism. Moreover, the directions set out in Chapter V of the strategy - "Sustainable development and tourism promotion" were the basis for determining the three key areas of intervention financed by the Regional Operational Programme in the field of tourism. These are:

1. According to the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, the strategy laid the foundations for concrete measures to develop tourism, which targeted both the material support of tourism - cultural heritage, natural resources with tourism potential,

infrastructure of accommodation and leisure, as well as the means of sustainable capitalization of the tourism heritage by developing local economies (trade, construction, transport, catering, small industries and crafts) and creating new jobs.

2. At the same time, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development has set specific targets for Axis 5 of the Regional Operational Programme (ROP). According to the document, till year 2015 the Romanian state has proposed the implementation of 400 projects in tourism infrastructure, supporting direct or indirect 350 firms in tourism, the deployment of at least 10 campaigns to promote tourism brand at national and establishment of 10 international and national centers of information and tourism promotion, resulting in, among other things, the creation of 1,000 new jobs.

Materials and methods of research

According to the Managing Authority of ROP, until now, the Regional Operational Programme were financed 518 projects in tourism, of which 105 tourism infrastructure projects and 347 projects in the field of promoting tourism potential.

Apart from the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, in 2006-2007, a team of experts from the World Tourism Organization has developed, along with counterparts in Romania on behalf of the Romanian Government, a National Tourism Development Master Plan 2007-2026.

Masterplan included a six-year action program (2007-2013), in conjunction with financial support from the Structural Funds allocated from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013, to which Romania has access as a result of joining the European Union in January 2007.

The purpose of this policy document was formulating a policy framework for the development and sustainable management of the tourism industry in terms of natural and cultural resources. This plan was designed to provide an umbrella strategy, including plans and strategies described so as to optimize the sector's contribution to the national economy.

Results and considerations

Strategic programming documents - strategies and action plans - developed following the Master Plan for National Tourism Development aimed, on the one hand, marketing and promotion of Romanian tourism, and on the other hand, developing some specific forms of tourism, as priority - nature tourism, spa tourism, rural tourism - according to the directions of action identified in the Master Plan.

These strategic documents are:

1. Strategy of creating and promoting national tourism brand.
2. National Strategy for development of health tourism.
3. National Strategy for development of Ecotourism.
4. Strategy for development of the southern Romanian coast.
5. Strategic and operational plan for 2011-2015 Romania's tourism marketing.
6. Strategic and operational plan for tourism marketing of Bucharest 2011-2015.

Implementing the Strategy for creating and promoting the national tourism brand and of both strategic and operational marketing plans was performed including through 12 projects funded by the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013, Axis 5.3 - Operation "Creating a positive image of Romania as a tourist destination by defining and promoting the national tourism brand." The 12 projects are implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration and have a total value of over 75 million, of which approximately 55 million in non-refundable financial assistance.

In 2009, the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism organized the public procurement procedure for contracting the definition and implementation of tourism brand of Romania, and since autumn 2010 Romania began to promote it as a tourism destination under the current visual identity. According to the Ministry of Regional Development and Public

Administration, campaigns conducted under the umbrella strategy of creating and promoting national tourism brand aimed at building a positive image of the country as a tourist destination, both internally and externally, presenting its competitive advantages and strengthening Romania's competitive advantage in terms of tourism development and sustainable development.

Thus, although the policy documents were not financed from the Regional Operational Programme, they were implemented, which leads us to believe that the role and structural funds in tourism development in Romania was both relevant and significant.

ROP role in the field of tourism is extending beyond the mere implementation of tourism policies and strategies. Priority Axis 5 - "Sustainable development and tourism promotion" has an allocation of around 663 million euros, representing about 18% of the total allocation of ROP. The goal of this axis, as defined by the Framework Document for implementing the Regional Operational Program (2007), is to facilitate sustainable capitalization and promotion of cultural heritage and natural resources and improve the infrastructure quality in accommodation and leisure, to stimulate increasing the attractiveness of regions, developing local economies and creating jobs.

Priority Axis 5 is structured in three major areas of intervention, in accordance with priorities set by the National Tourism Development Master Plan 2007-2026, analyzed in the previous sections.

The three major areas of intervention are:

1. Restoration and capitalization of cultural heritage and modernization of related infrastructure;
2. Creation, development and modernization of infrastructure for sustainable capitalization of natural resources and to increase the quality of tourism services.
3. Promoting tourism potential and creating the necessary infrastructure in order to increase Romania's attractiveness as a tourist destination by projecting a positive image of Romania, defining and promoting the national tourism brand, developing domestic tourism through diversification and specific marketing, including the establishment of an integrated online tourist information and statistics.

The 518 projects contracted by the Regional Operational Programme - Priority Axis 5 "Development and promotion of tourism" - totaling about one million Euros, which represents 18% of the contracted amount on all six axes of ROP. However, their impact on Romania's development as a tourist destination and over the evolution of the number of arrivals of tourists at national and regional level seems to remain low.

An increase of Romania's competitiveness on the international tourism market is not possible in the absence of coherent public policies that stimulate tourism activity and allow access to external financing. However, to facilitate tourism development, it is essential that policy makers take into account the conditions which had a negative impact on the effectiveness of public policies and structural funds.

Conclusions

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the literature, we identified a number of determinants of lack of efficacy:

a) *Delay in the adoption of coherent public policies in tourism.* The first strategic documents intended to set the framework for development of tourism in Romania have been developed and adopted in 2006-2008, some of which, such as the Master Plan for Tourism, setting directions for future implementation of the Priority Axis 5 of the Regional Operational Programme. In Bulgaria, for example, such a strategic framework has been created since the early 1990s, when the Tourism Board was established. This committee not only established a framework for coordinating access to and implementation of structural funds, but was also responsible for the transition from a centralized economy to a market economy and privatization of public organizations of tourism.

b) *Failure to adopt public policies that focus on active involvement of the private sector and*

NGOs in the development of tourism. Strategic documents prepared and adopted by national authorities in order to strengthen tourism development are predominantly targeted on public organizations. Moreover, according to the Managing Authority for Regional Operational Programme, approximately 50% of all projects funded through ROP, Priority Axis 5 - are contracted by local authorities and ministries.

Studies show, however, that the regions with the largest number of NGOs are the regions with the highest number of arrivals of tourists annually. This demonstrates that the non-governmental sector development policies oriented and focused on the greater involvement of NGOs in the field of tourism will increase the total number of tourists and therefore expand the tourism industry.

Not least, the private sector is the main supporter of developing tourism. Hotels, restaurants, entertainment services, travel agencies and tour operators are all belonging to the private sector. Thus, tourism policies should focus on developing private entities and their ability to finance and support investment.

a) *Lack of coordination between tourism promotion and development strategies.* An analysis of strategic documents forming the current framework for the development and promotion of tourism in Romania shows that these documents were created and adopted by different entities at different times and independently from each other. As a result, their objectives do not always coincide and their implementation often leads to negative effects on the environment and local culture.

This trend is visible not only at national, but also at regional and local levels. For example, although the strategy to promote Bucegi mountains is focused on ecotourism, local development strategies presume massive expansion of access infrastructure - even asphalt roads – towards the protected areas.

These differences are exacerbated by the availability of structural funds, which makes it possible for local communities and NGOs, implementing projects to promote tourism in destinations that do not have the basic infrastructure necessary for providing minimum tourist services.

Practical experience has shown that promotion projects with total value of over one million Euros are implemented in areas that do not have accommodation units and the attractions are in an evident state of decay. Therefore, they do not lead to the continued development of tourism activities. In such cases, it is obvious that the implementation of projects financed through ROP will not increase the number of tourist arrivals, the funding received context may even have a negative financial impact on organizations providing co-financing of projects, given the ineffectiveness of investments made.

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