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## THE ANALYSIS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN BUCOVINA

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to present an analysis of the sustainable development of rural communities with tourism resources from Bucovina, an important region that is known for its culture, traditions and values.

This article is based on research originating in secondary sources and online data provided by the Institute of Statistics, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture and similar websites as well as on primary research aimed at 29 mayors of the localities with a high tourism potential in Bucovina.

Herein, we analyse the current state of sustainable development of the region from a natural, ecological, social, economic, and cultural perspective. Consequently, certain examples of good practice and future prospects for developing localities with important tourism resources were identified.

### **Keywords:**

sustainable development, rural communities, tourism resources, Bucovina

### **JEL Classification:**

Q01, R11, P25

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### **Introduction**

The rural area holds an important place in the history, civilization and national identity of a country, both by the means of spatial and demographic dimensions and the economic, social, cultural and ecological dimensions. The future of Romania/Bucovina depends greatly on using the rural area development potential on sustainable principles.

The best-known definition of the concept of sustainable development was adopted in 1987 by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in the report entitled "Our Common Future" (Brundtland Report): "Sustainable development represents a form of growth that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

In the local rural community occur various developments, due to their economic, social and environmental capital (Wilson, 2010). Even so, in case of rural communities with important tourism resources, tourism becomes useful when in need to address future options for sustainable development.

Engelhardt (2005) considers that sustainable tourism could enrich the income and living standards for local people. Tourism could revive local culture, respectively traditional crafts and customs. In addition, tourism can contribute to the increase of the rural economy by creating demand for agricultural products and, through infrastructure development projects, it can administer capital into rural areas.

An interesting approach is emphasized by Weaver (2006), he considers that sustainable tourism implies decrease of negative impacts and intensifying positive impacts of the tourist destination.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), sustainable tourism can be defined as: "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".

The main goals of sustainable tourism development of a destination are encompassed by: environmental goals, which means preservation of natural resources for tourist purposes, reduction of environmental pollution and degradation caused by tourism; economic goals, which suppose material welfare of host communities; sustainability and optimal usage of tourism infrastructure; social goals which present the opportunities for gainful employment in the tourism sector; recreation opportunities for both visitors and host communities; increased community participation in local tourism policy (Rainey et al., 2003; Niezgodna, 2011).

Rainey et al. (2003) state that it is important for the rural communities to triumph in the global economy, they need to contend with urban areas. Technological advances in communication and transportation have given to the rural communities the potential to overcome the problems of geographic and information isolation.

The concept of sustainability should incorporate economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions, according to Chirieleison and Scrucca (2017).

The essential elements which are required to set up a sustainable economy in rural areas that are infrastructure, clean seeds, guidance in crops and livestock production, and credit as well as cooperatives, education, marketing facilities, farm machinery, water supplies, and diverse economic activities, noted Zolfania and Zavadskas (2013).

### **Research Methodology**

This article will focus on the analysis of the recent developments in terms of sustainable development of the localities with a high rural tourism potential in the southern part of the historical region of Bucovina, respectively the area located on the territory of Romania, covering mainly the Suceava County.

In order to select the rural localities with a high tourism potential in the Bucovina region we referred to the Emergency Government Ordinance no. 142/2008 regarding the approval of the Spatial Planning of the National Territory, Section VIII - Tourism Resources Areas, GEO approved by Law no. 190/2009.

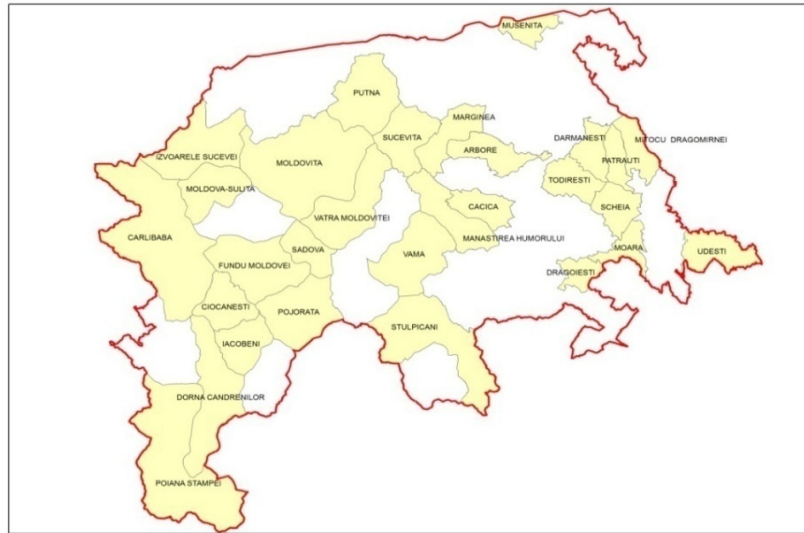
According to normative act, 29 out of the 71 rural localities in Bucovina (40.8%) are considered as administrative and territorial units with natural and anthropic resources of high value (22 localities) and of a very high value (7 localities).

The research methodology included both secondary and primary research sources, the whole analysis being made from four perspectives: a natural-ecological, a socio-human, a cultural, and an economic one.

The research based on secondary sources sets the trend towards sustainable development in 29 localities by analysing the results of different studies.

The aim of the secondary research is to complement the primary research. Thus, in terms of the primary research we applied a pilot survey having as a tool the questionnaire. The survey was conducted in November 2018, the questionnaire being sent both by mail and by fax to the 29 rural localities with a high tourism potential in Bucovina.

The questionnaire included closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. Out of the 32 questions in the questionnaire, the most relevant ones were selected to be analysed in this article.



**Fig. no.1 Rural high tourist potential localities in Bucovina**

*Source: drawn by the authors, 2018*

## Research Results

### *Socio-Human Perspective*

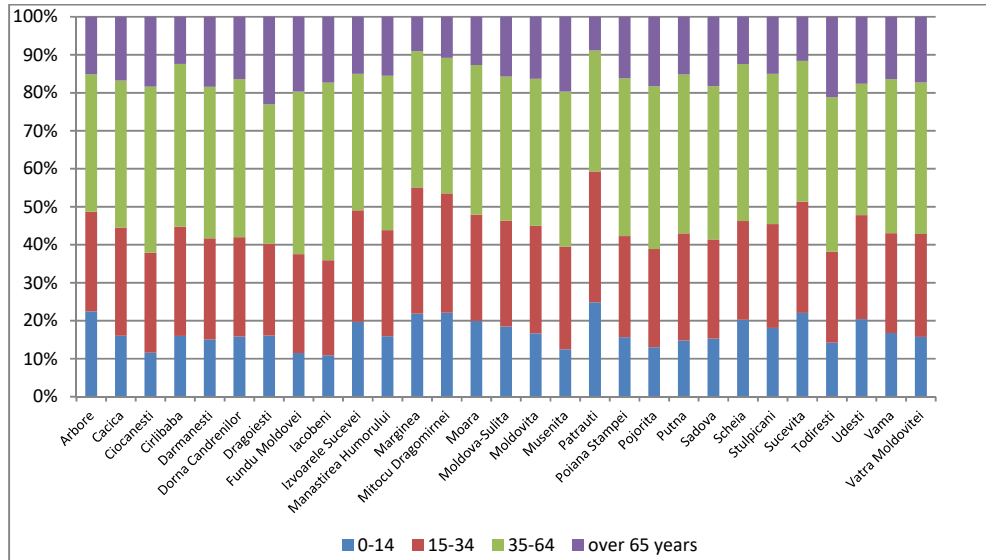
Human capital represents one of the most important resources in a region, being, on the one hand, an important factor contributing to its sustainable development and, on the other hand, the main beneficiary of development. A particularly important aspect that is analysed in this research is *the demographic situation* of the 29 localities with a high rural tourism potential. On 1st January 2018, the population of the region was of 557,032, representing 73.9% of the population of Suceava County. In opposition to national trends, over the last ten years there has been registered a population growth in the region (+ 3.9%, from 536.257 in 2008, to 557.032 in 2018), while at the level of the 29 localities with a high tourist potential this growth has been even more abrupt (+ 5.3%, from 126.024 in 2008, to 132.755 in 2018).

The age structure of the population in Bucovina reflects a relatively high proportion of people aged 0-14 (18.0%), higher than that registered at national level (14.7%). At the same time, the proportion of persons aged over 65 is lower in this region compared to the national situation (14.0%, compared to 16.3%).

An analysis at the level of each locality reveals the high weights of the young population (aged 0-14) in Pătrăuți (24.9%), Arbore (22.5%), Mitocul Dragomirnei (22.1%); of the elderly population (aged over 65) in Drăgoiești (23.0%), Todirești (21.2%); of the active population (aged 15-64) in Iacobeni (71.8%), Cârlibaba (71.6%), Ciocănești, and Putna (70.0%).

On the contrary, *the weight of young people (aged 0-14 years) is low* in the localities of Iacobeni (10.9%), Fundu Moldovei (11.5%), Ciocănești (11.6%). In this case, the effects could be extremely damaging on the medium and long run, should no measures be taken to boost birth rates and create new jobs.

Localities with low percentages of the elderly population (aged over 65) are: Pătrăuți (8.8%), Marginea (9.0%), Mitocul Dragomirnei (10.8%), Sucevița (11.6%), Cârlibaba (12.4%); and low weights of the active population (aged 15-64) are found in: Drăgoiești (60.8%), Udești (62.0%), and Arbore (62.4%).



**Fig. no. 2 Population structure by age groups, broken down by localities (2018)**

Source: done by the authors, NIS, Tempo online database (<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>)

### Natural-Ecological Perspective

This area stands out due to a great variety of land forms, the existence of extensive forest areas, grasslands, slopes, soil resources, an extensive hydrographical network and protected natural areas, all of which have made their mark on the economic development and social aspects of this region. Thus, given the high share of the mountainous and plateau areas, forests cover considerable areas in Bucovina (54.7% in the whole region and 63.5% cumulated in the 29 rural localities with high tourist potential analysed in this study), wood being also an important natural resource in this area.

The main environmental problems identified in the analysed area are floods (in 17 of the 20 localities covered in this questionnaire). The area is one associated with a flood risk on a rather extensive surface in the areas crossed by the Suceava and Moldova rivers, as well as in the piedmont contact area between the Dragomirnei Plateau and Obcina Mare, crossed by the smaller affluent of rivers, especially Suceava (Suceava County Council, 2010).

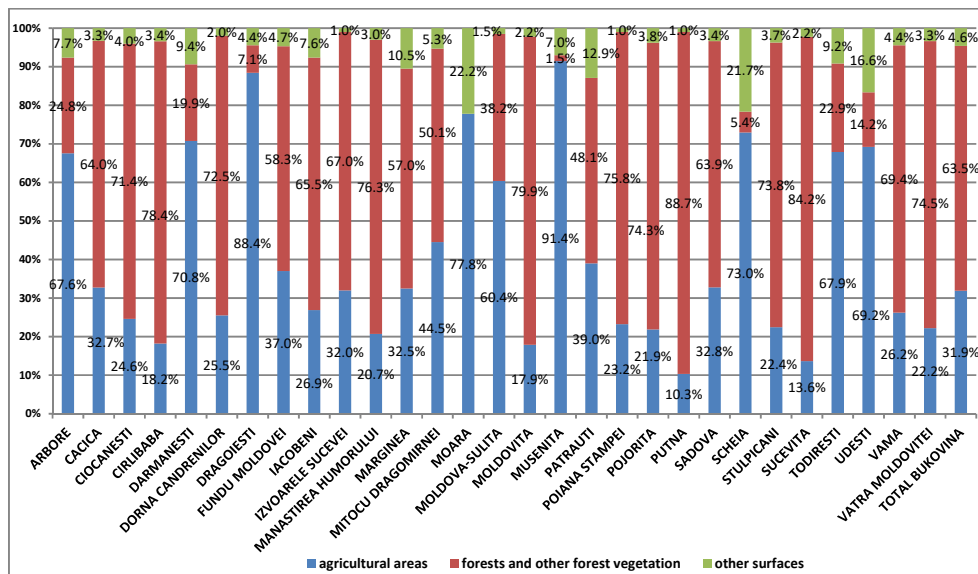
Water pollution (9 localities), soil pollution (5 localities), landslides (4 localities), large quantities of waste (3 localities), air pollution (one locality) are other problems identified by local government officials.

The existence of mining sites that make no object of greening environmental measures, especially tailings ponds (e.g. Fundu Moldovei), could cause a certain degree of accidental pollution.

In order to prevent and combat environmental problems, several localities have declared that certain projects have been carried out aimed at: embankment / diking of river banks (in 10 localities); waste collection (5 localities); unsilting and regularization of the river beds (in 4 localities); realization of the sewerage network (3 localities); forestation of areas with landslide problems, land stabilization (2 localities); educational and awareness-raising actions aimed at the population (2 localities); realization of the water supply network (1 locality); installing septic tanks (1 locality).

**Economic Perspective**

The research carried out showed that the economics of the high tourist potential localities in Bucovina have underwent important transformations marked by a transfer of activities from the primary and secondary sectors (agriculture and industry) to the tertiary sector (services). According to the responses from 20 of the 29 analysed localities, it was revealed that the economy of the area is based on wood exploitation and / or wood processing activities (15 localities, representing 75% of the answers received), agriculture - animal breeding and cultivation of the land (12 localities, representing 60% of the answers), commerce (9 localities, representing 45% of the answers), mining - salt (Cacica), peat (Poiana Stampei), stone (Poiana Stampei, Pojorâta), mineral water (Dorna Căndrenilor), food industry (Pojorâta, Arbore - bakery, Dorna Căndrenilor - dairy), services (3 localities - Marginea, Iacobeni, Sucevița), constructions (3 localities - Sucevița, Arbore, Marginea) etc. Therefore, agriculture and forestry are basic economic activities in the analysed localities. The localities in the mountain area have extensive forested areas. For example in (Fig. no.3), could be observed the localities with the highest percentages: Putna (88.7% of the land fund); Moldovița (79.9%), Cârlibaba (78.4%), Humorului Monastery (76.3%) etc. Concerning the extent of agricultural land, cumulatively, the 29 analysed localities have a share of 31.9%. The largest agricultural areas are registered in the following localities: Mușenița (91.4%), Dragoiești (88.4%), Moara (77.8%), Șcheia (73.0%), Dărmănești, while Putna (10.3%), Sucevița (13.6%), Moldovița (17.9%), Cârlibaba (18.2%) account for the smallest areas benefiting from agricultural areas.

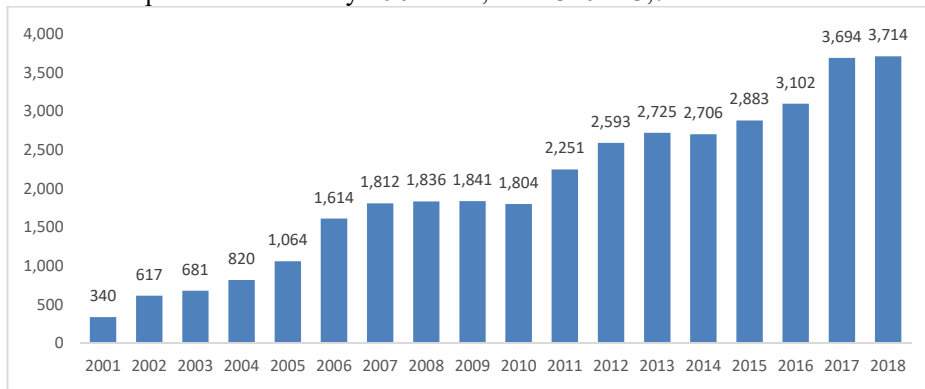


**Fig. no. 3 Land fund structure in Bucovina, broken down by locality**

Source: made by the authors, NIS, Tempo online database (<http://statistici.inssse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/inssse-table>)

In the field of industry, it is worth mentioning Șcheia, a village located on the outskirts of Suceava (food industry - beer factory, canned food and meat factory, dairy factory, bakery factory, wood processing industry - furniture factory, mechanical industry - bearing factory, textile industry, extractive industry - sand and gravel mines). In the other localities, industrial activities play a peripheral role - e.g. Poiana Stampei (peat processing) and Iacobeni (non-ferrous ore processing).

As mentioned above, tourism has played an important role over the last 20 years in the sustainable development of this region. Cumulatively, in the 29 analysed localities there are 185 accommodation establishments (representing 40.2% of the total number of this kind of units in Suceava County), with 3.714 bed places (30, 6% of the total Suceava County). As can be seen from the data below (Fig. no.4), between 2001 and 2018, the number of accommodation places increased by 10.9 times, from 340 to 3,714.

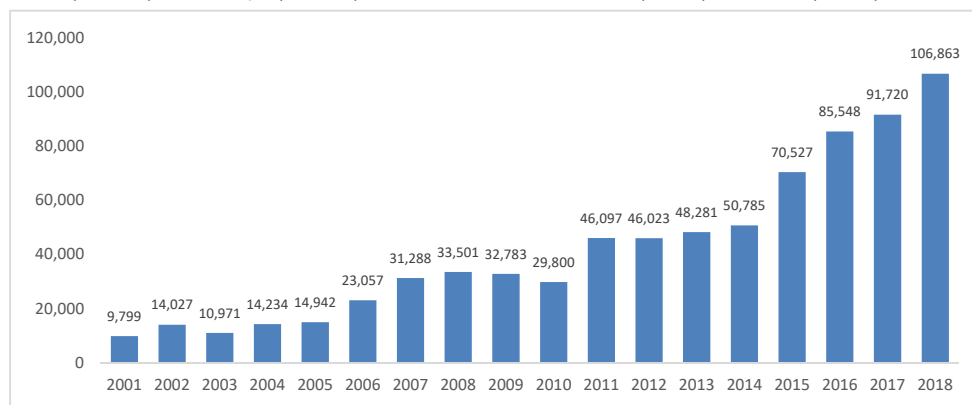


**Fig. no. 4 The evolution of the bed places in tourist accommodation units (2001-2018)**

Source: made by the authors, NIS, Tempo online database  
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Regarding the number of accommodation places for the analysed area, most of them are in Sucevița (23.6%); Vama (12.0%); Șcheia (11.9%); Mănăstirea Humorului (8.8%).

A similar evolution was recorded in the number of tourists. According to (Fig. no.5), their number in rural localities with a high tourist potential in Bucovina grew by 10.9 times between 2001 and 2018, from 9,799 to 106,863, most tourists being registered in localities: Șcheia (22,5%); Sucevița (19.0%); Mănăstirea Humorului (8.0%); Cacica (7.5%).



**Fig. no. 5 Evolution of the number of tourists in the 29 localities (2001-2018)**

Source: done by the authors, NIS, Tempo online database  
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

### ***Cultural perspective***

The area under consideration has a particularly valuable cultural and historical heritage. In the 29 localities with a high tourist potential in Bucovina, there are five monuments registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Sucevița, Moldovița, Humor monasteries, Pătrăuți and Arbore churches), 16 other monuments belonging to the category A of historical monuments and 41 monuments enlisted in the B category. In the localities originating in the analysed area, a series of projects / actions for the restoration / consolidation / protection / preservation of the historical monuments, of the cultural objectives or of the representative buildings, were carried out, respectively:\* the rehabilitation of the church Luca Arbore (Arbore commune); the rehabilitation of the Roman Catholic Church (Basilica minor) of Cacica (Cacica commune); the rehabilitation Museum-House of the Peasant of Leontina (Ciocănești commune); reinforcement of the church of Sf. Ilie (Șcheia commune) etc.

Moreover, according to the responses received from the mayoralities, several projects / actions have been carried out in the analysed area in support of local artisans. An example is the project called "*Folk Art - A link for tourism development in Bucovina*", financed by the Ministry of Communications and Information Society. Under this project, a tourist circuit was built; it included 10 local artisans, 10 accommodation structures, and 10 travel agencies (2 folk artisans were selected from the Arbore locality).

### **Conclusions**

The existence of certain natural resources initially triggered the development of primary economic activities (agriculture, forestry), in order to develop certain secondary (industrial) economic activities. These resources have also made an important contribution to the development of the tertiary sector, and in particular to that of tourism.

For example, while salt mining was initially made strictly for industrial purposes, salt mines such as Cacica are now also used for tourism purposes. The existence of important mineral water resources favoured the development of packaging activities, but also the development of renowned spa resorts such as Vatra Dornei. The rich forestry fund has contributed to the development of the wood industry, but has also been an important factor in the development of woodworking crafts. In addition, the existence of extensive pasture and meadow areas has favoured agricultural activities such as animal husbandry, but has also contributed to the development of traditional crafts such as weaving and sewing, and, more recently, the development of agro tourism activities.

The valorisation of the tourist potential of rural areas in the Bucovina region creates a viable alternative to the predominant economic activity of the rural inhabitants - agriculture. At the same time, the development of tourism leads to the development of other economic and social areas (transport, craft industry, agro-food industry, various services), thus generating a multiplier effect in the local economy. Consequently, this could contribute in the future to reducing and even stopping the demographic decline.

At the level of this area, some sustainable development initiatives were implemented, both in agriculture (470 agricultural producers and 5 agricultural processors operating at county level were certified in organic farming), in forestry (24 forest units managed by RNP Romsilva implemented the Forest Management System according to the FSC standard) but also in the field of sustainable development of tourism. In this line, it is worth mentioning the eco-tourism project of Țara Dornelor Tourism Association aimed to certify the Țara Dornelor area as an ecotourism destination (concept developed by the Ministry of Tourism).

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\* Information received from the Mayories of the localities

It is also encouraging to notice that there are some examples of good practice in preserving the local architecture (Ciocanești), a successful model that can contribute to the development of tourism in the locality and can be replicated by other localities in the area, creating the premises for the multiplication of certain positive examples at regional level.

### Acknowledgement

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