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THE TOURISM AND AGRO-TOURISM POTENTIAL ANALYSIS IN TULCEA COUNTY

EUGENIA-DORINA CIOBANU(RĂDOI)¹, RALUCA NECULA²

Abstract. Tulcea County is a special tourist area, with a natural and anthropic touristic potential extremely rich and with real development opportunities in this area. An analysis of the touristic activity in the county can be particularly useful, so this work intends to analyze and present the touristic potential and the agrotourism potential of Tulcea County and the degree of use of it at this point. All these analyses will be made having in sight the elaboration and implementation of some potential effective strategies of development and recovery, at maximum range, in the touristic activity, also present and in the future.

Through the development of touristic and agrotouristic pensions' activity carried out in this area, will be able to record the visible developments, economic and social developments in the County, leading to an increase in the standard of living of the inhabitants, especially those from rural areas, who are currently living at the edge of existence.

Keywords : agro-tourism, rural tourism, Tulcea Region, Romania

Classification **JEL:** Q01, Z3, O13

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, in Tulcea County were allotted important amounts of money for carrying out a major study on the tourism opportunities evaluation, tourism being regarded as a fundamental factor in the economic and social development of the area.

Of the total population of County, 50.7% live in the rural areas, the agrotourism and rural tourism having the opportunity to play an important role in the touristic activity of the County, to increase the standard of living of the inhabitants.

Table 1. The habitable surface evolution on residence areas, in Tulcea County, 1990-2015

Specification	MU	1990	2000	2010	2015	Mean	Standard deviation	Variation coeff.	Annual rhythm
						Th. m ²	Th. m ²	%	%
County Total	Th. m ²	2,953	3,280	3,897	4,341	3,653	447.7	12.3	1.55
	%	100.0	111.1	132.0	147.0	x	x	x	x
TULCEA	Th. m ²	917	999	1,240	1,307	1,134	146.1	12.9	1.43
	%	100.0	108.9	135.2	142.5	x	x	x	x
BABADAG	Th. m ²	91	114	140	172	132	24.5	18.6	2.58
	%	100.0	125.3	153.8	189.0	x	x	x	x
ISACCEA	Th. m ²	56	63	85	96	76	13.7	18.0	2.18
	%	100.0	112.5	151.8	171.4	x	x	x	x
MACIN	Th. m ²	107	131	154	175	145	18.9	13.1	1.99
	%	100.0	122.4	143.9	163.6	x	x	x	x
SULINA	Th. m ²	62	70	75	83	73	5.1	7.0	1.17
	%	100.0	112.9	121.0	133.9	x	x	x	x
Urban Total	Th. m ²	1,233	1,377	1,694	1,833	1,559	205.9	13.2	1.60
	%	100.0	111.7	137.4	148.7	x	x	x	x
Rural Total	Th. m ²	1,720	1,903	2,203	2,508	2,094	245.3	11.7	1.52
	%	100.0	110.6	128.1	145.8	x	x	x	x

Processed by: Data from NIS, available at www.insse.ro [4]

From the data given by the National Institute of Statistics, it shows that the number of County residents registered in the year 2015, was of 205,965 inhabitants, of whom 96, 032 live in the urban area and 109, 933 in rural area. From the table 1 data, it can be seen that in the countryside, the habitable space was of 2,094 thousand m² in rural areas and of 1,559 m² thousands in urban areas, as an average of the years 1990-2015. The habitable space growth rhythm is approximately the same: 1.60% in urban areas and in rural 1.52%.

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To be noted that half of the County's surface is occupied with the wetlands of the Danube Delta, and belonging to the Biosphere Reserve which is declared starting with year 1990 by UNESCO as natural heritage of world importance, unique in Romania and in Europe. This natural objective can be an important touristic objective for Tulcea County and for Romania [7]

The Danube Delta is also included in the Network Natura 2000, the European network of protected natural areas. The Danube Delta comprises a large number of wild species and natural habitats of Community interest. The area presents interest both for the nature protection, and to maintain these unique natural spaces in the long run. The Danube Delta ensures at the same time the necessary resources for a socio-economic development in this geographic zone. [6]

The main activities in the area are fishing and agriculture, cumulating together approximately 65% of the economic activities carried out in the County.

The tourism activity is not very developed in the area, and even registered a decline over the past 20 years, the number of tourists decreasing from one year to another, despite the rich touristic potential at the disposal of Tulcea County.



Fig 1. Tulcea County (<http://www.turistinfo.ro/judet-tulcea>)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Within the method of the touristic and agrotourism potential analysis of Tulcea County, were used the following indicators: the indicators characterizing the natural conditions, the scores on the assessment of the touristic potential in the administrative-territorial units in relation to anthropogenic and natural touristic resources, infrastructure and specific activity of tourism and the SWOT analysis of the County in terms of tourism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tulcea County has been analyzed from the following points of view: (1) by natural conditions, (2) through the level scores of the existing touristic potential, (3) through the existing touristic structures and (4) through the SWOT analysis.

(1) Natural conditions.

According to the data presented by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests-National Agency for Environmental Protection-Tulcea, we can observe the following:

Air -it is of good quality, which favors the practice of tourism, there are no effects of ambient air pollution on health, ecosystems, soil or vegetation, conclusions drawn as a result of the analyses of the atmospheric pollutants, pollutant SO₂, the only pollutant that registered valid date over 75%, according to the Law 104/2011. (Table 2) "

Table 2. The average annual concentrations for SO₂ pollutant, for the period 2008-2014

Pollutant	Station type	Annual average concentration			
		2008	2010	2013	2015
		Limit value: 20($\mu\text{g}/\text{mc}$)			
SO ₂ ($\mu\text{g}/\text{mc}$)	TL1-traffic	5.88	3.37	4.99	16.94
	TL2-industrial	2.12	3.30	3.57	-
	TL3-traffic/ suburban		3.75	5.30	-

Annual Report 2015 , Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests National Environmental Protection Agency [2]

Water –the water resources of the County are marked, 207,874,382 thousand m³. The largest amount is due to the existence of the Danube River, with the largest intake of water, and which constitute the main attraction of the area. (Table 3)

Table 3. Water resources in thousands cub meters

Water resources Th. M3	
Surface water(Inland rivers + Danube)	207,704,230
Underground waters	170,152.05
Total	207,874,382.05

Annual Report 2015 , Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests
National Environmental Protection Agency [2]

Soil -grey dark soils of category levigable chernozioms, which are characteristic for this County. Soils thickness varies between 2.0 and 3.5 m, pH is neutral, and for agricultural uses, falls of grade III quality, which favors agriculture. In conclusion the soils condition in the County is relatively good, however these are affected by flooding, drought regularly extended, fires, excessive grazing and practicing a nonorganic tourism.

Landscape and biodiversity -the geographical location of the County makes on its territory to be almost all forms of relief: from the Măcinului Mountains -the oldest mountains in Romania and among the oldest in Europe and up to the Danube Delta-land still in formation, the newest ground in the country.

The existence of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, favors the highest biodiversity in the Country, and of course the biggest attraction for tourists from all over the world.

The Danube Delta is known for its diversity of habitats and the forms of life which it hosts, constitutes a true Museum of biodiversity, a natural gene bank of inestimable value for the universal natural heritage recognized by the three-time protection status which it holds: A biosphere reserve, wetland of international importance especially as a habitat of water birds-Site Ramsar and part of the World Natural Heritage [2]

(2) The level scores of the existing potential

Another important aspect of the analysis is to establish the scores of the touristic potential for each village and every town.

For the calculation of these scores, it have been taken into account the existence of the natural attractions, the anthropogenic objectives and the specific infrastructure from the analyzed areas.

Further will be presented and analyzed in detail, 3 tables, in which are presented the cities and villages of the district, with scores being awarded on the basis of the touristic potential, from two analysis perspectives, and a third table, where the County is analyzed using the SWOT analysis, to draw some conclusions more realistic regarding the touristic potential of the area and possibilities for development and recovery.

According to the data of table 4, the data arising from the score application in tourism according to the criteria established for a project financing submitted under the measure 3.1.3,

conducted by PNDR, annex 10, maximum score achieved by the villages in Tulcea County was 8 points out of 10. [5]

The eight points were obtained by only 2 villages, in 8 villages were booked by 6 points, 4 villages have received five points, the majority of the villages, i.e., 13 of those 46 obtained, 4 points, 3 points got 8 villages, 2 points won 7 villages and 1 point have received 4 villages.

Table 4. The list of villages in Tulcea County with the score awarded in relation to the touristic potential

No. crt.	Villages	Score	Total	
			No.	%
1	Niculițel, Sfântu Gheorghe	8	2	4.3
2	Beidaud, Jurilovca, Luncavița, Mahmudia, Murighiol, Nufăru, Sarichioi, Valea Nucarilor	6	8	10.8
3	Baia, Beștepe, Jijila, Slava Cercheza	5	4	5.4
4	Ceatalchioi, Cerna, Chilia Veche, Crișan, Hamcearca, Maliuc, Ostrov, Pardina, Peceneaga, Smârdan, Somova, Topolog, Turcoaia	4	13	17.5
5	Casimcea, Ceamurlia de Jos, Ciucurova, Frecatei, Izvoarele, Mihai Bravu, Văcăreni, Valea Teilor	3	8	10.8
6	Carcaliu, Dăeni, Greci, Grindu, I.C. Brătianu, Nalbant, Stejaru	2	7	9.5
7	C.A. Rosetti, Dorobanțu, Horia, Mihail Kogălniceanu	1	4	5.4
Total villages with score in tourism			46	100

Source: Processed by: * PNDR, Measure 313, Annex 10,

file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/pndr_masura_313_anexa_10_lista_comunelor_cu_potential_turistic_ridicat_m313_actualizat_14112008.pdf [3]

After the presentation and analysis of the list of villages in Tulcea County with the score awarded in relation to the touristic potential, resulting from the application of the criterion established in PNDR, 313, annex 10, villages with touristic potential, we present and analyze the structure of cities/villages with touristic score determined according to MDRT, 2008, Methodology regarding the evaluation of the touristic potential in the administrative-territorial units, according to the data presented in table 5. [3]

In determining the touristic scores were used as basis indicators, the natural touristic resources, the anthropogenic touristic resources and the specific touristic infrastructure.

Were analyzed all the County's villages and each of it has obtained a score that represents the area's touristic potential.

The total scores were assigned into groups, as follows: 1 to 9 points, from 10 to 19, 20 to 29 points, from 30 to 39 points.

In the first group, with scores ranging from 1 to 9 points, we have 10 villages, who scored only at natural touristic resources, in the second group, with scores determined from 10 to 19 points, we have 25 villages and 2 towns- Isaccea and Măcin, who punctuated at the anthropogenic and natural touristic resources, but were very weak at specific touristic infrastructure almost nonexistent, in the group of 20 to 29 points, the 11 villages and 2 towns -Sulina and Babadag, have scored in all three indicators, here observing the highest scores on all aspects of analysis, and the group of scores from 30 to 39 points, we have one town namely Tulcea, the County seat, who scored both at the anthropogenic and natural touristic resources and the existence of specific touristic infrastructure, cumulating a total score of 38 points.

Overall, no town or village, has not exceeded 40 points for touristic potential anthropogenic and natural and specific touristic infrastructure, biggest deficit being the tourist infrastructure, specific branch suitable underdeveloped for an efficient use of this area with a rich touristic potential and a strong source of recovery to create revenue and raising the standard of living of the inhabitants of the County.

Table 5. Structure of towns/villages in Tulcea County according to touristic score

No.	Towns/villages	Total towns/villages		Total score	Touristic resources		Specific touristic infrastructure	Total
		No.	%		Natural	Anthropogenic		
1	Dorobantu, Frecatei, Greci, I.C. Bratianu, Stejaru, Valea Teilor, Daeni, Grindu, Smardan, Vacareni	10	19.6	1 to 9	3.6	0	0	3.6
2	Beidaud, Hamcearca, Horia, Nalbant, Mihail Kogalniceanu, Baia, Ciucurova, Niculitel, Slava Cercheza, Topolog, Carcaliu, Ceamurlia de Jos, Jijila, Mihai Bravu, Ostrov, Sarichioi, Macin, Ceatalchioi, Pardina, C.A. Rosetti, Casimcea, Izvoarele, Jurilovca, Bestepe, Peceneaga, Isaccea, Cerna	27	52.9	10 to 19	5.6	7.5	0.2	13.3
3	Sfantu Gherghe, Sornova, Crisan, Luncavita, Chilia Veche, Turcoaia, Sulina, Nufaru, Mahmudia, Maliuc, Murighiol, Valea Nucarilor, Babadag							
4	Tulcea	1	1.9	30 to 39	14	17	7	38
5	Total	51	100	x	36	32.3	11.5	79.8

Source: Processed by: MDRT, 2008, Methodology to measure the tourism potential in the administrative-territorial base units

(3) Touristic structures

One aspect, equally important as the above, is the identification and presentation of the evolution of the number of touristic establishments with the accommodation functions existent in the County.

Analyzing the data in table 6, we see a slight increase in the number of structures with functions of accommodation between 2001-2015.

The number of establishments has increased, from 85 units in 2001, to 140 units in 2015, the annual growth being of 3.63 units.

We analyzed in depth, the representative units of accommodation, respectively touristic hotels and pensions and we see a significant increase in the past 15 years, the increasing number of hotels, from 13 units in 2001, to 20 units in 2015, while the agrotourist pensions number increased from 11 units to 16 units, having been recorded in 2005 a number of 20 units.

The highest annual growth rate, had the touristic pensions, 4.29 units per year, their numbers almost doubled in the past 15 years, from 5 units in 2001 to 9 units in 2015.

Table 6. Establishments of tourist reception with functions of tourist accommodation

Structures type	MU	2001	2005	2010	2015	Mean	Standard deviation	Variation coefficient	Annual rhythm
						Th. m ²	Th. m ²	%	%
Total	No.	85	128	127	140	122	20.9	17.1	3.63
	%	100	150.6	149.4	164.7	143.7	x	x	x
Hotels	No.	13	16	14	20	17	2.6	15.2	3.12
	%	100	123.1	107.7	153.8	129.7	x	x	x
Touristic pensions	No.	5	10	4	9	7	2.4	32.4	4.29
	%	100	200	80	180	149.3	x	x	x
Agrotouristic pensions	No.	11	20	12	16	17	5.7	32.9	2.71
	%	100	181.8	109.1	145.5	158.2	x	x	x

Source: Processed after : NIS Statistics-tourism,

[http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/index.jsp?page=tempo3&lang=ro&ind=TUR101C_\[4\]](http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/index.jsp?page=tempo3&lang=ro&ind=TUR101C_[4])

(4) SWOT Analysis.

Next, we will make a SWOT of Tulcea County as a touristic destination, by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the County, from a tourist point of view, the opportunities, but also threats, acting on the area.

As a result of this analysis, we notice, that the County has various strengths and opportunities in relation to the weaknesses and threats identified by us in the framework of this comprehensive analysis.

The presence of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve-a landmark, unique in Europe, the third most important in the world and an important scientific point, make from Tulcea County a strong touristic area, with multiple possibilities of development.

To be done, in the future, is to take account of the most efficient possible capitalization, resulting from the implementation of programmes and strategies for the development and recovery of the area through tourism, which should clearly show these strengths and to take account of the opportunities offered by the County, which are quite a few, and with real possibilities for development and implementation (table 7).

Table 7. The SWOT analysis of Tulcea County-touristic destination

Strengths	Weak points
The Danube Delta, the most important landmark of Romania-biosphere reserve; Authenticity, tradition and gastronomy, based on area-specific natural products; Possibility of practicing the agrotourism and the development opportunities of this branch; On Tulcea County territory there are many cultural vestiges and historical monuments; Touristic potential is diversified, represented by protected areas, unpolluted rural areas, natural parks, cultural attractions and fishing.	Insufficient promotion of the area; Underdeveloped touristic infrastructure and insufficient; To the touristic objectives the traffic routes infrastructure is weak, sometimes impossible; Low standard of living of the inhabitants and the existence of many communities in rural areas without utility such as water, sewage, gas, etc. Cultural and tourist events are rare and unpromoted properly in the County.
Opportunities	Threats
Real possibilities for development of tourism and rural tourism; The possibility of accessing the structural funds through the POSDRU projects; The development of the various types of tourism, allowing the area practicing many forms of tourism; The development of organic agriculture.	The touristic objectives degradation; The increase in the rate of unemployment and the migration of rural residents; Poor absorption of grants, may lead to a fall in the value of funds allocated to the County.

Source: authors ' own Analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, Tulcea County is a county of our country with a diverse natural and anthropic touristic potential and with a high degree of interest for different segments of tourists, with the possibility of multiple forms of tourism, from the travel tourism to sports tourism (sport fishing), up to a scientific tourism.

Agrotourism can be a real opportunity for the development of the standard of living of the inhabitants in the rural area of the County, who are now living on the edge of the existence and that's because agrotourism is able to capitalize on their existing surplus of accommodation in the peasant household by engaging tourists in and supply management services and activities (meals, accommodation, interact with the social and natural environment) in the peasant household without having to disturb its specifics.

Rural tourism embraces all touristic activities in the rural area, with the aim of harnessing the natural and human potential of the villages. [8]

The area's problems in this field become visible, however, when we begin to analyze the specific touristic infrastructure, which refers to the touristic accommodation, with functions of food, conference halls, exhibition centers, treatment facilities, amenities, etc., where there is a deficit of accommodation establishments, insufficient in number and diversity of the types of units.

By referring to the data base of the National Institute of Statistics, is noted that the County has 140 units of accommodation, insufficient number for a County with a such a touristic potential, of which only 20 units are hotels, 80 units are touristic villas, 16 units are agro-touristic pensions, and

9 are touristic, 7 accommodation on waterway vessels and maritime, and 8 are other structures with touristic accommodation functions (chalets 1, holiday villages 1, campsites 1, tourists halting places 2, tourist cottages 1, camps for children 1 and 1 inn). [4]

Also, there aren't entertainment facilities specific to the areas 'potential, are not enough exhibition centers, conference halls, etc., in which can be presented the area's beauty and the things that makes it unique in Europe and extremely important in the world.

All of those things listed above, in addition to a weak promotion on the domestic and international tourist market, have made that the number of tourists, who chose this area as a touristic destination, to be reduced from one year to another, with a worrying decline in the last period.

By referring to the data again from the database of the National Institute of statistics, it can be noted that in 2004, arrived in the County 73,241 tourists, and in 2014, just 66,242 tourist have chosen as their destination to spend the holidays, Tulcea County. [4]

The declining number of visitors supports the findings set out above, and should draw a warning, to give institutions a greater interest on the touristic activity in this area, activity with a strong chance of developing and exploiting what the County has best i.e. our country's touristic potential, diversified and so harmoniously distributed in the territory.

Additional funds allocated to this segment of activity, for the tourist development of the area, a more aggressive promotion on market and an increased interest of the inhabitants of the area, are just some of the objectives that should be taken into account in the future development strategies, to increase the living standard of the County's inhabitants .

It is noted that the Government has recently approved the HG. 120/2010 on approval of the list containing the programmes and investment projects in tourism.

Through this document it is facilitated the financing of investment projects in tourism and the finalization of the ongoing investment objectives and whose funding was discontinued after 2013, which we hope to "resuscitate" the Romanian tourism. [1]

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