



## THE NEED TO APPROACH THE MANAGEMENT OF THE TOURIST DESTINATION BY THE CENTRAL AND LOCAL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES IN ROMANIA

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### **Abstract:**

*In the medium and long term, priorities in the development of tourism aim to develop a complex tourist offer, making the most of the natural and anthropogenic resources existing in connection with the preservation of the environment and the heritage. On the long run, it will contribute to raising the living standards of the population, especially social categories with lower chances of reintegration into the labour market (people made redundant in industry, elderly people etc.). Implementation of the strategy at regional level must be achieved through an active partnership between Romanian public authorities, economic agents and private investors, with the involvement of the federation of employers in the sector and of the professional associations.*

**Key words:** *Tourist destination, Tourism management, Tourist cluster, Sustainable development, Tourism competitiveness*

### **1. Introduction**

A tourist destination is that geographic location with an attractive, communicative and receptive tourist offer that meets the tourist needs of the tourist product. The tourist destination must benefit from the attractiveness that motivates the choice of tourists to visit it, specific services of accommodation, food, leisure, access based on a transport infrastructure, availability by complex tourist packages, specific activities that can be offered to tourists on the duration of their stay in the respective tourist destination and the support services that meet the needs of tourism consumers. The natural and immaterial heritage of a tourist destination is a competitive advantage of the area and its recognition and its inclusion in the development of new markets and

tourist products is the key to creating a stimulating economic environment for local communities with real and harmonious benefits connected to environmental protection.

Gunn defines the spatial tourist destination as a "geographic area containing a critical mass of development that meets the tourist objectives. The main elements, from the perspective of the tourist destination, are: natural resources, accessible transport, attractive services, promotion and information" (Gunn C.A., 1994). But in order to have a real, stable and long-lasting tourist destination, we must add the most important element: the people who live there, those who are able to provide quality services and who can mold their lives so that "living" is possible (Serra F., 2003).

They turn everyday loneliness into participation, as they also want on vacation; the need for socialization is painful for those condemned to the routine of the days of performing economic systems.

In a classical sense, "tourist destination" might mean a country, a region within a country, a city, a village or a resort. The tourist destination exists and lives through the concerted action of the local population, visitors and tourists through Destination Management Organization (DMO). The inventory of those who can participate in the development of a tourist destination and the subsequent updating of the list of participants must allow highlighting the characteristics of each category, their expectations to adapt realistic and effective actions leading to maximum economic, social, cultural, etc. results, by exploiting the tourist destination of the area where it was built. (Rotariu I., 2008)

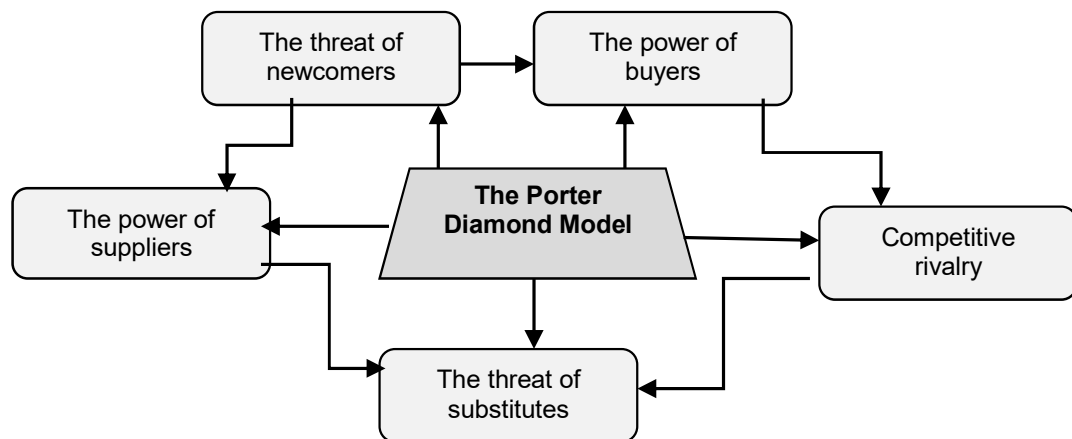
Competitiveness of the tourist destination is described as an element that facilitates its ability to increase its revenue from tourism, a continuous increase of visitors while providing memorable experiences in a profitable way, enhancing the welfare of residents, preserving natural capital for future generations.

Competitiveness has several dimensions: economic, socio-cultural and environmental. Competitiveness becomes the focus of tourism policies. On higher the competitiveness and tourism activity, the tourism policies focus on creating systems that monitor, control and increase the quality and efficiency of the tourism industry and preserve the environment. Several models have been launched to synthesize the theory and make it usable in practice. The "Porter diamond" model, designed for general theory, was relatively lately applied for tourism. The five forces of competitiveness are: the threat of newcomers, the power of suppliers, the power of buyers, the threat of substitutes and competitive rivalry.

There are many "clusters" in tourism, so the product appears as a composite that stimulates the development of new clusters. The competitive advantage of a tourist destination comes from a dynamic system consisting of 4 determinants that form Porter's so-called "diamond":

- The state of the factors or the destination of the production factors required for tourism;
- The conditions of demand or the nature of domestic demand (for products and tourism services);

- Connective activities or industries that support the tourism (eg the presence or absence of related industries or support for tourism);
- Market structure, rivalry, organization and strategy or conditions under which are managed (managed) tourist destinations, how to create, organize and manage companies and the nature of local rivalries.



**Figure 1. Porter diamond model adapting for tourism**

The Poon Model occurs when the theory compares new tourism (flexible, segmented, diagonal integrated, environmental awareness) to old (mass, standardized and rigid) tourism in terms of consumers, management, technology, production and system of running conditions. Poon passes from the option of developing tourism to how to develop it to benefit the community.

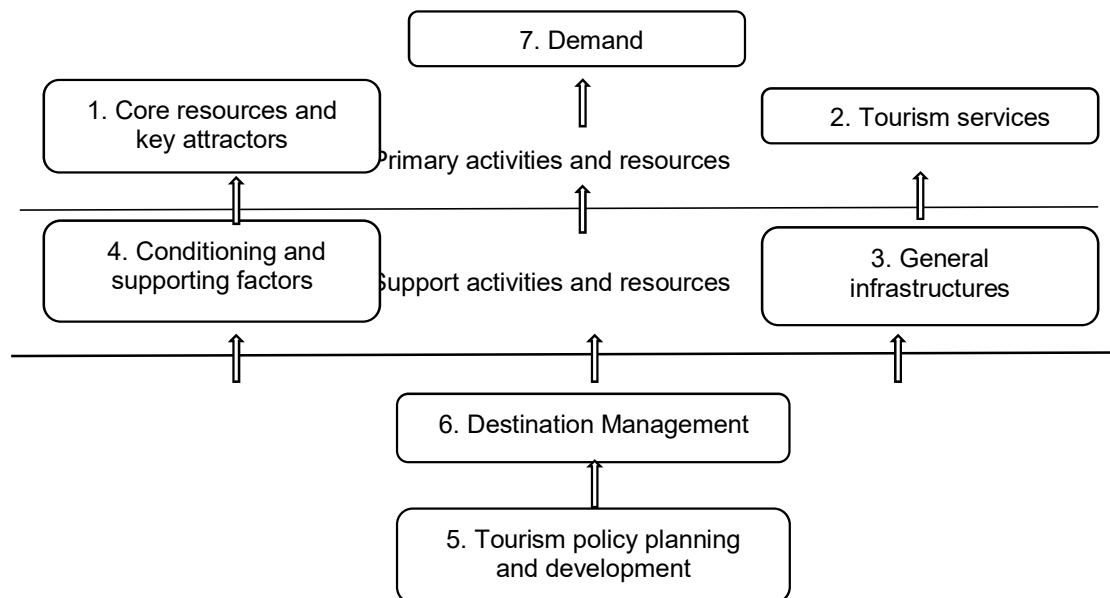
The Ritchie and Crouch model is considered to be the most comprehensive model, starting from the hypothesis that there is a comparative and competitive advantage. The comparative advantage reflects the resources that the destination can mobilize, whether natural or human, capital, knowledge, etc. The competitive advantage is established as a result of the use of resources (maintenance, growth and development, efficiency, efficiency, reality and audit), i.e. how a tourist destination manages to use its resources for maximum added value.

The authors consider two groups: DPPD (Destination Policy, Planning and Development) and DM (Destination Management) to be addressed separately and establish success factors for each.

Destination management in market-based democratic systems takes on special forms in the era of globalization. It is done through dedicated structures that have to manage the synergy of local actors to achieve the double effect: satisfaction of the tourist and locals and obtaining community profit. The community is required to use support systems such as planning and assessing local life to achieve community-targeted goals and for which it has allocated resources (Rotariu I., 2008).

Local authorities play a very important role in tourism development and, at the same time, have to bear in mind that this activity generates both positive and negative effects (Ruhanen, 2012).

Tourism planning (Manente, Minghetti and Mingotto, 2014) aims at establishing ways to achieve socio-economic benefits for society, aiming to achieve a sustainable development of the tourism sector by protecting the environment and local culture.



**Figure 2. Competitiveness and sustainability of a tourism destination: a model of evaluation**

*Source: Adapted from Richie and Crouch, 2000*

Therefore, it has been attempted in the literature to define a relationship, sometimes even overlapping the image of the destination, with notions such as perception and attitude. The relationship between image and perception was also discussed in the literature of psychology, detailing two main common directions: pictorialism - image as a visual representation, and descriptivism - image as representation in words and thoughts (White, 2004). These affective associations greatly influence the image of the destination and, implicitly, the purchasing decision through factors such as climate, recreational activities, cultural traditions and gastronomy (Leisen, 2001).

The effect of visiting a particular destination in imaging was investigated by Baloglu and McCleary (1999), the authors concluding that "the tourist experience contributes not only to image change but also to change of positioning based on cognitive/perceptual variables and affective and general level of attractiveness" (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999).

## **2. The current situation of Romanian tourism. The vision of the Ministry of Tourism on increasing the tourism competitiveness**

The goal of sustainable development is one of the most actual and stringent desideratum equally declaimed and assumed nowadays at all of the society's levels by individuals - politicians, academics, and civil society militants, organizations - firms as well as non-for-profit organizations of any kind and authorities - local, national, regional, global (Ogrean Claudia, Herciu Mihaela, 2013).

Globally, the last decade has been marked by an acceleration in the dynamics of the tourist market, the emergence and development of new concepts that are already accepted as undeniable trends in the future of tourism. Although the complexity of preferences, the high level of information of the modern tourist and the diversity of offers have positively influenced these dynamics, the tourism industry is currently confronted with the changes brought about by the new circumstances of the global economy and the new geostrategic and security context:

- Changes in consumer habits: the modern tourist has evolved towards a sophisticated consumer interested in practicing niche tourism, with Romania having the advantage of bringing together almost all forms of tourism and their complementary offers on its territory.
- In the context of the global competition between destinations, Romania needs to accelerate the growth of the quality of tourism services to meet the growing demands.
- The development of information and promotion technology tools: the biggest impact on this industry has come from digital marketing in recent years, which has fundamentally changed destination marketing. Interactive travel is the key target segment for many sectors and destinations around the world because of their attitude, income level and interest in the places they visit.

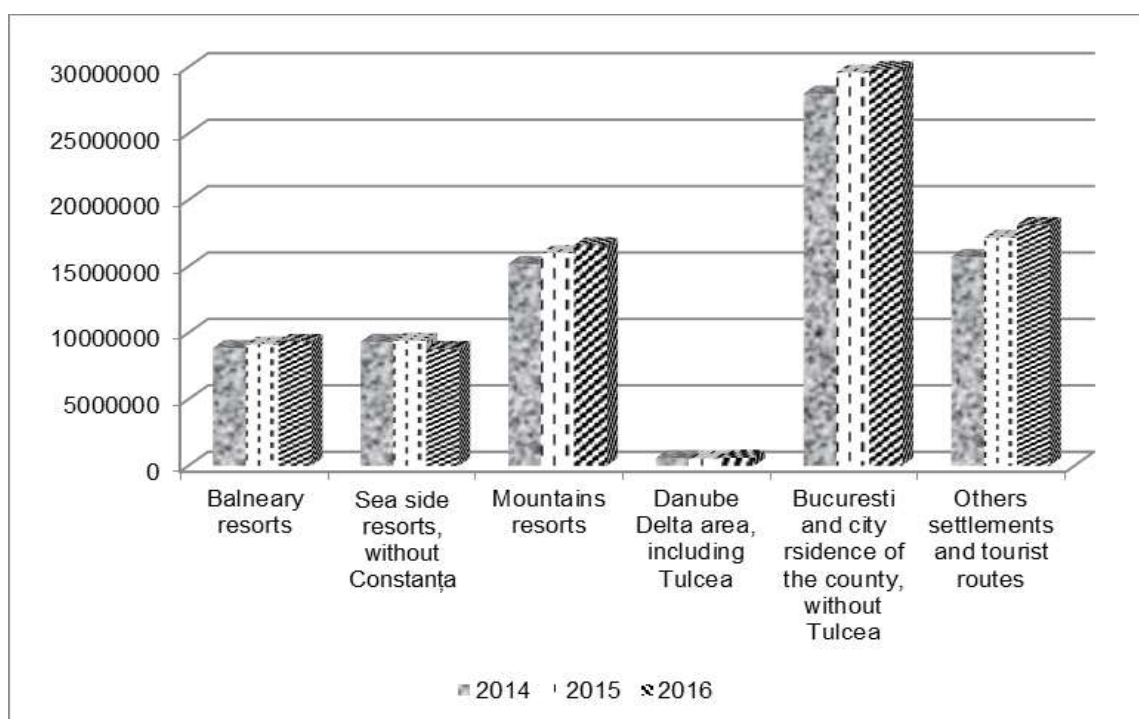
In 2016, in Romania, by reporting the number of arrivals (11.0025 million registered tourists) to the total budget (5.82 million USD) of the National Tourism Authority (allocated from the state budget in 2014), there is an amount average of \$ 0.7 spend. In the same year, this indicator recorded close values in Poland and Bulgaria (0.8 USD/tourist) and much higher in Hungary (1.5 USD/tourist), Austria (2.0 USD/tourist), Croatia (2, USD 8/tourist), Czech Republic (3.1 USD/tourist), Greece (3.7 USD/tourist) and Turkey (4.6 USD/tourist), per official data provided by World Bank and World Tourism Organization. Analysing comparatively these data, it results that Romania (with the smallest percentage of 0.7 USD/tourist) had the lowest budget allocated to tourism, relative to the total number of arrivals.

The competitiveness analysis in tourism is an analytical framework based on the data provided by the World Travel and Tourism Council (W.T.T.C.) within the "Competitiveness Monitor - 2016" which: provides a record of policy indicators and developments affecting the tourism and travel industry; compare national statistics, government policies and commitments; for tourism and travel industry shows the importance of strategic planning and the need to be included in government policies

and decisions. In terms of level quantification and progress in responsible tourism, Xin and Chan (2014) have taken into account recent studies suggesting sustainable tourism measurement indicators (Jaini, Anuar, Daim, 2012), grouped into four dimensions (ecological, planning, social, economic), ecotourism and sustainable destinations proposed by the European Commission.

The analysis of tourism competitiveness is based on a series of 14 business-environment indices: safety and security; health and hygiene; HR; access I.C.T. (internet, telephony, electricity); prioritizing the field of "Travel and Tourism"; international openness (regional bilateral air service agreements); competitive prices; medium sustainability; air transport infrastructure; road and port infrastructure; tourism services infrastructure; natural resources; cultural resources. Whose value on a scale of 1 to 7 shows the performance of each country, value 1 represents the lowest value of the index and the highest value 7. The data sources for these indicators are largely represented by development indicators developed by the World Bank, but also by the United Nations and the World Travel and Tourism Council. In the analysis of competitiveness in tourism, nine countries close to Romania were considered as reference countries, which are competitors, per the key tourism form: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Greece and Turkey. The global analysis refers to the comparison of the analysed countries, in terms of the values of the 14 indices (Ministry of Tourism, *Marketing Vision*, 2017).

Some representative data concerning Romanian tourism are presenting as follow:



**Figure 3. Touristic Romanian statistical data concerning tourist arrivals by destination between 2014 and 2016 (no. tourists-day)**

Source: data from insse.ro, 2017

**Table 1: Touristic Romanian statistical data concerning tourist arrivals by destination and types of tourists between 2014 and 2016**

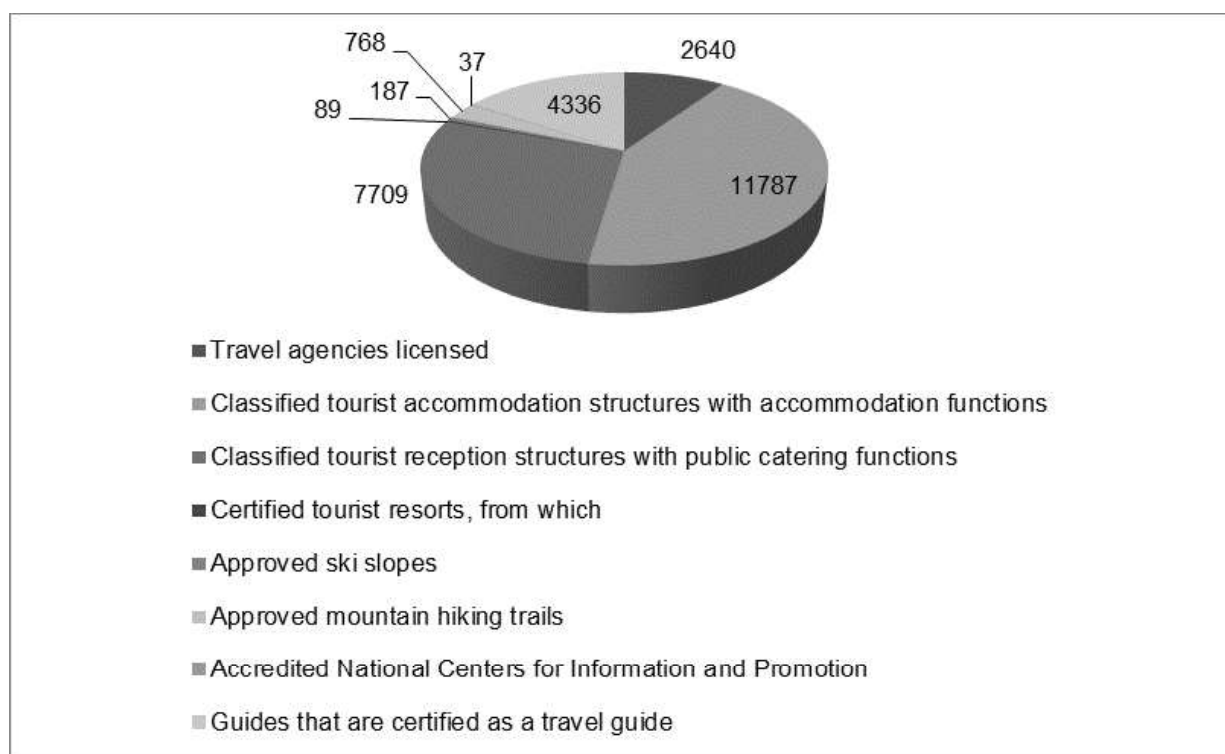
<b>Touristic destination</b>	<b>Types of tourists</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Balneary resorts	Total	655565	779325	851040
	Romanians	621966	735869	804955
	Foreigners	33599	43456	46085
Seaside resorts, without Constanța	Total	747103	821659	977386
	Romanians	715778	792039	942987
	Foreigners	31325	29620	34399
Mountains resorts	Total	1291013	1528583	1748157
	Romanians	1158742	1356404	1565562
	Foreigners	132271	172179	182595
Danube Delta area, including Tulcea	Total	65604	69076	73114
	Romanians	52122	53384	55747
	Foreigners	13482	15692	17367
Bucarest and city residence of the county, without Tulcea	Total	4308117	5088334	5562743
	Romanians	2821981	3369247	3632115
	Foreigners	1486136	1719087	1930628
Others settlements and tourist routes	Total	1398507	1634897	1790082
	Romanians	1180750	1374953	1520332
	Foreigners	217757	259944	269750

Source: *insse.ro*, 2017

Tourism companies are usually small and medium-sized enterprises where the management coordination is very present and important and is achieved through bilateral discussions with the employees, hence the conclusion that good coordination in such a firm depends very much on the quality of communication.

Most of the time, in the tourism agencies with 2-3 employees or in the case of low-capacity hostels (up to 8 rooms), the decisions are exclusive to the manager of the respective unit. In the case of larger companies, however, information and data, important components of the informational system of managers and inferior hierarchical leaders, can also be obtained by other means, through short sessions, bilateral meetings, emails etc. In fulfilling the coordination function in a tourism company, the manager should consider the following: using motivation at all stages of the managerial process; the rational staggering of individual tasks, duties and responsibilities; permanent training of staff (according to the provisions of the Order of the President of ANT no. 65/2013, it is established the obligation of the different categories of personnel to undertake training courses in the field: receptionists, managers in the tourism activity etc.). In the hospitality industry, the idea that planning-forecasting activity is exclusively a function of management is rejected. It occurs at all levels of the organization (Petrescu I., 2014).

The tourism sector in Romania has been affected by the absence of a general policy of guiding and guiding the sector. Although the tourism sector has undoubtedly benefited most of this assistance, the isolated implementation of these measures, without being integrated into a general strategic plan, seems to generate partial results.



**Figure 4. Touristic Romanian statistical data**

*Source: insse.ro, 2017*

The Master Plan for the Development of National Tourism, underlines the idea that in order to prove that Romania is a successful tourist destination it is necessary to analyse weaknesses of the Romanian tourism and activities aimed at the recovery of the industry.

The Master Plan for the Development of National Tourism provided for the establishment of a national tourism organization (NTO) to operate in a public-private partnership. This organization involves both the public and private environments in promoting tourism and providing industry assistance as well as making the right marketing. The leadership of this organization includes representatives of tourism associations, local authorities, as well as non-governmental organizations.

The approach to sustainable and long-term development of tourism implies a process of reaching a higher level of development while respecting the country's natural and cultural heritage. The vision of the Ministry of Tourism is to turn Romania up to 2021 into a competitive tourist destination, so that visitors / tourists want to spend as much time on the territory and return. This will have the direct effect of increasing employment and long-term sustainable development of the sector, thus contributing to a larger extent in the growth of gross domestic product. Increasing the competitiveness of Romanian tourist destinations must be based on principles of specialization of strategic planning processes, adapted to each stage of development (launch, growth / development, maturity or even decline and re-launch) of the tourist destination.



Given the economic and social importance of tourist destinations and the impact on their natural and cultural heritage, there is a need for effective cooperation between all the structures involved in the vast field of tourism. Strategic planning has to be done within a public-private partnership, because while the public sector provides the general framework for the proper development of tourism activities, the private sector is the one that actually attracts the tourist by guaranteeing their satisfaction through the offers integrated services and quality services.

The mission of the Ministry of Tourism is to develop a coherent and dynamic system consisting of rules and regulations of public and central tourism authorities in partnership with the private sector in order to achieve an attractive tourist destination that meets the demands of the tourist services consumer the consolidation of Romania's position as a "must see" tourist destination, recognized for its diverse natural and cultural heritage, by 2021, which can be capitalized throughout the year, resulting in an increase in the contribution of the tourism industry to gross domestic product (Ministry of Tourism, *Marketing Vision*, 2017).

The long-term sustainable strategic framework is linked to internal development for the competitiveness of tourism. In this respect, the key tourism projects (the Master Plan for Tourism and the creation of the Romanian tourism brand) have highlighted the importance of the long-term competitiveness building process for the future prosperity of this industry, which is indissolubly linked to the rapidity with which it is created a national cooperation to build competitiveness, laying the foundation for sound and healthy future development, as well as developing and understanding the concept of competitive quality at all levels of the national tourism value chain.

The concept of competitive tourism quality (the most extensive and complex task for the future of Romanian tourism) is linked to the need to operate according to policies tailored to high-value offers aiming at excellence in the whole tourist value chain while ensuring and protecting the character unique Romanian and identity. Introducing competitive quality as a concept and then as a widespread practice will require time and effort. This is primarily linked to the creation of innovative qualitative processes and concepts.

To achieve the long-term vision of Romanian tourism, it is first and foremost the development of a smart business environment. Romania needs to pursue ongoing reforms to provide a more competitive environment and business climate, especially for the tourism sector. In addition, Romania still needs significant efforts to remove barriers to investment and to modernize the material basis (accommodation, food, treatment and leisure), ultimately building a competitive business environment that supports general adaptation of industry to reach the defined vision.

An intelligent business environment targets better business conditions, profound changes to current marketing policy, an efficient and effective destination management system, encouraging investment projects and, last but not least, a significant reform of the legislative framework in the field.

Reform of tourism and hospitality can be achieved by: creating a number of educational programs within the industry, focusing in particular on the development and implementation of new professions; setting the bases of primary infrastructure to educate young tourism professionals; Encourage exchanges of experience among students with hotels and hotel management schools with great reputation; placing a strong focus on the use of information technology (IT) in the tourism sector.

The key policies and actions to be pursued should consider marketing based on experiences and emotions that: create a global awareness of the attractions with positive connotations of Romania as a tourist destination (brand image) - ongoing; reflects the general orientation towards providing experience in this sector; is based on authentic emotions created by Romanian nature, culture and identity, which ultimately attracts target groups using new tools, international lifestyle magazines and, in particular, travel guides.

In order for SMEs to be able to integrate better and faster into large-scale global sales channels, a strong national e-business network, including a national tourism information system, using state-of-the-art technologies at all levels (before booking, during and after booking).

### **3. Reconceiving the elements of differentiation of the tourist destination Romania on the international tourism market**

The creation of quality products / services is crucial to align with European development requirements, as well as to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of Romania as a tourist destination. Romania needs to establish an efficient and effective destination management system that will gradually become able to have a strong impact on building the competitiveness of destinations. The destination management system is one of the most important pillars of improving competitiveness.

Business-to-business management is needed that can be more involved in development projects and provides a competitive and transparent framework for local and international business initiatives.

By successfully applying a local/regional destination management system, local players definitely outweigh any resistance to the modernization process and actively militate for tourism to become a major player in planning and managing local communities. Thus, local managers receive appropriate regular training to be always informed about global trends and best practices in the field, and the local population is constantly subject to opinion polls on accepting the tourist practices in the destination. Tourist information/ visitor information centres must be present in main/secondary destinations throughout the country. Local governments and people understand and build high value experiences for visitors and products based on culture, identity, character and local charm. The stakeholders in the tourism industry and local governments are jointly responsible for collecting and implementing state-of-the-art

knowledge of tourism development models and solutions. The final decision on major investment projects is based on a solid public-private consensus, which should be permanently encouraged.

The process of creating experiences and products of great value will take place only at regional / local level, meaning that all clusters (regions) of Romanian tourism must formulate and adopt specific plans.



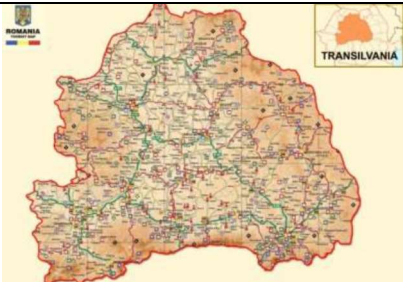

DMCs (Destination Management Companies) have to become a key tool to take advantage of this trend, being in fact high-priced agents specializing in structuring, managing and marketing task packages / special interest categories to ensure meeting the need for capacity building in terms of new technological tools to be implemented and training programs for local CMD managers; providing tax incentives for these entrepreneurial initiatives; building global itineraries and attractive thematic packages; the strong promotion of tourism.

Marketing and competitiveness are two closely related concepts that need to be addressed simultaneously. Efficient marketing increases competitiveness, but at the same time without a minimum level of competitiveness, it is not possible to make effective marketing. Destination competitiveness should be understood as the ability to optimize the efficiency of the Romanian tourism system in a systematic and balanced development environment so that tourism can contribute sustainably to increasing the quality of life and the distribution of wealth among all members society. Actions to improve competitiveness, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism, are translated into: Human Resources Development; technical assistance to private companies and businesses, product development, quality systems implementation, etc.; promoting competitiveness, through incentives for research and development and for permanent innovation (Ministry of Tourism, *Marketing Vision*, 2017).

Authentic and competitive cooperation must be geared towards reaching a common agreement on the Romanian tourism strategy to improve the attractiveness of the destination, create a strong system of experiences, substantially increase resource productivity, and manage the country's tourism system in an efficient way. These cooperation initiatives are structured through partnerships: public-private, public-public and private-private.

At present, Romania does not have officially defined clusters / tourist regions with specific and effective tourism management systems. Only Bucovina and Maramureș represent clusters that are institutionally organized and consist of a single county. Ideally, as all the historical regions of Romania, which best reflect and differentiate the key attributes of the country and the experiential structure, be organized in such clusters, respectively in 9 key tourist clusters, reflecting different potentialities and tourist experiences and specific. Some of these clusters have already built a strong image of their products and experiences (Transylvania, Maramureș, Bucovina and a few others) and others are about to do so. Some of the clusters / regions are already tourism-relevant, and others are not. The key attributes, tourism experiences and the related development of potential products for each group / region can be defined as follows:

Table 2: Proposal for Romanians clusters

Cluster 1 Bucovina ( 1 county)	
	<p><b>Attributes:</b> Unique cultural sites recognized by UNESCO; the authenticity of traditions and gastronomy; nature untouched; mineral waters</p> <p><b>Experiences:</b> peace of mind and spirituality that leaves strong memories; savoring local gastronomy and hospitality of locals</p> <p><b>Products:</b> High Priority: Circuits; Rural tourism; Medium priority: Active tourism and adventure.</p>
Cluster 2 Maramureș (2 counties)	
	<p><b>Attributes:</b> The authenticity of traditions, gastronomy and distilled products such as "horinca"; Cultural sites recognized by UNESCO - wooden churches; The cheery cemetery, Mocănița - the steam forest train; Nature untouched from national and natural parks;</p> <p><b>Experiences:</b> The joy to live; Participation in traditions with locals; Savoring organic food and the wonderful hospitality of the locals.</p> <p><b>Products:</b> High Priority: Circuits, Rural Tourism, Active Tourism and Adventure; Medium priority: Parks and wildlife.</p>
Cluster 3 Transylvania (9 counties)	
	<p><b>Attributes:</b> Sibiu - the cultural capital of Europe in 2007 and the European Gourmet Region in 2019; Sighisoara - UNESCO medieval town; Ancient and medieval sites recognized by UNESCO - Dacian fortresses and fortified churches; Dracula; The whole offer of active and adventurous experiences in Romania; The untouched nature of 6 national and natural parks, including Retezat; Thermal waters and minerals / lakes.</p> <p><b>Experiences:</b> "Loss" in the medieval atmosphere; The most spectacular roads both on and off the road (one end of the famous Transfagarasan and the new Transalpina highway); Meeting with Dracula; The joy of living and participation in the traditions of Romanians, Saxons or Szeklers; Tasting the best Romanian white wines; Removal of civilization in the most beautiful places in the Carpathians.</p> <p><b>Products:</b> High priority: City break; Circuits; Rural tourism; Active and Adventure Parks and wildlife; Medium priority: Health and Wellness</p>
Cluster 4 Dobrogea (2 counties)	
	<p><b>Attributes:</b> UNESCO Biological Reserve of the Danube Delta; The oldest mountains in Romania - Măcin National Park; International entertainment in Mamaia and Old Customs; Water and sea air, therapeutic sludge resources.</p> <p><b>Experiences:</b> Safari nautical in the Danube Delta; Circling a rich and sunny cultural environment; Nightlife in selected places on the Romanian Riviera</p> <p><b>Products:</b> High priority: Parks and wildlife; Sun and beach; Cruises and Nautical; Active and Adventure; Medium priority: Health and Wellness</p>

**Cluster 5 Muntenia (11 counties)**



**Attributes:** Capital Bucharest; Half of the famous Transfagarasan road; Rich resources of activities and adventure on the highest peaks of the Carpathians; Muddy volcanoes and ancient Christian caves; The thermal waters in northern Bucharest

**Experiences:** Rich cultural experiences always located somewhere between Paris and Istanbul? Follow the birth of Dracula's legend? In Bucharest probably the best entertainment in South-eastern Europe

**Products:** High priority: City break; Circuits; Active and Adventure; Medium priority: Wildlife and natural parks; Health and Wellness

**Cluster 6 Oltenia (5 counties)**



**Attributes:** Half of the new Transalpine; Cultural site recognized by UNESCO - Horezu, also known for its outstanding ceramics; Tg. Jiu - the city of Constantin Brâncuși, which houses its large works; thermal peels on the Olt Valley; Nature untouched from 5 national and natural parks;

**Experiences:** Combining spectacular trails with several points of cultural interest, such as Brâncuși's Infinite Column or familiarizing with the Romanian architectural style; Among many other adventures available, rafting on the Jiu River.

**Products:** High Priority: Circuits  
Medium priority: Active and Adventure; Health and Wellness; Parks and wildlife

**Cluster 7 Banat (2 counties)**



**Attributes:** The balneo-climatic resort "Baile Herculane", Karlovy Vary style; The Gorge of the Danube, the Iron Gates; The gigantic sculpture of Decebalus' image, the famous Dacian leader; Playground dedicated to activities and adventure in the Văliug - Three Waters area; Nature untouched from 3 national and natural parks

**Experiences:** Prevention and cure of rheumatic diseases; Spectacular road trails near the Danube and the mountains; Perhaps the best climbing experience in Romania in the Cerna valley; One of the most appreciated international jazz festivals in Gărdana; The enjoyment of organic food and local traditions

**Products:** High Priority: Circuits; Active and Adventure Parks and wildlife; Medium priority: Health and Wellness.


**Cluster 8 Moldova (7 counties)**



**Attributes:** Iasi, the capital of Moldova and even Romania during the First World War; Bicaș, the largest artificial lake in Romania; Lepșa mountain resort; Nature untouched by national and natural parks; Health and wellness resources from Slănic Moldova

**Experiences:** Enjoy the amazing atmosphere and architecture of Iasi, one of the top three university cities in Romania

**Products:** High priority: City break; Medium priority: Active and Adventure Health and Wellness; Parks and wildlife.

Cluster 9 Crișana (3 counties)	
	<p><b>Attributes:</b> Oradea town and its balneo-climatic resort Baile Felix; Nature untouched from national and natural parks</p> <p><b>Experiences:</b> An impressive collection of Art Nouveau buildings in the center of Oradea; High-level spa experience in a world-class international hotel; Prevention and cure of rheumatic diseases; adventures, explore the caves in the Apuseni Mountains</p> <p><b>Products:</b> High priority: Health and Wellness; Medium priority: Active and Adventure; Parks and wildlife.</p>

Several key actions need to be implemented as a reflection of the new culture in the field of Romanian tourism. *Improving the perception of the value of the destination* starts from the fact that, in order to satisfy the consumer, it is important to manage the capacity of the tourism system to provide value, measured in terms of intangible elements such as feelings and experiences, results from tourism activity. The value perceived by the visitor will be influenced by factors such as the quality of the environment, the appearance of the urban environment, the attitude of the locals towards the visitors, the offer of authentic and unique experiences, etc. Also, the Romanian tourism system must manage the pressure felt by tourists, generated by insecurity, discomfort and the price they have to pay for their holiday experience. These pressures may be a consequence of the poor quality of public infrastructure and services and maintenance of basic equipment as well as price fluctuations, noise, crime. Managing perception of value can only be done locally. Each destination, region or locality must take responsibility for improving its own competitiveness. Customers are attracted to a destination by the experiences / activities they can live or do in a particular area. The Romanian tourism system should focus on the development and quality of selected key products as well as on structuring attractive and flexible tourist packages. The central objective of these actions must correspond to focusing on certain key key products of Romania in order to ensure the maximum use of resources and to generate a significant impact on the market. The role of product managers will be central to the development and improvement of tourism products. Product managers at the central and local level should take responsibility for certain sectors and all their actions should be geared towards improving Romania's competitiveness in the respective sectors. Learning from the experiences of destinations applying "good practices" as well as establishing cooperation mechanisms with product development partners will contribute to the improvement of the Romanian tourist product base. In recent years, we witness changes in consumer habits: the modern tourist has evolved towards a sophisticated consumer interested in practicing niche tourism, with Romania having the advantage of bringing together almost all forms of tourism and their complementary offerings on its territory. Culinary tourism gives the opportunity to present the richness of folkloric traditions to tourists (Chase, Manning and Valliere, 2014).



From a certain fear of limitation, but also due to the different forms of tourism practiced in Romania, there is currently no clear determination of the position of the tourist destination Romania in relation to other tourist destinations and brands. The diversity and mystery that surrounds the destination of Romania should not be seen as a disadvantage but as a benefit for visitors, which necessarily enter into dialogue with other tourist and cultural offerings of Romania. So we can fit Romania as a destination. The implementation of a quality brand in tourist destinations leads to ethical and commercial advantages, helps to spread good practices and generate "responsible" products for the international traveller, develops specialization, excellence and innovation, provides competence through added value, not the prices or tariffs practiced. In this context, it is necessary to identify the existing problems in the tourist destinations through an evaluation audit.

Designing the quality label can be achieved through the collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism, local public authorities and professional and employers' associations in the field of tourism, taking into account the recommendations made by the World Tourism Organization, the Confederation of Hotels, Restaurants and Cafes in the European Union, and the European Parliament resolution of 29 November 2007 on a new EU tourism policy: Strengthening the partnership for tourism in Europe (2006/2129 / INI).

Developing the conditions and criteria for quantification of the quality of tourism services for granting the *RoQ* trademark within the public-private partnership (the criteria to be applied for the certification of the tourism management system and services in the tourism sector) as well as the integration of the Sharing Economy concept ("collaborative economy"), which involves networking and collaboration among members of a network, in order to maximize the benefits that each of the parties can get, are two other measures that are necessary in the current period.

*The Destination Management Organization* (DMO) is an entity with legal personality that functions by associating the administrative-territorial units of destination with representatives from the private environment and, as appropriate, with representatives of other relevant entities, such as associations of promotion, professional associations in various economic sectors, non-governmental organizations, administrators of the protected natural areas, tourism training environment, academia and others, based on a partnership that ensures the realization of the marketing policy and the coordinated management of the destination components in order to developing and capitalizing on the tourist potential of the destination. The establishment of the Destination Management Organization (DMO) aims at co-ordinating the organizations and stakeholders to develop, capitalize on the tourism potential and coordinate the tourist destination.

Strategic planning is done by: analysing the environment in which DMO operates (with the evaluation of opportunities and threats), analysing the market to which the tourist destination is addressed, its dimensions and structures (market share, market trends, consumer profile, etc.) segmentation and targeting the market to which the tourist destination is addressed, the positioning of the tourist destination on the

market, based on specific, unique and determinant attributes, the analysis of the tourism destination's competitiveness; creating marketing programs on tourism forms, specific / preponderant to the tourist destination with objectives, activities, budget indicators, specific performance indicators, as well as concrete marketing actions, up to the creation of tourist packages in order to support the destination brand and implementing the proposed strategy; creating monitoring systems for strategy implementation, program implementation, and performance measurement.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Romania has built an involuntary image, drawn from stereotypes or fragments of information that underlie its perception as a tourist destination. All these outline a mysterious, diverse and bidding destination, lost in an indefinite time, and which draws through its allure of story.

Romania can generate and deliver authentic and diverse experiences, with the potential in this respect to become a particularly attractive destination for tourists who prefer the originality and the novelty, less explored places, in the midst of traditional communities, from gastronomic experiences unique accommodation structures in the local architectural style (traditional houses, mansions, ridge huts), wildlife and local charm.

Recognized, assumed and managed, the authenticity of national identity becomes a concrete value for Romania's image and a pride of motivation for the developers of tourist offerings. These main characteristics of Romania's image are real characteristics of contemporary Romanian society, which are *reasons to believe* - points of support of the positioning. Tourist destination, by 2021, the basic differentiators, identified as competitive advantages, which give Romania uniqueness as a tourist destination and motivate the target group (among the domestic tourists and those of the target countries) represented them: unspoiled and almost virgin nature, authentic rural life and a unique cultural environment in the world.

Quality is the most important factor of competitiveness, and quality improvement is a major strategic goal for any organization that wants to be competitive under the conditions imposed by the competitive market. Creating quality products / services is crucial for increasing Romania's attractiveness and competitiveness as a tourist destination. Improving the quality of tourism services must be a continuous process, which includes: setting objectives, developing strategies, implementing criteria and professional standards for managers and employees, monitoring and permanent evaluation.

Correctly measuring the value of customer experience will have important implications for tourism providers, providing them with both a competitive advantage and a useful tool in establishing the most appropriate strategies. Better understanding of customer value and careful measurement will help your destination improve its quality of service.



The Ministry of Tourism should concentrate its work on 3 key management principles in order to achieve the objectives: functional focusing by deepening and expanding its areas of activity, acting systematically and simultaneously in the field of competitiveness of destination and internal and external marketing; Leadership & Guidance, by understanding its role as a driving force in the process of establishing a new marketing culture and competitiveness and, at the same time, as a source of inspiration for all domestic and related organizations, to stimulate the cooperation of all actors in the tourism sector; efficiency in the rational use of financial, technical and human resources. This means actions focused on the following directions: redefining functions; strengthening the operational structure with greater use of external resources (outsourcing); the adequacy of economic resources to the needs of the new policy; attracting new financial resources.

In order to achieve the objective of increasing the attractiveness of the tourist destination Romania, by transmitting the differentiating elements to the target audience, it is necessary to develop an integrated communication campaign so that the promotion is carried out in a sustainable manner, which will definitely help to highlight the Romanian values.

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