

**BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY, CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF GEOGRAPHY
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY**

PhD THESIS

- Summary -

**TOURISM WITHIN THE RURAL-MOUNTAIN
AND MARGINAL CONTACT AREA IN CLUJ COUNTY**

**Keywords: tourism, rural-mountain, tourism supply, prospection, valorisation, strategy,
tourism product**

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since the appearance of tourism, which manifested itself both as a phenomenon and as a consciously managed activity, it has not ceased to complete the spectre of its content and valences, affecting in one way or another not only the involved people, but also different aspects of the socioeconomic reality circumscribed to the geographical space related to tourism unfolding.

Being a state in which approximately 90% of Romania's surface is represented by the rural area, rural development has early formed into a strategic objective, but what could have been obtained in the past solely through harvest or agribusiness, nowadays, in the third millennium, it can be accomplished also through tourism. On this line, the promoted vision of the National Programme for Rural Development in the 2014-2020 period, stands as a proof inclusively by undersigning to the advantages induced by tourism. Referring to tourists and particularly to rural population, the same programme acknowledges merit of tourism phenomenon capable of growing the attractivity of rural areas, on the one hand, and intensifying both the feeling of pride and identity of the local communities with respect to where they live, on the other hand, thus diminishing the desire of abandoning the rural space for the urban one. Furthermore, by means of preserving and conserving the local anthropic heritage (unique cultural resources, ethnofolkloric ones, rural traditions, gastronomic customs etc.) and the natural one (local environments characteristics, ecological features) and by using it for the purpose of socioeconomic development, tourism can contribute to job creation and, by default, to income generation (complementary to the activities ran by rural population, agrarian or not), with positive impacts experienced also in terms of better management, through local development strategies, that Romanian villages, especially those in the mountain area, thrive for so much in the territorial development process.

Under the current circumstances in which the demonstration that an area is suitable for tourism equals to a chance to economic, social and environmental revival in the perspective of sustainable development, no other goal could have been better served by all the research – bibliographic documentation, field observation, prospectations, classifications and rankings, analyses and surveys, followed by projects and proposals subordinated to a unitary strategy of tourism development – that were employed within the mountain and submontane sector from the rural area in Cluj County.

Motivation in choosing the subject and the study area

The arguments which have oriented the specific of the research towards tourism within the rural-mountain area in Cluj County coincided with several factors such as: the personal interest showed in this activity, the higher education studies taken in this fields and the accumulated experience derived from the past years of research, the dynamic character, advantages and multilateral implications of tourism – ranging from satisfying human needs (which also generate it) to sustaining the national economy – a high interest towards the rural universe and a peculiar admiration towards the mountains, along with the personal origins' aspect that has favored a direct knowledge of the physical-geographic, cultural and socioeconomic realities corresponding to Cluj County, towards which has also counted the feeling of moral duty translated into the desire to contribute at least to the promotion of its tourism supply, if not to its whole development.

Geographic location, territorial delimitation and configuration of study area

Located in the northeastern extremity of Apuseni Mountains which stretch over the southwestern part of Cluj County on approximately one third of its surface, the study area is the

result of associating physical-geographic and territorial-administrative criteria in which 26 communes, integrally or partially occupied by the mountain sector, were taken into consideration (Figure 1). Along with the marginal contact strip between the limits of the mountain units and the ones belonging to the territorial-administrative units in the submontane area, the examined territory covers approximately 2.686 km², bordering Sălaj, Bihor and Alba counties in the northern, western and southern parts, and Huedin, Izvorul Crișului, Aghireșu, Gârbău, Baciui, Florești, Cluj-Napoca, respectiv Apahida, Cojocna, Ploscoș, Turda and Călărași (within the limits of Cluj County).

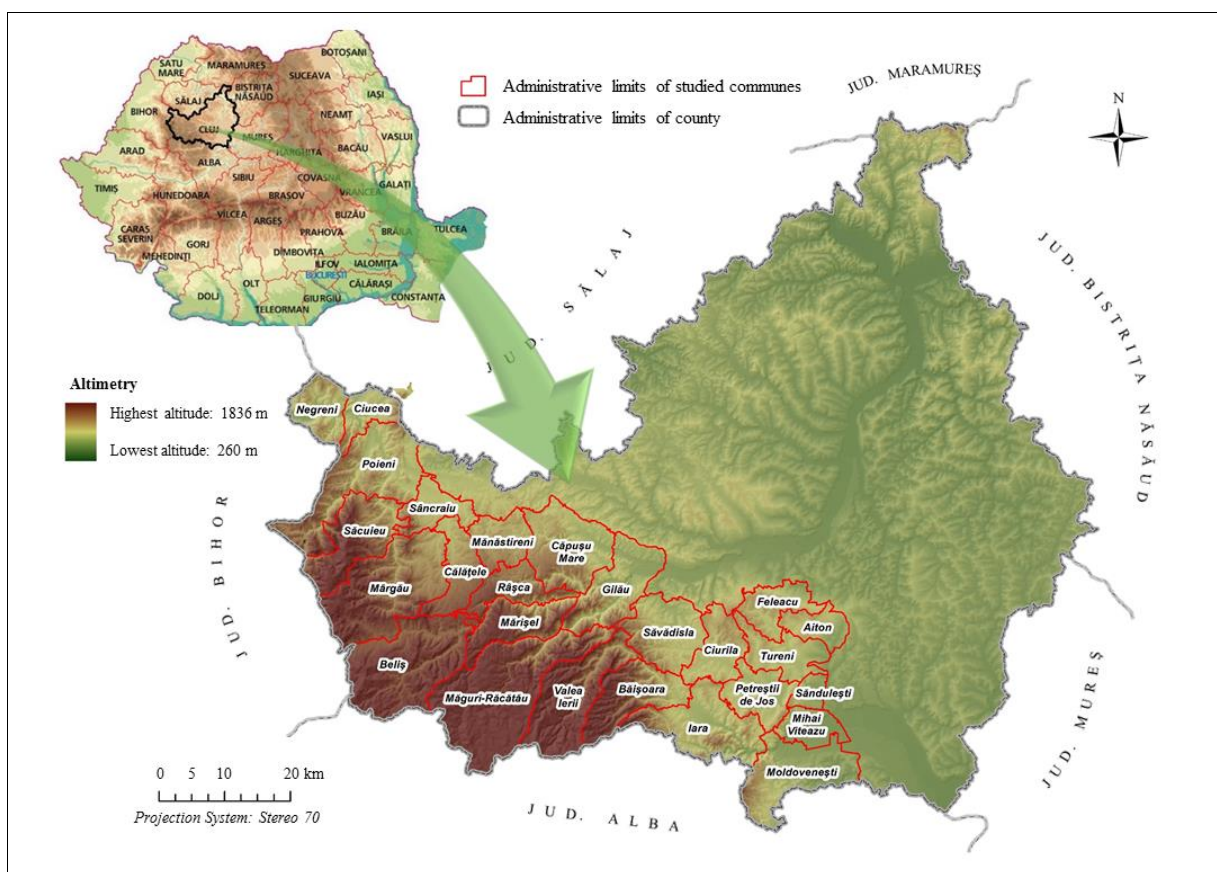


Fig. 1. The study area at national and county level

Structure of the thesis

Adhering to the general structure that research methodology papers and tourism studies recommend and practice, this PhD thesis is the result of a complex series of objectives comprised in nine chapters and 43 subchapters – preceded by introduction and followed by conclusion – displayed in conjunction and in the same logical succession with the hypotheses which were subordinated to the belief that the examined territory has all the geographic, tourist, cultural and socioeconomic coordinates to ensure its development through tourism.

For illustrating the investigated reality and the formulated proposals in an original and suggestive manner, either analytically, or synthetically, with the purpose of facilitating some comparisons or obtaining an overall perspective, there have been: written 325 pages (and other 39 included in the Appendices); inserted 233 figures (out of which approximately 60 maps); made 47 tabular representations; consulted approximately 300 bibliographic references and 110 websites; added 15 appendices (composed of 27 tables and 3 questionnaires) and 130 footnotes.

1. THEORETICAL, CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAME

1.1. Terminological specifications and general theoretical considerations

Conceived as a theoretical preamble, the first subchapter was allocated to defining notions and tourist categories which were employed within the research, including concepts such as: space, geographical space, tourist space, elements of regional geography (sit, spot, centre, complex, area, zone and region), tourism demand and supply (primary and secondary), tourist fund and patrimony, tourist attractions and resources, material base of tourism, tourism infrastructure (technical-edilatory facilities and related services), tourist receiving structures, tourist potential, tourism prospectation, tourist arrangement, tourism product, tourist flow, types and forms of tourism etc.

1.2. Theoretical contributions regarding the subject and the study area

Given the fact that the general theme of the study is represented by tourism with all its implications and manifestations – determined by the specificity of the natural (predominantly montane) and territorial-administrative framework (totally rural), influenced by economic, political, demographic, social and cultural aspects – there was required for consulting a heterogeneous bibliographic material from the field of tourism geography, tourism economy, prospectation, valorisation and tourist arrangement as well as papers written by authors who approached subjectes such as relief, climate, hidrography, biogeography, ethnography etc. A special section was consecrated both to *tourism within the rural area*, and to *tourism within the mountain area*, within which evolutive, structural and functional aspects were approached along with a special emphasis on the specificity of rural tourism and Apuseni Mountains' particularities (equally known for their gorges and defiles, peaks and carst abrupts, waterfals, caves, different crystalline and volcanic forms of relief, subterranean waters individualised through carst springs, mineral and thermomineral waters, lakes of hydro-energetic interest, and for their vast cultural tourist patrimony, religious and ethnofolkloric). Indicating the quoted authors along the whole length of the thesis was also performed in the last section of theoretical considerations regarding *tourism within Cluj County* within which specialised contributions reffering either to the integral presentation of Cluj County or to certain aspects of the geographical and historical, social and cultural, tourist and economic reality, or to the mountain ramifications streched over the surface of Cluj County, or to the analysed communes and villages (mainly monographic or tourism studies).

1.3. Hypotheses and objectives of the research

The general objective of the research was to demonstrate that the examined territory possesses a complex and diversified supply that can transform tourism into a viable economic alternative as long as there is a remote possibility of exploiting the tourist resources (usually by means of practicing tourism forms, sustained by specific tourist arrangements, integrated within coherent tourism products), amid proper, active and sustainable valuing, doubled by an efficient promotion, able to orientate different demand segments, actions which would contribute to the tourist flow intensification and tourism earnings maximisation that would finally act as an economic catalyst for the development of both study area and Cluj County. For this purpose four hypotheses were formulated and subjected to validation, as they follow:

- ✓ **Hypothesis 1:** The primary tourism supply related to the rural-mountain and contact marginal area in Cluj County is sufficiently diversified, developed and attractive to stimulate tourist motivation among different demand segments.
- ✓ **Hypothesis 2:** The technical and material base of tourism belonging to the rural-mountain and contact marginal area in Cluj County sustains a dynamic and active tourist valuing of the

attractive potential and, through its dimension and typology, it facilitates the unfolding of some diversified tourism forms.

- ✓ **Hypothesis 3:** Tourism can provide economic development for the rural-mountain and contact marginal area in Cluj County under the existing conditions of tourism market, political activity, administration system, geodemographics and tendencies.
- ✓ **Hypothesis 4:** The presence of a tourism network would significantly contribute to an efficient promotion of the tourism product pertaining to the rural-mountain and contact marginal area in Cluj County, the more so as even nowadays its adresability concerns heterogeneous segments of the tourist demand.

1.4. Phases of research. Data and information sources

The elaboration of the research process was based on performing certain stages that occurred in a logical and coherent succession which started with the documentation phase which engaged a series of analyses of bibliographic materials and databases, of statistical and cartographic materials. This was followed by the field data collection phase, accomplished through direct observations upon the local horizon (tourist potential and specific infrastructure elements) and through collaborations with the local authorities, with the providers of tourist services from the examined communes and with their tourists. Finally, data processing and interpretation phase took place, consisting of incorporating the results of personal investigation and comparing them with those derived from official sources (Statistics National Institute and National Authority for Tourism), completing the last analyses in terms of accommodation, promotion and tourist flow, inserting the photos taken in situ, elaborating the tourism development strategy of the rural-mountain area in Cluj County and designing the thematic tourism products subordinated to personalised tourism.

1.5. Elements of the research methodology

Reiterating the idea that the methodology is tributary to the hypotheses and, thus, represents one of the fundamental factors which play a crucial role in the success and efficacy of a scientific investigation, the presentation of the indispensable components for the research process was required. In a descending order of generality degree, these components dealt with: theoretical *principles* (spatial distribution principle, causality principle, geographic integration principle, historicism principle, regionalism principle, ecological principle, sociological and anthropic principles); *methods* and techniques of data collection (observation, analysis, hierarchical clusterial analysis, survey, quantitative structured interview); *techniques* and procedures of data processing (statistical and mathematical, tabular, graphical and cartographic representations techniques); logical *procedures* of analysis, organising and presenting data and results (description, explanation, classification, ranking, comparison and synthetis).

2. NATURAL TOURIST FUND (PRIMARY TOURISM SUPPLY)

2.1. Morphotourist component

This component distinguished itself by relief units (Figure 2) integrated both in the *mountain sector* (Vlădeasa Massif, Gilău Mountains, Muntele Mare Massif, Trascău Mountains, Plopiș Mountains (Șes Mountain), Meseș Mountains) and in the submontane or the *marginal contact area* represented by hills, submountain depressions and couloirs (Feleac Massif, Huedin Depression,

Căpuș Couloir, Vlaha–Săvădisla Depression, Iara–Hășdate Depression, Inferior Arieș Couloir, Aiton–Viișoara Hills), alternating with the secondary depressionary bassinets (Ciucea, Negreni, Petrești, Săndulești, Tureni), with average altitudes of approximately 1.050 m and maximum ones that do not exceed 1.836 m elevation. Individualised through relief forms such as peaks, levelling surfaces, gorges and defilees, caves etc., the natural framework turned out to be, first of all, a picturesque one within which the background function stood as an added value and attractivity to the support function for all the recreational activities practicable in the area.

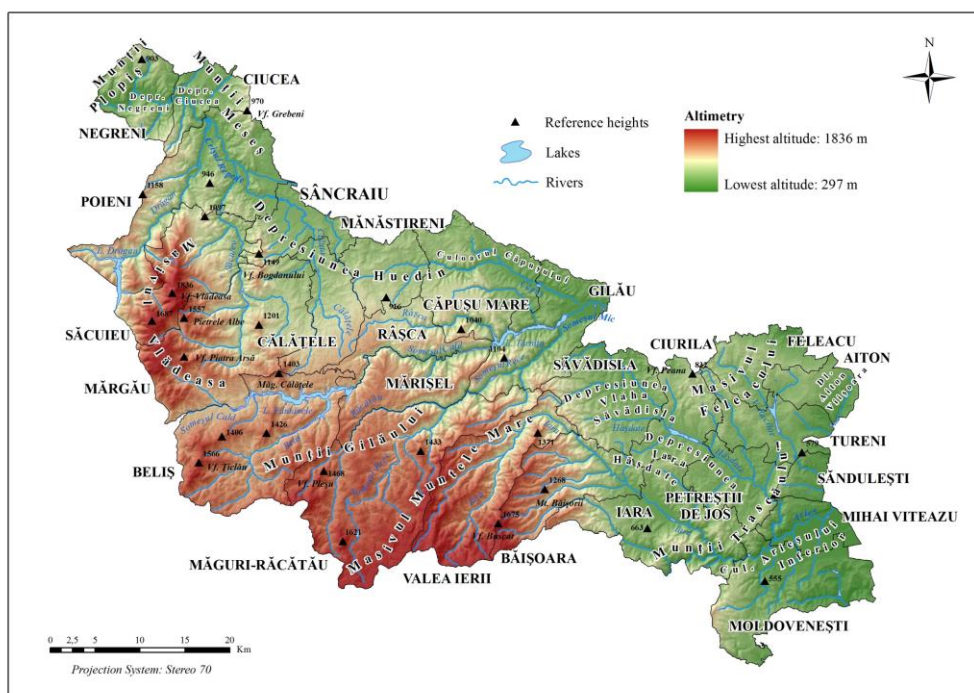


Fig. 2. Relief units within the study area

2.2. Climatic tourist component

In addition to the landscape features, the study area remarks itself also through therapeutic ones, determined by those meteorological parameters that make the difference between the *mountain stimulent-tonic bioclimate (of small and medium-sized mountains)*, with the related benefits installed at altitudes greater than 700 m, and the *submontane neutral-sedative bioclimate of hills and submountain depressions* (under 700 m), which lacks contraindications, making it accesible for all tourist categories and suitable for both climatic and rest tourism.

2.3. Hydrographic tourist component

The physical-geographic specificity of the rural-mountain and marginal contact area in Cluj County proved to be favorable for the existence of a great hydrographic tourist potential, firstly ensured by the rivers that cross the county's territory and the one of the study area. Subordinated to the western hydrographic system, these rivers belong to the basins of Someșul Mic (along with the 19 tributary streams, out of which Someșul Cald, Someșul Rece and Căpușul are more important), that has a more evolved basin in the superior course, of Arieș (with its eight tributary streams out of which Valea Ierii, Valea Hășdatelor and Valea Racilor are more important) and of Crișul Repede (with its nine tributary streams out of which Călata, Săcuieul and Drăganul are more important), the latter ones having a hydrographic basin uniformly developed over its whole length. Secondly, what

came into prominence were the water-powered energy storages artificially edicated for electricity production, water alimentation and flood wave attenuation, purposes that complete pisciculture, entertainment and irrigations (Drăgan, Fântânele, Tarnița, Someșul Cald and Gilău) and the 20 stock pounds from the marginal contact strip (out of which the lakes from Ciurila, Tureni and Mărtinești are more important).

2.4. Biogeographic tourist component

Unique by associating the vegetation storey with correponding fauna species in an amphitheater system, this component concurrently affirms itself through different exemplaries revealed at altitudes lower and higher than 500 m, elevation which separates the forest steppe storey from the forests' one (divided into the coniferous forests storey, the mixed forests storey and the broadleaf forests storey) as well as through those that exist at altitudes greates than 1.550 m, the elevation value that marks out the subalpine storey domain.

2.5. Protected natural areas

The reconfirmation of the importance and the geological, speleological, botanical, cinegetic, landscape or mixt value, was due to the emphasis placed on those tourist resources known as *protected natural areas* (Figure 3), numbering 57 exponents, out of which 27 of *county interest* (Drăgan, Fântânele, Tarnița, Someșul Cald and Gilău water storages, Borzești Gorges, Păniceni Gorges, Stanciului Valley Gorges and Răchițele Waterfall, Arieșului Defile, Hășdatelor Defile, Băișorii Mountain, White Stones, Ierii Valley, Vlădeasa etc.), one third part of the European network Natura 2000 – more precisely 16 *community importance protected natural areas* (Apuseni Mountains, Muntele Mare, Turzii Gorges, Turenilor Gorges, Someșul Rece, Ierii Vally, Șes Mountain etc.) and three special protection areas (Apuseni Mountains, Trascău Mountains, Crișului Repede Defile) – and other 11 *national interest protected natural areas* (Apuseni Natural Park, Turzii Gorges, Turenilor Gorges etc.), ideal for ecotourism.

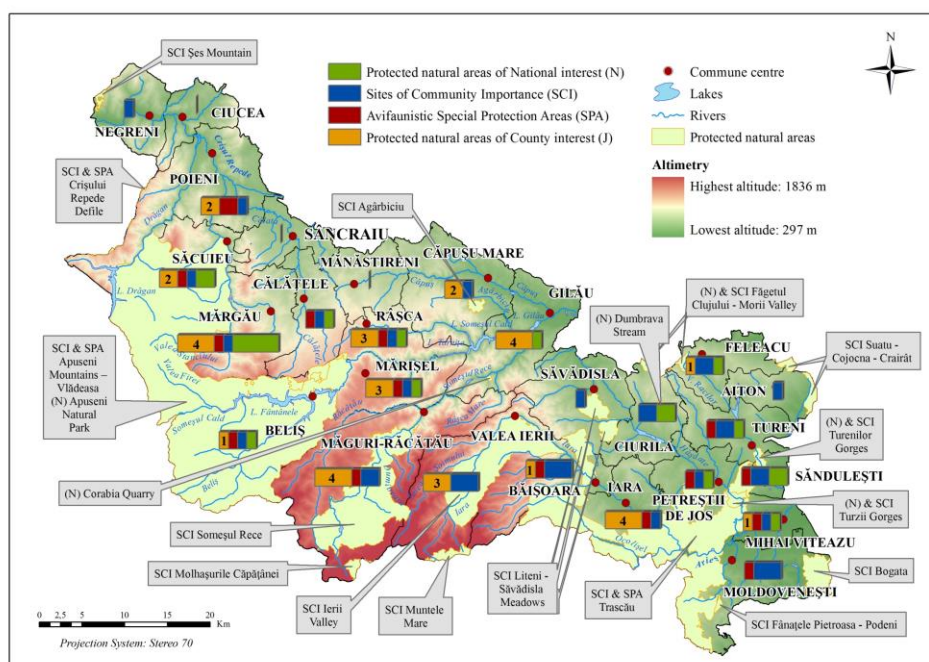


Fig. 3. Distribution and typology of the protected natural areas within the examined territory

2.6. Natural tourist fund attractiveness potential value estimation

The physical-geographic peculiarities of the study area imposed the awarding of the relief with the highest score (between 2 and 10 points), due to the support and background functions, as well as to its attractiveness), followed by the biogeographic component (between 2 and 6 points), due to the association of the vegetation storey and corresponding fauna species, while the elements of the other resources' classes were set between 1 and 3 points (Table 1).

Table 1. Awarded points to the natural tourist fund's resources

Tourist resources	Morphotourist resources	Climatic tourist resources	Hydrographic tourist resources	Biogeographic tourist resources	Protected natural areas
Awarded points	<i>relief units:</i> medium-sized mountains (1.000 – 2.000 m): 10p. small mountains (sub 1.000 m): 8p. hills: 6p. depressions: 4p. culoires: 2p.	<i>bioclimate:</i> mountain stimulent-tonic: 3p. intermediate: 2p. submontane neutral-sedative of hills and submountain depressions: 1p.	collector rivers and lakes: 3p. main tributary streams, waterfalls and captations: 2p. secondary tributary streams: 1p.	<i>vegetation + fauna:</i> subalpine: 6p. coniferous: 5p. mixed forests: 4p. broadleaf forests: 3p. forest steppe: 2p.	national interest: 4p. communitary interest SCI: 3p. county interest: 2p. avifaunistic SPA: 1p.

Source: Răcășan *et al.*, 2016 (with modifications and completions)

The estimation of the values related to the natural tourist potential of the 26 communes in the examined territory also served for their arrangement in an attractiveness hierarchical order of the primary tourism supply (exposed in the table below), concurrently facilitating their grouping according to five potential categories, ranging from very high (Mărgău) to very low (Aiton and Mănăstireni). Hence, the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the analysed tourist resources, established that approximately half of the territorial-administrative units' number, 11 more precisely, have a natural potential above the average (they have totaled at least 45 points), capable to sustain different tourism forms and to stand on the basis of creating authentic and original tourism products that could be further valorised in an efficient and complex manner.

Table 2. The assessment of the natural tourist potential of the study area

Natural tourist potential	Commune	Morpho-tourist resources	Climatic tourist resources	Hydro-graphic tourist resources	Biogeo-graphic tourist resources	Protected natural areas	TOTAL	
<i>very high</i> (55 – 81 p.)	Mărgău	10 p.	3 p.	18 p.	18 p.	32 p.	81 p.	↑
	Valea Ierii	10 p.	3 p.	20 p.	18 p.	15 p.	66 p.	↑
	Măguri-Răcățău	10 p.	3 p.	19 p.	18 p.	14 p.	64 p.	↑
	Poieni	7 p.	3 p.	19 p.	20 p.	9 p.	58 p.	↑
<i>high</i> (45 – 54 p.)	Tureni	7 p.	1 p.	31 p.	5 p.	11 p.	55 p.	↑
	Gilău	6 p.	2 p.	25 p.	9 p.	12 p.	54 p.	↑
	Mărișel	10 p.	3 p.	14 p.	12 p.	14 p.	53 p.	↑
	Săcuieu	10 p.	3 p.	6 p.	18 p.	16 p.	53 p.	↑
	Beliș	10 p.	3 p.	11 p.	15 p.	10 p.	49 p.	↑
	Băișoara	7 p.	3 p.	6 p.	18 p.	11 p.	45 p.	↑
<i>medium</i> (35 – 44 p.)	Ciurila	5 p.	1 p.	20 p.	5 p.	14 p.	45 p.	↑
	Râșca	10 p.	3 p.	9 p.	7 p.	14 p.	43 p.	↑
	Iara	7 p.	1 p.	8 p.	9 p.	12 p.	37 p.	↓
	Moldovenești	6 p.	1 p.	15 p.	5 p.	10 p.	37 p.	↓
	Mihai Viteazu	6 p.	1 p.	14 p.	5 p.	10 p.	36 p.	↓
<i>low</i> (25 – 34 p.)	Călățele	8 p.	3 p.	8 p.	9 p.	8 p.	36 p.	↓
	Săndulești	6 p.	1 p.	7 p.	5 p.	15 p.	34 p.	↓
	Căpușu Mare	6 p.	2 p.	9 p.	9 p.	7 p.	33 p.	↓

	Petreștii de Jos	6 p.	1 p.	8 p.	5 p.	8 p.	28 p.	↓
	Sâncraiu	7 p.	1 p.	15 p.	5 p.	-	28 p.	↓
	Feleacu	6 p.	1 p.	3 p.	5 p.	12 p.	27 p.	↓
<i>very low (below 25 p.)</i>	Negreni	7 p.	1 p.	7 p.	5 p.	3 p.	23 p.	↓
	Ciucea	7 p.	1 p.	9 p.	5 p.	-	22 p.	↓
	Săvădisla	7 p.	1 p.	6 p.	5 p.	3 p.	22 p.	↓
	Mănăstireni	7 p.	3 p.	5 p.	7 p.	-	22 p.	↓
	Aiton	6 p.	1 p.	6 p.	5 p.	3 p.	21 p.	↓
The average for the study area		7,5 p.	1,9 p.	12,2 p.	9,5 p.	10,1 p.	41,3 p.	

The assessment of the attractive potential also showed that, in terms of natural tourist fund, Mărgău, Valea Ierii and Măguri-Răcătau benefit from the highest potential in the study area, even though, in certain extent, all researched communes can stimulate tourist motivation and sustain specific activities.

3. ANTHROPIC TOURISM PATRIMONY (PRIMARY TOURISM SUPPLY)

3.1. Historical objectives and edifices

By consulting the List of Historical Monuments (LHM 2015), it could be observed that the rural-mountain and marginal contact area concentrates an impressive number of *archaeological vestiges*, 207 to be more precisely (Figure 4), exceeding at archaeological settlements (101) distributed within the perimeter of 15 communes, as well as at archaeological sites (34 in 11 communes), followed by towers (19), tumuli (15), fortified settlements (12) and 12 other categories of archaeological vestiges, dating back to prehistoric times, Roman or Middle Ages.

These were completed by other 19 *habitational objectives with architectural value* (seven manors, seven houses, four castles and one palace) which established the total number of historical edifices at 226 exponents that also sustain the existence of cultural, historical and heritage tourism.

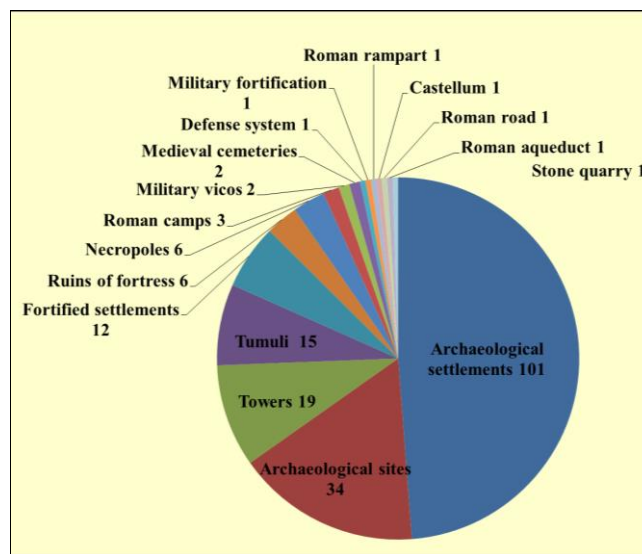


Fig. 4. Number and typology of archaeological vestiges in 2015, within the study area
Source: elaborated after LHM 2015

3.2. Religious edifices

Researches in the study area revealed a total number of 250 religious edifices (Table 3) out of which 54 beneficiaries of the historical monument status and among them 24 wooden churches; along with seven monasteries, 17 wooden churches without a privileged status (H.M.) and other 172 religious buildings pertaining to different cults, most of them Orthodox churches, erected during the 18th century.

Table 3. Religious edifices within the study area

Attractive potential	Status	Religious edifices in the custody of:											TOTAL
		The Church:							Christian cult:		Religious Organisation		
		Orthodox			Refor-med	Uni-tarian	Greek Catholic	Roman Catholic	Adven-tiste	Baptist	Pente-costal	„Jehova’s Witnesses”	
		Monasteries	Wooden churches	Churches									
high	M.I.	-	24	8	11	7	-	4	-	-	-	-	54
medium	-	7	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24
low	-	-	-	93	14	6	6	2	1	26	22	2	172
TOTAL		7	41	101	25	13	6	6	1	26	22	2	250

3.3. Cultural objectives and edifices

The prospectation of the cultural heritage brought into light the existence of 66 cultural objectives and edifices out of which the six museums (in Ciucea, Feleacu, Mărișel, Copăceni from Sândulești and Sâncraiu), the ethnographic collection from the biggest museum within the examined territory (included in the Octavian Goga Ensemble from Ciucea, integrally classified as historical monument) were considered more important in terms of tourist attractiveness. However, the other 59 monuments, predominantly erected in the honor of heroes, have also put themselves on the map, if not by number and territorial distribution (in 24 communes), then by the historical monument status corresponding to the following four exponents: the Mausoleum of Octavian Goga, the Cross of Avram Iancu in Mărișel, the Tomb of Pelaghia Roșu in Mărișel and the Crucifix of the Martyr Peasants who were shot in the autumn of 1918 in Beliș.

3.4. Economic edifices with tourist function

Regarding the 17 economic edifices with tourist function that were inventoried, those which have particularly detached were the six dams (Fântânele, Tarnița, Someșul Cald, Gilău I, Drăgan, Săcuieu or Scind-Frăsinet), pertaining to the water storage reservoirs in the mountain sector and, with some reservations, the five hydroelectric power stations (Mărișelu, Tarnița, Someșul Cald, Gilău I and Gilău II) along with other two smaller specialised stations, two mills and a whirlpool, traditional technical installations (the latter ones) classified as economic edifices because of the current tourist function which has replaced the initial one and because of the easy access that tourists still have inclusively outside the ethnographic museums, where these installations are being frequently visited.

3.5. Human activities with tourist function (events)

The quantification of the attractive elements of anthropic provenance continued with the human activities with tourist function category amongst which 73 events registered at the beginning of 2017 were identified within the limits of 22 communes from the researched area (Figure 5). The most common events were definitely the cultural ones (39 traditional celebrations, festivals, folklore spectacles, concerts and fairs), followed by competition events dedicated to sports (25 winter sports, running, fishing, complex sports or swimming competitions) and adventure activities (9 mountain bike, off-road or mountain climbing competitions), organised throughout the year, with a higher predilection for the summer season (half of them), predominantly having a local and regional impact. Further research revealed the preponderance of events that were promoted through posters, usually in the online press or on specialised sports websites or cultural ones, classified as growing events from the perspective of the editions' number (between two and ten editions).

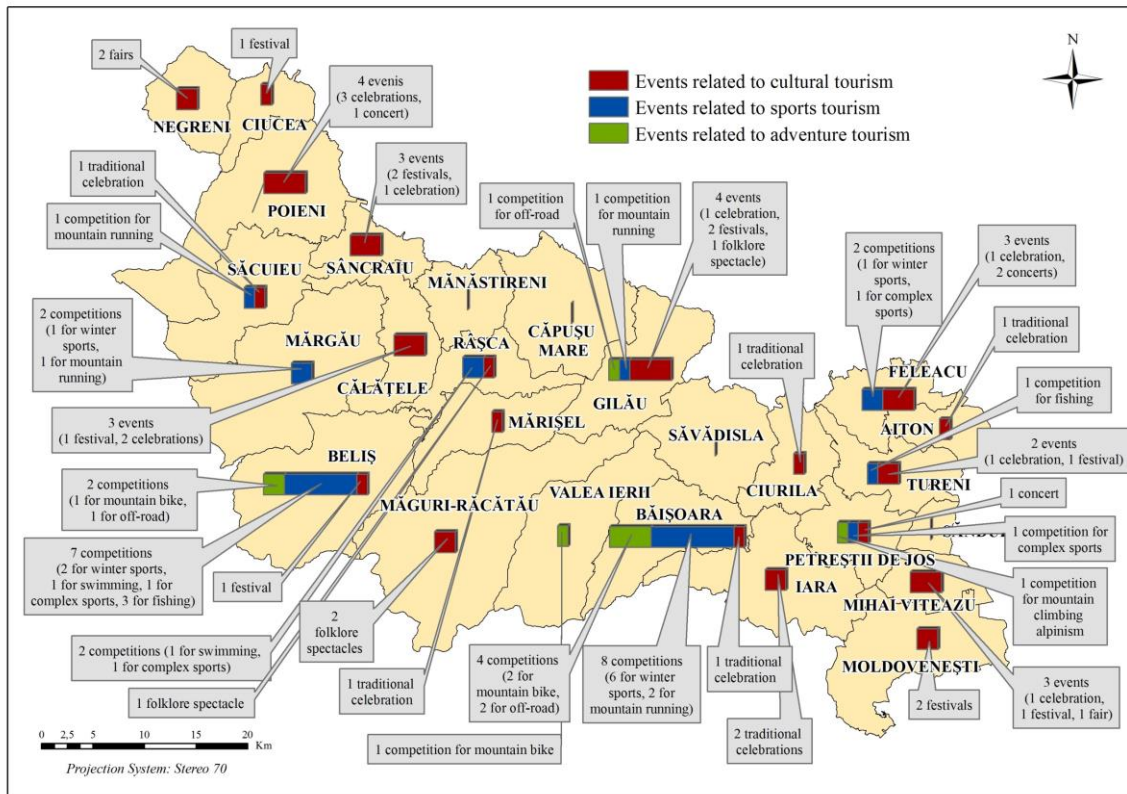


Fig. 5. Territorial distribution and typology of tourist events in the study area according to the type and form of tourism that they relate to

3.6. Ethnographic tourist resources

Finally, the ethnographic tourist resources were brought into attention, distinctly approached when compared with other anthropic objectives due to their immaterial character, difficult to quantify and estimate even in the context of a pertinent bonitation system. Therefore, the whole analysis was limited to reviewing several aspects which qualify the rural-mountain and marginal contact area in Cluj County for rural tourism and agritourism. Thus, as far as the ethnographic patrimony was concerned, the ethnographic areas of Apuseni Mountains (with Călățele subzone and „Mocătime” subzone), Călata and Câmpia Transilvaniei (with Dealurile Clujului subzone) were equally individualised, each of them with their specific ethnic traits and way of living influenced by the wood civilisation and the pastoral and agro-pastoral society reflected in architectural styles (households and annexes), traditional occupations (the cultivation of plants, vegetables, pomiculture and viticulture, the raising of animals, apiculture, gathering, hunting and fishing, wood exploitation and processing) and crafts (coopering, textile fibre processing, wovening, skinning, blacksmithing, pottering, liming etc.), traditional technical installations (mills, millers, whirlpools) folk costumes, feasts (in the calendar cycle or family cycle), traditions and customs, life patterns and behavior models which complete the unicity of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the rural universe.

3.7. Anthropic tourism patrimony attractiveness potential value estimation

All these resources' categories represent the anthropic tourist potential whose value was estimated, in terms of a score ranging from 0,1 to 5 points (Table 4), according to the attractive potential and the possibility of valuing it through well-defined tourism forms.

Table 4. Awarded points to the anthropic tourism patrimony's resources

Anthropic tourist resources	Historical objectives and edifices	Religious edifices	Cultural objectives and edifices	Economic edifices with tourist function	Human activities with tourist function
Awarded points	edifice (castle, manor) H.M.: 4p. castle, manor, palace: 3p. H.M. house: 2p. ruins: 1p. archaeological vestiges H.M.: 0,1p.	H.M. church: 5p. monastery: 4p. wooden church: 3p. other churches: 0,1p.	museum H.M.: 5p. museum: 4p. colection: 3p. monuments M.I.: 1p. other monuments: 0,1p.	dam: 5p. mill M.I.: 3p. other tourist objectives: 1p. other technical edifices (HE.C., water station): 0,1p.	international interest: 4p. national interest: 3p. regional interest: 2p. local interest: 1p.

Source: Răcășan *et al.*, 2016 (with modifications and completions)

Based on the counted scores for each tourist resources class, the analysed territorial-administrative units were ranked according to the estimated value of the attractive anthropic potential which was exposed in the columns of the following table. Simultaneously, five categories of anthropic tourist potential were listed, from the highest one (Iara) to the lowest one (Valea Ierii), which have also intermediated the conclusion that one third of the examined communes are characterised by an anthropic potential above the average and as many as that do not have enough attractive resources to build a tourism product solely based on the anthropic patrimony (Table 5).

Table 5. The assessment of the anthropic tourist potential of the study area

Anthropic tourist potential	Commune	Historical objectives and edifices	Religious edifices	Cultural objectives and edifices	Economic edifices with tourist function	Human activities with tourist function	TOTAL	
very high (45 – 55,6 p.)	Iara	12,2 p.	41,2 p.	0,2 p.	-	2 p.	55,6 p.	↑
	Căpușu Mare	6,5 p.	45,6 p.	-	3 p.	-	55,1 p.	↑
	Moldovenești	8 p.	39,1 p.	-	-	2 p.	49,1 p.	↑
	Gilău	9,6 p.	6,1 p.	0,2 p.	16,5 p.	13 p.	45,4 p.	↑
high (30 – 44,9 p.)	Beliș	-	6,3 p.	1,1 p.	5 p.	28 p.	40,4 p.	↑
	Mihai Viteazu	4,9 p.	25,7 p.	0,5 p.	-	7 p.	38,1 p.	↑
	Băișoara	1 p.	4,6 p.	0,1 p.	1 p.	31 p.	37,7 p.	↑
	Ciucea	10,7 p.	9,5 p.	9 p.	-	3 p.	32,2 p.	↑
medium (20 – 29,9 p.)	Feleacu	1,1 p.	14,7 p.	4,3 p.	-	10 p.	30,1 p.	↑
	Săvădișla	5,7 p.	19 p.	4,2 p.	-	-	28,9 p.	↑
	Sâncraiu	0,1 p.	15,6 p.	4,2 p.	-	8 p.	27,9 p.	↑
	Ciurila	4,5 p.	19,5 p.	0,8 p.	-	1 p.	25,8 p.	↓
	Mănăstireni	6,1 p.	15,8 p.	0,2 p.	-	-	22,1 p.	↓
	Mărgău	-	10,7 p.	0,1 p.	5,1 p.	6 p.	21,9 p.	↓
low (15 – 19,9 p.)	Petreștii de Jos	1,7 p.	12,7 p.	0,5 p.	-	7 p.	21,9 p.	↓
	Săndulești	6 p.	10,4 p.	4,2 p.	-	-	20,6 p.	↓
	Râșca	-	7,6 p.	0,2 p.	5 p.	7 p.	19,8 p.	↓
	Călățele	0,1 p.	13,8 p.	0,2 p.	-	4 p.	18,1 p.	↓
	Tureni	2,9 p.	9,2 p.	0,4 p.	-	4 p.	16,5 p.	↓
very low (below 15 p.)	Săcuieu	2 p.	10,3 p.	0,1 p.	-	3 p.	15,4 p.	↓
	Poieni	2,6 p.	1,2 p.	0,2 p.	6 p.	5 p.	15 p.	↓
	Negreni	0,1 p.	9,4 p.	0,2 p.	-	5 p.	14,7 p.	↓
	Mărișel	-	0,3 p.	6,1 p.	5,1 p.	2 p.	13,5 p.	↓
	Aiton	1,3 p.	10,5 p.	0,3 p.	-	1 p.	13,1 p.	↓
	Măguri-Răcățâu	-	7,4 p.	0,1 p.	-	2 p.	9,5 p.	↓
	Valea Ierii	-	-	0,1 p.	-	2 p.	2,1 p.	↓
The average for the study area		3,1 p.	14 p.	1,4 p.	1,7 p.	5,8 p.	26,5 p.	

4. MATERIAL BASE OF TOURISM (SECONDARY TOURISM SUPPLY)

The multilateral development of the tourism infrastructure has determined the sectorial evaluation of the secondary supply on subcomponents of the accommodation, public catering, transportation and entertainment base, for whom the values of the infrastructure's elements were identified, quantified, classified and, finally, estimated for the purpose of demonstrating the existence of an adequate base dimension compared with the attractive potential. For primary and secondary data collection, field observations were made, official information sources provided by the National Authority for Tourism (NAT), Statistics National Institute (SNI) and other specialised websites were consulted, cartographic materials were elaborated for all the approached subjects and through statistical and mathematical methods, various tourism indexes that were calculated and then processed, served for interpretations and conclusions with respect to the material base of tourism.

4.1. Accommodation infrastructure

The analysis of this tourism sector started with the *number of accommodation units and places evolution within 1990-2015 period*, that revealed that after some political and economic changes (the systemic crisis instaurated after the Revolution of 1989 and the global financial in 2008) which affected the configuration of the accommodation base of the study area, this sector has grown from 1.332 places distributed in 24 units (in 1990) to a maximum value of 2.721 places in 110 receiving structures (in 2009) which has later stabilised to 1.696 places in 59 units (in 2015).

Next, the *dimension and capacity of accommodation infrastructure* were investigated, where the particular note was conferred by the triple perspective upon the tourist receiving structures, so that the accommodation number, capacity and typology suffered consecutive and significant modifications from one source to another. Consequently, the 59 units and 1.696 accommodation places concentrated in seven types of accommodation structures that were recorded by the Statistics National Institute, reached 142 classified units and 2.437 places in 13 types of structures (according to the National Authority for Tourism), and then a total number of 363 accommodation units with a cumulated capacity of 6.140 places (as the personal investigation of the online environment and the field observations have revealed) preponderently distributed in tourist guesthouses. Despite the inaccuracies caused both by lack of communication between institutions and by withholding of the tourism activities, the examined territory illustrates the existence of a consistent accommodation sector compared with the rural area corresponding to the other two thirds of Cluj County's surface (which were not taken into study) that barely concentrate one third of the receiving infrastructure.

By calculating the *medium size of accommodation infrastructure* from the three sources' perspective it was established that the value of this index equals to 28,7 *places/unit* (according to SNI), 17,1 *places/unit* (according to NAT) and 16,9 *places/unit* (according to personal investigation) and that the highest values were registered in Gilău and Săcuieu. Regarding the *tourist function through accommodation capacity*, by reporting the total number of places at the 68.831 inhabitants (indicated by SNI) in the rural-mountain area, different values were generated in the case of Statistics National Institute's data (an average of 0,02 *places/inhabitant* and a maximum one in Băișoara), National Authority for Tourism (an average of 0,04 *places/inhabitant* and a maximum one in Sâncraiu) and in the case of personal research (an average of 0,09 *places/inhabitant* and a maximum one in Beliș), differently reflecting the extent of the overall tourism phenomenon and the commune-scale one (Figure 6).

A separate section in the accommodation's prospectation was dedicated to the *typology and territorial distribution of accommodation units* and, although all three perspectives that enabled data processing were reviewed, the following sequence lists solely the official numbers reported by NAT

in 2015: 5 hotels (280 places), 3 motels (164 places), 3 hostels (56 places), 3 bungalows (18 places), 1 tourist stopover (56 places), 4 tourist villas (112 places), 4 tourist chalets (101 places), 1 vacation village (12 places), 1 camping (131 places), 2 camping cottages structures (20 places), 57 tourist guesthouses (932 places), 47 agritourist guesthouses (368 places), 11 rooms for rent structures (187 places).

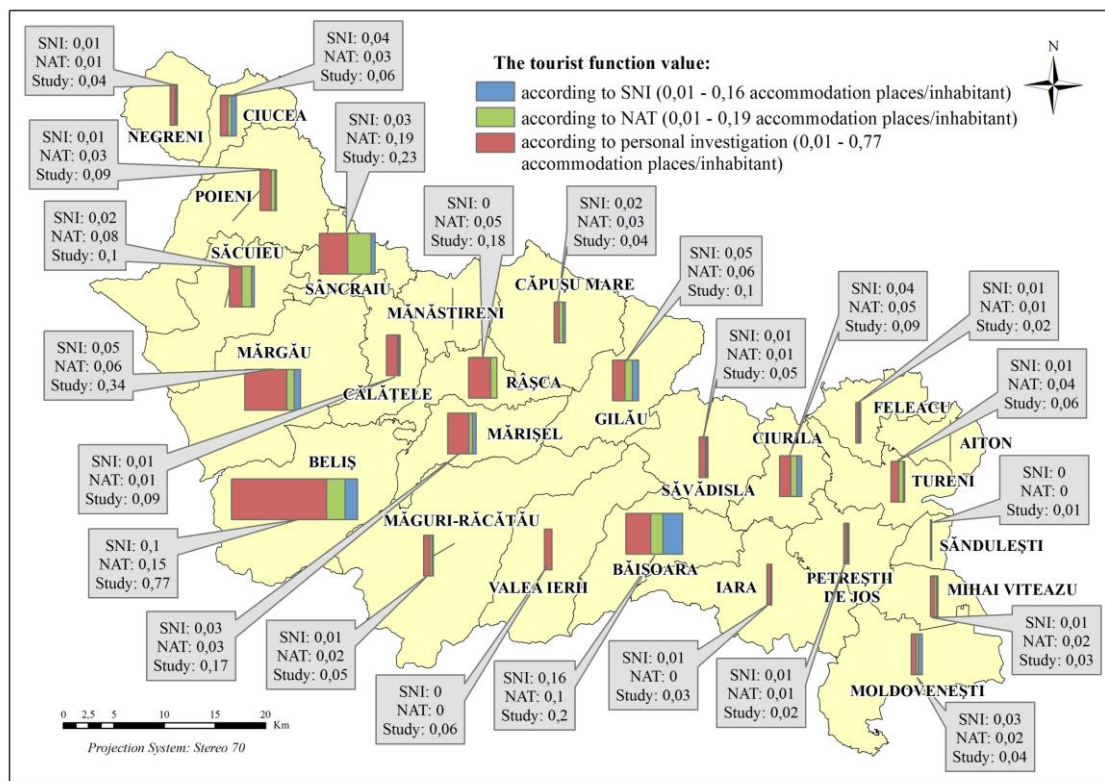
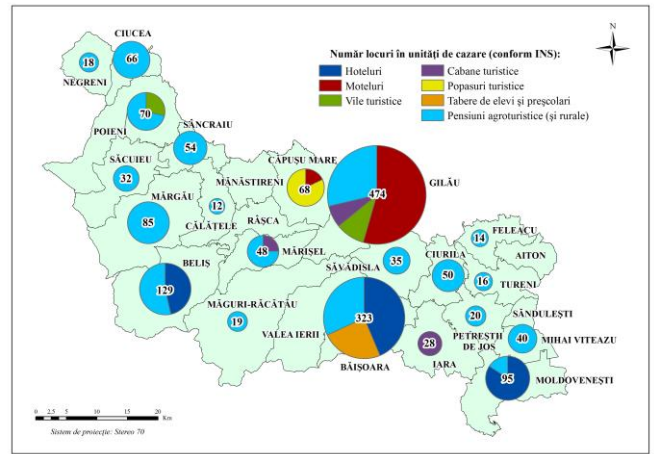
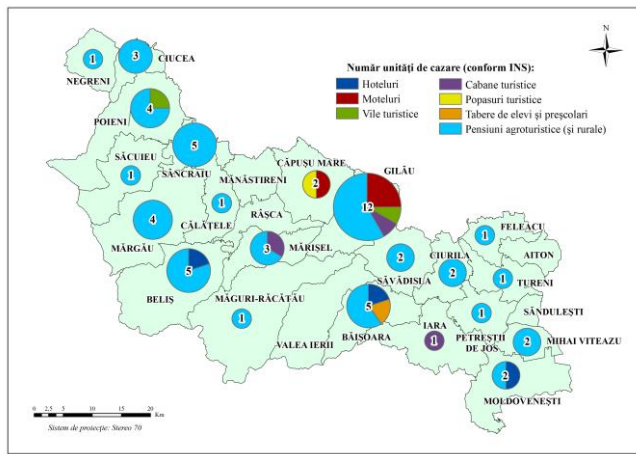


Fig. 6. The tourist function value of the communes in the study area, in 2015 (triple perspective)

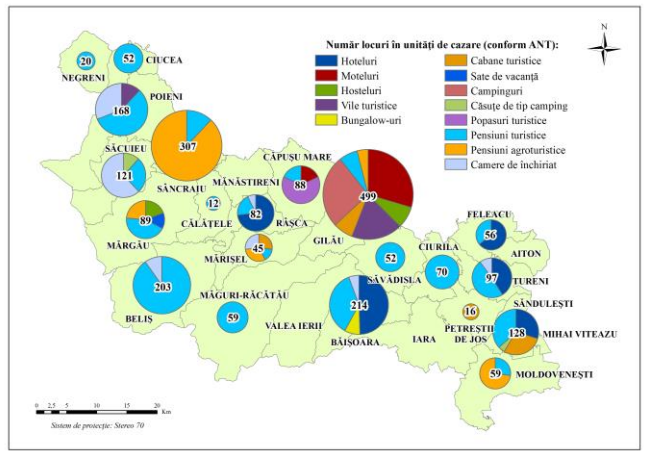
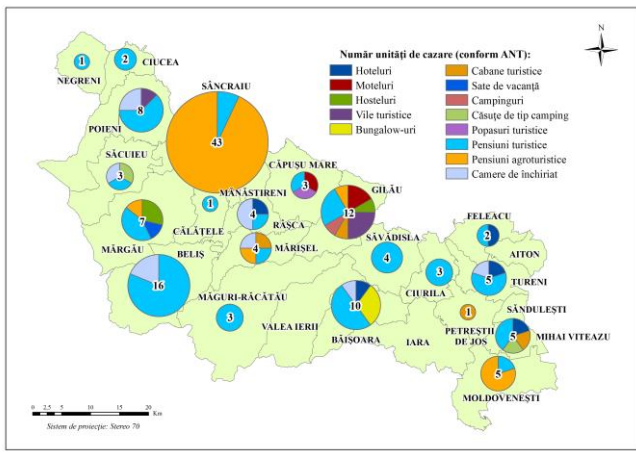
Finally, a *synthetical triple perspective upon accommodation infrastructure* was presented, more precisely upon the general dimension and capacity of the infrastructure, along with its configuration at commune level. The latter one highlighted that, in 2015, according to:

- Statistics National Institute (Figure 7): Gilău had the most consistent (474 places; 12 units) and diversified infrastructure (4 types);
- National Authority for Tourism (Figure 8): Gilău remarked itself both through the most heterogeneous accommodation sector (7 types) and through the maximum receiving capacity (499 places), while the highest units number was registered in Sâncraiu (43 units);
- personal investigation (Figure 9): Beliș was appointed ranking leader in terms of accommodation units (77) and places number (1.024), preponderantly distributed in guesthouses (517 places) and chalets (435 places), whose capacity became an unequaled one in the study area.

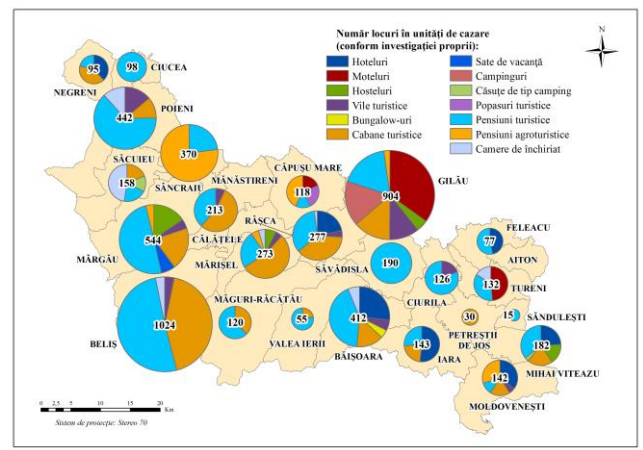
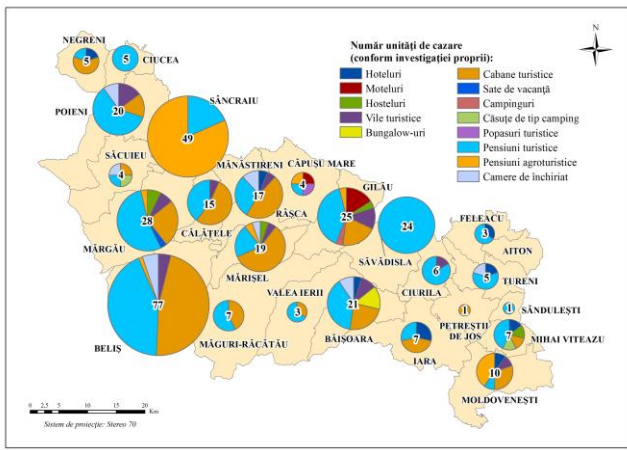
The examination of the accommodation ended with the analysis, firstly, of the *comfort category* which showed that with respect to capacity, in 2015, 54,4% of the accommodation places (1.327) were rated as three-star/flower ones, while with respect to dimension, 53,5% of the accommodation units (76) in the mountain and submontane area were classified as two-star/flower ones; and, secondly, of the *economic operator type corresponding to accommodation units*, which brought into prominence the preponderance of the Limited Liability Companies, an administration regime applied to 65 receiving structures (45% of the total accommodation infrastructure).



a) b)
 Fig. 7. The territorial distribution of the accommodation categories within the study area in 2015, according to SNI:
 a) in terms of structures number; b) in terms of receiving capacity
 Source: Statistics National Institute (last access: April 4, 2016)



a) b)
 Fig. 8. The territorial distribution of the accommodation categories within the study area in 2015, according to NAT:
 a) in terms of structures number; b) in terms of receiving capacity
 Source: National Authority for Tourism (last access: February 11, 2016)



a) b)
 Fig. 9. The territorial distribution of the accommodation categories within the study area in 2015, according to personal investigation: a) in terms of structures number; b) in terms of receiving capacity

4.2. Catering infrastructure

As concerned the *catering infrastructure*, the analysis was solely limited to one information source, namely to the official perspective provided by the National Authority for Tourism, which by the end of 2015 reported the existence of 45 public catering units within the examined territory (mainly restaurants) having 4.291 places integrated in ten catering structure types, with the best representation in Gilău (771 places in 7 units) and Feleacu (887 places in 6 units). It must be kept in mind, however, that most accommodation structures incorporate catering places and/or provide related services and this way they contribute to the broadening of catering sector outside the homologation sphere. Coming back to official data, given the significant proportion of restaurants and their large receiving capacity, the *medium size of catering infrastructure* was also a high one, equaling 95,4 places/unit, confirmed and validated in the *typology and territorial distribution of the catering units* section (Figure 10). The latter one brought into light a number of 28 classic restaurants (3.382 places), 3 guesthouse restaurants (161 places), 2 national specific restaurants (130 places), one bistro (40 places), one terrace (80 places), 2 cafe-bars (59 places), 5 bars (77 places), one buffet-bar (120 places), one fast-food (92 places) and one snack-bar (50 places). If by *comfort* they were classified as predominant two-star places (43% out of the total number) and preponderant three-star units (42% out of the total number of catering structures), by *economic operator type*, the Limited Liability Companies were the ones prevailing in 2015, due to the 82% of units managed in this regime.

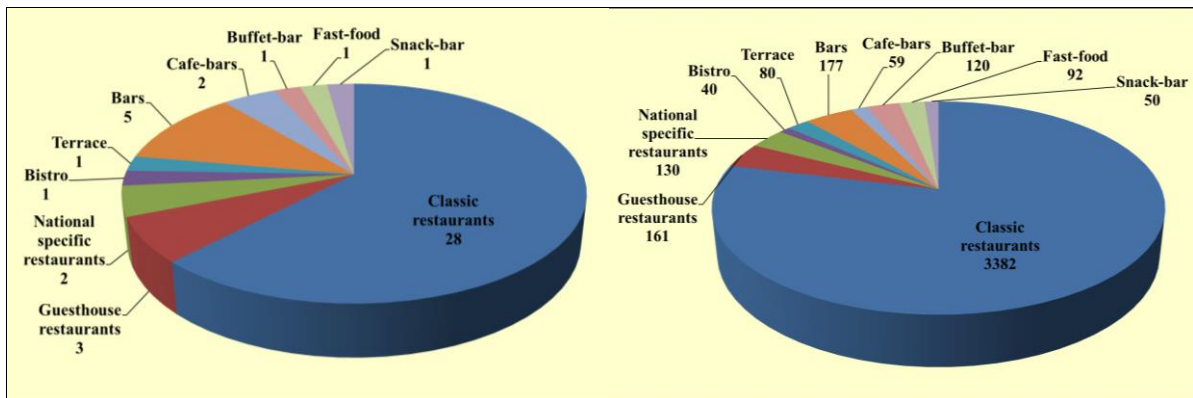


Fig. 10. Dimension and capacity of the public catering base, in 2015
Source: Natională Authority for Tourism (last access: March 17, 2016)

4.3. Transportation infrastructure

Following the principle of communication network density and the one of the transportation means frequency of use, the prospectation process of this sector was initiated by reviewing the *road* infrastructure, more precisely, the most important types of roads which cross the study area (A3 highway, E60 and E81 european roads, DN1 and DN75 national roads, 21 county roads and 23 communal roads) as well as determining the accessibility in the examined territory. On this line, both the distances between the 26 studied communes' seats (capital villages) and Cluj-Napoca were calculated (Figure 11), and the ones between the 26 and the bordering counties' capital cities (seats), showing that half of the rural-mountain area's surface is situated at a distance under 50 km from Cluj-Napoca (15 commune centres) and under 100 de km from Zalău (13 centres) and Alba Iulia (12 commune centres).

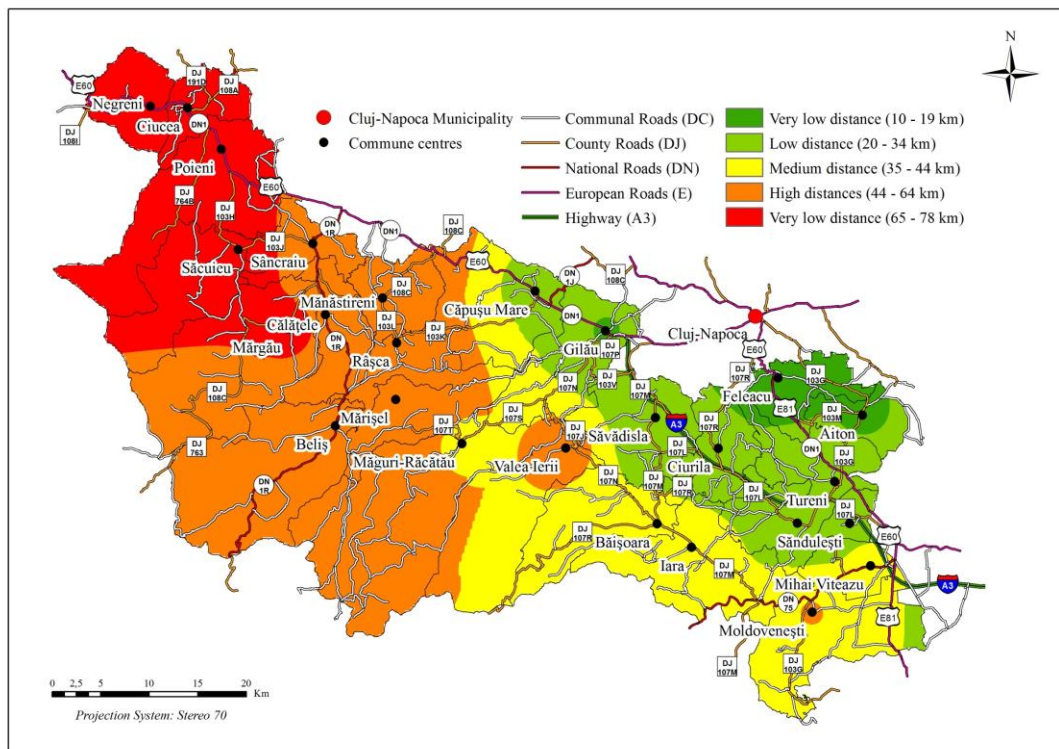


Fig. 11. Road accessibility of the researched commune centres towards the municipality of Cluj-Napoca

In terms of *rail* infrastructure, the emphasis was placed on the route of the Main Railway 300, which within the limits of the study area intersects Negreni – Ciucea – Valea Drăganului – Poieni – Bologa stations and halts, and on the rail routes that, although are not positioned on the direction of the main railway (300), through Ciucea station, they favor specific links with urban centres and localities that are transited by the following trains: Regio Cluj-Napoca – Oradea, InterRegio București Nord – Satu Mare, InterRegio Cluj-Napoca – Timișoara Nord, InterRegio Cluj-Napoca – Episcopia Bihor, InterRegio Timișoara Nord – Iași, InterRegio Brașov – Episcopia Bihor.

For *air transportation*, the presence of the Avram Iancu International Airport proved to be indispensable for the links with national and foreign cities due to three internal routes (Bucharest, Otopeni, Timișoara, Iași) and other 36 international routes between Cluj-Napoca and external destinations from 17 countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Great Britain, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Hungary).

4.4. Entertainment infrastructure

The importance of this component of the material base of tourism consists in its heterogeneous structure which incorporates a wide range of means and facilities (Figure 12) able to satisfy the recreational need of tourists. The ones responsible for this aspects continue to be the three *climatic and winter sports resorts* Fântânele (with fishing and nautical entertainment possibilities, sailing on the lake with different boats etc.), Băișorii Mountain and Buscat (mainly alpine skiing and snowboarding) completed by various forms of tourism such as mountain hiking, cyclotourism or mountain cyclism (mountain biking) in the surroundings, ecotourism, camping,

equestrian tourism (horse carriage rides or on horseback), rural tourism, recreational and rest tourism supported by the existence of both secondary residences and tourist receiving structures.

Either integrated within the two winter sports resorts or independent amenities, six *ski areas* were individualised (Băișoara, Buscat, Ciucea, Mărișel, Dângău, Feleacu) along with the 10 related *slopes* (Băișoara Big Slope, Băișoara Special Slope, Buscat 1 Slope, Buscat 2 Slope, Buscat 3 Slope, Codrii Vlăsinului Slope, Mărișel-Leșu Slope (Old Slope), Twins Slope, Black Slope, Ski Arena Feleacu Slope), with different difficulty degrees, lengths, widths and variable surfaces, equipped with cable transportation installations (lifts and chairlifts) of various capacities, partially featuring snow cannons and nocturnal installations, five out of ten being currently homologated.

Furthermore, four *entertainment parks* with specific profile (Fun Park during the summertime and Snowpark during winter in Feleacu; mountain cyclism park in Buscat; zoopark and adventure park in Sălicea) and an equestrian centre in Ciurila have also put themselves on the map of tourism arrangements which induce new entertainment possibilities that meet the ones provided by the accommodation units as supplementary services to the basic ones offered to tourists in the receiving structures.

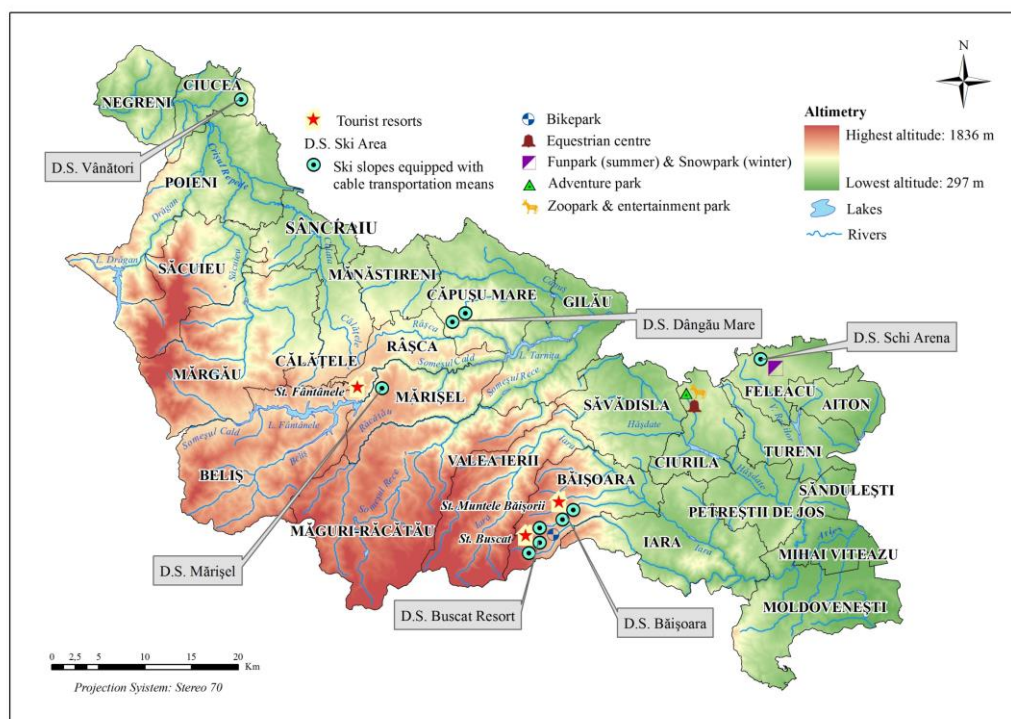


Fig. 12. Territorial distribution and typology of the entertainment infrastructure's elements within the study area

4.5. Tourist promotion and information elements

Complementary to accommodation, catering, transportation and entertainment services, a series of aspects related to *tourist information and promotion* were also pointed out in order to highlight their existence rather than their number. Hence, *signalling indicators and informational boards* (with „welcome” message, corresponding to elements from the commune’ tourism supply, tourist maps for guidance, related to attractive tourist resources, signalling accommodation units, pre-signalling and guiding to entertainment facilities or complex tourist arrangements, road signs, improvised indicators etc.), *tourist information centres* (13 within the study area) and *informational*

and promotional materials (albums, catalogs, booklets and promotional guides, flyers etc.) were equally brought into prominence within the research.

4.6. Material base of tourism potential value estimation

The bonitation system of the material and technical base of tourism that was proposed for the estimation of the related potential value (Table 6) exclusively concerned the four fundamental pylons of the secondary tourism supply, amongst which the functional, typological and dimensional particularities, along with the authenticity and complexity of the infrastructure's elements were the ones which have intermediated the score awarding process (between 1 and 10 points).

Table 6. Awarded points to the structures of the material base of tourism

Tourist receiving structures	Accommodation infrastructure	Catering infrastructure	Transportation infrastructure	Entertainment infrastructure
Awarded points	agritourist guesthouse: 5p. guesthouse, chalet (rooms for rent): 4p. vacation village, camping: 3p. villa, bungalow, tourist stopover: 2p. hotel, hostel, motel: 1p.	national specific restaurant: 5p. guesthouse restaurant, classic restaurant: 4p. bistro, terrace: 3p. bar, buffet, cafe-bar/cafe: 2p. fast-food, snack-bar: 1p.	highway: 5pt. european road: 4pt. national road: 3pt. county road: 2pt. communal road: 1pt.	tourist resort: 10p. slope: 5p. thematic park (zoo, adventure etc.), equitation centre: 3p.

Source: Răcășan *et al.*, 2016 (with modifications and completions)

By totaling the scores that each territorial-administrative unit has obtained, communes like Sâncraiu, Băișoara, Beliș and Gilău were brought into prominence as the owners of the most complex and diversified material and technical base of tourism (Table 7). Together with the next five communes in the illustrated hierarchy from the table below, they all expose above average values (at least 40 points cumulated), suggesting an infrastructure which adequately exploits the attractive resources that the indicated territorial-administrative units possess.

Table 7. The assessment of the base of tourism potential of the study area

Material base potential	Commune	Accommodation infrastructure	Catering infrastructure	Transportation infrastructure	Entertainment infrastructure	TOTAL	
very high (80 – 221 p.)	Sâncraiu	212 p.	4 p.	5 p.	-	221 p.	↑
	Băișoara	31 p.	6 p.	6 p.	48 p.	91 p.	↑
	Beliș	64 p.	8 p.	8 p.	-	80 p.	↑
	Gilău	34 p.	25 p.	21 p.	-	80 p.	↑
high (40 – 79 p.)	Feleacu	5 p.	19 p.	20 p.	11 p.	55 p.	↑
	Poieni	30 p.	4 p.	11 p.	-	45 p.	↑
	Mihai Viteazu	16 p.	12 p.	16 p.	-	44 p.	↑
	Moldovenești	24 p.	-	18 p.	-	42 p.	↑
	Tureni	17 p.	8 p.	15 p.	-	40 p.	↓
medium (25 – 39 p.)	Mărgău	22 p.	6 p.	8 p.	-	36 p.	↓
	Căpușu Mare	7 p.	4 p.	15 p.	10 p.	36 p.	↓
	Râșca	13 p.	6 p.	5 p.	10 p.	34 p.	↓
	Ciucea	8 p.	10 p.	11 p.	5 p.	34 p.	↓
	Ciurila	12 p.	10 p.	2 p.	9 p.	33 p.	↓
	Săvădisla	16 p.	8 p.	9 p.	-	33 p.	↓

	Mărișel	17 p.	5 p.	4 p.	5 p.	31 p.	↓
<i>low</i> (15 – 24 p.)	Săcuieu	11 p.	6 p.	6 p.	-	23 p.	↓
	Măguri-Răcățau	12 p.	4 p.	5 p.	-	21 p.	↓
	Negreni	4 p.	7 p.	10 p.	-	21 p.	↓
	Săndulești	-	-	15 p.	-	15 p.	↓
<i>very low</i> (below 15 p.)	Călățele	4 p.	-	8 p.	-	12 p.	↓
	Iara	-	6 p.	6 p.	-	12 p.	↓
	Petreștii de Jos	4 p.	-	2 p.	-	6 p.	↓
	Mănăstireni	-	-	6 p.	-	6 p.	↓
	Valea Ierii	-	-	4 p.	-	4 p.	↓
	Aiton	-	-	4 p.	-	4 p.	↓
The average for the study area		21,6 p.	6 p.	9,2 p.	3,7 p.	40,7	

5. TOURIST FLOW WITHIN RURAL-MOUNTAIN AREA

5.1. Primary indexes of tourist flow: arrivals and overnight stays

The analysis of the tourist flow based on the data provided by the Statistics National Institute and by means of statistical and mathematical methods allowed, firstly, the calculation of the primary indexes which showed that in 2015, within the investigated territory, 41.997 tourist arrivals were registered (after the 11.512 arrivals in 2001) along with 116.731 overnight stays, (after 28.531 overnight stays in 2001), most of them in tourist guesthouses (Figure 13).

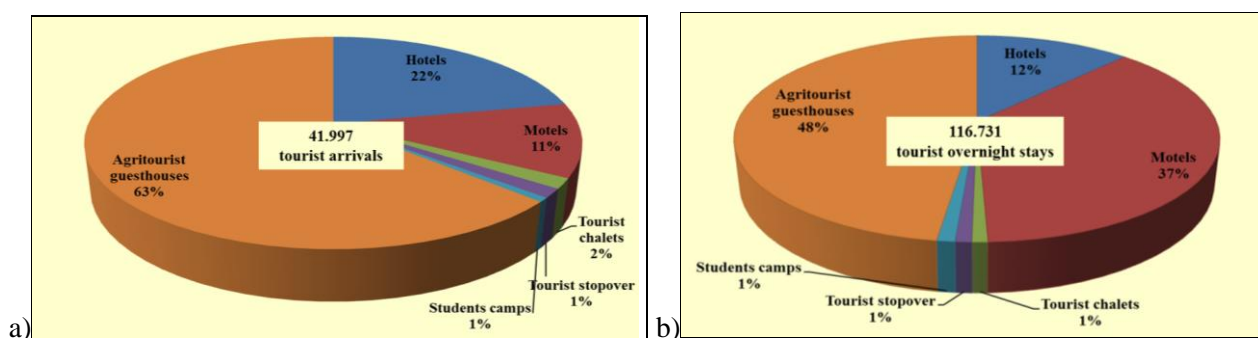


Fig. 13. The share of (a) tourist arrivals and (b) tourist overnight stays in the accommodation categories within the study area, in 2015

Source: Statistics National Institute (last access: June 26, 2016)

5.2. Secondary indexes of tourist flow

The same values have also enabled the calculation of the secondary indexes such as: *the functional accommodation capacity net using index* (an average of 24% and a maximum of 45% in Gilău); *the tourist flow intensity* (an average of 119 overnight stays per 100 de inhabitants and a maximum of 899 overnight stays per 100 inhabitants in Sâncraiu); *the tourist flow density* (an average of 61 arrivals per 100 de inhabitants and a maximum of 515 arrivals per 100 inhabitants in Sâncraiu).

5.3. Average stay in accommodation units

By reporting the tourist overnight stays number at the arrivals number, the average stay in accommodation units was determined, indicating an average of 2,8 days, in 2015, and a maximum length of stay of 7,2 days, which from a territorial point of view was recorded in Gilău, while from the perspective of accommodation categories, the record belonged to the motels in the area.

5.4. Tourism seasonality

The frequency that tourists booked accommodation service in 2010-2015 period, showed a higher predilection for the month of August; solely in 2015, the arrivals' number was 4.891, and the one of the overnight stays in receiving structures was 14.135. This was also the highest threshold both for August and for the summer and autumn season (over 4.000 monthly arrivals in 2015 and over 10.000 overnight stays between April and November). The winter months continued to attract the lowest flows even in 2015 when the difference of 2.717 arrivals and 9.957 overnight stays between August and February – the least popular month in terms of vacations – was among the biggest differences over the past years.

5.5. Foreign tourists in the rural-mountain area. Case study: Fântânele Resort

Given the fact that the Statistics National Institute does not provide data for each commune or accommodation category regarding the arrivals and overnight stays of the foreign visitors, a study case was employed, in 2015, within Fântânele Resort in order to determine the nationality and proportion of foreign tourists in the analysed territory. It came out that Romanian visitors hold the biggest share (approximately 90%) both in the situation of the 1.470 tourist arrivals and in the case of the 2.373 overnight stays, followed by Hungarians (approximately 50% out of the foreigners' number) who had also spent 2 days, in average, in the accommodation units, as many as the Belgian tourists had, although the highest length of stay (4 days) corresponded to Slovenian and American tourists.

5.6. Official and estimated tourist flow. Related economic valences

The constant invocation of the economic alternative that tourism can represent in certain conditions, has led to an attempt of estimating tourism earnings, having as a starting point the real number of overnight stays in tourist receiving structures, provided by SNI, in 2015, and the average tariff for one night in an accommodation unit (50 lei/person). Thus, according to SNI, it came out that, in 2015, within the rural-mountain area, an amount of 5.800.000 lei was obtained solely from accommodation services. Further calculations based on multiplying the number of arrivals and overnight stays with the number of accommodation places recorded by NAT, showed that if 60.193 arrivals had recorder an average of 167.666 overnight stays, the same tariff/night stay/person, should have brought an income of 8.400.000 lei. And the situation gets better when the receiving capacity is more consistent, this being the case of the 6.140 places in the accommodation units revealed by personal investigations, which would have registered 151.658 arrivals and 422.432 overnight stays in identical tourist flow conditions, meaning an estimated income of 21.100.000 lei. No doubt, collecting such amount of money every year from accommodation services and even more from the other services (catering, transportation, entertainment etc.) could transform tourism into an economic development supporter of any area.

6. ASSESSING AND VALUING THE TOURISM SUPPLY OF THE STUDY AREA

6.1. General tourism supply potential value estimation

The peculiarity of this chapter consists of the intermediate conclusions which it states, by resuming all the scores that the 26 communes obtained in terms of natural, anthropic and material base tourist potential and by establishing the value of the general tourism supply related to the analysed territorial-administrative units and to the main potential categories (Figure 14). Despite the total average of 108,6 points which qualifies the examined area as a highly general tourist potential one within which a great share corresponded to the natural fund value, there was also noticed an under-sized material base of tourism compared with the attractive potential value. Thus, reporting the numerical value of the primary tourism supply to the one pertaining to the secondary tourism supply, it came out that 22 communes were characterised by an undervalued potential whose biggest differences (up to 80 points) had been recorded in Iara, Mărgău and Valea Ierii.

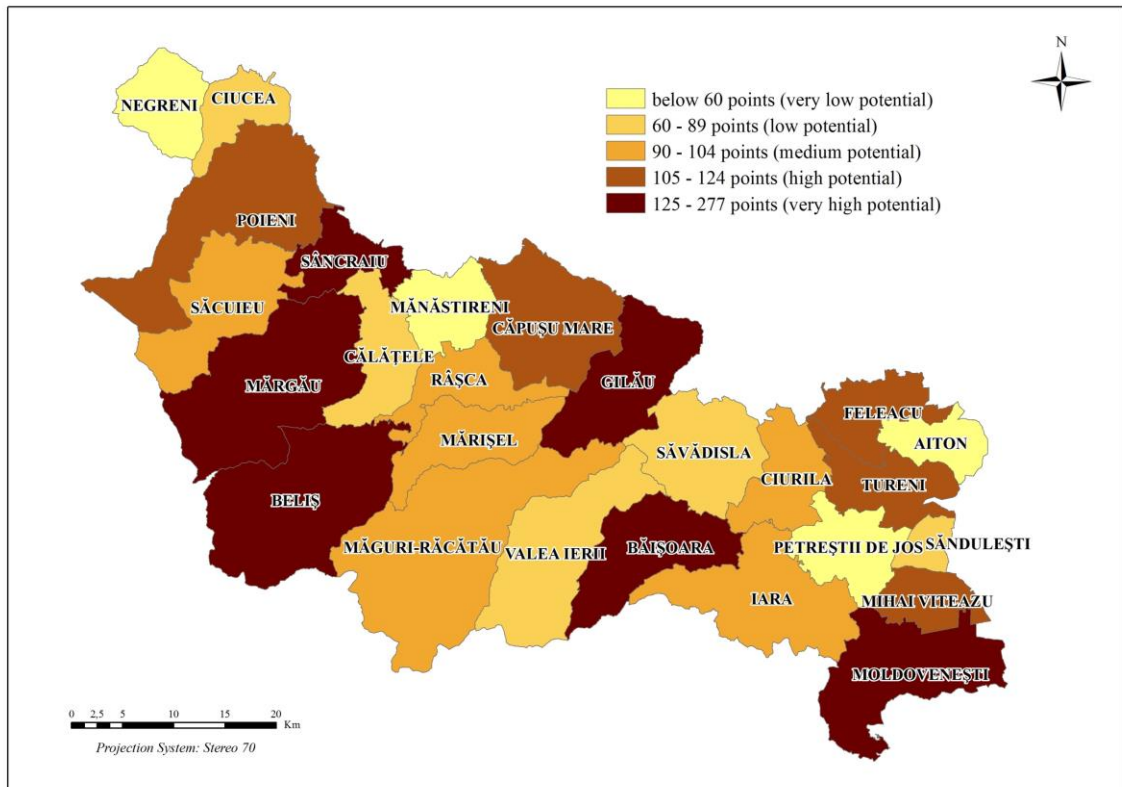


Fig. 14. Attractive potential categories related to the general tourism supply within the study area

6.2. Types and forms of tourism

The complexity of the tourism phenomenon exposed within the previous chapters through various attempts of identifying, inventorying, ranking and evaluating the attractive resources and the elements of the material base of tourism, continued to expand over the manifestations of tourism amongst which 20 tourism forms were listed for the study area. To be more specific, these forms concerned hiking tourism, cyclotourism, camping tourism, winter sports tourism, adventure and extreme sports tourism, mountain climbing/ mountaineering, speleotourism, rest tourism, mountain climatic tourism, nautical sports tourism, fishing tourism, hunting tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, cultural and historical tourism, cultural and religious tourism, heritage tourism (H.M.),

events tourism, gastronomical tourism, conference and business tourism. Regarding the territorial-administrative units whose tourism supplies could provide the adequate framework for practicing the above-mentioned tourism forms, it turned out that Mărgău, Beliș, Mărișel, Poieni, Râșca, Săcuieu and Tureni (with more than 15 forms each) are the most privileged communes, although all 26 examined ones were assigned both a main tourism form and a secondary one on the basis of its representativity for the general tourism supply and its unique combination.

7. PERCEPTION OF TOURISM IN THE RURAL-MOUNTAIN AREA

7.1. Local authorities' perception of tourism supply

The first part of the evaluation survey of the perception upon tourism, which was held in three steps, dealt with the local authorities' perspective on the matter, who had reconfirmed the importance of tourism activities, not only by acknowledging it within the development of the commune up until nowadays, but by trusting its contribution to the future one (in 90% of cases). On this line, most of the local authorities' representatives (65%) declared that they had accessed European funds for different projects and tourism investments, simultaneously indicating the existence of a development strategy at communal level (16 din 26) or, at least, an overall vision within which the development of tourism infrastructure was a priority (21 out of 26). When asked about the utility of founding a tourism network, they all had a positive reaction and answer (100%), inclusively showing high receptivity towards the idea of creating some tourism products such as circuits that would reunite elements from the tourism supply of various territorial-administrative units (85,3%). Last but not least, it was noticed a good knowledge of tourism forms with chances of success (rural tourism and hiking – the most frequent answers), of the most important element involved in the creation and/or diversification of the tourism supply (amongst which the morphotourist component, followed by transportation and accommodation infrastructure and services have prevailed – over 70% each of them) and of the elements that could be used for designing a commune brand (36% of respondents mentioned the anthropic resources and 20% the natural ones).

7.2. Accommodation services providers' perception of tourism supply

In the second survey, the one referring to the perspective of the accommodation services providers, overlapping opinions were observed both with local authorities (first survey) and with tourists (third survey), firstly in terms of tourism potential, responsible for 78,5% of the total number of tourists in the area (the morphotourist component being the best rated one: 88%), and then with respect to the accommodation supply, whose highly appreciated by tourists characteristics (approximately 90%) has coincided with accessibility, prices of services and staff's amability. Similarities between the answers of providers and tourists, who had proven a good knowledge of the behavior and preferences of the latter ones, were also noticed for: the average stay (94%: 2-3 days) – especially during summer (85%) when the accommodation capacity rate is usually over 50% occupied – the tourists' wide provenance area, the high predilection for online means of promotion (76% using specific websites that promote accommodation services and 67% using their own websites), the aspects which define the general image of the accommodation unit (amongst which the importance of setting a fair quality/price report has clearly detached itself from other elements) and, in the case of tourism categories suitable for practice in the area (recreational

tourism and weekend tourism). Furthermore, there were also revealed a series of particularities and advantages that the owners and managers of receiving structures rely on when attempting to stimulate tourist activities, including the prices for accommodation services in a double room /night stay (98 lei without breakfast or 126 lei with breakfast, on average) on which 90% of the providers make discounts for children under a certain age, for a minimum number of nights, for groups or for loyal customers, preponderantly oriented towards recreational tourism and weekend tourism (91%).

7.3. Tourists' perception of tourism supply

The investigation of the tourists' perception brought into prominence, in addition to the first two stages of the survey, the special importance that they give to practicing tourism activities (87,8%), so that more than one third of those who were interviewed had not been to their first visit in the area or to their first stay in the accommodation unit at the moment of survey. On one hand, this was due to morphotourist component and accommodation services (64,3%) while on the other hand, to services' prices and staff's amability (circa 60%). The large proportion of those who declared themselves satisfied with both territory's tourism supply and the services from the tourist receiving structure, reflected on the high frequency of affirmative answers to the questions which put into discussion their return in the area for tourism purpose (100%) and in the same accommodation unit (95%); after previously establishing the similarities with the answers of the services' providers regarding the average stay and the most-used information sources (the same ones preferred by managers as means of promotion). Finally, the *sociodemographic profile of the tourist in the examined territory* was determined, highlighting the prevalence of those with the age between 25 and 44, residing in urban areas, who graduated higher education, mostly single or married couples without children, with medium income.

8. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE RURAL-MOUNTAIN AREA

8.1. Geodemographic premises of tourist development. Preliminary aspects

In the preamble of the development strategy of the study area, the approach of some geodemographic aspects was considered appropriate on the grounds that population might be referred as a workforce reserve as well as an attraction factor through its cultural and spiritual elements transposed in tourism activity. Hence, in order to determine the *proper geodemographic variables*, the results of the latest Population and Housing Census were recorded, showing that, in 2011, the examined territory registered 67.038 inhabitants, meaning a general density of 24,9 inhabitants/ km².

The analysis of the *sociocultural geodemographic variables* revealed that, from an ethnic point of view, in the same year, 77% of population was represented by Romanian, followed by Hungarians (16%) and Roma (4%), while as concerned the religious structure, the same number of inhabitants was split in Orthodox (73%), Reformed (11%), Unitarians (4%) and Pentecostals (3%). With respect to education level, it was noticed the predominance of gymnasium graduates (34%), succeeded by high school graduates (18%), primary education (16%), vocational school and apprenticeship (12%), and in a small proportion, those who graduated higher education (6%). Afterwards, the approach of the *territorial variables related to living environment* brought into light a total number of 36.045 buildings, out of which 35.991 residential buildings, 24.957 households, 37.679 conventional dwellings in the rural-mountain area, out of which in 2011, 95% were

equipped with electrical installations, about 50% were connected to the water and sanitation network (circa 50%) and solely 15% to central heating system, while from the perspective of outbuildings, 73,3% had a kitchen and 47,4% a bathroom.

The transposition of the educational stock along with the health, vital and material capital into human capital generated the *local human development index* whose average value within the study area (53,9) made it resemble quite well the situation of Cluj County (56,4) in 2016, simultaneously individualising its extreme values, 78,1 in Gilău and 33 in Aiton (Figure 15), more than representative for the current stage of the general development.

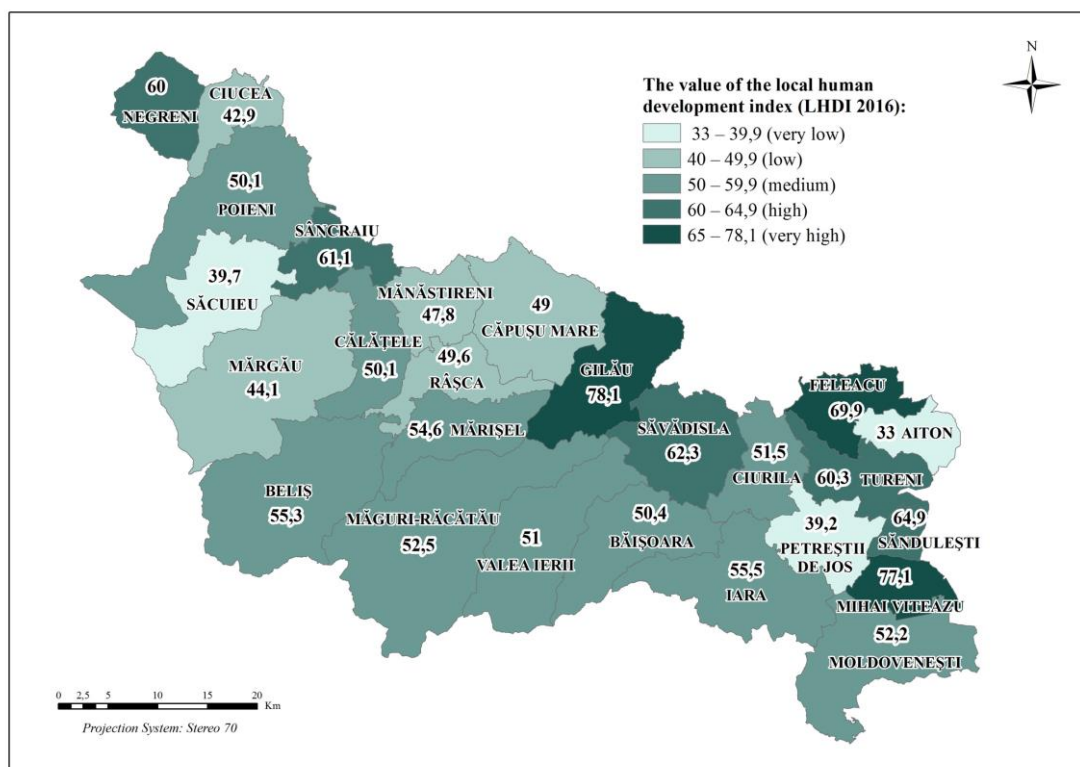


Fig. 15. The value of the local human development index within the study area
Source: www.madr.ro (last access: July 29, 2016)

8.2. Development opportunities within the political and economic context 2014-2020

The research of the political and economic context and opportunities in the 2014-2020 period has pointed out the *LEADER approach* (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement Rural) as pertinent solution for the socioeconomic development of the rural area due to the possibilities of accessing funds from European grants up to 200.000 euros for one project under the circumstances of a Local Development Strategy and a Local Action Group (LAG), the investigated territory having already a full coverage on this line through the five LAGs that currently work within its limits (LAG Someș-Nadăș, LAG Lider Cluj, LAG Napoca Porolissum, LAG Poarta Transilvaniei and LAG Poarta Apusenilor).

8.3. SWOT analysis

According to global and regional analyses, any successful initiative must rely on a diagnostic analysis, objectively exposing the predisposing and limiting factors, and then, indicating

the necessary measures for an optimum development. Consequently, on the basis of primary and secondary tourism supply prospectation, tourist flow analysis and survey interpretation, the framework of all strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the examined territory was determined and put on the ground of the next diagnoses and proposals.

8.4. Diagnosis of the main causes and effects generated by the central problem

Punctual identification of major problems in the form of cause-effect relationship representations through Problem Tree, highlighted the central problem that the study area confronts with, namely the deficient valorisation of the tourism potential provoked by various causes and subcauses, with negative consequences upon tourism development, that were listed in the next table.

Table 8. Problem Tree corresponding to the study area

<i>Effect 3. Low earnings from tourism</i>							
<i>Effect 2.1. Low tourists' spendings</i>				<i>Effect 2.2. Low number of tourist overnight stays</i>			
<i>Effect 1. Low number of tourists (tourist arrivals)</i>							
CENTRAL PROBLEM: DEFICIENT VALORISATION OF THE TOURISM POTENTIAL IN THE RURAL-MOUNTAIN AND MARGINAL CONTACT AREA IN CLUJ COUNTY							
<i>Cause 1. Low implication degree, underestimation and low interest regarding the role of tourism in the economic development of the local communities</i>			<i>Cause 2. Underdeveloped tourism infrastructure in the rural-mountain and marginal contact area in Cluj County</i>			<i>Cause 3. Disorganisation in terms of tourism activities practicing conditions in the rural-mountain and marginal contact area in Cluj County</i>	
Cause 1.1. Different relating of the local communities from the rural-mountain area in Cluj County towards tourism activity	Cause 1.2. Misinformation and ignorance from the local communities towards tourism's implications in the socioeconomic development	Cause 1.3. Low specific education degree of tourism activities' direct beneficiaries in the rural-mountain area in Cluj County	Cause 2.1. Low quality in the case of certain tourism infrastructure elements that exist in the rural-mountain area in Cluj County	Cause 2.2. Insufficient infrastructure space and elements the more so as in the context of a rural tourism network foundation in the rural-mountain area in Cluj County	Cause 3.1. The absence of a coordination and monitoring organised system regarding tourism activities' unfolding (ex: tourism network)	Cause 3.2. Unpersonalised tourism product, sold in less organised conditions in the rural-mountain area in Cluj County	Cause 3.3. Inefficient promotion of the tourism supply pertaining to the rural-mountain area in Cluj County la nivel regional și național

8.5. Development strategy. Objectives and action directions

The conversion of the central problem and the determinant causes from the Problem Tree into the Objective one, allowed correct formulation of the general objective (efficient valorisation of the tourism potential), of the action directions and of the specific objectives supported by practical activities. In other words, the proposed strategy involved the accomplishment of three projects whose purpose dealt with the: growing the interest and information degree of the local communities regarding the role of tourism in the socio-economic development through awareness and direct involvement campaigns (Direction 1), developing the specific tourist infrastructure through the improvement of the current one and the arrangement of new structures indispensable for tourism activity (Direction 2), and improving the conditions for the unfolding of tourist activities through the implementation of a tourism network for the rural-mountain and marginal contact area in Cluj County (Direction 3). Estimations towards temporal, human and financial resources (which had also included wage costs, material and equipment purchase and other costs) showed that the fulfillment of these goals could be possible within a two-year period if a team project composed of 50 members equitably shared their tasks (some of them being held in the same time) and had to spare a total

budget of 260.000 euros for all 25 activities (Table 9) comprised in the strategy (from elaborating the instrument of evaluation upon perceptions and attitudes, editing questionnaires and informational materials, unfolding information, counseling and skills training sessions to the foundation of a NGO association, arranging the office of the tourism network and new tourist information points, households and crafts centres for introducing them in the tourism circuit, designing an appropriate tourist orientation and signalling system, opening of a travel agency under the network's influence and creating a series of tourism products and promotional materials both exhibited on a specialised platform and on profile fairs).

Table 9. Gantt – WBS chart

	Activities. Results. Costs.	Human resources	2018												2019												2020		
			APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR			
			M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18	M19	M20	M21	M22	M23	M24			
Direction (purpose) 1 Budget:69,700 EUROS	S.O.1.1. Estimated budget: 21.700 euros																												
	A.1.1.1. elaborating questionnaire model	12 people																											
	A.1.1.2. application of 7.500 questionnaires	12 people																											
	A.1.1.3. concepere 4 modele materiale info.	12 people																											
	S.O.1.2. Estimated budget: 22.850 euros																												
	A.1.2.1. editing 8.500 info. materials	9 people																											
	A.1.2.2. holding 26 info. sessions	9 people																											
	A.1.2.3. holding 26 counseling sessions	9 people																											
	S.O.1.3. Estimated budget: 25.150 euros																												
A.1.3.1. foundation of N.G.O. TuRSeM Cluj	6 people																												
A.1.3.2. organising training and developing course	9 people																												
A.1.3.3. acordare 200 diplome/certificate	6 people																												
Direction (purpose) 2 Budget:148,000	S.O.2.1. Estimated budget: 33.450 euros																												
	A.2.1.1. elaborating infrastructure portofolio	6 people																											
	A.2.1.2. quality standard institution and proposal making	9 people																											
	A.2.1.3. verifying and awarding 150 brand-plates	29 people																											
	S.O.2.2. Estimated budget: 114.550 euros																												
	A.2.2.1. arranging the office of ReTuRuM tourism network	6 people																											
	A.2.2.2. arranging 14 tourist information points	31 people																											
	A.2.2.3. integrating 25 household-guesthouses	31 people																											
	A.2.2.4. arranging 10 craft centres	31 people																											
A.2.2.5. implementing orientation and signaling system	33 people																												
Direction (purpose) 3 Budget:40,900 EUROS	S.O.3.1. Estimated budget: 4.750 euros																												
	A.3.1.1. quantifying stakeholders and roles within network	6 people																											
	A.3.1.2. creating the database of current tourism supply	6 people																											
	A.3.1.3. projecting an interactive web-platform	5 people																											
	S.O.3.2. Estimated budget: 25.600 euros																												
	A.3.2.1. opening travel agency S.R.M. Tour	10 people																											
	A.3.2.2. designing 4 types of tourism products	8 people																											
	S.O.3.3. Estimated budget: 10.550 euros																												
	A.3.3.1. elaborating 8.500 promotion materials	10 people																											
A.3.3.2. activating the applications of the web-platform	8 people																												
A.3.3.3. preparing equipment for fairs participation	8 people																												

9. TOURISM PERSONALISATION ASPECTS

9.1. Tourist destination brand image of the communes from the study area

Continuing and completing the proposals in the development strategy, the last part of the thesis placed an emphasis on tourism personalisation aspects, more precisely on the tourist destination brand images of the investigated communes for which there were designed 26 models of tourist images, both illustrated and explained, with the purpose of promoting all them as independent tourist destinations.

9.2. Personalised tourism products categories

In these cases, there were exemplified seven types of tourist packages, either circuits or mini-stays, focused on practicing specific tourism forms and visiting the most important attractive

resources in the area, individualised through the presentation manner that, among general characteristics (name, slogan, type of product, proposer, number of days, period, target segments, promotion means), described the itinerary, the schedule of events and the price calculation, concurrently attaching a representative advertising poster model for each type of tourism product. To be more specific about the approached issues, the above-mentioned packages included the: rural-mountain tourism product (a 6-day general tourist circuit rated 1.269 lei/pers.), agritourism product (a 3-day thematic tourist circuit rated 499 lei/pers), wintry tourism product (a 3-day mini-stay rated 769 lei/pers), ecotourism product (a 3-day thematic tourist circuit rated 479 lei/pers), lacustrine tourism product (a 3-day mini-stay rated 489 lei/pers), fishing tourism product (a 3-day mini-stay rated 789 lei/pers), heritage tourism product (a 2-day thematic tourist circuit rated 439 lei/pers).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research, prospectation, radiography and projection process of tourism within the rural-mountain and marginal contact area in Cluj County, which was presented allthroughout the nine component chapters, was to demonstrate that that the examined territory fulfills all the requirements for a dynamic and sustainable tourism development and for transforming it in a viable economic alternative able to improve the living conditions of the local communities under the circumstances of an efficient valorisation of the attractive potential and an appropriate promotion of the tourism supply.

Therefore, due to all arguments, methodology, analyses not only of tourist aspects but also of the physical-geographic, cultural, economic, political, administrative, geodemographic ones which have also imposed difference between fundamental factors (primary tourism supply), decisive (secondary tourism supply) and permissive ones (tourist flow related elements), strategic and projection (as result of observation, prospectation, analyses and surveys), it can be considered that the objectives were accomplished, the hypotheses were validated, and the general purpose of the thesis was equally fulfilled.

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