Evaluating the Possibilities of Improving the Quality of Tourism Services of the “Eco-Guesthouses” from Mărginimea Sibiului

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of the possibilities of improving the quality of tourism services of the ”eco-guesthouses” from Mărginimea Sibiului in the context where the international studies indicate that lately tourists have become more experienced and expect good quality products in chosen holiday destinations. Currently, the international market of ecotourism has developed with 10-12% annually, having the fastest growth in the world tourism sector and tending to become an independent market segment, under the influence of factors such as: travelers prefer to choose educational holidays, their desire to escape to nature and spend quality time with friends or family, etc. In these circumstances, the quality is important for both tourists and eco-guesthouses, as it can contribute to making better products at lower costs, ensuring continuous customer orientation and thus controlling and shaping their preferences and expectations.

Keywords: Eco-Guesthouse, Ecotourism, Ecotourism Potential, Marginimea Sibiului, Quality, Tourism Services

DOI: 10.4018/IJSEM.2015010103
INTRODUCTION

Between economic and social phenomena characteristic to the contemporary era there is also the rapid development of tourism, now considered one of the most internationalized sectors of the world economy. As economic and social activity, tourism has emerged and evolved in close connection with the development of human society (Nedelcu, 2011).

The place of tourism in the sustainable development is logical given by its role as an industry that sells human and physical environment as a product of his. Tourism is one of the industries that should be involved in sustainable development as a resource industry dependent on nature endowment and cultural heritage of each society; tourism sells these resources as part of its product and at the same time, shares some resources with other users, including the local population.

It is in the interest of tourism to be active on the issue of sustainable development and to work in cooperation with other industries in ensuring the quality of the resource base and its survival.

Relevance of conservation natural resources, along with ensuring social balance of tourist destinations is a true strategic vector of sustainable development made at national and international level. This fact is recognized by many organizations, associations and institutions active in the international tourism domain, by bringing their contribution to support the efforts of national and local authorities, and representatives of tourism businesses that recognize that their activities are impacting the ambient environment and the degradation of the infrastructure in the area. Note that this effort also enjoys wide acceptance and proper support from the public (Dorobanțu & Nistoreanu, 2012).

The tourism industry is seen by its specificity, as related to the environment, but its size and presence have created negative physical and social impacts on the environment.

As hundreds of millions of travelers crossing borders each year, the temptation to obtain high income generated by receiving visits, may lead to development decisions, thus resulting a decrease of green, natural elements. However the number of green tourism campaign is growing, causing only some green attitude, but in the end, all have an impact on the brand and credibility sector.

In Romania, organized tourism in natural areas is suffering from many viewpoints. The low quality of tourist services is the first negative aspect worth mentioning. Secondly, the national legislation is deficient in this area of natural and anthropogenic environmental protection. A third negative aspect is the practice called “Greenwashing”. This refers to companies that call themselves as “sustainable”, “green”, “responsible”, “eco-touristic”, but in fact they do not meet generally accepted standards, or even are in contradiction with these concepts (Hornoiu et.al. 2009).

Quality is important for customers, but also for the organization’s staff, because it can help reduce costs and provide better service in the same budget. In a competitive market, obtaining a
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