Chapter 4

Sustainable Tourism Development in the Black Sea Coastal Areas: A Research on Romanian Tourists and Tourism Operators

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyses the significance that tourists, on the one hand, and the business environment, on the other hand, lend to the concept of sustainable development in tourism. Starting from this point, the chapter highlights the characteristics of the sustainable development of tourism in the coastal areas of Black Sea. Sustainable development has been conceptualized by a set of four variables: economic, socio-human, ecological, and institutional-technological. The main results of the research show that both tourists and members of the business environment attach the greatest importance to the institutional-technological variable, focusing primarily on collaboration and communication between decision-makers and executives. Regarding the stakeholders, both tourists and the business community indicate local governance and central government as the main factors responsible for sustainable development. Following the research, a possible list of actions was proposed.

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INTRODUCTION

The complexity of tourism in relation to sustainable development in coastal areas requires a balance between economic results, attention to environmental fragility, adaptation of technology and the satisfaction of both tourists and locals. From an economic point of view, the objectives of sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas imply qualitative performance, controlled utilization of resources and the competitiveness of products and services offered. The environmental dimension of tourism development is better described by the planning of optimal landscaping, supporting forms of eco-friendly tourism and managing tourism flows. The socio-human side is supported by an increase in the quality of life of the local population, by superior and better-paid jobs, by the quality of the experiences lived by tourists. These are the results of proper services, uniqueness and innovation, the care for future generations, determined by tourists and residents’ behaviour and attitude. The institutional-technological dimension means collaboration between stakeholders, free and equal access to information and the implementation of technological improvements in tourism.

The process of sustainable development in tourism depends mainly on the involvement and cooperation between policy makers and implementation factors, but also on society’s attitude. Good local governance is the key to development; destination-based decisions are based on real, current information and address the socio-economic needs of tourist areas. However, central authorities, professional tourism organizations, tour operators or tourists and the resident population should sustain touring activities in various forms. Also, the academic institutions and international organizations may improve this framework of cooperation through generating ideas and guiding principles.

In order to achieve the objectives of sustainable development in coastal areas for tourism, there are some measures that have to be implemented: improving the quality of services and diversifying the supply, but also improving the transport infrastructure and the accommodation facilities.

Above all, in coastal areas the sustainable development of tourism is a problem of balance between support capacity and tourist traffic, between the spatial arrangement of territory and touring arrangement, between the utilisation of sea and beaches for tourism purposes and environmental protection. We live in a pragmatic world in which money dictates the course of action, therefore the success of sustainable development means finding beneficial solutions for the environment and society to demand and supply equations.

The chapter analyse the significance of the concept of sustainable tourism development that is given by both tourists, and the business environment. Starting from this point, there will be defined the characteristics of the tourism’s sustainable development in the coastal areas of the Black Sea.

The chapter stands on a quantitative research whose objectives are:

- Characterizing the dimensions of the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas: the economic dimension, the environmental-ecological dimension, the socio-human dimension and the institutional-technological dimension.
- Measuring the extent to which each stakeholder is responsible for the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas.
- Evaluating measures and directions of action that support and generate sustainable tourism development in the Black Sea coastal areas.
- Defining the sustainable development of tourism in coastal areas in relation to its economic, social, ecological and institutional dimensions.