

## Ecotourism Management in Banat's Protected Areas

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### Abstract

The strategies developed in the field of ecotourism contribute to the creation of a favourable environment in this sector of activity and to the meeting of tourists' demands without endangering the natural resources in the Banat's protected areas. Management should take into account the main requirements regarding the ecological exploitation of the areas, the judicious exploitation of the tourist flows and the establishment of support thresholds as well as the implementation of material recycling measures in the area. Cooperation between rural and ecological tourism produces benefits such as diversification of economic activities, development of infrastructure and increase of demand for rural goods and services – all this contributing to the long-term economic stability in areas with such natural resources.

**Keywords:** ecotourism, protected areas, Banat

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### 1. Introduction

At present, tourism is characterised worldwide by a strong competition between destinations. Some of these resources can face international competition, some others fail [1-3]. In these conditions, they need more and more a new model of tourism policy that influences the competition position in the context of worldwide competition. The measures that can be taken at central level can improve the competition position of one's own destination or can damage it; hence, the following measures to be taken [4-6]:

- Fight against environmental pollution;
- Legislation of competition;
- Policies in the field of training and research;
- Policies in the field of exchange rates and interests;
- Policies in the field of the labour market;
- Policies and structure of encouraging investments;
- Policies of incomes;

- Structure and objectives of national/regional/local bodies in the field of tourism.

In the competition environment of today, the strategy in the field of ecotourism should help developing a favourable environment in this sector; it is a "pluridisciplinary enterprise" that needs a bold strategy, specific to the sector, stable, with the support of responsible at operational level, that provide a vision, a model capable of guiding production and marketing of tourism products [7,8].

Ecotourism management is the process of operating, anticipating, organising, coordinating and controlling all ecotourism resources for maximum efficiency without damaging the environment and ensuring, at the same time, tourist relaxation. Satisfying the tourists should not damage social and economic interests of the population in the area, or the environment, the natural resources which represent, in fact, the fundamental attraction [9,10]. As in other tourism activities, ecotourism means applying management systems through objectives, projects (per products, through exceptions or total qualities, in a participative way), methods (diagnosis analyses, decision fundamenting-

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optimising meetings), and different management techniques depending on the features aimed at [11].

## 2. Materials and methods

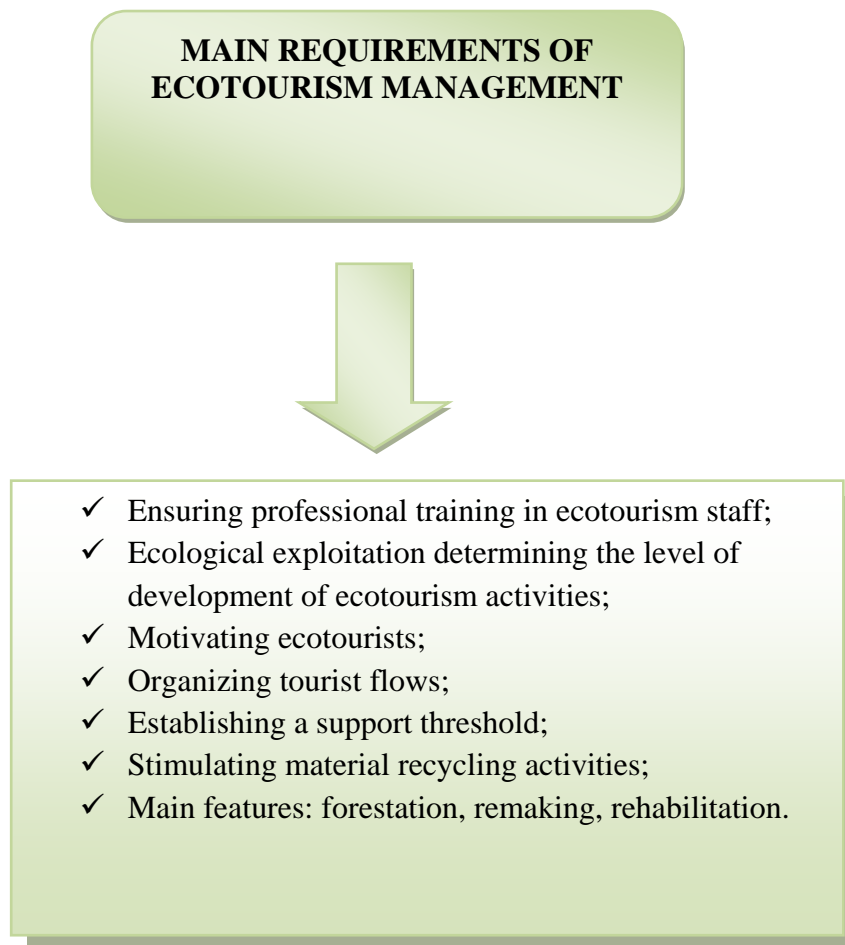
To achieve this scientific approach, we studied the way ecotourism activities are practiced in the Banat area.

## 3. Results and discussion

Ecotourism management should take into account a few essential requirements regarding the protection of the areas (Figure 1):

- **Ensuring the professional improvement of the staff working in ecotourism** (in accommodation, structures, tour guides, local communities involved);

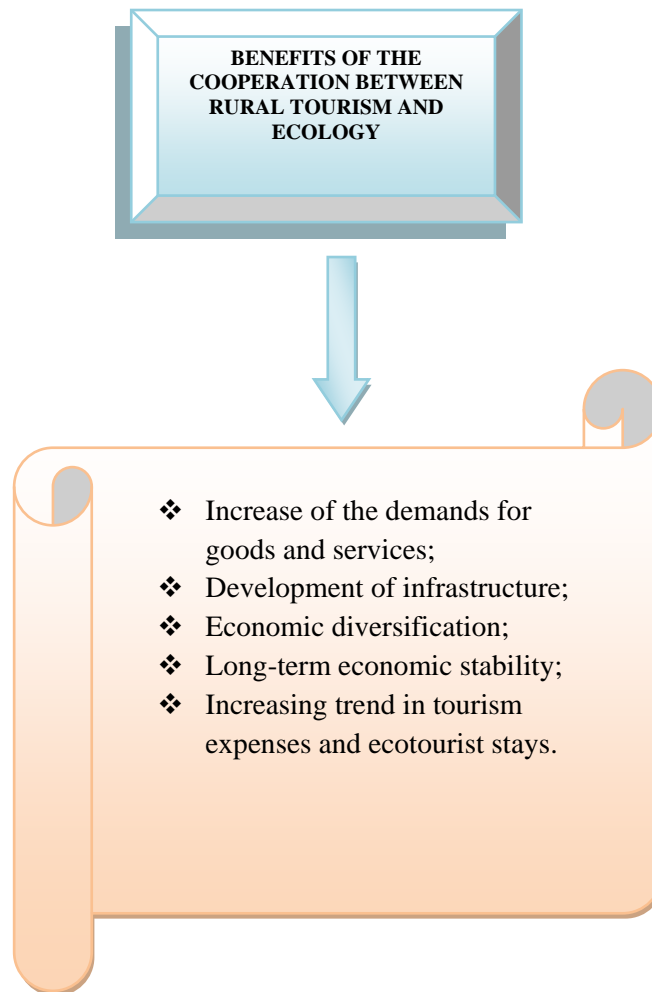
- **Ecological exploitation** determines the level of development of ecotourism activities;
- **Motivating ecotourists**, which supposes observing and appreciating the nature, knowing dominant cultural traditions, knowing flora and fauna of the protected area;
- **Organising tourism flows** in small groups of up to 25 people to reduce the negative impact on the areas visited;
- **Establishing a support threshold** supposes the observance of consumption norms per tourist and of the standards of classification of tourism units;
- **Stimulating material recycling activities**, the use of alternative energy, of low-impact substances (lead-free gas);
- Main features: forestations, farmers contributing to the remaking, rehabilitation of ecosystems, introduction of species extinct in Romania (deer, moufflon, marmot), protection of endangered species.



**Figure 1.** Main requirements of ecotourism management

In a state of normality resulted from the two main features of economic life – decentralisation and market economy – the new association between ecology and tourism materialises one of the most important desiderata of the future generations: environmental protection in the areas included in the national and world tourism circuit. At global level, more and more firms appeal to ecological

management to carry out current activities. The motivation relies in that feature of ecotourism which represents a travel experience that highlights the nature and contributes to the conservation of ecosystems while observing the integrity of the host community. The benefits of the cooperation between rural tourism and ecology are manifest in the following (Figure 2):



**Figure 2.** Benefits of the cooperation between rural tourism and ecology

- Increase of the demands for goods and services resulting in benefits for local economies;
- Development of infrastructure allowing the access to the nature reserves;
- Economic diversification, particularly in the rural areas, peripheral and non-industrialised;
- Long-term economic stability;
- Increasing trend in tourism expenses and ecotourist stays.

The management plan is a stable framework of integration of natural and cultural environment conservation and protection issues with issues regarding the social and economic development in the Banat's protected areas and a dialogue tool between the institutions managing natural and human resources of the areas. As for the actions in the ecotourism management plan, they need to be designed taking into account first the natural, cultural, social and economic resources of the protected areas. As for the goal of the management plan, we can say that it aims at

promoting a model of management that allows sustainable development of the human communities and the conservation of the landscape, of the biological diversity and of the other values of the natural and cultural environment in the Banat's protected areas.

The objectives of the ecotourism management plan of the Banat's protected areas are as follows:

- Managing properly the protected areas from a sustainable point of view;
- Conserving the characteristic landscape and the specific geological, geomorphologic, and paleontological elements, as well as maintaining populations and habitats of community and national interest;
- Shaping in the spirit of ecological education, information, awareness and consulting of a favourable attitude of local communities and of decision-making factors towards the values of protected areas, influencing perception and behaviour of the visitors in the spirit of conservation of natural heritage imperatives, as well as in the spirit of sustainable development;

Maintaining and promoting sustainable activities of exploitation of resources and removal of activities susceptible of having a negative impact on the environment.

## Conclusions

In order to carry out normal ecotourism activities, we need to implement a management plan that contributes to the ensurance of professional training of operators, of the organisation of professional improvement of the operators, of the proper organisation of tourist flows and of reorienting them if their presence has a negative impact on the environment.

We need to establish a support threshold for each protected area through management plans that integrate conservation and protection issues of the natural and cultural environment with economic development in Banat's protected areas and a dialogue tool between the factors that manage natural and anthropic resources of these areas.

Products are focused on traditional objectives or close to "bio" term.

The combination between products and services becomes an experience that determine the "story" that the tourist will tell to his friends when he will

return home. Therefore the owner is the one who needs to create the story of the guesthouse/farm, containing the main elements they offer.

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