

ROMANIAN ACADEMY, IAȘI BRANCH
Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
National Agency for Mountain Areas (ANZM), Vatra Dornei

ROMANIAN ACADEMY
“Costin C. Kirițescu” National Institute for Economic Research
Centre of Mountain Economy (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei

26th International Conference

***TOURISM AND RURAL SPACE
IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
CONTEXT***



24 - 26 May 2024
Hybrid
Vatra Dornei
Romania

ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ – FILIALA IAȘI
Institutul de Cercetări Economice și Sociale „Gheorghe Zane”

MINISTERUL AGRICULTURII ȘI DEZVOLTĂRII RURALE
Agenția Națională a Zonei Montane (ANZM), Vatra Dornei

ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ
Institutul Național de Cercetări Economice „Costin C. Kirițescu”
Centrul de Economie Montană (CE-MONT), Vatra Dornei

Conferința științifică internațională

TURISM ȘI SPAȚIU RURAL
ÎN CONTEXT NAȚIONAL
ȘI INTERNAȚIONAL

Ediția a XXVI-a

24 - 26 mai 2024
Vatra Dornei

Aim of the Conference

The International Conference on Tourism and Rural Space in National and International Context (TARS) aims to provide a platform for economists, social scientists, policy analysts, managers, and practitioners from all academic and professional backgrounds worldwide to present, discuss, and share new issues, research findings, and developments in the fields of tourism, hospitality, and rural studies.

TARS intends to explore some of the main concerns of both tourism researchers and practitioners, focusing on the following thematic areas: tourism management, tourism marketing, tourism policy, sustainable tourism, rural development, cultural tourism, nature-based tourism, health tourism, hospitality, digital tourism, cross-border cooperation, tourism economics.

Organizing Committee

Georgia-Daniela TACU HÂRȘAN

Researcher, Department of Economic Research, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy, Iași Branch

Alina-Petronela HALLER

Senior Researcher, Department of Economic Research, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy, Iași Branch

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Radu REY

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Opening Ceremony

Speeches and Messages

Friday, 24th of May
9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (Bucharest Time)
National Agency for Mountain Areas - Aula Magna
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Chair

Dr. Akmaljon ODILOV (Uzbekistan)

Aurel SIMION

*Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development,
Bucharest, Romania*

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Researcher III, Centre of Mountain Economy, Vatra Dornei, “Costin C. Kirițescu” National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy, Romania

Plenary Session

Keynote Speakers

Friday, 24th of May
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (Bucharest Time)
National Agency for Mountain Areas - Aula Magna
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Chair

Dr. Akmaljon ODILOV (Uzbekistan)

Dr. Gül ERKOL BAYRAM

Vice-Dean, Faculty of Tourism, Sinop University, Sinop, Türkiye

✧ *Exploring Romania: Navigating New Tourism Roads amidst Challenges and Future Prospects*

Dr. Marco VALERI

Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics, Niccolò Cusano University, Rome, Italy // Lecturer, Xenophon College, London, United Kingdom // Associate Researcher, Magellan Research Center, School of Management, Jean Moulin University, Lyon, France

✧ *Digital Transformation and Sustainable Oriented Innovation*

Dr. Sunil KUMAR

Director of Academics, Institute of Hospitality, Management and Sciences, Kotdwar, Uttarakhand, India

✧ *Rural Tourism Transformative Journeys into the Heart of the Rural Heritage*

Ananya BHATTACHARYA

Co-Founder & Director, banglanatak.com, Kolkata, West Bengal, India // Vice-President, International Cultural Tourism Committee, International Council on Monuments and Sites - ICOMOS, Paris, France

✧ *Regenerative Rural Tourism Pivoting on Living Heritage*

Parallel Sessions

Session 1

Friday, 24th of May
12:15 PM - 1:30 PM (Bucharest Time)
Language: English
Room 1: Mountain Amphitheater
[Connect online](#)

Chair

Dr. Akmaljon ODILOV (Uzbekistan)

Adam CZARNECKI, Aneta DACKO, Mariusz DACKO,
Barbara SKOWERA

*Permanent and Seasonal Residents of the Little Beskid Mountains
against the Extreme Weather Events: Awareness, Perceptions and
Coping Strategies*

Cristina Emanuela DASCĂLU

*Rural Wellbeing Tourism: Adaptable Solutions for Preserving Local
Specificity and Promoting Sustainable Socio-Economic Growth in
Romania*

Akmaljon ODILOV

Uzbekistan as a Hub for Tourism and Hospitality in Central Asia

Oscar RODRIGUEZ

*Implications of Smart Tourism in Planning and Developing
Protected Areas*

Session 2

Friday, 24th of May
12:15 PM - 1:30 PM (Bucharest Time)
Language: English
Room 4: Council Room 1 (Building B)
[Connect online](#)

Chair

Dr. Gül ERKOL BAYRAM (Türkiye)

Alvenso Haykal HARYANTO, Iffat Dhiyaa ULHAQ

Comparison of Quantitative Analysis of Geosite and Geomorphosite for Geotourism Purposes in Baturraden and Guci Hot Springs Tourism Areas, Central Java, Indonesia

Najat MOUHOU

Global Statistics of Mountain Tourism

Shamiso NYAJEKA MAHOHOMA

Voices of the Community: Online Promotion and Tourism Development Perspectives in Rural Southern Africa

Isabelle Margareta OPREA, Liviu Gelu DRĂGHICI, Emanuela Adina NICULA, Alexandru Sabin NICULA

Enhancing Rural Economies through Digital Banking: Strategies for Financial Inclusion and Education

Session 3

Friday, 24th of May
12:15 PM - 1:30 PM (Bucharest Time)
Language: Romanian
Room 5: Council Room 2 (Building A)
[Connect online](#)

Chair

Dr. Ciprian Ionel ALECU (Romania)

Ciprian Ionel ALECU

Methodological Approaches to Analyzing the Sustainability of Rural Tourism Projects Using Elementary Trapezoidal Fuzzy Numbers

Manuela APETREI

The Role of Ecosystem Services in Defining the Marketing Policy in Țara Dornelor (The Land of Dornas)

Ioan GONTARIU

Assessment of Tourism Forms and the Tourist Potential of the Suceava Area

Ioan GONTARIU, Ana-Maria GONTARIU

Considerations regarding the Impact of Globalization, Development and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources on Rural Tourism

Session 4

Friday, 24th of May
4:00 PM - 7:30 PM (Bucharest Time)

Language: English

Room 1: Mountain Amphitheater

[Connect online](#)

Chairs

Dr. hab. Adam CZARNECKI (Poland)

Dr. Cristina Emanuela DASCĂLU (Romania)

Iqbal Ahmad BHAT, Nazish Hena KHAN

Rural Tourism and Heritage Conservation: A Case Study of Raghurajpur Village in Odisha, India

Amila INDIKA

Reasons for Higher Level of Tourists' Satisfaction on Ayurveda Health Resorts in Sri Lanka

Deepak JAISWAL

Augmenting Spiritual Tourism and Indigenous Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship: A Study with Special Reference to Buddhist Circuit in India

Tribhuvan NATH, Vimal Chandra VERMA

Harvesting Agritourism Opportunities through High-Tech Agriculture and Knowledge Transfer: Evidence from a Case Study in India

Neerja NIGAM, Manish NIGAM

A Study on Impact of Pandemic on Indian Tourism and Sustainable Measures for Its Recovery

Pratibha PANDEY, Vimal Chandra VERMA

A Qualitative Analysis of Elderly Consumers' Perception towards Health Tourism in India

Lindsey Elizabeth PASHOW, Victoria GIARRATANO

Developing Agritourism Economic Sustainability through New York's Taste New York Program

Samuel Uwem UMOH, Sarah Mohlago RAMAHLO, Elizabeth Adetola UMOH

Sustainable Tourism Development and Governance: From the Lens of Africa's Travel Indaba in South Africa

Liliana VELEA, Roxana BOJARIU, Zenaida CHIȚU, Anișoara IRIMESCU

Climate Information for Climate Action in Romanian Rural Tourism

Vimal Chandra VERMA

Exploring the Flavors of India: A Review of Gastronomic Tourism

Walter WYMER

Strategic Brand Management Planning for Location Tourism

Cristina Emanuela DASCĂLU, Mariana Gabriela DASCĂLU

EU Policies, Opportunities and Challenges in Tourism and What They Mean for Romania

Cristina Emanuela DASCĂLU, Iulian Eugen DANALACHE
*Romanian "tochitura" (Aka "Traditional Romanian Pork-based
Stew") Case Study, Culinary Trails, Rural Gastronomy and Cultural
Cuisine Heritage*

Session 5

Friday, 24th of May
4:00 PM - 6:15 PM (Bucharest Time)
Language: Romanian
Room 4: Council Room 1 (Building B)
[Connect online](#)

Chair

Dr. Valentin NIȚĂ (Romania)

Gina Ionela BUTNARU, Valentin NIȚĂ
Nature-based Tourism: Characteristics and Economic Benefits

Marilena DONCEAN
Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development

Doina GURIȚĂ
Price Policy in Tourism Marketing

Doina GURIȚĂ
The Objectives of Tourism Promotion and Promotion Techniques

Ina ISAC
Vărzărești Monastery: The First Monastic Settlement in Bessarabia

Corina MATEI GHERMAN
Komodo National Park in the Republic of Indonesia

Valentin NIȚĂ, Gina Ionela BUTNARU
Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania: Interpretation, Methods, and Techniques

Georgia TACU

The Impact of Cultural Tourism: Evidence from Romania

Session 6

Friday, 24th of May
4:00 PM - 6:15 PM (Bucharest Time)

Language: Romanian

Room 3: Runc Hall

[Connect online](#)

Chair

Dr. Daniela MATEI (Romania)

Daniela MATEI

Development, Risks, and Vulnerabilities in Local Tourist Resorts in Bukovina

Silvia Alexandra MATINCĂ (PASCU), Daniela RĂDOI

Research on the Role of Accounting Information in Enhancing Performance in the Tourism and Catering Industry

Ion MĂRGINEANU

The Rural Tourism of Moldova in the Post-Communist Era

Alina Cristina NICULESCU

Rural and Urban Spaces in Romania: Statistical Analysis of Cultural and Artistic Units, Cultural Consumption (During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic) and the Current Degree of Digitization

Luminița PANAIT

Strong Correlation between Rural Tourism and Other Key Sectors of the Tourism Industry

Olga POALELUNGI

*Cultural and Religious Tourism in the Republic of Moldova:
Conditions and Needs for Attracting Foreigners*

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI, Ciprian Ionel ALECU

*What Can Be Done to Transform Romanian Rural Communities
into Smart Villages?*

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI, Bogdan Mihai NEGREA

*What is the Link Between Academic Aspirations and the Costs of
Pursuing Prestige in Research?*

Session 7

Friday, 24th of May
4:00 PM - 6:15 PM (Bucharest Time)
Language: Romanian
Room 5: Council Room 2 (Building A)
[Connect online](#)

Chair

Dr. hab. Alina Petronela HALLER (Romania)

Alina-Petronela HALLER

Sustainable Tourism in Eastern Europe: An Analysis of Inbound Tourism

Nicoleta ȘEICARU BUCATĂ

Touristic Development of Comana Commune in Giurgiu County

Ion TALABĂ

Recent Negative Legislative Effects in Tourism

Vasile TODINCĂ, Maria Flavia POP

The Tourist Potential of the Valley of Hell, Bihor County, Romania

Dana Alina UNGUREANU

The Importance of Creative and Recreational Activities in the Mountain Tourist Experience

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Japanese Experience: Model for Organizing a Tourist Program in the Land of the Rising Sun

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Development Opportunities for Poiana Stampei Commune, Suceava County: Gateway to Bucovina

Daniela VĂRVĂRUC

Human Resources in the Hospitality Industry: An Essential Component for Satisfying Customers at the Sinaia Resort

Workshop

Successful Romanian Entrepreneurial Practices in Tourism

Saturday, 25th of May

4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (Bucharest Time)

Language: Romanian

Room: Mountain Amphitheater

[Connect online](#)

Chair

Dr. Dănuț UNGUREANU (Romania)

Speakers

Dr. Radu REY

Director, Centre of Mountain Economy - CE-MONT, Vatra Dornei, "Costin C. Kirițescu" National Institute for Economic Research, Romanian Academy // Honorary Member, Romanian Academy, Bucharest // Honorary Member, "Gheorghe Ionescu-Sisești" Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, Bucharest, Romania

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Book Presentation

Saturday, 25th of May
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (Bucharest Time)

Language: Romanian

Room: Mountain Amphitheater

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Chair

Dr. Ion TALABĂ (Romania)

Editors

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Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research,
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✧ *Economy and Contemporary Society: A Journal for the Future*, Romanian Academy Publishing House

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Book Launch 1

Turismul rural și etnoturismul. Oportunități pentru o dezvoltare durabilă a Țării Beiușului

Saturday, 25th of May

11:15 AM - 12:15 PM (Bucharest Time)

Language: Romanian

Room: Mountain Amphitheater

[Connect online](#)

Chair

Dr. Dănuț UNGUREANU (Romania)

Author

Dr. Vasile TODINCĂ

Senior Researcher, Țării Crișurilor Museum, Oradea, Romania

Speakers

Dr. Ion TALABĂ

Senior Researcher, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and Social Research, Romanian Academy, Iași Branch, Romania

Dr. Vasile TODINCĂ

Senior Researcher, Țării Crișurilor Museum, Oradea, Romania

Book Launch 2

Moldovița, comuna din inima Bucovinei. Capitalul structurant al patrimoniului natural și uman. Studiu monografic

Saturday, 25th of May

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM (Bucharest Time)

Language: Romanian

Room: Mountain Amphitheater

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Chair

Dr. Valentin NIȚĂ (Romania)

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Dr. Daniela MATEI

Senior Researcher, Gheorghe Zane Institute for Economic and
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Visiting Tourist Attractions

Sunday, 26th of May
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM (Bucharest Time)

Organizer

Dr. Dănuț UNGUREANU

- Wood Art Museum in Cîmpulung Moldovenesc, Suceava County
- Sadova Village Complex in Sadova, Suceava County
- Saint George Church in Sadova, Suceava County
- La Fermă, a small dairy factory in Sadova village, Suceava County
- Lunch at Oana Sava Bedrule's Local Gastronomic Point "La Fermă" in Sadova, Suceava County

Abstracts

Ciprian Ionel ALECU

Methodological Approaches to Analyzing the Sustainability of Rural Tourism Projects Using Elementary Trapezoidal Fuzzy Numbers

There is a variety of motivations for choosing rural tourism in the current socio-economic and technological context. The consumption of tourism services exerts pressure on the environment and rural communities, and these effects need to be managed in a timely manner. Modern principles of the circular economy involve evaluating the sustainability of rural tourism projects from the design stage. This article proposes an analysis of sustainability in relation to natural and anthropic heritage, specific tourism infrastructure, the local community, and the digital society. For analyzing rural tourism projects, the author suggests using elementary trapezoidal fuzzy numbers for decision-making. This tool allows for a systematic approach to this field, taking into account a large number of specific quantitative and qualitative characteristics and evaluating a complex framework of the decision-making problem. Additionally, the paper discusses a numerical case study on the use of elementary trapezoidal fuzzy numbers.

Manuela APETREI

The Role of Ecosystem Services in Defining the Marketing Policy in Țara Dornelor (The Land of Dornas)

In an era marked by ecological disasters and a persistent decline in biodiversity and ecosystem services, sustainable exploitation of both tangible and intangible ecosystem resources, exemplified by Țara Dornelor, is crucial for tackling climate crises and biodiversity loss. The restoration of nature not only ensures food security but also mitigates business risks. According to the World Economic Forum, over half of the global GDP, amounting to \$44 trillion, is reliant on nature, highlighting the economic risks associated with biodiversity degradation. In this context, integrating local resources into a collaborative, identity-promoting system in Țara Dornelor presents an

opportunity for sustainable development through effective marketing strategies.

Iqbal Ahmad BHAT, Nazish Hena KHAN

Rural Tourism and Heritage Conservation: A Case Study of Raghurajpur Village in Odisha, India

Raghurajpur is a heritage village in the Puri district of Odisha in the eastern part of India. The village is famous for palm leaf manuscripts, pattachitra paintings, and stone carvings. The village has been recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India as "Best Tourism Village" in 2023 under the silver category. It is the only village in India where all the households are engaged in handicrafts and paintings with natural colours. The Odisha Tourism Department in association with local artisans organizes local festivals known as "Haats" to increase the participation of the community for equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Tourism has benefited more than five hundred community members by providing them with direct employment, while almost two hundred people have benefited indirectly. There have been ample opportunities for women and self-help groups to participate in handicraft production and marketing of manufactured goods. The economy of the local community has multiplied through inbound tourism in Raghurajpur village. The local people engage with tourists by providing accommodation in a traditional cultural setting with immersive local culture. Against this background, the present study highlights the importance of rural tourism in a heritage setting through the participation of the local community. The study is based on both primary as well as secondary sources of data. The primary information source is based on the researcher's visits to the study site and interaction with the local artisans and community people. It is found that village tourism at Raghurajpur offers a unique opportunity for guest–host interaction while experiencing the authentic culture in its rural space.

Ananya BHATTACHARYA

Regenerative Rural Tourism Pivoting on Living Heritage

Regenerative rural tourism offers new possibilities of positive impact on destinations in a post pandemic world affected by climate change. Rural tourism has many challenges ranging from heritage preservation and management, inadequate infrastructure, accessibility, environmental impact, economic sustainability, marketing and promotion, pitfalls of heritage commercialization, etc. The ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism which supports a more responsible and sustainable tourism management will be presented. The Charter recognizes heritage as a common resource. The governance and enjoyment of these commons are indeed shared rights and responsibilities. The charter addresses how communities and tourism stakeholders can create positive impact in destinations through participatory governance of heritage commons and take action to manage and mitigate climate impact, risks of disruption or intensification of use of tourism resources and leverage traditional knowledge to build resilience. Case stories from India where rural tourism is pivoted on intangible cultural heritage and the tradition bearers are the protagonists of the commercialization process will be shared. This approach has transformed underserved habitats to cultural destinations, revitalized local culture and fostered socio economic empowerment of the communities. Safeguarding of living heritage has resulted in strengthening community identity and pride and engaged women and youth in heritage tourism management. Key strategies have been capacity building of the tradition bearers for innovations enhancing visitor experiences, building public awareness using intellectual property-based tools and digital storytelling.

Gina Ionela BUTNARU, Valentin NIȚĂ

Nature-based Tourism: Characteristics and Economic Benefits

Attracting a significant number of tourists worldwide, nature-based tourism is an inherent part of the tourism industry. Despite the urban comforts and conveniences facilitated by improved standards of living, many people find themselves estranged from nature. Globalization and technology have minimized the impact of seasonality on fruit and

vegetable production and supply. In such circumstances, the return to nature may be seen as a reconnection with "a land of hope" (Mother Nature). This study reveals that specialists' opinions are divided between defining nature-based tourism as a distinct concept and utilizing various complementary terms to describe it, such as eco-tourism, sustainable tourism, adventure tourism, alternative tourism, outdoor activities, and eco-traveling. Therefore, we can define nature tourism, also known as nature-based tourism, as tourism centered around the natural attractions of an area. It involves responsible travel aimed at experiencing natural environments, landscapes, flora, and fauna, with a focus on protecting the environment and enhancing the quality of life for locals.

Adam CZARNECKI, Aneta DACKO, Mariusz DACKO, Barbara SKOWERA

Permanent and Seasonal Residents of the Little Beskid Mountains against the Extreme Weather Events: Awareness, Perceptions and Coping Strategies

Due to the ongoing climate change, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events are on the rise worldwide. Considering the susceptibility of second-home tourism to natural disasters, understanding how their owners perceive and deal with the associated risks is paramount. This study focuses on the awareness and perceptions of extreme weather events' risks and their underlying factors among the seasonal (second-home owners) and local residents in the Little Beskids mountains in the southern Poland. Findings reveal that, despite notable distinctions in socio-demographics and residency status, both groups exhibit strikingly similar risk perceptions. These insights pave the way for community readiness and effective mitigation strategies for coping with and recovering from extreme weather-related challenges.

Cristina Emanuela DASCĂLU

Rural Wellbeing Tourism: Adaptable Solutions for Preserving Local Specificity and Promoting Sustainable Socio-Economic Growth in Romania

A number of concepts, including sustainability, happiness, health, and well-being, have come under rigorous scrutiny from a variety of stakeholders, including service providers and policymakers. The increase of infectious diseases and pandemics, loss of natural resources and ecosystems, and the slow decay of healthy social relationships, the impact that COVID-19 has had and is still having on humanity, all point out to the fact that more than ever we need to find refuge in rural wellbeing tourism which is both a personal escape from daily stress and inconveniences, and at a bigger scale a way to develop disadvantaged rural areas in Romania, as well as anywhere in the world. By fusing regional ecological food, farm animals, breathtaking scenery, art, and religious experiences, wellness tourism in rural areas—particularly in Romania—can provide a singular experience. Rural tourism in Romania has been identified as a significant driver for the development of disadvantaged areas, offering a means to capitalize on resources and promote local culture. Since the nation's 1990 shift to a market economy, rural tourism—including agro-tourism, which meets visitors' demands with regionally produced goods—has grown. By focusing on the concept of "rural wellbeing tourism," Romania can tap into its potential to create competitive tourism products, similar to successful models in Nordic countries, Mediterranean countries, United States and Canada. This approach can provide tourists with a holistic experience that encompasses wellness, local culture, and the unspoiled natural beauty of rural Romania.

Cristina Emanuela DASCĂLU, Mariana Gabriela DASCĂLU

EU Policies, Opportunities and Challenges in Tourism and What They Mean for Romania

The European Union (EU) has recognized the significance of tourism in its policies, aiming to reduce regional disparities and enhance territorial cohesion. The EU's focus on sustainable tourism development aligns with its broader goals of economic and social

recovery, especially in the aftermath of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. EU countries have implemented financial policies to support the tourism industry during challenging times, emphasizing support for SMEs, sustainable employment, and liquidity assistance. Additionally, the EU has been increasingly emphasizing social tourism as a means to achieve sustainable development, particularly for vulnerable groups like children, seniors, and low-income families. By integrating tourism into its policies, the EU aims to leverage the sector's potential for economic growth, regional development, and social inclusion. Tourism plays a significant role in the EU and Romania, impacting economic, social, and cultural aspects. In the EU, tourism contributes over 5% of GDP and provides millions of jobs. Romania, aiming for sustainable development, focuses on utilizing its cultural heritage and promoting multilingualism in tourism to enhance economic value. However, challenges persist, such as a large informal economy affecting sectors like tourism, with over 20% of accommodation services in Romania being sold informally. Additionally, the geographical concentration of tourism activities in Romania leads to disparities between regions, highlighting the need for differentiated tourism policies based on the type of territory. To improve quality, Romanian tourism entrepreneurs in regions like Dobrogea should prioritize service enhancement and diversification, aiming to satisfy customers and compete nationally and internationally. Additionally, the mountain area's hotel industry can leverage quality management to enhance tourist satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of socio-cultural progress and nature proximity. By implementing quality strategies, sustainability measures, and aligning with EU policies, Romania can elevate its tourism sector's competitiveness and attractiveness. Overall, tourism in the EU and Romania is a multifaceted sector with both opportunities and challenges that require strategic approaches for sustainable growth and development.

Cristina Emanuela DASCĂLU, Iulian Eugen DANALACHE
Romanian "tochitura" (Aka "Traditional Romanian Pork-based Stew") Case Study, Culinary Trails, Rural Gastronomy and Cultural Cuisine Heritage

Agriculture, food and tourism is combined into offering tourist products in rural areas. The development of local activities combining traditional food and tourism becomes an investment for the future with both the concept of sustainable gastronomy and agriculture sustainability, and helps in the development of local entrepreneurship in rural areas. The European Union has introduced provisions for the protection of traditional and regional food that can be used to create a variety of tourist products. Currently, tourists are looking for unique local products. More and more people travel because of culinary motifs, and local products, dishes and local processors can become an attraction in these places. This paper presents the idea of "The Best 'Tochitura' in Moldova". The rapid development of culinary tourism means that tourists are looking for offers in this area. There are many cooking-related products available in the tourism market, one of which is the culinary trail. Food becomes one of the advantages of places where tourism related to the culture of the region develops. Based on cultural heritage, a variety of tourist products can be created, e.g., culinary trails combining agriculture and food produced in this area with tourism. The culinary trail is just one of the many cooking-related items accessible in the tourism sector. One benefit of locations where tourism centered around the local culture grows is food. Cultural heritage can be used to develop a range of tourism offerings, such as culinary trails that combine local food and agriculture with travel.

Marilena DONCEAN

Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development

Tourism can have both positive and negative effects, both economically and especially socio-culturally. The beneficial effects manifest for both tourists and the local population. It is necessary to identify at what levels of socio-cultural development tourism has positive and negative effects regarding the development of rural areas and the preservation of rural culture. The impact of cultural tourism on local development

must be approached differently, across cultural domains, so that, as a whole, the local community can experience real cultural development and a closer economic level to that of the more advanced regions of the country.

GÜL ERKOL BAYRAM

Exploring Romania: Navigating New Tourism Roads amidst Challenges and Future Prospects

This presentation explores the evolving landscape of tourism in Romania, examining the interplay between challenges and opportunities as the country strives to redefine its position on the global tourism map. Romania boasts a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and untapped potential, yet it grapples with infrastructural deficiencies, environmental concerns, and economic fluctuations. Against this backdrop, stakeholders are forging new paths in tourism, leveraging innovation, sustainability, and strategic planning to overcome obstacles and capitalize on emerging trends. This presentation offers a comprehensive analysis of the current state of Romanian tourism, identifying key challenges and outlining strategies for sustainable growth and development. By envisioning future prospects and navigating uncharted territories, this abstract aims to shed light on Romania's journey towards becoming a premier destination while addressing the complexities and opportunities inherent in its tourism industry.

Ioan GONTARIU

Assessment of Tourism Forms and the Tourist Potential of the Suceava Area

Interest in tourism has expanded in recent years, becoming a phenomenon that attracts millions of tourists who travel to spend their leisure time both domestically and abroad. At the same time, tourism represents a means of exploiting all categories of resources, especially natural ones: the beauty of landscapes, the healing qualities of thermal or mineral waters, and the climate conditions. In the current context, due to the presence of untapped and underutilized tourist resources (with significant consequences on the evolution of the economy and

society, on national and international interpersonal relations), tourism represents a remedy for disadvantaged regions. As a tourist unit, the region of Suceava, also known as South Bucovina, is designed as a dynamic model of development and is part of the process of qualitative renewal by increasingly exploiting its rich resources, aiming to regain the attention of tourists as a purely ecotourism area. The diversity, volume, and value of the tourist potential existing in the county of Suceava favor various ways of spending leisure time, resting, recreating, and practicing specific forms of tourism.

Ioan GONTARIU, Ana-Maria GONTARIU

Considerations regarding the Impact of Globalization, Development and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources on Rural Tourism

Rural tourism encompasses tourism activities organized and managed by local communities, fostering a close relationship with both natural and human environments. Sustainable development aims to establish socio-economic systems that maintain equilibrium between economic growth and preservation of natural capital. It provides a framework for decision-making in scenarios where human-environment interactions occur, addressing environmental, economic, and social dimensions. Globalization poses new challenges by facilitating increased trade, investment, and technological exchange among regions. However, it also risks homogenizing cultural identities and traditions, potentially threatening their uniqueness. Nonetheless, globalization fosters international collaboration, offering opportunities for human civilization's advancement. The Community Strategic Guidelines (LDSC), as outlined in the Gothenburg and Lisbon agreements, prioritize policies that ensure robust economic performance while promoting sustainable natural resource management. Sustainable tourism emphasizes collaboration between policymakers and tourism stakeholders, particularly in protected areas. By aligning with principles of environmental protection, sustainable tourism supports biodiversity conservation.

Doina GURIȚĂ

Price Policy in Tourism Marketing

This paper emphasizes the importance of prices in attracting tourists by tourism companies. Price policy in tourism refers to the strategies and decisions made by companies in the tourism industry regarding pricing for their products and services. These strategies include determining selling prices, offering discounts, promoting tour packages, and adjusting prices according to demand, season, competition, and other relevant factors. The purpose of price policy is to maximize revenue and profitability, attract and retain customers, as well as gain a competitive advantage in the tourism market. Price is one of the four components of the marketing mix, alongside product, distribution, and promotion. In the narrowest sense, price represents the amount of money charged for a product or service. In a broader sense, price is the sum of all values that consumers offer in exchange for the advantage of having or using the product or service. Price, as a variable in the marketing mix, is not the primary factor through which the producer adapts to or imposes on the market, as this role belongs to the product (service), but through price, the producer can adapt to market conditions. Price is the point of intersection between the utility of the product (service) perceived by consumers and the possibilities of fitting into certain production costs incurred by the producer.

Doina GURIȚĂ

The Objectives of Tourism Promotion and Promotion Techniques

In this paper, we analyzed the importance of promotion in tourism, as well as the methods of promotion. The advertising objective, like others, underlies decision-making. It serves for evaluating results. However, it is debatable whether the achievement of objectives should be measured in relation to the sales obtained because in marketing, advertising is just one of the numerous tools that influence sales results. Competition, the state of the distribution network, services, price, and the quality of the tourism product, all these factors decisively affect the level of sales and profit. Advertising is essentially a means of communication with the public. Its direct role is not to sell but to facilitate selling by influencing the attitudes of the public to encourage

positive buying behavior. By its very nature, the objective of advertising is not a commercial one but a communicative one. Advertising is a communication technique that aims to establish contact between the seller and the buyer to encourage the latter to purchase a certain product. In tourism practice, advertising is considered the most important tool for gaining potential clientele. Advertising not only influences tourist behavior but also operates in other phases of the buying decision. Subsequently, the tourist will supplement the impersonal information provided by advertising by turning to an intermediary. Establishing an advertising policy means defining advertising objectives and, based on these, appropriate strategies, so that the advertising policy is a coherent whole. Decisions regarding promotional activities in the tourism industry are of utmost importance considering the investments they require. These investments are necessary due to the large geographical spread of tourist markets, international competition, and the intangible nature of the tourism product.

Alina-Petronela HALLER

Sustainable Tourism in East Europe: An Analysis of Inbound Tourism

A sector that has experienced high growth in recent decades is tourism. Globalization and digitization have facilitated the development of inbound tourism worldwide. Reality has shown that tourism is highly resilient to shocks, able to recover rapidly after crises regardless of their nature (financial, health, or natural). However, tourism is often associated with environmental risks due to its development's potential to damage the environment. In this context, we analyze the impact of inbound tourism on the environment in Eastern Europe, focusing on the countries of Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey for the period 2005-2020. Our results, based on data from the World Bank website analyzed using the OLS method, indicate that tourism receipts significantly influence the environment in all three countries, exerting an unsustainable effect. Inbound expenditures are sustainable in Bulgaria, while total inbound receipts are sustainable in Romania, and receipts for travel items are sustainable in Turkey. However, inbound receipts are unsustainable in Bulgaria, and inbound arrivals have the

same effect in Romania and Turkey. These results are crucial for informing tourism policy in Eastern Europe. We did not identify a consistent inbound tourism pattern, emphasizing the need for tailored measures in tourism development to ensure a sustainable tourism sector in each country.

Alvenso Haykal HARYANTO, Iffat Dhiyaa ULHAQ

Comparison of Quantitative Analysis of Geosite and Geomorphosite for Geotourism Purposes in Baturraden and Guci Hot Springs Tourism Areas, Central Java, Indonesia

Baturraden (Purwokerto) and Guci (Tegal) are renowned tourist destinations situated on the slopes of Gunung Slamet in the Central Java Province. Each site boasts natural hot springs, which hold significant geotourism potential. The research area falls within the Slamet Volcano Lava Rock (Qvls) and Undifferentiated Slamet Volcano Rock (Qvs) regions, comprising Quaternary volcanic formations such as andesitic lava, breccia, tuff, and more. The research was conducted in three stages: literature review, field research, and analysis of geosites and geomorphosites, employing a quantitative assessment method following Kubalikova's approach (2013). Five sites were evaluated: Pancuran-7 and Pancuran-3 in Baturraden, and Pancuran-13, Pancuran-5, and Sigeong hot spring in Guci. The quantitative analysis yielded scores of 82%, 75%, 79%, 79%, and 63% respectively. These results suggest that Pancuran-7, Pancuran-3, Pancuran-13, and Pancuran-5 are highly suitable for geotourism. However, the Sigeong site requires improvement, particularly in infrastructure. Conservation efforts should focus on mitigating existing disaster risks, such as volcanic eruptions and landslides, and potential threats to site sustainability. Additionally, educating residents and visitors about the geological significance of hot spring formation is crucial. This can be achieved through informational signage at the sites and on local websites.

Amila INDIKA

Reasons for Higher Level of Tourists' Satisfaction on Ayurveda Health Resorts in Sri Lanka

Ayurveda health tourism can be considered as one of the key special interest tourism subsets of Sri Lanka, with potential for further development of tourism towards meaningful encounters beyond the dominant mass tourism beach model. The island has considerable number of Ayurveda health resorts and main properties are ranked often, at the levels of "very good" or "excellent" in Trip Advisor indication higher level of tourists' satisfaction. And there are increased level of repeat visitors and expectations to make revisit to the resort is high as well. Reasons for this phenomenon can be observed as a grey area in tourism research of Sri Lanka. This research intends to recognize reasons for higher level of tourists' satisfaction on Ayurveda Health Resorts in Sri Lanka. Qualitative thematic analysis on Trip Advisor reviews of tourists on five selected Ayurveda health resorts were used for data analysis. Sample was 125 reviews representing 25 reviews on each property. A thematic map was developed and seven main themes and eighteen sub-themes were found. High quality staff, perfect service, delicious and healthy food, superb treatments, resort facilities, relaxing atmosphere and great view, and positive yoga experience were identified as reasons for the higher level of tourists' satisfaction.

Ina ISAC

Vărzărești Monastery: The First Monastic Settlement in Bessarabia

Today, the Republic of Moldova is going through a process of restoring its identity and values, and a cornerstone of this identity is the religious settlements. The oldest monastery in this part of Romanian territory is Vărzărești Monastery. The first mention of this holy place was found in a document issued in Suceava by the Lord of Moldavia, Alexandru Voievod (Alexandru cel Bun, 1399-1432), on April 25, 1420. Vărzărești Monastery bears the name of its founder, the boyar Stan Vărzari, a great supporter of the ruler. Vărzari's monastery was designated by the ruler as a landmark, demonstrating that this settlement enjoyed great popularity among the locals and the boyars at that time, indicating that the monastery is older than the document

attests. Initially, the boyar Stan built a modest wooden monastery, which throughout history was devastated by the Tatars many times. In 1770, the monastery was rebuilt by the priest Vasile Măcărescu and his son, Constantin, aided by free peasants (răzeși) and the local peasants. The reconstruction works were completed in 1796. Between 1863-1868, the monastery expanded: a stone church with heating was built, the old church was enlarged, a wooden cell block was constructed, the walls were strengthened, and the monastery was connected to water and electricity. In 1904, a girls' school and a charity hospital were established here. In 1959, the Communist regime destroyed the monastery: the summer church was turned into a warehouse, and the winter church became an entertainment club. In 1990, the parish priest, Vasile Plăcintă, revived the monastery. Thus, the first liturgy after the Communist terror was performed in 1995. The monastery was restored 7 hectares of land, and through the mercy of Christians, a large community was established here. Today, the monastery enjoys peace and the attention of pilgrims.

Deepak JAISWAL

Augmenting Spiritual Tourism and Indigenous Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship: A Study with Special Reference to Buddhist Circuit in India

The spiritual heritage of India is garnering significant attention, particularly in relation to Buddhism, which offers rich opportunities for spiritual and sustainable tourism. Spiritual and ecotourism represent niche segments within the Indian tourism industry. Buddhist tourism is flourishing in Asia, notably in India, Nepal, South Korea, and Thailand, serving as a form of religious tourism that deeply influences the social, political, and cultural landscape of these countries. Within this context, the Buddha Circuit holds immense potential for sustainable tourism development in India. The Buddha Circuit traces the footsteps of the Buddha from Lumbini to Kapilvastu, Sarnath, and Kushinagar, encompassing renowned heritage, spiritual, and religious centers such as Bodhgaya, known for practices like Dhyana and Vipassana. However, destinations like Kapilvastu and Lumbini have not received adequate attention from stakeholders compared to Sarnath

and Bodhgaya, resulting in limited exploration by foreign and domestic tourists in the realm of sustainable tourism. Therefore, there is a pressing need to promote the Buddhist Circuit by enhancing indigenous spiritual tourism management, which can serve as a principal source of local livelihoods and contribute to sustainability through heritage preservation and eco-friendly practices. The primary objective of this proposed project is to bolster the promotion of the Buddhist Circuit while maintaining a balance between spiritual and ecotourism, and fostering indigenous livelihoods for sustainable development in eastern Uttar Pradesh, with a focus on the Siddharth Nagar district. This paper aims to act as a catalyst in promoting sustainable tourism opportunities by empowering local tourism communities, such as the establishment of Small Tourism Help Groups (STHGs), and supporting cognitive and research centers like Dhyana (Vipassana Kendra) across various sites of the Buddha Circuit. Ultimately, this initiative can contribute to the development of indigenous spiritual tourism and the advancement of local livelihoods, entrepreneurship, and aligning with the UNDP's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly through sustainable transportation initiatives.

Sunil KUMAR

Rural Tourism Transformative Journeys into the Heart of the Rural Heritage

This research paper explores the multifaceted impact of rural tourism on preserving and promoting cultural heritage in Pauri Garhwal, an area located in the Himalayan foothills of India. Through a rigorous analysis of data collected from 200 tourists, we utilize various statistical methodologies including chi-square tests, t-tests, and regression analysis to assess the significant effects of rural tourism on both the local community and visiting tourists. Our findings indicate that rural tourism plays a pivotal role in driving economic development and preserving the cultural heritage of Pauri Garhwal. This study also sheds light on how rural tourism facilitates sustainable growth and heritage conservation in rural landscapes like Pauri Garhwal. Additionally, we examine how rural tourism facilitates meaningful interactions between tourists and locals, fostering cross-cultural understanding and

community empowerment. By providing a nuanced examination, this research offers insights into the transformative potential of rural tourism as a catalyst for holistic development and cultural preservation in rural regions.

Corina MATEI GHERMAN

Komodo National Park in the Republic of Indonesia

During the 1963 United Nations Conference on International Tourism and Travel held in Rome, the term of international visitor was understood for the first time as any person who travels to a country other than their country of residence for purposes other than engaging in remunerated professional activities in the visited country. According to the most recent statistical data, international tourism encompasses 30% of tourism services, 30.5% of transportation services, and 5.6% of passenger transportation services. Additionally, international tourism extends to destinations like the Komodo National Park in the Republic of Indonesia, recognized as one of the seven wonders of the world.

Daniela MATEI

Development, Risks, and Vulnerabilities in Local Tourist Resorts in Bukovina

Concerns regarding the research of rural areas in the mountainous region of Suceava County highlight the recognition and consolidation of a preexisting tourist offer, which has reached a critical threshold for transitioning a large number of localities to the status of tourist resorts of local interest. Obtaining this status offers significant development opportunities, but the 21 communes must be regarded as unique functional territorial systems, composed of various socio-economic, cultural, and environmental elements and relationships. The study starts from the premise that once a locality acquires the status of a tourist resort, tourism conditions transform it into a mass phenomenon characterized by complexity, specialization, and fragmentation. This situation favors the growth of rural and cultural tourism, which are among the fastest-growing segments. The process has both positive and negative aspects. Using secondary data, we will detail the positive effects, which include economic growth, the acquisition of special funds

for tourism development, and the strengthening of local identity by raising awareness of local specificity and cultural values. The data also highlight the negative effects, which include conflicts of interest—sometimes difficult to resolve—and the risks of overloading the territorial system, as well as the standardization of cultural elements.

Silvia Alexandra MATINCĂ (PASCU), Daniela RĂDOI

Research on the Role of Accounting Information in Enhancing Performance in the Tourism and Catering Industry

The accounting information must allow means to discern, quantify, classify, and evaluate all actions and activities of an economic entity, both for actual investors and potential ones. Accounting information is undoubtedly one of the most important resources provided by accountants. The article highlights the importance of accounting information in improving the performance of companies in the tourism and hospitality sector, and also outlines the characteristics and preliminary requirements for accounting information to be used effectively. When examining the correlation between accounting information and market value, it becomes evident that the relevance of accounting information for a company is determined by the presence of a significant statistical relationship between the two. If such a relationship is absent, it can be concluded that the accounting information lacks relevance, as it fails to meet one of the fundamental objectives of financial statements. This reasoning leads to an examination of the relevance and reliability of accounting data for companies in the tourism and hospitality industry in Romania, where the capital market is evolving.

Ion MĂRGINEANU

The Rural Tourism of Moldova in the Post-Communist Era

After 1990, rural tourism in the Republic of Moldova has undergone numerous developments. The paper briefly presents a history of the evolution of this phenomenon¹. Moldova offers an authentic and memorable rural tourism experience, allowing travelers to discover the country's culture, traditions, and Moldovan hospitality.

Najat MOUHOU

Global Statistics of Mountain Tourism

Mountain tourism has gradually increased its position among tourists' preferences at international level. The main reason is the strong relationship that man develops with nature and specifically with mountains, making them a destination of great tourist influx. Appropriate use of these tourist flows will lead to the development of sustainable activities that can contribute to improving the economic situation of these regions. This paper aims to identify and to analyze the evolution of the indexed scientific production on "mountain tourism" in the international databases Scopus and Web of Science, to build a deeper understanding of the current situation in this area of study. The paper methodology focuses on a bibliometric analysis of the worldwide research activities associated with mountain tourism, according to country, institution, and subject.

Tribhuvan NATH, Vimal Chandra VERMA

Harvesting Agritourism Opportunities through High-Tech Agriculture and Knowledge Transfer: Evidence from a Case Study in India

Agritourism has emerged as a novel agricultural pursuit for innovative farmers in emerging economies. These progressive farmers are advancing agriculture and farming through innovation and by adopting high-tech farming practices as a promising strategy to increase crop productivity and profitability. The study aims to illustrate entrepreneurial opportunities in agritourism through high-tech agriculture and knowledge transfer to visitors in the Indian context. The case study provides evidence and insights into agritourism opportunities through a high-tech farm led by an agri-tech entrepreneur known as the "magician of agriculture" in the country. This high-tech farm has demonstrated one of the highest levels of crop productivity for many horticultural crops in the country, producing top-quality farm produce that leads to improved market access and profitable returns. Each year, this high-tech farm attracts thousands of farmers and other visitors, including foreigners, seeking to explore and acquire knowledge about advanced agricultural practices, thus creating

opportunities for agritourism. Overall, this case study reveals that agritourism in emerging economies like India provides a win-win situation for both the agri-tech entrepreneur and visiting farmers, as well as other visitors. Agritourism can strengthen the rural economy by providing farmers with additional income and leveraging local resources to their fullest potential. Important facts and strategic insights emerging from the analysis of this case study are discussed along with their policy implications.

Alina Cristina NICULESCU

Rural and Urban Spaces in Romania: Statistical Analysis of Cultural and Artistic Units, Cultural Consumption (During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic) and the Current Degree of Digitization

We live and work in an increasingly technologically connected society, where cultural consumption has changed. Some of the most obvious consequences of this digitization can be seen in terms of new forms of presentation and promotion of cultural heritage. Despite the damage it has caused, the COVID-19 pandemic has also spurred the digitization of the tourism and cultural industry. The pandemic has demonstrated how important digital tools are for tourism and culture, alongside basic digital skills. Therefore, analyzing the digital transformations in cultural tourism by residential environments (urban and rural) is essential given the constant expansion of digital tools. This article investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural and urban areas of Romania from a statistical perspective. In order to identify cultural trends in both rural and urban environments, we will use statistical information at the national level to conduct comparative analyses, which will highlight differences between the two residential environments during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The article will also include an analysis of the current degree of digitization by residential environment to research the digital inequalities between urban and rural environments in Romania.

Neerja NIGAM, Manish NIGAM

A Study on Impact of Pandemic on Indian Tourism and Sustainable Measures for Its Recovery

The recent COVID-19 pandemic affected all businesses and industries. The tourism industry is one of the severely impacted segments. This research paper examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indian tourism. The paper discusses various pandemic factors that have affected the tourism industry, such as travel restrictions, economic changes, and the challenges faced by tourism-dependent communities and markets. Furthermore, the paper explores the steps and measures adopted by the Indian Government and the Indian tourism industry to minimize the crisis and adapt to the new normal environment, including digital transformations, sustainable tourism practices, and improvising health and safety protocols. After analyzing the impact and adaptation, the paper discusses the role of governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders in facilitating the recovery of the tourism industry. By analyzing the impact, adaptation, and recovery processes, this paper provides insights into building a more resilient and sustainable tourism industry in the face of future pandemics and crises.

Valentin NIȚĂ, Gina Ionela BUTNARU

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania: Interpretation, Methods, and Techniques

The concern for environmental protection is not new. People have always been interested in maintaining a sustainable relationship with nature as a provider of resources to meet their needs. In this regard, we conducted a study of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania. The aim of the case study is to evaluate the perspectives of applying different interpretation methods and techniques in this UNESCO site. An important conclusion is that innovative approaches such as the creation of the Living Delta brand, the invention of the "canotca", United Waters, the Rowmania festival, the Caraorman Bird Sanctuary, as well as youth involvement allow for interpretation methods to be applied in a unique and specific manner, at least in the case of the Danube Delta.

Shamiso NYAJEKA MAHOHOMA

Voices of the Community: Online Promotion and Tourism Development Perspectives in Rural Southern Africa

In the face of climate change-induced adversities, rural communities in southern Africa grapple with profound challenges to their traditional livelihoods. Recurring droughts and economic uncertainties exacerbate these difficulties, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable solutions. Amidst these challenges, tourism emerges as a beacon of hope, offering not only economic opportunities but also serving as a pathway to resilience and prosperity. However, realizing tourism's potential as a driver of sustainable development hinges on meaningful community engagement and empowerment. As rural destinations endeavour to brand and promote themselves to attract visitors, it is crucial to ensure that local communities are actively involved and benefit from tourism initiatives. This paper examines the case of Nyanga, a quintessential rural destination in the southern African country of Zimbabwe. It investigates how its rural community participates in promoting the destination and their attitudes towards tourism development. Through in-depth interviews with community members, the study explores their perceptions, aspirations, and challenges regarding tourism engagement. A thematic analysis uncovers nuanced community attitudes towards tourism, shedding light on factors influencing engagement and authenticity perceptions. Furthermore, the study examines the implications of these findings for destination branding strategies and sustainable development initiatives in rural areas. By amplifying the voices and experiences of residents, this research contributes unique insights to the discourse on rural tourism development in southern Africa. The findings offer actionable recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders seeking to foster inclusive, sustainable, and culturally grounded tourism experiences. This study proposes the adoption of an Ubuntu-centered approach to destination development, emphasizing community empowerment, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. By embracing the principles of Ubuntu, rural communities in southern Africa can pave the way for a more resilient, equitable, and prosperous future rooted in shared humanity and collective well-being.

Akmaljon ODILOV

Uzbekistan as a Hub for Tourism and Hospitality in Central Asia

Uzbekistan has emerged as a significant hub for tourism and hospitality within Central Asia, leveraging its rich cultural heritage, strategic location, and proactive government initiatives. The paper explores Uzbekistan's transformation into a premier destination for travelers seeking authentic experiences in the heart of the Silk Road. The historical cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva serve as focal points, showcasing exquisite examples of Islamic architecture and providing insights into the region's ancient trade routes. Uzbekistan's commitment to preserving its architectural treasures, coupled with investments in infrastructure and transportation, has facilitated accessibility to these cultural gems. Moreover, the Uzbek government's efforts to streamline visa procedures and promote tourism have attracted a growing number of international visitors. Initiatives aimed at enhancing hospitality services and expanding accommodation options cater to diverse traveler preferences, from luxury seekers to backpackers. Beyond its architectural splendors, Uzbekistan's cultural vibrancy, traditional cuisine, and warm hospitality captivate visitors, offering immersive experiences that transcend mere sightseeing. As a result, Uzbekistan is increasingly recognized as a hub for travelers seeking authentic encounters and meaningful exploration in the heart of Central Asia. The paper underscores Uzbekistan's evolving role as a tourism and hospitality hub, highlighting the country's immense potential to further elevate its profile and contribute to the region's socio-economic development through sustainable tourism practices.

Isabelle Margareta OPREA, Liviu Gelu DRĂGHICI, Emanuela Adina NICULA, Alexandru Sabin NICULA

Enhancing Rural Economies through Digital Banking: Strategies for Financial Inclusion and Education

This paper investigates the transformative role of digital banking in enhancing rural economies by promoting financial inclusion and education. It posits that the penetration of digital banking services into rural areas represents a critical strategy for economic empowerment, addressing the dual challenges of access to financial services and

financial literacy. The research systematically reviews the landscape of digital banking, identifying innovative tools and services tailored to the needs of rural populations. It highlights the importance of digital financial literacy as a catalyst for effective engagement with digital banking platforms, which can lead to improved financial behaviors and outcomes. By analyzing data from diverse geographical regions, the paper illustrates the positive impacts of digital banking on rural economies, including increased savings, access to credit, and the facilitation of remittances and payments. Furthermore, it discusses the challenges faced in implementing digital banking strategies in rural areas, such as infrastructure deficits, digital literacy gaps, and resistance to change. The paper proposes a multi-stakeholder approach that includes governments, financial institutions, and community organizations to develop and implement educational programs alongside digital banking solutions. The conclusion underscores the potential of digital banking to serve as a cornerstone for financial inclusion and education in rural areas, driving economic growth and development. The study calls for concerted efforts to overcome existing barriers and harness the power of digitalization for the socioeconomic upliftment of rural communities.

Luminița PANAIT

Strong Correlation between Rural Tourism and Other Key Sectors of the Tourism Industry

Rural tourism encompasses all tourist activities carried out in rural areas, including a wide range of accommodation options, activities, events, festivals, sports, and recreational activities. The importance of rural tourism globally is demonstrated by the decision of the World Tourism Organization to designate the theme of "Tourism and Rural Development" for World Tourism Day in 2020. Without adequate regional development, sustainable rural tourism cannot be practiced, as evidenced by the signing of the Green Charter for Regional Development by European countries in 1992. For Romania, the scale of rural tourism development is a significant concern at both governmental and local levels. As proof of the importance that regional and international organizations accord to rural tourism as a significant segment of the tourism industry, it is also included on the agenda of

meetings concerning the dynamics of rural tourism development. Additionally, its close correlation with cultural tourism, ecotourism, religious tourism, spa tourism, and cross-border cooperation is crucial. It is necessary for the authorities in Romania responsible for the economic development of the country's regions to intensify their efforts to maintain and protect Romanian villages, preserving and conserving rural traditions and customs. Romanian Village Day, celebrated every year on the last Sunday of September (according to Law 44/2020), is a true national celebration of Romania's enduring values, featuring exhibitions, themed fairs, conferences, and seminars on the conservation, promotion, and development of rural settlements. This day could be successfully included in the agenda of events organized by those responsible for rural tourism development. The World Code of Ethics in Tourism, a roadmap for the development of responsible and sustainable tourism, was ratified by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization in 2001. Its 10 principles, addressing the economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of tourism, could beneficially contribute to maximizing the benefits of the tourism sector while minimizing the potential negative impact of globalization and digitalization.

Pratibha PANDEY, Vimal Chandra VERMA

A Qualitative Analysis of Elderly Consumers' Perception towards Health Tourism in India

This qualitative research paper investigates the perceptions of elderly consumers regarding health tourism in India. Health tourism, a very rapidly growing industry globally, has achieved significant position in India due to advanced medical facilities, cost-effectiveness, and diverse cultural experiences. However, while existing literature has explored various aspects of health tourism, there remains a vast gap in understanding how elderly consumers perceive and engage with phenomenon of health tourism. In this research semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis were used. This study aims to uncover the perspectives of elderly individuals towards health tourism in India. The research explores factors influencing their decision-making process, such as perceived quality of medical services, trust in healthcare professionals, affordability, accessibility, cultural considerations, and

emotional well-being. Furthermore, the study investigates the role of information sources, including word-of-mouth, online platforms, and healthcare intermediaries, in shaping elderly consumers' perceptions and decision-making regarding health tourism. By understanding the unique needs, concerns, and motivations of elderly consumers, this research contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of health tourism strategies tailored towards this demographic segment. Findings from this study have implications for healthcare providers, policymakers, and tourism stakeholders, facilitating the development of targeted marketing strategies, improved service offerings, and policy interventions aimed at enhancing the overall health tourism experience for elderly consumers. This research aims to provide valuable insights into how health tourism can better cater to the needs of elderly individuals, contributing to the sustainable growth of this industry in India.

Lindsey Elizabeth PASHOW, Victoria GIARRATANO

Developing Agritourism Economic Sustainability through New York's Taste New York Program

Economic sustainability is important for the survival of farms, especially with the diversification of farms into agritourism. However, just having an agritourism operation provides a unique educational opportunity, and value-added products does not guarantee survival for a farm. It is important to look at the unique advertising and marketing opportunities that can be developed to highlight an agritourism operation but also the agritourism industry. New York has developed a unique advertising and marketing program called Taste New York, that specifically focuses on helping farmers develop economic sustainability. This program was created over 10 years, with collaborations between Cornell University Cooperative Extension program, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and Empires State Development/I Love NY. The Taste New York program showcases farms, agritourism operations and their value-added products at a variety of outlets across the state through stores, welcome centers, events, and trails. Since its launch in 2013, the Taste New York program has grown significantly, bringing over \$100 million in economic impact to New York State agricultural producers. During the

session, we will highlight how the program was developed, collaboration through a variety of agritourism stakeholders, marketing technics, and a variety of events that has led to economic sustainability for agritourism operations in New York. We will highlight some of the different farms that have increased revenue through the Taste New York programming, including Jadda Hill Farm which has seen a 3000% increase in sales by participating in the program. Taste New York program has created economic sustainability for many farms and agritourism operations throughout the state.

Olga POALELUNGI

Cultural and Religious Tourism in the Republic of Moldova: Conditions and Needs for Attracting Foreigners

We analyze the conditions for the entry and, depending on the case, the temporary stay of foreigners in the Republic of Moldova for cultural and religious purposes. Rural tourism offers foreigners the opportunity to get acquainted with the country's cultural and religious heritage. In most cases, tourist attractions are located in rural areas, thus offering authorities the opportunity to attract additional sources for the economic and cultural development of the localities. In the Republic of Moldova, there are about 50 monasteries, including rock monasteries, which have an indisputable cultural-religious value but are insufficiently explored. Conclusions based on the analysis of the regulatory framework referring to statistical data on the number and profile of foreigners visiting the country highlight the need to intensify activities to promote rural tourist attractions and create conditions to attract visitors from abroad.

Oscar RODRIGUEZ

Implications of Smart Tourism in Planning and Developing Protected Areas

Determining the implications of smart tourism on protected areas is crucial for the future of sustainable tourism. Smart tourism is now well established from a variety of scholarly studies devoted to smart tourism cities. However, the contribution of smart tourism has received little attention within protected areas. This highlights the need for a

conceptual perspective to explore how smart tourism technology enhances visitor experiences, facilitates sustainable tourism development, and addresses challenges unique to protected areas. Taking a conceptual perspective, this study investigates both the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing smart tourism technology in protected areas. Drawing on the critical discourse theory of smart tourism ecosystems, this study set out to investigate the usefulness of smart tourism planning and development strategies, particularly in protected areas where preserving cultural and natural heritage is paramount. Traditional tourism development has had a negative impact on the biodiversity of protected areas. It involves the construction of infrastructure disrupting wildlife and their habitats. Consequently, a major problem with traditional tourism development is the loss of natural ecosystem integrity and the fragmentation of wildlife habitats. The research methodology employed in this study is an integrative literature review approach. By critically assessing and synthesising existing literature, this method aims to advance knowledge in theoretical frameworks and perspectives related to ecosystems in protected areas. In the context of natural and cultural heritage, this study contributes to the current discussion on smart tourism planning development in protected areas.

Nicoleta ȘEICARU BUCATĂ

Touristic Development of Comana Commune in Giurgiu County

Comana is a commune located in the eastern part of Giurgiu County, near the border with Ilfov County, on the right bank of the Argeș River, where it receives the waters of the Neajlov River, which in turn receives the waters of the Gurbanu tributary. The area is characterized by silvo-steppe vegetation and brownish-red forest soil. The region also features the Comana Natural Park, covering approximately 500 hectares and dominated by lime trees, along with maple, hornbeam, oak, and ash. The protected species within the park include lily of the valley, hawthorn, and forest peony. The commune's activities include agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and tourism. Additionally, there is an ongoing project for the restoration and sustainable tourism development of the historical monument in Comana, which aims to improve the socio-economic climate and enhance the quality of life for

the local population. The commune of Comana has developed significantly over the past two decades, attracting hundreds of tourists annually, especially from Bucharest, which is located 40 km away. Comana Natural Park was established by Government Decision no. 2151 in December 2004. Tourism has grown considerably, particularly in recent years, and the main attractions of the commune are: Comana Adventure Park, the Neajlov Delta, Comana Monastery, and Comana House. The Neajlov Delta is part of Comana Natural Park and ranks second in the country in terms of biodiversity, after the Danube Delta. It is fed by the Neajlov River and is considered the largest wetland area in southern Romania. Annually, thousands of tourists come to visit this small commune, located in the southern part of the country, close to the capital, surrounded by forest. The main attraction for children is the Adventure Park, but also the Neajlov Delta, where tourists can relax and enjoy nature.

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVȘCHI, Ciprian Ionel ALECU

What Can Be Done to Transform Romanian Rural Communities into Smart Villages?

The paper focuses on identifying and evaluating a set of viable solutions tailored to the specificities of Romanian rural communities, with the ultimate aim of delineating a conceptual framework for their transformation into smart villages. Through an analytical and comparative approach to the results obtained in pilot projects across Europe, the study underscores the importance of adaptability and flexibility in implementing technological and infrastructural solutions tailored to the unique characteristics of each community. The central aspect of this research lies in identifying the priority needs of rural communities, as well as the available resources, including existing infrastructure, human capital, and funding at both local and national levels. Based on the analysis and synthesis of this information, the paper proposes a series of recommendations and practical strategies for implementing transformation projects into smart villages within the specific context of Romania. These recommendations span various domains, such as digital connectivity, natural resource management, intelligent public services, and community engagement. Moreover, the study emphasizes the significance of collaboration among diverse

stakeholders, including local authorities, the private sector, NGOs, and the local community, to ensure efficient and sustainable implementation of rural development initiatives. By adopting a pragmatic and solution-oriented approach, this paper not only provides an analysis of the challenges and opportunities encountered in transforming Romanian rural communities into smart villages but also serves as a valuable guide for policymakers, practitioners in rural development, and other stakeholders involved in this process.

Dan Constantin ȘUMOVSCI, Bogdan Mihai NEGREA
What is the Link Between Academic Aspirations and the Costs of Pursuing Prestige in Research?

In the endeavor to establish a correlation between academic aspirations and associated costs, it is evident that success is not always directly proportional to the desire to achieve it. Often, those who seek success at any cost fail to attain it, as their aspirations may be overshadowed by conflicting motivations or neglect of essential academic processes. Researchers pursuing career prestige must recognize that it cannot be achieved through excessive costs or unethical means. Additionally, those aspiring to prestige should be cautious about seeking leadership positions, as these roles demand profound commitment and personal sacrifices, including renunciation, listening, and humility, to lead the entire team to success. A significant issue in this context is the increasing hypocrisy in the academic environment, particularly the tendency to measure researchers' performance solely based on quantitative metrics, such as the number of citations across databases like Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, without considering other criteria for evaluating the quality of their work. Moreover, the emergence of citation rings designed solely to artificially inflate citation counts undermines the integrity and relevance of these metrics in authentically evaluating research impact. This system may favor the massive production of works without real value or overlook the significant contributions of researchers with less popular or less cited approaches. Therefore, it is imperative for researchers to reassess their priorities and uphold their academic integrity in the face of financial or social pressures. A more balanced and ethical approach to pursuing

prestige in the academic world is necessary to promote quality research and authentic contributions to the progress of human knowledge.

Georgia TACU

The Impact of Cultural Tourism: Evidence from Romania

Cultural tourism can have a positive or negative impact on the destination/community, and the involvement of local actors in preserving their own heritage is a defining factor. In specialized literature, a model for evaluating this reality was conceived. Additionally, it was noted that visitor involvement beneficially influences cultural contact, which subsequently positively impacts the memorable tourist experience. Cultural tourists will have memorable experiences only if the way they are engaged meets their need for deeper cultural experiences. A profile of the cultural tourist was created, a framework for evaluating cultural sustainability was devised, and the relationship between perceived cultural distance, tourist–host social contact, and travel attitude was analyzed. This paper attempts to discern which of these aspects are relevant in relation to the cultural tourist in Romania.

Ion TALABĂ

Recent Negative Legislative Effects in Tourism

The paper discusses the negative effects on the theory and practice of tourism caused by Romanian Government Ordinance 2/2018 regarding travel service packages and associated travel services, as well as Directive (EU) 2015/2302 of the European Parliament and of the Council on package travel and linked travel arrangements.

Vasile TODINĂ, Maria Flavia POP

The Tourist Potential of the Valley of Hell, Bihor County, Romania

Our paper focuses on an area located at the eastern limit of Bihor County, known as Valea Iadului (the Valley of Hell). The researched area is a mountainous zone with scattered villages, crisscrossed by valleys and surrounded by hills and mountains such as the Plopiș Mountains (or Șes Mountains), the last ramifications of the Vlădeasa Massif, and the Pădurea Craiului Massif. The scattered villages consist

of hamlets, each comprising seven to ten farms. The karstic relief is well represented with dolines, avens, slopes, and over 200 explored caves. Here, the endemic plant *Syringa Josikaea* grows spontaneously at the edge of the woods in the psalterium zone (400-600 meters altitude). It is an extremely rare plant in the Romanian flora and considered a tertiary relict, distinctly different from *Syringa emodi* from the Himalayas. In this valley, there are both natural and ethnographic landmarks, manifested in traditional farms and technical plumbing powered by water, such as the boarded water mill, sawmills for log processing, equipment for wood finishing, forges, and cereal mills. These forms of manifestation, along with the local culture, have sparked interest in rural tourism in Valea Iadului. While the inhabitants of these villages were initially unaccustomed to it, they quickly realized its benefits and adopted it. However, this kind of development could have two aspects: it may bring additional revenue to the rural economy, which is currently unstructured, but it could also contribute to the depopulation of the village.

**Samuel Uwem UMOH, Sarah Mohlago RAMAHLO,
Elizabeth Adetola UMOH**

*Sustainable Tourism Development and Governance: From the Lens
of Africa's Travel Indaba in South Africa*

Tourism governance plays an essential role as the rules and mechanisms for developing policies and business strategies that incorporate key organizations and individuals" in tourist destinations such as South Africa. The importance of tourism in South Africa is echoed in the 2030 National Development Plan (NDP) as one of the key drivers of employment, economic growth, and one of the six core pillars of growth in the country's New Growth Path (NGP) framework. Drawing from Travel Indaba (an annual 3-day tourism event that showcases South Africa's tourism products/services), the paper presents the case study of South Africa, analyses South Africa's tourism policy and strategy with particular attention to tourism development, tourism Sector Recovery plan and tourism governance strategies. It discusses how more collaborative engagement, responsiveness, representation, and inclusion for sustainable tourism may be achieved through tourism

governance. Data was generated from South Africa's tourism policy analysis, the Portfolio Committee on Tourism in the National Assembly of South Africa, site visits to Travel Indaba, and interviews with diverse stakeholders (officials of the South Africa Tourism Promotion Agency, exhibitors, tourism business owners/managers). The paper found that locals and communities were involved in South Africa's local tourism governance and development through Africa's Travel Indaba, which showcases the variety of South Africa's tourism products and attracts international buyers-sellers and media worldwide. The event gives tourism exhibitors the best stage to present their products. Tourism Indaba is one of the attractions of the international tourism calendar in South Africa from local and foreign guests from outside South Africa as one of the largest and most pertinent tourism trade exhibitions on the African continent. The terms "Africa's" and "Travel" were appended to the name "Indaba" in order to establish its identity as a pan-African tourist event and reputable standing in the international tourism sector, South African tourism is broad and encompasses a variety of industries with facilitators and regulators of tourism destination competitiveness that collaborate with several government agencies to expand and revamp the industry and economy and bilateral to strengthen regional cooperation. Most stakeholders were satisfied with the governing agencies' responses, indicating a collaborative decision-making process with ample opportunity for listening to them. However, some addressed worries about poor employment representation, their opinions needing to be heard, and involvement in decision-making processes. These point to the necessity of improving decision-making, representation, and collaborative engagement.

Dana Alina UNGUREANU

The Importance of Creative and Recreational Activities in the Mountain Tourist Experience

In a world where the most admired individuals are constantly busy, leisure time, relaxation, playful and creative activities lose their value. The irrelevance with which they are viewed originates from the way we have been educated to live, valuing predominantly the fact of being useful, hardworking, tired. This aspect often reflects also on how people

relate to vacations, to the leisure time they choose to enjoy outside the environment they live in. There is a constant need to disconnect from the busy and responsibility-filled life we mostly live, a need that, when satisfied, arouses mixed feelings, leading to the paradox that we find it difficult to enjoy the chosen rest nonetheless. More and more tourists choose rural mountain areas for introspection and creative activities, but often find themselves unable to actively participate in rural activities, to disconnect from day-to-day tasks, or to enjoy complete relaxation, which often involves a playful spirit. Furthermore, there is a growing need for connection with family/friends in recent years, a need that vacations promise, but not always fulfill. This paper presents activities that can help tourists visiting the mountain area to get more out of the relaxation and connection they desire, from a therapeutic perspective. We aimed to highlight the benefits of these types of activities for the mental health of tourists and for the good development of rural tourism.

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Japanese Experience: Model for Organizing a Tourist Program in the Land of the Rising Sun

Japan, situated in East Asia, is an island nation spanning a chain of islands between the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, to the east of the Korean Peninsula. It is famously referred to as "the land of the rising sun". The country encompasses a land area of approximately 380,000 square kilometers, comprising around 3,000 islands. Among these, four main islands: Honshu (227,414 km²), Hokkaido (78,411 km²), Kyushu (42,600 km²), and Shikoku (17,800 km²) constitute roughly 95% of Japan's territory, with the remainder consisting of smaller islands. Over 80% of Japan's landscape is mountainous or hilly terrain, boasting more than 25 peaks exceeding 3000 meters in height. Mount Fuji, the highest among them, stands at 3,776 meters. Tourism plays a vital role in Japan's modern economy and society, although it's worth noting that much of the tourism infrastructure caters primarily to domestic travelers. Exceptions to this trend are evident in cities like Kyoto and Tokyo. Japanese workers typically enjoy relatively brief vacations, often synchronizing their time off with colleagues from their workplaces. The main periods for travel are during the Golden Week in

late April to early May, the O-Bon week in mid-July or August, and the year-end/New Year holidays. Extended trips exceeding a week are uncommon for those engaged in full-time employment but are more feasible for students, retirees, and homemakers. Annually, Japan attracts over 13.4 million tourists, with a significant portion originating from Taiwan, South Korea, and China. The majority of visitors flock to the urban hubs of Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, drawn to a diverse array of attractions including castles, temples, UNESCO World Heritage sites, and modern landmarks. One highlight for tourists is traveling on the high-speed Shinkansen trains, capable of speeds up to 280 km/h. Accommodation options range from contemporary hotels to traditional Japanese inns, offering guests a glimpse into the country's rich cultural heritage. Japanese cuisine, recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013, is renowned for its nutritional balance and exquisite flavors, adding another dimension to the country's allure for visitors.

Dănuț UNGUREANU

Development Opportunities for Poiana Stampei Commune, Suceava County: Gateway to Bucovina

Located in an area steeped in history and legend, at the pass between Transylvania and Bucovina, Poiana Stampei commune encompasses one of the most picturesque localities in the country. Its composition includes the villages of Poiana Stampei, Căsoi, Dornișoara, Pilugani, Prăleni, Tătaru, and Teșna. In Poiana Stampei, some of the most beautiful folk costumes from Bucovina have been worn and are still preserved; the traditions and customs of winter, Easter, or other holidays, as well as those accompanying significant life events such as birth, weddings, and funerals, are cherished. Forgetting them would be akin to losing a treasure. Poiana Stampei is renowned for its skilled craftsmanship, particularly in the art of inking and the creation of colorful buns. The commune is situated in the southwestern part of Suceava county, within the Dornelor Basin, along National Road 17, Vatra-Dornei – Bistrița, a major national and European thoroughfare. The villages of the commune are clustered along the Dorna River, which collects all the waters flowing in this area. To the west, the commune is sheltered by the Bârgău Mountains, while to the south, it

is bordered by the imposing wall of the Călimani Mountains. It is flanked to the north by Dorna Candreni commune and to the east by Dorna Candreni and Șaru Dornei. To the south, it shares borders with Harghita and Mureș counties, and to the west with Bistrița Năsăud county. The commune's location, surrounded by the Bârgău Mountains to the west, the Dornelor Depression to the north, and the Bistrița Mountains to the east, gives rise to undulating relief, with ridges in the downstream part and prominences and narrow valleys in the upper reaches. The average altitude of the area is 800 meters, with Pietrosu peak rising over 2000 meters and Tămău reaching 1800 meters. Significant massifs include the Bistrița Mountains to the east and the Călimani Mountains to the south. The presence of the Via Transilvanica tourist route passing through the locality creates new opportunities for the locals to capitalize on the area's tourist potential. Additionally, optimal conditions exist for the establishment of Local Gastronomic Points to showcase the region's specific cuisine. Registering local products and agri-food with the quality designation Mountain Product, as well as developing tourism accommodations within households offering rooms for rent for tourist purposes, are just a few of the possibilities for tourism development in the commune.

Marco VALERI

Digital Transformation and Sustainable Oriented Innovation

The presentation focuses on a bibliometric study that provides an overview of research related to digital transformation (DT) in the tourism industry from 2013 to 2023. The research goals are as follows: (1) to identify the development of academic papers related to DT in the tourism industry, (2) to analyze dominant research topics and the evolution of research interest and impact over time, and (3) to examine the change in research topics during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Daniela VĂRVĂRUC

Human Resources in the Hospitality Industry: An Essential Component for Satisfying Customers at the Sinaia Resort

The objective of this article is to emphasize the significance of organizing and coordinating human resources within tourism

organizations to enhance performance and deliver quality services. Through the analysis of tourist traffic indicators and technical-material resources, the applied model facilitates the identification of control factors that influence the creative capacity of personnel engaged in tourism activities, thereby aiding in attracting tourists to accommodation facilities. The methodology employed entails an evaluation conducted via a comprehensive questionnaire distributed to tourists residing in accommodation units within the Sinaia resort. The findings highlight how the quality of tourist services emerges as a pivotal factor in selecting Sinaia as a tourist destination, underscoring the importance of the services offered.

**Liliana VELEA, Roxana BOJARIU, Zenaida CHIȚU,
Anișoara IRIMESCU**

Climate Information for Climate Action in Romanian Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is gaining an increasing interest from both tourists and investors, being one of the fastest growing type of tourism in Romania. A large range of motivations are at the basis of tourists' choice for rural destinations and among them nature, landscape, and outdoor activities held a large weight. This makes tourism vulnerable to climate changes through the direct effect of changes in the attractiveness of climate conditions, in addition to the indirect effects due to the expected impacts on other associated socio-economic sectors. In this context, increasing rural tourism resilience to climate changes is a complex issue which needs to takes into account adaptation measures focusing on tourism specifics in synergy with adaptation measures in related sectors (e.g., energy, land and water management, urbanization aspects). Expected impacts, vulnerability and resilience of tourism to climate changes are research issues more and more addressed in the recent years and their assessment at national or even local scales becomes increasingly important for designing effective adaptation measures. The proposed study aims to present a summary of current knowledge related to the impact of climate changes on tourism and in particular on rural tourism in Romania. Also, a synthesis of the available climate information tailored for tourism sector in Romania is presented,

focusing on actionable information that may be employed to reduce the negative effects of climate changes on Romanian rural tourism.

Vimal Chandra VERMA

Exploring the Flavors of India: A Review of Gastronomic Tourism

Travelers are increasingly looking for genuine culinary experiences while on their travels, which has led to the emergence of a significant trend in the travel industry worldwide: gastronomic tourism, also known as culinary tourism or food tourism. India, a country well-known for its wide range of culinary traditions and cuisine, is now a major force in the gastronomic tourism market. This study attempts to investigate the tastes of India by reviewing gastronomic tourism in its entirety and concentrating on its development, main forces, effects, difficulties, and prospects in the Indian context. The diverse range of flavors, spices, and cooking methods found in India's cuisine are woven together to create a tapestry that reflects the nation's cultural heritage. Global foodies are drawn to each region's unique culinary identity, which ranges from the spicy curries of Kerala to the fragrant biryanis of Hyderabad. For those who enjoy a wide variety of culinary experiences, this diversity encompasses street food treats, classic home-cooked meals, and haute cuisine establishments. The hospitality sector, governmental organizations, food entrepreneurs, and local communities all have a significant influence on how gastronomic tourism develops in India as the country maintains its status as a top culinary destination. With an emphasis on strategies for sustainable growth and development in this dynamic sector, this review seeks to critically examine these aspects and provide insights into the opportunities and challenges related to gastronomic tourism in India.

Walter WYMER

Strategic Brand Management Planning for Location Tourism

The goal of brand management is to make the brand stronger. The same holds true for managing a location as a brand to attract and retain tourism. This conceptual paper will discuss attracting and retaining tourism from a strategic brand management perspective. The desired outcomes are to attract priority tourists and to deepen their

commitment to the brand as a tourist destination. Deepening tourists' commitment to the location brand includes: (1) increasing length of stays, return visits, and amount spent during visits; and (2) providing favorable word-of-mouth referrals within social networks and on social media.

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