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# Management model of ecotourism services quality analyze

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## ABSTRACT

*Quality is a concept of maximum generalization that covers the set of features of a product or service appreciated by customer expectations. Service's quality is a phrase that distinguishes customer satisfaction from the perception of the characteristics of the service purchased. Generally speaking, according to the dictionary "Services include everything the manufacturer offers to the consumer to make the use of goods as comfortable or as enjoyable". Regarding ecotourism services, the customer becomes satisfied with the service when purchases only if the degree of satisfaction leads to repeat the request and to convince the friends to accompany him / her. Ecotourism service providers differentiate each other to the extent that they raise the quality of standards to meet the growing needs of customers. It is precisely for these reasons that we agree with those who claim that the quality of service management, the more obvious the management of the quality of ecological services, becomes dependent on the extent to which the quality of standards is followed with accountability and respect for the client.*

**Key words:** green tourism services, quality, management, marketing, accommodation capacity, tourism traffic density, occupancy rates.

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** M21, Q5, Z3

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## INTRODUCTION

Following the evolution of man in his relationship with nature, economists divided the economy into three main components: the primary sector comprising agriculture, hunting, fishing and extractive industries; the secondary sector - made up of what is specific to the manufacturing industry and the tertiary sector - with reference to the service sphere. The analysis of the contributions of the three sectors to the quality of life leads to the idea that

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services have an increasing role in assessing economic development, and their diversification in relation to material products, but also as stand-alone market activities, supports the idea according to „There are no service activities, but only activities whose service’s components have a greater or lesser weight in others (Kotler, 1997).

This paper aims to highlight the importance of niche tourism services in the national economy, contributing to sustainable development as well as to the welfare of local communities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Services, as well as material goods, at the economic level are produced by those who want to meet the needs of market demand in competitive conditions. But unlike material goods, palpable through sensory organs and complicated rational and affective processes, services offered to the market are characterized by intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and variety (Kotler, 1997).

Firstly, services can not be perceived by the sense organs, ie they can not be counted, can not be measured, can not be inventoried, can not be tested and checked before being sold, ie they are intangible (Kotler, 1997 , Batteson, 1977; Bery, 1980; Lovelock, 1981). The intangibility makes the producer company unable to be sure of the buyers’ perception of service consumption, and their own service quality assessment is made with a certain high risk because they can only predominantly rely on the volume of time collections (Zeitham, 1981).

Secondly, the services are heterogeneous, their perceived quality being closely related to the professionalism of the service provider, thus varying from manufacturer to manufacturer, from time to time, but also in relation to the particularities of a buyer’s or another’s own appreciation. For these reasons, it is almost impossible to achieve a certain consistency of appreciation of the service staff (Bons and Bitner, 1981), because the image of the service offered by the producing company may differ greatly from that of the current and potential consumer.

Third, the production and consumption of services are inseparable commercial actions (Kotler, 1997, Carmen and Langeard, 1980, Upah, 1980). For the manufacturer, the quality of the service is consumed immediately but expects reputation to be appreciated within a time span from the moment the service is sold, and for the consumer, the initiation of the claim process is based predominantly on the reputation perceived by the service bidder may diminish or strengthen the function of the satisfaction of the buyer after the purchase act has been consumed. These considerations make us believe that the company’s management manages the quality standards with a lot of weight because they depend both on the service

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provider, which is usually engaged, but also on the consumer involved in the act of consumption, which is heterogeneous and unpredictable.

In the fourth place, the fact that production and consumption are inseparable, this phenomenon generates the appreciation of the variability of services given by the conditions of place, time and person providing the required service. As a result, companies that are committed to increasing the quality of service provision aim at selecting specialized personnel, normative standardization of the serving process, as well as the permanent quantification of the satisfaction rate perceived by the consumers of services offered (Udrescu M., Coderie C., 2009).

Services generally define “sales activity that produces advantages and rewards without conducting a physical exchange in the form of a good”, but economic practice works both with independent material goods services as well as with services that accompany or condition the purchase and of the material goods, the services becoming an important support for the substantiation of the purchase decision. As such, most economists consider services as a system of utilities, appreciated by buyers, which do not materialize in a material, but that give it special rewards.

To quantify the quality of ecotourism services in the studied development region, we proceeded to extrapolate the data series used in the analysis to be presented below. According to the literature, “extrapolating with the average (absolute) increment per annum involves first determining the chain-based increases (for phenomena that tend to evolve in the form of an arithmetic progression) and then establishing the average growth” (Anghelache C. et al, 2017, p. 21).

Every business must be supported by a consumer-oriented policy to meet and anticipate their needs. Studying consumer needs is a prerequisite for delivering quality services to achieve the company’s competitiveness through a quality-focused strategy. For these reasons, especially for the sphere of ecological services, “Quality is ballet, not hokey” (Crosby, 1979) or “Quality is the best policy to ensure customer loyalty and win new ones, the most effective defense against competition and the only way to grow and permanently earn.” (Kotler, 1997).

## **METHODOLOGY , DATA, RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The quality of the Romanian green tourism services in the fourth macro-region was assessed using direct and indirect quantifying procedures. The research consisted in analyzing the main indicators of the tourism traffic registered in the studied macro-region, using statistical methods of extrapolation, in order to obtain a more concrete view on their evolution. It

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was also analyzed, both the national specialized literature and the international one in the tourism field.

- **Tourism services**

Broadly speaking, tourism services cover all service activities that serve and satisfy the needs of consumers and tourists' services, whether they travel through service providers or on their own. In the literature, tourism services fall into the tertiary sector and are considered to have become a real industry for the economic development of a country.

In accordance with international conventions, any person visiting a place other than that in which he has his habitual residence within the country or residence for any reason other than to engage in paid employment and thereby a stay of at least night may be considered a national tourist and any person who moves to a country other than that in which he has his habitual residence for any purpose other than to exercise a paid profession in the country of residence is an international tourist. The services that both national and international tourists need are called generic tourist services. Under the conditions of the contemporary world, tourism services have become a mass requirement, and the way a solution is found reflects the quality of national management in relation to an important sector of the national economy. In order to meet the needs of people on a journey, the tourist services cover specific transport, accommodation, counseling, etc., as well as regular services for feeding, rest, agreement, culture, health, etc. By their commercial nature, tourist services have to provide feelings of added value perceived by their consumer with ever-surprisingly good cumulative satisfactions. Taking into account the wider range of needs perceived by any tourist, the tourist services have a complex composition, expressing themselves as an integrated system of tangible elements, complemented by other intangible elements. On the whole, tourism services are the dynamic component of the tourist offer, which makes the organizations providing tourist services to be personalized by proposed and recognized quality standards. Thus, tourism services themselves are a source of added value to national wealth, which supports statements such as: "economic growth consists not in increasing the production of things but in the production of wealth and wealth is what people value as value. Obviously, material things can contribute to wealth and are somehow essential in producing wealth. But there is no binding link between wealth growth and an increase in volume, weight or quantity of material objects „ (Hayne, P., 1991)

- **Green tourism (Ecotourism and its services)**

Many people on the planet and more and more organizations, including countries, become part of the responsibilities for the clean future of

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the planet as the right of future generations. In the last time, tourism has truly become a basic messenger of the new consciousness. As a conscious balance of increasing interest in knowing the most sensitive areas of nature and culture, as well as protecting them, tourism is increasingly developing ecotourism together with its specific services. Ecotourism combines knowledge with protection, combines profit-making with environmental development, suggests a harmonious blending of raising the overall level of education with increasing enthusiasm for preserving the environment of every kind. Traditional tourism gradually turns into ecotourism as the following types of activities evolve: thus, the motivation of the traveling - the bidder and the beneficiary of tourist services become aware and act in the sense that the natural and cultural heritage exists both to be admired and to to be known, aiming at enhancing the passage of man through such general patrimony environments; ways of transport, accommodation and feeding - the bidder and the recipient of tourism services as important partners of the commercial binom are also part of the interest in facilitating twinning with nature, combining harmoniously the interests of efficiency and personal efficiency with the major interests of the natural heritage cultural, which makes the service provider and the tourist services consumer turn into agents of ecosystems; environmental impact management - by offering and purchasing tourist services that catalyze all the behavior that leads to the reduction of all forms of waste, all forms of pollution, but also to the awareness of the impact of own actions, whether supplying or consuming, on natural and cultural environment.

A moment of global importance for ecotourism was the declaration of the United Nations of 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism, certifying the extent of the eco-tourism phenomenon acquired in recent years and the general interest in policies that emphasized the global concerns for understanding and adoption by all states a pro-ecotourism position. Thus, the most important action related to the International Year of Ecotourism was the World Ecotourism Summit held in Canadian Québec from 19 to 22 May 2002 with the support of the Local Tourism Office and the Canadian Tourism Commission under the aegis of the World Organization the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). On this occasion, they appreciated (Gheorghe A., 2016, p. 85-91): emphasizing the role of ecotourism in sustainable development, sharing information on sustainable planning, ecotourism development, management and marketing, deeper understanding the social, economic and ecological impacts of ecotourism, the establishment of mechanisms and schemes to monitor and control the impact of ecotourism, the presentation of local community members' experiences of ecotourism projects and businesses, the conviction

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of governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations for the use of ecotourism as a method in the process of sustainable development and conservation of natural and cultural resources, finding ways to encourage more responsible behavior by all those working in the field of ecotourism, including official public bodies, the private sector and their employees for as well as tourists themselves, defining new areas of international collaboration to contribute to sustainable development and the spread of ecotourism management around the world.

• **Quality management regarding tourism services**

As tourist services became increasingly demanded on the market, more and more participants began to meet demand, which also required a regular regulatory activity in this area of economic life. Beyond the local, regional and global efforts to regulate the tourist services market, the number of those attracted to develop a profitable business in the field has grown and the management of the company has been able to approach the competitive market by using of economic leverage at hand, among which the importance of total quality management is of particular importance. Total Quality Management (TQM) is defined by three directions of action: meeting customer requirements, product sales volume and reducing costs.

Total quality management is a continuation of Ioseph M. Juran's ideas, according to which: quality can not be entrusted to others; it is the goal of everyone, both at the individual level and at the team level, which can be achieved by self-control. The human side of quality is essential. In general terms, quality planning consists of conceiving the products needed to satisfy customers. More specifically, quality planning includes the following basic activities: identifying customers and their needs, designing a product that responds to those needs, designing a process to achieve that product. The quality planning algorithm involves: identifying customers, determining customer needs, translating those needs into the company's business language, designing a product that meets needs, organizing product features so that it matches business interests and customer needs, designing a process capable of product realization, continuous process optimization, transfer of product quality responsibility to execution forces (Joseph Juran, 2008).

Based on these genius recommendations, the success of any tourism business is overwhelmingly determined by how the customer perceives the expected quality in close correlation with the quality offered. Quality of service is the basic criterion for choosing a service provider.

Quality management is a quality-driven system based on the work of all participants, aiming at long-term success by meeting customer

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requirements and gaining benefits for all members. Basic principles are continuous quality improvement, defect prevention and customer focus. Total quality management is a new vision, which results in overcoming consumer expectations by reorganizing priorities. Its implementation involves a change of attitude of all staff, starting with the manager. It has to fully engage in all its plans: developing strategies, verifying the operational and executive levels, implementing quality management techniques and tools. The implementation of Total Quality Management in tourism would increase the competitive potential of establishments offering such services. Anticipating consumer wishes can lead to their full satisfaction and people's determination to return. Implementation of Total Quality Management involves a number of changes in the organizational culture of accommodation units. For managers, total quality is a re-adaptation to the goals pursued to reach the level of perfection that the hotel or board wants to achieve and maintain, in order to meet customer preferences. As a result, there is an increase in the flow of tourists and including the unit's income. Conceptualisation of the overall quality management concept The management system within an organization is based on its objectives, products or services and specific practices. So, although it varies from one unit to another, it always has the same purpose: efficiency. Total quality management is a type of quality management and the involvement of all members of an organization in order to gain as many advantages as possible. The basic concept is excellence and, in principle, it is intended to attract the customer's trust. Based on these principles, our study on a tourist region wishes to capture some developments in the implementation of Total Quality Management in the field of ecological tourist services and to suggest directions of action so that they get a growing share in the general sphere of tourism services

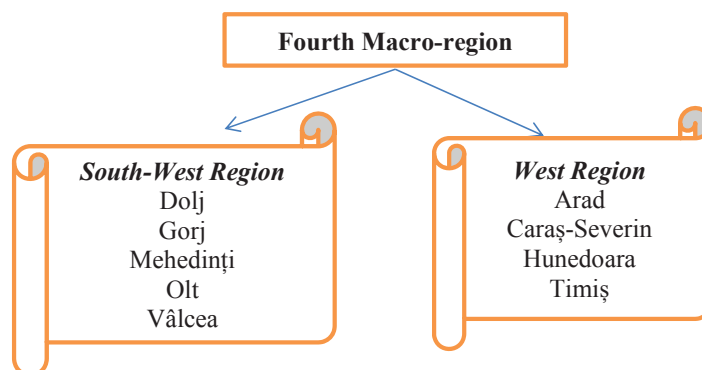
### **ECOTOURISM SERVICES QUALITY EVALUATION IN ROMANIA'S FOURTH MACRO-REGION**

Romania's fourth macro-region is composed of two development regions, namely the South-West Region, Oltenia and the Western Region (see Figure 1). This macro-region covers a total area of 61240 km<sup>2</sup>.



## Romania's Fourth Macro-region

Figure 1



Source: National Institute of Statistics

The macro-region presented in the above figure consists of a number of nine counties, being possessed of cultural-traditional richness and some natural surface, transposed into the strengths of the Romanian niche tourism. The material basis existing in the two regions is outlined in Table 1.

### Accommodation units in Romania's Fourth Macro-region within the timeframe 2010-2017

Table 1

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<i>Hostels</i>	23	29	33	34	42	56	56	63
<i>Motels</i>	32	38	41	43	42	40	42	44
<i>Touristic villas</i>	93	87	91	75	70	76	78	92
<i>Touristic cottages</i>	21	26	30	32	34	43	43	73
<i>Bungalows</i>	13	17	24	21	21	12	11	17
<i>Holiday villages</i>	1	2	3	3	4	3	3	4
<i>Campgrounds</i>	10	10	10	12	13	15	14	14
<i>Touristic stops</i>	11	13	13	13	13	11	11	12
<i>Touristic houses</i>	6	6	6	6	4	7	7	10
<i>Touristic pensions</i>	223	256	312	308	296	296	305	356
<i>Agrotourist hostels</i>	153	159	220	218	224	253	270	336

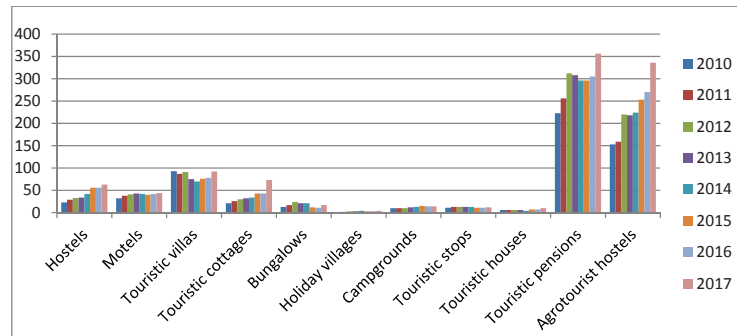
Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo Online, accessed at 21.03.2018

From the data presented by the National Institute of Statistics regarding the medium and small size accommodation units of the two Romanian regions, it can be seen that their number is higher compared to Muntenia and Center, but smaller compared to Transylvania, North- East and south-east of the country, which proves us a slow development of the rural tourism present in the two studied regions. To point out accommodation units evolution , the authors present the figure below:



## Accommodation units evolution within the timeframe 2010-2017

Figure 2



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo Online, accessed at 21.03.2018

The number of existing tourist villas has fluctuated from year to year, but the number of cabins and boarding houses together with agrotourist pensions have increased from 2010 to the last year studied (see Figure 2).

In the conducted study there were used statistical methods for obtaining the predicted data for the year 2017. These include the extrapolation of the accommodation capacity for the year 2017. The level of accommodation capacity in operation during the studied period is shown below (see Table 2).

The accommodation capacity of the units presented above is shown in Table 2.:

### Romania's Fourth Macro- region accommodation capacity (places-days), within the timeframe 2010-2017

Table 2

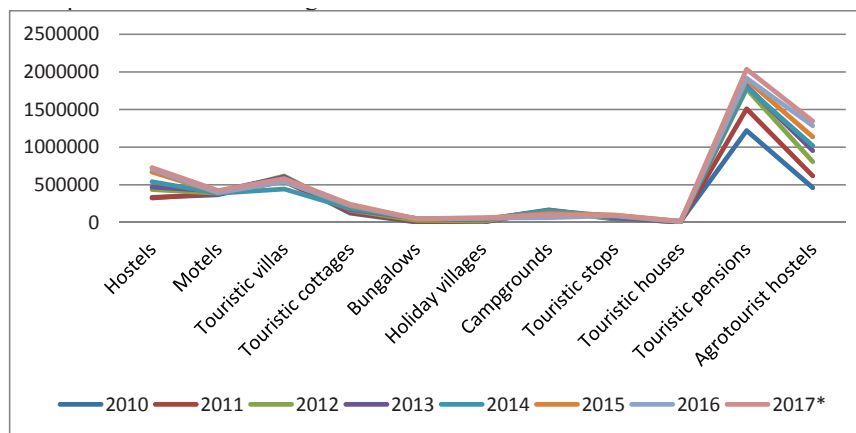
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*
<i>Hostels</i>	333520	323860	436368	469321	540266	670292	707771	<b>727665</b>
<i>Motels</i>	366714	382513	387614	414212	386494	393537	394906	<b>422166</b>
<i>Touristic villas</i>	575321	545855	617253	602605	443679	540170	543222	<b>581903</b>
<i>Touristic cottages</i>	121118	136323	163073	171719	184620	220104	228174	<b>240425</b>
<i>Bungalows</i>	4738	12411	27804	53004	51400	48986	46090	<b>48534</b>
<i>Holiday villages</i>	682	4708	15694	33272	35897	48750	59318	<b>61302</b>
<i>Campgrounds</i>	153151	148010	143210	165499	156945	120440	62673	<b>98674</b>
<i>Touristic stops</i>	43096	58970	52614	58007	80747	98611	89175	<b>93987</b>
<i>Touristic houses</i>	16848	6424	5262	3672	13161	14630	11283	<b>11996</b>
<i>Touristic pensions</i>	1219159	1509932	1772237	1813722	1795145	1895398	1916118	<b>2035335</b>
<i>Agrotourist hostels</i>	460186	616603	807192	953740	1018967	1136384	1283616	<b>1346383</b>

Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo Online, accessed at 21.03.2018

In the present study, the accommodation capacity for 2017 is represented by values that are subject to the statistical extrapolation process. The data highlighted in the above table represent the accommodation units that have the highest demand among tourists. These include: tourist and agro-tourist boarding houses and tourist villas. Evolution of the accommodation capacity during the studied period can be seen in figure 3:

**The accommodation capacity evolution within the time frame 2010-2017**

*Figure 3*



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo Online, accessed at 18.03.2018

According to the database presented above, the number of functional accommodation places is increasing, mainly in rural tourist pensions, villas and tourist cottages. This increase in the number of places available for tourists shows that there is a major interest of ecotourism business developers to develop small businesses in the field. Encouraging is also the fact that rural tourism demand within the two regions studied in this subchapter is increasing and among the ecotourists' preferences regarding the holiday areas are counties Olt, Gorj, Vâlcea, Hunedoara and Timiș.

Further, there are studied two high value tourism indicators, namely the number of tourists' arrivals and the number of overnight stays (see Table 3). The values for 2017 are presented by using the statistical procedure named in the specialized literature data extrapolation.

**The evolution of the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays in Romania's Fourth Macro-region , within the timeframe 2010-2016**

*Table 3*

<i>Analyzed period</i>		<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017*</b>
<b>Hostels</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	22468	23398	36200	31837	46531	69264	75505	<b>78557</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	<b>49333</b>	53092	72820	85418	103837	167447	179003	<b>186113</b>
<b>Motels</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	38237	37949	33733	35909	31237	37020	37020	<b>71490</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	68768	69254	58125	62913	57749	63305	68979	<b>73470</b>
<b>Touristic villas</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	24434	27974	29710	27553	28587	48056	55695	<b>58115</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	108254	116493	109978	92486	70184	115239	113968	<b>121234</b>
<b>Touristic cottages</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	5168	9628	9995	9275	8052	13128	14677	<b>15376</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	<b>8853</b>	16053	15472	16399	15510	24232	28611	<b>29863</b>
<b>Bungalows</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	606	1324	1604	1744	2127	2182	2621	<b>2743</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	1440	3120	3626	4646	6123	4225	5874	<b>6165</b>
<b>Holliday villages</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	12	564	2397	2507	2194	3065	2342	<b>2473</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	28	1112	4490	6707	5490	7379	4925	<b>5226</b>
<b>Campsgrounds</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	9468	9153	8528	6629	2618	5688	3935	<b>4395</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	19237	20697	19111	11400	5939	12349	9084	<b>10062</b>
<b>Touristic stops</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	2108	3866	3385	6825	6001	8797	8521	<b>8916</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	6370	9100	9988	17744	15630	22156	22508	<b>23543</b>
<b>Touristic houses</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	277	197	99	318	1139	1080	534	<b>570</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	460	624	427	656	2824	4472	1499	<b>1609</b>
<b>Touristic pensions</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	105614	121642	148573	150229	162431	193822	203173	<b>214028</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	215699	231636	274907	278885	291559	374035	405811	<b>426536</b>
<b>Agrotourist hostels</b>	<b>Arrivals</b>	30774	44192	62269	68454	68075	92077	110267	<b>115028</b>
	<b>Overnight stays</b>	66924	97701	119177	132475	131535	201660	224511	<b>234251</b>

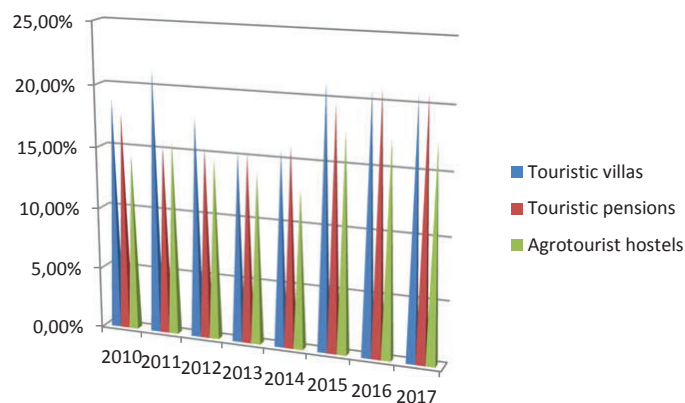
Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo Online, accessed at 26.03.2018

As it can be seen in the table above, the two indicators analyzed from the ecotourism point of view, are higher compared to the Third Macro-region, but smaller compared to the First Macro-region studied in other articles. Arrivals in niche tourism units such as rural tourist boarding houses, bungalows, campsites, show special attention of ecotourists on the natural environment, eliminating options that could have a negative impact on nature. Also, the number of overnight stays in the rural tourism areas of the Southwest and West regions lead to a higher demand for ecotourism services (for example, the number of overnight stays in rural tourism pensions has increased more than three times since the first year studied until 2017).

An important indicator in the field of niche tourism is the occupancy of the accommodation units, especially the occupancy of the touristic villas, the touristic pensions and agrotourist pensions in the studied macro-region. It is appreciated that the occupancy rate of the accommodation units is significant in determining the quality level of the niche tourism services. Figure 4 shows the evolution of occupancy of the above-mentioned accommodation units:

**The occupancy rates evolution of touristic villas, touristic and agrotouristic pensions in The Romania's Fourth Macro-region, within the timeframe 2010-2017**

*Figure 4*



Source :Made by authors

Figure no. 4 is based on the occupancy rates of the villas and touristic and agrotouristic pensions listed in Table no. 4, according to which the tourist villas record the highest values of the tourism indicator studied in Romania's Fourth macro-region.

**Touristic villas, touristic pensions and agrotouristic pensions occupancy rates in Romania's Fourth Macro-region, within the timeframe 2010-2017**

*Table 4*

Accommodation units	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Touristic villas	18,81%	21,34%	17,81%	15,35%	15,81%	21,33%	20,98%	20,83%
Touristic pensions	17,69%	15,34%	15,51%	15,38%	16,24%	19,73%	21,18%	20,96%
Agrotourist hostels	14,54%	15,85%	14,76%	13,89%	12,91%	17,75%	17,49%	17,40%

Source: Made by authors

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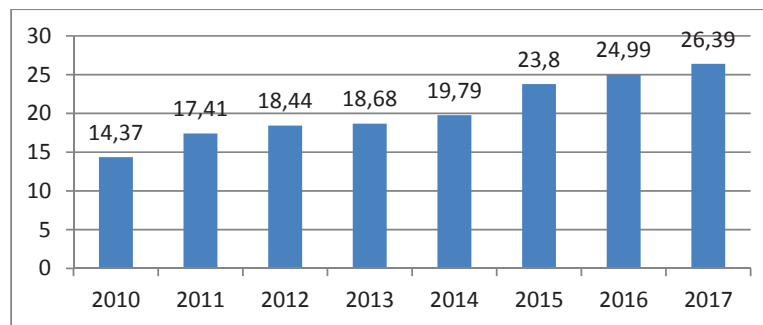
According to the data presented above, the best touristic year was 2016, the occupancy rate of villas and touristic pensions being over 20.5% at the level of the studied macro-region. 2013 was the year with the lowest touristic demand in the studied macro-region, the occupancy rate of villas and touristic pensions being about 15.4%.

The agrotouristic pensions in Romania's Fourth Macro-region have fewer demands among tourists, their occupancy rates during the studied period were between 12.91% and 17.75%.

The density of regional tourist traffic is reflected by the ratio between the number of arrivals and the area of the regions (R.Minciu, p. 97). Its evolution over time is shown in the following figure:

**The evolution of tourist traffic density in Romania's Fourth Macro-region, within the timeframe 2010-2017**

*Figure 5*



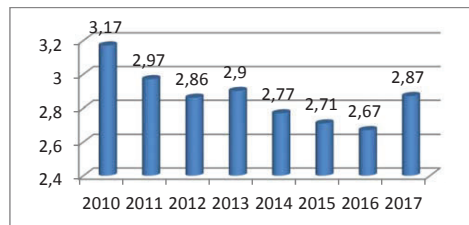
*Source: Made by authors*

As we can see from the situation of the evolution of the tourist traffic density in the South-West and the Western part of the country, the number of tourists per sq km increases year-on-year. On average, approximately 20 tourists / kmp are registered annually. The tourism traffic density for the year 2017 was achieved using the extrapolation statistical method presented in the literature review section.

According to the data presented in the study, Macroregion 4 records the highest tourist demand at national level, but the length of stay is very short (see Figure 6).

**The evolution of the length of stay in Romania's Fourth Macro-region, within the timeframe 2010-2017**

*Figure 6*



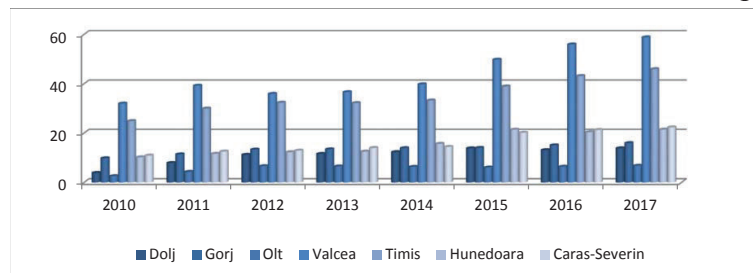
*Source: Made by authors*

Although the demand for regional tourist services is steadily increasing, the stay time is very low compared to the other macro-regions of Romania, as this is explained by the interest of tourists in visiting regional tourist attractions in a short time. We also find high quality leisure services such as skiing, mountain biking, backpacking on access roads, such as the thematic paths, which of course direct the ecotourists' attention to rural tourism in the two regions studied in other works.

In order to deepen the research in the field of rural tourism, the density of the tourist circulation in a territorial profile is to be presented, by studying a number of counties that are of significant importance in the field of Romanian green tourism, highlighted in Figure 7:

**The evolution of the tourism traffic density in Romania's Fourth Macro-region counties within the timeframe 2010-2017**

*Figure 7*



*Source: Made by authors*

The evolution of tourism traffic density presented in the figure above is highlighted in the table below:

### Tourism traffic density in Romania's Fourth Macro-region

Table 5

Analyzed period	Dolj	Gorj	Olt	Vâlcea	Timiș	Hunedoara	Caraș-Severin
2010	3,88	9,81	2,57	31,96	24,85	10,19	10,9
2011	7,89	11,4	4,31	39,2	29,94	11,61	12,54
2012	11,2	13,32	6,61	35,9	32,33	12,25	12,9
2013	11,57	13,41	6,49	36,6	32,16	12,5	13,97
2014	12,3	13,89	6,33	39,76	33,21	15,65	14,4
2015	13,82	13,99	6,06	49,76	38,89	21,38	20,14
2016	13,1	15,04	6,39	55,93	43,14	20,37	21,27
2017	13,84	15,94	6,77	58,82	45,92	21,41	22,33

Source : Made by authors

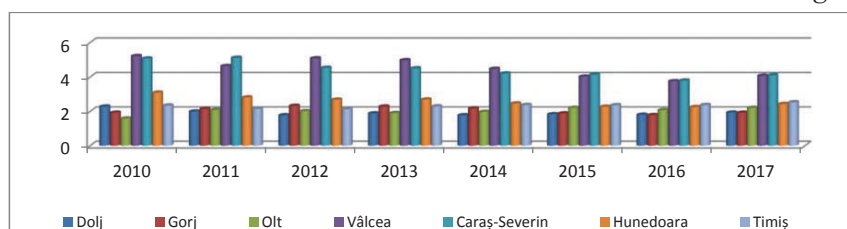
Observing the data presented in Figure no. 4, it can be mentioned that, the county with the highest annual tourist density in the Macroregion 4 of the country, is Vâlcea. According to the study, the minimum density is about 32 tourists / sq km, and the maximum density is about 50 tourists / sq km. It follows Timis County, which records an annual minimum of 24 tourists / kmp and a maximum of 38 tourists / kmp.

The counties that represent a smaller tourist attraction for tourists everywhere are Dolj and Olt.

In order to deepen the analysis of territorial tourism indicators, it is analysed the evolution of the average duration of the stay in Romania's fourth Macro-region counties within the timeframe 2010-2017:

### The evolution of the average duration of the stay in Romania's Fourth Macro-region counties within the timeframe 2010-2017

Figure 8



Source: Made by authors

As it can be seen in the previews figure, the highest value of the average duration of the stay in Romania's fourth macro-region is registered in Valcea County in the year 2010. Hunedoara County is also on the tourists lists. Most tourists find this romanian region interesting because of its natural resources and interesting cultural touristic objectives like Cincis Lake known as Cursed Lake because of its legend and Corvins Castle. To highlight the evolution of tourism traffic indexes, Figure 8 is based on the table no 6:



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**Average duration of the stay in Romania's Fourth Macro-region  
counties within the timeframe 2010-2017**

*Table 6*

Analized period	Dolj	Gorj	Olt	Vâlcea	Caras-Severin	Hunedoara	Timiș
2010	2,28	1,92	1,58	5,21	5,07	3,09	2,34
2011	1,99	2,14	2,08	4,63	5,11	2,81	2,15
2012	1,77	2,32	2,01	5,08	4,53	2,68	2,13
2013	1,88	2,28	1,9	4,97	4,5	2,69	2,29
2014	1,77	2,17	1,97	4,47	4,2	2,46	2,37
2015	1,83	1,88	2,2	4,02	4,14	2,27	2,36
2016	1,8	1,78	2,07	3,75	3,79	2,25	2,37
2017	1,93	1,92	2,2	4,07	4,1	2,43	2,53

*Source: Made by authors*

In Table 6 it is noticed that the tourists' stays are longer in the counties of Vâlcea and Caras-Severin, registering between 4 and 5 days. In the counties of Gorj, Dolj and Olt tourists stay between 1 and 2 days, making full use of the tourist attractions.

In Hunedoara the stay reaches a maximum of 3 days, and in Timis county it is constant during the analyzed period of 2 days.

## CONCLUSIONS

In Hunedoara, Retezat National Park hosts annually both foreign tourists and romanian tourists. The country of Hateg in the Retezat Mountains has been debated to become officially an ecotourism destination. The National Tourism Agency declared Esara Hațegului-Retezat as ecotourism destination. This area has a wealth of valuable landmarks, such as castles, traditional houses, medieval churches and area-specific food services.

The material base of Hațeg Land consists of ecotourist hostels such as Salasu de Sus Ecotouristic Guesthouse (one of the two Iancu hostels), located in Sălașu de Sus, with a capacity of 12 places. Another eco-friendly pension in the county, Hateg Ecotourism Guesthouse, situated on the road between Hațeg and Prislop, has a capacity of 11 places and offers high quality accommodation.

Among the caves located in Timis County, of great ecotourism interest is the Romanian Cave, located in the South-East of the Romanian village, a cave where annual music concerts take place.

Timis county maintains its ecotourism competition, possessing a series of exceptional natural monuments, which are the object of ecotourism demand. One of the most important natural reserve in Banat is the Satchinez Ornithological Reserve, a reserve that includes: peninsula, marshland, reed

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forests. The natural environment is ideal for finding unique bird species such as egret, stork, cormorant, etc. The Little Danube of Banat is a favorite place for ecotourists from all corners of the world. In Bacovăț it can be visited the Bazoșul Nou Dendrological Park, a park that hosts over 800 world-protected plants. Within Bazoșul Nou Park there is an oak over 500 years old. Another natural area in Timis county, Sacosul Turcesc, is Lunca Pogănișului, situated on the shores of Pogăniș Stream. This is famous for holding the species *Fritillaria meleagris*, *Laleaua Pestriță*. The Pestrița Wale is a Mediterranean plant protected by the Bern Convention. Also, the protected area shelters oak and ash forests, combined with elm, hornbeam, forest apple and forest pear. Vâlcea County has a number of ecotourism attractions of great interest at both international and national level. In the Horezu area, Vâlcea county lies the Bistrita Gorges Nature Reserve with a length of 1200 m.

Bistrita's Keys include 22 famous caves in the country, caves such as the Bear Cave and the Bats Cave. Also, the implementation of the Natura 2000 European Ecological Network in the Buila - Vânturarița National Park contained a set of studies of flora and fauna.

The plant species and animals protected by law have been identified within the project. The research carried out consisted of measurements and delimitations of habitats of animals and birds.

In conclusion, green tourism is constantly expanding, and the Romanian macro-regions offer exciting ecotourism services.

The services offered by the Romanian intelligent tourism (accommodation services, food services, specific transport services, leisure services) require a rigorous evaluation. With the help of the ecotourism control-evaluation function, a series of strategic directions are developed to continuously improve their quality.

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