Assessment Criteria for National Tourism Development Strategies - Romania

The authors of the assessment: Constantin Serban – expert
Adela Talpes – assistant

Organisation: Greentourism Ecological Association
Contact: 81, Garlei, Corp B, (Biotera University), Sector 1, Bucharest, Romania, CP 061125
web: www.turismverde.ro
tel: +40 752 644 724

Name of the document: Master Plan for National Tourism Development in Romania (2007 – 2026)

The analyze was prepared on the base on Assessment Criteria and Methodology for a National Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy of CEEweb for Biodiversity (Sustainable Tourism Working Group).
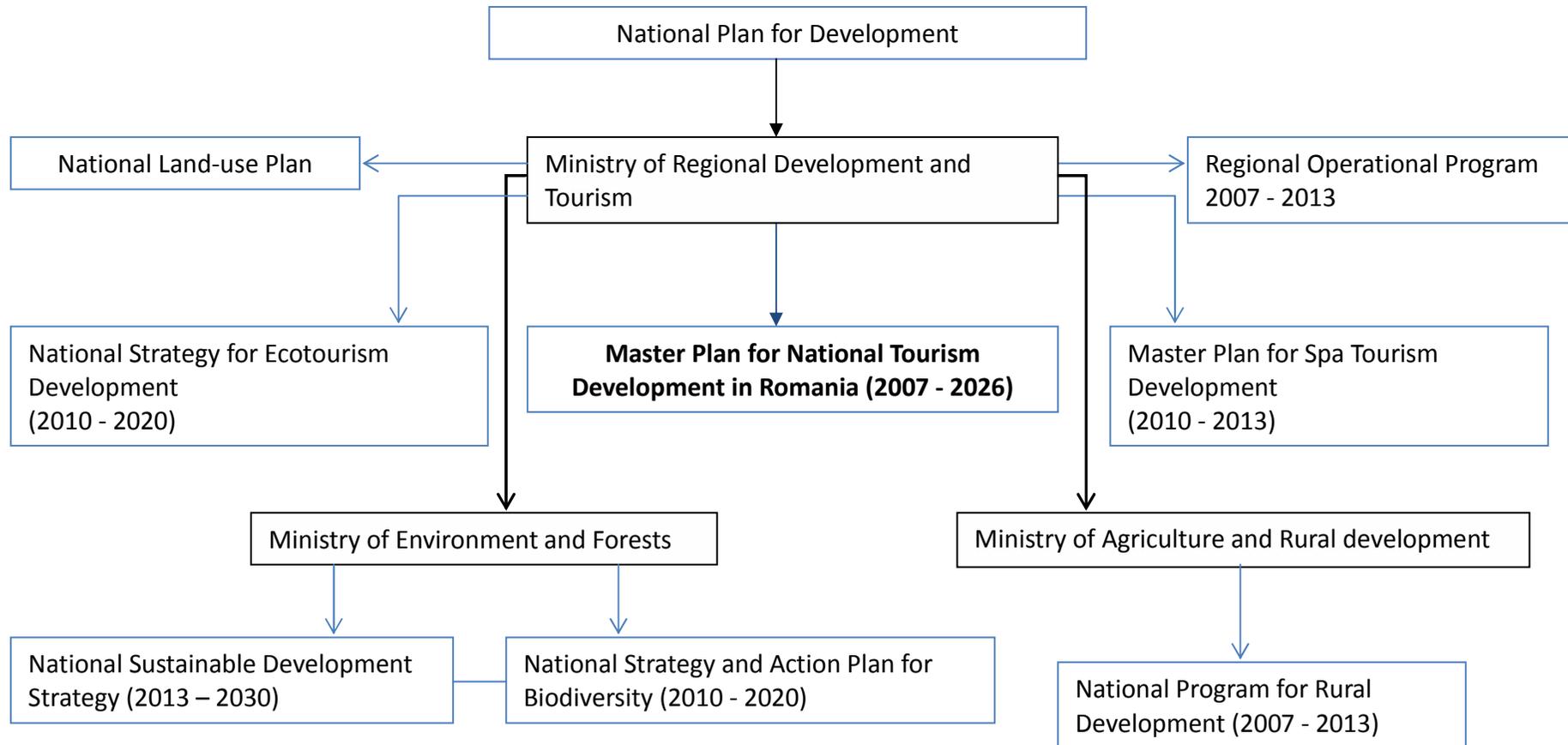
1. Introduction

The Master Plan for National Tourism Development in Romania (2007 – 2026) is the document of Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism which aims to identify the weaknessens in the Romanian tourism industry and provide strategic directions as to how it can be restructured, resourced and regenerated in order to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

The Master Plan has been elaborated by a team of World Tourism Organisation experts assisted by 20 romanian experts on behalf of the Government of Romania. It seeks to embrace the principles of sustainable tourism development as defined by the World Tourism Organisation, namely, "*Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems*".

The vision is „*To establish Romania as a high quality tourism destination based on its natural and cultural heritage, which matches EU standards of product and service <u>delivery by 2013 and to accomplish an environmentally sustainable development of tourism sector at a higher rate than other European destinations.</u>*"

The tourism planning system in Romania

National Plan for Development

National Land-use Plan

Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism

Regional Operational Program 2007 - 2013

National Strategy for Ecotourism Development (2010 - 2020)

Master Plan for National Tourism Development in Romania (2007 - 2026)

Master Plan for Spa Tourism Development (2010 - 2013)

Ministry of Environment and Forests

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development

National Sustainable Development Strategy (2013 – 2030)

National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity (2010 - 2020)

National Program for Rural Development (2007 - 2013)

The Master Plan is integrated with National Plan for Development which recognizes Tourism as a priority field for development, which can contribute to the balanced development of all regions in Romania and it is also a means of achieving other strategic economic priorities.

There are several other strategies and programs which cover tourism related fields, but unfortunately they are not very well correlated or supported with actions towards an efficient policy for sustainable tourism development in Romania.

National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation (which is still waiting to be legally adopted by Government) – states two operational objectives for ensuring an integrated management of tourism in accordance with the principles of biodiversity:
1. The inclusion of landscape and biodiversity conservation principles as key conditions for tourism infrastructure development;
2. Conversion of mass tourism in protected areas, including Natura 2000 sites into sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

The Master Plan is also legally supported by the "The annual marketing and tourism promotion program" and "The multiannual program for tourism destinations, forms and products development" (H.G. No. 20 from 11th of January 2012)

Goals:
• To establish a heightened awareness both domestically and internationally of Romania's positive appeals as a tourist destination and its tourism brand image;
• To ensure that tourism is developed in a sustainable manner so that the environmental, cultural and heritage appeals are both appreciated today and preserved for future generations;
• To ensure tourism is recognized as a key sector within the economy and as a generator of an increasing number of jobs;
• To create an awareness among the population of Romania of the tourism appeals of the country and a desire to share these with visitors;
• To restructure the NTA (National Tourism Authority) as an efficient and effective national tourism organization, ensuring quality product and service standards, providing information to visitors and supporting all sectors of the country's tourism industry in the development of tourism;
• To develop and implement annual collaborative public/private sector destination marketing plans targeting all major markets with potential for Romania
• To offer coordinated support mechanisms to regional and local tourism organizations in the development of area tourism policy, strategies and plans;
• To expand the system for the regular collection, analysis and dissemination of tourism statistics and research to assist in the creation of a Tourism Satellite Account for Romania and facilitating investment and marketing decision-making;
• To establish a network of coordinated tourist information centers in all main tourist areas in order to extend a warm welcome to visitors, providing appropriate information to assist in their orientation, enjoyment and appreciation of the destination;
• To develop a nationwide database of tourism products, facilities, events and services with both tourism industry and public access;
• To upgrade and expand the role of the national tourism website as a major promotional, information, reservations and e-marketing tool;
• To develop a refined system of product and service classification and grading to ensure the provision of quality products and services to meet visitor needs and expectations;
• To introduce mechanisms and incentives to facilitate investment in tourism by both Romanian and foreign investors;

• To consolidate the legal framework for tourism so that it will ensure good practice and guarantee high standards without undue bureaucracy;
• To encourage town, county and regional authorities to develop integrated tourism development plans including all infrastructure elements to avoid uncoordinated and incompatible development;
• To develop the provision of pre-vocational and vocational training for the hospitality sector so that curricula evolve to meet changing market needs and sufficient staff is qualified to meet employment demand / fill employment vacancies;
• To facilitate the development of a national convention center enabling the capital and country to compete for international meetings;
• To develop Romania's spa resorts to offer the range of treatments, facilities and services demanded by a rapidly changing customer base;
• To develop mountain areas and resorts to offer year round facilities and attractions for visitors;
• To identify season lengthening development opportunities for Black Sea coastal resorts and facilitate their introduction;
• To ensure the requirements of tourists are given prominence in the development of the national transport system including road and rail networks, airport and harbor infrastructure;
• To expand the national tourism signage system in conformity with EU standards and introduce themed tourism routes;
• To assist the development of ecotourism in the Danube Delta, national parks and reserves and rural areas legislation;
• To train and assist major national museums and monuments in improving their visitor facilities, especially welcome and interpretation and marketing, as an example to all such monuments.
• The creation of a national cultural events database to facilitate the promotion of visual and performing arts, and particularly traditional festival and folklore events;
• To establish cooperative and collaborative frameworks within and between public and private sectors.
• To develop an effective Implementation Strategy to ensure the Master Plan goals are realized.

Among this long list of 25 goals only two are interesting from the point of view of sustainable tourism:
- Ensuring a sustainable development of tourism in such a way that its environmental and cultural heritage to be appreciated in the present and also preserved for future generations ;
- Supporting the development of ecotourism in the Danube Delta, national parks and reserves and rural areas legislation;

Strategic Directions / Initiatives formulated in the Master Plan are as follows:
1. Statistics and Research
2. Politics, framing and legislation in tourism
3. Human Resource Development
4. Planning and Physical Infrastructure, Product Enhancement
5. Information Services
6. Destination Marketing
7. Environment
8. Investment Policy

Every strategic direction gives specific actions and recommendations which have been incorporated in an Action Plan with identified "lead" organizations responsible for implementation and "Partners", who may assist in the action.

The "Duration" (the anticipated length of time the action will take whenever it is started), the "Funding" (an indication of sources that may be approached for finance) and the "Success Criteria" (measures to evaluate whether the action has been successfully completed) for each action are also listed.

The actions listed in the Action Plan below are presented in order of priority and by type:
- Immediate,
- Short Term (initiated by the end of 2008),
- Medium Term (initiated before 2013), and
- Long Term (initiated before 2020).

The weakness of previous tourism development strategies has been the failure to implement the recommendations. The availability of EU Structural Funds for the period up to 2013 provides a major resource to facilitate the implementation of these recommendations of the Master Plan.

The Regional Operational Program 2007 - 2013 (ROP) is one of the Romanian operational programs agreed with the European Union and a very important tool for implementing the national strategy and the regional development policies. It is applicable to all eight development regions of Romania. The overall objective of the ROP consists of supporting and promoting sustainable local development, both economically and socially, in Romania`s regions, by improving the infrastructure conditions and business environment, which support economic growth. This means that the ROP's aim is to reduce economic and social development disparities between the more developed regions and the less developed ones.

The ROP in Romania is financed under one of the structural funds of the European Union – the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The funds are distributed by priority axes of the Regional Operational Programme. Each priority axis is allocated a certain budget and includes a number of key areas of intervention aimed at meeting development objectives.

Priority Axis 5: Sustainable development and tourism promotion (15% of the budget allocated to the ROP) provides support for cultural – historic heritage restoration, modernisation of tourism infrastructure, improvement of the infrastructure quality in the nature areas that could attract tourists.

The ROP has been subject to a process of Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the provisions of EU Directive setting up the environmental assessment procedure of certain plans and programmes.

However, the Working Group on Strategic Environmental Assessment of Regional Operational Programme agreed to take into account, in a first stage, only links / relations / correlations that exist between environmental objectives and funding priorities identified in this programme, and **not necessarily impact issues**.

In order to ensure essential elements in the Master plan are not neglected an **implementation strategy** and its procedures have been established.

Additionally Government has been requested to establish an Implementation Committee to monitor progress and assist in overcoming unforeseen obstacles, but **this is not accomplished so far**.

2. National Tourism Strategy as a public planning document

The Master Plan document is published on the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism web site only in Romanian version, splitted in four parts:
http://www.mdrl.ro/_documente/turism/studii_strategii/masterplan_partea1.pdf
http://www.mdrt.ro/_documente/turism/studii_strategii/masterplan_partea2.pdf
http://www.mdrt.ro/_documente/turism/studii_strategii/masterplan_partea2_sectiunea3.pdf
http://www.mdrt.ro/_documente/turism/studii_strategii/masterplan_partea3.pdf

We could only find the first part translated in English here:
http://www.amcham.ro/UserFiles/articleFiles/Master%20Plan%20Section%20A,%20B,%20C%20&%20D%20-%20Situation%20Analysis_05131452.pdf

The strategy is published in a hard-to-read version with over 500 pages, from which only four are dedicated to environmental issues.

3. Sustainable tourism assumptions in the document

The pristine environment is perhaps Romania's greatest asset as a tourism destination.
Regrettably this is damaged by negative practices, which pose a very real threat to the image of the country.
Actions for sustainable development stated in the Action Plan cover areas such as: waste, water management, air quality, planning, promotion etc.
Immediate term
- Including environmental criteria in the accommodation licensing system by introducing standards for solid waste, sewage and energy conservation

Very short term
- Include environmental protection in the authorization sistem by introducing standards for solid waste, sewage and energy saving
- Prioritize the ecological waste management and adopting a new legislation for reducing plastic containers use
- A better residual water management by implementing proper treatment units
- Work with animal protection associations to remove the risk of stray dogs, which are a threat for tourists in some areas.

Short term
- Local administrations to elaborate tourism development plans for every destination, that comply with environmental legislation
- Protected areas administrations to elaborate sustainable tourism development plans and apply for financial support from EU funding
- The Tourism Ministry to elaborate economic plans, environmental impact studies and land-use plans for the new winter sports facilities
- Rationalize the tracking trails network to reduce the negative impact on the environment
- Intensive promotion of rural tourism and ecotourism as elements that give a pozitive unique touristic image of Romania

- Implementing the campaigne „A clean Romania" to clean the waste affected landscapes

Medium term

- Introduction of a 'Romania Inflorita' (Bloomed Romania) competition to encourage flower and shrub planting in order to improve the attractiveness of towns and villages and increase civic pride

The National Strategy for Ecotourism Development is closely correlated with the National Tourism Development Master Plan.

Ecotourism is not a mass or a basic tourist activity and the volume of total foreign Eco tourists in Romania is not even 10,000 per year. However, this form of tourism is a vital way for Romania due to a number of issues:

- ecotourism is specific to low-income communities so that impact on people in those communities is relatively high
- traditional lifestyle of host communities is at risk so that ecotourism is an important means of supporting these traditions.
- the practice of ecotourism depends directly and contribute to the protection and preservation of natural areas, flora and fauna
- natural resources and socio-cultural underpinning Ecotourism in Romania are features that distinguish it from other countries in the region.

These key elements will contribute to the development and general image of Romania as a tourist destination.

In the strategy it is recommended that ecotourism facilities, activities and attractions include in their program visits of representatives of the media, as a first step in developing a positive image internationally tourism in Romania.

So far, the Criteria for ecotourism destinations designation in Romania were developed based on the European Ecotourism Labeling Standard - EETLS and Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.

For the next year 2013, the priority action communicated by the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism is designating the ecotourism destination in Romania, based on developed assessment indicators.

The evaluation table

Name of an indicator	Scores (S) and Weights (W)	
I Description of the document and elaboration process	$W_I = 0.1$	
1. The documents representing tourism policy in the country	**S = 3** if yes	

- general plan of social-economic development
   - sectoral plan (national tourism strategy)
   - operative plan for government actions and agendas
   - the strategy is published in an easy-to-read version which does not exceed 100 pages comprising major targets
	S_1
	S_2
	S_3
	S_4
		-
		3
		3
		-
		
		S_4- The strategy is published in a hard-to-read version with over 500 pages. The text is very dense and difficult to follow.

2. The national strategy sets out clear priorities, goals, policies, objectives, interventions and expected results that contribute to improving biodiversity protection and meeting national and global commitments in the:	**S = 1** if just the long term vision (up to 10 years) is included **S = 2** if sustainable tourism is included by enhancing issues where tourism can make a difference **S = 3** if sustainable tourism and biodiversity protection is included	

- vision of national tourism policy
   - goals of national tourism policy
   - objectives of national tourism policy
   - operational measures/tasks
   - expected results/indicators
   - expected results (outcomes) of national tourism policy
	S_5
	S_6
	S_7
	S_8
	S_9
	S_{10}
		2
		2
		2
		2
		2
		1

3. Targets or norms are established by governments (in other strategic documents as well) considering areas such as:	**S = 1** if the relevant planning document exists **S = 2** if the tourism issues are included in the document **S = 3** if the tourism issues and biodiversity protection is included **S = 4** if there are targets set which influence tourism sector	

		S = 5 if there are targets set which influence tourism sector and biodiversity protection
- land-use zoning - ecosystem functioning - biodiversity conservation and sustainable use - sustainable transport - greenhouse gas reduction in the tourism industry - climate change adaptation and mitigation in destinations - waste reduction and management - poverty alleviation/mitigation	S_{11} S_{12} S_{13} S_{14} S_{15} S_{16} S_{17} S_{18}	2 - 5 4 1 1 4 - S_{12} - National Land-use Plan has a Section dedicated for Tourism S_{13} - National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation provides specific targets influencing tourism sector and biodiversity protection but **none of them was fulfilled by now**. S_{14} - development of water transport infrastructure and port facilities for tourism and leisure activities is the only tourism issue included in the Sustainable Transport Strategy and several targets are set S_{15}, S_{16} - Preventing climate change by limiting emissions of greenhouse gases and their negative effects on society and the environment is only a general goal in the National Sustainable Development Strategy.
4. Strategy formulation process includes the following actions:		**S = 1** if the information about the document formulation is available for stakeholders

	S = 2 if the stakeholders are invited to the meetings or other form of involvement into the formulation process **S = 3** if the active contribution was accompanied by research on the type of tourism the stakeholders want to host	
- baseline information is gathered on the basis of multi-stakeholder consultations - local communities are involved in the consultations and their active role in destination management is recognized - public and private sector work together during the consultations	S_{19} S_{20} S_{21}	1 1 1 S_{19} - In the Master Plan is stated: "Apart from desk research extensive travel to most parts of the country was undertaken and consultations held with a numerous public and private sector interests in tourism", but the militant environmental protection NGO's were excluded until today.
II Situation analysis and programming	$W_{II} = 0.2$	
5. The tourism resources and market analysis for national tourism development	**S = 1** if there are major stakeholders and elements of supply and demand of tourism market included **S = 2** if there are major stakeholders and elements of supply and demand of tourism market included (including separate analysis of country's tourism destination and regions) **S = 4** if there are major stakeholders and elements of supply and demand of tourism market included (comprising separate analysis of country's tourism destination and regions) and natural resources are presented from the point of view of ecosystem services	
- domestic (national) market: major stakeholders (tour operators, travel agents, national and regional authorities, NGOs etc.)	S_{22}	2

- tourism supply: products, services, infrastructure and facilities	S_{23}	2
- demand of the domestic market (income, costs, positive and negative trends in demand, working hours)	S_{24}	2
- strategic planning method analysis (e.g. SWOT)		
- needs for further development and official forecasts	S_{25}	2
	S_{26}	2
		S_{23}- The strategy includes separate analysis of Romania tourism destinations, but natural resources were not presented from the point of view of ecosystem services S_{25} - Strategic planning was based on a SWOT analysis

6. Political factors and international aspects of tourism development	**S = 1** if the description includes the national destination only **S = 2** if the description includes the national and regional destinations **S = 3** if the description includes the national and regional destinations and their *competitiveness* is described

- product and infrastructure development, general industrial policy starting points	S_{27}	1
- destination marketing	S_{28}	1
- reinforcing the image of the country as a tourist destination	S_{29}	1
- benchmarking (product, strategic)	S_{30}	1
- the strategy gives the answer to which type of tourism is best for the national destination	S_{31}	1
		S_{27} - The strategy describes different types of tourism products and infrastructure only at national level, for example business tourism, cultural tourism, rural tourism, active tourism, health spa tourism etc. S_{28} - On the basis of tourism resources, access infrastructure

	and market analysis a number of areas have been identified as potential tourism development areas. The areas identified are broad geographic zones which should be developed as priority areas. The areas identified (named clusters) have a broad mix of attractions capable of sustaining tourism activity through the year, but they are not necessarily overlapping the development regions of Romania. S_{31} – The strategy identifies the priority types of tourism at national level for domestic and international market☐
III The grade of enhancement on sustainable approach to tourism in policies	**W_{III} = 0.1**
7. Linkage of tourism to other sectors (the grade of complementation of management documents of the following sectors with tourism development planning)	**S = 1** if there are tourism issues involved in documents **S = 3** if there are targets within the documents which define how tourism will help to solve problems of other sector (e.g. agrotourism complements aims of rural development strategy) **S = 5** if there are targets within the documents which define how tourism will help to solve problems of other sector involving the quality of live for host and visitor **S = 6** if there are targets within the documents which define how tourism will help to solve problems of other sector involving the quality of live for host and visitor and there is a special chapter in tourism strategy describing the connections
- environmental policy - agriculture and forestry - regional and rural development policy - transport strategy	S_{32} 1 S_{33} 3 S_{34} 5 S_{35} 1

- health policy	S_{36}	-
- employment policy	S_{37}	-
		S_{32} - National Sustainable Development Strategy states that promotion and sustainable development of tourism is one of the priority axes of the national objective of supporting sustainable and territorially balanced economic and social development of the Romanian regions according to their specific needs and resources, but no actions, outcomes and timelines are set.
		s_{33}, s_{34} - National Program for Rural Development provides a specific measure for encouragement of tourism activities which aims to financially support the development and promotion of a competitive tourism in rural areas in order to raise the quality of live for host communities. This measure also takes into account environmental criteria.
8. Reference to sustainable tourism agreements, conventions, protocols, EU policy towards development of sustainable tourism and nature conservation:		**S = 2** if there is a reference to at least 1 document **S = 3** if there is a reference to 2 **S = 4** if there is a reference to more than 2
1) the **<u>Global Code of Ethics for Tourism</u>** (GCET) as a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide key-players in tourism development (WTO) 2) the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, especially Decision VII/14 Biological Diversity and Tourism and Decision V/25: Biodiversity and tourism, 2004 3) The Charter for Sustainable Tourism (developed in Lanzarote, Canary Islands) Spain, 1995 4) **<u>EU Sustainable Development Strategy</u>** (EU SDS) with indications for national policies on law foundation for sustainable development of tourism, implementation of principles for tourism in other sectors of state activity and	S_{38}	- The underlined documents can be found as reference only in the complementary strategies, not in the Master Plan.

enhancement on scientific research on relations between tourism development and environment protection 5) the Agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism **6) <u>European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas</u>** 7) Agenda 21 as a comprehensive plan of action to be taken by governments in every area in which human impacts on the environment, Rio de Janeiro, 1992 8) The Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) adopted at the 3rd Ministerial Conference "An Environment for Europe", Sofia, 1995 9) EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the Carpathian Convention (Tourism Protocol) 10) Other related to sustainable tourism development (fill with the name): **<u>World Convention for Cultural and Natura l Heritage Protection</u>**, UNESCO, 1972	
9. Social benefits and community profits	**S = 3** if there are outcomes defining how tourism will contribute to the evaluated issue **S = 4** if there are outcomes defining how tourism will contribute to the evaluated issue and recommendations for regional level tourism development strategies are included

- tourism is valued as the contributor to country's economy (preferably in %) - preservation and development of the culture in the region - distribution of income and prospects for employment - support to cultural heritage and local identity - maintenance of community infrastructure - participation of indigenous and local communities (e.g. community based tourism)	S_{39} S_{40} S_{41} S_{42} S_{43} S_{44}	3 - - - - - S_{39} – in 2005 the contribution of tourism at the GDP was 3,5% $S_{40} - S_{44}$ - It is only anticipated that the people of Romania

	will participate in the benefit from the development of the tourism sector which is intended to: - increase foreign exchange earnings; - bring the Romanian economy and society into line with that of existing EU countries - improvement in the quality of life; - increase and encourage investments in all areas of the tourism sub-sector; - stimulate the creation of employment; - stimulate development; - foster the enhancement and preservation of cultural heritage; - assist the development and conservation of the physical and natural resources of the overall country; and - distribute the benefits of tourism throughout all parts of Romania. No further outcomes defining how tourism will contribute to the above issues are available.	
IV Participation of institutions in tourism management	$W_{IV} = 0.1$	
10. Setting up and enabling a National Tourism Organization as:	**S = 3 if yes**	
- a national body for tourism businesses and destinations - a source of best practice, offering tourism business advice - a custodian of the national product database	S_{45} S_{46} S_{47}	3 - 3
11. Enhancement on bottom – up approach in destination management	**S = 3 if yes**	

- local tourism bodies are responsible for a tourism destination which reflects the natural geography of an area's visitor economy (rather than local public sector or electoral boundaries)	S_{48}	3
- the tourism policy gives the possibility for tourism bodies to band together into larger groups voluntarily	S_{49}	3
- ensuring financial sustainability of the bodies with minimum reliance on public funds (can act as partners with local authorities or local business partnerships)	S_{50}	-
- reduction of taxes to central level	S_{51}	-
- supporting creation of *Destination Management Organization* rather than Marketing Organizations	S_{52}	-
- partnership between public sector and local authorities and local businesses and attractions	S_{53}	3
- recognition of role of the bodies for Regional Development Strategies	S_{54}	3
		S_{48} – In addition to the local public administrations with specific responsibilities in tourism, there are 8 Regional Development Agencies responsible for tourism development and promotion at regional level S_{49} – Action 2 in the AP aims to facilitate the establishment of a confederation of associations in the tourism industry. Action 35 in the Action Plan (AP) states that regional development offices of the National Tourism Authority will encourage and support the creation of consortia and associations to promote rural tourism destinations and tourism products marketing. S_{53} – The public-private partnership is often underlined in different parts of the Master Plan and there are also two sub-chapters (2.1, 2.2) describing the roles and responsibilities of each part.

		S_{54} – The section 4.1.4. describes the role of Regional Development Agencies
12. There are responsibilities determined for the strategy implementation for the following bodies:	**S = 5 if yes**	
- ministries - the local and regional governments - tourism business associations, clusters, tourism entrepreneurs etc. - the non-governmental sector - protected area authorities, environmental institutions etc.	S_{55} S_{56} S_{57} S_{58} S_{59}	5 5 5 - 5
V Sustainable development of tourism businesses, supply of services and special enhancement addressing nature protected areas	**$W_V = 0.2$**	
13. Plans to increase the number of environmentally oriented tourism providers and offerings by:	**S = 1** if recommendations of the following actions are listed **S = 2** if there are operative actions described for the implementation **S = 3** if there are operative actions described and indicated bodies responsible for the implementation of these actions	
- support of certification and labelling schemes - strengthening cooperation between (organisation and financing) public and private entities as well as partnerships for sustainable tourism development - educational programs for tourist staff and their professionalization in the framework of tourism environmental impact and social responsibility	S_{60} S_{61} S_{62}	1 - - S_{60} – Action 32 in the AP requires set of environmental recommendations for accommodation facilities authorization, including the introduction of standards for solid waste, sewage and energy conservation Action E 2.2 in the National Strategy for Ecotourism Development states the supporting tourism products and

		services that have implemented a model of best practices in ecotourism, by free and priority promotion from the Ministry of Tourism side in a special section "Touristic Green Romania". Unfortunately, the action covered only ecotourism destinations and it was accomplished in a superficial way. S_{61} – Public-private partnership recommendations do not cover sustainable tourism development targets S_{62} – The Master Plan has a large section dedicated for human resources development, but there are no recommendations regarding their professionalization in the framework of tourism environmental impact and social responsibility
14. Grade of incentive and encouragement to sustainable practices in tourism companies:		**S = 1** if country has sustainable policy for resources management with relevant legislation **S = 2** if the legislation provides alternatives for resources' using **S = 3** if state government stimulates sustainable practice with finance benefits (tax reducing, tariff reducing)
- energy efficiency - efficient water management solutions - waste management	S_{63} S_{64} S_{65}	- - 1 S_{63} - The "Green House" program launched in 2010 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests to financially support installation of heating systems using renewable energy, including replacing or complementing traditional heating systems, but it was stopped in 2012. S_{64} - Action 25 in the AP states urgent implementation of wastewater treatment units, but in practice the legislation is

		poor and the procedure is difficult to follow S_{65} - The legislation is compliant with EU directives and establishes the necessary measures to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the adverse impacts of waste generation and waste management
15. Support for financial contribution from the tourism industry to nature protection services:		**S = 3** if there are: a system or instruments with relevant legislation and rules **S = 4** if there is evidence (data) that stakeholders use these instruments
- enhancing regional marketing as the foundation for sustainable tourism development, particularly in UNESCO biosphere reserves and national parks	S_{66}	3
- areas close to or in populated regions are protected for nature-based recreation	S_{67}	-
- incorporating the European Union network of Natura 2000 sites in tourism territorial development and marketing	S_{68}	- S_{68} - Even there is relevant legislation regarding nature protected areas and Natura 2000 sites, they are not incorporated in the tourism development and marketing strategy and it is not always respected.
VI Tourism strategy measures		$W_{VI} = 0.1$
16. Indicators and targets comprise important part of the strategy		**S = 4** if yes **If no** go to indicator no. 18
- strategy includes targets to be fulfilled	S_{69}	4
- strategy recommends indicators for monitoring	S_{70}	4
- targets are combined with indicators in order to measure impacts	S_{71}	4

17. Indicators for monitoring are described in 8 groups[1] as headline indicators (not only complementary indicators):	**S=0** if the indicator is not included in the strategy **S= 1** if the indicator is included in the strategy	
(a) political - value of micro-loan program for local businesses respecting sustainability criteria and number of SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) supported by the programme	S_{72}	1
- measures for evaluating tourist information policy (grade of including sustainability criteria in tourism promotion e.g. communicating access code for tourists, evaluation of tourist behaviour, knowledge and attitudes)	S_{73}	0
- measures to policy for disabled people and equal access to tourism	S_{74}	0
- the map of regional supply chains through the establishment of local or regional cooperation (e.g. territorial communes tourist associations, clusters)	S_{75}	1
- measures of participation and local control (measures of accessibility to information about the strategy, number of people and stakeholders that participated in decision-making process and the quality of their participation)	S_{76}	0
- existence and quality of management plans, visitor regulations and monitoring measures	S_{77}	1
(b) economic - value of tourism expenditure in tourism destination by target groups of tourist (annual growth) or change in visitor spending	S_{78}	1
- percentage of GDP coming from tourism	S_{79}	1
- measures taken to reduce the dependency on tourism and seasonality (percentage of income coming from tourism in the time-scale of the year, percentage of fulltime, part time and seasonal jobs in tourism, local unemployment rate off-season, local unemployment rate off-season)	S_{80}	1
- length of average tourist stay (in days)	S_{81}	1
- percentage of people employed in tourism or tourism related jobs	S_{82}	1

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[1] According to *Conceptual framework for tourism sustainability assessment* by T.G. Ko [in] *Development of a tourism sustainability assessment procedure: a conceptual approach*, Tourism Management 26 (2005) 431-445, Science Direct and Criteria for sustainable tourism, *Tourism for Nature* GEF project's publication.

- percentage of change in the total number of tourists	S_{83}	1
- growth in % of the surface of the areas which are used for tourism	S_{84}	1
(c) socio-cultural		
- increase/decrease in cultural activities or traditional events and level of participation	S_{85}	1
- level of awareness of local values and cultural heritage	S_{86}	0
- number of local businesses related to the local culture (handicrafts, music, food)	S_{87}	0
- extent of traditional land use	S_{88}	0
- number and quality of infrastructure development stimulated by tourism	S_{89}	1
- percentage of locals using tourism related infrastructure	S_{90}	0
- proportion of tourism revenues reinvested by administration in public responsibilities	S_{91}	1
- tourism's contribution to the preservation of cultural goods	S_{92}	1
- evaluation of the local inhabitants' experiences with and attitudes towards tourism (percentage of locals who are satisfied with tourism development)	S_{93}	0
- evaluation of the tourists' experience	S_{94}	0
(d) service and product quality		
- number of Green Tourism Business Awards	S_{95}	0
- number and type of tourism attractions, tourism products and visitor infrastructure	S_{96}	1
- quality measures of accommodation, food, transport and other services	S_{97}	1
- evaluation of safety	S_{98}	1
- tourists' satisfaction evaluation (percentage of return visitors, visitor expectations versus experience measure, satisfaction rating for those visitors whose experience exceeded their expectations (in 1-5 scale, 1 (much worse than expected) to 5 (much better than expected))	S_{99}	0
- length of the tourism season	S_{100}	1
- existence and quality of visitor/information centers, interpretative materials (e.g. brochures, panels), guided tours, trails, cycling routes, signage (length of trails, number and language of signs)	S_{101}	1
- level of training (guards, guides, information, catering, management, etc.)	S_{102}	1

(e) general environmental impacts		
- intensity of use (tourist/hectare or km of trails, carrying capacity indicators, level of use of protected areas and natural environment)	S_{103}	0
- percentage of tourism businesses with appropriate resource management	S_{104}	0
- behavior and attitudes of tourists and locals towards environmental protection	S_{105}	0
- type and extension of protected areas, percentage of extended surface of protected areas and creation of new ones	S_{106}	1
(f) ecosystem quality		
- revenue from tourism allowed to environment protection activity	S_{107}	0
- number and quality of direct engagement of tourism business in projects and programmes for the improvement of environment	S_{108}	0
- effectiveness of resource management measured e. g. by amount of waste and water consumed per tourist per day	S_{109}	0
- scale of impacts due to tourism infrastructure (e. g. erosion caused by trails, consumption of territory)	S_{110}	0
- type and percentage of transport facilities used (tourists arriving by car, train, etc., number of tourists using public transport)	S_{111}	1
(g) biodiversity		
- percentage of endangered species	S_{112}	0
- habitat status changes measures	S_{113}	0
- monitoring of tourist flow is mentioned	S_{114}	1
- tools for tourist flow mitigation are previewed	S_{115}	0
(h) environmental policy and management		
- amount of financial contribution of tourism to funding of conservation	S_{116}	0
- number and type of measures to engage locals in protection activities (meetings, programs, expenditure)	S_{117}	0
- percentage of locals actively involved in conservation activities	S_{118}	0
- percentage of tourism managers with environmental training	S_{119}	0
- percentage of tour operators and hotels with an environmental strategy or policy	S_{120}	0

- existence of a land use or development planning process including tourism	S_{121}	1
- existence of the environmental impact assessment legal procedure	S_{122}	1

VII Financing and Implementation of the National Tourism Strategy	$W_{VII} = 0.2$	
18. Financing	**S = 1** if there are indicated concrete institutions who are responsible for financing **S = 2** if there is indicated concrete amount for each measure implementation	
- financing is secured through governmental and voluntary resources for the entire period of the strategy	S_{123}	1
- the strategy implementation is accompanied by a micro-loan program for local businesses respecting sustainability criteria	S_{124}	-
19. Monitoring and Evaluation	**S = 0** if no **S = 3** if yes	
- M&E is a substantial part of the strategy	S_{125}	0
- the strategy has clearly described ways and means of monitoring, including the responsible body and intervals of monitoring	S_{126}	3
- the periodical monitoring is made public	S_{127}	0
- there are simple qualitative along with quantitative data gathering means employed (household survey of local residents and visitor questionnaire, Delphi technique or in-depth interviews or focus group interviews of environmental expert groups)	S_{128}	0
- tourism research on tourism market (product quality, visitor satisfaction with products and marketing) as well as relation tourism-environment (contribution of tourism to community economies, impact on nature and support for nature protection) in academic and expert institutions will assist and complement the strategy monitoring analysis	S_{129}	3

- there is a specification of data sources for strategies' evaluation (according to what data is available at national level and where the new research is required)	S_{130}	3 S_{126} – The Master Plan has a section describing implementation strategy, including the responsible body (the Implementation Group) who would meet every 3 months to analyse progress for each of the measures set out in the Master Plan and to report the outcomes to the National Tourism Authority.	
20. Execution		**S = 1** if there are roles and responsibilities for private and public sector (governmental institutions, NGO, etc.) **S = 2** if there is given time scale for each strategy measurement **S = 3** if there is a financing for implementation	
- the strategy identifies clear roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders for the implementation of the strategy	S_{131}	1	
- the strategy has an integrated adaption tool, which allows for the review of the strategy after a given period of max. 10 years	S_{132}	2 S_{132} - The Master Plan is planned to be updated every 3 years which did not happen so far and there is no financing is allocated for this.	

Total Score (TS) = $W_I \cdot \sum S_{1\text{-}21} + W_{II} \cdot \sum S_{22\text{-}31} + W_{III} \cdot \sum S_{32\text{-}44} + W_{IV} \cdot \sum S_{45\text{-}59} + W_V \cdot \sum S_{60\text{-}68} + W_{VI} \cdot \sum S_{69\text{-}122} + W_{VII} \cdot \sum S_{123\text{-}132}$	**TS** = 19,1
Maximum Score (MS) = 45	
Percentage in which a strategy fulfills given indicators (P) **P = (TS / MS) x 100%**	**P** = 42,4%

Recommendations:

1. The tourism strategy should be available in a maximum 100 pages easy to read version, or at least a summary should be published in Romanian and English as well. Although the Master Plan was initially elaborated in English, there is no English version available for public and the Romanian translation is poor. Also there are discrepancies between English and Romanian versions provided by the authorities.

2. Sustainable development of tourism should be more than just a statement, but a real priority supported with clear goals, expected results, realy consistent actions and monitoring. Biodiversity protection is only mentioned as a reference to the National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation. A consistent chapter on biodiversity conservation and sustainable landscapes should be included in the Tourism Master Plan.

3. The green infrastructure concept needs to be introduced in the tourism strategy. More protected areas don't necessary mean more sustainable land use as even ecotourism activities may threaten the highly evaluated natural sites, if not carefully managed.
The conservation of biodiversity and associated ecosystem services should be extended from protected areas to all areas where tourism activities take place, by implementing coherent actions across all policies that influence tourism field.

4. Although the Master Plan precisely noticed the lack of interest from the authorities for environment protection in tourism, it still overlooked important actions for sustainable development of tourism and biodiversity conservation. A possible explanation could be the lack of involvement of all involved stakeholders in the formulation process e.g. environmental NGO's or they didn't work together during consultations.

5. No comments

6. The tourism policy focuses mainly on development and consuming and puts too little emphasis on nature heritage conservation. Many tourism infrastructure facilities (e.g. ski facilities) were developed without taking nature and biodiversity into account, because the legislation allows interpretations which in practices lead to environmental abuses.

7. The Master Plan should be correlated with all strategic complementary documents formulated afterwards to capture all relevant sustainability issues and it should be updated with distinct chapters providing goals and actions for every related fields.

8. The Master Plan should be aligned with all sustainable tourism agreements, conventions, protocols, EU policy towards development of sustainable tourism and nature conservation.

9. The strategy should make a step forward from simple statements to actual research, figures and actions regarding the evaluated issues.

10. No comments

11. The strategy should support creation of Destination Management Organization rather than Marketing Organizations

12. No comments

13. The Master Plan should support the implementation of green certification and labelling systems (using environmental criteria) for the entire Tourism field (for example the Progressive Green Labeling System), not only for ecotourism destinations.

Considering the tourism raising awareness is a prerequisite for success of sustainable tourism development, consistent educational programs for tourist staff should be encouraged and supported in the strategy.

14. The legislation regarding energy efficiency and water management needs improvements as well as simplification of procedures. The "Green house" program should also continue.

15. National and regional tourism development and marketing plans should be updated by including SEA, EIA and EA for developing tourism infrastructure as a must, not only in protected areas, but in all areas.
    Developing financial mechanisms for the tourism sector's contribution to biodiversity conservation and landscape is also needed.

16. No comments

17. No comments

18. A financing program for local businesses respecting sustainability criteria needs to be adopted.

19. Monitoring and evaluation should be a priority, specific actions should be fixed and the outcomes made public. Given the bad state of natural environment, The Implementation Group should meet every week to analyse the strategy implementation progress.

20. A thorough update of the MP after 5 years since the elaboration is a must.