

TOURISM PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE: ROMANIA'S EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: *The long awaited by tourism professionals as the general public, the Master Plan for Tourism Development in Romania was developed by a group of experts from the World Tourism Organization, in collaboration with Romanian experts, for the period 2007-2026. The document was developed in order to help transformation of Romania into a successful tourist destination, offering a comprehensive guide and a draft long-term tourism strategy. Master Plan highlights the issues to be considered by stakeholders involved in tourism activity to exploit strengths and mitigate weaknesses of our country as a tourist destination. The results obtained in the period since the plan was developed and so far shows that it has not fulfilled the mission for which it was created, and that is a strong reason for concern. This paper is a critical review of the Master Plan, both in terms of strategic management and tourism, trying to highlight aspects that could be improved.*

Keywords: *master plan, tourism, strategic planning, strategic management, action plan, analysis*

I. Introduction- A worrying situation for Romanian tourism

A first document¹ about the concerning of civil society and tourism professionals to Romanian tourism situation was published in July 2013, at the first colloquium C.A.E.S.A.R. dedicated to "Romanian tourism promotion and development" and is entitled "Tourism in Romania 2030. Challenges. Solutions. Ownership and responsibility". The purpose of the symposium was "to identify the main priorities for the development and promotion of tourism in Romania in 2030", from the current situation of tourism and the obstacles they face Romania at the time.

In the expert groups organized at the symposium were discussed the following topics:

- Analysis of human, natural and cultural resources of Romania;
- Business environment, technology and infrastructure- exponential factor for tourism development;
- The regulatory environment and procedures in tourism;
- Elements of branding and competitive advantages of Romania.

¹ Source: www.fundatiacaesar.ro/2012/09/Raport-Colocviu-CAESAR-Turism-in-Romania-20301.pdf

Among the challenges identified in the mentioned event are:

- The number of tourists fluctuated over the past two decades;
- The low percentage contribution of tourism to G.D.P.;
- Quoting poor development factors of Romanian tourism;
- Indicators of Romanian tourism statistics are few and irrelevant.

All this comes in contrast with the fact that Romania has a huge potential for tourism development.

Participants at the symposium came up with SMART proposals for tourist valorization of strategic resources, business development, technology and infrastructure, creating an improved legislative framework, respectively SMART ways to exploit the branding and Romania's competitive advantages. Additionally it was noted that although it has invested in the development of strategic documents for tourism, but they did not specify an implementation schedule and a budget. One example is the Tourism Development Master Plan (2007-2026), whose implementation has remained at the design stage on the one hand and on the other hand, the plan does not contain specific implementation responsibilities and tools.

The mentioned event was intended to be "the first step in developing a strategy for long-term of the tourism industry", giving young people with a passion for tourism the opportunity "to get involved in finding viable solutions" to problems facing Romania's tourism.

In another document² published in September 2016 by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment Relationship and entitled "Romania competitive: A project for sustainable economic development" are presented positive and negative aspects of Romanian tourism. These negative aspects are difficult to conduct analyzes on the state and evolution of the tourist market, reducing the positive effects of the implementation of the Tourism Master Plan in our country and the strategic importance of tourism for the sustainable development of Romania.

Further, the document presents a series of objectives and measures aimed at boosting tourist activity in Romania which is reflected in the balance surplus revenues from tourism, income rate of G.D.P., plus increasing the number of jobs in tourism. It proposes five strategic objectives, each accompanied by a set of appropriate measures. For each strategic objective are offered two to four measures derived from Romanian Tourism Development Master Plan (2007-2026), plus Vision Marketing 2020 National Tourism Authority³. These strategic objectives are related to the following issues:

- Positioning Romania as a destination of quality (2020);
- Improved management of destination;
- The planned development of the seven key forms of tourism (rural tourism,

² Source: www.minind.ro/Romania-competitiva.../TURISM.pdf

³Source: www.sibiu-turism.ro/UserFiles/Docs/Strategii/Viziunea-de-Marketing-2020-a-A-N-T.pdf

nature and adventure tourism, cultural tourism, health and wellness, city break, seaside tourism and business travel);

- Improving training and professional specialization of employees in tourism;
- Improving recording revenue from tourism and its assessment directly contributing to G.D.P.

To implement the proposed measures, is allocated a total budget of EUR 37.58 billion annually, broken down by the following: Marketing, promotion and representation, Investments and Territorial Development. As responsible for the implementation of those measures and strategic objectives were named "the public and local authorities/institutions".

Current statistical data⁴ published by the authorities, shows that in 2016 the number of non-resident tourists accommodated in collective tourist accommodation was 2.4699 million people, and expenses incurred by them amounted to EUR 5.9225 billion lei. Of the total arrivals of non-residents in Romania, 51.7% were organized through travel agencies and 30.5% have organized stay on their own. The main means of transport for non-resident tourists arrived in Romania was the plane (74.9% of total visitors), followed by personal vehicle (14.3% of total), coaches and buses (9.1% of total) and other means of transportation (train, river boats, etc.) (1.7%).

In another press release⁵, is stated that revenues from tourism in the first quarter of 2016 were equal to EUR 349 million. Expenses incurred by tourists have amounted to EUR 393 million, which yielded a negative balance equal to EUR -44,000,000, confirming the trend registered in previous years.

Internationally, the statistics⁶ show that the number of overnight stays in tourist accommodation occurred in Romania in 2016 was equal to 25.4 million. Of these, non-residents made 4.9 million overnight stays and 20.6 million overnight stays residents.

The economic impact of tourism in Romania, compared with the European Union, is much lower, as can be seen from the table below (table 1):

Table 1. Economic Impact of Tourism for Romania and the European Union in the year 2016:

Indicators	Romania	European Union
G.D.P. (direct contribution)	1,3%	3,7%
G.D.P. (total contribution)	5,2%	10,2%
Employment (direct contribution)	2,4%	5,0%
Employment (total contribution)	6,2%	11,6%
Investment	8,1%	4,9%

Note: The author own adaption after the following sources:

<https://www.wttc.org/economic-research/economic-impact-analysis/Romania>

<https://www.wttc.org/economic-research/economic-impact-analysis/E.U.>

⁴ Source: www.insse.ro- Comunicat de presă nr. 70/17 martie 2017, Domeniul turism- "Turiștii nerezidenți sosiți în România în anul 2016 au cheltuit în medie 2397,9 lei/pers."

⁵ Source: www.bnr.ro, Comunicat de presă al B.N.R., 13.05.2016

⁶ Source: ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/tourism/publications- "Number of tourism nights spent in the EU slightly up in 2016"

II. Developing Tourism Master Plan

Master plan is a planning document that is the result of a contest of ideas, a public debate and / or activity of a working group. The plan may be developed to different levels - national, regional, county, etc. The plan is general, stating and indicating development directions, recommendations, programs, measures and projects. The document refers to long periods of time and area, and may include a staging of its implementation.

Like other economic activities, tourism should be planned. The best way to achieve planning is developing and implementing the Strategic Master Plan for Tourism. This document provides a comprehensive development strategy, and guide development, including concise statements of tourism policy, proposed objectives and recommendations that can be implemented on the ground. In doing so, the tourism sector can realize its full economic potential.

In view of the World Tourism Organization⁷, a plan makes a framework for long-term development of tourism, lasting between 10 and 20 years, which highlights the following elements: policy and strategy, planning, institutional power, laws and regulations, the development and diversification of the tourism product, marketing and promotion, tourism infrastructure and superstructure, the economic impact of tourism investment in tourism, human resource development, socio-cultural and environmental tourism.

Master Plan includes an action plan⁸ on short term (over three years), which contains priority actions; they should be made to start the sustainable development of tourism and the preparation of demonstration projects or pilot areas. Duration of a document of this type is between 4 and 12 months. Indicative budget set starts from a minimum amount of 150,000 EUR. The budget depends on the purpose and nature of the project. Target recipients are:

- Destination management organizations;
- National Administration of Tourism;
- Provincial governments.

According to the World Tourism Organization, the methodology for the Master Plan comprises three phases:

Phase I- project mission statement, which analyzes the current scenario of tourism and preparing the project document (detailed terms of reference) for the formulation of the Master Plan for Tourism Development.

Phase II- formulation Tourism Development Master Plan, which focuses on the following sectors: transport, accommodation, tourism activities, tourism product development, zoning tourism marketing and promotion, institutional framework, statistics and research, legislation and regulations, standards quality tourist services. The plan prioritizes actions proposed for each sector

⁷ Source: <http://cooperation.unwto.org/technical-product/tourism-development-master-plans-and-strategic-development-plans>

⁸ Source: http://cooperation.unwto.org/unwto_technical_product__portfolio.pdf

and includes an action plan which defines the roles and responsibilities of various interest holders, deadlines, indicative budgets, monitoring trends and success criteria.

Phase III- Master Plan implementation by providing technical assistance to government to set up the recommendations.

Tourism Development Master Plan can be formulated at national or local level. Moreover, they can be formulated specific theme, such as: rural tourism, mountain tourism, coastal ecotourism, spa, etc. In this context, Romania has the following types of plans (according to information found on the Internet):

- Master Plan for Tourism Development in Romania (2007-2026);
- Spa Tourism Development Master Plan (updated);
- Regional Master Plan for South East Region (2010);
- Regional Action Plan for Tourism North East (2009-2013);
- Study the Tourism Development for South West Oltenia Agency (2014);
- Region West-Travel (2014);
- Master Plan for Tourism- Sibiu;
- A comparative study of Mangalia;
- Integrated Tourism Development Strategy in the Caraş-Severin area.

National Institute of Research Development in Tourism⁹ (I.N.C.D.T.) was involved in the development of master plans and strategies for tourism, forms of tourism or territorial area.

III. A strategic approach of planning

In an article¹⁰ published in 1994 in the journal of Harvard Business Review, Henry Mintzberg shows that while appearing strategic planning, was considered "the best way" to develop and implement strategies that will improve the competitiveness of each business unit (Mintzberg, 1994).

Planning means carrying out an analysis, an analysis of how to divide an object or a set of moves in steps to formalize these steps to be implemented, followed by the articulation of the early consequences or results of each stage.

In terms of H. Mintzberg, planning represents a calculating style of management rather than engaging management style. Research conducted by him and by other experts have shown that the development strategy is complex and huge, with the most sophisticated, subtle and subconscious elements of thought.

Planning cannot generate strategies. Given a viable strategy, it can schedule, making it operational. Programming strategy is needed to coordinate actions to be sure that everyone in the organization acts in the same direction. As a result, plans are considered to be a communication tool of strategic intentions and control of individual paths to maintain common direction. On the other hand, plans can be used to gain a moral and tangible support from

⁹ Source: http://www.incdt.ro/index.pl/strategii_in_turism_ro

¹⁰ Source: <https://hbr.org/1994/01/the-fall-and-rise-of-strategic-planning>

people outside your domain. Plans have a role of simulation, but it is less used than the roles of communication and control (Mintzberg, 2008).

In one of the first chapters of his book, the Canadian professor reviewed the main schools of thought on strategy formulation. One is the "school of design" and the other is "planning school". According to the first school, the S.W.O.T. analysis is a model for developing a strategy. For the design of strategy are used some basic ideas and the strategy formation is a process of conception. From the point of view of the second school, strategy should be a controlled and conscious thought process, and model of strategy should remain simple and informal. Responsibility for carrying out this process needs to belong to the executive director of the organization, which is the strategist. The best strategy is resulting from a creative design process.

In the conception of H. Mintzberg, conventional strategic planning has two stages, namely:

- Formulation, covering the objectives and strategies;
- Implementation, referring to programs and actions. However budgets are closely linked.

In terms of change, some obstacles occur in the way of planning, caused by factors such as lack of flexibility of plans, lack of flexibility in planning and scheduling types.

Formally planned change is incremental and faces generic term to match the orientation established organization and not give rise to resistance to change. Planning can make for long term if the external environment cooperates, that manifests itself in a certain way: remains unchanged, can be predicted easily, and is subject to any strategy that organization decides to impose them.

Another aspect highlighted by H. Mintzberg in his book is the relationship between planning and politics. Considering that political activity interferes with the planning, the Canadian professor has shown that planning is not political and objective approach, which is undermined by confrontation and conflict.

A special situation discussed in the book by H. Mintzberg is planning for public relations purposes. There are some organizations which use planning as a tool, but not because they necessarily believe in the planning process itself, but because the factors that influence the activity of these organizations believe in planning. Thus, planning becomes a "front" for the organization, serving to impress those outside the organization. According to H. Mintzberg, to be able to develop a plan is a prerequisite of being able to spend some money responsibly.

This type of planning, other specialists called "ordinary planning" or "decorative planning" has some dysfunctional side effects, for example:

- It shows a penchant for using past trends in order to predict future developments;
- Planning approach is creative and intense;
- Everyone is encouraged to participate and express their opinion;

- The plan is published and widely distributed;
- The document has little substantive content, the more is longer;
- Ephemeral bodies planning is made, for example, working groups, Presidential Commission, etc;
- Bodies of this type call in prestigious experts from the outside, thereby increasing the visibility of the respective body; but experts do not have enough time to be able to figure out how to make the proposed changes;
- Planning is seen as an attempt to make a change to occur;
- Internally, this is a planning tool used to impress senior management.

H. Mintzberg recommendation is to use scenarios rather than predictions because they focus less on predicting outcomes and more on understanding the forces that will yield a specific outcome. Building scenarios is based on speculation several possible future choices, one might be correct.

On the other hand, strategic planning is favored the occurrence of certain conditions of application like stability, maturity of industry, capital intensive, large size, structure developed, simple operations, external control and grouping these conditions.

IV. Analysis of Tourism Development Master Plan of Romania (2007-2026)

A first analysis¹¹ of the Master Plan for Tourism Development in Romania was carried out in 2012 by a group of experts from environmental associations Green tourism Bucharest (Șerban, Talpeș, 2012). The basis for this analysis was the evaluation criteria and methodology for the National Tourism Development Strategy provided by CEEWEB for Biodiversity (Sustainable Tourism Working Group).

The analysis took into account the principles of sustainable tourism development, as defined by the World Tourism Organization. The document shows schematically tourism planning system in Romania, highlighting the link between the National Tourism Development Master Plan and other national planning documents, including the National Development Plan and the Regional Operational Program (2007-2013). On the other hand, the Master Plan is supported by two other normative documents, contained in H.G.R. no. 20 / 11.01.2012:

- Multiannual tourism marketing and promotion;
- Multiannual program for the development of destinations, forms and tourist products.

From a list of 25 objectives set out in the Master Plan, the expert analysis identified only two goals that relate to sustainable tourism. The following are the strategic directions / initiatives set out in the Master Plan, namely:

- Statistics and Research;
- Politics, framing and Legislation in tourism;
- Human Resource Development;

¹¹ Source: http://www.turismverde.ro/file/Final_NTDS-Assessment_Romania1.pdf

- Planning and Physical Infrastructure Enhancement Product;
- Information services;
- Destination Marketing;
- Environment;
- Investment Policy.

Specific actions and recommendations for each strategic direction of them were included in the Action Plan, accompanied by the indication of the source of funding and success criteria. These actions are presented in order of priority and according to their type, as follows: immediate action, short-term actions (initiated by the end of 2008), medium-term actions (launched prior to 2013) and long term actions (initiated before 2020). The Master Plan is not neglected to formulate an implementation strategy and establish the corresponding procedure.

In a first phase, the above analysis has taken into account only the links, relationships and correlations between environmental objectives and funding priorities identified in the program without taking into account the effect / outcome. Moreover, the government was required to establish a committee to implement the Master Plan, which is responsible for monitoring progress, but it was not up until then.

Master Plan is a document was published on the website¹² of the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (existing at that time) only in Romanian and divided into four parts. Experts have found translated into English, only the first part of the Tourism Master Plan. Another important detail, the document is about 500 pages and is very hard to read and handle. Of these, only 4 pages refer to environmental problems. Sustainable development actions foreseen in the Action Plan covers the following areas: waste, water management, air quality, planning, promotion, etc. They are categorized according to their duration. On the other hand, the National Strategy for the Development of Ecotourism is closely linked to the National Tourism Development Master Plan.

Table Assessment consists of experts to analyze the Master Plan includes a series of indicators, which are assigned a certain weight. Depending on the situation submitted in the Master Plan, each indicator receives a certain score. Finally, the total score was calculated using a weighted average. The maximum possible score is equal to 45. The result showed that the indicators cover the present strategy in an amount of 42.4%. As a result, experts have made several recommendations that relate to some of the indicators included in the evaluation table. Indicators included in the evaluation table are as follows:

- Document description and process development;
- Situation analysis and programming;
- Penetration sustainable approach to tourism policy;
- Participation in tourism management institutions;

¹² Source: www.mdrap.ro/turism/studii---strategii

- Sustainable development of tourism businesses, services and facilities offer special protected natural areas addressed;
- Measures tourism strategy;
- Financing and implementation of national tourism strategy.

Master plan was expected to be updated every three years, which has not happened until then. Moreover, there was no source of funding allocated for these actions.

The recommendations made by experts relate to the following issues and problems:

- Publication of the tourism strategy as a document easier to read, with not more than 100 pages and a summary written in Romanian and English;
- Conservation of biodiversity;
- Introducing the concept of "green infrastructure";
- Concentration tourism policy on conservation of cultural heritage, not only on development and consumption;
- Correlation Master Plan with all strategic documents complementary worded its appearance;
- Align Master Plan with all official documents related to sustainable tourism development and nature conservation;
- Creating destination management organization, rather than marketing organizations;
- Implementing green certification and labeling systems;
- Improving energy efficiency legislation on water management and simplifying procedures;
- Updating the national and regional plans for tourism development and marketing;
- Adoption Program funding local businesses respecting sustainability criteria;
- Monitoring and evaluation should be a priority and the results of actions taken be made public;
- Updating Master Plan at an interval of five years after its development.

If we look in terms of specific tourism Master Plan for Tourism of Romania seems to have been designed with an optimistic approach that combines a certain proportion of the three types of scenarios, namely: development based on demand (scenario of exogenous development), building on local investments (scenario of endogenous development) and development of foreign investments (accelerated growth scenario) (Cocean, 2014).

On the other hand, there is a partnership approach to strategic planning, specific tourism, whose steps are:

- Establishment of public service destination management;
- Identifying the stakeholders;
- Formalizing and managing partner network.

Based on the S.W.O.T.M. analysis (Strengths and Weaknesses on the Target Market), Master Plan respects the principles of strategic planning in tourism:

- Sustainable development;
- The principle of equal opportunities for tourism development.

Taking into account the structure of the Master Plan as a document, it appears that the transition from S.W.O.T.M analysis to the strategy was made directly. This is possible in two cases, namely:

- Development of the strategy was carried out under the pressure of time;
- There is not a good partnership structures sufficiently familiar with planning tools. In this case, you can perform two types of interventions:
 - Eliminating or reducing weaknesses;
 - Recovery, reproduction, or maintenance coverage strengths.

On the other hand, the Tourism Development Master Plan complies flowchart used to compile a document of this type (Cocean, 2014), including:

- Formulation of vision;
- Outline the current profile (using specific analysis tools);
- S.W.O.T. analysis;
- The formulation of the strategy;
- Action Plan.

Regarding the action plan, in terms of theory that was developed with logical framework matrix pattern, are missing the following elements: check indicators, targets and sources of verification of these indicators. Specifically, the action plan includes the following elements: objective (refer to the appropriate section of the master plan), action, motivation, time, leadership (perhaps responsibility), partners, funding and success criteria. The table below shows schematically the proposed actions according to their priority and the field to which they belong (see Table 2):

Table 2. Summary of the proposed actions- Master Plan for Tourism Development in Romania:

Activity	Time / Priority		
	immediate	short	medium
Structural arrangements	x	x	---
N.O.T. offices	x	---	---
Planning and physical infrastructure enhancement product	x	x	---
Human resource development	x	x	x
Creating tourism products	x	x	x
Information services	x	x	x
Statistics and research	x	x	x
Destination marketing	x	x	---
Environment	x	x	x
Politics, framing and legislation in tourism	x	---	---
Investment policy	---	x	x

Many of the proposed actions should be taken under the National Tourism Organization (N.T.O.) leadership or in partnership with N.T.O. Funding for the proposed actions are likely to be made from its own resources, European funds (in particular R.O.P.), the state budget, local budget and private sources.

Basically, there are big differences between what was planned and Tourism Master Plan which was conducted during the time that followed the writing and publication of this document. The tables below summarize some of the optimistic forecasts published in Romania's Tourism Master Plan, namely:

Table 3. Goals target on international and domestic visitors expenditure in the period 2005-2026 (EUR million):

Year	International Visitors Expenditure	Domestic visitors expenditure	Total expenses
2005	877	1878	2755
2011	1726	2385	4561
2016	2947	4058	7005
2021	4798	5914	10712
2026	7740	8329	16069

Source: Tourism Development Master Plan, p. 166

Table 4. Goals target on the use by visitors of the accommodation in the period 2005-2026 (million nights):

Year	International Visitors	Domestic visitors	Total
2005	3,46	14,91	18,37
2011	6,37	21,11	27,48
2016	10,22	27,69	37,91
2021	16,01	37,25	53,26
2026	23,78	48,76	72,54

Source: Tourism Development Master Plan, p. 168

Statistical data published by Romanian institutions for the period 2010-2015 contradict these predictions, showing a negative trend in the movement of the indicators considered, as can be seen from the following tables:

Table 5. Balance of payments for tourism in 2010-2015 (mil.EUR)

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Income	860	1019	1142	1196	1378	1542
Expenditure	1238	1408	1429	1547	1824	1855
Result	-378	-389	-287	-351	-446	-313

Source: Balance of payments and investment position of Romania, B.N.R., 2017

Table 6. Overnights in establishments with functions of tourist accommodation (mil.Nights):

Year	2011	2012	2013
Total	17,98	19,17	19,36
Romanians	14,91	15,87	15,88
Foreigners	3,07	3,30	3,48

Source: Romania's tourism Statistical Yearbook, I.N.S.S.E., Bucharest 2014

V. Conclusions

Over a decade or more since being drafted this document, the Tourism Master Plan was not revised and the National Tourism Organization was not established.

Lack of national organization caused a disaster in implementing the action plan, because is missing the essentials necessarily to deal with the ongoing implementation of the strategy. On the other hand, the performance was started by generating local and regional projects, funded through the Regional Operational Program 2007-2013, which is an alternative approach in implementing the strategy. Only now officially¹³ is put the problem of investment in tourism and the multiannual investment planning. All these show that it did actually planning lacks originality, which was not adapted to the specific situation of Romania as a tourist destination and managerial approach of the Tourism Master Plan was not inspired.

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¹³ Source: www.economica.net/mobile/autoritatile-vor-sa-realizeze-un-master-plan-de-investitii-in-turism-pana-la-1-iulie_132779.html, visited at 6.04.2017.

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