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Report workshop „Development of sustainable tourism in Țara Făgărașului region - North Făgăraș Massif”

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About MOVING



The importance and specificity of mountain areas, as well as our involvement in the EUROMONTANA association and our work in Braşov, a mountain town, led us to participate, together with 23 organisations in Europe, in the **MOVING** project (Valorisation of mountain regions through interconnection and green development) **funded** by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, a project that studies value chains in 23 European mountain regions. The MOVING project is the only European research project focusing on the analysis of value chains in mountain regions.

The 2 main objectives of the project are:

- Contribution to the development of European policies.
- Improve existing mountain value chains or create new ones to support the resilience and sustainability of mountain regions.

The importance of the MOVING project for local actors is given by the medium and long-term benefits:

- Potential to influence European, national and local policies;
- Potential to influence the way mountain areas are managed and the economic activity in these areas;
- Potential to influence the way economic activities in mountain areas are financed - funding programmes to address mountain specific problems (such as SAPARD);
- Potential to strengthen the resilience of mountain areas to climate change.

MOVING project - phases

Phase 1

Identification and description of 20 **value chains** in the Romanian mountain area.

Phase 2

Detailed study of the certified ecotourism value chain in the Zărnești - Piatra Craiului eco-destination (analysis of climate change in the area, maps to observe the development of the area over time, interviews with stakeholders and a workshop based on the forecasting methodology).

Phase 3

Involving youth - discussions with students of the Faculty of Tourism and Public Food (Transilvania University of Brasov) and students of the College for Agriculture and Food Industry "Țara Bârsei" Prejmer on the importance of sustainable tourism for the development of mountain areas.



Phase 4

Analysis of sustainable tourism (especially certified ecotourism) as a regional phenomenon - Făgăraş massif.

Phase 5

Analyse existing public and private policies in this area and create a set of recommendations for the European Commission.

Phase 6

Update the EUROMONTANA report on the implementation of the optional quality scheme "mountain product" with a case study on Romania.

Phase 7

Youth involvement - Summer School

Our interest in the Făgăraş County micro-region (mountain area) stems, first of all, from the similarities between the community in this area and the community in Zărneşti-Piatra Craiului. Thus, we can extrapolate the conclusions to the regional level. At the same time, considering the recent initiatives of the community in the area of association and the creation of a visitor management plan and a certified eco-destination in the area, the forecasting exercise is to the benefit of the local community in the micro-region for the local actors to identify the needs, constraints and next steps to have the desired future in 2050.

Thus, stage 4 research focused on the micro-region of Țara Făgăraşului - North Făgăraş Massif - mountain area (including Ucea, Viştea, Drăguş, Sâmbăta de Sus, Lisa, Recea, Hârşeni and Şinca).



Future scenarios for the Țara Făgărașului micro-region - mountain area

Element	Negative scenario	Positive scenario
Community	<p>Local people choose to migrate to big cities or abroad.</p> <p>Newcomers (in search of the peace and quiet of the countryside or in search of more favourable climatic conditions) are not properly integrated into the community.</p> <p>Bureaucracy prevents young and enterprising people from accessing funds to develop new businesses, which pushes them to leave the area.</p> <p>As the population ages and migrates, part of the cultural heritage is lost.</p>	<p>Some of the young people who have migrated return to the area with financial resources, new experiences and ideas for the sustainable development of the area and the maintenance of community spirit.</p> <p>Red tape in accessing funds is reduced and the whole process is streamlined and communicated to residents who will access them for the development of the area.</p> <p>There will be 'islands' representing the cultural heritage of the area, which will continue to be promoted (e.g. through events).</p>
Building development	<p>Buildings (both residential and tourist buildings) will be extended, in some cases without planning permission and not respecting the local architectural style.</p> <p>Problems of lack of harmonisation between PUGs and PUZs and between regulations in the component counties of Făgăraș County continue to exist, aggravating the trend of uncontrolled construction.</p> <p>Some of the constructions for tourist activities operate illegally, which does not result in economic benefits for the community and is a source of conflict.</p> <p>Bureaucracy to become legal remains difficult to implement and understand, and is a hindrance.</p> <p>There are two problems with respecting the traditional style of architecture: the lack of trained craftsmen to make and work with the right building materials and the high cost of these materials.</p> <p>Uncontrolled and chaotic building development also affects the availability of water resources (especially for accommodation units).</p> <p>Mountain shelters continue to remain in a precarious state.</p>	<p>There is harmonization between regulations at county level in the Țara Făgărașului area.</p> <p>There is harmonisation between PUGs and PUZs.</p> <p>The bureaucracy concerning the registration of an accommodation unit is streamlined and the procedure is simplified and correctly communicated to those interested.</p> <p>Craft activities are encouraged and promoted, and there are specific funding sources for them.</p> <p>Landlords who choose to respect the traditional architectural style receive a benefit from the local authorities (e.g. a tax deduction or help to cover costs).</p> <p>The refuges are managed by the destination management unit and therefore no longer pose a danger to tourists.</p>

Future scenarios for the Țara Făgărașului micro-region - mountain area

Element	Negative scenario	Positive scenario
Tourism	<p>The area lacks a destination management unit and therefore the area does not develop in an integrated way.</p> <p>The area continues to be attractive only in summer and tourists are concentrated in a few key points.</p> <p>There are not enough trained auxiliary staff in tourism activities (e.g. mountain guides).</p> <p>Local Gastronomic Points remain not integrated in a chain and are not properly promoted.</p>	<p>A Destination Management Unit exists in the area, comprising a diversity of stakeholders, who through collaboration and partnerships create the vision and strategy for the area and monitor its implementation. Through cooperation between the various stakeholders, private investors can be attracted to the area to set an example of good practice.</p> <p>The area becomes attractive all year round, and through collaboration and partnership between municipalities, tourists are no longer concentrated in just a few key spots.</p> <p>There are trained ancillary staff in tourist activities to ensure an authentic tourist experience.</p> <p>Local Gastronomic Points are integrated into a network and bring real socio-economic benefits to small producers and are promoted accordingly.</p>
Agricultural activities	<p>Agricultural activity will focus on berry production. Local products in the area are often uncertified, and some of the certified ones are not properly promoted and are not integrated into the tourist value chain or shops.</p> <p>Apart from a few plantations, the rest of the agricultural land in the area will be abandoned.</p> <p>The abandonment of traditional agricultural activities (e.g. grazing) and their unsustainable development affects the landscape of the area and may change the flora and fauna composition.</p>	<p>Small producers are encouraged and supported to continue their activity.</p> <p>Local products are integrated into tourism and more and more are certified (mountain product, traditional product), bringing economic benefits to small producers.</p> <p>Traditional agricultural activities are supported (financially) to continue.</p>
Pollution	<p>Waste management is still poor. Despite allocated funds, illegal landfills still exist and are a source of pollution in the area. Uncontrolled septic tanks at buildings are a source of air and water pollution in the area.</p>	<p>There is funding for micro water treatment and purification plants (especially for accommodation units).</p> <p>Waste is sorted by fractions and composting is an existing habit in every household.</p>

To download the videos presented at the meeting, please access this [link](#) until 30 April 2023.

Workshop conclusions

The main objective of the meeting on 16 March 2023, organized at the [Cobor Household](#), was to bring together local and county public authorities, local entrepreneurs and NGOs from the Țara Făgărașului micro-region to discuss together how we want Țara Făgărașului to look like in 2050, the needs and existing constraints to reach this future, but also the steps to follow.

The discussion took place in three groups: public authorities (representatives of Brasov County Council, the Romanian Parliament, the town halls of Viștea and Ticuș communes, the Local Action Group Association "Răsăritul Țării Făgărașului", the Brasov Environmental Protection Agency, National Agency for Protected Natural Areas Brasov, Environmental Guard), local entrepreneurs (Carpathian Nature Tours, Microgreens Țara Făgărașului, Travel Carpathia, Șura Culinară Șomartin, Museum of Canvases and Stories, Casa Terra) and civil society (Association Poveștile Carpaților, Association S. O.S Țara Făgărașului, Asociația Comperio Medela, Asociația Institutul de Cercetare Făgăraș, Asociația de Ecoturism România, Fundația Ștefan Călița).

The main needs identified by public authorities relate to the need for decentralisation of decisions to regional and even local level, to avoid underfunding of rural areas and to reduce the bureaucratic process (considered cumbersome, time-consuming and an obstacle to solving problems). The poor representation of rural areas in the Romanian Parliament is also an important need identified during the discussion. There is a need to fund and support cultural heritage in the area (especially intangible heritage) to ensure its continuity and protection. Improving the dysfunctional relationship between the public and private domain is also a need in the community. The next steps identified by the public authorities include the integration of the Intercommunity Development Association Regional Centre for Sustainable Development and Tourism Promotion "Țara Făgărașului" into the Destination Management Organisation developed at the county level in Brasov and there is openness for the development of a Destination Management Organisation at the intra-county level (i.e.: Brasov and Sibiu counties). At the same time, in order to contribute to the development of year-round tourism, a ski slope will be built.

The main needs faced by local entrepreneurs in the Țara Făgărașului area include the need for human resources and training for them, improving the infrastructure in the area (road and utility), supporting entrepreneurs in finding/creating a market for their products, improving communication between the private and public sectors and a long-term integrated vision for the Țara Făgărașului micro-region.

Concluzii întâlnire

While there is energy and desire to solve problems, local entrepreneurs face a number of constraints that hinder them: depopulation of the Țara Făgărașului area (migration of young people and an ageing population), lack of resources (human and financial), lack of consumer education on the importance of local products for sustaining rural areas and lack of integrated promotion of the area (including accommodation establishments, small local agricultural producers, restaurants, local gastronomic outlets, craftsmen and artisans, tourism operators), poor and non-functional legislation, corruption and lack of public-private dialogue. The next steps described by the local entrepreneurs refer to the support of vocational schools (craftsmen) and the development of internship programmes, the organisation of events for the integrated promotion of the area, the opening of a dialogue between the public and the private sector, the referral to the public authorities of the problems encountered by the entrepreneurs and concrete proposals for the improvement of legislation.

Civil society has identified as the main needs an improvement of the relationship between the three categories of actors and linking them through a destination management body. There is also a need to create a relationship between public authorities and specialists in related fields, to include NGOs and their contribution to the strategies developed in the area and to simplify access to funds. In order to find solutions to these needs, it is necessary to harmonise the strategies developed at local level and the initiatives at local level, to organise frequent meetings in the community, bringing together representatives from the three categories of actors to discuss freely the problems in the area and possible solutions. There is also a need for education and lifelong learning to professionalise the local population and to inform them about opportunities for personal and professional development (e.g. certification of agricultural products, creation of local gastronomic points). Incompetence at the legislative level often prevents the problems in the area from being solved (legislation not adapted to the needs of the community and/or poorly applied). The next steps identified by civil society representatives involve the development of a Federation of NGOs in Țara Făgărașului, which together with the Intercommunity Development Association Regional Centre for Sustainable Development and Tourism Promotion "Țara Făgărașului" and the Association of Entrepreneurs of Țara Făgărașului will form the coordination and administration board of the micro-region Țara Făgărașului. At the same time, a joint calendar of events will be developed and communication in the area and promotion of the area will be improved.



Although each category of actors (public authorities, local entrepreneurs and civil society) has its own particularities in terms of needs, constraints and next steps, we see commonalities. What stands out is the need for decentralisation of decision-making power at regional and local level, resulting in legislation that reflects the real needs of the community and can be implemented efficiently, in the reduction of bureaucracy for some procedures (e.g. drafting of PUZs) and for accessing funding sources. At the same time, a common element is the need to connect public authorities, local entrepreneurs and civil society, strengthen trust between them and create a long-term partnership.

At the end of the document we would like to thank the participants for their openness to participate and contribute to the discussion and also Gospodăria Cobor for hosting and Casa Terra for the local lunch.

The table of meeting notes and list of participants (together with contact details) can be found at the end of this document.



Annex 1: Meeting notes

Category	Needs	Actions
Public authorities	<p>Funding for infrastructure projects</p> <p>Rural areas have been under-funded</p> <p><5% of parliamentarians are from rural areas</p> <p>Need to preserve traditions</p> <p>Need to fund intangible and tangible heritage</p> <p>Newcomers to rural communities need to be/are integrated</p> <p>The process of obtaining permits is cumbersome and very lengthy</p> <p>Decentralisation</p> <p>Local communities to have the decision and work for the good of the community</p> <p>Local authorities in rural areas do not have sufficient/trained staff</p> <p>Integrated management unit (with local people)</p> <p>Cumbersome legislation + lack of resources (PUGs)</p> <p>Legislation linked to other areas</p> <p>Non-functional public-private relationship</p>	<p>ADI-Țara Făgărașului will join the Brașov County destination organisation management (DOM)</p> <p>Regional DOM (trans-county destination management)</p> <p>Ski slope</p>

Annex 1: Meeting notes

Category	Needs	Constraints	Actions
Local entrepreneurs	<p>Integrated long-term vision</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Human resources</p> <p>Promotion</p> <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Marketing</p> <p>Communication</p>	<p>Lack of resources</p> <p>Corruption</p> <p>Lack of consumer education</p> <p>Legislation</p> <p>Depopulation</p> <p>Lack of public-private partnership (dialogue)</p> <p>Lack of image and promotion</p>	<p>Internship</p> <p>Submissions</p> <p>Supporting vocational schools (craftsmen)</p> <p>Cultivating a constructive spirit</p> <p>Open</p> <p>Encouraging personal development</p> <p>Concrete proposals to improve legislation</p> <p>Events</p> <p>Partnerships and association (public-private)</p> <p>Educational campaigns</p>
Civil society	<p>Simplifying access to funds</p> <p>Connecting the three entities through a management body</p> <p>Authorities connected with specialists</p> <p>Prioritising NGOs in strategies</p> <p>Better communication with authorities</p>	<p>Harmonisation of initiatives</p> <p>Community meetings</p> <p>Continuing education and information</p> <p>Identification of new professions and tourist niches</p> <p>A level of incompetence at the legislative level (inadequate, intrusive and poorly enforced legislation)</p>	<p>Federation of NGOs in Țara Făgărașului</p> <p>Association of Entrepreneurs in Țara Făgărașului</p> <p>ADI - already exists</p> <p>Communication and promotion (multi-channel): neutral, independent, active</p> <p>Harmonisation of development strategies</p> <p>Frequent meetings of all actors (for knowledge and solutions)</p> <p>Calendar of events</p> <p>BORD (Development Confederation: Federation of NGOs, ADI and Entrepreneurs Association)</p>



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MOUNTAIN VALORISATION THROUGH
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