

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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*Publication of this article aims to raise awareness among the decision makers in tourism filed, which are responsible for this branch, and to undertake concrete actions related to organizational management for a sustainable development of tourism industry in the Republic of Moldova. The popularity created around the concept of sustainable development has led the author's conviction that tourism can be developed in compliance with the philosophy of sustainability. In seeking solutions for achieving the sustainable development there is required a specific sectoral view as that of services performance in the tourism field. Because of the intensive connection of tourism with many other economic and social development areas, sustainable tourism should be seen as a whole that encompasses all other sectors, this representing an essential argument in planning the government's agenda. Tourism planning and development should be integrated at all levels, so that the development policies of this sector should reflect the regional, national and international levels. Analyzing the deficiencies and problems faced by the branch of tourism of the Republic of Moldova, the author comes up with proposals on the implementation of concrete actions which would boost this industry, capable of becoming a competitive and balanced developed economic sector, to be supplier of hard currency in the country, to effectively capitalize on heritage tourism, to promote Moldovan hospitality and to ensure welfare of the population involved in servicing tourists. Research methodology lies in identification of the problem, data collection and information about the tourism branch, solution proposals and formulating conclusion. Identification of the problem. Functionality of Moldovan tourism industry largely depends on state policy in the management of this branch. Nowadays, the legal and regulatory framework is outdated and Law 352 "On the organization and conduct of tourism activity in the Republic of Moldova", requires major changes. Many segments of the sector have no regulations. The tourism market is growing faster than the normative base. Recommendations. Improvement of the legal framework in the field of tourism, in accordance with the requirements of the tourism market, harmonization of tourism legislation to European standards, implementation of actions proposed by the author in the 5 areas of intervention in the tourism industry.*

**Keywords:** *tourism, sustainable development, tourism industry, inbound tourism, tourism potential, tourism information and promotion structures, tourism brand, tourism register, tourist areas.*

*Publicarea prezentului articol are ca scop sensibilizarea factorilor de decizie din domeniul turismului, care sunt responsabili de această ramură și întreprinderea acțiunilor concrete ce țin de managementul organizațional în vederea dezvoltării durabile a industriei turistice a Republicii Moldova. Popularitatea creată în jurul conceptului de dezvoltare durabilă a determinat convingerea autorului, conform căreia, turismul se poate dezvolta în conformitate cu filosofia durabilității. În căutarea căilor spre obținerea unei dezvoltari durabile este necesară o viziune specific sectorială, ca cea a performanțelor serviciilor în domeniul turismului. Din cauza conexiunii intensive a turismului cu multe alte domenii de dezvoltare economice și sociale, turismul durabil trebuie văzut ca un întreg, care cuprinde toate celelalte sectoare, acest fapt reprezentând un argument esențial în planificarea agendei guvernamentale. Planificarea și dezvoltarea turismului trebuie integrată la toate nivelurile astfel, încât politicile de dezvoltare a acestui sector să reflecte nivelul regional, național și internațional. Analizând deficiențele și problemele cu care se confruntă ramura turistică a Republicii Moldova, autorul vine cu propuneri privind implementarea unor acțiuni concrete, care ar impulsiona această industrie, capabilă să devină un sector economic competitiv și dezvoltat echilibrat, să fie furnizor de valută forte în țară, să valorifice eficient patrimoniul turistic, să promoveze ospitalitatea moldovenească și să asigure bunăstarea populației implicate în deservirea turiștilor. Metodologia cercetării constă în identificarea problemei, colectarea datelor și informației despre ramura turistică, propunerea anumitor soluții și formularea*

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concluziei. Identificarea problemei. Funcționalitatea industriei turistice a Republicii Moldova depinde, în mare măsură, de politica statului în gestionarea acestei ramuri. La momentul de față cadrul legislativ și normativ este învechit, iar Legea 352 „Cu privire la organizarea și desfășurarea activității turistice în Republica Moldova”, necesită modificări esențiale. Multe segmente ale sectorului nu dispun de reglementări. Piața turistică se dezvoltă mai rapid decât cadrul normativ. *Recomandări.* Perfecționarea cadrului normativ în domeniul turismului, în conformitate cu cerințele pieței turistice, racordarea legislației turistice la standardele europene, implementarea acțiunilor propuse de către autor, în cele 5 domenii de intervenție ale ramurii turistice.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** turism, dezvoltare durabilă, industrie turistică, turism receptor, potențial turistic, structuri de informare și promovare turistică, marcă turistică, registrul turismului, zone turistice.

Публикация этой статьи предназначена для информирования органов публичного управления в сфере туризма, которые ответственны за эту отрасль, и имеет как цель реализацию конкретных действий, связанных с устойчивым развитием индустрии туризма Республики Молдова. Туризм в Республике Молдова должен стать конкурентноспособным и равномерно развитым сектором экономики, который эффективно осваивает туристическое достояние страны, продвигает молдавское гостеприимство по высоким стандартам, обеспечивает разнообразный досуг для граждан страны. Поиск решений, которые могут обеспечить устойчивое развитие туризма, требует концептуальный отраслевой подход. Для этого необходимо сконцентрировать весь потенциал и ресурсы, которые имеются на данном рынке. Из-за интенсивной связи туризма с другими экономическими и социальными отраслями, устойчивое развитие туризма следует рассматривать как одно целое, которое охватывает весь экономический спектр других отраслей, представляющий как существенный аргумент в планировании действий со стороны правительства. Планирование и развитие туризма должно быть сконцентрировано на всех уровнях таким образом, чтобы развитие этого сектора отражали региональные, национальные и международные уровни. Анализируя недостатки и проблемы, с которыми сталкивается туристическая отрасль в Молдове, автор предлагает реализацию некоторых действий, способных стимулировать развитие этой сферы. Туризм может становиться конкурентноспособным и сбалансированным сектором экономики, быть поставщиком твердой валюты, эффективно используя при этом культурное наследие и молдавское гостеприимство. Туризм может обеспечить и благосостояние населения, которое участвует в обслуживании туристов. Методология исследования заключается в выявлении проблем, сбор данных и информации о туристической отрасли, а также формулировка предложений и реализация конкретных действий по этому вопросу. Функциональность индустрии туризма в Республике Молдова, зависит во многом от государственной политики в управлении этой отрасли. В настоящее время правовая нормативная база устарела, а Закон «Об организации и осуществлении туристической деятельности в Республике Молдова» требует существенных изменений. Многие секторы туризма не имеют соответствующей регламентации. Туристический рынок развивается быстрее, чем нормативно-правовая база. *Рекомендации.* Совершенствование нормативной базы в области туризма в соответствии с требованиями туристического рынка, приближение законодательства к европейским стандартам, внедрение действия предложенных автором в пяти областях деятельности индустрии туризма.

**Ключевые слова:** туризм, устойчивое развитие, индустрия туризма, въездной туризм, туристический потенциал, структуры по информированию и продвижения туризма, туристическая марка, регистр туризма, туристические зоны.

**JEL Classification:** L83, L89, L80.

**CZU:** 338.48(478)

**Introduction.** Republic of Moldova currently faces many problems that have to be solved immediately, mostly of them concerning the socio-economic development, but it would be a mistake to ignore the needs of future generations. We can not endlessly exploit natural, human, and economic resources without their regeneration and sustainable management.

Economic growth and development inevitably involve changes in ecosystems, and therefore the economic policy of tourism development should be designed rationally so as not to harm the natural and human environment, either now or in the future.

For sustainable development to be implemented, it will have to meet the needs and aspirations of people while respecting the ecological limits of the country, and the only viable way to achieve this is the economic integration of tourism into the environment without causing any negative ecological consequences [1].

**The importance and consequences of sustainable development.** Sustainable development implies a new paradigm that takes into account the entire capital stock: natural capital, anthropic capital, human capital and social capital, and maintaining a proper relationship between them.

**The value of tourism in the development of society.** Tourism is one of the industries that should be involved in sustainable development as a resource industry dependent on the natural and human potential, cultural heritage of society. Statistical dynamics on the development of this sector over the last five years is shown in table 1.

Table 1

## Internal, inbound, outbound tourism during 2011-2016

|      | Internal tourism |          |               | Organized inbound tourism |          |               | Outbound tourism |          |               | Total revenue in tourism |
|------|------------------|----------|---------------|---------------------------|----------|---------------|------------------|----------|---------------|--------------------------|
|      | Total            | Tourists | Excursionists | Total                     | Tourists | Excursionists | Total            | Tourists | Excursionists |                          |
| 2011 | 37764            | 27917    | 9847          | 10788                     | 8993     | 1795          | 136095           | 135875   | 220           | 860,026 mil.MDL          |
| 2012 | 34363            | 27965    | 6398          | 12797                     | 11 369   | 1 428         | 146791           | 146 425  | 366           | 972,634 mil.MDL          |
| 2013 | 34172            | 25446    | 8726          | 13150                     | 11492    | 1658          | 157556           | 157288   | 268           | 1,05 bil.MDL             |
| 2014 | 43045            | 26648    | 16397         | 14362                     | 10608    | 3754          | 180646           | 179573   | 1073          | 1,38 bil.MDL             |
| 2015 | 37255            | 24817    | 12438         | 15514                     | 12717    | 2797          | 189790           | 185702   | 4088          | 1,57 bil.MDL             |
| 2016 | 41297            | 25437    | 15860         | 15668                     | 11937    | 3731          | 177252           | 170131   | 7121          | 1,48 bil.MDL             |

Source: Developed by authors based on data from the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova

Table 2

| Tourists staying in accommodation units in the Republic of Moldova | Year Tourists    | 2009          | 2010           | 2011          | 2012          | 2013          | 2014          | 2015          | 2016          |
|--|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  |                  | 1             | Local tourists | 168325        | 166300        | 173309        | 179233        | 175901        | 189104        |
| 2  | Foreign tourists | 59563         | 63593          | 75000         | 88956         | 95640         | 93897         | 94381         | 121340        |
|  | <b>Total</b>     | <b>227888</b> | <b>229893</b>  | <b>248309</b> | <b>268189</b> | <b>271541</b> | <b>283001</b> | <b>278855</b> | <b>306307</b> |

Source: Developed by authors based on data from the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova

Tourism "sells" these resources as some parts of its product, but also shares some resources with other users, including local communities, occupying one of the main roles. It is essential for tourism to be active in issues of sustainable development and cooperate with other industries in ensuring the quality and longevity of resources on which the entire tourism activity is based [2].

Table 3

**SWOT analysis of the tourism industry of the Republic of Moldova**

| <i>Strengths (S)</i>  | <i>Weaknesses (W)</i>  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positioning of tourism as a priority branch of the Republic of Moldova's economy</li> <li>2. Availability of natural and anthropogenic tourist resources</li> <li>3. Road infrastructure in continuous growing</li> <li>4. The existence of the legal and normative framework in the field</li> <li>5. Implementation of tourism projects financed from the state budget</li> <li>6. Implementation of strategies and programs of tourism development different regions</li> <li>7. Availability of tourism reception structures with modern accommodation and food functions</li> <li>8. Availability of unique wine cellars</li> <li>9. Presence of conference rooms equipped with modern equipment</li> <li>10. Operation of two training and personnel retraining centers in the tourism industry</li> <li>11. Activity of specialized various associations</li> <li>12. The Republic of Moldova is a member of international organizations that support the development of tourism (World Tourism Organization of the United Nations, the Danube Competence Center, BSEC, GUAM, CIS Tourism Council, etc.)</li> <li>13. Approval and entry into service of new tourism country brand.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tourist legislation unaligned to European standards</li> <li>2. Insufficient and outdated legislative and regulatory framework</li> <li>3. Lack of qualified human resources in tourism management and provision of quality services</li> <li>4. At the central level, there is no institutional framework for the implementation of state policy in the field</li> <li>5. Lack of functional tourist information offices in Moldova's diplomatic missions accredited abroad</li> <li>6. Lack of Tourism Information and Promotion Centers nationwide.</li> <li>7. Limited number of tour operators and travel agencies that form and sell local tourism products</li> <li>8. Lack of tourism hotels of 2-3 star category, which would contribute to the development of inbound tourism through attractive prices competitive on the international tourism market.</li> <li>9. High accommodation costs for services in the local tourist places</li> <li>10. Low number of accommodation structures in rural areas where the sights are located.</li> <li>11. Few classified accommodation structures</li> <li>12. Weak tourism indicators</li> <li>13. Lack of information stands nearby tourism sites</li> <li>14. Old tourist buses park</li> <li>15. Lack of skilled personnel and experts of international languages in tourist attractions and museums</li> <li>16. Statistics are calculated incorrectly and do not reflect the actual situation from the field</li> <li>17. Lack of records on individual tourists</li> <li>18. Low efficiency of the control mechanism on compliance with quality of tourism services provided</li> <li>19. Lack of LOW-COST flights with major European countries.</li> </ol> |
| <i>Opportunities (O)</i>  | <i>Threats (T)</i>   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Traditional hospitality.</li> <li>2. Beneficial strategic position of the country (border with the CIS and the European Union countries).</li> <li>3. No need of visas for citizens of EU, USA, Japan, Canada, etc.</li> <li>4. Reducing the number of countries which have the status of country with high risk of migration, taking as a basis the list approved by the European Union.</li> <li>5. Air connections with major airport hubs</li> <li>6. Liberalization of prices on flights and demonopolisation of aviation</li> <li>7. Existence of foreign aid projects for tourism development</li> <li>8. Large number of events with a high tourist attraction: cultural, artistic, sporting, recreational</li> <li>9. Worldwide known status of a wine country</li> <li>10. Computerization of services for inbound tourism at the country level</li> <li>11. The availability of online platforms in 3-D format of sightseeing</li> <li>12. The existence of a performant country web page</li> </ol>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Underdeveloped infrastructure at sights of national and international interest</li> <li>2. Low level of knowledge in Europe and the world of Moldova as a tourism destination</li> <li>3. Lack of favorable investment climate for investors to develop infrastructure of tourist reception structures with functions of accommodation and food for mass tourism.</li> <li>4. Low competitiveness of Moldovan tourism offer (high costs for visa to Moldova, high costs to the flights operated by local airlines)</li> <li>5. Extremely limited number of objectives included in the UNESCO heritage list and in the Guinness book</li> <li>6. Insufficient financial resources for promotion of the field: exhibitions, promotional materials, financial support to projects in the field, etc.</li> <li>7. Inefficient management of the tourism sector at the second local government level.</li> <li>8. Lack or improper restrooms at entry points in the country and at gas stations designed to serve foreign tourist groups on national tourist routes</li> </ol>  |

Source: Developed by author.

Sustainable development in tourism is a necessity, and the link between tourism and the environment is stronger than in other industries. Often tourism has created significant economic, social or environmental effects and their mitigation can not be done only through a professional management that could attract in the decision making process all stakeholders involved in tourism development.

Being a sector of services, tourism contributes to the economy through capital accumulation within about 12 types of activities specific for the sector, attracting in its activity around 20 work related branches.

**Tourism Development Strategy „Tourism 2020”.** The strategy was developed in 2014 and approved by the Government Decision no. 338 of 19 May, 2014 [3]; it identifies the development of tourism as a national priority and examines the situation in the field and the given consultations have allowed to mention achievements, finds trends, highlight problems and suggest prioritizing areas for development of the field for the period 2014-2020. The overall objective of the Strategy is to boost tourism activity in the Republic of Moldova by developing domestic and inbound tourism. The SWOT analysis of the development of internal and inbound tourism is presented in Annex 2. In our opinion, this strategy justifies the financial support that has to be given to infrastructure rehabilitation of tourism areas and valorization of natural, historical and cultural heritage, to include them in the touristic circuit and promote them to attract tourists.

Investments in tourism will allow developing regions to use the advantages offered by the potential of tourism and cultural heritage in identifying and strengthening own identity in order to improve its competitive advantage in sectors with high added value and high qualitative and cognitive content, both on traditional markets and new emerging markets [5].

Tourism creates opportunities for regional and local economic growth and helps in creation of new jobs through cultural and natural heritage valorization, specific to each of the three development regions of the country.

In the author's opinion, valorization of tourism attractions in different parts of the country can contribute to the economic growth of some declining urban centers, by favoring the emergence and development of local enterprises, transforming areas with low economic competitiveness in areas attractive to investors.

Tourism activity creates demand for a wide range of goods and services purchased by tourists and tourism enterprises, including goods and services produced by other economic sectors (trade, construction, transport, food industry, handicrafts) [1].

In all developing regions, development of tourism attractions is largely limited by the quality of infrastructure of tourism areas, services in general, and of accommodation and entertainment services, in particular, all of these being major obstacles to tourism development.

It is expected that the implementation of the Tourism Development Strategy "Tourism 2020" will help to improve tourism areas infrastructure, services, accommodation and leisure facilities and through a sustained support domestically and internationally for Moldova's image, to increase the quality to European standards, of all the conditions for practicing tourism, with direct impact on tourism demand for Moldova as a tourism destination.

Tourism in the Republic of Moldova must become a balanced developed and competitive economic sector that capitalizes effectively the country's tourism heritage, promotes Moldovan hospitality at high standards and provides citizens leisure diversity.

**Fields of intervention.** In the author and the working group's view, that had developed the Tourism Development Strategy "Tourism 2020" for boosting tourism activity in the Republic of Moldova, for the development of domestic and inbound tourism, **5 areas of intervention are required** [3]:

1. improvement of the legal framework in the field of tourism in accordance with the requirements of the tourism market, adjusted to European standards;
2. valorization of the national tourism potential and promotion of Moldova's image as a tourism destination;
3. the regional development of tourism;
4. enhancing the training level of specialized staff and the quality of tourism services;
5. technological modernization of the tourism industry through the use of information technology and communications.

For the **first area of intervention "Perfectioning the normative framework in the field of tourism in accordance with the requirements of the tourism market, adjusted to European standards"**, **9 actions** are needed:

**I-st action.** *Development of the legal framework on the assessment of tourism heritage and tourism zoning*, which will provide the development and approval of the Registry of tourism, development of the mechanism of assessment of tourism potential of administrative-territorial units based on the tourism Registry. In order to develop the Registry of tourism there is necessary to:

- establish the tourism sightseeing that have to be assessed;
- establish the mechanism for evaluation and methods of granting scores for the administrative territorial units;

- develop tourism zoning criteria of the country;
- include tourism areas determined in the National Land Management Plan.

**II-nd action. *Development of the legal framework on tourism routes, tourism signs*** will result in the inclusion of the concerned concepts in the legislation, development of methodological norms that will comprise the requirements and conditions for the creation, certification and registration of tourism routes.

For tourism signalization there will be developed a regulation or standard, where will be stipulated requirements for the construction and use of tourism signs in accordance with European standards, the content of tourism signs, also who makes orders, who manufactures, installs and who is responsible for the maintenance of indicators, penalties for intentional damage, etc.

**III-rd action. *Perfectioning the normative framework regarding the delimitation of tasks of tour operators and travel agencies*** will aim at increasing the accountability of economic agents, holders of tourism licenses, in forming the package of tourism services, enhancing the quality of sold products and services and protecting consumer rights. The aim of the action will be achieved by introducing specific requirements in legislation for the formation of tourism services packages, of the conventional liability for breaching the law on the formation of tourism services packages.

The amendments in the tourism legislation will create prerequisites for the development of the tourism market in an appropriately competitive environment and with a high quality of provided services, will help reduce the risks of purchasing poor quality tourism products, and tour operators will be able to get specialization on certain segments that would allow diversification of tourism offers, capable of meeting the most diverse wishes of tourists.

**IV-th action. *Improving the legal framework for ensuring the quality of tourism services*** will include:

- modification of the model of tourism contract on the provision of tourism services between the economic agent – owner of a tourism license and beneficiary of tourism services;
- development of new typological contracts in tourism: commercial agent contract, recreational contract, bailment contract, contract for providing transportation services for tourists, contract on providing accommodation services, contract on performance of tourist guide services;
- changing requirements and criteria for grading the tourist reception structures with functions of accommodation and food services;
- review the requirements concerning tourism transportation.

**V-th action. *Improving the legal framework on the protection of tourism services consumer rights***. In order to increase the quality of tourism product and ensure consumer's protection it is necessary to develop quality standards of tourism services, tourism services certification mechanism, rules of use of Tourism Label of the Republic of Moldova.

Mechanism to ensure the quality of tourism services and consumer protection will also provide the control of the tourism activity. To this end, the **Specialized Body of Central Public Administration** will perform, based on risk factors, controls on the activity of agents of tourism market.

**VI-th action. *Development of the legal framework on the activity of tourism guides***. The action will include the development and inclusion in the legislation of provisions regarding the activity of tourism guides: who can become a tourism guide, who approves the terms of selection, training and use of tourism guides, how the qualification level is being assessed, what are considered as contraventions in the activity of tourism guides and so on. The regulatory framework will contain methodological norms on the selection, training and use of tourism guides and a Regulation related to the certification of tourism guides, which will include: guides categories, the procedure of attestation, requirements for activity, activity control.

**VII-th action. *Development of a mechanism for organizing and functioning of the structures of tourism information and promotion***. To this end, in the Law no. 352-XVI of 24 November 2006, there will be introduced provisions on the conditions of organization and operation of office and tourism information and promotion centers, there will be extended the list of structures which have the right to establish tourism promotion and information centers, will be exposed their duties, after which there will take place the development of the legal framework on the creation of the Tourism Information office and of the Framework-regulation – on the organization and operation of tourism promotion and

information centers.

**VIII-th action. Simplification of procedures related to starting a tourism businesses in rural areas** will contain the development and inclusion of provisions in the legislation regarding the start of businesses in the field of rural tourism, namely the introduction in the Law no. 352-XVI of 24 November 2006 of a new chapter "Development of rural tourism", simplifying classification procedures for tourism accommodation structures and modification of the Methodological norms concerning the classification of tourism reception structures with functions of accommodation and catering, referring to structures from the rural areas.

**IX-th action. Improving statistical tools and the mode of collection, processing, validation and dissemination of statistical data on tourism** includes the following activities:

- a) improvement of the mode of collection, processing, validation and dissemination of statistical data on tourism;
- b) gradual implementation of the electronic reporting module on tourism statistics, using the Internet network;
- c) gradual implementation of the Satellite Account in Tourism.

**For the second area of intervention "Valorization of national tourism potential and promotion of the Republic of Moldova's image as a tourism destination",** there are 8 actions necessary to be achieved:

**I-st action. Diversification of tourism promotion tools,** which will include the development of a policy of promoting tourism potential and marketing plans, drafting, editing and distribution of promotional materials: advertisings, maps, travel guides, tourism events organization, use of the Tourism Label of the Republic of Moldova in promotional materials, participation in exhibitions in the country and abroad, etc.

**II-nd action. Including the national tourism potential in the international tourism circuit,** which will be achieved through certification of routes and tourism sightseeing, connection of domestic routes to European tourism routes, creation of common tourism routes with neighboring countries (eg. "Wine Route", "Monasteries of Bessarabia" "Medieval Jewelry: Hotin, Soroca, Suceava fortresses"), etc.

**III-rd action. Valorization of active forms of tourism at present,** which will include activities on the development of wine, business, rural, spa, religious and tours tourism,.

**IV-th action. Development of forms of tourism that need to be boosted,** which will include activities on boosting the cultural, gastronomic, social, sporting, automotive, weekend, urban, nostalgic and ecologic tourism.

**V-th action. Development of a perspective form of tourism,** which will include the implementation of activities that would boost the development of academic, transit, water, medical and adventure tourism.

**VI-th action. The diversification and enhancement of types of recreation** that will be achieved by promoting the locations and types of recreation, with their subsequent inclusion in tourism offers.

**VII-th action. Diversification of tourism destinations on outbound tourism under agreements to be concluded with states which are of interest for tourists from the Republic of Moldova,** will include consultation with economic agents from the field of tourism and civil society in order to identify new destinations of interest to the outbound tourism and increasing bilateral and multilateral collaboration with the countries concerned, which will result in agreements on cooperation in the field of tourism.

**VIII-th action. Collaboration with the Diaspora to promote the country's image and attracting foreign tourists** will be achieved by organizing in the country jointly with the Moldovan Diaspora, of promotion actions of the country, the organization in their countries of residence, during national and traditional holidays of cultural and tourist events, editing and distribution through Diaspora associations of leaflets about traditions, customs and national tourism; support, based on partnerships, of projects of national and international importance in the field of tourism between economic agents in the country and the Moldovan Diaspora.

**For the III-rd area of intervention "Regional development of tourism",** it is necessary to implement 6 actions.

**I-st action. Carrying out the tourism zoning of the country,** which will contain:

- a) inventory and records of tourism heritage which will be achieved by completing the Registry of tourism, according to its structure and official documents for registration of tourism heritage;
- b) assessment of the tourism potential of administrative – territorial Units according to the content

of Registry of tourism and carrying out the country's tourism zoning in accordance with the approved methodological norms;

c) inclusion in the National Land Management Plan of highlighted tourism areas.

**II-nd action. *Identifying and valorization of investment opportunities***, which will contain:

- development and implementation of projects funded from national and international funds;
- attracting investment projects and grants in the tourism industry;
- promoting investment opportunities in tourism during business meetings;
- organization of events such as the Forum of investment in tourism, trainings for writing and implementing projects, etc.

**III-rd action. *Support and stimulation of economic agents from the tourism industry that contribute to the development of domestic and inbound tourism***, will be achieved by:

- organization of events for awarding the economic agents from the field of tourism;
- free participation economic operators in the tourism industry that contribute to the development of domestic and inbound tourism in the national stand of the Republic of Moldova at international exhibitions;

- free inclusion of economic agents in printed promotional materials edited by the state, etc.

**IV-th action. *Modernization of tourism infrastructure and planning of tourism destinations***, which will be achieved by implementing tourism projects financed from various sources, but mainly from the Regional Development Fund.

**V-th action. *Establishment of a tourism-pilot zone***. The purpose of this action is to create a tourism – pilot zone with adequate infrastructure that will serve as a model for tourism development. In this respect, a feasibility study will be conducted to identify the most appropriate locations and ways of their creation, followed by the project development and establishment of the zone.

**VI-th action. *Development of an efficient mechanism of cooperation with local authorities***. Activities within this action are directed towards:

- a) designation of the persons responsible for tourism development in the local authorities of the second level;
- b) training of responsible for tourism development in the local authorities of the second level;
- c) coordination by the **Specialized Body of Central Public Administration** of the development and implementation of local policy documents of tourism development;
- d) creation of tourism promotion and information centers in the regions with tourism potential;
- e) creation and exploitation of local tourism routes;
- f) creation of local registers of tourism;
- g) development of recommendations for the development of rural tourism, etc.

**For the fourth area of intervention "*Improving the training level of specialized staff and the quality of tourism services*", 4 actions** are required to be achieved.

**I-st action. *Adjusting training programs for specialists in the tourism branch to market requirements*** will be achieved by updating the nomenclature of functions of tourism and their description, revision of academic curricula in the field of tourism, development of curricula for new specialties as required by the tourism market.

**II-nd action. *Diversification of opportunities for staff perfectioning***, will include:

- elaboration and implementation of plans for staff perfectioning,
- organization of seminars, conferences, thematic round tables;
- exchange and training of specialists in the field from abroad;
- training of tour operators on the creation of tourism packages through information technologies;
- inviting foreign IT specialists in tourism, for training and transfer of new technologies in the provision of tourism services, etc.

**III-rd action. *Enhancing the level of compliance with quality standards in tourism*** will be achieved by:

- intensification of the classification process of tourism reception structures with functions of accommodation and catering. This action will include: record of all accommodation structures, identification of unclassified accommodation structures, classification of tourism reception structures with functions of accommodation and catering, control on compliance with classification requirements;

- checking the quality of tourism service provided by the agents of tourism market. This will be done through thematic checks on the work of agents of tourism market, etc.



**IV-th action. Counteraction of the phenomenon of illegal activities and illegal work in tourism.**

In pursuit of this action, there will be concluded cooperation agreements between the **Specialized Body of Central Public Administration** and various state agencies concerned to combat illegal activities and illegal employment in tourism; thematic working groups will be created formed of representatives of the Tourism Agency and other ministries and their subordinated institutions that will undertake joint action to combat these phenomena.

**For the fifth area of intervention "Technological modernization of the tourism industry through the use of information technology and communications", 4 actions** are necessary to be achieved.

**I-st action. Creation and implementation of the evidence mechanism, in an electronic format, of the tourism potential of the country.** This action will be achieved by developing an electronic database on the tourism potential, which will result in the creation, development and functionality of the Automated Information System "Registry of tourism", interoperable with other banks and databases on tourism potential, and at a later stage, the creation of the mechanism of reflection on the online map of the location and information about the tourism sightseeing from the Registry of tourism through the creation and use of the Automated Information System "Digital map of tourism potential".

**II-nd action. Creation and implementation of the mechanism of electronic statistic recording and reporting,** will be achieved through the conclusion of the agreement between the **Specialized Body of Central Public Administration** and Electronic Governing Center on connecting to the platform "M-Cloud", development of forms of electronic reporting "Report on the use of travel vouchers", 1-TUR and 1-B-SC, with the subsequent connection to SIA "E-reporting".

**III-rd action. Gradual transition to provision, in an electronic form, of tourism services** will be performed through 2 areas: public and private. In the next years, there will take place the transition to electronically receiving, by state institutions, of requests of classification of tourism accommodation structures and certification of tourism guides. Among the actions that have to be taken should be mentioned the development of the Concept of classification service in the form of e-service, in accordance with the single desk of tourism principle and placing the service of classification of tourism accommodation with functions of accommodation and catering on the Public Services Portal [www.servicii.gov.md](http://www.servicii.gov.md). During the development of the Regulation of certification of tourism guides, there will be provided the way to receive applications for certification in an electronic format.

**IV-th action. Diversification of tourism promotion instruments in electronic form** shall contain:

- development and launch of websites to promote tourism of the Republic of Moldova;
- creating accounts for the country's tourism promotion on social networks;
- development and implementation of electronic orientation applications and tourism promotion, etc.

Within the portal, the specialized tourism information will be presented through audio travel guides, electronic tourism brochures, with the possibility of uploading images in real-time or videos through modern technology (GPS, digital guides, smart phones, etc.).

**Conclusion.** The important role that tourism should play in developing the economic and social future of the Republic of Moldova is undeniable. Tourism must have a considerable positive impact on the economic development of areas and regions of tourism attraction. The most important positive effects of tourism refer to the contribution in currency, contributions in government revenues, generation of opportunities for business and employment of human resources.

Tourism expenditure made by foreign tourists and services exports generate significant revenue for the economies of receiving countries and stimulate necessary investment to finance other sectors, thus accelerating through the multiplier effect, the economic growth and development.

Tourism development is justified by the fact that tourism helps to ensure funding sources for conservation of natural areas, arts, crafts, historical and archaeological areas, some cultural traditions, as these items represent attractions for tourists.

However, many efforts have to be made in order to ensure that the potential of the tourism industry of the Republic of Moldova is fully valorized. Both government and tourism branch will have to find solutions to a large number of challenges, to ensure that maximum benefits are achieved for the economy and society in a sustainable and long term.

Long-term planning at regional and national level is a prerequisite for generating investor confidence and organization of successful and sustainable development of tourism in the Republic

of Moldova.

Principles that should guide the design and implementation of policies for tourism development in the Republic of Moldova, in our opinion, are:

- creating a positive image of the Republic of Moldova as a tourism destination by promoting the national tourism brand;
- develop and strengthen inbound tourism by supporting tourism products and specific marketing activities;
- creation of a diversified and competitive tourism offer by supporting the development of domestic and international investments, leading to the increased volume of tourism activity and respectively, of tourism traffic;
- stimulating the development of qualitative tourism offer, enabling the increase of revenue in domestic and foreign currencies in the tourism field, as well as the increase of the share of tourism in GDP;
- increase of net revenue of the population involved in servicing tourists and increase the absorption level of labor force;
- sustainable valorization and restoration of the cultural heritage through the creation and modernization of related infrastructure;
- creation of Tourism Information and Promotion Centers to increase the number of tourists;
- establishment of an integrated and computerized system of the Moldovan tourism offer;
- decentralization of the decision making process from the central level, to the local public administration of second level;
- ensuring a partnership between all actors involved in the development of tourism industry;
- planning the use of natural and human resources through programs and projects to attract investments;
- co-financing through the financial contribution of the various actors involved in implementing programs and projects for tourism development.

Implementation of those actions, which were described in this article, in our view, would accelerate the pace of development of the tourism industry and the community could become the main beneficiary of the positive effects generated by this branch.

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**Recommended for publication: 28.11.2016**