

Colinele Transilvaniei

Destination management for
rural economic development

A rural case study from Romania



*Authentic places.
Stronger communities.*



260,000 ha
mosaic rural
landscape



5 UNESCO sites
and 60+ fortified
churches



600 km trails
hiking, cycling,
horse riding



90 local operators
in the ecotourism
network



Destination management can turn dispersed rural assets into a functioning local economy.

The rural challenge

Valuable assets, but a fragmented rural economy

45 local authorities • 100,000+ residents • strong rural assets across a large territory



Small-scale
agriculture



Dispersed
villages



Living heritage
5 UNESCO sites,
60+ fortified churches



High
biodiversity



Very small
businesses



Limited access
to markets



Skills and
capacity gaps



Seasonality and
low cooperation



Rural resources exist, but they do not automatically translate into local economic value. **We need connection, cooperation and a common approach.**

Our model

Connecting assets, entrepreneurs and the market

*More than a destination.
A stronger rural economy.*



SUPPORTED BY



including mentoring, regular meetings and visitor insights



Authentic places. Stronger communities.

PEOPLE | PLACES | OPPORTUNITIES

Supporting entrepreneurs beyond farming

From traditional activities to complementary rural income



Traditional rural activities



Farming & local food



Households & accommodation



Orchards, plants & local produce



Crafts & traditional skills



Local gastronomy



Our support (network + BizHUB)



Training & mentoring



Product and experience design



Financial planning & pricing



Marketing & digital presence



Regular network meetings



Guidance on legal requirements



New income opportunities



Accommodation in rural households



Food experiences & tasting



Workshops and local crafts



Guided nature and heritage activities



Inclusion in destination itineraries



90 operators in the network • **95%** family-owned businesses • average tourist spend ~€150/day • estimated **€11.25M** local revenue generated by the network



LAGs and destination management

Different roles, same entrepreneur

Local Action Groups (LAGs)



Community mobilisation



LEADER funding



Support for investments



Local knowledge and trust



Access to rural communities



Rural entrepreneur

*Stronger together
for rural entrepreneurs!*



Destination management (Colinele Transilvaniei)



Product development



Quality & standards



Marketing & promotion



Quarterly meetings & mentoring



Distribution & market access



Monitoring & visitor data



LAGs can help create and finance rural businesses. **Destination management helps those businesses become part of a market.**

From legal compliance to market readiness

Making requirements understandable for very small businesses



What activity
do you want
to sell?



What
authorisations
apply?



Which institution
is responsible?



Are there specific
restrictions?
(e.g. protected areas, heritage,
visitor regulations,



Is the business ready
to enter the destination
offer?

Main areas we support:

- ✓ Tourism accommodation (classification)
- ✓ Food safety & hygiene
- ✓ Fiscal registration and taxation
- ✓ Guiding and outdoor activities
- ✓ Activities in protected areas (Natura 2000 – ROSCI0227 / ROSPA0099)
- ✓ Heritage-related activities and events
- ✓ Connection with the competent authorities

*Our role is not
to regulate,
but to guide.*



What makes the model transferable?

Key elements for success in other rural areas



*Funding creates assets.
Entrepreneurs create businesses.
Destination management
**connects them into a viable
rural economy.***



Colinele Transilvaniei: from isolated rural initiatives to a functioning destination ecosystem.

*Rural people.
Real opportunities.
A lasting future.*