

## ABSTRACT

**Key word: agro-tourism, Dornelor Depression, development, strengthening**

The doctoral thesis entitled “**STUDIES AND RESEARCH ON THE POSSIBILITIES TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN THE AGRO-TOURISTIC UNITS FROM THE DORNELOR DEPRESSION**” is structured in two parts.

The doctoral thesis includes an introduction, the abstract in both Romanian and English, 6 chapters, the conclusions, the recommendations and the bibliography.

**The first part** refers to the „**Literature review of the agro-tourism research field**” and includes the first chapter related to the „**Domestic and foreign specialized literature review**”, which presents a synthesis of specialized information regarding the agro-tourism concept, the agro-tourism situation in the European Union as well as in Romania.

**The second part** refers to personal contributions and includes the chapters II-VI, the conclusions, the recommendations and the bibliography.

**The aim, the objectives, the material and research methodology** were highlighted in the second chapter.

The research aim and objectives were shaped within a SWOT analysis, which identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities related to the possibilities of development and strengthening of agro-touristic units from the Dornelor Depression, as well as the threats that could appear. The threats impose measures to be taken to eliminate and minimize their negative impact.

The most important objectives refer to:

- *the agro-tourism potential and the determining factors in the Dornelor Depression;*
- *the importance and characteristics of mountain tourism;*
- *the economic, social and environmental effects of agro-tourism development experienced by the local population and community.*

In order to achieve all these objectives, many methods and processes were performed, such as:

- *the monographic method;*
- *method of simple division and comparison;*
- *SWOT analysis;*
- *analysis of statistical survey type interview with written questionnaire;*
- *the graphics method;*

- *analysis of specific indicators;*
- *diagnostic analysis;*
- *the Fishbein-Rosenberg models;*
- *targeting and strategic positioning on the market.*

**The third chapter** was dedicated to the “**monographic study of the studied area**”. The following issues were analysed:

- *natural-geographical location of the Dornelor Depression;*
- *the climatic and soil conditions of the Dornelor Depression (the relief, the climate, the hydrographic and hydrological network, the soils, the flora and fauna);*
- *the social-economic conditions.*

**The diagnostic analysis of agro-tourism offer in the Dornelor Depression** is presented in the fourth chapter, which highlights the main agro-touristic resources and potential of the Dornelor Depression.

The rich and diversified natural resources and the peculiar landscape of the Dornelor Depression offer an exceptional natural setting completed by the local traditions, hospitality of the inhabitants from rural communities, traditional products, as well as by agriculture and animal breeding.

In addition, special consideration is given to the accommodation infrastructure in agro-touristic pensions, the quality of agro-touristic services, the model of quality and the main determining factors of the quality perception of agro-tourism services, the standards and evaluation indicators on the quality of agro-tourism services.

**The fifth chapter** analyses „a case study on the **agro-tourism practical training of students from UASVM Iași, at the training centre at Plaiu Șarului - Suceava county**”.

The chapter starts with a short presentation of the Training Centre at Plaiu Șarului, and continues with the aim and the main objectives of students’ practical training in the field of agro-tourism, focusing on the following specialisations: Mountain Agriculture, Engineering and Management in Public Food Services and Agro-tourism, Control and Expertise of Food Products, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Animal Husbandry. Also, the focus is on the analysis of the main evaluation indicators of the students’ practical training in the field of agro-tourism.

**The sixth chapter** analyses the “**Development and strengthening strategies of agro-touristic units from the Dornelor depression (case studies on three agro-touristic pensions)**”.

This chapter explores four marketing strategies based on case studies of agro-touristic pensions in the Dornelor Depression, namely:

- *product differentiation strategies for agro-touristic products;*
- *marketing and pricing strategies;*

- *distribution placement strategies for agro-touristic products;*
- *promotion and sale strategies for services and agro-touristic pensions.*

**The doctoral thesis** ends with the **”Conclusions and recommendations”** that account for an overall synthesis of all the research issues.

The recommendations are oriented toward factors that could positively influence the development and strengthening possibilities of the agro-touristic pensions in the Dornelor Depression, but also towards the diversification, the increase of the quality of agro-touristic services and the ensuring of high incomes for the population of rural communities.

The bibliography is rich and up to date and incorporates 165 significant Romanian-language and foreign-language titles printed in Romania and abroad.