

Tourism - Innovation for Sustainable Turinn Cluster model

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Abstract — European Union has successfully developed such competitive economic agglomerations on the basis of public or private initiative, the "cluster policy" becoming an important element of innovation policy in the Member States, which supports an approach based on regional innovative clusters, not only in developed urban centers areas but also in poorer regions and rural areas.

The observatory of European clusters has identified around 2 000 clusters that were formed either from the bottom up or top down and are supported by policies, projects and national and European funding.

Clusters began to be studied in Romania for the first time, the most probably, since 1998, in a study ordered by the World Bank (International Centre for Entrepreneurial Studies - CIS) which used data gathered from the 8 development regions of the country (NUTS II), and having as theoretical base Michael Porter's micro-economic "diamond". The study identified three "incipient" forms of clusters in software producing, naval industry and wood industry.¹

The present stage of evolution of the human society is characterized by an unprecedented development of tourism, materialized in the inclusion of new and new regions in its range of capitalization. Therefore, not without reason, some researchers consider tourism as the most dynamic world industry of the 21-st century, which we have just entered only a decade ago.

The first condition to develop leisure activities is the existence of attractive resources, the "raw material" which, by means of adequate planning, may become a proper supply. Apart from the attractions, an importance that should not be neglected is held by the position of the country compared to the general orientation of international tourism flows, the size of the domestic tourism market, the stage of economic and social development, the specialized infrastructure, the tradition of tourism activities, implementation of cluster policy, etc.

The objective of this paper is to argue the importance of innovative clusters for the regional development having as example Romania. Many empirical studies emphasize a positive relationship between the cluster-like organization and the development extent at local or national level. The current article comprises a synthesis of these studies. On these grounds the formal clusters from Romania are analyzed in terms of their capacity to catalyze the regional development.

Keywords— innovative cluster sustainable tourism, cluster theory, clusters benefits, *institutional* cluster, regional development, economic growth.

I. INTRODUCTION

Among the global competition for markets, the chances of the economic success of one country or one region are based on the specialization of the offer and the focus on the development effort of key-fields, where there are competitive advantages, resources and competences. In this context, the innovative clusters in tourism are a successful solution because they offer a combination of entrepreneurial dynamism, intense connections between companies and institutions, which hold top knowledge, respectively pro-active synergies between the main actors of innovation(Fallon, P. and Schofield, P. (2009)and Mazilu, M.,2010) At the level of the European Union, *the innovative clusters* are considered the "engine" of the economic development and innovation, these representing a very good frame for the development of business, for the collaboration between companies, universities, research institutions, suppliers, clients and competitors located in the same geographical area (local, regional, national, cross-national). In recent years there has been a growing interest in the role of location in the global economy. Some have argued that globalization is rendering the significance of location for economic activity increasingly irrelevant (O'Brien, 1992; Gray, 1998).

Others, however, espouse the opposite view, that globalization is actually increasing rather than reducing the importance of location, that it is promoting greater regional economic distinctiveness, and that regional economies rather than national economies are now the salient foci of wealth creation and world trade (Ohmae, 1995; Coyle, 1997, 2001; Krugman, 1997; Storper, 1997; Porter, 1998a; Scott, 1998, 2001; Fujita et al., 2000, Ron Martin & Peter Sunley,2003,Mazilu,M,2011). The innovative clusters in tourism, must not act only regionally, (eg. Turinn- Cluster, in Mehedinți County) but they must look for excellence where it is possible, and on an international level there are few that work alone. The public institutions must be opened to the granting of the necessary support for the innovative clusters.

II. PROBLEM FORMULATION

Sustainable development is a global and long-term challenge. Sustainability for tourism as for other industries has three independent aspects: economic, socio-cultural and environmental. Sustainable development implies permanence, which means that sustainable tourism requires the optimal use

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<http://www.clusterobservatory.eu/system/modules/com.gridnine.opencms.modules.eco/providers/getpdf.jsp?uid=100154>

of resources (including biological diversity), minimizing the negative economic, socio-cultural and ecological impact, maximizing benefits of local communities, national economies and conservation of nature. As a consequence, sustainability also refers to the management structures needed to meet these goals.

The goal of achieving sustainable tourism should be subordinated to national and regional plans of economic and social development. Actions may cover for economic goals (income growth, diversification and integration of activities, control, development potentiating and zoning), social goals (poverty and income distribution inequality improvement, indigenous socio-cultural heritage protection, participation and involvement of local communities) or environmental goals (protection of tourism functions, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity). Some experts prefer to speak about sustainable tourism development rather than sustainable tourism, the first referring to all aspects of development, and the second to some aspects and components of tourism – such as long distance air transport that may easily not be sustainable under current technologies, even using the best practices. With respecting and promoting the principles of sustainable development, tourism is a means of protection, conservation and capitalization of the cultural, historical, architectural and folklore potential of countries.

Based on GD no. 720/2010, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment is responsible for organizing and monitoring the development and implementation of Romania's industrial policy. In accordance with the commitments made by Romania within the EU Accession Treaty and to ensure similarity with other European Union Member States, the National Reform Programme for 2011-2013 – Industrial Policy Section (approved by the Romanian Government in April 2011) – and the Industrial Policy Document stipulate *the importance of clusters' policy and competitiveness poles* for economic recovery and increase of regional and national competitiveness.

At EU level, innovative clusters are considered the "engine" of economic development and innovation, representing a proper framework for business development. (COM 614/27.10.2010 «An Integrated Industrial Policy in the Era of Globalization» and COM 546/6.10.2010 «An Innovation Union», two emblematic initiatives of EUROPE 2020 Strategy). With increased globalization and competitiveness on national, European and international markets, membership to an innovative cluster becomes a real advantage for SMEs, due to both quick and easy access to research results in order to implement them in production and development of innovative products using advanced technologies and joint development strategies.

Since 2009, within the Romanian-German bilateral cooperation, GTZ (German Technical Cooperation Society) has assisted the Department of Industrial Policies of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment for benchmarking analysis on the cluster policy and development of the study "Romanian Cluster Mapping" (Fig. 1), the concept approach being "bottom up" from the level of the 8 development regions of Romania.

However, within the project INOVCluster, developed by a consortium of companies in the Sectoral Plan of Industry Research, the Guide for the implementation in Romania of the innovative cluster concept was developed, which offers a methodological and pragmatic basis for those who want to implement the new innovative concepts of cluster and competitiveness pole. The guide was disseminated to all stakeholders in seminars regionally and nationally.

Implementing the concept of cluster and regional competitiveness pole started from the economic theory of Michael Porter, namely "*a cluster is an economic concentration of enterprises, especially SMEs, in a given geographical area, interconnected, with own research nuclei (centers), training centers, specialized suppliers, in a certain field that competes but also cooperates*", and a competitiveness pole is an innovative regional cluster, regionally or nationally oriented, or a network of clusters. Romania's economic reality required the presence of catalyst institutions (entities specializing in technological transfer and innovation, consulting firms, chambers of commerce, etc.) in the "Four-leaf clover" Model (figure 1).

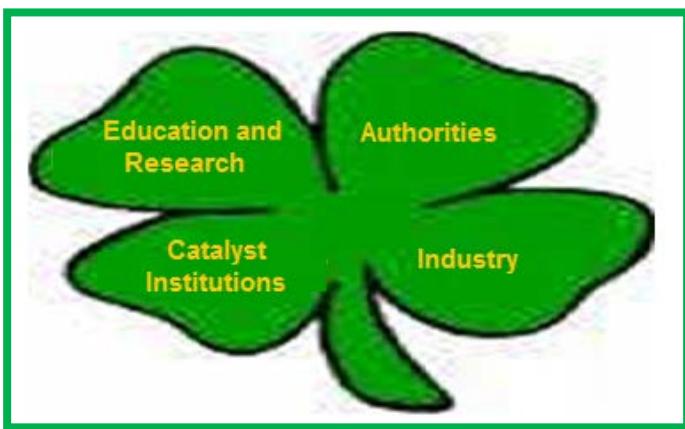


Fig. 1. The Romanian cluster model: the four-leaf clover.

Clusters and competitiveness poles in Romania do not have legal entity, they are built upon a Collaboration Protocol signed and stamped by all members, but the Associative Structure Management Association has legal entity. In Romania were created, naturally, about regional **27 innovative clusters and competitiveness poles** in different economic sectors: automotive, ICT, creative industries, renewable energy, aviation, maritime and river, agrifood, tourism and 49 industrial parks with about 760 companies from different business sectors (see Table 1).

On July 1, 2011, the **National Cluster Association (ROCA)** was established and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment joined the **ECA – the European Cluster Alliance**.

Currently, funding innovative clusters in Romania is ensured only by private funds, and in first quarter of 2012 European funds under SOP IEC «Increase of Economic Competitiveness» will also be accessible by both competitiveness poles and to attract SMEs in chains of providers and clusters.

No.	Cluster name	Sector	Website	Town
1.	AUTOMOTIVEST Regional cluster	Automotive	www.adrvest.ro	Timisoara
2	ICT Regional Cluster	ICT	www.aries-tm.ro	Timisoara
3	Dacia Renault Cluster	Automotive	www.acarom.ro	Pitesti
4	PRO WOOD Regional Wood Cluster	Silviculture and Wood industry	www.kofa.ro www.prowood.ro	Sfantu- Gheorghe
5	Green energy cluster	Renewable energies	Eroare! Referință hyperlink incorectă..ro	Sfantu-Gheorghe
6	TURINN Cluster	Sustainable and innovative tourism	www.aptmh.tk mirelamazilu2004@yahoo.com	Drobeta Turnu Severin Prof. Ph.D Mirela Mazilu
7.	Agro-Food Regional Cluster	Agro-food	www.expoarad.eu	Arad
8	Electro-technical Regional Cluster ETREC	Electro-technics	www.electroprecizia.ro	Sacele-Brasov
9.	ASTRICO Textiles Cluster	Textiles	www.astricone.eu	Savinesti
10	Furniture Cluster	Furniture	www.mobex.ro	Tg.Mures
11	Agro-Food Cluster Bucharest	Agro-food	www.inma.ro/pactmar/	Bucharest
12	Tourism Regional Cluster	Tourism	www.bucovinaturism.ro	Suceava
13	Fashion Clothes Cluster	TCF sectors	www.fepaius.ro	Bucharest
14	Agro-food Cluster	Agro-food	www.icc.ro	Iasi
15	ICT -Regional Competitiveness Pole	ICT	www.ipacv.ro	Craiova
16	Tourism South East	Tourism	www.asociatia-litoral.ro	Mamaia
17	Geothermal Energy Cluster	Geothermal energy	www.nord-vest.ro	Cluj Napoca

Table 1 - Romanian's Clusters - European Observatory Cluster.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment supports the strengthening of competitiveness of innovative clusters under the new project of the Sectoral Research Plan for the Industry and their Participation in regional programs (South

Eastern Europe, Black Sea, Danube strategy, etc.) or economic missions in EU Member States in order to perform an experience exchange and best practices. In January 30 to 31, 2012, in Brasov, under the best practices exchange with EU Member States, the Conference of Clusters in Romania was held, where experts from Spain presented specific ways of accessing structural funds for projects of innovative clusters. TURINN cluster is a **tourist cluster**, designed as a geographic concentration of companies and institutions interconnected through tourism activities.

2.1. Prerequisites of development of innovative clusters in tourism involve:

- The existence of competitive enterprises;
- The favourable geographical location, natural potential, cultural traditions, food, sincere hospitality;
- Key partners are concentrated in the vicinity;
- The existence of formal and informal links between cluster partners

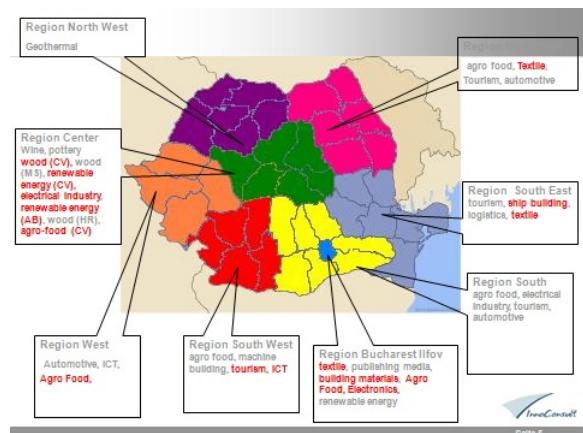


Fig. 2 Romanian Cluster Mapping

A cluster in tourism is associated with tourist product and a tourist destination. Costa (2005) and Mazilu (2012) add that cluster development in tourism should include the following components:

- ✓ *static elements* represented by accommodation and catering services;
- ✓ *mobile elements* given by passenger transport services, those of tourism agencies and tour operators, rent a car services;
- ✓ *dynamic elements*, i.e. recreational, cultural and sports services being primarily responsible for increased consumption by increasing spending by visitors.

According to Ferreira (2003), the tourism cluster includes, in addition to specific activities of the tourism and accommodation sector, catering, transportation, entertainment and various attractions, operators and tourism agencies, guides, crafts, car rentals, and support activities, such as organizational support services, transport infrastructure, education and training, consultancy and other business services. It requires the participation of other actors than those specific to develop a

tourism cluster (Brown, Geddes, 2007). According to these authors, the government should encourage programs to attract private investment, to finance investments in infrastructure and to promote tourism in the region, because only such a cluster can grow and can ensure the competitiveness of a tourist destination.

Mutual relationships with suppliers can stimulate innovation processes, but they also can be used, transposing onto them the partners' expenses and thus being in financial constraints.

For a potential sustainable development of tourism clusters, some specific statistical criteria should be considered such as:

- Sectoral turnover in the region compared to the sectoral turnover at regional / national level;
- The rate of employment in the sector from the area given;
- Higher than average growth in the sector (annual data, sectoral comparison);
- Identification with a larger number of newly established SMEs in the area / tourism sector;
- Concentration of a large group of bodies/institutions with competence in economic infrastructure development and/or providing services/training to local companies operating in the area.

2.2. Innovation in tourism

One way to define, in general, the term innovation is: "Innovation is the search and discovery, development, improvement, adoption and commercialization of new processes, new products and new organizational structures and procedures"².

A broad definition, like the one above, is useful when applied to the field of tourism. Hjalager describes an appropriate sub-division of innovations into five categories - product, process, management, logistics and institutional innovations, described in the following section³:

• Tourist product innovations

This category consists of changed or new tourist products or services, developed for the commercialization stage.

Their novelty should be evident to producers, suppliers, consumers or competitors. Loyalty programs, events based on local traditions and environmentally sustainable accommodation facilities are examples of production innovations in marketing destination of recent years:

• Promotion innovations

These innovations involve a way of raising the performance of existing operations with new or improved technology or by redesigns of the entire production line. These kind of innovations can be combined with or result in product innovations (e.g., robots for cleaning and maintenance of green hotels, self-service devices and computerized management and monitoring systems make up good examples).

² Regulatory reforms and innovations", OECD Report, p. 17.

³ All information concerning the sub-division of innovations is based upon Hjalager, A.-M. "Repairing innovation defectiveness in tourism", Tourism Management, 23, 2002, p.465f



Fig. 3 Innovation in regional tourism destination

Source: supplied by the author

2.3. Sustainable and Innovation in Tourism Development

A sustainable tourism destination is reached when environmental, community and economic values are balanced and resolved through collaboration and compromise to achieve a level and style of tourism that:

- protects and enhances the natural and built features upon which the tourism industry is based;
- is consistent with community values and aspirations both now and over the long term, and contributes to community development and well-being;
- is appropriately developed and marketed so that it is distinctive, competitive and synergetic, and with the flexibility to respond to market changes now and in the future;
- increases the contribution of tourism to the economy of regional destinations and promotes long-term industry viability;
- increases destination appeal, delivers on brand promise, increases repeat visitation and enhances the reputation of the destination resulting in increased yield from tourism.

- **Human resources management innovations**

New job profiles, collaborative structures and authority systems among others belong to this category, often in combination with the introduction of new tourist products, training, improvement and specialization services, etc. These can for instance lead to staff empowerment through job enrichment, training and decentralization.

- **Logistics innovations**

Materials, transactions, information and customers constitute examples of the flows handled in tourism. Recent innovations in this field are Internet marketing, enhancement of airport hub systems and integrated destination information systems.

- **Institutional innovations**

This category deals with collaborative and regulatory structures in communities. Institutional innovations go beyond the individual firm. They transect public and private sectors and

form new rules and regulations. Reforms of the financial incentives that restructure social or health tourism concepts, the setting up or change of credit institutions and changes in the conditions for obtaining finance are such examples affecting tourism.

The global competition requires a constantly innovated and improved productivity level, including the efficiency of the workforce. Managers and public officials need to learn new skills to attract visitors to the region or country and the workforce needs to develop specialist skills in areas such as mountain trekking and ski lift maintenance. Nevertheless, a lot could be gained from applying a cluster approach in trying to understand geographically limited concentrations of tourism actors and the linkages and alliances involving related operators and industries. The cluster approach may be one tool available in fostering economic growth, by promoting potential and established tourism clusters.

Cluster development is not automatic, although clusters often arise spontaneously. Supporting structures and efforts to promote clusters may constitute the difference between success and failure. Therefore a lot can be learned from the development of clusters around the world and attempts to support them. One simply has to be cautious about copying the concept and believing that it will be applicable anywhere.

In particular when focusing on tourism clusters, which to a large extent is a neglected area of research as well as of practical implementation, it is important to look beyond national borders to learn more. The following section will give a brief overview of tourism clusters in three areas of the world, discussing how they developed, what role they play as well as what can be learned from their experiences.

The identification methodology used to select a tourist area relevant to creating a cluster, as with the TURINN cluster was based on three main components:

- **physical proximity** (geographical concentration);
- **SMEs dominance** – high concentration of small companies (the number of SMEs is greater than the number of large companies);
- **Intercompany networks** in some of the interconnected industries.

Within the TURINN “cluster” (CLUSTER FOR SUSTAINABLE AND INNOVATIVE TOURISM (TURINN) Founded in 2011, founding member of the Romanian Association of Clusters (CLUSTERO.ro): <http://clustero.eu/ro/turinn-cluster>), grouped companies have identical or interrelated business areas, but even if their fields are different, the common element is that in a region a particular type of industry or economic activity becomes dominant and highly effective. Although between companies there are competitive relationships and they are specialized on types, varieties of similar products, there is cooperation between them, associating themselves in areas that provide an increase in competitiveness, thus creating the optimum competition – cooperation ratio, called “cooperative competition”.

The interest or lack of interest shown by public authorities towards sustainable economic growth can be highlighted to some extent by the tourism policy and its effects on the short-

term (contribution to the economic development of the country or region) or long-term – economic strength when confronted with an economic crisis, increased competitiveness in the global market and improvement of a country's image in the international community.

III. PROBLEM SOLUTION

While few would deny the benefits of an innovation-based economy, it is possible to implement a “clusters’ policy” to be seen as very ambitious for a country that still needs to add the missing pieces to complete the image of a functioning market economy. Policy makers and economic analysts most often fall prey to the vagaries of international politics, importing, wrongly, success stories from abroad, incompatible with the realities of the domestic market.

Romania intends to involve in the modern housing the following economic activities/clusters:

- Woodworking and furniture production
- Ecologic building materials (green house) and constructions
- Modern technologies for renewable energies
- Household appliances
- Cultural and historical restoration (tourism)
- Some expectations of our clusters to be provided within partnership events:
- Development of joint initiatives on the global market
- A regional sectorial cluster network integrating companies, R&D entities and local administration
- Business opportunities and exchange of best practices
- Jointly development of practical tools and solutions related to cluster strategy
- Jointly access to EU innovation programs
- Links between ADC project and Danube Strategy project

Specifically, the innovative element "should be in high demand" in the contemporary landscape of Romania, especially in creative fields par excellence, as is tourism. Imperatively, it is necessary to:

- better use European instruments for R & D cluster projects – recommendation: it is proposed that 30% of structural funds are used for R & D projects
- specific call for proposals from the R & D projects from clusters
- increase European networks: thematic tools for creating networks
- increase mutual interest on a territorial and sectoral basis.

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- Links between ADC project and Danube Strategy project
- Definition of “cluster manager” profile and development of transnational cluster strategy etc

Sustainability for tourism as for other industries has three independent aspects: economic, socio-cultural and environmental. Sustainable development implies permanence, which means that sustainable tourism requires the optimal use of resources (including biological diversity), minimizing the negative economic, socio-cultural and ecological impact, maximizing benefits of local communities, national economies and conservation of nature. As a consequence, sustainability also refers to the management structures needed to meet these goals.

Therefore, it is imposed more acute the interrelation of three subsystems: social, environmental and economic, in the view of opening new innovative sector-specific horizons, especially in tourism due to the fact that it is also a considerable openness to innovation (see figure 4).

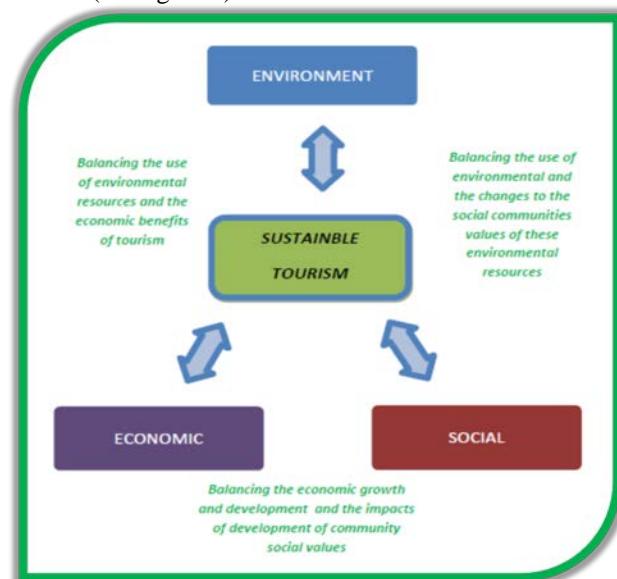


Fig.4 The interrelation of the 3 subsystems in the perspective of a sustainable tourism

The goal of achieving sustainable tourism should be subordinated to national and regional plans of economic and social development. Actions may cover for economic goals (income growth, diversification and integration of activities, control, development potentiating and zoning), social goals (poverty and income distribution inequality improvement,

indigenous socio-cultural heritage protection, participation and involvement of local communities) or **environmental goals** (protection of tourism functions, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity). Some experts prefer to speak about sustainable tourism development rather than sustainable tourism, the first referring to all aspects of development, and the second to some aspects and components of tourism – such as long distance air transport that may easily not be sustainable under current technologies, even using the best practices.

Clustered firms may be capable of incremental and continuous improvement within certain parameters, but may be unable to adapt to radical shifts in technology and product (see Pouder and St John, 1996; Loasby, 1998). There is clearly a danger that by encouraging highly specialized localizations of industry, cluster policies may actually reduce innovation rates. The evidence from urban economics suggests that, for many industrial sectors, innovation is associated with location in a diversified urban base. As Duranton and Puga (2000, p. 553) write ‘The link between innovation and diversity seems fairly robust, so that highly innovative clusters cannot be bred in previously specialised environments’. None of the swelling ranks of cluster adherents seem to explain how policies should respond to these dangers. Fritz et al. (1998) argue that policy-makers should see local industrial specialization as having a ‘risk-return trade off’, plotting the risk of ossification against the higher returns gained from clustering (a point made some time ago by Conroy, 1975, in his study of regional specialization versus regional diversification). In practice, constructing such ‘trade-offs’ is obviously very far from straightforward. A further risk related to clusters concerns that of localized inflation and ‘over-heating’. The cluster literature itself tends to downplay the importance of cost-based competition. To quote Steiner (1998, p. 4): ‘The existence of clusters is the decisive element for the competitiveness of regions and nations, not cheap land, labor, or energy, nor even high subsidies and low social costs, nor even high technology strong and leading industries’. Other more cautious sources express concern about the effects of clusters on local costs. The question of the impact of cluster growth on other local sectors of activity is unresolved. The cluster orthodoxy would presumably be that as costs rise in the cluster, less productive firms are either put out of business or move away. In Porter’s (1998a, p. 245). View, ‘Rising local wages and profits reflect economic success.

Many sustainable tourism initiatives have developed useful methodologies and produced examples of best practices. However, they are usually local and often isolated. The multiplier effect is extremely limited.

The Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism helps all interested stakeholders make connections that enable them to scale-up and replicate successful initiatives around the world. The Partnership acts as a clearinghouse. It helps identify funding sources for worthy endeavors. And it uses the knowledge garnered from this process to influence public cluster’s policy at all levels.

Tourism is one of the most promising drivers of growth for the world economy.

The sheer size and reach of the sector makes it critically important from a global resource perspective.

Even small changes toward greening can have important impacts.

For 2013 growth is expected to continue but at a more moderate rate in the range of 2% to 4%. A comprehensive forecast by region will be included in the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer of January 2013 Furthermore, the sectors’ connection to numerous sectors at destination and international levels means that changes in practices can stimulate changes in many different public and private actors.

IV. CONCLUSION

Global environmental problems have risen to the top of the international political agenda and there is a growing demand for analyses that help in understanding inter-coupled social, technological and environmental systems and formulating urgently needed policy actions.

Social, technological and environmental systems are typically open and dynamic and often indeterminate in their behavior.

This introduces challenges concerning the quality of knowledge and the tools and methods suitable for understanding and managing system changes. These challenges are further compounded when governance interventions are framed differently under different, contending social values and interests and shaped by the exercise of cultural, political and economic power.

Although it is generally accepted that natural and social systems are inter-coupled, both are mostly analyzed using disciplinary models.

Social systems are often studied in isolation from the surrounding environment, whereas for natural systems it is common that a large number of interconnections and variables are analyzed, while the role of humans is described by a single actor model portraying people mainly as creators of disturbances. Ecological economics approaches to these challenges seek to bridge this gap and overcome the theoretical and methodological challenges. This requires developing strategies for understanding, engaging with and managing the complexities, interdependences and co-evolutionary dynamics of socio-ecological systems.

First, a program to develop a regional *cluster* can take about five years, and 6 to 10 years more until the *cluster* can reach maturity, and its overall impact on economy will be felt in the next 10 to 20 years. In other words, an interventionist industrial policy of such an extent will operate with tools that work more slowly, requiring many processes of learning and cumulative effects and, as such, will produce tangible results in a broad horizon of time.⁴

⁴ Pencea S ,Promovarea clusterelor industriale inovatoare, componenta a strategiilor de crestere a Competitivitatii pe piețele globale,Institutul de Economie mondială,p.154.

Therefore, it requires, in addition to everything mentioned above, tenacity and patience. Potential results are extremely promising and can reward in full the effort of businesses, government and the many support institutions involved, by the contribution they can make to ensure a vigorous and sustainable economic growth.

Promotion of Sustainable Tourism to Alleviate Poverty

Linking and integrating national tourism policies and poverty alleviation strategies

Many tourist attractions and destinations are located in some of the poorest places in the world. Sustainable tourism can serve as a powerful poverty-reduction tool, especially in rural areas. By offering alternative or supplementary sources of income, tourism can improve the livelihoods of people while helping to conserve the environment and preserve historic sites.

The Global Partnership works to incorporate sustainability principles into national tourism plans and encourage the public and private sectors to work together to make sure that local communities reap benefits. The Partnership adheres to the framework of the Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) initiative, established by the UNWTO.

One of the priorities of the Turinn cluster is to mainstream sustainability into tourism development by demonstrating the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits of sustainable tourism.

The strategic focuses of our work:

- Support the integration of sustainability in tourism development policies
- Support to governments and other institutional stakeholders in the local regional and international level
- Promote sustainable production patterns in the tourism value chain
- Cooperation with the tourism industry (Hotels, tour operators, transportation industry, etc.)
- Encourage demand for "sustainable tourism services"
- Consumer based activities. Cooperation with NGOs having programmes on sustainable tourism.

For the development of the support services market for business, the new approach directs to the promotion of the added value consultancy services. The new concept has in view the setting up and development of the consultancy services index, concept that takes into consideration the Community expertise and standards. The "culture of business" shall be promoted by the new approach, which shall support the setting up of new enterprises, the consolidation and development of competitive SMEs, the encouragement to set up and develop the R&D and innovative enterprises.

(Source:http://www.mie.ro/_documente/dialog_Ro_UERestrategie%20Lisabona/03.pdf)

The main conclusion of the work is that the Romanian economy does not have the experience of cooperation within a micro-economic network. The innovative clusters are very young and they have not demonstrated their growth potential.

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