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## PROVISION OF TOURIST SERVICES IN THE BASIN OF THE LOWER COURSE OF THE DNISTRE RIVER

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of the research is to assess the state and types of service provision in the Lower Dniester River Basin and analyze their use, especially for tourist and leisure activities. For the activity of structures in the tourism industry, one of the priority components is: the network of economic agents that provide services in the field of tourism. Many services have expired and are in poor condition. This fact highlights urban localities and causes most tour operators to reduce tourist trips to many rural destinations that thus become isolated from national tourist circuits. Some services have been renovated according to international standards, but these advances are insignificant due to the lack of funding sources. At present, low employment rates are generally found in the region.*

**Key words:** *provision, services, tourism, Dniester.*

**JEL CLASSIFICATION:** Z; Z3; Z31; Z33.

### INTRODUCTION

This region has a rich natural and anthropogenic tourism potential, which, being capitalized at its fair value, could have great prospects in increasing tourist flows and developing tourism. This study is among the pioneering works in our country, when the flows are evaluated at the hydrographic basin level.

At the end of the 1980s, the Dniester Valley was one of the most popular tourist destinations in the former USSR. The tourist and recreational attractions in the vicinity of the Republic's capital enjoyed great popularity, especially the Vadul lui Vodă resort in the cities of Tiraspol and Tighina. These areas also benefited from the largest number of accommodation and leisure units, and the transport infrastructure ensured a maximum flow of tourists. Also, the Dniester Valley has a high balneoclimatic potential, which was exploited to a much greater extent compared to the other tourist regions of the Republic. However, since the beginning of the 1990s no complex studies have been developed, which would value the very valuable touristic heritage of this region (Eфpoc, 1991).

As a result of the armed conflict on the Dniester from 1991-1992 and the tense relations between the authorities on the left and right of the Dniester, the number of visitors to this area decreased considerably, and the tourist and leisure activities significantly decreased in intensity. In addition, a good part of the area of the Lower Dniester is controlled by the illegal authorities on the left of the Dniester, where most of the visitors come from. Thus, the official authorities of the Republic of Moldova have incomplete information and do not collaborate with the authorized subdivisions on the left side of the Dniester. In recent years, as a result of the efforts of tourist agencies

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and NGOs, there has been a relaunch of this tourist region, especially in the area of the Lower Dniester (Bacal, 2010).

This study of tourism is done at the basin level in the Lower Dniester Basin region and the identification of potential areas for the development of tourism activities that will improve the situation of social-economic problems by creating new jobs and additional incomes.

The Lower Course Basin of the Dniester River on the territory of the Republic of Moldova was selected for the study. The research area occupies the entire or partial territory of several territorial administrative units of the country (figure 1).

This territory was selected based on the following criteria: geographical position, current state, historical-cultural heritage, tourist and recreational sites, hydrography, relief, borders and others.

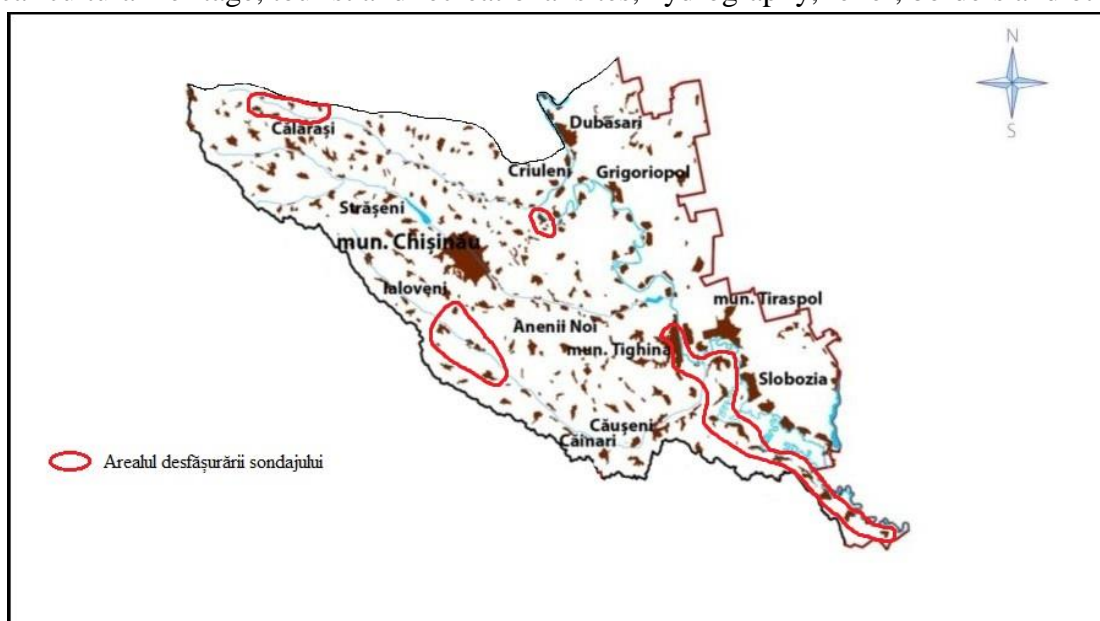
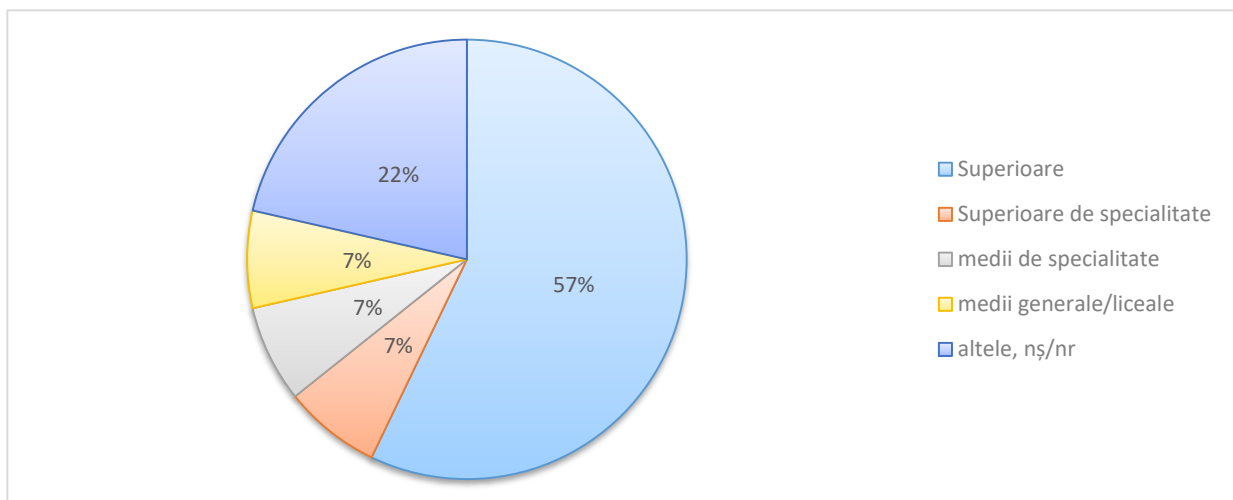


Figure 1. The network of human settlements and the area of implementation of the sociological survey within the LDRB.

Source: developed by the author.

For conducting the survey in the field, some more important regions were selected (figure 1), which from a geographical point of view cover the most eloquent tourist regions in the Lower Dniester River Basin (LDRB). In this way, it was selected from the northern part - the localities from Călărași district (Răciula, Hîrbovăț, Mîndra Frumoasa, Leordoia, Palanca, Hîrjauca); from the central part of the region – the localities of the Ialoveni district (Rezeni, Horești, Costești, Mileștii Mici); from the eastern part of the region – Chisinau Municipality (Vadul lui Vodă); and from the southern part of the region - the localities of the Ștefan Vodă district (Palanca, Tudora, Crocmaz, Olănești, Purcari, Răscăieți, Ciobruciu, Talmaz, Căușeni (Grădinița, Leuntea, Copanca, Chițcani, Hagimus,) Transnistria (Tighina). Thus, from from a geographical point of view, the entire region was taken into account where the author and other specialists in the field made personal field trips.

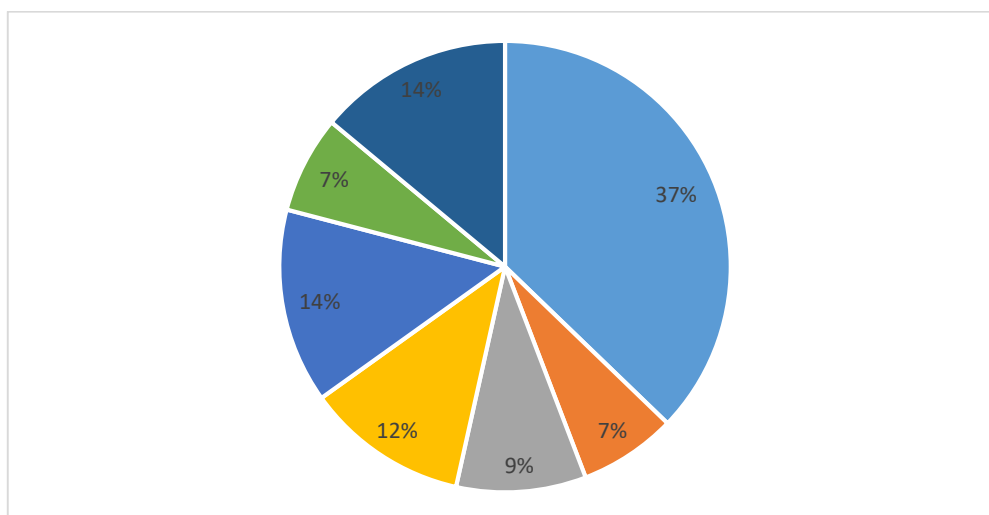
## RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE-BASED SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY IN THE LDRB



*Figure 2. Owner studies*

*Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field*

According to the data collected in figure 2, the structure of the sample according to the last graduated school of the owner who provides services places people with higher education in the first place with more than 50 percent of those interviewed. On the second position are the owners who ticked the column other studies or don't know/don't answer, and the last position was shared by three categories together totaling 21% of the total providers, namely those who have general/high school, higher and secondary education Specialized.



*Figure 3. What are the main personal reasons for founding the tourism enterprise?*

*Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field*

According to the collected data, which are reflected in figure 3, the main personal reasons for founding the tourism enterprise are the development of a profitable and promising local business (37%), the availability of the necessary financial sources and other reasons held 14% of the respondents' answers, the passion for providing services tourism (12%), ensuring a decent future for descendants (9%), 7% of economic agents emphasized that the main reason for providing tourist

services is determined by the subsidies allocated by the state and the possibility of providing jobs for relatives and locals.

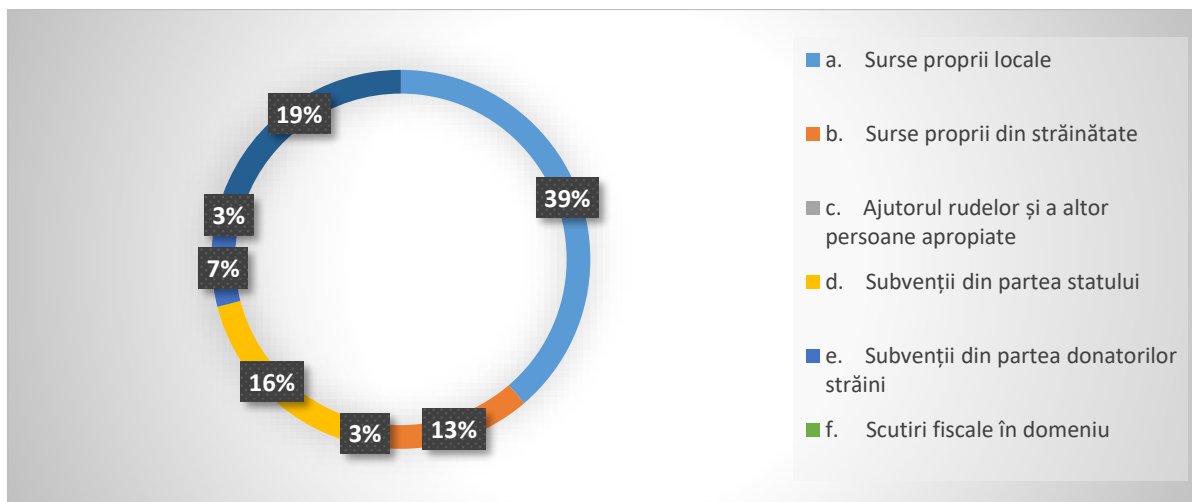


Figure 4. What were the main sources in the development of the tourism business?

Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field

The main sources that were the basis of the development of tourist businesses are the local ones (39%), followed by other sources with 19%, subsidies from the state constitute 16%, own sources from abroad 13%, subsidies from foreign donors 7% and 3% each constitute tax exemptions in the field and the help of relatives and other close people.

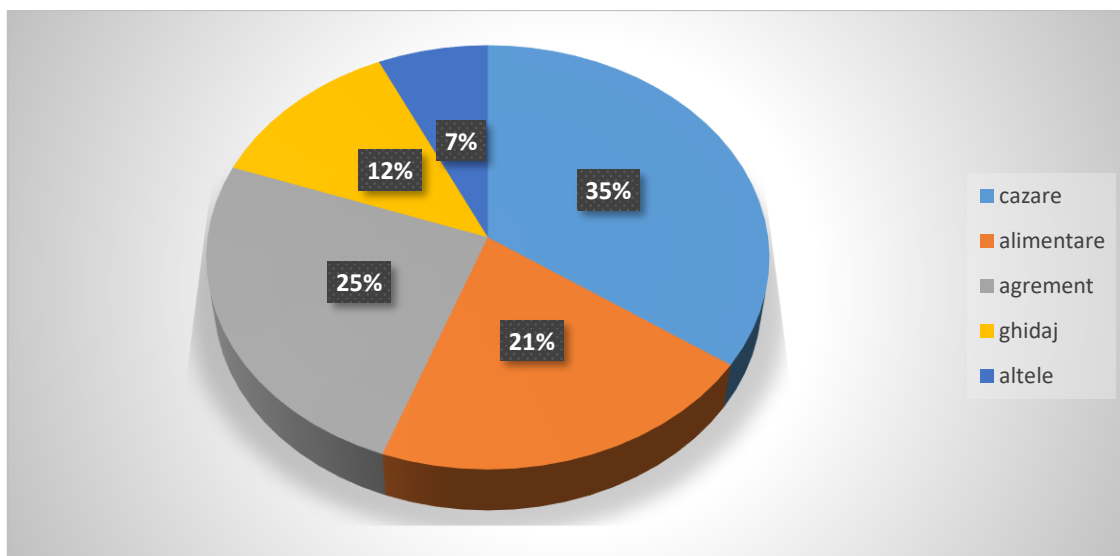


Figure 5. What services are provided?

Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field

According to the data provided by the respondents (figure 5), accommodation services are provided 35%, leisure 25%, food 21%, guiding 12% and others 7% which include various cultural, sports, religious, recreation, gastronomic, entertainment activities such as fishing, crafting, knitting, crocheting, pilgrimage, festivals, festivities, workshops, healing, treatment, tourist cooking, cycling, kayaking, hunting, wakeboarding and SUP, etc.

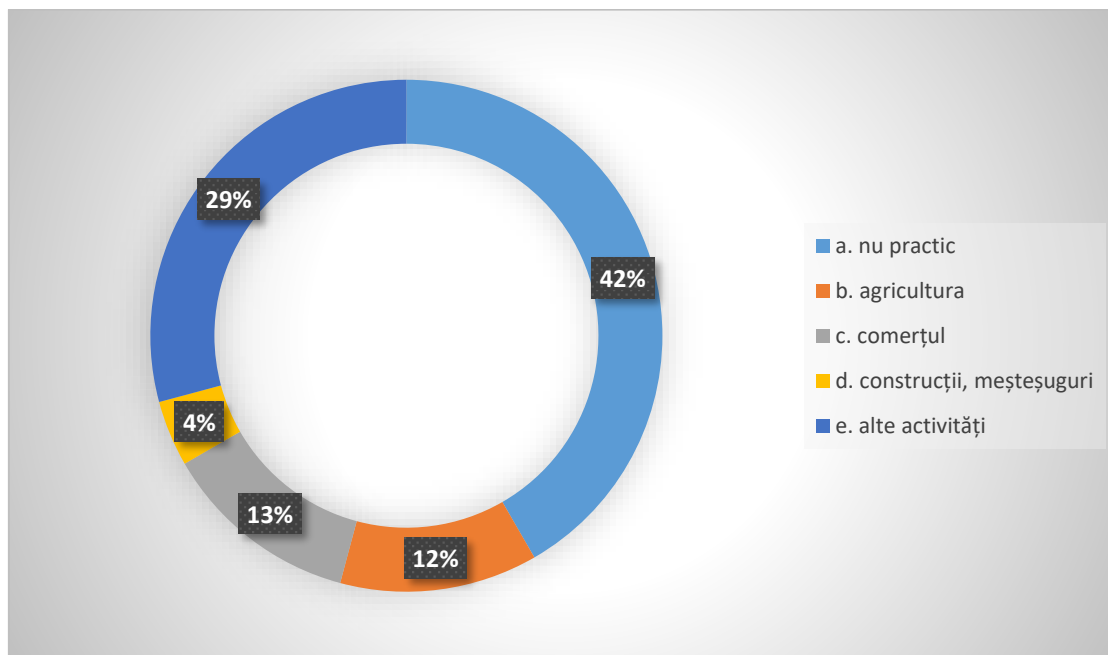


Figure 6. Apart from tourism, do you practice other economic activities in the area?

Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field

After asking the question, "Besides tourism, do you practice other economic activities in the area?", 42 percent of the respondents answered that "no", which indicates that they are vulnerable and totally dependent on the tourism business they manage. . The second category 29% of respondents have other activities such as transport, legal, beauty services, notary, etc. The third group also includes 29% of which 13% trade, 12% agriculture and only 4% construction, crafts.

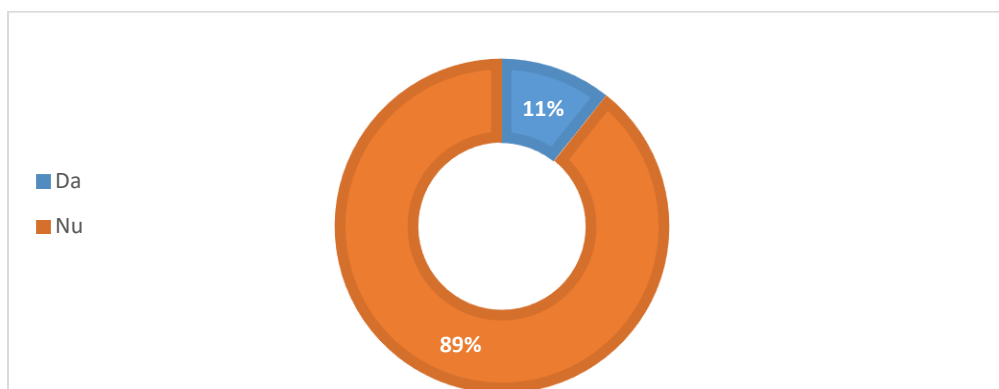


Figure 7. Do you have your own or local guides?

Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field

To the question "Do you have your own guides or from the locality?", the studio region is in a bad position. Only 11% of the providers have the possibility to guide, a fact that diminishes and destroys the tourist flow at the destination. Most of the providers (89%) do not have guides, some working with travel agencies and external guide services, others not.

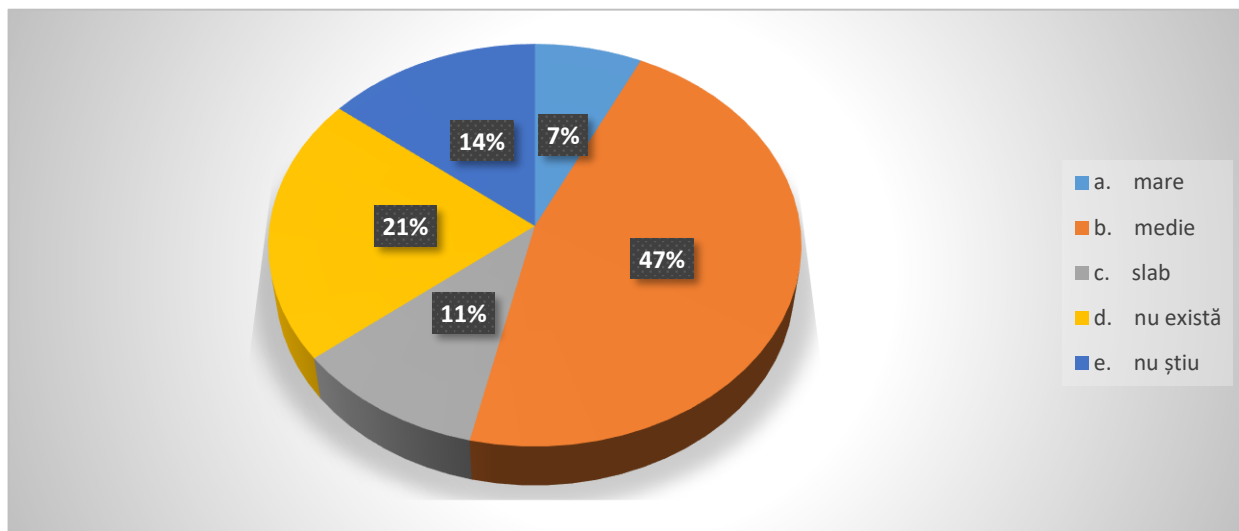


Figure 8. The level of competition in the area.

Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field

As we can see from figure 8, the level of competition in the study region is average, as stated by 47% of the respondents and the other 21% consider that it does not exist. A good part of economic agents, namely 14%, do not know the situation in the area and answered this question by ticking "I don't know". The other 11% of providers consider that the competition is weak and only 7% think that it is high. Small and medium competition denotes the advantageous fact for the development of services in the field of tourism.

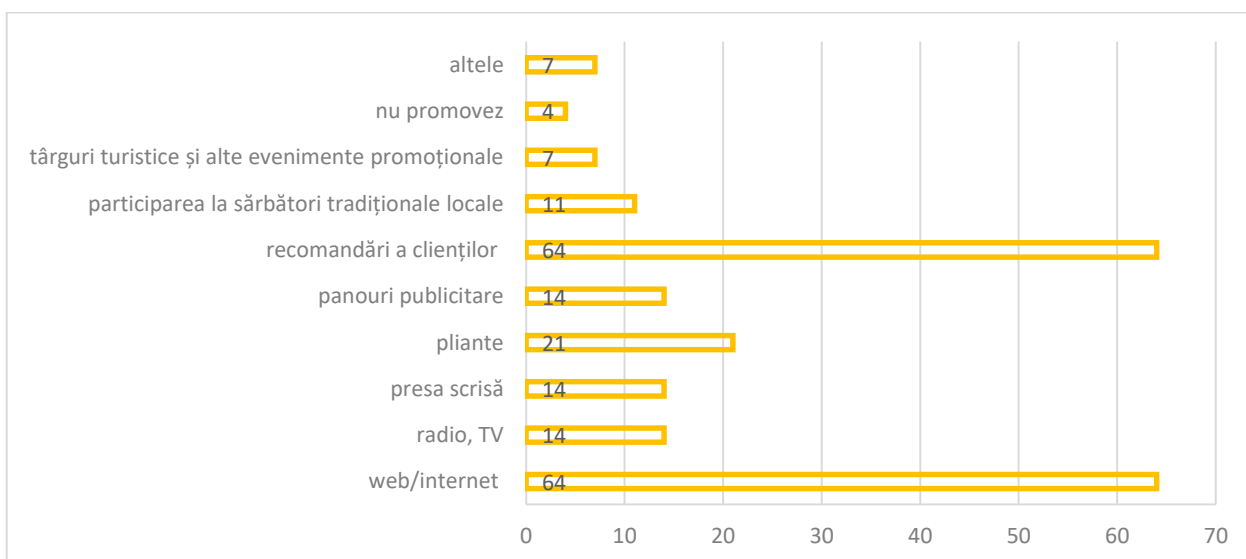


Figure 9. How do you promote your tourist destination?

Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field

The vast majority promote their services and offers through the most used medium today, namely through the internet, but not only this, the oldest and most durable method with an effectiveness of attracting tourists of over 60% remains that of the recommendations made by tourists both in the classical method as well as the electronic one. On the other decreasing positions are the

methods such as leaflets 21% radio and TV, print media, billboards each 14% and the other methods of promoting the destination.

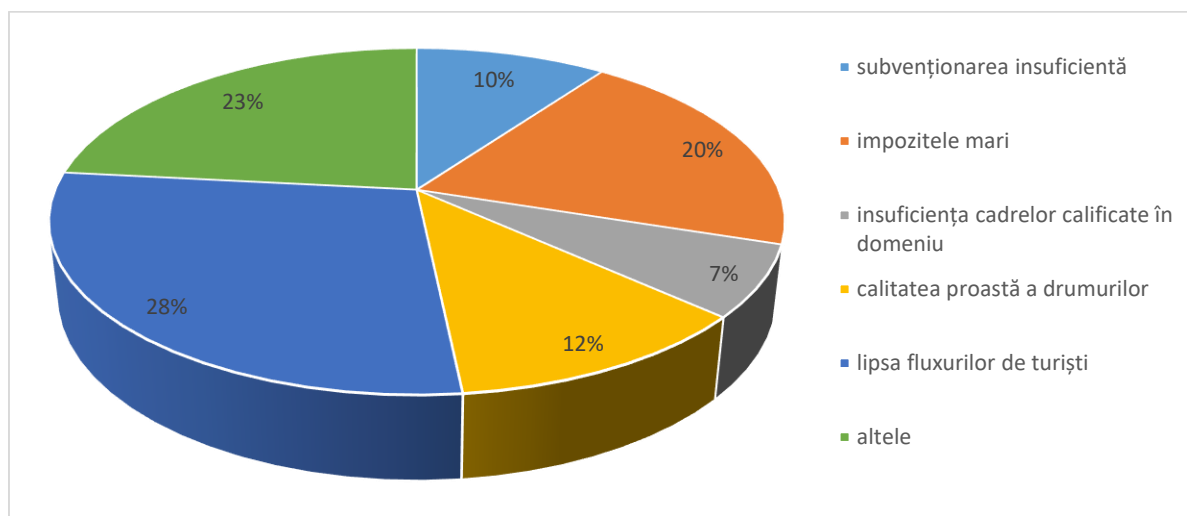


Figure 10. What difficulties do you encounter for the development of the tourism business, which should be solved as a priority?

Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field

The main difficulties for the development of the tourism business that providers encounter that should be solved as a priority are the lack of tourist flows (28%), high taxes (20%), with a medium impact are the poor quality of the roads to the destination (12%) and subsidization insufficient (10%). The third group of difficulties according to the opinion of the economic agents interviewed is composed of 30%, which includes the insufficiency of qualified staff in the field, the negligence of the Local or Central Public Administration, rest and leisure are not a priority and unfair competition.

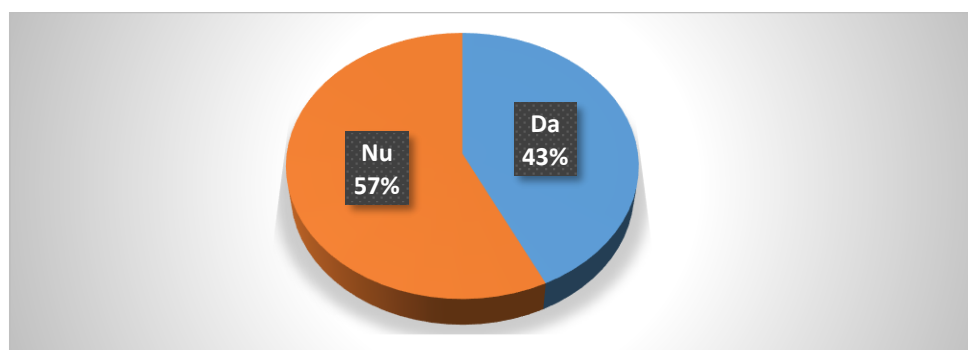


Figure 11. Looking to expand your local tourism business?

Source: calculated by the author based on the sociological survey in the field

To the question offered to providers if they want to expand their local tourism business, we received a more pessimistic and discouraging answer with a No (57%) and with the other part of economic agents who want a growth and expansion in this field with a little more less than half (43%) which constitutes a still gratifying result and with good hopes for the development of the provision of accommodation, food, leisure, transport, guidance, etc. services.

## CONCLUSION

In the BCIRN region, various accommodation, leisure, food, guiding and other services are provided, including various cultural, sports, religious, recreation, gastronomic, entertainment such as fishing, handicrafts, knitting, crocheting, pilgrimage, festivals, festivities, workshops, healing, treatment, tourist cooking, cycling, kayaking, hunting, wakeboarding and SUP etc.

The main sources that were the basis of the development of tourism businesses are the local ones (39%), followed by other sources with 19%, subsidies from the state constitute 16%, own sources from abroad 13%, subsidies from foreign donors 7% and 3% each constitute tax exemptions in the field and the help of relatives and other close people.

The owners who provide services are mostly people with higher education with more than 50 percent followed by those who have general/high school, higher and specialized secondary education.

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