

Mountain Resort Landscape Valuation – Soveja, Romania

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Abstract. According to the National Development Plan of Romania- section VI, Soveja is a mountain resort valuating natural resources. This paper identifies and expands the development plan references concerning the local capital, within the framework of a landscape planning study. The natural capital of touristic interest is presented as part of a complex landscape, bearing also valuable cultural attributes. The limits of the valuation area are drawn according to territorial landscape identification methodology, thus involving all the interacting factors of the landscape. The actual resort ground is thus seen as a core of a landscape amenities valuation system. The proposed urban intervention connects the outer mountain landscape with the resort streetscape and with its green infrastructure as a whole. The socio-economic approach aims the equitable access to public goods, from present to posterity. The neighboring local communities are offered an active role in tourism development and its environmental impact mitigation. The landscape's cultural heritage offers the opportunity to value the Cucuteni to modern day's continuity on a national relevance site. The study concludes there is an opportunity to protect local natural and anthropic heritage within a national park.

Keywords: green infrastructure, landscape amenity, landscape planning, mountain resort

Introduction. Romanian mountain landscapes are among the best preserved natural sites in Europe, considering the exceptionally low fragmentation levels. Yet, this state of facts relies on the severe underdevelopment of the mountain areas. Social pressure comes from resident peasants exploiting natural forest products (mainly wood) and from tourism in natural amenities rich rural areas. It's easy to speculate that natural isolation, reflected in economy, society and culture is a self-devouring condition of these agro-sylvo-pastoral systems. Thus, biodiversity suffers a great impact and charismatic fauna is among the first jeopardized. An obvious model of isolation is Soveja Depression landscape from Romania. The rough terrain surrounding it is slowly shifting from treasure chest to curse.

Aims and objectives. Based on the diagnosis of the local development's hazardous turn, this study investigates the possibility of integrating natural and cultural amenities in a territorial landscape concept, built around the Soveja mountain resort – acting as an internal pole. The result of the landscape planning study is an urban planning theme for the resort, thus ensuring the most sustainable valuation-protection ratio of the surrounding landscape.

Materials and methods. Natural resource coherence area – the territorial landscape – was designated on the basis of the overlapping territorial landscape typologies, as identified according to a national methodology (a Ministry of Development study, in 2008) and the isochrones for tourism valuation of the territorial resources. Cultural attributes of Soveja landscape were approached as landmarks determining visiting routes. Soveja depression forests provide ecosystem services relevant on the landscape space-time scale, such as carbon sequestration, pollination and wildlife habitat. Soveja is the core of the area resulting from the superposition of: the natural capital; cultural attributes; landscape amenities – open space amenities (scenic amenity, hunting etc). The mountain resort values the agro-sylvo-pastoral system's natural and cultural resource. Along landscape amenities valuation, environmental responsibility subliminal induction was considered for the site planning. Natural capital

approach must also focus on conservation, considering the vicinity of Putna Vrancea Natural Park.

Result and Discussion. Protected habitat buffers, though not compulsory according to national legislation, could provide tourism and protection opportunities. The Soveja Depression could be included in Putna Vrancea natural park buffer zone. The identity of Soveja mountain resort, as resulting from the present study, integrates complex territorial and cultural features, unique but most of all representative in national and regional context. Their valuation is recommended in the national planning strategy (The Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing, 2008 – The strategic concept of territorial development for 2030 in Romania), within the framework of objectives 5 – regarding rural development of isolated places – and 9 – on the protection, development and valuation of the natural and cultural heritage. The landscape features requiring integration in the resort's identity, as resulting from the surrounding landscape, are: charismatic fauna; landscape dynamics, resulting mostly from the terrain as rhythm and force lines; vegetal associations; forest and mountain paths; forest and mountain camping thrill opportunities; climate valuation – especially winter blizzard, which could support all-season touristic interest. At the same time, the Soveja resort should be the focal point of the cultural amenities connected with local landscape, most of them being in a state of absolute neglect. The development opportunities for this should value for national, regional and local interest the following features: the pre-historic civilization; the local unique features of local folklore - the *hora* and the associated clearings, the *Miorița* ballad and the associated pastoral landscapes (Lazăr-Bâra, 2012), the Christian heritage, the 1856 Union traces, the WWI heritage site valuation and the anti-communist mountain resistance heritage.

Conclusion. Vrancea depression system's unique landscape character derives both from its territorial isolation as a whole and from the connectivity of the inner rooms. The Soveja resort development is connected to the neighboring Putna Vrancea natural park. The valuation of this relationship is an important condition for the protected area conservation efforts success. Integrated local development is the sustainable development standard, allowing conservation, heritage valuation and most of all, supporting environmental culture.

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