

**ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES OF BUCHAREST  
DOCTORAL SCHOOL: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY**

**THE ROLE OF LOCAL INITIATIVES IN PROMOTING  
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY  
PERCEPTIONS AND NEEDS**

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**Keywords:** sustainable tourism, Local Action Group Central Dobrogea, sustainable development social responsibility, community perceptions, sustainability

## **THESIS SUMMARY**

This doctoral thesis explores the interactions between sustainable tourism and the socio-economic and cultural development of the Central Dobrogea region of Romania, with a focus on how sustainable tourism practices can contribute to improving the quality of life in local communities. The study integrates concepts from the fields of sustainability, social responsibility and cultural heritage valorisation, providing a new perspective on tourism development as a driving force for economic and social progress.

The main aim of the research is to identify and analyse the impact of sustainable tourism on local communities and to assess how cultural heritage can be effectively used to promote a form of tourism that is not only economically viable, but also environmentally responsible and socially inclusive. The thesis also addresses the role of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in supporting sustainable tourism initiatives and analyses their impact on the quality of tourism services. By using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including bibliometric analysis, surveys and interviews, the research provides an assessment of local community perceptions and the direct economic impact of tourism. The results indicate a positive correlation between the implementation of sustainable tourism practices and positive community perceptions, emphasizing the importance of social responsibility within the tourism industry.

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to the literature by offering new insights into how sustainable tourism can function as a tool for sustainable local development, suggesting that integrating social responsibility and valuing cultural heritage are essential for the long-term success of the tourism industry. Policy and practice recommendations emphasize the need for integrated strategies that promote sustainability and community involvement in tourism planning and development processes.

The PhD thesis is structured to provide a detailed and in-depth exploration of the intersections between sustainable tourism and its impact on the socio-economic and cultural development of the rural Central Dobrogea area in Romania.

### *Chapter 1: Introduction*

The initial chapter sets the theoretical and contextual background for the research conducted. It discusses the global dynamics of tourism and the relevance of sustainability in this sector, highlighting how these elements are treated in the literature. It defines the aim of the research,

which is to analyse the contribution of sustainable tourism to local development, and highlights the academic and practical relevance of the study. It also presents the structure of the thesis, orienting the reader to the architecture of the argument developed.

#### *Chapter 2: Current State of Research*

The paper continues with a section comprising the literature review on tourism, sustainability and resilience. This chapter aims to synthesize relevant previous research using bibliometric methods to map the development and impact of sustainable tourism. Various bibliometric approaches such as co-occurrence analysis and the impact of tourism on local sustainable development are explored, laying the groundwork for further investigations of the thesis.

#### *Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Assumptions*

Here the theoretical framework is developed and research hypotheses are formulated. The chapter clarifies the theoretical and conceptual models guiding the analysis and interpretation of the data collected, focusing on the link between sustainable tourism, cultural heritage and social responsibility.

#### *Chapter 4: Research Methodology*

Describes the methodology adopted in the research, including data collection methods and analysis tools. This chapter details the research design, the target population and the statistical techniques used to evaluate the data, thus providing transparency and replicability.

#### *Chapter 5: Results and Discussion*

This chapter forms the heart of the research, presenting the data collected and analysing it in the context of the hypotheses formulated. It discusses how demographic perceptions influence sustainable tourism development and explores the socio-economic impacts of tourism on local communities. A critical discussion of the results is also provided, highlighting both the contributions and limitations of the study.

#### *Chapter 6: Conclusions*

The final chapter summarizes the main findings of the research and how they contribute to existing literature and tourism development practices. It makes recommendations for practitioners and policy makers and suggests directions for future research.

#### *Bibliographical References*

This section covers all academic sources consulted in the development of the thesis, providing the reader with extensive resources for further exploration.

This structure of the doctoral thesis allows an in-depth and systematic analysis of the impact of sustainable tourism on the socio-economic and cultural development of Central Dobrogea, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinarity in addressing these complex issues.