



## RESEARCH ON AGRITOURISM ACTIVITY IN BIHOR COUNTY

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**Abstract:** Located in the north-west of Romania, Bihor County is characterized by a varied relief, which harmoniously combines the Apuseni Mountains, hills, plains and meadow areas, offering an ideal setting for both recreational activities in nature and authentic experiences related to rural life. These spectacular landscapes not only attract hiking, caving and adventure tourists, but also foster the development of rural and agro-tourism. Agro-tourism in Bihor County is constantly expanding, having a significant impact on the local economy thanks to its natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and well-preserved traditions. The authors of this scientific work note a steady growth in this sector, with more and more rural households being transformed into agrotourism guesthouses, offering visitors traditional-style accommodation, local cuisine and activities inspired by village life. At the same time, a detailed analysis of the methods used and the results obtained contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of rural tourism and agritourism in the region. For the realization of this study, quantitative and qualitative methods were used, which allowed a detailed analysis of the agritourism sector in Bihor County. Therefore, the scientific research methodology included clear principles and rules for conducting the investigations, using appropriate tools for data collection and interpretation. In the process of processing and interpreting the information, we used in particular the method of comparison, analyzing the data in time and space in order to obtain a deep and detailed understanding of the analyzed activity.

### • Introduction

In the context of the transition towards a sustainable economy, agritourism is gaining increasing importance in Eastern Europe and, implicitly, in Romania. Its definition as a form of tourism integrated into rural life involves the accommodation of tourists in traditional households, offering them authentic experiences related to agricultural activities, gastronomy, crafts and village life. In particular, agritourism contributes to the economic revitalization of rural areas, supplementing farmers' incomes and offering job alternatives for the rural population.

Several studies show that agritourism not only reduces the degree of economic dependence on agriculture, but also has a positive influence on the preservation of local identity, halting depopulation. At the same time, it entails risks and challenges: high seasonality, lack of qualified staff, inadequate promotion and poor infrastructure, especially in remote areas

### • Material and method

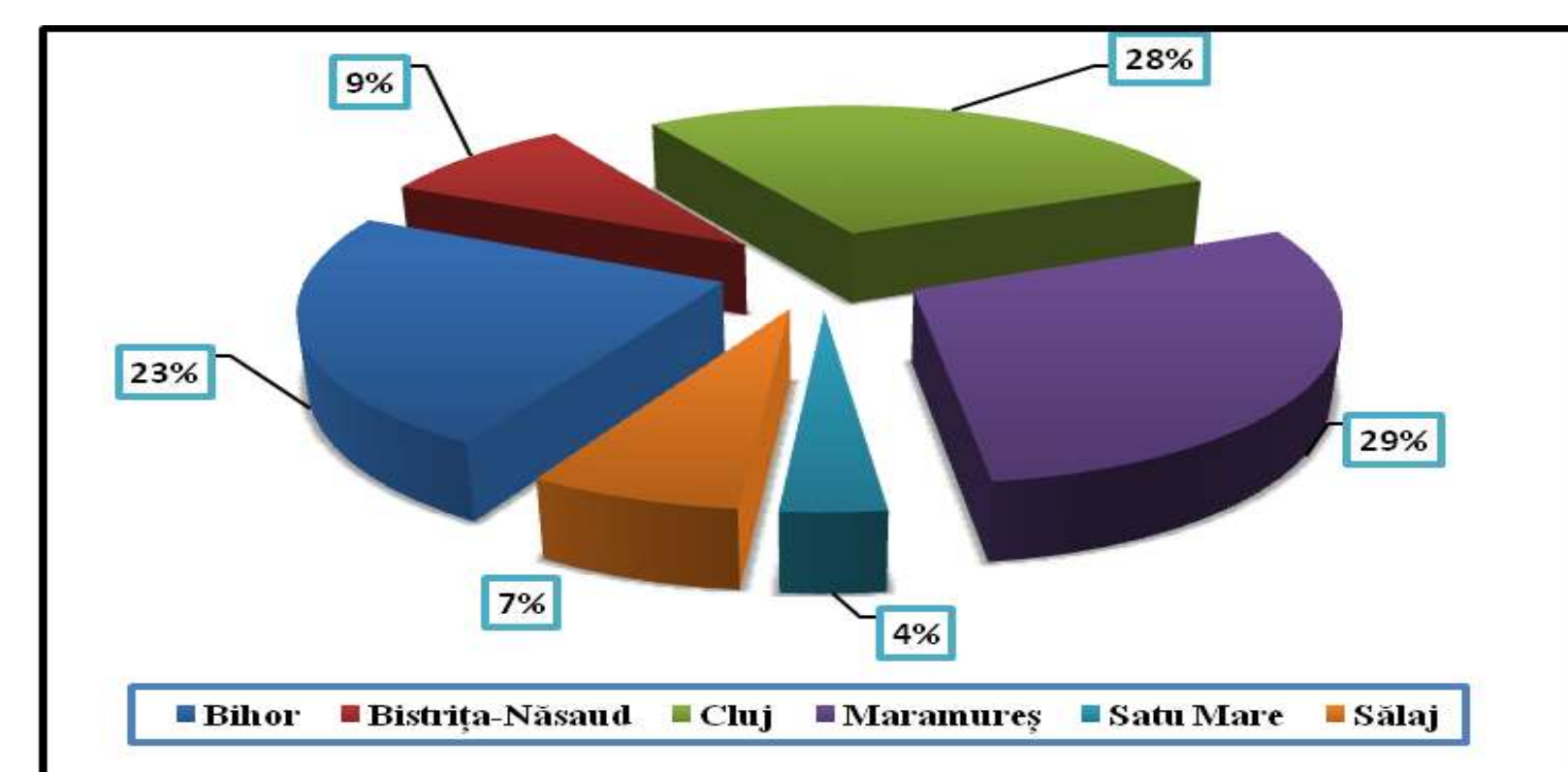
The present research was carried out between 2013-2023, with the aim of analyzing the evolution and current status of agritourism activity in Bihor County. The approach was descriptive and analytical, based on secondary sources and qualitative analysis methods.

### • Results and discussions

Bihor County is one of the most attractive counties in Romania for rural tourism and agrotourism due to its varied landscapes, well-preserved traditions and the hospitality of the locals.

Situated in the north-west of the country, the county benefits from a diversified relief, including the Apuseni Mountains, hills, plains and meadow areas, offering an ideal setting for recreational activities in nature and authentic experiences of rural life.

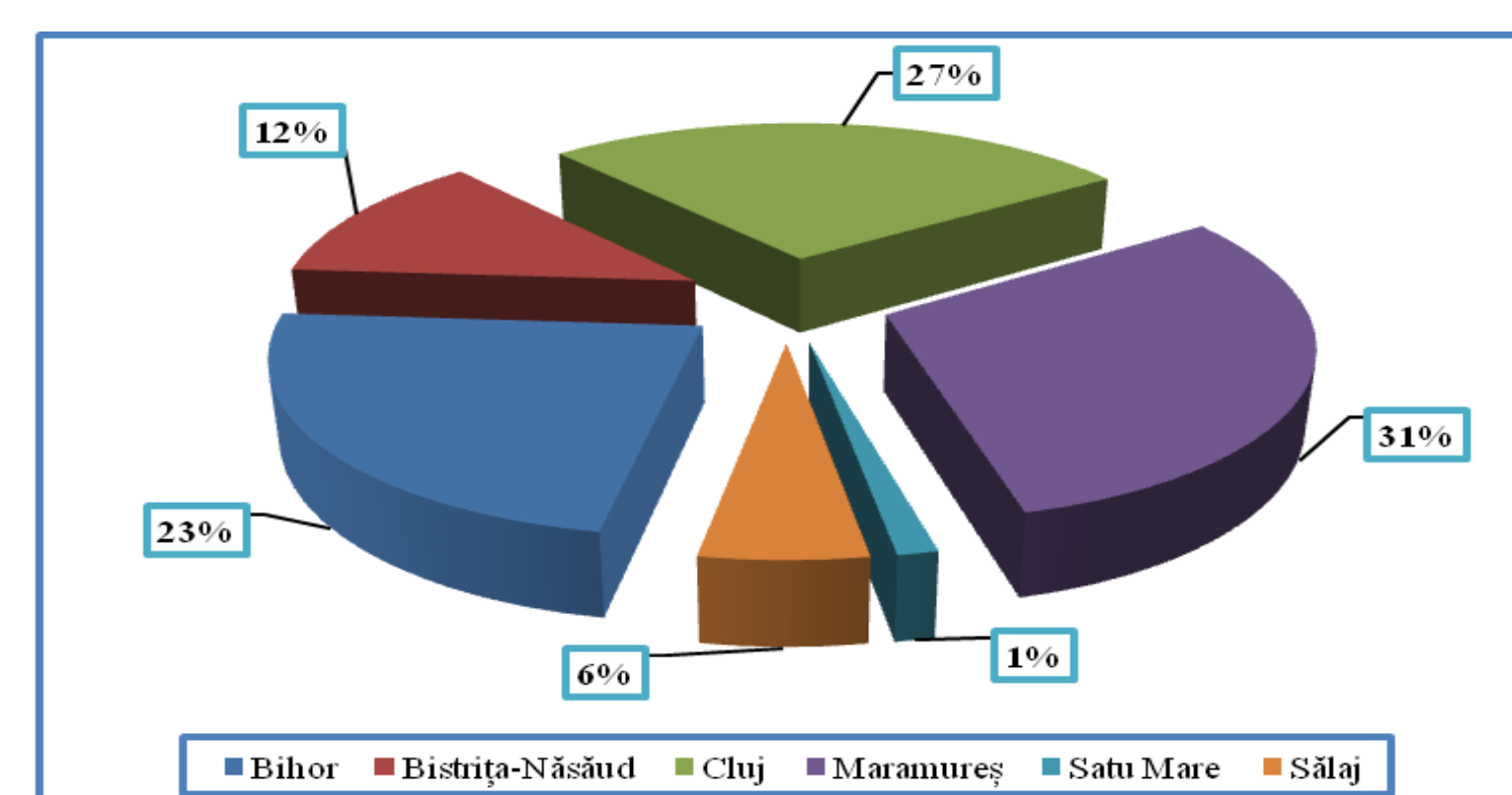
At regional level, Bihor County ranks 3rd with 23%, equivalent to 495 accommodation establishments out of a total of 2119, according to the data presented in the figure below.



Distribution of accommodation establishments in North-West Region, 2023

The tourist infrastructure of Bihor County is very well developed. In 2023, the county registers 495 tourist accommodation units, including 57 hotels, 17 hostels, 136 apartments and rooms for rent, 7 motels, 39 tourist villas, 5 chalets, 29 tourist guesthouses and 195 agro-touristic guesthouses.

In the period 2013-2023, there was an increase of 361.47% in the North-West region in terms of agritourism guesthouses. In Bihor county, this increase was 367.92%.



The distribution of existing agritouristic guesthouses in the North-West Region, in 2023

According to the above figure, the agritouristic guesthouses registered in Bihor County represent 23% of the total number of agritouristic guesthouses in the North-West Region.

### • Conclusions

Research results confirm that Bihor County has a solid agro-tourism potential, supported by varied natural resources, a rich cultural heritage and a developing infrastructure.

Agro-tourism in Bihor County has a positive impact on the local economy, generating jobs in rural areas and supporting the local economy by involving communities in providing tourism services.