GLOBALIZATION IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY AND ITS IMPACT ON TRAVEL DESTINATIONS. CASE STUDY OF UNDEVELOPED BEACHES ON THE ROMANIAN BLACK SEA COAST

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Abstract. *The need for sustainable development has generated important new approaches and transformations in all economic sectors, through legislative efforts and other measures reflected in international, regional and local strategies. The tourism industry was among the first ones to signal a prompt adjustment to this concept of sustainable development, mainly due to its significant social and human component and the critical importance of the environmental factor for its success. Tourism cannot exist without high quality, a clean and attractive natural environment – the "raw material" used by this industry. A healthy natural environment, beautiful and eye-catching landscapes and the conservation of the travel resources and destinations make up the foundation the long-term, sustainable tourism activities. The correlation between the economic performance of tourism companies and the environmental protection efforts, in addition to the strategic measures of limiting travel flows, is the starting point of the analysis covered in this paper. Romania is joining the ranks of the countries with real opportunities for enhancing the performance of their tourism industries and this is the key reason why identifying how the current needs of the entrepreneurs in the tourism industry correlate with their customers' needs is a critical issue that can be examined and evaluated as part of immediately applicable strategies, put together both by the local authorities from the travel destinations (with, or without, particularly intense tourist flows) and by the companies active in the tourism industry. This paper aims to analyze a set of specific metrics that quantify the pressure level generated by tourism activities and the maximum pressure levels from such activities that can be tolerated by travel destinations that include protected undeveloped beaches. The findings of this analysis could provide input into the strategies for sustainable management of the protected areas with tourism potential, such as the Vadu, Corbu, Gura Portitei, Sulina undeveloped beaches.*

Keywords: *sustainable development; globalization; tourism pressure; protecting natural resources; coastal tourism.*

Introduction

The consolidation and accelerated growth of globalization are fundamentally reflected in the tourism and travel industry – both at a generic level, as well as at a more detail-oriented one. Globalization has resulted into an internationalization of demand for travel services, while the free flows of tourists across national borders and the deregulation of the airline industry have led to the creation of a global travel market and an upsurge of the tourism phenomenon across most of the world's countries and regions. The tourism industry is seen as a key engine of economic development, a panacea or universal remedy for all the economic ills. However, this triggers an important question: how sustainable today's tourism industry really is?

Nowadays, the pressure exercised by tourism on destinations is no longer merely a theoretical concept; it is a visible reality, which materializes in environmental degradation, in that of sites, which becomes upsetting for the masses of holiday seekers.

The rapid development of tourism has engendered prosperity for the communities in which it has been implemented, but, at the same time, the negative consequences of social, cultural and environmental impact have created significant misbalances, the effects of which have been eradicated later with great difficulty. At present, tourism reflects, just like the rest of the economic sectors, the theories of orientation towards development, through the inclusion of social desiderata and of economic growth in harmony with the natural environment. It is the phase of alternative tourism, which includes concern for the environment, for limiting the impact of tourist pressure on ecosystems, for the preservation of tourist flows within the boundaries of the parameters expressing what the environment can withstand.

First, for the tourist to be able to contribute to the sustainable development of the economy, s/he needs to integrate the natural, cultural and human environment and, above all, to mind the fragile balance that characterizes many tourist destinations.

The tourism industry reunites all the necessary characteristics in order to become a leader of the new order imposed by sustainable development, and “not out of philanthropic impulses, but out of its long-term interest in applying sustainability” (Reid, 2003). Starting from this premise, we can admit that tourism has, from an ecological perspective, the objective of introducing, in all sectors of activity, measures and regulations meant to reduce its negative impact on the environment by limiting tourist circulation and pressure on the latter, through actions regarding the conservation and protection of biodiversity and the integrity of the ambient component through strategies on making the use of natural resources efficient.
The global development of tourism had as a main trigger coastal tourism, the form with the greatest dynamic, in most cases being thought of as mass tourism. Dependent on natural resources (climate, landscape, ecosystems), the development of coastal tourism has been and continues to be affected by climatic conditions or unforeseen events, a reason for which the unfolding of specific activities cannot be achieved unless there are adequate conditions connected with the corresponding infrastructure that takes up resources and has direct effects on the environment.

Based on these facts, the decisions regarding the development of coastal tourism most often rely on financial grounds rather than on ecological ones, to the detriment of the latter, resulting in unsustainable development with a negative impact on the environment and on local communities. Among the negative effects of the development of coastal tourism we can count: the destruction of ecosystems, pollution, the modification of the natural landscape, urban expansion, the pressure put on sensitive areas, waste production, and, last but not least, the degradation of beaches due to the massive presence of tourists, which is beyond the physical limit that these can withstand.

At a global level, coastal tourism registers the most rapid expansion in the past few decades, outnumbering all the other forms of tourism – almost 60% of European tourists prefer coastal destinations. The Eurostat estimate regarding the expansion of coastal tourism in 2025 is of 312 million tourists in Europe only at the level of the Mediterranean Sea. Coastal tourism at a European level generates approximately 200 billion Euros as a contribution to the gross domestic product and 3 million workplaces (Eurostat, 2013). In this context, the Black Sea is an option for coastal tourism at a European level, even more so as the areas on the Bulgarian and Romanian coasts are considered low risk when it comes to terrorism. In other words, the tourist pressure specific for the Mediterranean area is likely to migrate to these new areas.

"Beaches are used by more people than any other habitat in the coastal zone. Beaches are the focal point for international coastal recreation and tourism. People are willing to travel thousands of miles and spend thousands of dollars to lie, sit, or walk on the beach" (Salm, 2000, p.232). To put it differently, ecotourism, a form of sustainable tourism, which enforces more constraints for the environment, is concentrated inland, around the national parks and private reserves, while, generally, most coastal tourism is on a larger scale and caters to more of a mass tourism market (CESD, 2007, p.32). Briefly, coastal tourism and ecological tourism are rather theoretical concepts than practical ones.

"Although mass tourism was originally embraced by many countries as a "smokeless" (nonpolluting) industry that could increase employment and gross national product, evidence quickly grew that its economic benefits were marginal and its social and environmental costs high. Much of the money did not stay in the host country, and often the only benefit to the local community was found in low-paying service-level employment as maids, waiters, and drivers" (CESD, 2007, p.66). Also, coastal destinations have begun to disappoint, most of the times the agglomeration, traffic jams, noise pollution, as well as air, soil and water pollution, the degradation of the beauty of the landscape through urbanization or the intensification of human activity linked with tourist activities destroy the attractiveness of the area for tourism.

Tourist pressure and carrying capacity

At present, at the level of all coastal destinations, a phenomenon of marked pressure can be noticed, generated by numerous factors such as climatic change, coastal erosion, the expansion of specific and general tourism infrastructure, intense coastal urbanization, pollution, physical pressure of tourists in sensitive areas (beaches, coastal protected areas). Moreover, human pervasiveness should enter the definition

of coastal tourism, as it has been demonstrated that, in those destinations where tourism has a negative image, this is most of the times due to either the high numbers of tourists or excessive development, much over the carrying capacity of the respective destination.

Table 1. Indicators of sustainable tourism according to UNWTO (2004)

Indicators	**Specific measures**
[1] Protection of sites	Establishing the site category within UICN classification
[2] Stress	Quantification of the number of tourists that visit the site (yearly/peak months)
[3] Intensity of use	Intensity of use during peak periods (tourists/hectare)
[4] Social impact	Ratio between the number of tourists and that of the local people
[5] Control	Application of control measures
[6] Waste management	Quantification of the volume of waste resulting from tourist activities and not only
[7] Planning	Drawing up a regional development plan
[8] Fragile ecosystems	Quantification of rare species or of endangered species
[9] Consumer satisfaction	Quantification of the degree of tourist satisfaction (based on inquiries)
[10] Satisfaction of local people	Quantification of the degree of satisfaction of the local people (based on inquiries)
[11] Tourist contribution to the local economy	Quantification of the impact of tourism on the local economy
Aggregate indicators	
A. – carrying capacity	An aggregate means of measuring that draws attention from the start on the key factors that influence the carrying capacity of the site in relation to the various levels of tourism development
B. – site disturbance	An aggregate means of measuring the levels of impact on the site in order to find out the natural and cultural particularities under the effect of cumulative constraints from tourism and other sectors
C. - interest	An aggregate means of measuring the particularities of the site which make it attractive for tourism and which can change with time

The concept of "carrying capacity" in tourism can refer to "the number of tourists that a certain place can receive, without putting pressure on either the environment or the host population and, at the same time, without diminishing tourist satisfaction" (Patrichi, 2012*)*. According to Dumbraveanu (2013) it can be:

- the ecological carrying capacity represents the level/limit of use above which ecological risk and negative ecological impact emerge;

- the economic carrying capacity consists in the level or limit of use above which local economy relies mostly on tourism and becomes dependent on it;
- the social carrying capacity is given by the level above which tourists become annoying to the locals or affect the local culture;
- the psychological carrying capacity is represented by the level of which tourists feel discomfort and insatisfaction because of the tourism agglomeration.

Starting from beach degradation, intensified and extensive construction of infrastructure, urban planning which impacts the environment, landscaping and beach carrying capacity, this paper highlights a situation faced by many other tourist destinations in the world nowadays, namely the pressure applied by aggressive development in coastal areas, a pressure resulting from the desire of real estate agents, of local authorities, of demand for residential tourism and of the second homeowner to put their mark on a new territory, namely, on the last wild beaches in Vadu-Corbu, Gura Portitei, Sulina and Sfantul Gheorghe. This paper focuses on the study of Corbu and Vadu beaches.

In order to show the present-day situation of coastal tourism in the area near Corbu-Vadu beaches, respectively the coastal area, the cities of Constanta, Navodari and Ovidiu, we present in what follows the main indicators that characterize the specific infrastructure in tourist circulation. We can notice from figure 1 that, during the period we have analyzed, from the point of view of tourist demand, there is an important dynamic, between 18-22%, for the total number of arrivals, respectively for the overnights. This situation of the tourist circulation dynamics, in relation with a relative stagnation of investment in hotel infrastructure, generates additional pressure on the adjacent areas, including the beaches of Vadu and Corbu.

The village of Corbu is in the north part of the municipality of Constanta, 23 kilometers away, and it is mainly an agricultural area. Due to its geographic position on the coast of the Black Sea and in the south of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation, the Corbu village has a high tourist potential which can be capitalized on according to the principle of sustainability by granting more attention to environmental preservation, respectively to the preservation of those elements of biodiversity which have determined a great part of the village surface to receive the status of protected natural area.

Hence, 8.372 hectares of the area of Corbu village have been included in the perimeter of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation, the beaches are known as Corbu and Vadu included. They are part of Grindul Chituc, an integrally protected area included in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation, having 2300 hectares.

Being considered a scientific reserve of a mixed type (the 4th category IUCN), the Grindul Chituc area consists of a sandy hill of a marine lagoon type, having lakes with a reduced exchange of water and partially covered with floating vegetation, hollows with reed and bulrush, meadows and low marine hills as well as little consolidated coastal meadows. The Corbu and Vadu beaches are among the last virgin beaches on the Romanian coast, having fine-grained sand mixed with shells of sea snails in some areas (Monography of Corbu Village, 2012).

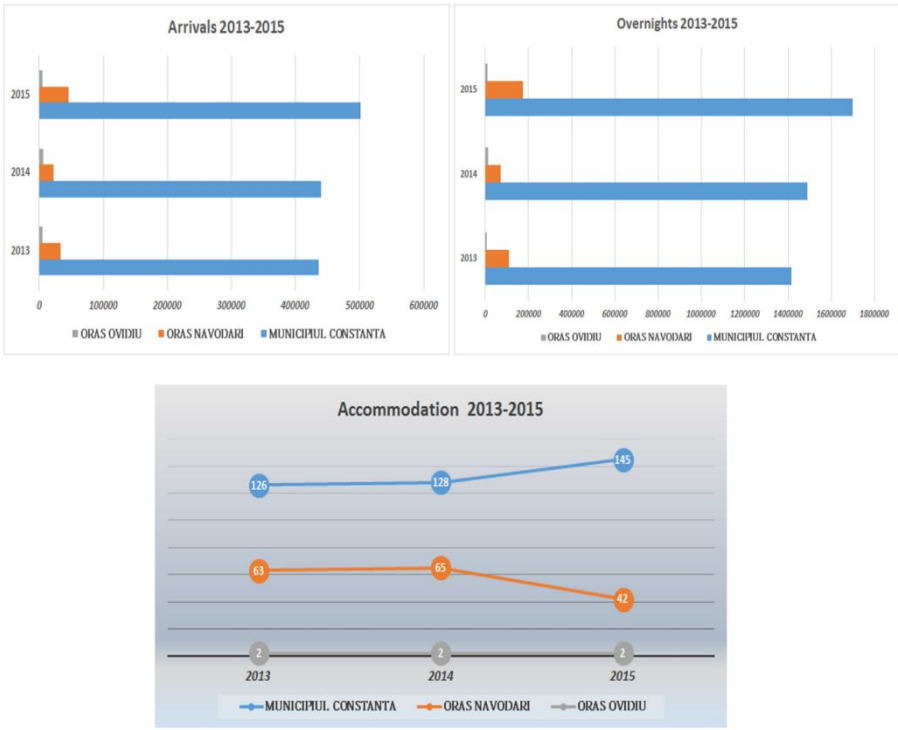

Figure 1. Evolution of specific tourist circulation indicators and of accommodation units Geographic delimitations (INSSE, 2016)

The protected areas in the Corbu and Vadu regions, according to Natura 2000:
-ROSCI 0065, with a total surface of 454.037 hectares is a vulnerable area through its geographic position, ship circulation causing significant changes on the banks of the canals through the phenomena of suction and wave, as well as noise and vibration production that affect the fauna, especially during nesting and feeding.
-ROSCI 0066, with a surface of 123.374 hectares, it hosts important species of protected birds. Intensely circulated roads within the area, agricultural portions with various types of crops have a negative impact on the site.
-ROSPA 0031 the Danube Delta and the Razim Sinoe Complex, with a surface of 512.820 hectares, hosts important groups of species of protected birds.
-ROSPA 0076 the Black Sea has certain particularities given by the major influence of the Danube waters and alluviation so that there are unique sedimentary habitats of the Romanian coast.

The urban plans for Corbu, for which over 100 hectares are allocated, are the following:
- the zonal urban plan "Introduction to urban areas and land parceling in view of building permanent and seasonal dwellings, accommodation and eating units and constructions corresponding to urban technical endowment and associated facilities", Corbu village, is situated outside the Corbu inhabited area, has a surface of 92.82 hectares, on the east of Corbu village, in the close proximity of the Black Sea (Adequate Evaluation Study, Primaria Corbu, 2015).

- the zonal urban plan "Holliday village parceling with fishing specific 3", Corbu village, Constanta municipality, has 12.88 hectares, it is situated within the sites *Natura 2000 ROSPA 0031 the Danube Delta and Razim-Sinoie Complex, ROSCI 0065 the Danube Delta*, in the near vicinity of the southern border of the two protected areas. Its purpose is to build a holiday village for the summer peak season. *(*Adequate Evaluation Study, Wildlife Management Consulting, 2015 p.3).
- the zonal urban plan *Parcela 610/31***-** Its main objective is the parceling of the area to the purpose of developing a residential complex. The whole surface is 5 000 sq. m. The area was parceled before the elaboration of this zonal urban plan (PUZ), in seven parcels, while the final surfaces needed to be between 337 sq. m. and 1020 meters. It is situated inside the site Natura 2000 ROSPA0031 and close to the site Natura 2000 ROSCI0065. (Adequate Evaluation Study, Management Consulting, 2015, p. 23).

Figure 2. Image of the zonal urban plans: Corbu 92.822 ha (yellow) and holiday village with fishing specific (blue) and the Parcela zonal urban plan 610/31 (green) (taken from Corbu PUZ)

Surprisingly, after the analysis of the zonal urban plans in the region, although they enter the protected geographic area included in the Danube Delta Reservation, what comes out of the analysis is that the impact on the existing protected areas is minimal or inexistent; moreover, it would be even useful to human activity. We realize that, anyway, the areas in the discussion are the buffer zones for the protected area and that the ecosystem has already been destroyed by agriculture, pasturing and tourism. The three reported zonal urban plans indicate the important surface, of over 100 hectares, that needs to be built, clearly and indubitably affecting the protected area, even more so since the reservation will lose certain areas in favor of landowners. To these, other, already built structures are added.

Legend: Yellow line-shape (contour) Corbu zonal urban plan 92.822 ha; Purple line-shape (contour): Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation; Red line-shape (contour): ROSCI 0065, ROSCI 0066; Dark green line: ROSPA 0031 the Danube Delta and Razim Sinoe Complex, ROSPA 0076 the Black Sea (taken from Corbu zonal urban plan).

Figure 3. Corbu zonal urban plan and the delimitations of protected areas

In order to exemplify the results of human activity intensification in sensitive areas, we would like to consider now a brief analysis of the already modified area, between Mamaia North resort and Navodari, which was, before present-day urbanization, a protected area that is nowadays lost.

In the 90s, before the avalanche of constructions, Mamaia-Navodari was an arboreal edge and wild vegetation area, well known for being the habitat of countless species among which the boar, the fox, many species of birds and a specific flora. Because of privatization of the respective lands and constructions, the area has suffered complex changes, until the destruction of the ecosystem. Habitat destruction is reflected best by the cases that have stirred many reactions in the years after 2000, linked with the boar invasion in Mamaia. The boars, confused by the impact on the habitats and by their hunting, entered hotels in Mamaia or even reached the center of Constanta. The newspaper "Ziua" of Constanta published in September 2002: "Sources from the County Hunting and Fishing Association have declared that these events, unique for the area in question, have appeared due to deforestations of arboreal edges, approved by Navodari City Hall for the construction of villas on the coast. In this way, the last place on the coast where families of boars, deer and pheasants lived has been destroyed."

Figure 4. Urbanization in the formerly protected area between Mamaia and Năvodari (Google Maps, 2016)

In the Naăvodari zonal urban plan, it is specified that, as far as the fauna/avifauna is concerned, "in case certain species are inconvenienced by human presence, *these can be moved to areas that are less occupied with construction or even to natural protected areas in the vicinity*" (Environmental Report - Mamaia North Coast Area – Năvodari, 2014, p.71).

Figure 5. NĂVODARI zonal urban plan – Urban agglomeration in the coastal area Mamaia-Năvodari (taken from Npvodari zonal urban plan, p.46)

If Năvodari restricts the habitats of species towards Corbu, and Corbu, through urban planning, then pushes them farther towards Grindul Chituc, a phenomenon to which pollution from refineries and the impact of industry and of the existence of the shooting range from the military instruction camp get added, we may conclude that the *coup de grace* for the wild beaches Corbu and Vadu will come from tourism, all these surpassing the carrying capacity of the environment in a protected area.

What is strange is that in no adequate piece of research so far can we find the analysis of the carrying capacity of the environment and the impact of intensified tourism activity, especially since they are about sensitive, protected areas. According to international regulations, tourism in protected areas is subject to special norms, and the only accepted form of tourism is ecotourism (birdwatching, observing nature etc.). "This type of tourism is associated with the minimal development of infrastructure and small-scale interventions in areas of normally-strong control and restrictive management. Carrying capacity issues concern the number of tourists, visitor flows and spatial patterns of concentration/dispersion vis-à-vis the protection of nature and the functioning of ecosystems but also the quality of experience of visitors." (EPL University of the Aegean, 2001, p.8).

Model regarding the sustainable development of the Corbu-Vadu area

Type of area: Protected wild beaches
Site value: we consider it invaluable, in the context in which virgin beaches have become extremely rare at a European level.
Carrying capacity: in order to establish a starting point in the analysis of the carrying capacity, we have taken into consideration the calculation model specific for resorts destined for the sun and water cure resorts, according to INCDT.

Table 2. Characteristics and carrying capacity

Surface (sq. m.)	4000
Surface norm (sq. m./person)	4
Optimum carrying capacity of the beach:	1000
Daily carrying capacity of the beach:	1200

According to the results in the table above, for an optimum capacity of 1000 people, an area of at least 4000 square meters needs to be reserved, taking into account 4 meters/person as the beach norm, double as the present standard for the unprotected beaches.

Measuring accommodation capacity: We propose, for the Corbu-Vadu area, a capacity of 1000 places, meaning 500 rooms. According to the regulations (Urban Planning Regulations for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation), which stipulate that a tourism unit of a hotel type cannot have more than 20 rooms, and pensions no more than 10, it means that the accommodation infrastructure should have a maximum of 25 hotel units. This presupposes that the local authority should allow the development of the accommodation infrastructure up to this threshold. By extrapolation, we take into account one-night stay tourists as well, who frequent the same beach, generating in their turn an important flow of tourists, which put physical pressure on the area. Through the method of beach access tickets, this flow could be limited. At present, ARBDD has put at the tourists' disposal, as a first restrictive measure for disorganized tourism, beach access tickets, which can be bought directly on the ARBDD website, for the modest price of 5 lei per person per day, and 15 lei a week. In addition, car access on the beach is strictly forbidden, just as camping, since there are special places for these. At present, there is a certain type of disorganized tourism on the two beaches, with negative effects on the beach (pollution, waste, car access) called off-camping/trailer camping by those who perform it.

Measures: in the spirit of the ecotourism that we are advancing here, which involves the development of the wild beach area, we are proposing a set of measures that would aim at the future transformation of these virgin beaches into an exceptional USP of Romania. We think that maintaining the integrity of the natural beauty of these beaches, as well as that of the ecosystems can prove an invaluable gain for Romanian coastal tourism. In this sense, we consider as viable a series of measures that can represent a starting point for a sustainable model of coastal tourism in the Corbu-Vadu area, from the point of view of both the investors and the local authorities.

At the level of the local authorities, the sustainable model can take into account the following:
-The limitation of construction authorizations for more than 25 accommodation units, so that the spatial norms for sustainable tourist usage of the beach area should be observed, and in view of protecting the neighboring sensitive areas.
-An increase of beach access fees, which should contribute to attracting an educated, informed and responsible customer segment
-Tours organized for birdwatching and nature watching along the coast – performed in small groups, of maximum 20 people, accompanied by rangers who have been trained for both monitoring and control of the area and for tourist guiding in responsible tourism activities.

-Making sea itineraries for tourism unpolluting boats that would allow tourists to admire the coast in its entirety. The itineraries could take the Corbu-Gura Portitei route.
-Directing investments to the development of non-motor transport, respectively to bicycling routes in the vicinity of the beaches (along the already formed ones by car access)
-To the benefit of the community, we identify the opportunities created by the new workplaces, of rangers, guides, waste collection, bicycle rent, drivers of means of coastal transport to the beach, all being jobs that allow the requalification of community members
-From the perspective of the investors, we consider as timely the directing lines of the organization of competitions along the topic of "Sustainable investment in the virgin beach areas", which can be initiated by the local authority in partnership with ARBDD and private investors.

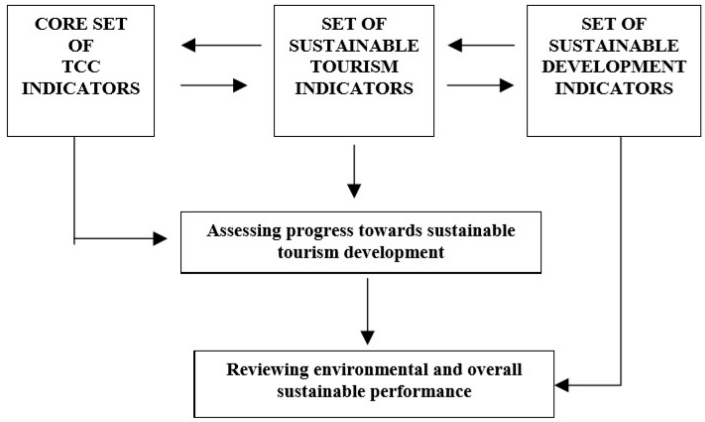

Figure 6. Core set of indicators for sustainable performance (taken from EPL University of the Aegean, 2001, p.27)

In this case, we recommend resorting to the methodology for evaluating the impact indicators: physical–ecological, socio-demographic and political–economic indicators, according to the model presented in the study (EPL University of the Aegean, 2001, pp.11-25).

Conclusions

Although it can represent a feasible long and medium term economic opportunity, the development of the Corbu-Vadu coastal area along the principles of sustainable tourism needs to be approached through restrictive management, which should use instruments of control and prevention of the negative effects of tourism on the coast. Restrictive management has to envisage the limitation of chaotic, intensified and extensive development of urban and tourism infrastructure, which characterizes the area between Mamaia and Navodari nowadays. In addition, it must contain guiding lines regarding the approval and implementation of solely sustainable projects for any activity, a first step being an ample research study overall coastal area, not individual studies on approved zonal plans like the ones that have been done so far.

Figure 7. Vadu Beach (by authors)

Tourism development of the Corbu-Vadu coastal area on sustainable principles may become an alternative to coastal tourism, a different type of tourism, destined to knowledgeable tourists who make ecotourism, who could enjoy, in this unique area, not only the beauty of the natural landscape, but also the sun, sea and sand in a virgin, unaltered territory.

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