

## THE IGNIȘ – GUTÂI MOUNTAIN TOURIST PLANNING IN TERMS OF A TERRITORIAL SYSTEM IN MARAMUREȘ

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**Abstract:** The tourism planning of Igniș - Gutâi mountain area is a relevant subject in the tourist thanks the gap between the natural and anthropic tourism potential and tourism infrastructure well represented almost nonexistent. The unique landscape, diversity and variety of natural and anthropogenic sightseeing, key indicators of tourist traffic signals a weak tourism phenomenon, even if they are individualized in small and medium-sized mountains with the natural exception. Being part of the small and medium mountains category, the tourism planning of Igniș - Gutâi Mountains must consider that they are component of a Territorial system. The novelty of this theme is emphasized by the way of tourist planning methodological tools which offer a different perspective to analyze the Igniș - Gutâi area. Thus, the scientific approach of this area will take into account the principles, the scientific norms and tourism planning methods and also the methods of Regional Geography and territorial systems. The starting point is the researcher's vision on the study area. He has seen the Igniș - Gutâi Mountains as an area subject to tourist planning, a region which provides the useful direction of research or the territorial system components cut in functional complexes. The original character is supported by the need for a territory interdisciplinary approach due to its complex structure, which can be found on the personal touch.

**Key words:** The Igniș - Gutâi Mountains, territorial system, tourist area, tourism planning

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### INTRODUCTION

Tourism planning is one of the main concerns of contemporary society, an action which is indispensable in studies on the development of the tourism phenomenon. Mostly application the research in the field of tourist planning were imposed both by the desire for organization and territorial development and for the operation of natural and / or anthropogenic tourism resources, so as to turn them into tourist products. The tourism planning of Igniș - Gutâi Mountains is a relevant issue in tourist planning because of the discrepancies between the tourist potential natural and anthropogenic which is well represented and the almost inexistent tourist infrastructure. The methodological tools offer a different perspective in analysis of the Igniș - Gutâi area. In the tourist planning, the pragmatic thinking and the methodological rigor contributed to the transition between quantity and quality in the whole scientific approach. The original character is supported by the need for interdisciplinary approaches because of its complex structure.

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## METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The territory analysis both of the perspective of a region and the prospect of choosing a territorial system imposed a methodological arsenal to include the research methods whose procedures or means should create a whole.

The first part of the paper focuses on the basic of concepts analysis through specialised literature, as checking references is during the first step in achieving of this research. Through direct and indirect observations the field research, the necessary information has been selected and has been subject to quantification, expressed quantitatively or qualitatively through table or maps.

The second part of the paper aims at the state of the art by diagnosis. This drew the borders of the territorial system and the descriptive analysis was correlated with cartographic material. The innovation of the tourism phenomenon features and the development was performed after the regional analysis of the territory. The map which gives the necessary information in the field was made after the program Corel Draw 13, relying on with the tourist map made by Mac (1992). The information aimed at analyzing administrative territorial units was effectively divided by a graphic and analyzed through a choropleth, thus the relationship between system components had been shown. Although Baia Mare lies in the Baia Mare Depression, in contact with the Gutâi Mountains, it was chosen in the study area because its villages are located inside of Igriş-Gutâi Mountains. Based on exhaustive inventory and distribution in the territory were prospected, the available potential tourism natural and anthropogenic and tourism infrastructure. The successful space management (Ianoş, 2000) was made after examining the general conditions and focusing on the favorable, restrictive and pressure conditions.

The third part of the paper presents an analysis of the importance of mountain tourism in the current context and identifies the main tourist reasons in choosing a tourist destination. The end of this research projects the potential direction of the functional tourist development in the resorts of Igriş - Gutâi Mountains, based on existing factors and specialized studies.

## ANALYTICAL COMPONENT DEBATE

Tourism planning has evolved continuously, based on research in architecture, territorial planning, marketing, industry, transport, ecology and the new perspectives on tourism. The interference of these branches contributed to the development of interdisciplinary character which the tourism planning has in approaching a territory, giving it a systemic vision. Basically, the tourism planning is influenced by the economic and social development of tourism territorial units.

The concept of tourism has developed evolutionary from research on „*tourist locations*” and „*exploitation tour*”, in terms of tourism (Ciangă & Dezsi, 2007).

The tourism planning of the territory could be defined as a dynamic and complex scientific organization of tourism space in a vision of tourism marketing, taking into account the relationship between the environment and human communities and all the factors influencing these relationships (Berbecaru & Botez, 1977).

From an economic perspective, Minciu (1995) defines the tourism planning as a process which reflects the complex interaction between the physical and geographical features of the territory and all economic and social activities in which the tourism has the central role in the polarization of interests and efforts. The tourism planning is an essential component of the dynamic and complex process of scientific organization of geographical space, which should benefit and exploit the features of the territory components through a specific assets, services and opportunities for their efficient operation (Ciangă & Dezsi, 2007, p. 31).

Coccean (2004) believes that tourism planning is the action to highlight the aesthetic and economic goal, attractive resort or a tourist area, ensuring a certain part of the building infrastructure, making tourism product and providing the full tourism supply.

Ilieş M. (2007) defines the tourism planning as an anthropogenic intervention in a given space, the aim of highlighting one or several landmarks, in a territory capable equipment to facilitate the smooth running of tourism act, based on their own experiences and practical

examples. The author emphasizes the importance of the tourism phenomenon in operational terms based on the components arranged. This stresses the differences between the tourism planning and architecture. The action is determined by the entire tourism development phenomenon, whereas architecture is only a major component of it even if they interrelate.

In a modern sense, Erdeli Gheorghilaş (2006) believe that tourism planning should be coordinated in a systemic vision and arranged taxonomic unit, it is considered a social recreational space which is defined by its structure.

Page (2009) believes that tourism planning is an evolving process in which managers make decisions that have an impact on the organization and business. He emphasizes the importance of human resources in creating and selling tourism products and services, identifying problems and solving them in tourism and provides case studies addressed both to tourism providers and tourists.

The relationship between tourism planning theory and practice is important for Woodside, Martin (2008) because they insisted on projects and implemented the tourism planning strategies. They identified five general stages that characterize the tourism planning process, beginning from prospecting and identifying tourism motivation, continuing with the planning, implementation, and impact evaluation of tourism and, in the end, the administration of the entire system have a major role.

### **ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Istvan et al (1990), the Igriş - Gutâi Mountains form a mountainous unit which is well defined by the surrounding depression areas: the Maramures Depression in the north and east, the Oaş Depression in the west and the Baia Mare Depression in the south. The delimitation and the individualization of the area are made based on physical and geographical limits, natural, administrative, social and complex limits.

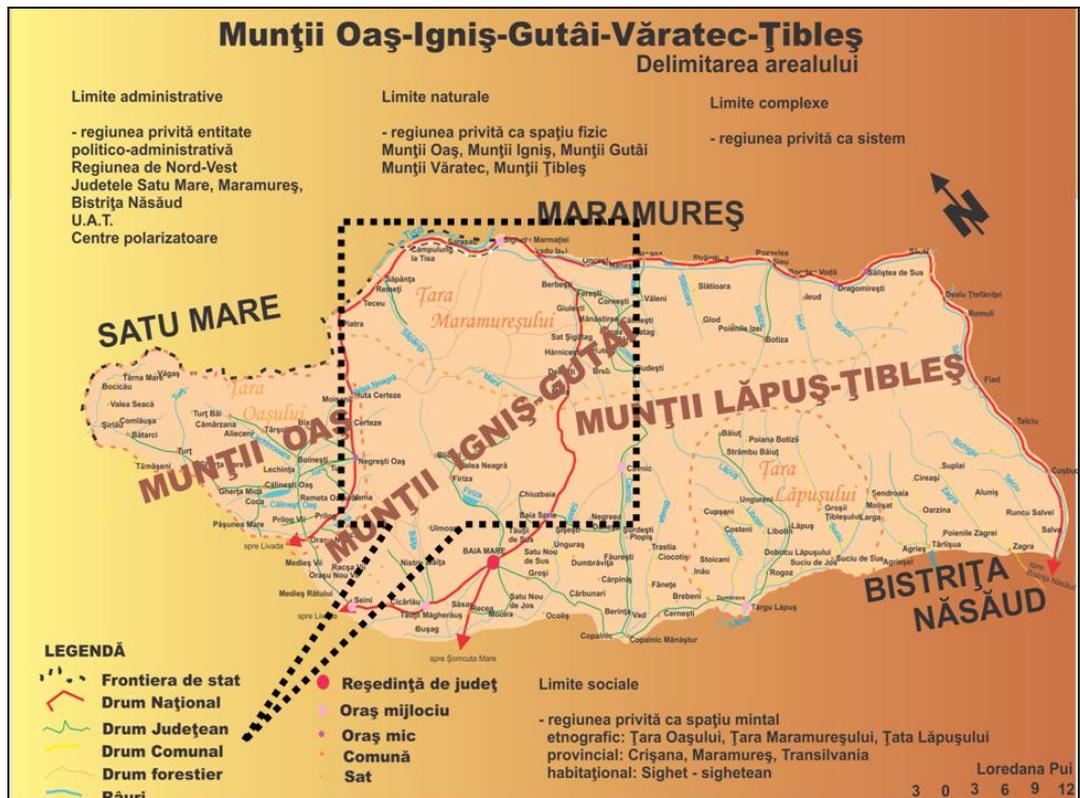
The physical and geographical boundaries limit accurately the study area of the Igriş – Gutâi Mountain as to the existing valleys around. Thus, Istvan et al. (1990, p 7 - 8), sets the northern limit at the south of the localities Piatra, Teceu Mic, Remeţi, Săpânţa, Câmpulung la Tisa, Sarasău and Sighetu Marmaţiei, on the left bank of the Tisa river, and the East limit on the west of the localities Vadu Izei, Berbeşti, Fereşti, Giuleşti, Sat-Şugătag, Hărnicieşti, from the Mara river, crossing then towards the Cosău Valley through the villages of Hoteni, Breb and Budeşti. The Southern limit is outlined in the piedmont area crossed by the Căvnic Valley basin, north of the village Şişeşti, Dăneşti, Şurdeşti, on the way to Baia Sprie, Baia Mare and until Seini, on the contact area with the Baia Mare Depression. The western mountain area is drawn on the east of the localities Oraşu Nou, Racşa, Vama, Negreşti-Oaş, Certeze and Huta-Certeze, in the Oaş Depression (figure 1).

In terms of natural boundaries, the region is regarded as a physical area which separates the mountain and the depression areas. Mihăilescu (1963) brings a new insight to limiting the regions by integrating Igriş - Gutâi Mountains within mountain massifs with heights below 1500 m and consequently the limits are set according to altitudes. Posea et al. (1974) uses the regionalization of Igriş - Gutâi Mountain based on tectono-structural and geological differentiation to include it in the structure of neo-volcanic unit. The administrative boundaries reflect the administrative territorial management of the Igriş - Gutâi Mountain in Maramures County. Although some localities outline the physical and geographical limits of the area, the analysis and the assessment of the current situation, as well as the identification of problems is performed based on the administrative-territorial structure, on the polarizing centers and on the connections between the localization points and the access areas, therefore, some localities of the NUTS V level are included in the in the study area.

The social boundaries set the mental space both ethnographically and according to habitation, by outlining the Maramureş Land, the Oaş Land and the Lapuş Land. Most of the Igriş - Gutâi Mountains are framed within the area of Maramureş Land, bordered by Oaş and Lapuş Land.

The complex limits offer the possibility to analyze the area in terms of a homogeneous territorial system which respects the principles of functionality, completeness, uniqueness,

causality and the dynamic equilibrium (Ianoș, 2000, pp. 39 - 40). From this point of view, the Igniș - Gutâi mountain area stands out as a territorial system both in Maramureș County and in the volcanic chain Oaș - Igniș - Gutâi - Văratec - Țibleș, which is framed in the north-west of România. The system can be defined as a segment of reality which identifies a set of objects, processes, phenomena, beings or groups connected through a lot of mutual relations, as well as relationship with the environment; they all act jointly in order to achieve well defined targets (Petrea, 1998). The human settlement as a geosystem is an optimal open thermo-dynamic and informational system (Ianoș, 2000). According to Zotic (2005), the overall system is a collection of interdependent elements which must focus on all the internal links and also on the relationship with the surrounding environment, from a global perspective.



**Figure 1.** The Igniș - Gutâi Mountains - a territorial system in the Oaș - Igriș - Gutâi - Văratec - Țibleș Mountains. Processing by Mac (1992)

The territorial development directions, regardless of the level, laid out in the land planning documentation are detailed by specific regulations within the limits of the administrative territory of the towns and villages through the planning documentation.

In this context, the analysis must take into account the localities in the northern area, at the border with Ukraine. Some of the localities in direct contact with the borderline area include the following local government units: Remeți, Săpânța, Câmpulung la Tisa, Sarasău and Sighetu Marmăției. Iliș (2003) compares the border towns between the states with the epidermis of a ratzelian organism which comes into contact and reacts to the external influences and to the constrictive and favorable measures of the cooperation process.

According to the new bordering and considering a general to particular approach, the Igniș - Gutâi mountain area is in compliance with the NUTS I (as a territorial system in Romania), NUTS

II (within the development of the northwest region), NUTS III (in terms of administrative authority, this area belongs to Maramureş county, its western limit marks the border between the counties of Maramureş and Satu Mare) and NUTS V (this territorial system also includes a municipality (municipality - the county seat on the contact area), 4 towns, 12 communes and 35 villages). The administrative division of the Igriş - Gutâi area can be seen in table 1.

An inductive approach is launched with the purpose of effective analysis, starting from the territorial division into local government units assigned to NUTS V.

**Table 1.** Territorial administrative organization of the Igriş - Gutâi Mountains area

Nr. Crt.	Municipiu	Oraş	Comune	Sate
1	<b>Baia Mare</b>			Blidari, Firiza, Valea Neagra, Valea Borcutului
2		<b>Baia Sprie</b>		Chiuzbaia, Satu Nou de Sus, Tăuții de Sus
3			<i>Budești</i>	Sârbi
4		<b>Cavnic</b>		
5			<i>Câmpulung la Tisa</i>	
6			<i>Cicârlău</i>	Bîrgău, Ilba, Handalu Ilbei
7			<i>Desești</i>	Hărniciești, Mara
8			<i>Giulești</i>	Ferești, Berbești, Mănăstirea
9			<i>Ocna Șugatag</i>	Breb, Hoteni, Sat Șugatag
10			<i>Remeți</i>	Piatra, Teceu Mic
11			<i>Sarasău</i>	
12			<i>Săpânța</i>	
13		<b>Seini</b>		
14	<b>Sighetu Marmăției</b>			
15			<i>Șișești</i>	Bontăieni, Cetățele, Dănești, Negreia, Plopiș, Șurdești
16		<b>Tăuții Măgherauș</b>		Băița, Bozanța Mare, Nistru, Ulmoasa, Bușag, Merișor
17			<i>Vadu Izei</i>	
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>

The Chorematic analysis will take into account the network of settlements, the territorial distribution, the network's role and functions - centers and areas of polarization. Picture 2 shows that the flows are directed towards major urban centers with administrative, socio-economic, cultural, medical and educational functions, offering the Igriş - Gutâi territorial system a centrifugal character.

Some of its centers of internal interest also display centripetal tendencies (eg. Cavnic) thus enabling the exchange of substances, energy and information between the two poles. The axes represented by DN18 (linking the urban centers Sighetu Marmăției and Baia Mare) and DN 19 (Sighetu - Marmăției - Negrești Oaş) are highly important for the system's organization. The development areas identified by Ianoş (2000) in the Igriş - Gutâi region are:

- effervescent areas - represented by the premises located at altitudes of up to 600 - 700 m, crossed by DN 18 and DN 19. These areas are characterized by linear polarization of the natural, economic or social vectors, territorial entities are usually compact. This area comprises the territorial administrative units of Câmpulung la Tisa, Sarasău, Sighetu Marmăției, Vadu Izei, Giulești, Ocna Șugatag, Cicârlău, Seini, Tăuții Măgherauș;

- converging areas - located at the foot of the mountains, in the hill-mountain contact area. They offer unique landscapes and also the possibility of developing tourism. In the Igriş - Gutai mountain area, the converging areas overlap the administrative units of Remeți, Săpânța, Desești, Budești, Șișești;

- isolated areas - represented by actual mountain area whose tourism potential can be exploited. These areas are characterized by diverse natural resources and favorable conditions for mountain tourism. These isolated areas are overlapping localities at 1000 m, the Cavic town, and a large part of the territory belonging to the Săpânța village and the villages of Blidari, Firiza, Valea Neagră, and Valea Porcului which belong to the administrative-territorial unit of Baia Mare. The mountain resorts Mogoșa, Șuior, Izvoare and Cavic are also classified as isolated areas.

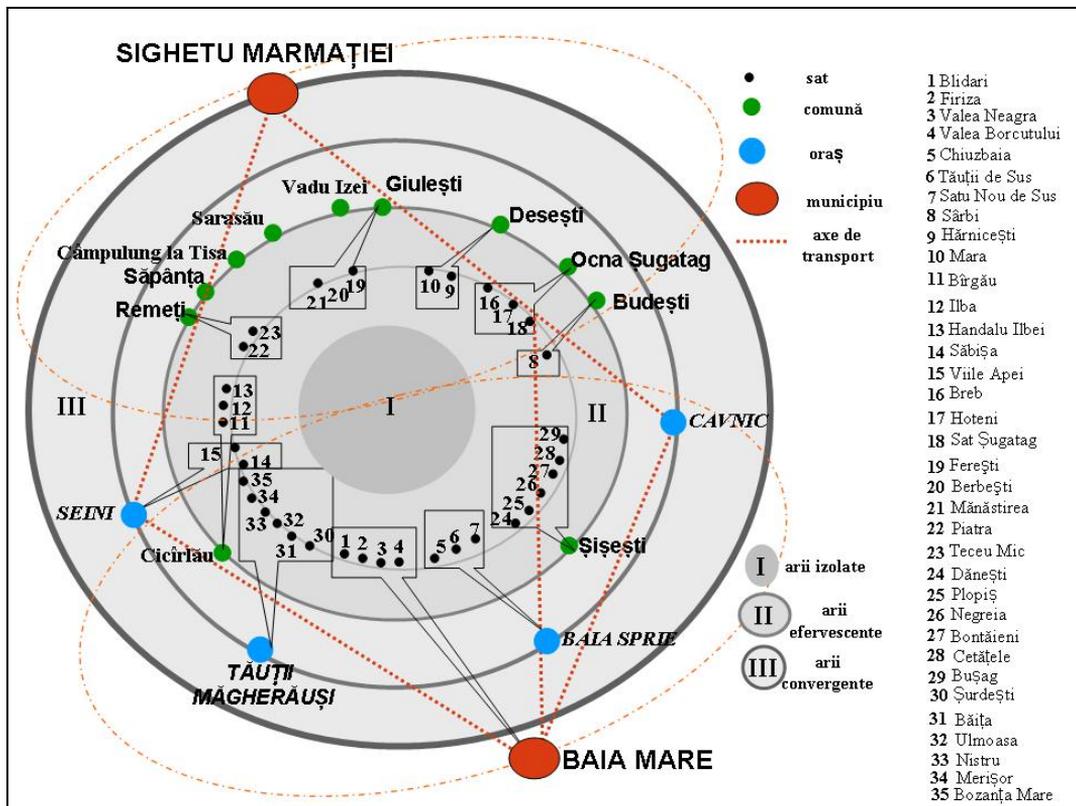


Figure 2. The chorematic model of Igniș - Gutâi Mountains

Tourism planning in terms of territorial system was studied by several authors. Cazes (1992) argues that tourism planning is a part of the process of organizing geographical space which highlights the natural and human potential contributing to the „*development and space planning*”. Erdeli Gheorghilaș (2006) see tourism planning as part of the Romanian tourism containing a number of subsystems related by functional links in order to increase the economic and social efficiency of the investment. Tourist areas should be designed as a transformable, multifunctional system with appropriate equipment, assigned functionally throughout the area, without creating imbalances in the natural and human environment.

The development of the natural tourism and / or human resources would not be achieved without full knowledge of the internal structure, of the characteristics, of the interference with the adjacent landscape elements and their quantitative and qualitative inventory. The marketing of all attractive resources, of the tourism supply and demand is carried out through a diagnosis analysis of the territory which sets the tourism development approaches in the region, according to the evolution in demand. Diagnosing the tourism potential of the Igniș - Gutâi Mountains is a segmented process for each of the components (natural and human potential and tourist infrastructure), obeying by the analysis directions set out by Cocean and Dezsi (2001), based on

four types of conditions: general, favorable, restrictive or pressure. Prospecting is not only in-depth knowledge of the available features of the fund, but also the interrelations system outlined in the tourist demand and supply (Cocean & Dezsi, 2001, p. 8). Cocean and Dezsi (2001) characterize high resonance natural landscape in tourism as a top tourist resource, a background to run tourist activities motivated by different kinds of attractions or the material support of all tourism activities. According to them, the lithology substrate, the topography, the hydrography, the climate, the vegetation and fauna are the components of the tourism phenomenon, the raw material which meets the needs of the tourist demand. The same authors highlight the importance of exploring the human tourism resources due to their diversity, the possibility of multiplication, the attractive value, the perishability and their need for protection and conservation. The prospect of tourism infrastructure must take account of possibilities of access, the type, the number and the dispersion in the territory of the accommodation units, the type and importance of leisure and treatment facilities, the characteristics of general infrastructure, their impact on tourism and also their influence on the development of different types or forms of tourism.

### **THE FORECAST MOUNTAIN OF TOURIST PLANNING IN THE IGNIȘ - GUTÂI MOUNTAINS**

The development of the mountain resorts has contributed to improvement of the tourism and economical potential and consequently led to an increase of the living standards. The favorable conditions for organizing and practicing winter sports as well as mountain trekking and the natural environment have contributed to the industrial and forest transformation of the area. The mountain offers the opportunity to address tourism so as to meet the needs of local people and the environment they depend on. If initially the forestry, the agriculture and the mining were the main ways to exploit the mountain area, in time, the attractiveness of the natural resources allowed the exploitation of the tourism phenomenon.

Ives (1992) considers that the great number of visitors to the mountain regions increased the global awareness of the importance of the mountain area, which covers a fifth of the land area. In his study of the mountain area, Mieczkowski (1995) found that mountain areas developed in terms of tourism because of the rich tourism offer and the infrastructure development, thus enabling the practicing of winter sports, recreational sports, adventure or even mountain hiking; the even negative effects of seasonality are reduced considerably.

Godde Price (2008) studied the tourists' motivations in choosing tourist destinations and found that they are choosing the mountains for various reasons such as the explosion of the population in the plain regions or the overcrowded urban centers wishing to escape urban pollution, the noise, the stress and want to breathe clean air that will help them calm down and relax. Another motivation is to seek adventure and to practice winter sports, hiking, camping, climbing, rafting, mountain biking etc.

Starting from the tourist motivation and the influence of Maslow's pyramid when choosing tourist destinations, Khunou et al. (2009) have identified several factors that contributed to the development of tourist facilities. After identifying the political, socio-cultural, technological, environmental and legal factors - called PESTEL - which determine the options of the target segments for a specific tourist destination, they also discovered that tourists choose a tourist destination depending on the availability of a package of services, accessibility, natural or man-made tourist attractions, socio-cultural or special events, charter flights, seasonality etc. They also take into account the transport which must be fast, safe, affordable and comfortable. Accommodation is chosen based on location, facilities, services, price, and overall destination image. Thus, the development of the travel fund and tourism infrastructure contributes to tourist motivation.

In the Igniș Gutâi administrative-territorial units were evaluated both natural and anthropogenic resources and tourism specific infrastructure and technology to establish the tourism development potential of the region. The administrative units Ocna Șugatag, Desești have the most important, varied and numerous natural attractions.

Based on Defert's model (1966), the forecast of tourist development will consider the ambiguous tourist planning model which covers all four existing mountain resorts. The tourist planning of the Igriș - Gutâi mountain area will take into account the „dominant white” planning rules and patterns for the mountain areas, with the identification of both isolated tourist facilities (in the case of isolated villages like Breb) and complex planning (tourist resorts at Cavnic, Mogoșă and the Șuior Complex).

## CONCLUSIONS

The empirical research concluded that tourism planning is a highly applicative branch of Geography. In order to be structural, functional and well-organized, the tourism planning process should be approached from the perspective of a project to be integrated or applied in a region regarded as a system. The identification of the main methods which give the research a scientific character, and the consultations of the main papers, articles or material information in the specialized literature led to the identification of the main components of the Igriș - Gutâi mountain area. These elements were analyzed to see if they contribute to setting up a functional territorial system. Tourism planning in the Igriș - Gutâi mountain area aims at the systemic organization of the ski area, the development of mountain resort and tourism forms.

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