

ECOLOGY AS A BASIS FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SERBIA⁵

ЭКОЛОГИЯ КАК ОСНОВА УСТОЙЧИВОГО РАЗВИТИЯ СЕЛЬСКОГО ТУРИЗМА В СЕРБИИ

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Abstract: Environmental pollution, alienation from nature, standardization and uniformity that provides life in cities caused rising demand for holidays in rural areas. A large number of different geographical areas with preserved ecosystem, rich gastronomic offer, as well as a number of different activities that can be performed in nature, represent a basis for planning development of sustainable rural tourism development in Serbia. Paper focuses on the ecology and sustainable rural tourist development, having in mind, good preservation of the natural environment resources which Serbia has. This can be basis for the construction of rural tourism planning Serbia as a country with preserved biodiversity where visitors can enjoy in a "healthy" and active rural holidays.

Keywords: ecology, sustainable development, tourism, rural areas.

Аннотация: Загрязнение окружающей среды, отдаленность от природы, стандартизация и единообразие, которые дает жизнь в городах, вызывают растущую потребность в отдыхе в сельской местности. Большое число различных географических территорий с охраняемыми экосистемами, богатым гастрономическим предложением, а также разнообразными видами деятельности, которыми можно заниматься на природе, представляют собой основу для планирования устойчивого развития сельского туризма в Сербии. Статья фокусируется на экологии и устойчивом развитии сельского туризма, имея в виду хороший уровень сохранности естественных ресурсов в Сербии. Это может служить основой создания планирования сельского туризма в Сербии как стране с сохранившимся биоразнообразием, где туристы могут насладиться «здоровым» и активным отдыхом в сельской местности.

Ключевые слова: экология, устойчивое развитие, туризм, сельские территории.

Introduction

Government of Serbia defined rural development as an economic, social and environmental priority. The diversification of the rural economy in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way is need order to improve the quality of life, to reduce the poverty level, as well as to fight against social and environmental degradation. Tourism has been identified as key sector which can drive to the diversification of the rural economy.

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In „Strategy of the development of tourism in the Republic of Serbia“ under the notion rural tourism it is emphasized that "rural tourism includes spectrum of activities, services and additional contents which organizes rural population on family households in order to attract tourists and to make additional profit respecting the principles of sustainable development and preservation of natural resources".⁶

1. Concept of sustainable rural tourist development

Document "Agenda 21"⁷ signed at the Rio conference in 1992 represents one of the most comprehensive with sustainable development issue. This document was signed by 178 Government of the UN member states. It contains 40 chapters in 500 pages. Full name of the document is "The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests". Among the other things, this document discusses about interaction of tourism and agriculture in the fourteenth chapter when explains the concept of multifunctional agriculture. Full title of the chapter is „*A. Agricultural policy review, planning and integrated programs in the light of the multifunctional aspect of agriculture, particularly with regard to food security and sustainable development.*“

Sustainable rural tourist development should recognize rights and needs of local residents (farmers), respecting their resources (natural, social, anthropogenic), lifestyle, culture, and taking account that these factors can have influence on exploitation of local resources, touristic, natural and all the other.⁸

The aim of researching sustainable development is to be taken of the impact of economic and social growth in the overall ecological processes and the very quality of the environment.

Sustainable tourism represents a way to meet the needs of present generations, both tourists and residents, without arrogant interpretation ability of future generations to meet the needs of soybeans.⁹

2. Serbian resources for sustainable tourist development

As it is well known, rural areas cover more than 80% of the Serbian territory and on these areas according to the Register from 2002. lives 43,6% of the total number of population. Serbia doesn't have an exit to the sea coast and there is only one real ski resort centre "Kopaonik" (if we, based on the circumstances, leave out Brezovica, located in Kosovo and Metohija).

According to these data it could be concluded how big potential Serbia has for the development of rural tourism and how big importance of rural areas is for the whole life.

Currently 10% of Serbian territory covered protected areas.¹⁰ From the aspect of quality of preservation the environment, Serbia on the whole has largely preserved natural environment. Serbia has 5 national parks with high quality of the environmental protection Fruškgora, Djerdap, Kopaonik, Tara, and Sharplanina.

In Serbia, a number of laws regulating the relationship to environmental protection. Certainly in the first place among the most important are *the Law on Environmental Protection*¹¹, as well as numerous bylaws, such as, for example, *the Regulation on Protection of Natural Rarities*¹², *Regulation on putting under control the use of trade in wild fauna and flora*¹³ as well as numerous other by-laws that directly regulate the relationship to the environment.

⁶Strategy of the development of tourism in the Republic of Serbia, first phase report, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Services of the Republic of Serbia. November, 24. 2005 p. 69.

⁷Web link: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf> (05th March 2015)

⁸Bakic, O. (2003): „Marketing at tourism“, Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade p.33.

⁹Baum, T., (1996): "Managing Human Resources – in the European Tourism and Hospitality Industry", Thompson Business Press, London, p.9.

¹⁰Data from Institute for nature conservation of Serbia.

¹¹Official gazette RS, no.135 /2004, 36/2009, 72/2009.

¹²Official gazette RS, no. 50/93.

¹³Official gazette RS, no. 31/2005 and 45/2005.

From the aspect of tourism and its role in the preservation and protection of the environment as the most important legal document emphasizes the *Law on Tourism*¹⁴, and then there are numerous bylaws that accompany this important document.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted a number of strategic documents related to environmental protection. Some of them are:

- National Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the approximation of environmental (December 2011);
- National Strategy on the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Strategy of management mineral resources in the Republic of Serbia by 2030 years.
- Strategy and Policy industry Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2011 to 2020.
- Strategy of Biodiversity the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2011 to 2016.
- Draft Waste Management Strategy for the period 2010-2019.
- National Strategy for the inclusion of the Republic of Serbia in the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol to the sectors of waste management, agriculture and forestry.
- The strategy for introducing clean production in Serbia.¹⁵

A detailed review of protected natural heritage in Serbia is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Protected natural heritage of the Republic of Serbia

	Republic of Serbia	Central Serbia	AP Vojvodina	AP Kosovo And Metohija
Total	1.106	-	-	-
National Parks – total	5	3	1	1
Nature parks – total	14	4	9	1
Landscapes – total	17	14	2	1
Area of exceptional importance	11	8	2	1
Reserves – total	73	45	21	7
Special Nature Reserve	15	4	11	-
General Nature Reserve	1	1	-	-
Monuments of nature-total	312	192	85	35
Natural Monument botanical character	257	152	83	22
Natural Monument geological and hydrological character	55	40	2	13
Areas of cultural and historical significance – total	43	32	6	5
Total protected the native goods	464	-	-	-
Natural rarity plant species – total	215	-	-	-
Natural Rarities species – total	427	-	-	-

Source: Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia – http://www.zzps.rs/novo/index.php?jezik=sr&strana=zastita_prirode_zasticena_prirodna_dobra (05th March 2015)

3. Sustainability and competitiveness of tourist destination

The characteristic of the modern tourist restructuring is installation of efficient environmental components in the overall tourism product and its promotion, treating it as a very important link for the achievement of competitive position and condition for attracting new tourist demand. Even more mounting environmental components is a priority task for the reintegration process in Serbia contemporary tourism flows, i.e. its repozicionranjae in the tourism market and strengthen its competitiveness.

¹⁴Official gazette RS, no. 36/2009; 88/2010; 99/2011, 99/2011 and 93/2012.

¹⁵All strategies can be taken at official web of Serbian Government: http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/dokumenti_sekcija.php?id=45678

Based on the model of tourism competitiveness is made by *Vengesayi S., (2003)*¹⁶, popularization tourist destinations can be enhanced by appropriate combination of factors of competitiveness and attractiveness. On this basis can ask questions:

- How to make the brand in a rural area, as well as
- What are the factors of attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations crucial (responsible) for the creation of a new rural brand?

In process of answering this question, it should bear in mind what concept of modern tourism approach particularly recommended, it is ecology and sustainable development.

The answer is more than justified, since it is obvious that the urban environment every day more and more polluted. Tourists today want ecologically clean environment in which they can spend their free time and be able to consume organically produced "healthy" foods. Continuously strengthen the requirements for the environmental quality of products and services on the one hand, but also it strengthens needs of local residents to preserve their own natural environment on the other. Therefore, these dual interests meet in sustainable tourism development. That's the key how to achieve the complementary development of rural and sustainable tourism.

Principles of sustainable development focus on:

- Understanding the value and level of influence of many different factors on the environment;
- Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of existing natural and anthropogenic sources, insisting on the regional aspect of development planning;
- Insistence on strict standards in the construction of tourism infrastructure;
- Providing a good balance of economic, social, environmental and other objectives.

Implementation principles of sustainable tourism development in the primary focuses put questions:

- Understanding of the value and power of influence of numerous factors on the environment;
- Preservation, protection and improvement of the quality of the natural, cultural, historical and other resources;
- Emphasizing the regional aspect of development planning;
- Establishing rigorous standards for the construction of tourist infrastructure.
- A good balance of economic, social, environmental and other aims.

From the strategic point of view, the development of tourism needs to emphasize the issue of the environmental, health, recreational value and specificity of receptive space.

4. Tourist destination management model through concept of sustainability

Regardless of the type of tourist destination, surely that the main value of destination is its environment, and that is also for what is primarily directed tourism demand. When it comes to rural tourism, it is a rural area. People from urban centers visit rural areas to get "rural tourist experience" in the interactive relationship.

Both components (the tourist product and rural ambience) must contain a strong environmental component to help tourists to get the full "rural tourism experience". Only if it has been complying with all environmental standards about the way how to protect natural environment, it can be concluded that the destination has a tourist attraction in terms of tourism demand, i.e. tourism is competitive from the aspect of tourist attractions. For that reason, it is priority to protect and develop quality of environment, because only if it is protected, i.e. fulfill standards which are prescribed by law, it represents value and tourist attractiveness, and it is also a subject of tourist demand and interest. In that sense priority question is management of tourism influence on environment, and quality of rural area.

¹⁶Vengesayi S., (2003) *A Conceptual Model of Tourism Destination Competitiveness and Attractiveness*, ANZMAC 2003, Conference Proceedings Adelaide, 01-03 Decembre 2003. p. 637-647, Retrieved July 11, 2010, web link: http://anzmac.org/conference/2003/papers/CON20_vengesayis.pdf (на дан 01.03.2015).

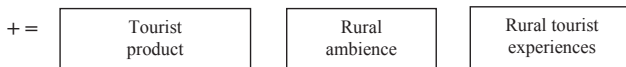


Figure 1. Components of rural tourist experiences

Source: „Master plan for sustainable rural tourism development in Serbia (2011), p. 115 – 116. UN Joint Programme “Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development”, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management, National Tourism Organization.

In destination exist conflict of interest between those who seek to preserve the natural environment and those which nature of business leading to its jeopardizing. Task of tourist destination management is to generate all interests in one "Local Agenda 21 for Tourism" (Program for Sustainable Tourism Development) and realizing a plan that should cause that Local Agenda 21 become part of the integral strategy for tourist destination development.

In the model, known by the acronym VICE (*Visitors, Industry, Community, Environment*) the point is that in a unique way make connections of interests of all stakeholders who will have benefit from the decisions on sustainable development of tourist destination.

UNWTO (2007)¹⁷ define that the VICE model (figure 1) presents destination management as the interaction between the visitors, the industry that servers them, the community that hosts them and the environment where this interaction takes place. The last of these, the environment, can be understood in its broadest sense to include built and natural resources on which many tourism products are based.

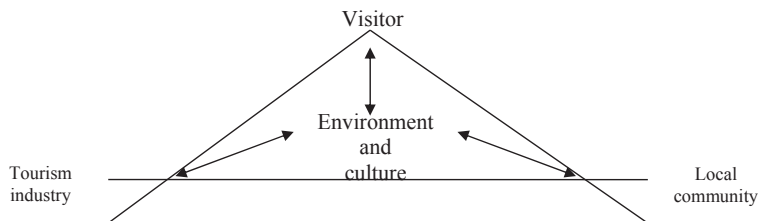


Figure 2. VICE model

Source: UNWTO (2007): „A Practical Guide to Tourist Destination Management“, Madrid, p. 13.

According to this model, it is the role of destination managers to work through partnership and joint destination management plan in order to:¹⁸

- Welcome, involve and satisfy Visitors;
- Achieve a profitable and prosperous tourist industry;
- Engage and benefit host Communities;
- Protect and enhance the local Environment and culture.

The „Master plan for sustainable rural development“¹⁹ presented:

- Ecological strategy,
- Strategies to protect natural and cultural resources and management,
- The inclusion of rural area in regional waste management system,
- The introduction of renewable energy and support in their use,

¹⁷UNWTO (2007): “A Practical Guide to Tourist Destination Management”, Madrid, p.13.

¹⁸UNWTO (2007), same, p. 13

¹⁹Master plan for sustainable rural tourism development in Serbia (2011), p.115 – 116, UN Joint Programme “Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development”, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Management, National Tourism Organization.

- Minimizing environmental risks and their management,
- Social awareness and community involvement,
- Improving nature tourism.

These proposals (Strategies) actually represent the same time the condition and the "need" how to develop rural tourism and in the same time protect natural and anthropogenic sources for future generations.

Conclusion

Making tourism more sustainable, means to take into account the economic, social and environmental impacts and needs in planning and development, and applies equally to tourism in the cities, "resorts", mountains, rural, sea side, and protected areas. Without proper planning and tourism management at destination, it may cause compromising the natural environment; also can cause social and cultural conflicts and can lead that residents will be alienated from tourism. Sustainable tourism manage with impacts of tourism on the environment, the economy and the local community, it maintains and improves destination resources for current and future needs, both for tourists and local community. These are the important basis on which must be based tourism development in rural areas of the Republic of Serbia. That is imperative in process of preserving natural and social resources for the future generations of tourists and residents.

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