

PERSPECTIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KLADOVO¹

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Abstract

Municipality of Kladovo is located in Eastern part of the Republic of Serbia. It has huge potential for development different types of tourism products and to offer them to the market. The attitude is based on reach natural and anthropogenic potential tourist attractions that municipality of Kladovo poses and that can be put in the function of development tourism. In municipality of Kladovo exists 21 villages which have respectable potentials for development rural tourism. In some of them rural tourism have been starting to developing. For the reason that rural tourism is in initial phase it is important to follow the rules that science prescribe. One of them is sustainable development. That is in coordination with concept of rural tourism that cannot exist if it is not in correlation with local ambience and local community. The aim of the article is to show huge potential that municipality of Kladovo possess for development rural tourism. Also, in the article it would be shown possible tourist strategy and policy that can bring success on the market.

Key words: *sustainability, development, rural tourism, destination.*

Introduction

The most important economic resources in the municipality of Kladovo are managed by the state. These are the “Djerdap” hydroelectric power plant and the “Djerdap” National Park. However, if this fact is excluded and other significant economic potentials are considered, it is estimated that the primary

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and tertiary sectors of the economy, in addition to the evident weaknesses, are more developed than the secondary ones. They are the backbone of future economic development.

Tourism is seen as one of the promising economic branches of the future economic development of Kladovo. The attitude is based on the natural and social attractions that this municipality has.

Residents of the municipality recognized tourism as an opportunity to increase their income, so in a large part of the settlements in the municipality, tourism began to develop spontaneously. One of the promising types of tourism that is available is rural tourism.

Tourist attractions of the municipality of Kladovo

The Municipality of Kladovo has respectable natural and socio-historical, cultural (anthropogenic) resources for tourism development. The most important natural resources and at the same time tourist attractions on the territory of the Municipality are:

- National Park „Đerdap“;
- Gorge “Kazan” located in “*Djerdap Gorge*” on the Danube river;
- “*Belederijsky*” waterfall;
- Oasis of birds in „*Mala Vrbica*“;
- Hiking trails on „*Miroč*“ mauntain.

On the territory of the Municipality there is a rich cultural and historical, ie. anthropogenic heritage. The most important resources and at the same time tourist attractions of the area are:

- “*Trian’s tablet*” carved on the carved rock above the “Djerdap gorge”. It dates from 100-103 and was created by the Roman emperor Traian as a sign of marking the end of the military journey from Belgrade to Djerdap;
- “*Trian’s Bridge*” and the fortress “*Pontes*” which are located near the village of Kostol, about 5 km from Kladovo. The bridge was built in the period from 103-105. The length of the bridge with portals was about 1,134 m;
- Fortress “Diana” built on the banks of the Danube, located near the village of Sip. It dates from the 1st century;

- Archaeological site “Glamija” located near the village of Ratkova. It is the highest military fortification located above the Danube River;
- Fortress “Fetislam” from 1524, which was built by the Turks. In translation, the name means “victory of Islam”. It consists of a small town that was an artillery base, and an open amphitheater;
- Church “St. Đorđa ”is located in Kladovo, built in 1735;
- Monastery “St. Trojice ”from the 19th century is located above the village of Manastirica;
- “Stara Čaršija” (Old Bazaar) in Kladovo is protected by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia as a spatial, cultural and historical (ambient) entity. In the “Old Bazaar” there are many trade, catering and other facilities of public importance, which is why it is the center of social life.
- The Archaeological Museum is located in Kladovo. It was founded in 1996.

Accommodation facilities in Kladovo which are important for the development of rural tourism

On the territory of the municipality of Kladovo, there is a large number of accommodation facilities that can meet the needs of increased tourist demand. It is characteristic that seasonality is expressed in their business, which is manifested by their occupancy in the summer months and insufficient utilization in the winter.

The share of the number of beds by individual municipalities in the Lower Danube region shows that the municipality of Kladovo is in first place with an average of 37.98%, followed by the municipalities of Majdanpek with 24.47% and Veliko Gradiste with 17.74%, etc.⁴

The development of accommodation capacities in the Municipality is a result of the presence of tourist attractions (natural and social) that generate tourist demand. However, it should be emphasized that not all types of tourist accommodation capacities have the same impact on the development of all types of tourism.

⁴ Master plan for development Lower Danube Region, (2007), Economic faculty, University of Belgrade, pp. 99.

a) Hotel accommodation capacities - The literature points out that despite the large number of accommodation units at their disposal, hotels make a small contribution to the development of rural tourism⁵. However, this does not necessarily mean that a rural tourism product cannot be created with tourists who would combine a hotel boarding house with a non-boarding rural tour offer. The role of management and the way in which they will create the so-called “Rural tourism experience”. According to the capacities, the two largest accommodation hotel facilities in the municipality of Kladovo are the hotels “Aquastar Danube” and “Djerdap”.

b) Camping - There are 2 (two) campsites on the territory of the municipality of Kladovo. These are the youth camp settlement “Karatash” in Kladovo and the camp “Miročka Voda” in the settlement Brza Palanka.

Roberts et al. (2016)⁶ have attitude that camping in rural areas should be in the function of rural tourism development.

When it comes to the camping settlement “Karatash”, it cannot be used for the development of rural tourism. However, the camping settlement “Miročka voda”, which is located downstream from Kladovo, can certainly do that.

It is located on the banks of the Danube downstream 22 km from Kladovo.

Within the camp there are 80 camping units for tents and caravans, as well as 20 double bungalows. It is a kind of “oasis” on a well-kept sandy beach near the center of Brza Palanka. It is an ideal place for Danube lovers, scouts, campers, fishermen. It has a variety of facilities for recreation and the possibility of visiting beautiful natural attractions such as “Blederijski waterfall”, hiking trails on Mount Miroč, Vratnjanski gates, etc. . There are also organized tours to tour the picturesque rural areas with numerous attractions of the National Park “Djerdap. Unlike the first campsite according to the criteria of thematic tours, this campsite can be included in the accommodation offer of rural tourism, because it meets the criteria defined by the OECD (1994)⁷.

c) Rural tourist households. According to the Tourist Organization of Serbia,⁸ Tourist organizations of Kladov accommodation capacities of rural tourism⁹,

5 Greffe, X., (1994): “*Is Rural Tourism a Lever for Economic and Social Development*“, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Vol. 2. No.1&2, pp.22-40.

6 Lesley Roberts, Derek Hall, Mitchell Morag (2016), *New Directions in Rural Tourism*, Routledge, London, UK.

7 OECD (1994), *Tourism Strategies and Rural Development*, OCDE/GD(94)49, Organization for Economic Co-Operation And Development, Paris, 1994.

8 Publication «*Catalog of rural tourist households*» (2018), Tourist Organization of Serbia.

9 Tourist organization Kladovo, web. link: <http://tookladovo.rs/> (accessed: 21.02.2021).

and the National Association “*Rural Tourism of Serbia*”¹⁰ accommodation capacities of rural tourism, type “rural tourist household” are located in the villages: Velika Vrbica, Korbovo and Rečica.

- In the village of Korbovo, 18 km away from Kaladovo, there is a rural tourist household with a location on the Danube. It has good access for boats, yachts, kayaks, etc. The household organizes excursion tours around Kladovo with 2 boats and 1 yacht. It has a well-kept wine cellar and a hall with a capacity of up to 50 guests. From the accommodation capacities it has 2/2 rooms.¹¹
- In the village of Velika Vrbica there is 1 rural tourist household which is 11 km away from Kladovo. It is categorized with 4 stars and has an ethno restaurant where tourists can consume specialties typical of the Lower Danube region.
- In the village of Rečica there is 1 rural tourist household categorized with 4 stars.¹²

Based on the data of the Municipal Administration during 2020, there was an increase in the interest of tourists to stay in rural areas in Kladovo, and from there consequently there was:

- increasing interest in rural tourism,
- increase of accommodation capacities and
- increase in the number of realized overnight stays.

However, due to the presence of the “COVID 19” virus, no records were kept, so this increase cannot be quantified.

The document “Master Plan for Sustainable Development of Rural Tourism of Serbia 2011” (p. 81) in the area of the Municipality suggests the rural ethno-zone in the villages of Podvrška, Petrovo Selo, Manastririca and Reka as important for the development of rural tourism.

It is emphasized that the villages are characterized by traditional architecture, customs and rituals that have been preserved to this day. Also, the folklore of the Serbian, Vlach and Romanian people has been preserved. These villages also have a rich offer of traditional cuisine.

10 Association “Rural Tourism of Serbia” - official representative of Serbia in the “European Federation of Rural Tourism” (EUROGITES), <https://www.selo.rs/rs> (accessed: 12.02.2021).

11 Owner Bogosav Popović (February 2021)

12 It is about the rural tourist household “Jović” (February 2021).

The assessment presented in this document is that there are no adequate capacities for the development of rural tourism, as well as that the number of visitors is not recorded. These villages also have a rich offer of traditional cuisine, which could affect the development of food tourism and so-called „event tourism“ or tourism “manifestation tourism”.

d) **Private accommodation.** Based on the data obtained from the Municipal Administration and the Tourist Organization of Kladovo, in recent years there has been a sharp expansion in the number of accommodation facilities in private accommodation. Hence the assessment that the municipality of Kladovo can meet the needs of increased tourist demand. Observed individually by settlements, the settlements of Kladovo and Tekija had the greatest expansion, but increased interest is also shown in other settlements in the municipality of Kladovo. The most important accommodation capacities on the territory of the municipality in private accommodation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Accommodation capacities in private accommodation in the municipality of Kladovo in 2021.

The settlement/village	Object/facilities type	The total number of facilities
Kladovo	Apartments	26
	House for rest	3
	Rooms for rent	8
Tekija	Apartments	4
	House for rest	2
	Rooms for rent	2
Kostol	Apartments	4
	House for rest	0
	Rooms for rent	0
Novi Sip	Apartments	1
	House for rest	1
	Rooms for rent	0
Ljubičevac	Apartments	0
	House for rest	0
	Rooms for rent	1

Source: Tourist Organization of Kladovo, <http://tookladovo.rs/> (accessed on November 22, 2021.)

Note: Data obtained from the Tourist Organization of Kladovo are not fully compliant with the current “Rulebook on conditions and manner of performing catering activities, manner of providing catering services, classification of catering facilities and minimum technical conditions for arranging and equipping catering facilities” (Official Gazette of RS), No. 48/2012 and 58/2016), have already been recorded as arriving from the field.

Based on the insight into Table 1 and the data obtained from the Tourist Organization of Kladovo, it can be seen that when it comes to private accommodation in:

- In *Kladovo* there are 26 apartments, 3 hose for rest and 8 rooms for rent. The facilities cannot be directly related to rural tourism, given the type of settlement and the character of the area.
- In *Tekija*, which is 22 km away from Kladovo, there are several types of accommodation facilities that can be used for the purpose of rural tourism development. The facilities are located near the river. It is about 4 apartments, 2 hose for rest and 2 rooms for rent.
- In the village of *Kostol* there are 4 apartments that are categorized into 2 and 3 stars.
- In the village of *Novi Sip*, accommodation facilities are located with 2 hosts. It is about 1 house for rest and 1 apartment.

Based on collected and presented data and facts:

- that in 4 villages in the municipality of Kladovo, the owners of rural farms have decided to actively engage in rural tourism (villages *Korbovo*, *Velika Vrbica*, *Rečica*, *Novi Sip*);
- that observed individually by villages, these are sporadic cases of dealing with rural tourism;

it can be concluded:

- that rural tourism in the municipality of Kladovo is in the initial phase of development;
- that in the period from 2016 to 2020 there was an increase in the number of farms that decided to engage in rural tourism (either as rural tourist households or in some of the emerging forms of private accommodation);
- rural tourism has so far developed spontaneously, without an appropriate strategy, plan and development program;
- In order for rural tourism to enter a higher stage of development, appropriate investments are needed, both by the state (direct investments or subsidies to rural households), but also by private entrepreneurs who would recognize the interest in the development of rural tourism.

Tourist traffic in the municipality of Kladovo

Table 2 shows the data on the movement of the number of tourists and their overnight stays in the last ten years.

Table 2. Trends in the number of tourists and overnight stays in the municipality of Kladovo in the period 2010-2019.

Years	Tourists			Overnight Stays			Average number of tourist overnights	
	Total	From Serbia	From abroad	Total	From Serbia	From abroad	From Serbia	From abroad
2010	30.542	28.158	2.384	85.855	80.310	5.545	2,9	2,3
2011	31.566	28.230	3.336	87.637	79.526	8.111	2,8	2,4
2012	25.524	22.875	2.649	66.972	60.657	6.315	2,7	2,4
2013	23.746	20.610	3.136	63.577	55.715	7.862	2,7	2,5
2014	16.050	13.293	2.757	39.102	30.757	8.345	2,3	3,0
2015	22.347	18.791	3.556	49.326	40.810	8.516	2,2	2,4
2016	25.651	21.719	3.932	50.187	42.219	7.968	1,9	2,0
2017	32.043	26.937	5.106	73.250	61.200	12.050	2,3	2,4
2018	33.126	26.978	6.148	75.092	60.781	14.311	2,3	2,3
2019	36.875	28462	8.413	79.758	64.296	15462	2,3	1,8

Source: Publication “Municipalities and Regions in the Republic of Serbia” for the period from 2014 to 2020.

Note: The Republic Bureau of Statistics monitors the movements of tourists without classifying them by types of tourism. Therefore, monitoring the dynamics of the number of tourists and their overnight stays in rural tourism is difficult.

It is noticeable that the number of tourists and overnight stays decreased in 2014, which is the result of heavy floods that were immanent to the whole of Serbia. Since 2015, there has been a continuous growth in the number of tourists and the number of overnight stays. In order to increase the competitiveness of Kaldov as a tourist destination, it is to raise the quality of tourist services and increase the number of accommodation capacities in rural tourism. First of all, by categorizing interested rural households.

As the representatives of LTO pointed out in the conversation, in recent years there has been a noticeable increase in the interest of local residents in engaging in rural tourism, which was initiated by the increase in tourist demand for living in the Lower Danube region.

Opportunities to improve the current situation in the tourism sector in the municipality of Kladovo in context of sustainable development

The Municipality of Kladovo as a tourist destination, viewed from the aspect of natural and social (anthropogenic) resources, having in mind the need to develop rural tourism as an individual, ie. the partial goals of its future development must include:

- 1) Greater orientation on modernization of existing and (if conditions are created), construction of new attractive accommodation capacities;
- 2) Investing in catering capacities and in promotional activities, emphasizing the tradition of rich local cuisine and local specialties;
- 3) Arrangement, adaptation and adjustment of numerous cultural and historical buildings to the needs of tourism;
- 4) Arrangement, adaptation and adjustment of religious buildings to the needs of tourism. It should be emphasized that in order to enable tourists to visit, the consent of the Serbian Orthodox Church is necessary, ie to harmonize the ways, rules and regulations of tourist visits, with religious rules, the principles of the so-called. religious canons.
- 5) As a possibility of valid use of the natural convenience of the location of Kladovo on the river is the construction of marinas, piers, etc., as well as all facilities related to the stay of tourists on the river (various sports and recreational activities, etc.);
- 6) Arrangement, adaptation and adaptation of numerous typical rural ambient units to the needs of tourism. In that respect, we have already started in the villages of Korbovo, Velika Vrbica, Rečica, and the tendency has continued. Potentials in the villages of Podvrška, Petrovo Selo, Manastirica and Reka, which have not yet been used, should also be used;
- 7) Investments related to the development of “wellness” tourism. Having in mind the preserved natural environment, the area of the municipality of Kladovo provides opportunities for the development of this increasingly popular type of tourism.
- 8) Use of all natural facilities for the development of tourism of special needs (hunting and fishing tourism, photo safaris, mountain and excursion tourism);

- 9) Use the advantages that Kladovo has for the development of transit tourism, relying on the potential provided by the road to Romania, the first-class state road I B-35 and the second-class state road II A-167; as well as the Danube River - European Corridor 7, international river waterway;
- 10) Take measures on the organizational and business connection of tourism, catering, trade, crafts, transport, agriculture, fisheries and other activities that form the tourist offer - an integral marketing approach.

One of the premises on which rural tourism is based is that development must not be to the detriment of the environment. Lane B. (1994, p.9.)¹³ has attitude that there must be rurality in terms of volume, number of buildings and the number of settlements. For these reasons, routine tourism must be small. In other words, it must not disturb the original ambience due to which tourists visit rural areas.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of data from the municipality of Kaldovo, a large number of natural and social resources can be seen that can help manage a large number of tourist products that can enrich the stay of tourists in rural areas. Modern tourists are looking for not only classic boarding house facilities, but also more. Today, the competition between tourist destinations is conducted primarily in the number of non-board facilities that can be offered to tourists.

It is the large number of resources (natural and social) that represent potential and current tourist attractions, that affects the management in creating the tourist offer. Residents of the municipality of Kladovo recognized the opportunities for the development of rural tourism. Today, it is in the initial phase of development. In other words, it develops spontaneously in places where there are objective conditions for its development.

- that rural tourism in the municipality of Kladovo is in the initial phase of development;
- that in the period from 2016 to 2020 there was an increase in the number of farms that decided to engage in rural tourism (either as rural tourist households or in some of the emerging forms of private accommodation);

13 Lane B., (1994): "What is Rural Tourism", Journal of Sustainable Tourism, No. 1-2., Vol. 2., p. 9.

- rural tourism has so far developed spontaneously, without an appropriate strategy, plan and development program;
- In order for rural tourism to enter a higher stage of development, appropriate investments are needed, both by the state (direct investments or subsidies to rural households), but also by private entrepreneurs who would recognize the interest in the development of rural tourism.

In order to improve rural tourism, it is necessary to make appropriate investments and to move from the phase of spontaneous to the phase of purposeful development. Both the state and local entrepreneurs who will invest in the development of tourism must find their interest in that. One of the premises on which tourism is based is that it is just as efficient as investing in it. In this development, care must be taken not to disturb the local environment. This is all the more so because the municipality of Kladovo is partly located in one of the largest and most important National Parks in the Republic of Serbia. It is about “Djerdap”. If all resources (natural, social, human) were connected and synergy was created, multiplied effects from tourism development could be expected.

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