

CONDITION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE AREA OF LOWER DANUBE REGION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Abstract

Six municipalities make area of the Lower Danube Region (Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Kučevo, Majdanpek, Kladovo and Negotin). The area has three main tourist attractions: the Danube River (European Corridor VII); Djerdap National Park with Djerdap Gorge; and the Archaeological Site "Lepenski vir". In addition to these, there are numerous other potential tourist attractions in the Lower Danube region. This is important for the development of rural tourism, since visits to these attractions could enrich the content of the tourist products that would be offered to tourists who would stay in one of the local rural tourist destinations in this area. The development of rural tourism is not evenly represented in this area. Majdanpek, Negotin and Kladovo stand out as municipalities with the most developed rural tourism. In addition to the existing ones which are already being used in touristic exploitation, the aim of the article is to point out the resources, on which rural tourism on principles of sustainability, could be developing in the entire area. Both receptive and all other resources that are important for the creation of rural tourist products will be pointed out.

Key words: *tourism, rural area, destination, accommodation.*

Introduction

Rural tourism has started to develop in Serbia since seventies of twentieth century. Today, it has different intensity, form and character. Achieved level of developing depends of various factors: „natural-geographical characteristics of the local area, the degree of development of the local economy, the anthropotic heritage and the awareness of the local population about its importance for development of the local communities“. (Vuković, P., 2017, p.58). In the Lower Danube region, rural tourism has developed spontaneously so

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far. There was no clear plan and strategy for its development. Regarding to accommodation capacities, they have developed mainly in the villages that were located near the main tourist attractions. These are villages located in the municipalities of Majdanpek, Negotin and Kladovo.

Accommodation capacities of rural tourism in the area of the Lower Danube region

Until now data on accommodation capacities of rural tourism in the Lower Danube region were provided by the Tourist Organization of Serbia 2018 and the National Association “Rural Tourism of Serbia” 2019 who is a member of the European Federation of Rural Tourism (EUROGITES). According to these sources, accommodation facilities are located:

- 1) in the municipality of Majdanpek in the villages of Rudna Glava, Mišin Breg, Crnajka;
- 2) in the municipality of Negotin in the villages of Vratina, Mihajlovo Kivilovo, Sharkamen, Rogljevo, Plavna, Rajac, Bukovo, Jabukovac, Vidrovac, Braćevac and Kusjak;
- 3) and in the municipality of Kladovo in the villages of Velika Vrbica, Korbovo and Recica.

Bearing in mind that accommodation capacities are an indicator that shows the attendance of a tourist destination, they can also be used as an indicator for the existence of local tourist destinations in which rural tourism has developed so far. According to the definition of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2007, p.1), „a local tourist destination is a physical space where tourists stay at least one night and includes tourist products, such as support services, attractions and tourist resources, used in travel“. According also to the definition of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2007, p.1), „a local tourist destination is a physical space where tourists stay at least one night and include tourist products, such as support services, attractions and tourist resources, used in travel. A local tourist destination has physical and administrative boundaries that define its management, as well as the image and perceptions that define its market competitiveness“. Local tourism organizations include a variety of interest groups, often including the local community, and can come together to form larger tourism destinations.

In the case of rural tourism, local tourist destinations can be defined as rural tourist destinations. Based on available secondary data sources (Đurović, D. and

Cvejić 2011; Tourism Development Strategy 2016-2025; data from the local tourist organizations, etc.) and facts:

- that in 18 villages in the area of the Lower Danube, the owners of rural farms have decided to engage in rural tourism;
- that these are sporadic cases of engaging in rural tourism (where only one, up to two households, decided to engage in this activity);

it can be concluded:

- that rural tourism is in the initial stage of development in this area;
- that in the period 2016 - 2019 there was an increase in the number of rural farms that decided to engage in rural tourism;
- rural tourism has developed spontaneously so far, without an appropriate strategy and development plan;
- In order for rural tourism to enter in a higher stage of development, investments are needed, both by the state (direct investments or through subsidies to rural households), and by private entrepreneurs who would recognize the interest in the development of rural tourism.

Traffic infrastructure as important condition for development rural tourism

Rural tourism practically began to develop after World War II after the rapid development of the automobile industry ie. with the development of road traffic, rural tourist destinations have become accessible to a large number of tourists from cities (Lane, B. 1994, p.8). Tourists in rural tourist destinations are very dependent on road traffic. Rural tourist attractions are usually spatially diffusely located and many of them are difficult to reach. Some attractions for which there is an increased tourist interest, can be “congested” with cars, and as an important problem is the construction of appropriate parking space, which disrupts the ambience of the rural area. This is important, having in mind the prerogatives on which rural tourism is based, that its development must not be to the detriment of the local environment.

The level of development of each traffic system, and thus the traffic system in the region of the Lower Danube is conditioned by:

- **The level of development of the overall economy** - in the area of the Lower Danube, according to all macroeconomic indicators observed in the six municipalities that make it up, is more limiting than a factor of development,

which must necessarily be changed by investing in economic development, opening new plants and jobs. This is a precondition not only for the development of the traffic system, but for the entire economy of the area. As tourism is an integral part of the economic system, it is also a prerequisite for the development of tourism;

- **Natural-geographical position and degree of involvement in the international division of labor** - For the area of the Lower Danube from the aspect of traffic and its area, we can state that it has a favorable geographical position. The position is supported by the fact that the area in the north is bordered by the Danube River (European Corridor VII), in the east by Romania and Bulgaria, and that it is led to the capital by the main road Belgrade - Kladovo, the so-called "Djerdap highway" (E-25.1.) Of all the modes of transport important for the development of rural tourism, two have a key role. It is about road and river traffic. Unfortunately, railway traffic is not included in the priority types. The reason is that the railway traffic in Serbia has been in a very bad condition for several decades. Having in mind the current economic and political situation, there are very poor prospects that it will be invested in this area in the near future. *River traffic.* The area of the Lower Danube is bordered on the north by the Danube River, which represents the European Corridor VII. A special impetus to the further development of river traffic on the Danube was given by the construction of the Rhine-Main-Danube canal, the opening of which in 1992 opened a new transit route of combined and direct shipping from the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea through Serbia. The Danube River is a traffic "link" between Western Europe and the countries of the Middle East. This is important because tourists who cruise the Danube can get acquainted with the contents of rural tourism. Thus, for example, it is possible to organize a bed and breakfast in one of the facilities of rural tourism. On that occasion, tourists would have the opportunity to get acquainted with the local tradition, food prepared in the traditional way, etc. Ports and marinas on the Danube already exist, and the construction of new ones is planned, as well as the modernization of the existing ones. *Road traffic.* The main traffic corridor for the development of tourism, and thus important for the development of rural tourism, is the road highway Belgrade - Kladovo (E-25.1.) so-called "Djerdap highway". Through it, local municipalities and the National Park "Djerdap" are connected with Corridor 10. Most of the road traffic network belongs to the modern type of road, although according to people from municipal administrations, there are local roads leading to some villages, ie

hamlets that are not yet paved. If the development of rural tourism is desired in the future, this shortcoming must necessarily be eliminated.

Tourist attractiveness in the area of Lower Danube region

Three main tourist attractions are characteristic in this area: 1. Danube River (European Corridor VII); 2. „Djerdap“ National Park with Djerdap Gorge; and 3. “Lepenski vir” archaeological site. In addition to these, in the area of the Lower Danube there are numerous other potential tourist attractions - natural and social.

Table 1. Tourist attractions of the Lower Danube region

No.	Municipality	Main tourist attractiveness	
		Natural	Anthropogenic
1.	Veliko Gradište	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Danube river (European corridor 7.) - Silver lake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fortress „Pam“. - Monastery „Нимник“. - National Museum Legacy of the Djordjevic Brothers
2.	Golubac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Danube river (European corridor 7.) - National park «Djerdap»; - Djerdap gorge - - Brnjica river canyon - - Ridan Waterfall; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Golubac Fortress - Monastery „<i>Tumané</i>“. - Ancient settlements: „<i>Vicus Cup-pae</i>“and „<i>Castrum Nove</i>“. - Cultural monuments in the city.
3.	Kučevo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A large number of caves; - Gold-bearing Pek River; - Mineral waters: Duboka and Banja - 2 Waterfalls: in Rakova Bara and in Ceremošnja, - Wellhead: “Shumeće” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer house of King Alexander I Karadjordjevic; - Ancient archeological complex from the 3rd century AD. e. “Karku Lu Jordan” is located in the area of the village “Brodica”.
4.	Majdanpek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National park «Djerdap»; - Rajko’s cave - Bigrena accumulation - “White Source”; - Natural stone bridge “Valja Prerast”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archaeological site “Lepenski vir” - Archaeo-metallurgical site “<i>Rudna Glava</i>”; - Churches: st. Apostles Peter and Paul and St. Nicholas. The churches date from the 19th century. - Captain Miša’s building in Donji Milanovac; - Technical house.

No.	Municipality	Main tourist attractiveness	
		Natural	Anthropogenic
5.	Kladovo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Djerdap National Park; - Gorge "Kazan" in Djerdap gorge - Belederijski waterfall - Bird oasis in Mala Vrbica; - Hiking trails on Miroč 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Trajan's board" - "Trajan's Bridge" - Diana Fortress - Archaeological site "Glamija" - Fetislam Fortress - Monastery of St. Three - Archaeological Museum
6.	Negotin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural stone doors: "Large outgrowth", "Small outgrowth" and "Dry outgrowth"; -Excursion site "Mokranjske stones" located 10 km south of Negotin city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Museum of Krajina "founded 1934. - "City Museum Hajduk Veljko". - There are as many as 6 monasteries on the territory of the municipality - „Negotin pubs“

Source: Data of Tourist organizations of Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Kučevo, Majdanpek, Kladovo, Negotino.

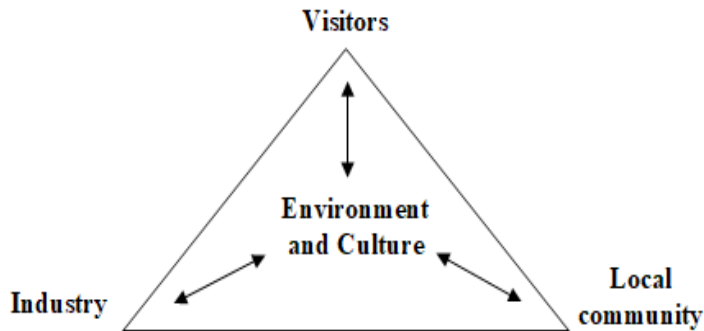
Characteristic of sustainable development rural tourism in the area of Lower Danube

It is important to highlight that many international organizations which are dedicated to the rural tourism (UNWTO, OECD, EuroGites, etc.) and different authors in scientific literature are agreed that „rural tourism is not based on stimulating mass arrivals, but focuses on a targeted “exclusive” market that needs a holiday that offers “something different, different and specific” ie. rural tourism does not belong to mass types of tourism“. (Tyrväinen, L. at al. 2001; OECD 1994, EuroGites, etc.).

Rural tourism cannot be developed against its own rural environment – rural areas. Basically in „Encyclopedia of Tourism“(2005) it is clearly defined that rural area represent base for its existing and on which it can be developed.

On that sense it is very important to highlight approach that UNWTO promoting regarding sustainable tourist development. Namely, (UNWTO 2007, p.13) define the VICE model (figure 1) which is important for tourist destination management. Model is based on „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 1. VICE model



Source: UNWTO (2007), *A Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management*, p.12.

Having in mind that this area, among the other things, covers in total territory of the National park “Djerdap”, archeological site “Lepenski vir, etc., for development rural tourism is very important sustainable tourism approach that UNWTO suggested.

Rural tourism is now in first stage of development which main characteristic is that it is developing without any serious planning. To get across in second phase of development well known as phase of dedicated development where state must invest on its development, it is important that all stakeholders must doing its rural tourism business in accordance with approach on which UNWTO insist. On that way it can be protected all natural and social (anthropogenic) resources of this area.

Conclusion

The Lower Danube region has many natural and social (anthropogenic) resources which are suitable for developed tourism. Rural tourism has developed in this area so far, spontaneously, sporadically, without any clear planning process in this area so far.

In this region nowadays six local tourist organizations exist. For the future development of rural tourism, their networking in all business segments is very important. Main characteristic of this organizations in business are to promote this region as tourist destination. But Serbian Law of tourism (Official Gazette 17/2019) also gave opportunity to be formed tourist destination management organizations. Its scope of work is much wider because it can manage with local tourist resources. It is expecting that in near future some kind of this organization will be forming and that rural tourism will be in fo-

cus of it work. On that way rural tourism will be developing according with all premises of sustainable development according with all described and requesting law regulations.

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