

TOURISM AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE PODUNAVSKI REGION

Jovan Rudež¹; Srđan Drobnjak²

Abstract

The subject of this research is the importance of tourism of the Podunavski region and tourism potential whose valorization will contribute to the development of regional economic growth as well as learning about existing potentials that are not being adequately harnessed. Negligence and underinvestment result in reduced economic profits. Non-investment and underdevelopment of certain types of tourism and non-improvement of existing events that would affirm this environment as an attractive tourist destination are some of the reasons for the stagnation of Podunavski region. Tourism in this region has development potential but they are unutilized. The promotion of various types of tourism will enable faster development of tourism in the sector resulting in an economic boost. A change in managerial awareness and comprehension of tourism, as a branch inextricably connected with other economic branches, would lead to a much more favorable economic climate for the overall progress of the region.

Key Words: *tourism, Podunavski region, economic development*

JEL classification: *R10, O10, Z32, K26*

Introduction

Tourism is a constantly evolving branch. People have a constant appetite for travel and a desire to take a break from their everyday obligations. If tourism potentials were to be valorized effectively with modern cognition, Podunavski region would also be contributed with comprehensive economic development. Podunavski region has a predisposition to place itself on a tourist map of Serbia - primarily the advantage of the Danube

¹ Jovan Rudež, Ph.D., Lecturer, College of Academic Studies Dositej , +381 60/0503-133, e-mail: jovan.rudez@gmail.com

² Srđan Drobnjak, Ph.D., Lecturer, MIA the Republic of Serbia, e-mail: sdrobnjak@gmail.com

river, one of the greatest Serbian potentials offering multiple types of tourism, as well as Kiseljak spa that used to show outcomes several times higher about twenty years ago. Tourism investments may heal the region concentrated mainly on the industry, whose most important holders are primarily Železara in Smederevo, HK Goša in Smed. Palanka and military plant in Velika Plana. Podunavski region covers an area of 1,245 km² and has about 200,000 inhabitants. It is one of the most densely populated regions in Serbia, with agricultural land accounting for 80 percent. Serbian soil is characterized by favorable agro-ecological conditions for the cultivation of most vegetable species, as well as the proximity to the EU. The main economic feature of this production is the rapid turnover of capital, which makes it very interesting for small producers who still form the backbone of agricultural production in our country (Pavlović et al., 2014, p. 896).

Tourism has not been developed to the extent it can be, based on the resources the country possesses. The following section will outline the resource base for tourism development in Podunavski region. Natural resources are defined differently depending on the profession. For economists, natural resource is that which is capable of producing useful goods and favors for a man. If those goods and favors can meet tourism needs, then they represent the natural basis for tourism development. Podunavski region stretches along the southern periphery of the Pannonian basin and the north-eastern slopes of the Šumadija hills. It is bordered on the north by the Danube and on the east by the Velika Morava. For centuries a favorable location, natural wealth (fertile land, forests, water) and extensive connections of this area have attracted many nations to pass through or stay here. Smederevo, as the center of the region, is located only 45 km from Belgrade (Rudež & Drobnjak, 2019. p. 439). The extensive transport network enables traffic connection of the region by road, rail, and waterways. The Belgrade-Niš highway, which is connected to the eastern part of Serbia by the Morava Bridge, passes through the region. The region and the south of Serbia are connected with Vojvodina by the Danube Bridge near Smederevo. Railway connects the region with Belgrade and Southern Serbia via Mala Krsna. The Danube River offers a great opportunity for water traffic development, as it enables connection with Central Europe and the Black Sea (Podunavski administrative region, 2020). The most important hydrographic resources in Serbia are lakes, rivers, thermal mineral springs and wetlands (ditches and ponds) (Maksin, 2012, p. 116). The attractiveness of the tourist area depends largely on the presence of hydrographic factors. The territory of Podunavski region is rich

in water since it flows onto the Danube and the Velika Morava. The Danube is an international river so its significance for the region is major.

The importance of tourism for economic development

Tourism is multiply interwoven with different connections. Agriculture, culture, transport, healthcare, trade, hospitality, crafts and a variety of other fields are significant for tourism. Not only does tourism connect these factors, but it also represents a link between different religions, geographical regions, nearer and further, as well as developed and underdeveloped ones. (Jovičić, 2002, p. 175). Tourism is a significant factor in driving overall economic development. Its growth tails the opportunity for other economical branches to prosper. A large number of tourism areas suitable for tourism promotion are of lower economic development and rely largely on agriculture and livestock breeding, Vegetable production is one of the most intensive branches of plant production, which is expressed by the amount of the harvest, the income generated, the revenue, the cost. Species diversity and plant species cultivation methods are typical for vegetable growing (Pavlović et al., 2014, p. 895). The appearance of tourism in such areas has a favorable effect on the development of the rest of the service and non-service industries, the production of specific goods for tourism purposes, investment construction, and the number of other areas as well. It performs an important economic function. Tourism activates a large number of both economic and non-economic agencies that are not marked for tourism by themselves, accelerates and stimulates their development, thereby increasing the overall national income. The whole process is of utter importance for the entire economy as tourist consumption is rapidly flowing from this area in particular to others. Tourism makes use of the natural goods that would not generate any economic gain otherwise. Many non-economical agencies are also activated; i. e. a culture with a wide variety of activities.

Regional economic development factors

An economy or economic system, unlike the environment, is a subsystem of the entire social system and represents a set of specified institutions and means for influence on achieving economic development goals (Rudež et al., 2015, 290). Creating state support for the development of regional economic entities is very important for the development of their economic environment meaning that the state gives general incentives for

development and that their realization is largely based on regional factors, such as local government and enterprises, other entities interested in local development and last but not the least, universities if any are located in the given environment. State-created strategies aim for developing the national economy. They also deliver wholesome support for local economic development. It is not unusual that regions have development opportunities and are competent in different ways, but those advantages remain unutilized. The main reasons for that are local factors indifference to own growth, ignorance, lack of personnel or lack of funding (Vojnović et al., 2009, p. 36).

The creation of a new concept of regionalization leads to the redistribution of responsibilities of republican and regional development institutions. Thus, the responsibility for higher-level development must be transferred to the lower-level entities of the local community (Glas, 2002, p. 103). When analyzing local economic development, it is important to use available data of significance to the local community and its economic development, such as regional location, current activities, location's infrastructure and its development, business culture, local leadership and personnel, natural potentials, community characteristics, and similar data. The local community should work on developing its business appeal, primarily by creating a stimulating business environment. Such a concept achieves new developmental opportunities due to the greater lure for investing in the local economy, while the development concept should consolidate all potentials available and put them into the function of development.

Decision-making at the macro level is based on the findings of the market position of the tourist factor necessary for decision making in the tourist complex management (Dulčić, 2001, p. 157). It is necessary to analyze market assessment, development trends, the position of the country or region, acquisition opportunities, characteristics of consumers, guests, why they decide to buy, etc. and to define the tourist market potential for the country as a whole or individual tourist region. In transition countries, regional development is of great importance. The financing of regions by the state is no longer possible because it is unacceptable from the market economy point of view. Budget limit is present, and a deficit of funds is a limiting element. Local and other inexperienced entities unaccustomed to holding responsibilities and making vital decisions found themselves caught by surprise. The same befalls major enterprises that have remained without market protectionism burdened with arrears and operating

expenses. A possible improvement measure would be the creation of adequate strategies for regional and local economic development for them to take responsibility for their own development. What is also one of the possible solutions is establishing regional agencies or similar institutions for taking jurisdiction over a field of development.

Podunavski region in the tourism development strategy of Serbia

On the territory of the Republic of Serbia, tourism is loaded with the concentration of tourist traffic during summer and winter. A more balanced flow of the tourist season is sought by innovating the tourist offer - by introducing new tourist commodities (Đenadić & Rudež, 2018, p. 645). The tourism development strategy of the Republic of Serbia includes the description of the existing situation in the tourism of the Republic of Serbia. It establishes the following tourist commodities that are particularly interesting for the Republic of Serbia: city break, round trips, business tourism, health tourism, mountains and lakes, navigation, events, rural tourism, special interests, etc. The Government of Serbia adopted a Tourism development strategy of Serbia in 2005. This strategy deals with the basic aspects of tourism development promotion. First of all, it defines the framework for the tourism sector authorities and divides Serbia into four clusters: Vojvodina, Belgrade, Southwestern Serbia, Southeastern Serbia (Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2006, p. 50). The development of Serbia as a tourist destination depends directly on the regional aspect of tourism development in Serbia. These regions would act as an initiator of Serbian tourism development where the positive effects of the realized tourist traffic in such regions would expand and open up the development space to the regions that nowadays have fair chances for rapid commercialization of their products. In that context, the first step implies the creation of competitive destinations (clusters), specifically creating competitive products in every single cluster (Unković, 2009, p. 95). Podunavski region partly belongs to the Belgrade cluster and one of the five key destinations of this cluster is Smederevo. Except for Smederevo, the key destinations of the cluster are Belgrade, Zemun, Đerdap - Lepenski Vir and Vinča..

A few years ago, the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development supported seven tourism clusters, including the Istar 21 cluster. The Istar 21 cluster is an association that aims to improve the cooperation and upgrade the development of tourism in Podunavski region, by examining markets, creating tourist products, educating tourist employees, promoting

and advertising tourism. This cluster covers the entire Danube river area in the country and aims to present the whole area as a unique tourist product. This cluster includes every municipality located on the Danube river, as well as entrepreneurial-catering companies, boaters, owners of accommodation facilities, manufacturers and souvenir shops, travel agencies and organizations, producers of wine, brandy, and other food products and all other entities whether they are part of the tourist economy or they supply it. Effects to be achieved through cluster activities are the identification of key elements of the tourist product, the shaping of local and regional product offerings according to European and world market, the acquisition, and sale of products at the cluster and local level, marketing activities improvement, building and development of a common information system, fund provision, education of personnel, increasing competitiveness by adding value throughout the chain, as well as the cooperation of members at all levels (Istar 21 Cluster association, 2009). What is worth mentioning is the project "Datourway" (Regional Agency for Development of Small and Medium Enterprises Novi Sad, 2015). It is a transnational project of seventeen organizations from six countries on the Danube and Italy. The project and other EU projects related to Danube European region were the first stage of the building process of the Danube strategy. The Danube strategy focuses on Danube European region and its development. Apart from the Danube itself and therefore the city of Smederevo, the project states that Serbia has great potential for spa tourism on the river banks of Danube, and one of the sixteen spas is the Kiseljak Spa in the municipality of Smederevska Palanka. This municipality and the Ministry of Diaspora tried to attract investors with private and public sector partnerships via the project "Euroviculus". The project would connect the spa-forest complex – Kiseljak Spa, Mikulja forest and Kudreč lake. With the help of embassies of EU countries, typical forest houses with state flags in front were to be built inside the forest Mikulja complex. Although the project was finished in 2010 not a single thing about realization has been done to this day.

Types of tourism suitable for the development of Podunavski region

What general definition of planning indicates is that it is a process of determining appropriate future activities in the spectrum of multiple options, ie. possibilities (Jafari, 2000, p. 115). In tourism, planning comes in many different forms from individuals planning their vacation, across economic entities and certain destinations planning future strategies to

achieve certain developmental and business goals, to states planning a future tourist contribution to their economic and social growth.

River tourism

Podunavski region is very rich in rivers. The biggest and the most important river for this region's tourism is the Danube being the greatest river potential of Serbia. The Danube is one of the most important economic, urban, cultural and historical development factors of the Republic of Serbia. It is a crucial factor for efficient European collaboration and national and regional development. The river's potential affects intensification of agriculture through irrigation, development of industry related to low-cost water transport, port activities, seasonal recreation, and cultural tourism. Its river flow through Serbia is 580 km long. The depth of the river goes down 22 meters, not counting Đerdap lake, where its depth reaches 90 meters. The Danube dives as long as 18 meters near Smederevo (Municipality of Smederevo, 2010). This data shows the Danube's transport, and tourist potential. Numerous beaches are located on the Danube. Definitely worth mentioning is the Jugovo beach near Smederevo that can be vastly crowded in the summertime. The coast of the Danube near Smederevo is very diverse. A great number of distributaries and several river islands rest with their potential unutilized although they are ideal for different types of tourism and eco-tourism. Near lies the fortress of Smederevo - impressive when seen from the land, but not as impressive as when seen from the river. An absolute jewel for tourists. In the last few years, the Tourism Municipal Organization has been paying much more attention to this tourism potential, so that various manifestations, concerts, and other events take place in the fortress. The Danube is an ideal river for nautical tourism. This includes yachting, cruise ships with larger boats, regattas, rowing, sailing, moto-nautical sports. Apart from the Danube, the Velika Morava river flows through Podunavski region. It enters the municipality of Velika Plana giving this region the opportunity for river tourism with its beautiful nature and its winding stream.

Spa Tourism (Health Tourism) - Kiseljak Spa

In a lovely town of Smederevska Palanka positioned in Podunavski region, Palanački Kiseljak Spa is located. The first mention of the spa dates back to 1719, and it was a Turkish travel writer who mentioned it in his journal. The healing feature of the water of Palanački Kiseljak was confirmed in Vienna by the order of Miloš Obrenović in the year 1834. Back in 1851 Dr. Lindenmayer issued a publication about Palanački Kiseljak stating: "There was an old spring at Kiseljak known since old times. The spring was walled

but The Jasenica and some stream flooded it, therefore, a reconstruction was made and the spring was reduced to the form of a tap in the year of 1836. However, this divine God's gift almost found its devastation, since its water constantly spoilt so no one wanted to drink it anymore". The spring remained unattended until the year of 1851 (Lindenmayer, 1865, p. 35). There are two thermo-mineral water springs, one reaching 32 C⁰ at the depth of 650 m, and the other as warm as 56 C⁰ at the depth of 936 m. Healing waters of Palanački Kiseljak received acknowledgments already in the early thirties of the past century from London to Turin and their quality did not cease to impress to this day. Today's spa of Palanački Kiseljak was founded when the facilities for the use of mineral water for the therapeutic purpose were built in the place around the spring site, under the surveillance of medical experts, in the 1970s. The spa is located in the south-east outskirts of the town, on the left bank of the Jasenica river, along the road Smederevska Palanka – Velika Plana, about a 1km away from the town. The spa is in a park with a total area of 5 ha, while the larger tourist complex is about 17 ha (Tourist Association of the Municipality Smederevska Palanka, 1983, p.48).

Table 1: *The basic analysis of Palanački Kiseljak water in 1996*

Water temperature °C	47.1	Electro-conductivity (in S/cm)	8.25
Air temperature	1.0	Mineralization (mg/l)	4.980
Colour (Pt-co scale)	6	Dry residue-180 oC (mg/L)	-
Muddiness (NTU)	2	Total hardness (dH)	-
pH	7.1	Total number of ions in alkaline earth metals (mg/L as Ca)	-
Eh (mV)	-	(mg/L as Ca)	-
rH	-	Consumption KMnO4 (mg/L)	9.31

Source: *The Institute for Rehabilitation, 1996*

The water of Palanački Kiseljak, which is of the so-called descendant type, originated from young geological as well as sedimentary formations derived from the former Pannonian Sea. At one specific place there is a shallow level – mineral potable water and at the depth of 930 m there is hot seawater. It has been scientifically proved that these waters are the remnants of the Pannonian Sea and that they were sweetened slightly because they had been mixing with other waters until they were closed by sediments. Today, Palanka has seawater. That is exactly the reason why tourism, in every aspect, can be developed here (Teofilović, 1993). The water is rich in Ca and Mg in an ideal ratio, and that is wealth which should be used in a better way, as the water is very competitive worldwide. The

mineral water of Palanački Kiseljak does not only have a unique ionic structure but it also has a range of elements in their mutual favorable biological ratio. The water with its biological characteristics is used in various therapeutic actions since it contains biological activators, which are the agents of all the functions in an organism. The unique ionic structure of the water and their mutual ions ratio, especially the one of cations and atoms' polymetallicity, enable an extremely high-quality basis for all synthetic roles and their possible action in the cells of certain organs (Novaković, 1984, p. 62).

Picture 1: *The spa in Kiseljak*



Source: *Spas in Serbia, Palanački Kiseljak spa*, <https://banjeusrbiji.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/palanacki-kiseljak-banja-u-srbiji.jpg> (02 March 2020).

The physical-chemical characteristics of the water, which enable the use both of cold and hot mineral water as an additional means in the treatment of certain illnesses, indicate the existence of natural conditions for the development of health-recreational tourism. The partial use of the water for filling the Olympic size pool hardly represents the real possibilities of its usage or its importance for the development of health-recreational and residence tourism. By completing the spa and transferring it from dispensary to infirmary way of offering services and by building an accommodation facility with installed hot water and organized health care it would be possible to form a rehabilitation center of great importance for the development of recreational-residence tourism in Smederevska Palanka.

All the above-listed shows that Palanački Kiseljak Spa has a long tradition and that its waters are of high quality. There is some interest on the part of the owner of the hotel for its renovation and upbuilding, but what is awaited for is an initiative of the Town Council to renovate the spa center for physical medicine and rehabilitation. Smederevska Palanka is a

municipality that used to be well-known for the industrial giant "Goša" not only in the country but worldwide as well. The industry having been ruined the town also got into a crisis and every year a way to keep the people employed has been looked for. The Town Council should turn to spa tourism because it is the only potential in the municipality along with agriculture, i.e fruit-growing. There are possible investors and with the help of the municipality authority and the state governing structures of Palanački Kiseljak Spa can regain its place from the time when tourists used to ask for an extra room in privately-owned houses, as the hotel was constantly overbooked. The vicinity of most important traffic arteries gives another pre-condition for the activation of the spa complex.

Advantages and disadvantages of the tourism development in Podunavski region

People consider how difficult it is to achieve particular goals. They investigate whether they can achieve these goals through their own actions, whether the contexts of their surrounding circumstances are mitigating or aggravating factors, as well as whether they will have the necessary resources or opportunities at their disposal (Pecujlija et al., 2015, p. 910).

A SWOT analysis was created to help companies to recognize a good business opportunity, but it can also be applied, and it is even desirable to do so, in the determination of a local economic development strategy. The SWOT analysis of regional tourism development has a task to ascertain competitive advantages and disadvantages. It gives an insight into the state of a region, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – limitations.

According to the advantages and disadvantages managers can make rational decisions about further steps related to this tourist destination. A model of rational decision making is characterized by: complete familiarity with the problem that is to be decided, a clear definition of the goals to be achieved, availability of all the information needed for decision making and the possibility of finding the best solution (Brunsson, 2000, p. 46).

Podunavski region, which consists of three municipalities, can be regarded as a whole that needs economic development. Moreover, each municipality in the region has its own tourist organization and companies that deal with tourism and that are, directly or indirectly, connected with the tourism economy.

Table 2: *SWOT analysis Podunavski region*

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - climate and natural conditions for the development - the region borders on Belgrade – a big consumer center - the river Danube and Kiseljak Spa - three mineral water springs - the harbor of Smederevo - highway E-75 runs through the region - the main railway for the south of Europe and the Middle East, corridor 10 - an elaborate net of the roads connecting its municipalities with the neighboring municipalities and regions - natural conditions for agriculture development - there is a tradition in fruit-growing, viniculture and livestock breeding - two sports-business airports in Smederevo and Smederevska Palanka - an increasing number of projects on the development of different forms of tourism in municipalities - the renewed traffic infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a high unemployment rate - a low purchasing power - experts' drain from the municipalities - insufficient cooperation between the local economy and local authority - insufficient marketing activities in representing the municipalities and the region - insufficient accommodation and catering capacity - unused potentials - an absence of adequate strategies - a complicated and costly procedure to get permission for the construction of marinas on the Danube - a decline of the importance of agriculture production and its share in tourism - a lack of knowledge and an inadequate level of awareness of nautical tourism promotion - an absence of a serious strategy for sustainable development
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to attract foreign investments in tourism - to simplify the procedure for getting permission for the construction of the marinas - the present capacity of Kiseljak Spa - greater cooperation among privately-owned, public and non-government sectors - to encourage direct connections between the development of the industry sector and the development of various forms of tourism - to begin the production in the factory for fruit and vegetable processing - possibilities for using the funds of Ministry, EU and individual donor programs for the realization of tourism projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - young people and qualified working force leaving to other regions and abroad - the age structure of the citizens - slow development of entrepreneurship climate - a delay or insufficient usage of funds - the lack of motivation on the part of the local authorities to use available resources for tourism development - underestimation of the potentials of public-private partnership for the realization of big projects in tourism

Source: *The authors*

All of them have certain visions and goals. All these goals, visions and interests although different should be embedded into the interest of the development of the whole region. A vision of a tourist destination represents an inspiring image of the destination in the future time in the way the key interest group sees it (Popesku, 2011, p. 171). The question to be asked is how to agree with individual interests so that the final result should be the development of both the region and the factors being interested in. To embed all of this we need to take into consideration the interests of all organizations and their development plans, to coordinate them with the strategy of tourism development of Podunavski region, which must be based on a real basis, according to financial possibilities. The generators of the development should be municipalities' tourist organizations that should gather all important factors, agencies, companies supporting all the interests in the strategy of the region development. In the very beginning, the development strategy will identify all the interested participants. In the next phase, there will be an evaluation of the importance of all the participants in the fulfillment of the development strategy. Ranking based on the importance is done according to various criteria:

- whether a company is of regional or local character,
- a company's activities, whether it is a hotelier company, a tourist agency, or a traffic company.

There is a great number of criteria that have to be taken into consideration to get the clearest possible picture, to rank all the factors correctly according to their significance. The most important part is adopting the plan for the development of Podunavski region. Persons of integrity – experts must take part in making the plan. The strategic plan for the development being adopted, there is a selection of qualified personnel capable of implementing the assigned goals and to make the plan achievable it is necessary to obtain necessary investments. The strategic plan for the development being adopted, qualified personnel capable of implementing the assigned goals is selected but to make the plan achievable it is necessary to obtain necessary investments. The problem that can arise is the relation between privately-owned companies and those under the ownership of municipality and the transfer of decision-making rights. If state institutions, municipality organizations and privately-owned companies acted together, everybody would benefit, therefore there must be confidence between the private and public sectors so that the strategy can survive with a view of the observed region progress and correct planning about the tourist destination. To make planning more successful, as Kler Gunn (1993, p. 233) points out, certain misunderstandings should be eliminated.

The connection between the public and private sectors

Serbia has passed through a period of dramatic change during the previous fifteen years. However, this did not reflect fully on economic growth since the impact of the international financial crisis and numerous rounds of elections have slowed down necessary structural reforms in the country and led to a loose fiscal policy until 2014 (Pecujlija et al., 2017, p. 257).

A public-private partnership, as a cooperation between public and private sectors in the field of planning, production, offers, financing, management or payment of public works, can help to a great extent in the development of tourism in this region. There is a large number of interpretations of this concept, and most commonly it is referred to as a relation between public and private sectors in which risk is shared based on a mutual endeavor to get the desirable result of public policies (Popesku, 2011, p. 137).

The goal of both the public and private sectors is making some profit. In this type of partnership both sides share responsibility when it comes to success and failure as well. Each side brings what they possess. The example of "Moravski konak" near Velika Plana shows such a case. The owner bought out a brickyard and a few years later, on the land beside the factory situated by the river Morava, he raised a tourist building. He was doing business in both companies at the same time, but then stopped the production in the brick factory and turned to tourism. Naturally, in this case, we should point out that he had no support on the part of the local community, but financed everything out of his own income. This example shows all the attractiveness of tourism.

The problems manifesting in the conception of tourist development are not identical throughout the state, a tourist destination, tourist locality, or, even, a tourist company (Čerović, 2002, p. 157). When there are favorable conditions, there will be more interest in investing, which can be building hotels, restaurants and other ways of entertainment such as aqua-parks and others. For all this, we need an infrastructure, and Podunavski region, as already stated, is situated in the center of traffic routes, both road and river transport. Certainly, we should mention sports-business airports in Smederevo and Smederevska Palanka. Because of all this, a local community should particularly be active, as its active role in projects will attract the private sector. Special attention, of course, should be paid to preserving the cultural and historical heritage and environmental protection. The synergy of public and private sectors will lead to the development of the

local economy. The areas which are interesting for this aspect of cooperation are: infrastructure, financing, marketing, human capital and researches. In respect of marketing, there comes cooperation in defining and building the image of a tourist destination, its further promoting and accessing to the tourist market. Marketing is a social process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need (Kotler, 1984, p. 3). In the center of attention, there are human needs and demands that should be satisfied. In order to provide an efficient development under new conditions new forms of partnerships are more and more needed. A partnership is a multidimensional phenomenon in the strategy of local economic development. It is necessary to establish a partnership between public and private sectors, local communities, central and local authorities, strategic partners and others.

The lack of personnel in tourism

Going forward, Serbia's main challenge is to improve living standards in the country and transform economic recovery into jobs in a tight fiscal environment. Increasing exports, productivity, and competitiveness are recommended actions that can help propel the country's economic growth (Pecujlija et al., 2017, p. 257).

Modern society requires the personnel that, with their knowledge, are capable of responding to modern trends in tourism. The researches about literacy in this country are devastating. When we perceive this problem we can easily come to the conclusion that there is a lack of qualified personnel. The prosperity of tourism is not possible without educated workers. New time asks for new people. Service personnel must be particularly educated so that they can make an outgoing contact with a guest and give him complete and decent information, as a tourist is overloaded with information perfection that he can read on his computer screen. Certainly, a notion that "an innkeeper is a person who can offer you some soup, or that a manager of tourist organization is someone who produces lodging" (Krippendorf, 1986, p. 11) cannot even close be sustained. The personnel in tourism will have to possess a higher level of information literacy. The users of tourist services are more and more people of high information literacy and they know very well the possibilities of the use and help of information technology in all aspects of tourism. Every year there is an increase in the number of family hotels. The owners must constantly keep up with trends and continually educate all the members of their families. Local structures themselves have to help them with this, through seminars, visits to those regions where this type of tourism is especially developed.

The basis of a successful company is its managers. They are initiators, they lead and direct activities. People do not become managers by birth, they have to make themselves managers. The successfulness of a company depends on the engagement of the most skilled personnel in suitable jobs and workplaces. Years are needed to build a managerial team, but a short time to ruin it by bad managing (Drucker, 1974, p. 279). For the efficiency and successfulness of management it is essential to become familiar with the way of making most of the potentials of one's associates and executives and to integrate it all. In the process of work collective integration it is necessary to integrate individual creativity into a cohesion unity, to achieve group risk-taking, to recast an individual sense of responsibility into a group one (Adižes, 1999, p. 131).

The percentage of qualified workers employed in tourist organizations who should be initiators of tourism in Podunavski region is below 30 percent, which certainly is not enough. A typical example of the region is a tourist organization in Smederevska Palanka, in which three employees have a college degree in tourism, whereas the others have nothing to do with tourism. The awareness of those in control in municipalities should be changed and only the people having professional skills for dealing with tourism should get positions if we want this branch to take an ascending path and go along the road of faster development.

Conclusion

Tourism performs an important economic function. It activates both economic and non-economic fields initially not having any tourist labels. Tourism accelerates and stimulates their development, thereby increasing the overall national income which is of utter importance for the overall economy of the country as tourist expenditure rapidly flows from its sector to other areas of interest. Tourism activates even those natural assets that would not be profitable if they were not included in joint development. What tourist economy development implies is a need for new accommodation facilities, sports objects, entertainment facilities, traffic and infrastructure development and other objects for tourist needs. Tourism requires the personnel of various qualifications and profiles. In comparison with other industries where fewer workers are needed for a better product due to the new technologies, tourism functions quite the opposite - the more developed it is the more workforce is required. All aforementioned leads to the development of the country, of the region or the municipality and it is the main goal and conception of this work. The goals are not only economical but also socially-cultural, market-oriented

and others. Economical goals are aimed at optimizing the tourist share of economic development, full employment, regional economic development, and the increase of the balance of payments. With the development of river tourism in Smederevo and the development of spa complex Palanački Kiseljak with other tourist potentials engaged by these two crucial projects, Podunavski region would have a significant increase in economic growth which would certainly lead to a better standard of living for its population. The potentials of the region must be utilized using information gathered through the research of the area. All strategies from local, across regional, to state-level, are required for tourism of Podunavski okrug to flourish. Tourism development will raise the importance of the region, change the minds of people and their understanding of tourism as one of the major fields of economy. Based on the potential that the region has and the potential for tourism development, contribution to the overall economic development of Podunavski region is within hand's reach. Tourism provides great economic development but needs to be recognized as such by the entities that lead the region and the municipalities so their tourist potentials can be used.

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