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DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST POTENTIAL AS A CHANCE FOR SERBIAN ECONOMY – EXAMPLE OF NATIONAL PARK DJERDAP

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Abstract

Tourism is nowadays a booming economic activity. As such, it represents a particular challenge for countries that see the provision and export of tourist services as one of the most important opportunities for accelerating economic growth. The natural resources of our country and its favorable geographical position can be a precious asset for attracting tourists and meaningful involvement of investors in this area. The intensification of investment activities in the field of tourism in Serbia offers many advantages, such as: (1) the building of new modern capacities and modernization of existing tourist facilities; (2) the use of modern information technology and participation in global distribution systems; (3) innovative promotional activities and the application of modern concepts of marketing and management in tourism; (4) and improvements in the quality of complex tourist services in accordance with the requirements of the world market. The authors pay special attention to the possibilities of developing areas of tourist potential, particularly at the Djerdap National Park, which is a national asset of great importance from the standpoint of the future development of tourism and overall economic activity in our country.

Keywords: *Tourism, National Park Djerdap, economic growth*

Introduction

Serbia belongs to the group of countries that are faced with numerous economic problems, and the development of tourism as an important economic activity can contribute to overcoming them. The comparative

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advantages of our country, which are reflected in the availability of natural resources and favourable geographical position, represent a significant advantage for attracting tourists and intensifying investment activities in the field of tourism.

Djerdap National Park is a significant and complex tourist value of Serbia. Natural resources, archaeological sites, medieval religious buildings, population and settlements, indicate significant attributes of touristic and investment attractiveness of the national park. However, a large navigable river, a vast artificial lake, the mountain ranges of the Carpathians, composite gorge with four constrictions and three tectonic-erosive enlargement, national park with a number of reserves, the existing tourist and catering facilities, border crossings with Romania and other benefits, are not economically valorized.

In this sense, the paper pays special attention to the possibilities of development of tourism and investment potential of this national park, with the biggest surface and national treasure of great importance, as far as the development opportunities of the domestic economy are concerned.

The development of tourism in the function of economic recovery and strengthening the investment activity of the domestic economy

Tourism, as an economic activity, at the present time is experiencing strong growth. In this sense, it represents a particular challenge for countries in the provision and export of tourist services, that is the countries which see one of the most important opportunities for accelerating economic growth (Djuric & Djuric, 2005, 240). The geographical location of the land and its natural resources are important factors that affect the pace of economic development of a country.

The Republic of Serbia has very favourable geographical position. Favourable natural geographic and traffic position of the Republic of Serbia is an advantage for the development and efficient functioning of river, land and air transport and a prerequisite to attract significant transit traffic. The proximity of current and future EU members from South East Europe, geostrategic position and infrastructure links of the Republic of Serbia with the countries of the region (the Balkans), sub-regions (South East Europe) and the EU represent a real advantage for faster political and economic integration of the Republic of Serbia into the geo-economic and regional integration. In addition to geographical location, natural

resources also play an important role in the economic development of most modern world countries.

The importance of natural resources to the country economy is conditioned by the level of its economic and technological development, the characteristics of the economic structure, and the economy provided by a particular region in the international division of labour (Djuric et al., 2012, 222).

Natural resources of our country and favourable geographical position represent a significant advantage for attracting tourists and intensifying investment activities in the touristic field. Strengthening investment activities in Serbia recreation area includes many benefits such as:

- construction of new modern capacity and modernization of existing tourist facilities,
- application of modern information technologies and participation in global distribution systems,
- innovation of promoting activities, affirmation of modern concepts of marketing and management in tourism, and raising the quality of complex tourist services in accordance with the requirements and criteria of the world market.

In the context of strengthening economic activity in the tourism field, we emphasize the importance of the investment role. Given that investments represent an important means of economic recovery and further development of the Serbian economy, encouraging investment strategy should become the backbone of its economic and development policies. With this goal, it is essential to define priority branches and areas for investments and determine the most desirable form of investment. The national strategy of encouraging investments should be required to identify the type of investment and economic areas to be developed.

The comparative advantages of our country condition commercial branches which should develop in the framework of which the best investments can be realized. The main direction of the strategy to attract capital must, therefore, be directed towards those areas of the economy that can take advantage of our strengths best, the most important of which are the following (Djuric, 2006, 284):

- geographical and strategic location,
- eligibility and low labour costs,

- size and connectivity of the domestic market with other markets,
- natural resources and others.

When it comes to the most important groups of investors that can be expected in the Serbian tourism industry, in addition to domestic investors, the attention should definitely be directed towards current traditional European partners. Investors from Russia, China and other non-European countries also represent an investment opportunity in the future.

Former socialist countries also represent important potential investors, not only for geographical proximity, but also because these countries already have significant experience with its functioning market economy. In this context, special importance is given to the countries of the former members of the common state - Yugoslavia.

Reduction of political tensions and economic subjects' numerous connections which have not so long functioned within the framework of the single economic space, provide opportunities for more active economic integration and significant investment commitment.

Mobilization of Serbian citizens' working abroad capital and economic potential can also constitute an important source of financing for the development needs of our tourism industry. It is certain that, in order to achieve good results, we must abandon long-term assumptions that patriotic initiative of our citizens abroad will be the main motive for their investments. In this sense, what is very important here is the role of the state in terms of investment and the creation of an adequate institutional environment (Djuric et al., 2011, 299).

Investors highly value the existence of political and economic stability of the host country of foreign investment, which, among other things, is reflected in the safety of guaranteed property rights, stability and predictability of legal regulations and government policies, the reliability of the judiciary, etc (Djuric, 2004, 397). To achieve success in this area, what should be created is a stable institutional environment, which in addition to more efficient operation of diplomatic and consular missions abroad, can animate the Serbian Diaspora for more intensive business activities in the Republic of Serbia.

In order to attract tourists and investments in the tourism industry, it is necessary to implement and significantly more aggressive strategy of promoting Serbia as an attractive location for the tourist development.

Bearing in mind the fact that the present role of the state in attracting capital conditions completely changed, it must continuously make efforts for the promotion of tourist potentials of the country and raising the level of services to potential investors. To this end, the state through its mechanisms must undertake promotional activities with the main task to:

- provide a complete package of services for potential investors, which provides an analysis of our business environment, as well as the analysis and review of the situation in specific sectors of our economy;
- provide different instruction and materials that facilitate the process of establishing touristic enterprises in Serbia;
- provide the possibility to organize meetings between interested investors with local authorities and others.

Djerdap National Park is a significant and complex tourist value of Serbia. Valorization of economic and natural resources, archaeological sites, medieval religious buildings, population and settlements indicate significant attributes of tourist and investing attractiveness, which enable year-round tourism with rich and diverse content. In this context, our work is particularly focused on the possibilities of development of tourism and investment potential of this national park, the surface of which is the largest one, which is a national treasure of great importance, as far as the future development of tourism, investment and overall economic activity in our country are concerned.

Tourist, geographic and traffic-geographical position

Djerdap National park is located in the North-East of Republic of Serbia and includes a part of the area Djerdap gorge (Iron Gate) in the middle of the Danube. (Article 4, paragraph 2) According to the original proposal, the surface of this National Park was 82,000 acres, but later determining the boundaries of the national park, it is reduced to 63,786.48 hectares, which has some negative implications for the development of tourism.

The national park has a favourable position because it passes through the main route, named "Djerdap highway" that runs from Belgrade, via Pozarevac, Veliko Gradiste and Donji Milanovac, to Kladovo and

Negotin. The favourable location of the park, according to the traffic direction mentioned above, has a special tourist value, because it is one of our country's route links with Romania.

Another route running alongside the Park on the south side is the road that goes from Pozarevac, through Kucevo and Majdanpek for Kladovo and tourist attraction of this area is smaller, which is caused by moving away from Djerdap lake.

The Danube and Djerdap Lake constitute a specific part of a pan-European road and water corridors 7. Corridor 7 is the only European corridor which basically has a river stream or waterway Danube, the length of which is 2857 km. This corridor is part of a unique trans-European times the Danube-Main-Rhine total length of 3505 km. In connection with this corridor, it should be noted that in our territory there is the most important river middle-Danube transit hub, towards which waterways of eastern Hungary (Tisa), western Romania (Bega) and former Yugoslav territories (Sava and Drava) naturally gravitate. The waterway Rhine-Main-Danube axis can become a significant future economic development of Europe (Spasojevic & Susic, 2005). However, the traffic potential of the corridors, especially downstream of Budapest, is not utilized to its greatest extent, although the navigation on the Danube and Djerdap Lake is an interesting travel experience. Possibilities of dating archaeological sites, medieval fortresses and modern cities in the coastal zone, which guarantee a rich content of tourist travel.

Djerdap lake can be said to have a favourable position towards the South-East province of Vojvodina, Belgrade, North-East and central Serbia, while a position of Djerdap to Belgrade is favourable, especially because in addition to road and rail transport, it can be used as the Danube waterway. A very convenient location Djerdap Lake is of interest according to a series of natural and anthropogenic tourist motives. It favours the development of many types of tourist movements, ensuring the rich content of stay. Djerdap Lake is located in one of the longest and most attractive gorges in Europe.

Natural Resources

“With its natural and created values, Djerdap National Park is imposed as a separate and complete tourist entity. The first and fundamental group of tourist motives is related to the Iron Gate, with its morphological and

hydrographic characteristics. The second group of motives derives from the attractiveness of the Djerdap landscapes, based not on topography diversity and hydrographic features, but also on a wide range of combining different elements of the flora and vegetation forms. The third group of motives has a very solid base in the cultural and historical heritage, and especially in some more recent origin created values (objects hydropower and navigation system "Djerdap"). For this group of motives are adjacent to certain ethnographic specificity (Petrovo village) with appropriate forms of economic activity (fishing, livestock) and folklore characteristics. A special group of tourist motives in the Djerdap National Park are protected and provided for the protection of natural objects - nature reserves and monuments of nature" (Stankovic, 2002).

Geomorphological characteristics

In geomorphologic terms of the National Park "Djerdap", two geomorphologic entities can be singled out. The first makes the Djerdap gorge as part of the Danube valley, and the other highland hills on the right side of the Danube, which constitute a powerful bastion of the river to the south.

Djerdap gorge, one of the longest in Europe (100 km), extends between the city and the fortress Golubacki Romanian village Guravoj as the most upstream points, to the town of Sip, as well as the most downstream location. Since it belongs to the type of break-through gorges, which are very rare in the topology of the Earth, it is a composite, making it especially attractive. In the sector of the Danube Djerdap gorge there are four narrowed gorges: Golubacka or upper cliffs, Gorge Gospodjin vir, Veliki and Mali kazan and Sipska gorge; and three tectonic-erosive extensions: Ljubkovska basin, Donjemilanovacka basin and Orsavka basin.

Downstream from Donjemilanovacka Basin, the Danube enters the most interesting part of the gorge - the Large and Small cauldron, narrow parts of the valley, the steep cliffs reminiscent of intense tectonic activity in this area. Veliki and Mali kazan are mutually separated with the expansion of the Romanian village Dubova, which further increases the complexity of the morphological space and makes it more attractive touristically speaking. The coastal belt of the Great and Little cauldron is easily accessible from vessels, rather than the road, and must make efforts

to better connect most attractive touristic parts of Djerdap with the nearby roads, in order to achieve a longer stay of tourists.

Djerdap gorge ends at Sipska narrowing on this sector, with the island Crkviste. There were favorable conditions for the rearrangement of the Danube and the construction of hydropower and navigable system, where artificial lake Djerdap I ends (Stankovic, 1975, 134). In the island Marul, the hydroelectric power plant Djerdap II" was built, along with a lock.

Great geomorphological diversity of the Djerdap Gorge provides the development of tourism in some of its parts and there are enough locations for the construction of tourist facilities. They can be divided into ones close to the shore of Lake Djerdap, sightseeing (the forward slopes, sharp promontories and leveled terraces which offer an amazing view of the wide expanse of lakes and coastal zone) and special (caused by natural and anthropogenic motives such as caves, springs, archaeological sites, forest stands, crossroads ...).

The gazebo decoration can be possible in the narrow parts of the Djerdap gorge, which would be accessible from the lake and the mainland, and extensions in basin, where there is enough space and sunny exposure for the construction of reception capacities, sports fields, parking lots, docks and marinas.

Smaller forms and objects of topography are typical of National Park "Djerdap". It is a fluvial and karst forms, such as river valleys Brnjica, Dobra, Boljetinska River, Porec river, Buttercup and other flows. Some of these river valleys are thoroughly investigated and due to natural and tourist values proposed for protection. The appearance of sinkholes, dry valleys, caves contributes to the diversity of topography and tourist attractiveness of the national park.

The hydrological characteristics

The biggest hydrological value of the national park "Iron Gate" is an artificial lake created by damming the Danube for the production of electricity and improved conditions of navigation and changed the appearance of the landscape. After damming the Danube in the Djerdap gorge and the creation of the artificial lake, tourist values of the area were increased to equalizing thermal water regime, improved navigation conditions, smaller amplitudes water level, improving predisposition for

sailing and fishing, road connection with Romania, the proclamation of a national park and more (<http://www.sgd.org.rs/publikacije/zemlja%Djerdapa.pdf>).

In places where the water has sunk lower stakes of Danube's former tributaries' riverbeds and meadows, the popular bays were formed, suitable for decorating the marina for nautical tourism as well as building and equipping checkpoints for fishing and hunting in the surrounding terrain. The largest bay of this kind was built in Porec river valley, the width of 1 km. It retracts 7 km along the Porec river valley. Smaller bays were created at the mouths of the Pesaca, the Ribnica, the Zatica and Suva Reka.

Picture 1: *The lake Đerdap*



Source: <https://sr.wikipedia.org/sr/>

According to the average monthly temperatures of water, swimming in the lake Đerdap is possible in June, July, August and September, when the water temperature is above 18° C. During the winter, ice can occur on Đerdap Lake (Stankovic, 1985, 1).

Anthropogenic Resources

Anthropogenic touristic values of those objects, events and happenings in space that can bind the attention of tourists a shape impressions, are divided into archaeological, architectural, ethnographic - artistic and touristic events. The result is material and spiritual culture of the society in space and time.

Anthropogenic tourist values cause the short-stay tourists, whereas the visit to some anthropogenic tourist values and organization of relevant events is often not time-dependent so that the tourist trade can take place throughout the year and be used for extending the tourist season.

The archaeological site of the fortress

The National Park "Djerdap" was inhabited from the Neolithic period which is proved by numerous archaeological sites and to the continuity of life is maintained until today.

The first archaeological excavations on the terrace of the Danube at Lepenski vir just assumed the wealth of findings. In 1967, under the farmers 'and herders' villages from the period from 5300 to 4 BC to 800 AD, traces of the material culture of world importance were discovered. Lepenski Vir is a cultural monument of exceptional importance, under the protection of the Republic of Serbia. At the archaeological site Lepenski Vir and the kind of prehistoric open-air museum, examples of jewelry and tools made of bone and stone, and carved stone plaques with symbols and signs that probably the basic mankind Vinca's letter were discovered.

In the area of the Iron Gate a few settlements from the time of Lepenski Vir and subsequent centuries were discovered. Their further scientific procession is pending, as well as finding opportunities to the tourist offer, which is already done with Lepenski vir. After the construction of the access road and the completion of the items on the open space and the museum, the culture of Lepenski vir will receive even greater tourist importance, while the national park "Djerdap" will become a kind of element originally offered cultural tourism trends.

Golubac city was built on a rocky slope of a hill, a branch of Homolje Mountain, while ramparts of the city follow the configuration of the terrain. The nine massive towers 25 meters high are connected by a wall and arranged in such a way to defend the city both from the land and water.

Fetislam fortress is located on the banks of the Danube and west of Kladovo. It consists of little and big forts. The small fort, made of the upper and riverside area, was constructed in 1524 as the starting point for the Turkish conquer cities Severina and Transylvania.

Picture 2: *Golubac city*



Source: <http://www.npdjerdap.org/kultura/golubacka-tvrđjava/>

The richness and diversity of cultural and historical monuments of national park "Djerdap" make it unique in our country. However, a great part of it is not equipped for tourist visits. In addition to Lepenski vir, there are no tourist-info offices.

Ethnographic tourism value

Ethnographic tourist values contribute to the enrichment of tourist stay contents and achieve higher economic and non-economic effects of tourism.

Valorization of ethnographic tourism resources can be done individually and in groups. This may be a manifestation of different forms of organization of folk customs, festivities, games and music (concerts, festivals, competitions), presentations of folk handicrafts and the brainchild of the galleries and museums and in environments with authentic ethnological characteristics (primarily in various rural areas and villages).

Special tourist attractions are folk customs of the local population, which have, due to poor communication and poor mixing, retained many archaic features. Annual holidays such as St. George's, St. Peter's ... when you get to a certain place where residents from the environment gather in national costumes, with old coin necklaces for women and girls, these are the kind of events with rich musical, poetic and artistic creativity. The particularly interesting ceremonies are "duhovske rusalje" (women who fall into a

trance), various types of commemorations (the cult of the deceased holds a special place in the religion of these areas, such as providing “daca” for life, various kinds of necromancy at cemeteries...) and “priveg” (ritual burning of village fires in which all the village residents take part).

Tourist events

In addition to other anthropogenic tourist values, various events attract the attention of tourists, which have a long and varied tradition. They can be: political, artistic, sporting, cultural and entertainment. The most visited ones are sports competitions, concerts, village meetings and events that do not require a high level of visitors' culture and information (Stankovic, 2008, page 206). Events in the tourist areas are of particular importance because they contribute to enriching the content of visitors' stay and to the increase in daily and total guests' spending.

We can single out a few events: Ethno festival of Eastern Serbia (held in July in Kladovo); The Djerdap Regatta Tekija - Kusjak; Folklore festival "Lilac fest"; Pop Music Festival "TIN" (held in July in Donji Milanovac); Danube Day; Porecki cauldron; Djerdap Cup sailing (held in August in Donji Milanovac).

The main forms of tourism

National park "Djerdap" with its natural and anthropogenic tourist motives, existing transport connections with sources of tourist demand, receptive facilities on its territory and in neighbouring countries, provides favourable conditions for many forms of tourist movements throughout the year.

Nautical tourism. This form of tourism is conditioned by the existence of large Djerdap Lake. Nautical tourism means the navigation on smaller and larger facilities in order to rest, leisure and visit tourist attractions, the Danube has a long and rich tradition. Given the increasingly favourable conditions for navigation on the Iron Gate, it is possible to expect an increase in traffic. Although the Danube runs a length of 588 km through Serbia, our country is one of those Danube countries which has excellent conditions for river nautical tourism.

One-day trips. Tours are components of an integrated tourism product and the number and variety of organized tours offered in the tourist destination as an indicator of development of these destinations.

Tourist movements dealing with one-day trips towards the national park "Djerdap" are more developed than some other forms of tourist traffic and especially in May, June, September and October (visit hydroelectric dams "Djerdap" and archeological settlements Lepenski vir). One-day trip tourism in Djerdap should not be limited to meeting only two or three buildings and sites, as Djerdap offers considerably more. One-day or weekend arrivals of Romanians in Kladovo across the Djerdap border crossing were intensified after the entry of Romania into the European Union.

Excursion tourism. Excursion tourism group travel usually involves the pre-planned and organized ROADMAP travel.

There are tremendous opportunities for the development of excursion tourism, a county provides excellent conditions for educational school trips, where the history of this district can be recounted during a visit over anthropogenic tourist values.

Stationary tourism. Donji Milanovac, Tekija and Kladovo provide the most appropriate conditions for a longer stay in the National Park Djerdap, because in these neighborhoods there are modern tourist and catering facilities. The center of tourism after the construction of the hotel "Lepenski vir" becomes Donji Milanovac, because it can meet the needs of many tourists, regardless of their primary commitment.

In recent years, recorded in groups of tourists from Germany, Austria and Greece, and conquer the markets of these countries is still pending. With this in mind, the home manager is required to develop skills in cross-cultural work environment. Cultural understanding and knowledge of cultural diversity at the present time becomes a basic prerequisite for successful business. Cultural sensitivity entails awareness and a sincere concern about the culture of other individuals, and requires the ability to understand the people who live in other societies. (Djuric & Djuric, 2010, 378-379) In this sense, investing in education and creation of competent personnel is becoming an important prerequisite for economic and social development. Investing in building and human resources training, in

modern conditions, is becoming a key competitive advantage (Djuric et al., 2013, 761).

Event tourism. This form of tourist movement is closely linked to the motives of the same name - manifestations, and it can have a cultural and recreational feature. The basis for the development of event tourism in the territory of the national park "Iron Gate" is enough. Tourist events can be highlighted with a sports and cultural content (regatta competitions in rowing and swimming and sports competitions on land surfaces).

Fishing and hunting. Hunting achieved many positive effects: significant financial income (certain portion of foreign exchange from foreign hunters and game meat exports), encouragement of the development of other economic sectors (catering etc.), improvement of the wild game and, from an ecological point of view, it provides the protection of endangered species of wildlife, improving the socio-economic status of the population and suppress unfavorable demographic trends (providing services in rural households money as additional income may increase their total revenue and retention on the property). Hunting requires special organization of the hunters' accepts, guidance services, inspection and maintenance of hunting grounds, but it can be also a rich source of income. The same applies for the development of fishing tourism in the Djerdap lake and its mountain tributaries. Along with hunting, specific gastronomic specialties can be developed in the national restaurants, which can affect the level of daily and overall spending tourists. Fishing tourism can have a significant impact on the increase of tourist traffic in the National Park. A large waterscape of the Danube and Danube Lake has abounds in populations of diverse species of fish (sturgeon, perch, catfish, carp, pike, bream, etc.).

Conclusion

Djerdap National Park is a significant and complex tourist value of Serbia. Valorization of natural resources, archaeological sites, medieval religious buildings, population and settlements, indicate significant tourist attractiveness attributes that allow year-round tourism of rich and diverse content of stay. Large navigable river, a vast artificial lake, mountain ranges of the Carpathians, composite Gorge with four constrictions and three tectonic-erosive enlargement, national park with a number of reserves, the existing tourist and catering facilities, crossing at the border with Romania and other benefits, are not touristic valorized.

Djerdap National Park and its immediate surroundings highlight the numerous cultural and historical monuments. Archaeological sites, medieval and modern facilities, clearly point to a long continuity of life in this area, which favours the tourism value because it allows content rich stay.

In the national park "Iron Gate", different forms of tourism may develop. Most of them are mutually complementary, affecting a higher degree of utilization of capacities and achieving better economic effects. Further efforts to strengthen the development of tourism and investment activities in this area must be committed to the better transportation infrastructure, particularly water transport on the Danube, as the basis for development of nautical and cruise tourism. It is necessary to construct facilities for youth tourism by utilizing the nature of schools and, more than ever, to develop sports and cultural manifestation and event tourism.

Tourist development must precede and it must spatially and temporally follow the protection of natural and anthropogenic resources. It must be based on the principles of the active protection concept of the environment and the sustainable development concept, which is based on the protection of such predecessors' development of tourism and other activities in the national park.

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