

THE FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS AND OBJECTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN KOSOVO

Valdete Rexhepi
valdeterexhepi@hotmail.com

Abstract

The tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world and as such, the tourism is one of the biggest economic sources for many countries. Also for Kosovo, the sustainable development is an aim for a long-term development. The mutual report which gets created between the base components of sustainable development, society, economy and the environment is a very complex one. Such relation derives from the common interest of these three factors for a sustainable development. One of the "proofs of authenticity" of convergence between these factors is also development of tourism. The development of tourism in Kosovo should not be considered as an aim only to promote themselves, but it must be considered as one of the important activities which through direct or indirect possibilities that offers, stimulates positive effects in the country's economy, by providing employment or by development of the domestic businesses. Taking into account the high contribution that the development of tourism may have within the economy of Kosovo, especially in the social aspect and on the other hand, the danger that threatens sustainable development of tourism from the current one which is not qualitative and is uncontrolled process of development, developing the tourism in Kosovo remains one of the one most enigmatic concepts to be managed. However, in order that the aimed development gets full meaning, it must be managed. In this context, the emphasis of this analyze falls on the key factors, on the basis of which are identified objectives for development of tourism within the sustainable development. In order to establish sustainable foundations for social and economic development of the country, the development of tourism will be justified with reduction of the negative impacts of tourism towards the environment and increase of positive impact.

Key words: objectives, development, sustainable tourism

Introduction

In the history of tourism, the initiatives for tourism development in various world countries traditionally were individual initiatives or were undertaken by the private sector. This means that, initially, the local authorities were not direct participants in managing, planning and development of tourism. In the later stages the role of the local authorities for development of tourism not only expanded, but it became necessary. In this case, it has also increased their responsibility for the development of tourism as an economic activity based on the complexity of the relationships created within the touristic system.

The answer to the question, what implies current development of tourism in Kosovo, certainly would be that it does not imply only management of hospitality premises and touristic agencies. But, initially, implies awareness of the local community as bearer of tourism development and awareness of the local authorities as implementers of such development. But, when it comes to development of tourism in the XXI century, all actions undertaken must be coordinated based on the principles of sustainability.

The methodology and the strategy of the study

Based on the importance of the factors and main goals for development of sustainable tourism as one of the most challenging industries to develop in Kosovo, the study is based on the theoretical overview of the contemporary literature to consult basic principles of sustainable development. In order to make the study in harmony with the sustainable development, the indicators of the sustainability must be relevant with the current situation in Kosovo, therefore, in the study are included various data sources in a real time of drafting of this study, various international and national reports which identify current problems in Kosovo, as well as experiences from the previous scientific researches. Research of literature is focused in selection of definitions which illustrate and create a clearer view for development and management of sustainable tourism. Outcome and conclusions of the study refer to research strategy which is based on the analyse of

the situation, indentifying factors pro et contra for development of tourism, as well as determination of goals for development of sustainable tourism in Kosovo. Such methodology for drafting of the study is based on the models of strategy drafting which are related to influences in the quality of life of the local communities and tourists, as well as in finding the balance between them and economic, social and environmental interests.

Theoretical overview on sustainable development of tourism

Development of tourism as a concept is a very complex process whose realization passes through different stages and it is composed of different factors. For an undeveloped country such process presents a tendency to end up as a touristic destination. Therefore, to establish the foundations of a touristic destination, it is necessary to know and analyse different aspects based on which will be indentified resources and fundamental factors for development of tourism, which indeed determine the final goal of such development. In the literature, there are various definitions which identify with touristic destination, but they vary depending from the point of view of basic aspects which has used an author.

Therefore, according Medlik (2003) tourism destinations are countries, regions, towns and other areas which attract tourists, are main locations of tourist activity, and tend to account for most of tourists' time and spending. They are the main concentrations of tourist attractions, accommodation and other tourist facilities and services, where the main impacts of tourism – economic, social, physical– occur.

The base of tourism development in a country which intends to be known as a tourism destination is consisted of natural and tourism recourses. When speaking of tourism in a developing country, the planning of tourism development must be foreseen in long-terms..

According International Encyclopaedia of Hospitality Management, sustainability implies the protection and conservation of resources for future generations, as opposed to current unconstrained depletion. While, on 1987

World Commission on Environment and Development, stated that: development that can meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The sustainability of tourism in a certain destination is determined through direct and indirect effects of the tourism in that destination. Tourism impact in general terms, the effect that tourists and tourism development have on a community or area. The impact is commonly categorized into economic, social and cultural, and environmental (Medlik, 2003).

According to Rogers, Jalal and Boyd (2008), in order to have a sustainable final solution for tourism development in a tourism destination, it is important that all three basic components of the sustainable development are individually economized. According to them:

- The economic approach: Maximize income while maintaining constant or increasing stock of capital
- The ecological approach: Maintain the resilience and robustness of biological and physical systems
- The socio-cultural approach: Maintain the stability of social and cultural systems.

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines sustainable tourism as a model form of economic development that is designed to: improve the quality of life of the host community, provide a high quality of experience for the visitor, and maintain the quality of the environment, on which both the host community and the visitor depend.

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability (UNWTO, 2004).

Development of tourism in a country, may display positive and negative sides of its influence more than any other activity.

Making tourism more sustainable is not just about controlling and managing the negative impacts of the industry. Tourism is in a very special position to benefit local communities, economically and socially, and to raise awareness and support for conservation of the environment. Within the tourism sector, economic development and environmental protection should not be

seen as opposing forces—they should be pursued hand in hand as aspirations that can and should be mutually reinforcing. Policies and actions must aim to strengthen the benefits and reduce the costs of tourism (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005)

Life cycle analysis of every proposed change is imperative to achieve sustainable development. We often fall short, because most of our analyses are based purely on private costs, on manufacturing costs, and on costs to purchase goods and services in the marketplace without sufficient attention to what is important (Rogers and others, 2008).

No doubt, when reviewing the literature, it is easy to notice domination of the base concept for sustainable development of tourism which is based on balancing of relationship between economic, social and environmental factors.

Development of sustainable tourism in the aspect of Kosovo

Kosovo is located in the centre of Balkan Peninsula, which enables Kosovo to be one of the most important linking bridges between the Central and South Europe, as well as between Black and Adriatic Sea. Numerous natural resources, mountains and high mountain peaks, natural landscapes, thermal waters, rivers, lakes, geomorphologic forms of land (gorges, caves, waterfalls) and cultural heritage are only few resources which reflect the basis of tourism development. Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe. Currently, it is believed Kosovo has in about 2.2 habitants, 61% of them belong to the age from 15-64 which indeed it presents the available labour force.

With a GDP of 1.76 Euros per capita in 2009 and the highest rate of unemployment, approximately 48%, Kosovo is believed to be one of the poorest countries in Europe.

While the mountains, waterfalls and garbage are some of the factors that have an impact in development of tourism and these factors would also be fields of a particular interest.

Without including other important factors, these are only some of the aspects which support development of tourism as an activity in Kosovo.

But, on the other side, within the fundamental aspects pro tourism development, should not be ignored the rhetoric of the current problems which Kosovo is facing, since this rhetoric has a direct impact in tourism development.

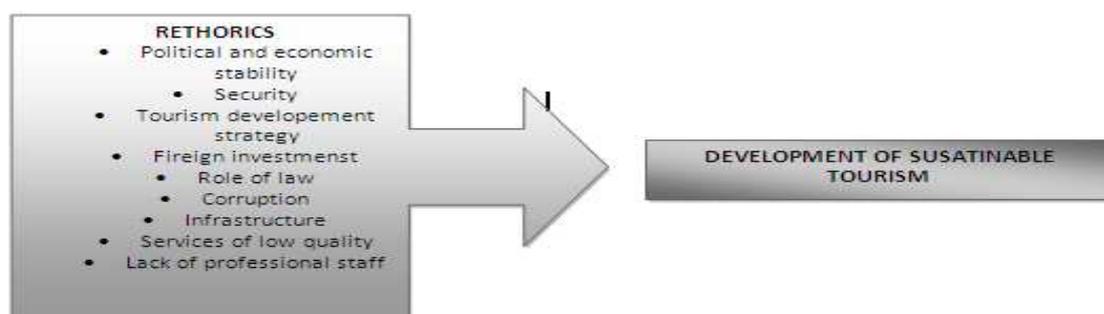


Figure 1. The current problems which are restraining development of tourism in Kosovo

Given that in Kosovo tourism development is needed to impact development of the economy and creating new jobs, the following question arises: what is the impact of the economic and social interests on the environment, what is the impacts of increased numbers of visitors and tourists in the environment and society?

Therefore, in order to resolve this association it is necessary to include visitors as a factor for balancing the necessary aspects for development of sustainable tourism.

Based on such request, the best known model of sustainable tourism management as in this case is VICE model based on which, the tourism management is based on interaction of major factors such as:

- Visitors,
- Hosting industry
- Hosting Community, and
- Environment

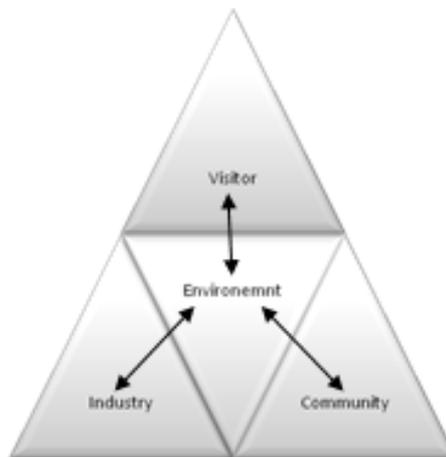


Figure.2. VICE model for development of sustainable tourism

Based on this model, the scope of the work is:

- To demonstrate what the sustainable development of tourism in Kosovo implies,
- To identify fundamental factors which determine tourism development,
- To determine goals for development of sustainable tourism, and
- To raise the most important issues which could translate the study in the activities.

The modern development of tourism is based on the quality of the resources which identify a certain space for tourism development. Therefore, in order to provide a sustainability of tourism, the protection and rational use of a certain space and resources should be the given the priority. The goals for tourism development in Kosovo as regards importance and priority can be various, but they may also be conflicting between them. For example, development of transit tourism in Kosovo is of a particular importance having in regard its geographical position and the international trends for often and short travelling, especially by car. In the coming years, such trend will become even more sustainable. Maybe development of such tourism type

would be a priority in Kosovo, but having in mind the rhetoric of the current problems and the infrastructure which is one of the factors that is currently hampering such development. The beneficiaries from such type of development would be the economy and society as well, but on the other side the environment would be the looser which would be exposed to permanent impacts of the society, economy and visitors. Therefore, this would be only one of the simple illustrations needed for balancing of the factors which are necessary for a sustainable development.

Despite the weaknesses and fails which may happen as a result of the tourism development, the development of sustainable tourism in Kosovo, first of all, implies the right of the country to develop tourism and integration into the global developments.

The most important economic, social, and environmental aspects identified during the study which indeed present real situation which coincides with tourism development in Kosovo are presented in the following table

Fundamental factors	Objectives	Realization of goals
1. Natural resources	1. Protection of these resources	1. Awareness and direct participation of the local community
2. Geographical position	2. Infrastructure development	2. Government's investments and FDI
3. Cultural heritage	3. Their actualization as touristic resources	3. Their protection
4. Employment	4. Employment of women, especially women living in the rural areas	4. Employment in the hospitality activities Development of agriculture and food industry
5. Tourism facilities	5. Raise of service quality	5. Standardization of the tourism premises in accordance with the international regulations
6. Education	6. The raise of quality and quantity of the professional staff	6. Professional education for the specific staff
7. Waste	7. Wastes managing	7. Wastes recycling
8. Water	8. Managing the drinking water	8. Raise of water and supplying quality, especially in the rural areas
9. The contribution of tourism to GDP	9. Enrichment of the economic structure of Kosovo with the tourism as an industry exporting tourism services	9. Development of tourism Development of agriculture Development of the industries which supply products used in the tourism industry
10. Tourism development planning	10. Tourism development strategy drafting	10. Involvement of the local community
11. Development of sustainable tourism	11. Economic development and social welfare improvement	11. Harmonization of economic, social and environmental factors

But, the objectives set forth above may be subject to changes because; as regards environmental changes impacted by the above-mentioned factors and development of tourism, they depend on the country's social and economic development level.

Conclusion

The fundamental goal for sustainable development of tourism in Kosovo is to provide to the local community the possibility to impact the economic development of the country and to raise the quality of their life through the raise of awareness for protection of natural, cultural and historical resources. At the same time, sustainable development of tourism enables fulfilment of needs and demands of the visitors and tourists in Kosovo, as well as it reflects directly on the regional countries.

But, to realize sustainable development of tourism in Kosovo, initially is necessary to make a plan and strategy for development of tourism. The strategy enables management of tourism in the current situation, but always besides the following fundamental principles which the sustainable development includes:

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- Participation of the local communities in the capacity of bearers and monitoring factor of the tourism development;
- Employment of the local residents and their participation in establishing a sustainable relationship between tourism and local residents;
- Creating a code of conduct in tourism based on the international standards which shall be applied at the local, regional and national level.
- Rise of education quality of the professional staff through trainings and professional programs for specific staff.

The sustainable development of tourism is undisputable if it is developed according to the plan and based on the contemporary international standards. Taking care of the resources based on the individual or collective initiatives will create for the country advantage as regards protection of tourism values and resources which are needed for accumulation of fortunes which would be used for sustainable development of tourism.