

THE REASONS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR INTERVENTIONISM REGARDING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT²

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the role of the public sector in tourism development. The development of tourism needs to be managed and not left uncontrolled. The public sector approaches tourism with special interest due to its positive impact on the economy. However, in order to realize the benefits of the effects of tourism, the public sector must achieve certain prerequisites for the development of tourism. Achieving a balance between the needs of each interested business and a sustainable development of tourist destinations is a real challenge. Therefore, the management of tourism is a complex task and there are good reasons why the public sector is usually in charge of its good functioning in society. After the introductory section the paper considers the reasons for the public sector interventionism in tourism development. The public sector by its intervening in tourism development seeks to achieve its long-term sustainable development. The public sector manages the activities of public importance. Since tourism is resulting in significant implications which are of public importance - the public sector faces an imperative of being engaged in planning and controlling tourist activities, or generally to manage the development of tourism. Permanent growth of tourism requires from the public sector to assume the role of a coordinator of overall tourism activities. In this context, the performance evaluation of tourism policy in a specific tourist destination is often a political issue, resulting in conflicts among political options, which is especially the case in Croatia.

Keywords: tourism, public sector, tourism destination, tourism development, interventionism.

² Review article

INTRODUCTION

The notion of destination derives from the Latin word *destinatio*, which means a destination. In its original meaning, it is a synonym for a goal, ultimate or casual. In tourism literature the notion of destination is a synonym for tourist site, zone, region, country, group of countries, or even a continent (Magaš, 1997). The notion of tourist destination is generally accepted in academic and professional circles and it became a part of everyday colloquial vocabulary. The use of this notion derives from the attempt to proclaim as a final goal of a trip not only one specific spatial point, but a broader area which surrounds it. Therefore, a tourist destination represents a broader spatial unit as a development unit (Grgona, 2003). Mason (2004) also considers that planning and management of tourism development are what makes one certain place, i.e. geographical space a tourist destination. According to the same author, following elements, which mutually interact, qualify a certain area as a tourist destination:

- domicile community – local population which lives and works at the area where a certain level of tourism activity is being practiced;
- tourism sector – it stands behind the development and it's goal is to achieve the return of investment and to make a profit;
- executive authority (local, regional, national) – often it has a very important regulatory function, while tourism in general thinks about possibility to ensure employment, increase profits and accelerate development at all levels;
- tourists – searching for a quality tourist product.

For statistical purposes, WTO defined a tourist destination as a significant place which is being visited during a tourist trip. A tourist destination is a specific geographical area where visitors spend their time as a part of their tourist trip (usually it is a place where they are staying), although it can be only one part of a larger itinerary, where a whole series of destinations is being visited. According to Hitrec (1995), a notion of tourist destination comprises a wider area which builds a tourism identity in accordance with the concept of cumulative attractions which enable an experience and, with additional tourism infrastructure, represent an area of intense tourism courses. Inside of each tourist destination environment it is possible to identify a range of elements, which make an area worth visiting or staying in. Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (1998) in their work *Tourism: Principles and Practice* systematize respective elements and call them „4 aces“:

- attractions
- amenities
- access and
- ancillary services.

Tourist attractions are the most important part of a tourist destination – they make it interesting and attractive and they are a reason why tourists decide to visit a destination (Weber & Boranić, 2000). Tourist attractions comprise a wide range of content, which is a result of natural processes or human activities. They attract broad mass of tourists, but also smaller fragments of tourist market, i.e. tourists with specific interests. For the majority of tourists, attractions are the reason why they visit a certain destination. Its attendance depends, among other, on the interpretation (Weber & Mikačić, 1995) of available contents. The interpretation comprises representation of a destination to tourists in a way which will catch their attention and provide them with new findings. The basis of tourist attraction is a key part of an overall resource base. It is formed of a range of potential and real tourist attractions of each destination, i.e. place, area, region, state and even of a continent (Kušen, 2002).

The availability of tourist resources and potentials, as well as the degree of their attractiveness are the hypothesis for tourism development in a certain area. With the goal of tourist attractions' exploitation in a certain area it is necessary to approach their valorisation. First of all, it is a task of destination management. Actually, the tourist valorisation of resources and potentials cannot be possible without positive destination management. When a certain circle of potential consumers, i.e. tourist market, is familiar with a destination product, the destination already has a comparative advantage over its competition. Therefore, the valorisation of the attraction basis is a first step of strategic reflection on tourism management, which is followed by its interpretation or a valid presentation of an attraction in the market (Bunja, 2003). Tourist destinations are competing on the global tourist market. Permanently growing competition is its basic feature. In this context, Page, Brunt, Busby and Connell (2001) consider that it is possible to speak about hyper-competition in tourism. According to them, it is possible to identify four following processes, which characterize contemporary tourism and which contribute to hyper-competition:

- the tourist demand for improved quality on lower prices;
- implications of information technology development;

- occurrence of very aggressive business subjects which are ready to enter the market for several years with so called loss leader products with the goal of destroying the competition;
- barriers of executive authorities toward competition are progressively being removed worldwide.

The position of a destination with regard to the competition represents a strategic position. It is determined with different parameters, market share being the most important one, according to Magaš (1997). Proper positioning is a prerequisite for defining a tourist destination's goals. The goals must be realistic, complied with the resource basis, which will ensure a long-term efficacy of a tourist destination compared to the competition.

MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism management requires certain measures in order to correct any deviations in relation to the set goals. Unpredictability and risk are inevitable within this process. In this context, those who manage a certain tourist destination, i.e. managers, must ensure the adjustment of a destination which will enable its survival.

In tourism literature we can find an agreement that tourist trends are conditioned by a whole range of exogenous and endogenous factors, which are not connected to tourism and which are out of its control. Managers need to anticipate the future in order to reduce risk and to increase the possibility for success. Accordingly, managers in tourism cannot avoid the need for some sort of forecasting future trends in tourism development. Forecasts might be a result of speculations, teamwork or the use of complex models, and they have a significant impact on the quality of managerial decisions. In their work *Marketing Tourism: A Practical Guide*, Jefferson and Lickorish (1991) emphasize that forecasting is not an exact kind of science given the fact that it tries to estimate the future potential and a series of possible scenarios related to the possible degree of changes within a specific category. According to Bull (1991) there are two basic types of forecasting:

- based on qualitative techniques and
- quantitative techniques of forecasting which use techniques derived from statistics and economy.

Forecasting tries to determine how the tourist flows influenced the shaping of previous trends and how they can be changed in the future. Although forecasting will never be an exact type of science, it is one of the

basic foundations for decision makers to plan future changes occurring in tourism.

Tourism measurement is helpful in understanding certain issues faced by those who make decisions related to planning in function of tourism development. The statistics is necessary in order to collect the data which will enable the estimation of tourism importance to researchers, management and other users. Reasons for statistical measuring in tourism are as follows (Page, 2003):

- estimation of tourism importance for destination areas;
- quantitative determination of its contribution to economy, i.e. to society as a whole, and especially its influence on the balance of payments;
- helping tourism industry and public sector in the process of planning and development of tourist infrastructure;
- helping with the promotional activities execution;
- helping tourist industry in the process of decision making related to future business activities.

However, there is an information gap between statistical data offered to users and their actual needs. Actually, the most part of the tourism statistics data represents the measuring of arrivals, overnights and consumption of tourists via questionnaires, whose results are interpreted in order to be representative for a current situation. Therefore, they are subject to substantial mistakes depending on the amount of sample. Tourism sector demands reliable statistical data required by managers or decision makers. The usefulness of tourism statistics depends on a range of factors, but firstly on the frequency of their collection, methods used and data analysis. The applied technique of sample choice and their quantity significantly affect the reliability of the data. Even in extensive types of research mistakes can occur (Brunt, 1997) in the selection of samples.

According to the WTO data, it is estimated in global perspective that domestic tourism is 10 times bigger by its volume than international tourism. However, very little research on domestic tourism has been conducted. This problem is related to the lack of data sources, given that tracking of domestic tourism is not that simple. Model analysis on different levels is necessary in order to consider spatial interactions of tourists among a multitude of possible starting points and destinations inside a certain country. The management of a tourist destination development is a complex question due to the following reasons (Page, 2003):

- tourist sector is not a homogenous economic sector, because it is composed of different activities included in tourism;
- in certain activities which constitute tourist sector it is not always considered that they make part of it;
- tourist destinations, i.e. areas where tourist activities are practiced, are not managed exclusively by the management in tourism sector, but also by the public sector which coordinates interests of domicile community and business subjects in terms of the conservation of resources they use;
- public sector is responsible for promoting the tourism development and its marketing.

For a successful development policy, it is necessary that everyone related to tourist destination gets involved in early phases of its design. Development policy of a certain tourist destination represents a smaller or bigger segment in designing a tourist policy within integrated regional or national policy. Destination environment is constantly changing, which indicates that its policy should also be dynamic.

Each form of tourism development, according to Magaš (1997) will have an impact on social and ecological environment. Given the fact that tourists must visit the location of production in order to consume the product, it is clear that tourism is responsible for such influences. The influence of tourism development on each destination, according to the same author, is determined by very different factors:

- volume of tourist arrivals,
- structure of domicile economy,
- types of tourist activities,
- social and cultural diversities between a host and a tourist,
- sensitivity of domestic environment.

All of the listed factors are related to the concept of load capacity limit. According to that concept, a certain level of tourist activity is long-term sustainable without exposing a destination to a serious and irreparable changes.

Taken into consideration that tourists are becoming more demanding and sophisticated, their expectations from tourist destinations are increasing. One of the reasons for the need of tourist management, according to Davidson and Maitland (1997) is that an increased demand for tourist activities results in unacceptable harmful influence on environment, local economy, and generally, on domestic community. It is possible to design appropriate

strategies for destinations in each phase of their lifecycle, so that the formula of destination as Mathieson and Wall (1982) call it, is being permanently audited and adjusted in order to achieve sustainable tourism development, as well as to satisfy needs, demands and desires of tourists. For the majority of tourist products there is a seasonal cycle of high demand during high season and the cycle of demand decreases in low season. In high season, the resources in some destinations might be over exhausted which can result in lower tourist satisfaction. Similarly, the demand in low season might be such that tourist facilities are out of business function for a longer period of time. This might have significant implications on the destination management. Those questions influence trends in tourism and domicile community as well.

ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR IN TOURISM

Public sector approaches tourism with a special interest because of its positive influence on economy. However, in order to benefit from tourism effects, public sector must realise certain predispositions for the tourism development. WTO cites adequate communal infrastructure as a basic predisposition for the tourism development in certain areas. Such infrastructure must be designed and constructed in a manner that it can serve to a domicile community at the same time. Equally, public sector must invest in sport, recreational, cultural and entertainment facilities and use them in order to enrich tourist offer. Finally, the development of tourism must stimulate the development of economic activities which does not make part of the tourist sector.

Achieving balance among needs of each interested business subject and sustainable development of a tourist destination is a real challenge. This is why tourism management is a complex task and there are good reasons why public sector is generally in charge for the said function in society. According to Swarbrooke (1999), the role of public sector in tourism arises from following facts:

- public sector has a mandate to represent society as a whole, and not only one group of interested groups or stakeholders;
- the intention of public sector is to be impartial without particular commercial interests;
- public sector thinks about tourism development from a long-term perspective, unlike business sector.

The basic role of public sector is planning of its development. Public sector intervenes in tourism development and aims to achieve its long-term development, i.e. maximization of the use which results from tourism activities, while preserving attractational foundations of a tourist destination. The process of tourism planning, according to Page (2003), usually includes:

- Preparation of a study – although a range of institutions might be actively involved in the process, usually the legislative body on a certain level is the one that runs the procedure. In the cases where the bodies of local and regional self-government bring the plan of tourism development, it is important that they are completed and integrated into single unit.
- Definition of goals – in order to enable realisation of tourism benefits, it is necessary to determine the main purpose of the plan and goals that tourism development must achieve.
- State analysis – inventory of all existing tourist resources in comparison to achieved development level. It comprises collection of tourist market data, data on the structure of local tourist industry, investments and financial facilities available for future development.
- Data processing – data collected in previous phase are processed with the purpose of plan formulation.
- Plan formulation – information from previous phases are used in order to determine different possibilities or scenarios for tourism development. Three main elements of tourism plans are: visitors' satisfaction, protection of the environment and stimulations for investors.
- Consideration of proposals – plans for the tourism development are prepared and delivered to authorities, i.e. institutions responsible for the planning process. In most countries, a period of time for public consultations is assured. This is when a plan sketch is available to the public, so the public could share their views of the plan. After termination of this procedure, the plan will be approved by authorities in charge for planning and the final plan will be designed.
- Implementation and supervision of the tourism plan realisation – alongside with the implementation of a plan, the plan should be supervised. This is a permanent process where authorities, i.e. institutions in charge for the planning, estimate whether plan goals are being realised. Application of tourism development plan usually contains a time framework which lasts for five years, followed by a revision.

- Periodical revision – refers to the processes of progress evaluation after the realisation of a plan. Some of the reasons for the failure of a plan might be related with changes of political constellation of powers; failure in achieving consensus among private and public sector on how to approach the tourism offer; inadequate infrastructure and public opposition to tourism.

In his work *Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationship*, Hall (1999) claims that responses of the public sector on the influence of tourism on destinations are often ad hoc, instead of being strategically determined in advance. Reasons for the interventionism of public sector within strategic goals of tourism development, according to Jeffries (2001), might be systematized in two following issue groups:

- seasonal redistribution of tourism activities and
- geographical redistribution of tourism activities.

Often limited and divided interests result in the lack of defined strategies with the vision of a future form the tourism will take in a certain destination. It is difficult to supervise tourism effects due to the structural character of tourism sector. However, in the future, each destination which does not make plans will not be able to estimate systematically its position in the market. Regardless of the form of tourism planning applied in a certain destination it must strategically deal with the identification and use of tourist resources.

Successful tourism management or the tourism activity planning and the adoption of regulations related to tourism require coordination among governmental bodies, stakeholders in private sector and the engagement of local and regional authorities and self-government (Inskeep, 1994).

The public sector bodies which have an important role in tourism in countries competitive to ours, are as follows:

- ministries of tourism including the department of tourism;
- national tourist organisations;
- regional and local authorities;
- regional and local travel organisations.

Governmental bodies on national level, as well as on regional and local levels, perform administrative tasks related to tourism. National, regional and local tourist organisations in the first place are in charge of the promotion of a tourist destination potential. Except for stated, an important role belongs to different development agencies, sectorial organisations and

different committees, boards, councils, etc. Public sector bodies are funded by state, regional or local budgets or by tourist taxes. On the one hand, public sector has a reactive role in terms of regulations and control of tourist activities, and on the other hand, it has a proactive role in tourism planning and management.

Public sector manages activities of public importance. Given that tourism produces results of significant implications of public importance, an imperative of a certain level of engagement in planning and controlling of tourist activities, i.e. in the management of tourism development is set before public sector. Permanent development of tourism demands from public sector to take over the role of coordinator of all tourist activities. In this context, the evaluation of the tourism policy performances in a certain tourist destination often represents a political question and a subject of dispute, which is especially stressed in Croatia.

Institutional framework for tourism management assumes a defined role of public sector in tourism in the domain of macroeconomic policy, spatial policy, protection of public goods and administrative regulations of tourism sector (Magaš, 1997). In this context, the role of public sector in Croatian tourism is comparable with the one in competitive countries. The bodies of public sector which manage the development of Croatian tourism on national level are as follows:

- Ministry of tourism
- Croatian Tourist Board

In analogy to the national level, tourism management on regional and local levels is coordinated according to the principle: executive authority body – tourist board.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS

With rapid social and economic changes in 19th century, the need for resource management and preservation occurred. The most widely accepted definition of sustainable development cited in *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) says that it is a kind of development which satisfies the needs of present generations without compromising the needs of future ones. Sustainable development allows economic development, but within parameters of the preservation of resources. The concept of sustainability can be considered from two aspects – economic, where the economy is sustained at all costs, and ecological, where environment has precedence over economic development.

The identification of harmful impacts of tourism led to putting emphasis on encouraging alternative tourism forms. However, the notion of alternative tourism is insufficiently specified as a concept, while other terms are also used, such as selective types of tourism (Jadrešić, 2001). The majority agree that it is an alternative form of tourism in relation to mass tourism. In his work *The Holidaymakers Understanding the Impact of Leisure and Travel*, Krippendorf (1987) states that, if it is possible to talk people into staying at home, it is also possible to encourage them to improve their environment instead of running away from it and destroying somebody else's in another place. Furthermore, he stands for bigger humanism in life, where tourism would only be a small part of it. The idea of humanism is trying to reverse trends in consumption and encourage bigger pleasure in non-consumer forms of activities. However, in reality people expecting more and more. Tourism has become a part of modern living which should not be stopped, but it is necessary to explore the ways for the sustainable development.

According to Cater and Lowman (1994), sustainable tourism aims to maintain quantity and quality, as well as the productivity of human and natural resource system during the time, respecting the dynamics of such systems simultaneously. The main task of sustainable tourism is to set balance among the host (local community), client (visitor) and environment. This triple relationship is in the middle of sustainable tourism principle. It is clear that sustainable tourism does not imply „no growth“ policy, but it recognizes limits of growth and the need to manage the environment on the long-term. The response to the recognition of tourism effects has led to the development of sustainable tourism. In his work *Sustainable Tourism Management* Swarbrooke (1999) defines sustainable tourism as tourism which is economically sustainable, but does not destroy resources on which its future will depend, especially natural environment and the social composition of local community.

In his article *A framework of approaches to sustainable tourism*, Clarke (1997) cites four following ways to consider sustainable tourism compared to mass tourism:

- as oppositions – where sustainable and mass tourism are diametrically opposed;
- as continuum – where nuances of sustainable and mass tourism are recognised;
- as movement – where positive effects can make mass tourism sustainable;
- as convergence – where tourism as a whole aims to become sustainable.

One of the main issues is the lack of consensus on what sustainable tourism means in practice. According to Wheeler (1991), the examples of successful management of tourism courses are exception and not a rule. Mass tourism assumes a big volume of tourists. However, a solution to the negative effect reduction in tourism development obviously does not lie in attracting large numbers of tourists. On the other hand, there are some dangers in promoting of sustainable tourism, because it can result in effects similar to those in the mass tourism development. A potential interest of tourists for sensitive natural and historical environment requires a strategic approach to environment management.

THE PROPOSALS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR INTERVENTIONISM IN CROATIAN TOURISM

The Republic of Croatia considers tourism as one of its main strategic guidelines of development. However, regarding the available resources, Croatia has not created a product competitive enough on the international market. Croatia is characterized by a poor offer and in general Croatia is unrecognizable as a destination (Bunja, 2002). Croatia disposes of inadequate capacities, the inland and its historical and cultural heritage are not evaluated enough, and Croatia does not have the developed awareness of the integrity of the tourist product, which additionally intensifies the in competitiveness of Croatian tourism (Bunja, 2003).

A long-term perspective of tourism development in Croatia should be based on principles of sustainable tourism development (Magaš, 1997). Sustainable development is the only one desirable and, in a long-run, the only possible developmental perspective of Croatian tourism. As the concept of sustainable development can be realized only in a long-run terms, this requires a hard and patient work on determination of sustainability criteria and their implementation in social and economic system. Environment should be used in such a way and so much as to enable a maximal preservation of this non-renewable resource. It is necessary to make a detailed analysis and a precise identification and evaluation of natural, cultural and historical tourism resources of Croatia as soon as possible. As tourism market becomes ecologically aware and demanding in terms of quality, this requires an adaptation of a tourism product and its marketing. The public sector is entitled to legalize proper stimulative and repressive measures for a rational relationship between the development and protection of environment.

Permanent growth of tourism requires from the public sector to assume the role of a coordinator of overall tourism activities. In this context, the performance evaluation of tourism policy in a specific tourist destination is

often a political issue, resulting in conflicts among political options, which is especially the case in Croatia.

CONCLUSION

A continuous expansion of tourism in its present scope and form is not desirable phenomenon for most of tourist destinations. Uncontrolled growth of tourism in many destinations actually destroyed the same resources on which it was based. A central issue is that tourism and the tourist activity development have both positive and negative effects on tourist destinations.

However, the level to which destination management can influence tourism trends is limited (Page et al., 2001). The measures that make it possible are the intensity of marketing activities, price policy, direct interventions of executive authorities and so on. While they can be useful for one destination, it does not necessarily have to be the case with another destination. Such measures can be used in order to stop the growth of number of tourists or as a means to attract a certain type of tourists (e.g. those with high purchasing power).

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