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EMPLOYMENT IN THE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN TOURISM – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS⁴

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ABSTRACT

SMEs are the engine of the national economy playing a very important role in the overall development of each country. These enterprises are also known as foundation enterprises. Compared to a large enterprises, SMEs employ more workers per unit of capital, contribute to total savings and equal income distribution in the economy, have formidable impact on regional economic development, serve as “training platform” for upgrading and developing the skills of industrial workers and entrepreneurs, contribute significantly to forward and backward linkages and finally play an important complementary role to large firms in the economically diverse sectors. SMEs especially play a crucial role in the field of tourism.

The aim of this paper is to point out the importance of SMEs in general, especially in the field of tourism in the countries: Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece by performing comparative analysis among them. In this paper, first will be analyzed term “small and medium enterprises” in general and then will be explained their application in the field of tourism. The second step will be making detailed analysis in each listed country with the number of persons employed in every sized class enterprise in total economy and also in the field in tourism. Finally, will be derived conclusions and findings about the importance of SMEs for employment in general, and especially for their importance in the field of tourism as well as specifying the measures which will be taken for stimulating their activity in the future.

Keywords: small and medium-sized enterprises, employees, tourism.

⁴ Review article

INTRODUCTION

SMEs are the engine of the national economy playing a very important role in the overall economic development of each country. These enterprises are also known as foundation enterprises. SMEs are a major source of technological innovation and development of new products. Moreover, SMEs, with their high turnover and adaptability, play a vital role in addressing regional and sectoral imbalances in a country's economy. Furthermore, SMEs' easy access and exit to markets renders economies more flexible and competitive.

Compared to a large enterprises, SMEs employ more workers per unit of capital, contribute to total savings and equal income distribution in the economy, have formidable impact on regional economic development, serve as "training platform" for upgrading and developing the skills of industrial workers and entrepreneurs, contribute significantly to forward and backward linkages and finally play an important complementary role to large firms in the economically diverse sectors. SMEs also play a crucial role in the developing countries because of their contributions to poverty reduction, export growth of manufactured products and development of entrepreneurship, manufacturing industry and rural economy.

Tolento (Sultan, 2007) summarizes some of the potential economic and social benefits of the SMEs to their capacity as follows: (a) create jobs at low cost of capital; (b) contribute positively to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP); (c) provide an opportunity to expand the entrepreneurial base; (d) provide the required flexibility to adapt to market changes; (e) provide support to large scale enterprises; (f) enter into market niches which are not profitable for larger enterprises; and (g) contribute to development policies that are more oriented towards decentralization and rural development.

SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

There is no universally agreed definition of an SME across all academic disciplines. The term SME covers a wide range of definitions and measures varying from country to country and between the sources reporting SME statistics. Some of the commonly used criteria are the number of employees, total net assets, sales, investment level, shareholders funds and even paid up capital. Thus, depending on the criterion selected, the same enterprise can be classified as "small" under one criterion and as "medium" under another criterion. As such, broad comparisons of SMEs across different countries may not be entirely appropriate because of the varied accepted operational

definitions. As there is no uniform definition of the SMEs in the global economy, different countries have defined SMEs in different ways. However, the most common definitional basis used is employment, and here again there is variation in defining the upper and lower size limit of an SME. A large number of sources define an SME to have a cut-off range of 0-250 employees.

Peterson et al. (Sultan, 2007) explain that both quantitative and qualitative measures are used in defining the SMEs. These definitions vary according to the geographic area and the purpose of the study. Quantitative measures are the most popular tools to define the SMEs such as the number of employees and the annual turnover.

Gunasekaran et al. (Sultan, 2007) suggest that the SMEs need to be defined within the context of the country in which they operate, as typically, the concept varies by the change of country.

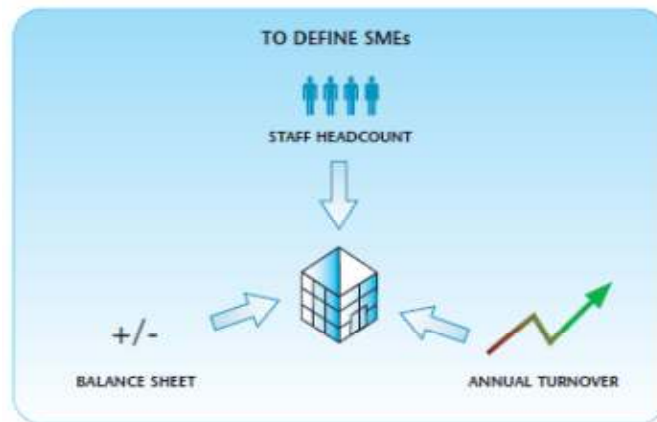
Story (Sultan, 2007) defines the SMEs as follows: (a) enterprises with a relatively small share of their market; (b) managed by owners or part-owners in a personalized way, and not through the medium of a formalized management structure; and (c) acting as separate entities, in the sense of not forming part of large enterprise or group.

The European Commission defines small, medium and large enterprises, according to the following criteria: staff headcount, annual turnover and annual balance sheet (figure 1 and table 1). The European Commission adopted this SMEs definition on May 6, 2003 which entered into force on January 1, 2005 and is applied to all policies, programs and measures that the Commission operates for SMEs. This definition is as follows: "The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) consists of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have either an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro.

Within this category: Small enterprises are defined as enterprises which employ fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed 10 million euro.

Micro enterprises are defined as enterprises which employ fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed 2 million euro." (Extract of Article 2 of the Annex of Recommendation 2003/361/EC).

Figure 1: The New SME Definition – User Guide and Model Declaration, Enterprise and Industry Publications



Source: European Commission. (2003)

Table 1
SME thresholds

Category enterprise	Headcount: Annual Work Unit (AWU)	Annual turnover or balance sheet total	
Medium-sized	□ 250	≤ € 50 million	≤ € 43 million
Small	□ 50	≤ € 10 million	≤ € 10 million
Micro	□ 10	≤ € 2 million	≤ € 2 million

Source: European Commission. (2003). The New SME Definition – User Guide and Model Declaration, 'Enterprise and Industry Publications

SMALL AND MEDIUM TOURISM ENTERPRISES

Tourism destinations are traditionally dominated by small and medium-sized tourism enterprises which provide wide range of products to the tourists such as accommodation, catering, transportation, attractions and activities and thus contribute significantly to the range, variety, authenticity and quality of their positive 'tourism experience'. SMTEs originate a variety of benefits for the tourism destinations by providing direct contact with tourists and by encouraging tourist for spending in local community, thus stimulating the multiplier effects.

In the field of tourism also is made an attempt by different authors to define the small and medium enterprises. In this area, the views and definitions are different.

Thus, according to Breen (Breen et al., 2005) small and medium tourism enterprises comprise all businesses, which operate in the tourism industry and employ up to 100 employees and include sole operators not employing any staff. Specifically, micro businesses are those that employ between one and four workers, small businesses employ between five and 19 employees and medium businesses employ between 20 and 100 employees.

Moutinho (Buhalis, 1996) says that when hotels are classified, the number of beds criterion can be applied.

According to Poon (Buhalis, 1996) most authors seem to agree that accommodation establishments with less than 50 rooms as well as hotels and travel agencies employing less than 10 people are small. In addition, he lists a wide range of qualitative criteria that can be used to determine the correct size of tourism enterprises, such as the organizational structure, participation in hotel consortia or chains, turnover, responsibility distribution in decision making, financial strength, operational procedures, recruitment and training practices, decision making process, entrepreneurial involvement and control, integration level, family participation in running the organization, internalization of operation, marketing functions and managerial experience.

According to Beaver (Beaver, 2005), defining the SMEs in the field of tourism should use the same definition for SMEs adopted from the European Commission but now using the acronym SMTE meaning either small and medium sized tourism enterprise or small and medium sized travel enterprise.

SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES AND EMPLOYMENT – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Small and medium sized enterprises are the dominant form of enterprises in all countries in the world, as in developed as well as in developing countries. They are backbone of European economy too. According to the data from the European Commission, SMEs assemble more than 99% of all European businesses, provide two-third of total employment (employ 2 in every 3 employees), and contribute to more than half (around 57%) of the total added value created by European businesses (produce 58 cents in every euro of value added).

Hence, SMEs are most prevalent in the countries which are object of analysis in this paper too: Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece.

A classification of enterprises by employment size classes using criteria “number of persons employed”, shows that the number of SMEs in 2013 is: in Macedonia 71 081 (which represent 99.71% of the total number of enterprises in Macedonia in 2013), in Albania 77 620 (99.87%), in Bulgaria 313 525 (99.79%), in Greece 698 272 (99.94%), in Serbia 87 040 (99.44%), in Croatia 146 223 (99.72%) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina 24 605 (99.25%). Micro enterprises (0-9 persons employed) create the largest share of total number of classified enterprises in all named countries (Macedonia 91.20%, Bulgaria 91.36%, Greece 96.92%, Croatia 91.56%, Bosnia and Herzegovina 94.985, Serbia 86.97%, Albania 95.1%). In the second place are the small enterprises employing 10 to 49 employees (Macedonia 6.70%, Bulgaria 6.99%, Serbia 10.17%, Croatia 4.60%, Albania 3.9%), while the smallest share in SMEs have the medium-sized enterprises employing 50 to 249 employees (Macedonia 1.81%, Bulgaria 1,31%, Serbia 2.30%, Croatia 2.34%, Bosnia and Herzegovina 4.27%, Albania 0.1% of the total number of enterprises in 2013) (table 2).

The number of active business entities in the Republic of Macedonia in 2013 is 71 290. The majority of them belong to the categories of micro and small enterprises. The number of active micro enterprises in the Republic of Macedonia in 2013 is 65 014 i.e. 91.20% of the total number of active enterprises in the country. The number of active small enterprises is 4 776 i.e. 6.70%, the number of active medium enterprises is 1 291 i.e. 1.81%, while the large enterprises are represented with only 0.29% of the total number of active enterprises in the Republic of Macedonia and their number is 209 (Table 2).

Table 2
Number of active business enterprises in total economy (enterprises by size class depending on the number of persons employed), NACE REV 2

		Total	0-9 employed	10-49 employed	50-249 employed	250+ employed
2010	Macedonia	75 497	70 032	4 051	1 211	203
	Albania	76 954	73 393	2 965	595	
	Bulgaria	313 079	284 670	23 321	4 381	692
	Greece	-	-	-	-	-
	Serbia	83 787	72 191	8 959	2 129	509
	Croatia	165 490	152 178	10 917	1 972	423

	BiH	21 469	20 315		986	168
2011	Macedonia	73 118	67 294	4 451	1 187	185
	Albania	79 969	76 344	3 002	622	
	Bulgaria	309 953	281 793	23 181	4 237	683
	Greece	-	-	-	-	-
	Serbia	84 690	73 108	8 990	2 105	487
	Croatia	153 687	140 928	10 419	1 915	425
	BiH	24 128	22 947		1 002	179
2012	Macedonia	74 424	68 211	4 732	1 280	201
	Albania	83 591	79 801	3 105	686	
	Bulgaria	312 608	285 346	22 049	4 061	661
	Greece	726 581	702 936	20 698	2 544	402
	Serbia	84 921	73 349	9 042	2 025	505
	Croatia	148 573	136 119	10 212	1 840	402
	BiH	25 882	24 668		1 035	179
2013	Macedonia	71 290	65 014	4 776	1 291	209
	Albania	77 719	73 916	3 026	678	99
	Bulgaria	314 192	287 045	21 976	4 119	667
	Greece	698 660	677 117			388
	Serbia	87 529	76 126	8 903	2 011	489
	Croatia	146 627	134 255	10 181	1 787	404

	BiH	24 790	23 546	1 059	185
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Source: Summarized data from the State Statistical Offices of the listed countries

The largest number of persons employed, observed by the size of enterprises by “number of persons employed”, in 2013 worked in SMEs. This share in Macedonia is 78.04%, in Bulgaria 75.50%, in Croatia 68.03%, in Bosnia and Herzegovina 61.80%, in Serbia 59.45%, in Greece 86.48% and in Albania 81.01%. Analyzing the share within SMEs i.e. between micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, the situation is as follows: in micro enterprises were employed 34.04% of total employees in Macedonia, in Albania this share is 43.42%, in Bulgaria 30.09%, in Greece 59.17%, in Serbia 21%, in Croatia 30.14% and in Bosnia and Herzegovina 10.82%.

Small enterprises employed 22.60% of total employees in Macedonia, this percent in Albania is 18.12, in Bulgaria 23.05, in Serbia 17.68, in Croatia 19.38 and in Bosnia and Herzegovina 20.56. In the medium-sized enterprises worked 21.40% of employed persons in Macedonia, in Albania 19.46%, in Bulgaria 21.40%, in Serbia 20.78%, in Croatia 18.50% and in Bosnia and Herzegovina 30.04%. The percent of people employed in the large enterprises in Macedonia was 21.96, in Albania 18.98, in Bulgaria 24.50, in Greece 13.51, in Croatia 31.97 and in Bosnia and Herzegovina 38.20 (table 3).

Table 3
Number of persons employed in total economy (enterprises by size class), NACE REV 2

		Total	0-9 employed	10-49 employed	50-249 employed	250+ Employed
2010	Macedonia	316 745	100 064	70 140	63 235	70 306
	Albania	276 031	125 701	57 094	93 236	
	Bulgaria	1 927 935	580 293	456 407	420 245	470 494
	Greece	4 389 800		423 782	393 494	730 489
	Serbia	1 024 796	207 400	181 297	223 215	412 884
	Croatia	1 075 442	335 059	206 291	202 243	331 849
	BiH	365		153 419	93 923	117 785

		126				
2011	Macedonia	328 377	110 970	72 919	70 033	74 456
	Albania	288 436	129 356	58 175	100 905	
	Bulgaria	1 902 513	568 383	454 443	406 726	468 215
	Greece	4 054 300	-	-	-	-
	Serbia	1 025 022	210 319	181 121	223 545	410 037
	Croatia	1 033 145	310 638	197 825	197 210	327 472
	BiH	615 909	71 709	128 136	180 401	235 663
2012	Macedonia	335 771	113 179	73 829	70 531	78 232
	Albania	315 963	141 067	60 982	113 914	
	Bulgaria	1 872 997	565 674	432 268	211 334	236 785
	Greece	2 198 986	1 288 790	374 801	239 105	296 290
	Serbia	1 019 738	208 944	182 167	213 809	414 818
	Croatia	1 002 905	303 447	192 650	188 676	318 132
	BiH	617 279	69 382	128 205	181 941	237 751
2013	Macedonia	339 349	115 515	76 700	72 613	74 518
	Albania	320 373	139 120	58 067	62 362	60 823
	Bulgaria	1 864 690	561 075	429 815	399 122	456 808
	Greece	2 130 786	1 260 841	-	-	287 972
	Serbia	1 013 658	212 841	179 178	210 609	411 030
	Croatia	996 631	300 388	193 170	184 427	318 646

	BiH	617 770	66 851	126 993	187 934	235 992
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Source: Summarized data from the State Statistical Offices of the listed countries

SMALL AND MEDIUM TOURISM ENTERPRISES AND EMPLOYMENT – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The enterprises of tourism industry i.e. accommodation and food service activities are represented with 6.29% (4482) in the total number of active business entities in the Republic of Macedonia in 2013. SMEs in this sector count 4 481 enterprises which represent 99.98% of the total number of enterprises in the sector accommodation and food service activities in Macedonia in 2013. The micro enterprises in this sector represent 90.49% of all enterprises in the sector accommodation and food service activities, the small enterprises 8.97%, the medium-sized enterprises 0.51% and the large enterprises only 0.02% of all enterprises in this sector in Macedonia in 2013 (table 4).

SMEs in accommodation and food service activities in 2013 in Bulgaria represent 99.91% of all enterprises in this sector, in Greece 99.98%, in Serbia 99.82% and in Croatia 99.87%. Micro enterprises in this sector in Bulgaria count 23 350 business entities (89.61%), in Greece 86 192 (96.31%), in Serbia 2 456 (85.99%), in Croatia 16 617 (93.03%), and in Albania 13 567 (98.43%) of all active enterprises in the sector.

The situation of the small enterprises in the sector of accommodation and food service activities is as follow: 200 enterprises in Albania (which represent 1.45% of all enterprises in this sector in the country), in Bulgaria 2 395 (9.19%), in Greece 3 015 (3.37%), in Serbia 323 (11.31%) and in Croatia 1 100 (6.165). Medium-sized enterprises in this sector have the smallest share in the SMEs. Their share is: in Bulgaria 1.10%, in Serbia 2.52%, in Croatia 0.68% and in Greece 0.30%. The smallest share in all enterprises in the tourism industry i.e. in the sector of accommodation and food service activities when enterprises are observed by the size class according to the number of persons employed have the large enterprises. Their share in 2013 is: in Serbia 0.17%, in Croatia 0.13%, in Bulgaria 0.09% and in Greece 0.02% (table 4).

The total number of employees in the accommodation facilities and food service capacities in the Republic of Macedonia in 2013 is 19 479 i.e. 5.74% of the total employment in the country. The number of employees in the micro enterprises in this sector is 10 386 which represent 53.32% of the total employment in the sector, in the small enterprises 7 062 i.e. 36.25%, in the medium enterprises 1 747 i.e. 8.97% and this number is the smallest in the

large enterprises and count 284 employees which represent only 1.46% of the total number of persons employed in the sector of accommodation and food service activities. The number of persons employed in the tourism industry in the SMEs in Macedonia in 2013 is 19 195 and represent 98.54% of the total number of employees in this sector (table 5). The employment in the SMEs in the field of accommodation and food service activities in 2013 in Bulgaria is 91.40% of the total employment in this sector, in Greece 97.56%, in Serbia 88.83%, in Croatia 89.54 and in Bosnia and Herzegovina 89.02%. The micro enterprises employment: in Albania 82.35%, in Bulgaria 40.86%, in Greece 69.85%, in Serbia 30.51%, in Croatia 51.77%, in Bosnia and Herzegovina 21.69%; the share of the small enterprises is: in Albania 10.08%, in Bulgaria 32.46%, in Greece 19.04%, in Serbia 27.53%, in Croatia 20.28%, in Bosnia and Herzegovina 37.09%; and the medium-sized enterprises employment in Bulgaria 18.09%, in Greece 8.67%, in Serbia 30.27%, in Croatia 13.49% and in Bosnia and Herzegovina 30.23% of the total number of employees in the sector of accommodation and food service activities. According to the class size of enterprises, the smallest number of persons employed in this sector worked in the large enterprises: in Bulgaria 8.60%, in Greece 2.43%, in Serbia 11.17%, in Croatia 14.46% and in Bosnia and Herzegovina 10.98% (table 5).

Table 4
Number of active business enterprises by size class in the sector of accommodation and food service activities depending on the number of persons employed, NACE REV 2

		Total	0-9employed	10-49 employed	50-249 employed	250+ Employed
2010	Macedonia	4 433	4 110	299	23	1
	Albania	12 687	12 558	112		17
	Bulgaria	26 073	23 373	2 385	291	24
	Greece	95 089	91 071	3 799	210	9
	Serbia	2 254	1 836	334	77	7
	Croatia	19 469	18 300	1 016	130	23
	BiH	691		664	26	-
2013	Macedonia	4 313	3 953	340	18	2

	Albania	12 773	12 634	117		21
	Bulgaria	26 071	23 222	2 530	295	24
	Greece	93 372	89 415	3 708	237	12
	Serbia	2 480	2 077	317	80	6
	Croatia	18 324	17 175	996	129	24
	BiH	737	579	135	23	-
2012	Macedonia	4 611	4 200	389	20	2
	Albania	13 678	13 518	140		20
	Bulgaria	26 540	23 764	2 477	277	22
	Greece	91 568	88 514	2 831	210	12
	Serbia	2 601	2 176	346	74	5
	Croatia	17 545	16 386	1 020	117	22
	BiH	723	565	136	22	0
2013	Macedonia	4 482	4 056	402	23	1
	Albania	13 784	13 567	200		18
	Bulgaria	26 056	23 350	2 395	287	24
	Greece	89 491	86 192	3 015	268	15
	Serbia	2 856	2 456	323	72	5
	Croatia	17 862	16 617	1 100	122	23
	BiH	690	663		D*	A*

Source: Summarized data from the State Statistical Offices of the listed countries

A* – primary confidentiality./ Data is confidential if it includes less than three statistical units.

D* – secondary confidentiality / Data is protected in order to prevent disclosure of primary confidential data

Table 5

Number of persons employed in the sector of accommodation and food service activities, NACE REV 2

		Total	0-9 employed	10-49 employed	50-249 employed	250+ employed
2010	Macedonia	16 881	9 823	5 296	1 200	562
	Albania	27 407	23 056	2 049	2 301	
	Bulgaria	138 118	57 587	43 713	24 949	11 869
	Greece	276 047	185 373	69 377	17 277	4 020
	Serbia	23 734	5 436	6 844	7 703	3 751
	Croatia	93 526	48 805	17 596	14 164	12 961
	BiH	7 224	3 201	1 625	2 398	-
2011	Macedonia	17 141	9 770	5 334	1 471	567
	Albania	28 426	24 114	2 027	2 285	
	Bulgaria	142 524	58 095	47 138	25 276	12 015
	Greece	269 014	177 282	63 780	21 833	6 118
	Serbia	23 320	6 054	6 383	7 939	2 944
	Croatia	91 164	47 478	17 202	13 503	12 981
	BiH	7 010	1 917	2 812	2 027	254
2012	Macedonia	18 515	10 141	6 028	2 039	307
	Albania	31 343	25 899	2 519	2 925	
	Bulgaria	140 011	57 878	46 814	24 391	10 928

	Greece	262 252	191 259	46 967	19 287	4 739
	Serbia	23 516	6 355	6 876	7 729	2 556
	Croatia	89 012	46 971	17 452	12 002	12 587
	BiH	7 910	1 987	3 030	2 632	261
2013	Macedonia	19 479	10 386	7 062	1 747	284
	Albania	33 520	27 605	3 378	2 536	
	Bulgaria	137 586	56 216	44 658	24 885	11 827
	Greece	277 438	193 796	52 835	24 052	6 754
	Serbia	23 136	7 060	6 369	7 123	2 584
	Croatia	92 105	47 684	18 677	12 423	13 321
	BiH	8 633	1 873	3 202	2 610	948

Source: Summarized data from the State Statistical Offices of the listed countries

Based on the data presented for the participation of small and medium tourism enterprises in the employment of the people, it can be concluded that these companies have huge importance for the economy and for economic development of all named countries. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures and actions for further development of these enterprises such as: introducing incentives to encourage investment in tourism facilities, investment in tourism product (in many types of tourism), education of employees in the field of tourism, encouraging others branches that stimulate tourism and vice versa, and professional (university) education for managers and other employees in the tourism that will ensure the required level of quality in offering tourism and catering services.

CONCLUSION

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are the dominant form of enterprises in all countries in the world, as in developed as well as in developing countries. They are backbone of European economy too.

According to the data from the European Commission, SMEs assemble more than 99% of all European businesses, provide two-third of total employment (employ 2 in every 3 employees), and contribute to more than half (around 57%) of the total added value created by European businesses (produce 58 cents in every euro of value added).

SMEs are most prevalent in the countries which are object of analysis in this paper: (Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Bulgaria and Greece) as in the total economy as well as in the tourism industry in selected countries.

Seeing the fact that small and medium enterprises in these countries in general and in the tourism sector especially employ most of the active working population, have the largest share in the realizing of turnover and in the generating of value added, it can be concluded that these enterprises have great importance for the economy and for economic development of all named countries. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures and actions for further development of these enterprises such as: introducing incentives to encourage investment in tourism facilities, investment in tourism product (in many types of tourism), education of employees in the field of tourism, encouraging others branches that stimulate tourism and vice versa, and professional (university) education for managers and other employee in the tourism that will ensure the required level of quality in offering tourism and catering services.

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