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EDITORIAL

International May Conference on Strategic Management has been held continuously for 14 years, always in the last week of May (the first conference was held in 2005, while the fourteenth was held in 2018). The quality of the presented and published papers has been continuously growing as well as the number of authors from a large number of countries all over the world (during the fourteenth conference 120 papers were submitted from 223 authors, coming from 24 countries). The visibility of published papers has been constantly growing as well as the number of times they were cited, especially after the conference Book of Proceedings started to be submitted to EBSCO Host database.

The May Conference on Strategic Management become recognizable in the world due to its quality, especially in Central and Southeast Europe. Special interest from the researchers has been expressed for publishing papers in the Book of Proceedings of the conference, as evidenced by the growing number of submitted papers through the years. Due to these facts, the organizers of the conference decided that papers will be published in a periodical publication under the volume 14, with its Editorial Board, Editor-in Chief, Technical Editors and ISSN numeration assigned to periodicals. In each volume there will be a number of publications depending on the content of the available papers. In this way presented and published papers will be made accessible to the widest scientific public interested in the research in the field of Management Science.

In order to increase the quality of papers published in this periodical publication, which will be published annually after the conference, the Editorial Board will carry out another review of the papers after the conference using the external reviewers, and the accepted full papers will be published in one of the issues of these publications. The publisher's desire is to make this publication available to the general public by increasing the quality of published papers and periodicity of the publication in order to increase its accessibility, as well as to increase its contribution to the exchange of scientific experiences and research results, along with providing a contribution to the development of Management Science in the world.

Editor-in-Chief
Prof. dr Živan Živković

**INTERNATIONAL MAY CONFERENCE ON
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**



TOURISM POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF RURAL TOURISM IN MACEDONIA

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Abstract: Tourism has significant social and economic benefits for rural communities, and tourism policy and legal framework created by government on national, regional and local level are one of the primary factors for the existence and development of tourism in rural areas. The subject of this thesis is tourism policy and legislation concerning the rural tourism in Macedonia, seen through the prism of tourism development strategies and tourism legislative. The thesis provides basic data for the rural tourism in Macedonia such as: historical development, regional distribution of rural tourism, accommodation facilities, number of tourists, rural tourism activities, promotion, tourism law, European Union funds and existence of a government initiatives for rural tourism development. Charts, presenting the governmental bodies responsible for tourism, national tourism development strategies as well as tourism related to legislation, are used for preparing a basic profile of rural tourism in the country. For the purpose of this thesis, we use research methodology and secondary data sources from relevant literature, official tourism development strategies and laws. An analysis and review of tourism strategies and laws have been made, based on systematical evaluation of their actual content using the method of content analysis. The thesis concluding remarks are regarding the structure, past issues and future challenges of rural tourism in Macedonia.

Keywords: rural tourism, Macedonia, tourism policy, tourism law

INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2017), the arrival of tourists in 2016, has reached 1,235 million at international level. The tourist consumption was \$ 1.235 billion, and the tourist industry participated with 10% in the global gross domestic product. Every tenth employee in the world is employed in this sector. Tourism will maintain its continuous and positive level of development from the past 60 years and in the upcoming period. Forecasts are moving in the direction where the European continent, in the following years, can hold the primacy of the world tourism market and will be the main source of tourist offer, demand and movement of tourists. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2004), the concept of rural tourism covers a number of constituent elements, based on the rural tourism community. Rural tourism depends on the rural environment and what this environment territorially can offer as heritage and culture, rural activities and rural life.

The existing relevant literature in the world dealing with the issue of rural tourism is rich in publications and research by various authors (Lane 1994; Sharpley & Sharpley 1997; Page & Getz 1997; Butler et al 1998; Richards & Hall 2000; Roberts & Hall 2001; Hall et al 2003; Hall et al 2005). The specific feature of rural tourism which distinguishes it from other types of tourism is its development in rural areas; based on small and medium enterprises, traditional activities, aspects of the surrounding environment and heritage (cultural and historical); smaller buildings and cities; based on the traditional characteristics of the rural environment; developing slowly under the control of the local population; and has different forms because it covers the complexity of the rural environment. Ruzic, makes the next division of the types of rural tourism (Ruzic 2005): Agro-tourist types of rural tourism (where only accommodation is offered, where only food is offered and where accommodation and food is offered) and other types of rural tourism (residential, nostalgic, sports and recreational, adventurous, health, cultural and religious, hunting and fishing, gastronomic and wine, eco-tourism, educational, camping tourism, nautical tourism).

In different countries, the determination of the type of rural areas is performed in different way. For example, in England, Portugal and Switzerland, a rural area is considered the area with less than 10. 000 inhabitants, Austria 5 000, France 2 000, Canada and Australia below 1,000, Denmark and Norway below 200 inhabitants (OECD 1994). In Macedonia, a rural area is considered a territory of municipality, where the populated place in the municipality has more than 30 000 inhabitants, according to the national population and households census or population density which is less than or equal to 150 inhabitants per square kilometer of the municipality. Differences in the definitions of different European countries for the rural environment, set the needs for a clear definition of the content of the particular rural tourism product, as the tourist's expectations can be seriously differentiated with its representation of a holiday in a rural environment (Statev 2007).

The use of the rural area in the territory of Macedonia for recreation exists from ancient times (Metodijeski 2012). The beginnings and development of rural tourism can be linked to: the construction of the road Via Egnatia (accommodation and other facilities beside it) and the use of baths by the Romans; in the Middle Ages, hospitality and stay in the monasteries; the estate of 2,700 hectares of vineyards and the construction of a villa by Aleksandar Karadjordjevic in Demir Kapija et al. Although this type of tourism has a long tradition, however, the targeted influence of the society and the tourism economy on its development with specific measures in the country is observed at the beginning of the 21st century. The Strategy for Tourism Development of the Republic of Macedonia (2009), states that rural tourism is a new activity and 10 existing locations of rural tourism are indicated: Brajchino, Vevchani, Galichnik, Zrnovci, Berovo, Pehchevo, Bansko, Smolare, Mokrino, Koleshino. These locations would be followed by: Lazaropole, Varvara, Makedonski Brod, Demir Kapija, Krushevo, Prespa and Pelister villages, Lesново, Dojran, Vladimirovo, Babino, Janche and others. Taleska indicates about 60 villages where rural tourism can be developed (Taleska 2009). In Macedonia, there are no accurate statistics on how many facilities offer services, related to rural tourism. According to us, about 250-300 facilities in rural areas offer rural tourism. Most of these facilities are concentrated mainly in three regions: the Southwest, Pelagonia and the East.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

Countries around the world are encouraging the development of tourism through direct and indirect forms of support. At national level, the development of tourism enters the

scope of Ministries, National Tourism Organizations or State Tourism Agencies. In general, these institutions are engaged in performing activities for: controlling and regulating tourism activity through the tourism laws, gathering information about the branch, preparing a national strategy for tourism development, preparing a national tourist advertisement, etc. National tourism organizations exist in more than 100 countries. The World Tourism Organization has revised the budget of 109 such Organizations and defined Agencies and their subsidiaries as follows (Jeffries 2001):

a) The National Agency for Tourism is defined as: Central administrative body with administrative responsibility for tourism at the highest level i.e a central management authority with powers for direct intervention in the tourism sector; and all administrative state bodies that have the authority to intervene in the tourism sector.

b) Other governmental or administrative bodies of lower rank. An example is the National Tourism Organization, which is defined as: an autonomous body with state, semi-public or private status, established or recognized by the state as a body with a national competence to promote, and in some cases to advertise the tourism.

The term "tourist policy" means the conscious activity of the state, i.e the society in the field of tourism. The main task of this policy is to undertake measures and activities that will maximally activate the factors for tourism development, in order to increase tourism turnover and consumption as well as to improve their structure and quality (Ackovska et al 2017). More specifically, the tourist policy fulfills the following functions (Goeldner & Ritchie 2009): defines the rules of the game - the conditions under which tour operators must function; sets the activities and behavior that are acceptable to visitors; provides a common goal for all interested parties in the destination; facilitates consensus on specific strategies and goals for a given destination; provides a framework for public / private discussions on the role and contribution of the tourism sector in the economy and society in general; and enables more effective link between tourism and other sectors of the economy.

The tourist policy has direct and indirect holders, or executors. Direct holders and executors of the tourist policy are (Ackovska et al 2017): the representative bodies of the government at all levels (assemblies, parliaments, individual councils, homes, commissions, etc.); and executive organs of the government (government) at all levels (secretariats, ministries of tourism, hospitality and tourism committees, General Directorates of catering and tourism at national, regional, municipal, city and a similar level).

Indirect carriers and executors of tourist policy are: special bodies outside the state administration (chambers of municipalities and special business associations); social organizations in the field of catering and tourism (tourist alliances at all levels, tourist bureaus); local communities; other economic and non-economic organizations in the tourism area that directly or indirectly participate in meeting the tourist needs.

Various measures (instruments, funds) are applied for realization of the goals and are set for the needs of tourist policy. In general, all tourist policy instruments can be divided into four groups (Ackovska et al 2017): legal regulations that mainly include: constitutional provisions, laws, prohibitions, permits, decisions, orders, etc.; administrative instruments, which mainly include taxes, duties, fees, contributions, public loans and other public revenues and subsidies (compensation, donations, premiums, guarantees, regress, etc.); economic instruments, mainly including: plans, programs, resolutions, funds, loans, bonds, money, courses and prices, and contracts and agreements.

The aim of this thesis is to review the tourism law and policy related to rural tourism in Macedonia. For the needs of the thesis, secondary sources of data were used from relevant literature in the field of tourism policy, the legislation related to rural tourism as well as the

Internet. Using the Internet, we have collected materials such as tourism development strategies and tourism laws which have been analyzed in this thesis. The main method, used in the research is content analysis (Hall & Valentin 2005). Content analysis is a research method used for systematically evaluation of the content of the phenomenon that is investigated i.e the content of the tourism laws and tourist policy of Macedonia related to rural tourism.

2. TOURISM POLICY, STRATEGIES AND LEGISLATION RELATED TO RURAL TOURISM IN MACEDONIA

2.1. TOURIST POLICY

Tourism as a branch in Macedonia is under the authority and is managed by the Sector for Tourism and Catering within the Ministry of Economy.

Chart 1. Governmental authorities at national, regional and local level responsible for the development of the tourism policy in Macedonia

Governmental authorities responsible for developing tourism policy (official website)	National Tourism Organization (NTO) / Agency (official website)	Regional centers	Municipalities
Ministry of Economy, Sector for Tourism and Catering (economy.gov.mk)	Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism in Macedonia (tourismmacedonia.gov.mk)	8	80

Source: Official websites of the institutions

The body dealing with the promotion of tourism in Macedonia is the State Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism. This body has developed an official website, and also performs the function of promoting the tourism potentials of the country on international level, through promotional campaigns, fairs, print, video and audio advertising material. In addition to these two bodies at national level, there are eight regional centers and 80 municipalities that deal with the development and promotion of tourism at regional and local level.

2.2. STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

One of the instruments of tourism policy is the development of tourism development strategies. To manage the development of individual enterprises, economic branches or sectors at national, regional and destination level, special programs and development strategies are often developed, (Budinoski 2010). The term strategy has been used since ancient times in connection with the knowledge of the military leaders. This term enters the last forty years in the economy and specifically in tourism and catering. Today, the development of a strategy is more than recommended and defines a system of governance solutions that determine the development perspectives, spheres, forms and ways of action, the allocation of resources for achieving specific goals, etc.

Chart 2, represents an overview of the strategies for rural tourism development in Macedonia, where we can see how strategies have been developed at national, regional and local levels. In Macedonia, besides the regions, most of the municipalities have developed strategic plans for local economic development or rural development strategies that emphasize the importance of rural tourism. However, there are few municipalities that have developed and adopted strategies directly related to rural tourism.

Chart 2. Overview of strategic documents for development of rural tourism at national, regional and local level in Macedonia

Level of action	Strategic document	Year of preparation
National	1. National Strategy for Development of Rural Tourism of the Republic of Macedonia 2012-2017	2012
	2. Substrategy for traditions and events of the Republic of Macedonia	2014
Regional	1. Study on tourism development in the region of Shara	2010
	2. Strategy for development of rural and mountain tourism in the region of Deshat Mountain	2014
	3. Study on the situation with the potentials for tourism development in the East Mountain Region	2014
	4. Register of potentials for development of rural tourism in the South-west region	2016
	5. Register of potentials for development of rural tourism in the Northeast region	2016
	6. Register of Potentials for Development of Rural Tourism in the Region of Skopje	2017
Local	1. Strategy for development of eco-tourism in the municipality of Berovo	2005
	2. Study on the development of agro-tourism in the municipality of Resen	2006
	3. Strategy for development of rural tourism in the municipality of Zrnovci	2007
	4. Strategy for development of rural tourism in the municipality of Cheshinovo-Obleshevo	2007
	5. Strategy for development of rural tourism in the municipality of Pehcevo 2018-2023	2017

Source: Strategic documents for the development of rural tourism in Macedonia

The review of the strategic documents in Chart 2 shows that in Macedonia there are studies, registers and strategies for development of rural tourism at national, regional, and six other regional and five local levels. In these reviewed documents and in their preparation, is included the mission and vision of the level and development of rural tourism. Strategies are prepared by ministries and experts in the field of tourism, regional and municipal administrations, as well as education and non-governmental organizations. Most of the strategies are implemented over a period of five years and contain an action plan for the implementation of activities related to the development of rural tourism.

2.3. LEGISLATION

It should be noted that Macedonia until 1991, was a country with a socialist system and legal system, and after this stage the country has changed its system and modified the tourist laws according to its own convenient model and in accordance with the level of activities related to tourism and its development. In Macedonia, the basic laws which are regulating the tourism, are the laws for tourism and catering. There are additional laws related to tourism in the country, such as: Law on Establishing the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism of the Republic of Macedonia 103/2008; Law on temporary residence tax 19/1996; Law on Tourist Development Zones 141/2012; Law on auto camps 13/2013. Regarding rural tourism, the rural environment and its activities are regulated by the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development 49/2010.

Chart 3. Overview of the legislation related to rural tourism in Macedonia

Legislation	Significant provisions from the legislation on rural tourism
Law on Tourism. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 62/2004	Tourism services in rural and ethno tourism are: renting horses for riding, photo safari, manufacture and sale of domestic handicrafts, souvenirs, tools and other products and services in rural household.
Law on catering activity. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 62/2004	Rural households provide services for renting rooms and apartments, whose owner or holder of the right to use is a member of the village household, and has up to ten rooms, or 20 beds. In rural households, hot and cold meals are prepared and served, beverages and drinks mainly from own production for more than 50 people (travelers) simultaneously. In rural households, wine tasting or brandy can be provided, as well as serving food from domestic production, in a tidy part of a residential or office building, in a closed space, covered by a tent or open space, for up to 50 people at the same time. For the purpose of improving the quality of the catering offer, in rural households, hikers (people residing in rural households) can prepare meals, drinks and beverages for their own needs.
Rulebook on the manner and the detailed criteria for obtaining the mark in rural households in the rural areas, as well as the form and the content of the mark. Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 169/2014	By designation of rural areas, at the request of the village household, are marked: houses, apartments and rooms for renting. The house, the apartment or the rooms for rent are catering facilities owned by the village households which are rented to tourists. They should meet the minimum technical conditions for providing accommodation services, and if food services are provided, the conditions for providing food according to food safety regulations should also be met. The mark for rural households in rural areas that perform catering activity is the sunflower.

Source: Legislation related to rural tourism in Macedonia

The legislation, that is regulating the rural tourism in Macedonia, presented in Chart 3, shows that there are laws for tourist and catering activity in the country, as well as a rulebook for accommodation of guests by rural households in the rural environment. According to these laws and regulations, rural tourism is terminologically defined as rural and ethno tourism. The legislation regulates the services provided in rural tourism, however, there is still a number of specific regulations regarding the regulation of rural tourism, such as the collection of services, records of the capacities in rural tourism, taxation, and other. The aforementioned laws in Macedonia have been amended many times since their adoption. This indicates that the country takes care not only for adoption, but also for reviewing the proposed legal solutions, as well as for possible amendments and supplements to the tourist laws in order to improve the regulation of the interests and needs of all interested parties.

2.4. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support by the state is one of the key factors for the development of rural tourism. In Macedonia, there are programs designed for citizens who decide to open a business in rural areas and they are granted financial support in the amount of 50 percent of the costs for setting up a business. Support relates to the opening of any business, ranging from the smallest to motor fitters, car washers, hairdressers and craftsmen, up to processing facilities and production facilities for small and medium enterprises. The Ministry of Economy (Sector for Tourism and Catering) subsidizes various touristic goals of village households that are categorized in the amount of 200,000 MKD through a public call that is published annually. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy supports rural tourism by financing projects for its development according to the IPARD program (measure 302 - Investments for diversification of rural economic activities). Moreover, the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development, supports rural tourism through measure 4 - Financial support for promotional activities for rural tourism development.

2.5. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

From the aspect of the educational system, rural tourism in the Republic of Macedonia exists in the formal education. From 2012, in the secondary municipal school "St. Naum Ohridski" in Makedonski Brod was introduced a new profile, catering technician for rural tourism in catering and tourism profession. At the faculties where tourism is studied, we come across as a subject or as a course of undergraduate or postgraduate studies. At the Faculty of Agriculture, at the State University "Goce Delchev" in Shtip, there is a module-Rural Tourism for undergraduate studies.

2.6. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Other factors in the development of rural tourism are non-governmental organizations. A dozen associations related to rural tourism can be found on the official website of the Public Revenue Office of Macedonia (ujp.gov.mk). These associations carry out activities and participate in projects in the field of rural tourism. Besides domestic associations, the role of foreign associations and foundations is also not very small in Macedonia and implements

projects related to the development of rural tourism, like the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), which has performed a number of investments in the form of trainings and projects, for development of rural tourism; Slow food; USAID-supported projects through various grants and programs; Swiss contact and others.

2.7. PROMOTION OF RURAL TOURISM

The promotion of rural tourism in Macedonia, in addition to local and regional centers, the main role is taken by the State Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism through promotion of tourism fairs, marketing campaigns in the country and abroad, preparation and printing of prospectuses, brochures, rural tourism, financial support for manifestations in rural areas, etc. Despite the Agency, 40 reports were recorded at national level for visiting different destinations in the country for domestic tourists (the tourist demand in rural tourism in relation to the seasons and the short stay of tourists which is characteristic for domestic tourists). These reports are presented on most of the television channels and are part of the campaign - Explore Macedonia, and refer to the promotion of Macedonia as a tourist destination. From the data on the official website of the campaign-Explore Macedonia, the recorded reports by regions can be presented in the chart below.

Chart 4. Regional prevalence of recorded reports from the campaign Explore Macedonia

Ordinal no.	Region	Story	Number of reports
1	Skopje	Matka, Gazi Isa begova mosque, Skopje, Vodno	4
2	Polog	Tresonche and Lazaropole, Janche, Galichnik, Shar Planina, Vrutok	5
3	Southwest	Skrebatno, Struga, Rajchica, Debar and Kosovrasti, Vevchani, Ohrid	6
4	Southeast	Veljusa, Smolare Waterfall, Dojran, Kozhuv	4
5	Vardar	Begnishte, Demir Kapija, from Skopje to Bitola by train, Papradishte	4
6	East	Berovo, Lesново, Plachkovica, Shtip, Novo Selo	5
7	Northeast	Kratovo, Kuklica, Kokino, Osogovo Monastery, Ponikva	5
8	Pelagoniski	Zovikj and Dunje, Prilep, Treskavec, Zrze, Krushevo and Cer, Brajchino, Resen	7

Source: www.istrazijamakedonija.com.mk

From Chart 4 we can conclude that most of the recorded reports or 7 of them refer to the destinations that are located in the Pelagonia region, while the other regions are represented with 6, 5 or 4 video reports. These data indicate that the regions have equal representation in terms of the number of reports made for destinations within their territory. The reports most often cover natural beauties and anthropogenic values of destinations that are recommended for visiting, interesting legends related to these places, local gastronomy and are related to rural tourism destinations.

3. CONCLUSION

The thesis reviewed the tourism policy and legislation in Macedonia, which is manifested through the work of the relevant authorities at national, regional and local level, the preparation of strategic documents for the development of rural tourism, as well as the financial support, the non-governmental sector, the education and the promotion of rural tourism.

Macedonia has good natural and anthropogenic resources that are a prerequisite for the development of rural tourism. To make tourism sustainable in the future, it is vital that to set up effective policies and legislation. Those who create politics, develop strategies and all stakeholders in tourism should be able to identify new trends in tourism and to propose appropriate measures that will lead to the creation of better quality tourism products.

The research for the needs of this thesis shows that serious attention is dedicated to the tourism industry in Macedonia, and there are appropriate state institutions in which the tourism sector is represented through its ministries that directly participate in the creation of tourism policy and legislation. There is a State Agency in the country that takes care of the tourist promotion; Strategies for development of rural tourism on local, regional and national level have been adopted, which are in connection with the modern tourist needs. There are adequate laws and regulations related to rural tourism that have undergone numerous changes and amendments for the needs of the interested parties and directed to improvement from the moment of their adoption. We consider that the following recommendations can be of great importance for the development of rural tourism in Macedonia: Improvement of the legislation and precise definition of the activities related to rural tourism; Statistical database for facilities offering rural tourism; Association of entrepreneurs offering rural tourism at local, regional and national level; Exploring the supply and demand of a rural tourist product; Adequate national strategy for development of rural tourism; Greater use of European funds for rural development; Trainings by higher education institutions and competent ministries for the local population while participating in rural tourism and opening tourism departments within the regions and municipalities that plan to develop rural tourism.

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