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# THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC PLANS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

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## Abstract

*The term planning and tourism is as complex as the concept of tourism. This intensifies the need for development planning, where planning is seen as a process, and not as a current event. The paper discusses the strategic plans for tourism development. Planning will be defined as an integrated approach with the essential characteristics, functions and levels. We will also investigate the tasks and phases of planning. A special segment that will be considered relates to planning the concept of tourism development: national and regional levels, as well as development planning at the level of cities or tourist sites, as well as tourist destinations. The aim is to show that the development of tourism in Serbia should apply best practices and modern solutions, and in this way, an acceptance of planning as an essential factor of development.*

**Keywords:** *planning, tourism, strategy, development, strategic plans*

## Introduction

Overall tourism development philosophy of the modern age is maximally directed towards tourists, guest, client-customer and his satisfaction. On the other hand, tourism, as part of the tertiary sector is considered one of the most profitable industries in the world and has great economic importance for each country. The higher the overall level of development, the more important the place and role of this group of the service sector is. Tourism as a complex phenomenon is among the most dynamic and most propulsive activities and, as such, is most associated with other parts of the economy. The annual growth rate of 4.3% for travel and 6.7% for

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consumption, which is more than the expected growth of 3% per year in the world's GDP (Hamović, et al., 2009). In accordance with the understanding that modern tourism is the concept of open and developed market economy, hence arises the necessity of the changes taking place in the complex market in the field of tourism to be ranked the fastest and most turbulent. According to Boljević and associates (2014) tourism is a labour-intensive economic activity that provides over 200 million jobs worldwide. The share of tourism in the world GDP is about 10.5%, through tourism over 12.5% of total exports in the world are realized and about 30% of world trade in services.

In order to achieve these indicators, it is necessary to detect potential opportunities or possible dangers, as well as potentiation of powers and avoidance of weaknesses, all of which can be benefits of planning for future development efforts. Ketchen and Short (2011) point out that unforeseen circumstances or unexpected restrictions should always be accounted for. Together with the strategic plan, the organization must prepare and plan implementation, as a strategic plan that cannot be achieved is unusable.

Modern organizations are trans organizational systems, because they do not represent the traditional exchange of final products, but the exchange of information and knowledge, including reciprocal functions and responsibilities of the partner companies. There are many forms of partnerships in tourism. Creation of clusters also emphasizes the synergetic effects, and the construction of the network structure, as well as vertical and horizontal connectivity, allows for cluster members to relativize their shortcomings and emphasize their advantages, in order to generate the necessary competitiveness in the market (Vukotić et al., 2013). In the literature, but also in practice, the motivation for the merger with tourism clusters is usually found in marketing activities. Marketing aims, as pointed out by Riznić and associates (2010) to collect the relevant resources of the organization to plan and carry out the provision of customer satisfaction.

In any case, tourism and other activities, is primarily intended to satisfy the consumer. De facto, the industry encompasses all the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, suppliers and retailers of tourism products, governments and host communities in the process of attracting and welcoming tourists (Hadiani et al., 2012).

The focus of our attention in this paper is primarily strategic planning, which we will deal first from the general point of view, then from the perspective of the tourism industry.

### **Strategic plans**

Strategic planning determines the strategic choices of companies, strategic goals and sets effective strategies necessary for their implementation. Concisely, Hill and Jones (2001) define strategic planning as a process of looking at the future of the organization and development of the necessary procedures and operations to achieve the desired objectives.

Strategic planning is an important factor to win the market and increase profitability. The strategic plan is a document that serves as a long-term guide of an organization. Companies must confront long-term competition, accordingly, they plan long-term goals for the interconnection of different activities. Four types of planning can be distinguished:

1. Basic financial planning
2. Planning on the basis of forecast
3. Foreign-oriented planning (with the help of a consultant engaged outside of the company)
4. Planning of top management (creating internal teams)

According Hill and associates (2004), a basic model of strategic planning consists of the following elements: defining the mission and goals of the highest level, external analysis of opportunities and threats, internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses and the SWOT analysis.

In order to achieve critical success factors there needs to be key drivers of work to generate strategies and plans of action. Therefore, Byrnes (2009) sets out the strategic plan as a set of comprehensive plans designed to deploy all available resources of the company, in order to achieve certain goals stemming from the mission and vision. The strategic planning process can be represented graphically as shown below.

**Figure 1:** The strategic planning process



**Source:** *Evans. Lindsay, 2002*

The tasks of strategic planning are:

- Identify significant customers and operational requirements
- Optimal use of resources and providing a bridge between short and long-term demands
- Ensure that at all organizational levels there exist well understood initiatives on quality
- Ensure that the organization and work structure eases the implementation of a strategic plan.

Three important characteristics of planning can be singled out, in orientation to (Vojnović, 2014):

1. Basic questions, in the direction of maximizing revenue,
2. Change of company's position and increasing deal opportunities,
3. Focus on the development and growth of the organization.

The central task of the planning process is the current and future state of the market and identifying threats and opportunities of the global environment.

The function of planning aims to:

1. Pass development plans and direct business activities according to market requirements,
2. Market research,
3. Personalizing activities and functions to the organization's goals.

According to the time span for which they are composed, development plans can be defined as: long, medium and short term.

The time dimension of development is directly related to the level of planning with the strategic levels having the longest schedules, and operating the shortest. Although at first glance the same, strategic plans are quite different from general ones. Characteristics of strategic plans are: 1) the adoption in the long period of time, it requires vision 2) realization of strategic plans is visible only after a long time, and 3) they relate to the much smaller number of elements than the general plan, which due to a long time to achieve does not mean they are easier to make, but the opposite.

### **Strategic planning in tourism**

Planning in tourism appears in the form of different approaches, from individuals who plan their holiday, through business entities and certain destinations that are planning future strategies to achieve the appropriate development or business goals, to countries that plan to the role of tourism in their future economic and social development, and intergovernmental and international organizations and institutions that are planning their future activities. Therefore, planning should be seen as a process, not as a current event.

Various entities in the tourist destination (usually described as the "Stakeholders", "Players", "Participants in the tourist business," and so on.) refer to each other, to dialogue, to cooperate (rather than compete) and the creation of various partnerships (Bakić, 2009). Their potential is measured by the performance and the ability to successfully negotiate the planned development of tourism in the destination, confronting with a unique goal - to provide the market with a tourist oriented product. The main bearers and exponents of knowledge are people, but in the literal and figurative sense we can speak of people as capital of the organization (Zakić, Vukotić, 2013).

Summing up all the theoretical views on this, but also practical experience, models of tourism planning can be divided into two large groups (Vukonić, Keča, 2001): 1) traditional, (including physical planning and economic approach to planning) and 2) current models (PASOLP model - Product's Analysis Sequence for Outdoor Leisure planning and RPP model - development spatial planning).

Model of physical planning is the oldest approach to planning which is the starting point in the analysis of resources and existing supply capacity.

In this model the planning of tourism can be distinguished by the following phases:

- Analysis of resources and capacities,
- Programming additional capacity which includes global assessment of the market,
- Preparation of detailed spatial plans and
- Evaluation of costs and benefits.

Vojnović and colleagues (2012) point out that the model of economic planning approaches gives different variants of development of tourism policy and made a sort of advance planning. Yet this model has no real analysis of the prerequisites of development or analysis of resources. It starts with the assessment of resources and assessment of market demand in order to, based on comparisons of these two elements, recognize development opportunities. So determined possibilities are the foundation for the development of detailed plans. No matter that this is about a partial market approach to planning, however, assessing market demand is an innovation in the field of planning. Economic planning approach appeared at a time when the supply abundantly exceeded demand, and when, "ready-made" offers could not successfully compete in the market. For this reason, it was necessary to enrich the supply. This model can be divided into the following phases:

- estimation and forecast of the market, and researching resources and existing offerings,
- comparison of the market and resources,
- variants of development tourist policies,
- selection of a particular development plan or development tourist politics and
- detailed planning of selected policies.

Given all the specifics that tourism has, it is very difficult in modern conditions to apply a uniform planning model. Yet there emerged two models, or more precisely, two groups of models which now have the greatest versatility in planning. The first is the model *Product Analysis Sequence for Outdoor Leisure Planning* - PASOLP, which fully respects the market approach to planning and introduced in the planning analysis the conditions of development. It is based on facility planning, as in a market economy tourism product. Because there are different definitions of a tourism product, for purposes of this model is the most appropriate one according to which the tourism product is a web or set of services,

goods and other conditions which meet certain tourist needs (Stefanović, 2003). At the same time this is the biggest complaint of this model, which is a tourist product treated differently and determined.

However, this model has several advantages. The basic advantages of model PASOLP are:

- Enables the development of different variants of tourism products,
- It is, progressive and avoids returning to the earlier stages,
- ensures that the best utilization of the most original resource of a destination is achieved,
- Considers the opinions of all social levels,
- Differences short-term, medium-term and long-term needs of tourism development.

Another group of contemporary models relate to the development of spatial planning (RPP) model, in which tourism is seen as the movement of people from the city of domicile to the tourist destination to satisfy their recreational, cultural, cognitive or other needs. According to Češljaš and Jeffery (1989), this model has the following phases: analysis of conditions for the development, identification of determinants of market development, programming capacity offers, working out detailed plans, forecasting of economic, social and physical consequences.

### **The concept of tourism development**

Some of the specifics of tourism are:

- The number of contacts in cross-sector relationships, which enlarge their quantitative and qualitative dependence, which directly affects the faster development of tourism,
- Relation to the systems of international relations (political, cultural or economic),
- Mixed subsystem of the economy and, as such, connected and open to the historical changes of the society at large,
- Tourism gives results in the long term (and the return of investments in facilities and infrastructure)
- Most tourist services are delivered the directly, which reduces expenses for intermediaries,
- Tourism has an impact on the development of other industries and activities (agriculture, transport, construction, industry and others).

Forming the concept of tourism development, in the context of the planning process essentially involves the following: the basic orientation of the development policy and the level of coordination. Čerović (2002) points out that the problems that are manifested in the creation of tourism development are not identical at the state level, a tourist destination, tourist site, or elsewhere in the tourist business. Global development concept, for instance, is made for the country as a whole and it establishes common requirements and benefits expected from tourism, with the determination of conditions for tourism development, which is the obligation of the state (Unković, 1995).

The basic three levels which we consider are related to: planning concepts of national tourism development, planning concepts of regional tourism development and planning of tourism development at the level of tourist cities and localities. As a special level that will be analysed is planning of a tourist destination.

### **The planning of a concept of national tourism development**

In today's tourism all the differences disappeared, or have blended into a single national plan in which are discussed and planned all the possible implications of tourism development, both on the physical, economic, social, cultural and environmental levels. Today, such a plan is called the main or master - plan for tourism.

The name of the plan suggests that it includes the total national area and predictable mutual benefit, without preference to any particular, although it is known that it is rare that the entire national space has equal opportunities for tourism development. In all master- plans of tourism are favoured smaller areas with more opportunities for tourism development, and which thus give their own contribution to the total national territory and its economy.

However, a more comprehensive and more adequate method is to determine two or more homogeneous groups of tourist attractiveness which may represent the centre of the tourism development in and around which it can form a certain capacity of the tourism offer (Gunn, 1993). This method is called method of clusters of tourism development or cluster methods.

Also, "width" should mean the necessity of achieving regional cooperation in tourism, creating different integrated tourism products, compatible to its content, the development of different clusters that transcend national barriers and "networking of interest" on the basis of the creation of "additional benefits for tourist consumers' (Bakić, 2009). Clusters certainly contribute to the internationalization, better application of technology, the introduction of quality standards, more qualifications of employees, affect the mobility of investment, innovation and increase productivity, reduce overall costs and contribute to the achievements of some other results (Vukotić et al., 2014).

At the national level it is a particularly important part of the planning related to the so-called great infrastructure. This is because the investment is very high, and exceeds, as a rule, the possibilities of certain areas, but, also, because such infrastructure very rarely can be used exclusively for tourism. The national plan should, in this respect, clearly mark which part in the financing of such infrastructure is the responsibility of the tourist complex. In a typical tourist cluster, for example, the quality of experience of visitors depends not only on the attractiveness of primary attraction (beaches or historical sites), but also of the quality and effectiveness of complementary activities, such as: hotels, restaurants, commercial distributors and transport capacity. Because the cluster members are mutually dependent, good performance of one can boost the success of others (Lazzaretti, Capone, 2004).

### **The planning of a concept of regional tourism development**

The main activities of this strategy are based on identifying local resources and attracting domestic or foreign investors (Vojnović, et al., 2009).

Planning of tourism development at the regional level is global. This means that the regional plan lists only the functions and purposes of smaller spatial units within the region, as well as the dimensions of development through basic indicators of tourism development. Also, global capacities are planned and coordinating with other regions - the principle of complementarity. Of course, it should be noted that each region has a different history, culture, politics and the like, so that to some extent, must take into account that each individual form of (tourism) development is unique.

For example, in order to achieve the best possible position in the international market, Vojvodina should apply the model of development that would provide a competitive advantage, relying on the experience of similar destinations. Still in accordance with Košić and his associates (2015) important activities that will contribute to improving the quality of services in rural tourism are:

- by improving the quality of accommodation capacities,
- education of the population with the aim of reaching a higher quality of service,
- the establishment and application of criteria for standardization and quality of services in rural tourism in Vojvodina and
- intensifying promotion at the local and the international market.

For regional planning marketing activities are important, because all plans, including regional, are proved on the tourist market. The other side of development, as well as tourism development, are costs. It is better to face these costs in the planning stages, i.e. at the beginning of implementation. This, for example, refers to the cost of cultural and social development. They were influenced in the early stages of planning such solutions that will strengthen relations between the host - guest. Furthermore, economic costs related to the construction or expansion (Vojnović, et al., 2012).

### **Planning of tourism development at the level of tourist sites and localities**

Planning for the tourist cities and localities in recent world tourism literature is called site design or site planning. If the design is understood as increasing the quality of the tourist town, then good design should be socially (moral, cultural and ethical), ecologically, economically, technologically and individually (aesthetic, psychological) acceptable and justified. Good design is created in the process of technical and technological design of the tourism product. Regions and destinations are a group of individual sites, but their attributes equally apply to the site. Therefore, it is not enough just to design a basic function of tourist activity, but must take into account all the characteristics of the city and surrounding area (architecture, climate, population, trades, cultural diversity and so on.). Localities and their environment suffer from a lack of understanding of their relationships. Each local decision about the design must respect the interests of tourist destinations and regions.

Within this conceived design originated the concept of "place - making", which literally means the creation of the site. Otherwise, it is the process by which designers design the whole environment of the tourist destination, its overall visual identity. It is, therefore, a creative adaptation of the actual characteristics of the site. Of course, there are certain criteria that must be followed, namely:

- Plans must create a development which will reliably function as a system (individual viewpoints turned into a whole)
- the existence of structural stability,
- functionality of usage
- function of aesthetic satisfaction (Gunn, 1993).

In any case, with plans of this level it is very important that the plan can be successfully implemented only if the guest (tourists) is in advance well visualized, as pointed out by Vojnović and his associates (2012). Precisely this implies uniqueness and diversity as a formula for success.

### **The planning and development of tourist destinations**

To be able to talk about the planning of tourist destinations, we should define the concept of a tourist destination. In any case, the destination is a spatial determinant in which a tourist trip takes place. In addition to space, time is also an important characteristic (actually, the length of stay).

Laws (1995) believes that the development of the destination is directly related to the development of tourism. Angeloni (2012) points out that to ensure that tourism generates success and favour, destinations must be planned, organized, managed and controlled. Associated with the management of tourist destinations are the elements from which it is structured: attractive elements, functional elements, material and organizational elements (Jovičić, 2002).

Attractive elements are parts of space or facilities, that by their properties meet the needs of consumers. They can be natural (climate, surface, flora and fauna, etc.) And anthropogenic (cultural and historical heritage, manifestations, events, fairs, etc.). For example, international facilities of a resort type are completely absent from our market, even though there are numerous attractive destinations for their positioning (VrnjačkaBanja, Palić, Zlatibor, Sokobanja...). It is important to mention that all the mentioned facilities are subscribers of contractual arrangements with

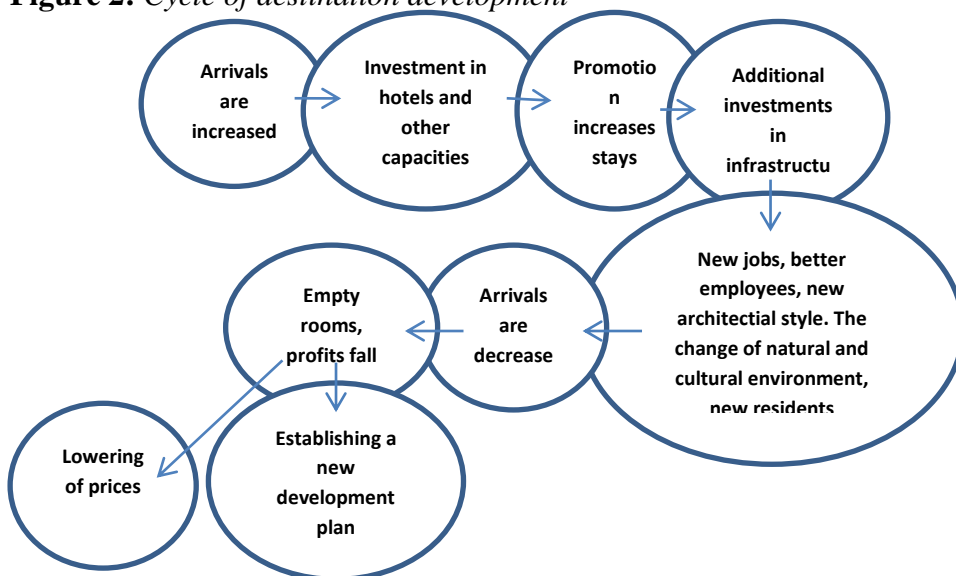
foreign companies, mostly the Contact on Franchising, which lead to taking over the standardized technical-technological and organizational systems of business, directed to giving standardized services and the facilities which belong to a certain chain (Petrović et al., 2013)

Functional elements reflect the economic and environmental characteristics, and are very important for the process of planning the development of destinations. Material elements create the material basis of traffic and make the totality of organizational measures towards the development of tourism.

Although tourism is characterized by dynamism it is often asked why there is no longer a destination. Blank (1989) states the following limitations: a lack of comparative advantages (location, quality, resources), capacity load, a preference for the status quo because of the lack of adaptability to changes in the community, favouring another development, resistance of "green parties" to any development, bad politics of exploitation of public goods and the like.

In its development, the destination is going through a lot of phases (Figure 2).

**Figure 2:** *Cycle of destination development*



**Source:** *Laws, 1995.*

When planning the tourist destinations, the following dilemmas, challenges and misunderstandings should be removed (Gunn, 1993):

- administrative division of the territory to destination zones is more suitable for administration, and less for the market
- borders of destination zones are fixed, but should follow the "heartbeats" of the market,
- destination zones are uniform, which cannot give the same results in all areas,
- the opinion that the best zones can be developed only by the private sector is wrong, because to this should be added the role of States and the non-profit organizations,
- claim that the destination zones succeed most in places dependent on tourism is questionable, because tourism has no point without other activities
- only identifying the destination zone does not ensure success, investments and management are also necessary.

### **Conclusion**

Experience has shown that the planning of tourism or planning in tourism is more of an art than science, with an important role of intuition. Being different is the risk in the business world, but also in tourism, but it is also the basis for development if it succeeds. However, one of the principles which may lead to success is the planned activity. It is from this combination of the set of postulates, steps or items involved in making plans and the visionary, but even a bit of a daredevil and intuitive approach to generate good results. Strategic planning is an important factor for winning the tourist market and increasing profitability. In order to achieve these premises, it is very important to anticipate changes, examine the situation and future development projects.

Of all the plans, strategic planning has a special role. First of all, it belongs to the general, not the partial context. Then, strategic plans are mainly long-range plans, with a significant impact on tourism development strategy. The paper discusses in detail the models of planning in tourism. The paper analyses the advantages and disadvantages of certain groups of modern models.

A large number of stakeholders is participating in tourist activities. The imperative of the site has always been important. All visitors must have

their destination - a place where they travel. Therefore, we analysed the three concepts of tourism development: national, regional and local. Each of these levels requires certain strategic plans, which would also need to generate development. Joining clusters and crossing certain spatial borders are one way of achieving synergy effects or the potentiation of the advantages and the relativizing of disadvantages.

The level tourist destination is different from the other three mentioned levels, and can be made simpler and less dispersed and the other, but still in its development passes through a lot of stage. Similarly, the management of tourist destinations is very layered and complex as it represents a spatial determinant in which a tourist trip takes place. However, if we carefully approach the development of a tourist destination and its planning then this will have an impact on the satisfaction of tourists or consumers-users of services. It will continue to positively affect directly or indirectly the development of all levels.

The fact that tourism, i.e. the tourism industry is very dynamic, with frequent and rapid changes and new developments that are taking place in several iterations, which imposes an obligation for plans to change and adapt to new circumstances. From what has been said is imposed as the ultimate conclusion that the tourism industry needed continuous, planned actions, and continuous planning.

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