

# TOURISM POLICY AND PLACE IMAGE – CHALLENGES AND PERFORMANCE

Ph.D. Nako Tashkov, [nako.taskov@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:nako.taskov@ugd.edu.mk);  
M.Sc. Tatjana Dzaleva, [tatjana.dzaleva@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:tatjana.dzaleva@ugd.edu.mk);  
M.Sc. Dejan Metodijeski, [dejan.metodijeski@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:dejan.metodijeski@ugd.edu.mk);  
Ph.D. Aleksandar Ilievski, [aleksandar.ilievski@ugd.edu.mk](mailto:aleksandar.ilievski@ugd.edu.mk).

## ABSTRACT:

Development plan with aim promotion of an old destination as attracting place is the principal planning policy which for are interested all those involved in development of the place that is promoting. It recognizes that achieving urban regeneration is dependent on creating an attractive and safe environment within the city/place, by using high-profile projects. This benefits the existing residents and businesses and attracts new investment, particularly in the city centre.

Cities pursue these types of tourism strategies as a tool to give some competitive advantage in an increasingly globalized and interdependent economy. In the interrelation between tourism and interurban competition, globalization decidedly affects the way in which policies for tourism are formulated and put into practice. Destinations face increasing pressure to raise their 'place identity' in order to position themselves competitively in the global context.

Improvement of the physical environment, will promote the place image as an attractive and enjoyable place to visit, to invest in, and to live in.

**Key words:** flagship projects, tourism, place image, investment, challenges

## INTRODUCTION

For West Balkan countries, the tourism industry is one of the main income sources and the number one export category, creating much needed employment and opportunities for economic development. According to World Tourism Organization's long-term forecast and assessment of the development of tourism up to the first 20 years of the new millennium, known as Tourism 2020 Vision, the international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Whether such forecast are possible and what the challenges for West Balkan countries in tourism industry are, it could be concluded if it is known a little more about the scale of economic crisis in the World, crisis influence on developing countries such as West Balkan countries and tourism sector industry.

In the beginning of year 2009, a number of factors were impacting business around the world: financing costs have increased as banks tighten their lending standards. Rising unemployment and falling consumer confidence are impacting revenue growth. Falling profits: analysts are lowering corporate forecasts as the recession bites. Government intervention and potential regulation is changing the operation of the market. Market volatility has increased significantly, making planning difficult: risk spreads on corporate bonds have soared to record levels and ratings agencies have downgraded many corporations greatly increasing financing costs for firms seeking credit. Many currencies have suffered volatility as global investors continue to assess strength of economies thus undermining financial arbitrage strategies.

The characteristics of a classical financial crisis include crisis that occurs after a period of sustained real sector growth, particularly in capital formation, also there is a substantial speculative element, the first stage of the crisis is caused by an external shock or change in policy. Also the fall in asset prices causes a sharp deterioration in balance sheet positions generating a general loss of confidence and these factors create liquidity and solvency problems for banks and other financial institutions. Further, adverse financial effects result in a reduction of economic activity leading to either recession or in a worst-case scenario, a depression and recovery occurs through elimination of bad debt, strengthening of the economy's financial position and restoration of confidence.

### **How these affect tourism industry?**

There are no precise data about crisis influence on tourism industry. For this purpose many researchers use an indirect method to evaluate crisis influence. Namely, they start with data about market capitalization by sector all over the world. According to that data, it is obvious that whilst the overall impact on market capitalization has been extremely negative in the past 12 months, there is significant variation in performance by sector. Taking the aggregate market capitalization of the top 30 companies, per sector, in particular economies reveals this. Initial analysis of the crisis influence to tourism industry was often alarmist in nature and focused on conference papers, the financial press, and other media outlets. Within a short period, a number of books had appeared on the subject and the academic press was beginning to address the issue. Unfortunately, the tourism literature has failed to comment on the crisis except for a relatively small number of journal articles and conference papers. This is surprising given the impact of the crisis on the tourism industry and the response by academics in other fields, particularly economics. As a consequence, the causes and implications of the crisis for Asia as a whole and for individual countries have been widely discussed from an economic perspective but the impacts on tourism are relatively under-researched. Perhaps this is a reflection of a wider lack of detailed economic analysis in the

tourism literature and is an issue that warrants more attention by journal editors in the future, particularly through special issues. Also here are studies that identified the impact of the euro and the European Union Travel Directive that made suppliers of the local product responsible for lapses in the product promoted by the seller in the country of sale as factors that magnified the problems generated by the crisis. Macroeconomics researchers are trying to provide information about the depth of crisis, but tourism researchers in developed countries are not involved enough in this process, even though the crisis comes from their countries.

The economic transition in Eastern Europe that is taking place have already affected and brought serious changes at the socio-economic level. The impact of tourism is beneficial to all concerned, the reason being the natural and cultural strengths of the region of Balkans and thus there are the necessary prerequisites for business related to tourism in the wider area. It is recognised that a stable society is essential for economic growth - an issue that is of concern to foreign investors at least as it concerns tourism.

There is the example of Serbia whereas key challenges are to make the economy more open and to address the high levels of unemployment. Thus the foreign and the local investors within this political frame were assured that there are the foundations laid for the development of tourism, including a new tourism law and the creation of a tourism development fund.

So, tourism is a factor for development. In this way, evidence presented confirmed that tourism can be a major player in the transformation of the economy and the promotion of sustainable development. Tourism prospects are closely tied to general economic prospect. Looking across borders tourism could be a major player in sub-regional and European integration. There is considerable opportunity to learn from best practices in other countries, especially by those coming later into restructuring their tourism sector. Countries in the 'New Europe' can learn from 'Old Europe'. They can also be more positively orientated towards tourism and show a new way for the whole of Europe. There are considerable opportunities for regional collaboration – in general and through cross-border projects whereas public-private partnerships are needed. In this respect sustainability considerations should be incorporated into all plans, and there is a need to ensure that they are adhered to in practice and in this respect increasing competitiveness is vital.

Policies should address poor infrastructure, low levels of foreign direct investment (FDI) flowing into tourism, and lack of resources for marketing, as these frequently act as a break on tourism development. Price competitiveness, proximity to markets, electronic communication, and opportunities for a diversified offer are all keys to growth.

The precise role of the state in tourism needs careful consideration. The level of intervention should be neither too high nor too low. National and local governments should work together on creating the context for sustainable tourism development. The respective roles of central and local governments in tourism need to be clear. Several countries have introduced new tourism laws. Coordination should be the most vital element between government agencies that relate to tourism promotion – e.g. cultural bodies, investment promotion agencies etc. as well as tourism organisations. Additionally, research and knowledge issues should focus on ongoing scientific research on tourism's contribution and impacts.

In spite of the fact that Europe represents the main source of tourists' demand and supply, the EU delayed in the establishment of a specific legal framework for tourism. The positive economic effects of tourism are the progress and prosperity and tourism becomes the dynamic lever that pushes up all branches of local and national economies.

Tourism is an important source of income contributing directly to the local, national and international GDP. It also affects GDP indirectly, by setting in operation the mechanism of the so called “tourist expenditure multiplier”. It is one of the main sources of direct and indirect job creation absorbing a substantial proportion of the economically active population in the tourist developed countries. It is a major factor that creates redistribution of the local population within the tourist developed areas. It is also the reason for attracting permanent population from other areas. It is worth presenting some figures in support of the view that tourism is the main reason of regional prosperity.

The EU is working on programs that will lead to the development of tourism of the candidate countries of Balkans. Key challenges are to make the economy more open and to address the high levels of unemployment and try to seize this socio-economic phenomenon. However there is still the need to increase the number of good quality hotels as part of the strategy towards meeting high growth targets, but also to all the Balkan countries because the attraction of wealthy tourists highlights even more the potential of economic and business growth. New instalments as hotels offering luxurious services, modern highways, plethora of banks and various other instalments and applied business practices secure that the fiscal conditions and the state economic reform encourages foreign direct investment, especially from the EU, a fact that is not only beneficial for the country’s tourism but also for the economy and its future potential. In this respect and within this process foundations are being laid for the development of tourism, including a new tourism law and the creation of a tourism development fund, of course with the legal and economic support of the relevant instruments, committees and institutions of the EU. EU enlargement should be considered as an economic and political cross-road and the EU target is to help the cause of the industry and many of the new member states to be better orientated towards tourism than those in old Europe. The new draft EU constitution, whose future is now uncertain, was to give the EU specific competence in the field of tourism.

The role that the transitional economies can play is great, but they need to continue to embrace change and increase competitiveness. This may be partly about structures and legal frameworks, but it is equally about a change in mentality. During the period of transition, particular attention should be paid to: the role of intermediary bodies such as professional associations, the role of small family enterprises, the chance to adjust to EU legislation even before membership, the opportunity to cultivate new niche markets such as ecotourism, and the great importance of the growing domestic market.

The problem that might arise in the development of tourism in the candidate Balkan countries is novelty and price competitiveness on the one hand and weak infrastructure and the difficulties of privatisation on the other and also we should not undermine the need for sound planning and human resource development that is still in embryonic level in comparison to the already developed EU countries. Attention should be paid to a number of market trends that bring opportunities but will also require adaptation of product and communication techniques, such as demographic changes, growth in independent travel, more frequent but shorter trips, the flexibility afforded by the internet, and the broadening of the market due to low cost air travel. The necessary prerequisite in this respect is not only the right policy making in the sector of tourism but modern economic and political attitudes should prevail in the Balkan countries in order for these countries to become attractive to all kind of business investors.

The distinctive historical and cultural personality of the Balkan countries, and by extension of the entire South-Eastern European region, offers opportunities for the region to establish itself firmly as a tourism destination. Not only that but also culture enriches Europe's pluralism including the allure/element of the unknown either for the natural beauties but also for the cultural significance of the Balkan historic places.

Cooperation among Balkan countries should occur on regional marketing that should aim at public private cooperation in marketing and promotion. This is a key mechanism for the development of economies of scale and network effects, as well as a condition for competitiveness, a tool to unite the fragmented tourist industry and give fresh impetus to small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). In this respect the Balkan countries should be based on Programs and ideas that will improve their tourism and the concept of tourism will rest on the same economic and business principles, like pilot projects of multicultural itineraries (cities, monasteries, mosques, castles, etc), promotion of Balkan gastronomy, identification of inland main products, itineraries and tourist destinations, to be promoted for an effective distribution of tourist flows from seaside resorts, or directly from the outbound markets, identification of other success factors for regional cooperation. Also important things are promotion of ecotourism, agro tourism and rural tourism, promotion of special interest tourism linked to the recent trend involving experiences, intangibility and atmosphere, setting-up of homogeneous standards for the region, particularly on hotel classification, promotion of theme parks on Balkan cultural diversity. The researchers in their study also determine as a key factor for tourism development activities as funding or incentives for the creation of a Balkan Symphony Orchestra, the Academy of Balkan Culture, and the Balkan Observatory for Culture and Tourism, giving support and advice National and Local Governments on infrastructure and on the supply side and effective public-private sector cooperation link in all issues.

The urban tourism has a cultural content and is also combined with certain administrative and organizational activities on cities functionalism. This kind of tourism does not concern exclusively the touring in historical monuments, the knowledge of the cultural inheritance of the area and the contact with the modern artistic creation. The tourist-visitor feels an important experience since he has the possibility to visit and meet closely monuments and

works of art whose formation was also instructed in the past. Simultaneously, the contact with the modern creation helps in the understanding and profound knowledge of habits, tendencies, ways of thinking of the indigenous, contributes in the spiritual uplift and in the conscience that the world is not limited to our only personal area of activity. In this way it could be discussed how to develop tourism plans.

So it is important to formulate a plan and techniques how to use it, how to incorporate it, the importance of this plan and the influence of area characteristics on planning. That is why is taken a brief historical background of the country or region, a brief geographical description of geology, land forms and hydrography with identification of areas geographically suitable for tourism development, natural resource areas, and existing land use and land tenure patterns, existing national and regional development policies, plans and programmes, with evaluation of their influence on tourism development, and cultural patterns of traditions, religious and social values and other relevant characteristics, and effects of development on cultural traditions and values. After this step, the next thing is analysis of the infrastructure. In this way, here is underline the essential meaning of tourist attractions and activities, and their improvements. This understand the survey and inventory of existing and potential attractions and activities, evaluation of the tourist attractions, with identification of primary and secondary attractions, recommended improvements (and conservation) required of the attractions.

Important thing is also to analyse what are tourist facilities and services, and their improvements. This in context - survey of existing and already planned other tourist facilities, including tour and travel operations, restaurants, banking and money exchange, handicraft, speciality and convenience shopping, medical and postal facilities and services, public safety and tourist information services, planned accommodation by number, type, location and quality level.

Essential things for discussion are market analysis and projections, recommended tourism development policy and structure plan, economic analysis and recommendations and plan implementation and monitoring. The explaining is that these steps should be analyse because these facts. Determination of tourism carrying capacities of various potential tourism areas and the entire country or region, based on environmental, socio-cultural, infrastructural and tourist satisfaction considerations and the determination of the most appropriate forms of tourism, by location, based on the inventory and evaluation of tourist attractions and activities, carrying capacity and market analysis and other considerations is particularly important. Also to have a good plan and successful tourism development in Balkans should be make :

- a review of global and inter-country regional tourism patterns and trends,
- analysis of tourist arrival patterns and trends in the country or region being planned,
- evaluation of the effect of existing or potential competing tourist destinations,
- determination of the major influencing factors on the types and extent of future tourist arrivals, and determination of the primary and secondary markets,
- establishment of market targets by number, type and extent of origin, socio-economic group, touristic interest groupings, length of stay and other relevant characteristics
- consideration of local residents' use of tourist attractions, facilities and services,
- projection of the number, type and quality level of accommodation, other tourist facilities and services and infrastructure required based on the market targets.

After this, the next step include determination of the present and projected tourist expenditures by amount and type, calculation of the present and projected economic impact of tourism by the standard measurements of contribution to GNP or GDP (or contribution to the regional economy), gross and net foreign exchange earnings, extent and types of national or regional economic leakages, income generated, the multiplier effect, direct, indirect and

induced employment generated and contribution to government revenues and recommendations on ways to enhance the economic benefits of tourism at the community, regional and national levels.

Recommendation could be given from environmental, socio-cultural and institutional point of view from Balkans perspective. These recommendations are in way to identify any present environmental problems generated by tourism and recommendations on ways to lessen them, recommendations on ways to improve the overall environmental quality of tourism areas (environmental); recommended public awareness programme on tourism and a tourist information brochure to inform tourists about the local culture, traditions and expected tourist behaviour, recommendations on ways to achieve community involvement in all aspects of tourism at the local level (socio-cultural). For Balkans is also of interest to make permanent review and evaluation of present public and private organisational structures for tourism, review and evaluation of present legislation and regulations related to tourism, manpower planning analysis for tourism and evaluation of present travel facilitation procedures (as institutional considerations).

To have an excellent results in tourism industry next question is how to implement any tourism plan. So it is necessary to have recommended development or action programme, with cost estimates and identification of responsible parties, specification of tourist facility development and design standards, and how these should be applied, preparation of detailed area plans and project feasibility studies for the first stage of development, including demonstration projects, identification of possible sources of funding for project development, and specification of the techniques and procedures to monitor plan implementation and the progress of tourism generally.

It could be concluded that for growth of tourism “old” destinations and make them more attractive in the present and in future for tourist (in Balkans country as example), should be given attention and analyses of:

- survey of area characteristics (location, natural environment, historical influences like population characteristics, cultural patterns and economic patterns).

- survey of institutional elements.

The institutional elements to be surveyed and evaluated in the planning process include present development policies and plans, government and tourism organisational structures, political ideology and its influences on the development process, investment policies and availability of capital, tourism related legislation and regulations, and tourism employees training programmes and institutions.

These are researched generally at this point for subsequent input into the planning analysis, policy and plan formulation, and the recommended implementation approaches. Survey of the institutional elements require both document research and discussions with government agencies and the private sector.

Institutional elements include: present development policies and plans; government and tourism organisational structures, investment policies and availability of capital, investment policies and availability of capital; tourism legislation and regulations, tourism education, training programmes and institutions.

In this way, most countries and many regions of countries, especially states or provinces, have some form of adopted development policies and plans. These may be long-term or medium-term, commonly for five-year periods, and sometimes include a tourism sector. Especially, one should consider the basic economical, physical, and social development policies and strategies of the country or region. These should be carefully reviewed to determine any overall policies that may influence the formulation of tourism plan. It may well be the case that, based on its findings, the tourism planning study will recommend

changes or refinements of these policies and development, but the present policies and plans must first be understood.

The overall system of government and its organisational structure should be understood as one of the considerations for determining the most suitable organisational role of government in tourism development. For example, tourism would be some what differently organised in a country with a highly centralised government structure than in one with a more decentralised government. The organisation of government agencies whose functions relate to tourism such as transportation and communications, environmental protection and cultural development, and immigration and customs, as well as any central planning departments should particularly be examined, including their interagency coordination arrangements.

The present investment policies for investment in development projects, including for tourism projects, should be researched. Investment policies refer particularly to provision for joint venture development between outside and local capital resources or between the government and private sectors, and incentives allowed to encourage private sector investments.

If tourism already exists in the country or region, some tourism-related legislation and regulations may have been adopted and should be researched. There may be a basic tourism law and specific regulations, such as on hotel standards and classification systems, tour and travel agency operations, and tour guide services.

If there is already some tourism development, there may be existing tourism education and training programmes and perhaps training institutions that should be surveyed and evaluated, as an input into the manpower planning and development component of the planning study. These programmes may include hotel, catering, tour and travel operations, and tourism management subjects such as on planning, marketing, and research techniques, etc.



## Conclusion

Cooperation programmes and high-profile projects will support the efforts of a destination to improve benefits for the development and implementation of sustainable tourism policies and programmes.

Improving the competitive of old destination image, will bring investment support and promotion, product development and strengthening linkages between tourism and other sectors of economic activity.

That's why there is need for a fundamental consideration of factors that influence the location of business and can help highlight the decisions that potential business investors and developers make. In addition, the necessity of the marketing principle in image promotion is an important issue. Destinations are different one from another, and it could be argued, place marketing must reflect this difference. The considerations of these marketing approaches in and of themselves can help to improve destinations strategies for inward investment and provide a focus for work on destinations image and potential target businesses.

Internationally, the promotion of a place (as the attraction of old destination in this case) by city authorities and donor organisations has typically aimed at encouraging private sector investment, macroeconomic growth and also foreign exchange earnings.

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According to all these, Balkan tourism, especially, Balkan industry faces big challenges. Namely, with the reduction of capital inflows in the Balkan countries, because of crisis in countries of foreign capital origin, exchange rate regimes became more vulnerable. Until now Serbia, Croatia and Macedonia protected their exchange rates with foreign currency reserve, but these reserves are limited and consequences will appear in the depreciation of currencies. That can be a strong attack on tourism industry in Macedonia and Serbia especially, because they out bound tourism industry.

The reasons for such an understanding of nations and nation states lie in the past. For it is in the past, as well as on the political maps of the Balkans that were continually redrawn by the victors of war and by the great powers of Europe, that is find the causes behind the feeling of national suppression experienced by many nations of Eastern Europe.

Human rights, work, security and open borders for people, trade, economic development, capital and information, gradual inclusion in the stable Europe through development projects – these are the hopes for the turbulent part of Eastern Europe. It is also the vital, long-term interest and duty of the peaceful, secure and developed part of our continent. The ideological and political confrontations in this region should not be replaced by scenarios of all-out wars between cultures or civilizations, which would justify fundamentalist aggression by invoking the defense of culture, faith or civilization.

In addition, place marketing planning needs to design the right sort of urban features, set attractive incentives for potential users of urban products and services, deliver these urban products and services, and promote the urban values and images so that the users know what the city's distinctive advantages are.

Seeking to attract inward business investment by targeting specific types of industry through effectively operating the marketing principles should guide inward investment strategy.

Tourism has the potential to empower communities and the sustainable tourism agenda needs to focus on how to bring this about. Understanding tourists and tourism processes is the first stage to empowering the local community to make informed and appropriate decisions about their tourism development. Considerable investments are required in communication and

trust building between the actors in tourism. In this context to make successful development of tourism and place promotion is necessary to understand the importance of activities and tourism strategy as tools for tourism business success. In this way, tourism businesses with the essential link between “old” and “new” destinations have been identified as essential factors for creating jobs, tourism destination development and generally growing the economy.

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