Chapter 11
Sustainability of Tourism Development in Rural and Mountain Areas in Eastern Serbia

Stetic Snezana
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1137-4441
College of Tourism, Belgrade, Serbia

Igor Trišić
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6497-9276
Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja, University of Kragujevac, Serbia

Adrian Nedelcu
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5306-5869
Faculty of Economic Sciences, Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti, Romania

ABSTRACT

The most attractive tourist destinations are those that have preserved natural and geographical environment, protected nature and anthropogenic tourist motives attracting domestic and foreign tourists. Very often rural and mountainous areas in Serbia have been neglected, without developmental perspectives. Sustainable tourism development in these areas represents conditionality for the use of tourism areas, so that they are not destroyed in such a way that future generations cannot use them. Destinations that have the capability to offer such tourism resources are able to be competitors in the tourism market. The significance of tourism development for rural and mountainous parts of Serbia is extremely high given that world tourism trends are oriented towards such destinations. It is about poorly developed areas. This chapter aims at understanding the potential of mountains and rural parts of Eastern Serbia and their inclusion into the tourism offer, using the long-term concept of sustainable development of this part of Serbia.
INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the basis for further economic development of Serbia, especially for economically underdeveloped areas. On this occasion, the concept of sustainable development, should be a guiding principle of the development policy in tourism, because it networks economic, social and ecological dimensions. Without proper planning or management, tourism can damage the environment, cause social or cultural conflicts, and affect the local community in a negative way. Sustainable development affects geospatial environment and its economy and the improvement of resources for present and future needs of both tourists and local communities (Štetić & Šimičević, 2014).

Mountain tourism is a form of travel and vacation that depends directly on the leisure time of tourists. There are a variety of opportunities and challenges, which are primarily caused by the specific natural factors, such as elevation, biodiversity and the specific weather conditions. These factors significantly influence the choice of travel by visitors, and determine the type, scope and quality of services that providers can offer. Specific characteristics of mountain tourism are actually seasonal difference between summer and winter tourism. These differences represent attractiveness on the one hand and a limiting factor for tourism activities, on the other hand.

An important national priority for achieving sustainable development in the Republic of Serbia refers to the protection and improvement of the environment and rational use of natural resources. The priority makes the adoption and implementation of the Draft of National Environmental Program with appropriate action plans, as well as the adoption and implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Resources and Goods. The significance of rural and mountain tourism development in Serbia is undoubted, because in this way the possibilities are expanded for (Štetić, 2002):

- Extending basics of tourism development and increasing revenue from this activity;
- Valorizing continental parts through their inclusion in the tourism offer;
- Creating the basis for expanding the real circle of tourist demand;
- Developing underdeveloped areas through their inclusion in the tourism offer;
- Employing a larger number of household members by providing services to tourists who reside with the host;
- Placing surplus agricultural products of rural households;
- Placing products of domestic work and preservation of customs and return of old forgotten crafts;
- Creating opportunities for returning the population to the part of abandoned rural and mountain areas and their revitalization, etc.

Aim of this chapter is to explore potentials for rural tourism in the mountain area in Eastern Serbia and the possibilities for its development. It is very important as rural tourism can help to protect natural values of the mountains and the benefits for this part of the country would be far-reaching. Although a tourism development program was adopted in the Republic of Serbia, unfortunately it has not had a significant impact on this part of the country so far. This paper therefore focuses on existing potentials and abilities of their inclusion in the tourist offer, with particular emphasis on sustainable development.