

BOOK REVIEWS

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„COMPETITIVENESS OF RURAL TORUIST DESTINATION IN THE AREA OF LOWER DANUBE REGION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA“

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Author Predrag M. Vuković Ph.D., a research associate in the Institute of Agricultural Economics, Belgrade has just published Monography under the title „*Competitiveness of rural toruist destination in the area of lower Danube region in the Republic Of Serbia*“. Monography could have significant impact on the theory and practice of competititvness of rural tourism Monography is result of research on the project „Sustainable agriculture and rural development in the function of accomplishing strategic objectives of the Republic of Serbia within the Danube region“, No. III - 46006, financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia“.

Author has been researching topic many yerars and studing various aspect of rural tourism in the theory and also in the Republic of Serbia. The monograph is conceptualized in six chapters with a total of 301 pages. The author approaches the problem of rural tourism in a systematic way using all relevant scientific methods.

The complexity of rural tourism issues coming from the fact that it touches two important branches of national economy - agriculture and tourism. This led to the fact that to date there is no single universally accepted definition, both in the literature and by the important international organizations that monitor its development.

Historically, the expansion in rural tourism development began after Second World War. Practically, growth of the interest has been recorded since the car became available to a large number of people, making possible for many rural areas to become accessible to city urban populations interested in vacationing in rural areas. The development of rural tourism was recorded first in the countries of Western Europe and North America, and then in others.

The trend of rural tourism development and expansion is present almost throughout Europe today. The reasons are many. Rural tourism has managed to slow down some of the major problems that have plagued people's lives in rural areas (such as accelerated aging of rural population, migration to cities urban centers, unemployment, declining macroeconomic indicators, etc.) or to stop them completely in individual cases. The cases have been reported in some Western European countries that rural tourism has triggered these negative trends which burdened rural areas in the opposite direction. Moreover, recognizing the positive consequences of rural tourism, some rural households have shifted from primary agricultural production to exclusively rural tourism. Such examples have been reported in Germany, Austria, Italy, France, etc. Following the positive examples, a large number of countries in Europe and the Americas seek to use their natural and social, or anthropogenic, resources in rural areas to put them at the service of rural tourism development.

The Republic of Serbia has respectable resources to develop various types of rural tourism, such as natural, anthropogenic and other. One of the large and so far underused natural tourist attractions is the Danube River.

The Danube, after the Volga, is the second longest river in Europe. It flows through eleven countries over 3,505 km in length. It is an integral part of the trans-European navigation system Rhine - Main - Danube, connect Atlantic and Mediterranean. In the Europe's traffic system, the Danube River was selected as the European traffic Corridor user VII. In the Republic of Serbia, it covers length of 588 km has been navigated and three simply geographical units have been formed: the Upper Danube, the metropolitan areas of Belgrade - Novi Sad and the Lower Danube Region.

The focus of the research on this monograph is the areas of the Lower Danube region in the Republic of Serbia, its rural areas, i.e., monograph analyses of the situation and opportunities for the development of rural tourism in them. This paper analyzes the theoretical and practical aspects of the competitiveness of rural tourist destinations and examines the possibilities for increasing them. Factors affecting the management of rural tourist destinations are also analyzed. The problems of rural tourism development are considered. On the basis of the empirical research which was conducted and gained results, it has done Annalise of the elements of tourist supply that have influence on competitiveness of rural tourist destinations and it has defined strategic directions for the future development of rural tourism in the Lower Danube region. Having in mind the numerous factors that have negatively influence on the rural area and their development, the subject of the research were also conceptual measures for the proper management of rural tourist destinations.

The author successfully connect theoretical issues with practical results of conducted research. This is reflected in the fact that the author in monograph, with his overall interdisciplinary research and results, systematically and analytically approaches the analysis of factors of development of rural tourist destinations in of the Lower Danube region. Conceptually he defines rural tourist destinations and creates a typology of rural tourist destinations based on the character and specific features of the rural tourist offer.

The monographs have carried out a critical evaluation of the impact of relevant social, environmental, economic and political factors on the development of rural tourism in the Lower Danube region in the Republic of Serbia so far, and the levels of development are specified, with descriptions individually. Through an empirical research stemming from an extensive theoretical approach, an analysis of the complete value chain of rural tourism supply in the Lower Danube region has been made; so that the strongest and weakest links in the value chain of tourist supply can be clearly identified. Also, the author suggests key factors that enable complementary development of rural tourism with other types of tourism that can be implemented in rural areas of the Lower Danube region.

Practical contribution of the monograph written by the author Predrag M. Vukovic Ph.D. steems from the results of the original conducted survey which conclusions represent the basis for the definition of the directions, streaming and propose of practical measaures how to improve development of rural tourism in the area of the Lower Danube region.

Having in mind all the above, all stakeholders interested in the issue of the competitiveness of rural tourist destinations in this monography can find a very interesting

and useful theoretical and practical reading material. A particular contribution to the development of tourism can be found by local stakeholders who are practically interested in the development of rural tourism in the Lower Danube Region.

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