

Service sector in terms of changing environment

Spatial planning and sustainable tourism as basis for developing competitive tourist destinations

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Abstract

It becomes evident that the increase and expansion of tourism markets, also the creation of larger and more numerous tourist destinations, or the growth of the overall tourism industry which is expected to advance in the coming decades as never before, will cause enormous effects on the economy, cultural identity, as well as on the physical environment. It is required on a global level, to adequately distribute the development of tourism resorts and destinations, as well as to deal with the dangers that can arise and are related to overcrowding which can cause unsustainable development of the most visited and most attractive tourism places. The aim of the paper is to present the importance of the contemporary changes in tourism which requires adaptation of all participants in the creation of the tourism offer in given destinations. The destinations start to be considered as complex wholes with an aim to ensure competitiveness on the tourism market. Sustainable tourism has become a separate category of selective tourism offer. Destinations become to be a set of joint tourism products and services, which implies the active participation of all stakeholders. New concepts for achieving competitiveness have been developed such as: development of sustainable destinations, destination management planning and implementation of integrated quality management.

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1. Introduction

Tourism, observed as a complex social and economic phenomenon, has risen to unprecedented levels of development and prosperity worldwide.

The past few years, the travel and tourism industry had to face a series of unpredictable events. The political uncertainty, terrorism, the variation and variability of consumer habits and demands, the economic turbulences and so on, created various pressures on the industry. In an effort to adapt to a changing marketplace, the travel and tourism industry had to restructure and refocus its efforts. While business plans have become shorter, more governments began to realize that they can not leave the growth and development of this industry only to chance. On the other side, the increased global awareness for these issues represented a huge opportunity for prospective directions in the industry. Noticeable is the shift in thinking about sustainable development and proper spatial planning as well as their impact on tourism and the mutual connection between them.

The providers of tourism services tend to offer such products and services that correspond to the given tourism needs of the consumers, who in a way "unite" themselves due to some mutual and specific necessities. Taking into account the geographical principle of determining the tourism market, we can define tourist destinations – spatial integrities where all transactions are occurring and are executed.

It becomes evident that the increase and expansion of the tourism markets, as well as the increase of the number and size of tourist destinations, or with other words – the growth of the overall tourism industry, will generate enormous effects on the economy, on the cultural identity, as well as on the physical surrounding and environment. On a global level, this requires adequate developmental allocation of tourism localities and destinations.

Openly and unequivocally it can be concluded that spatial planning and the development in general, can become unsustainable, if no detailed or thorough analysis and adequate research are undertaken. These should be focused on redefining the existing models and standards for establishing and executing tourism activities in certain areas.

Tourism represents a cross-sectional occurrence, involving a wide range of involved parties (stakeholders) from almost every domain who have different and often contradictory interests and agendas. The decisions about tourism development should be balanced between the national and the local needs, the private sector and the state, the local communities, the communities of citizens, between the tourists and the mass media etc. Especially political decisions should take into account the direct returns as well as the long-term benefits, which require a clear and well defined vision.

Therefore, sustainable tourism development is a very complex and complicated task to achieve.

2. Spatial planning as an opportunity for developing sustainable development

Sustainable development is a kind of development that adjusts the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of the future generations to satisfy their needs. Sustainable development needs to improve the integration of three independent developmental dimensions: *economic, social and environmental*.

Spatial planning can be used as an instrument for coordinating the socio - economic development through preventing environmental problems and simultaneously protecting the natural and cultural environment. The challenge for planning is to ensure efficient use of limited land resources and ensure balanced regional business development and balanced use of resources, including natural resources and landscape resources, soil, water and air. Because spatial planning has a long-term character, it can also involve important principles of sustainability.

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