

Service sector in terms of changing environment

## Cultural tourism in Ohrid as a selective form of tourism development

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate a specific type of tourism associated with cultural heritage through the analysis of the key segments that define it. The conducted research is related to a specific area through which it highlights its applicative value. The first part creates a broader context in which cultural tourism should be a part of the tourist offer. The second section focuses on a specific tourist destination, the city of Ohrid, which defines the necessary activities in order to ensure successful development of the cultural tourism. The analysis is based on the application of the SWOT methodology, applied for the wider area of Macedonia, with a detailed case study elaboration for the Ohrid area as most suitable for development of cultural tourism. The analysis differentiates the basic areas: the supply side, the scope of governance, marketing and promotion, with numerous indicated activities necessary to ensure the sustainable development of cultural tourism in an area protected by UNESCO. Generally it should be accepted that if cultural tourism is a complex type of tourism, then for its development the cluster approach should be essential which will ensure involvement of all stakeholders. If a variety of relevant activities are provided in the basic domains of operation which are addressed to each participant in cultural tourism, then its success will be very certain.

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*Keywords:* Cultural tourism; Ohrid; management of protected areas; cluster approach.

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### 1. Introduction

This paper is the result of the research done as part of the Revision and Implementation of the National Tourism Development Strategy 2009-2013 for Macedonia. The existing need for the revision of the

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strategic approach towards tourist products design, methods and implementation of Macedonian tourism, led to the application of the cluster approach. The main interest in the paper is set on the cultural tourism. The Republic of Macedonia of today is the result of a rich and diverse history, which highlights a wealthy multicultural heritage. Macedonia's development has clearly been funded on successive historic and cultural identities (Antic, Mediaeval, Late Medieval), whose remains are still visible today. That is why cultural tourism presents a great asset of Macedonian tourism development which focus is put on. The example of cultural tourism in Ohrid has been examined through the scope of clustering. Researched are all stakeholders in the destination Ohrid which together direct their strategies towards a common goal.

The practical implications are evident of this contemporary approach. First because competition on the tourist market is getting tougher and second, it is the result of changes in the tourism industry in the past decades where the traditional methods of operating can not be applied any more. Hence, this cluster approach besides Ohrid as a pilot spot used in the revision can be used to other regions as well.

The main purpose of this paper is to improve the current methodology for strategic development of regions in a tourism sense. Ohrid as a pilot spot for implementing the cluster approach will be a successful example for other cultural destinations as well. It will show that communication between all stakeholders is essential for success. Thus, through the case study of the Ohrid cluster, this paper is aiming to enhance and widen the existing knowledge in tourism research done in Macedonia and to show the positive impacts and benefits this approach has.

## 2. Macedonian cultural resources

Diversity in Macedonia is the main word to qualify its tangible and intangible heritage. The major stake of tourism development in Macedonia is now to find the appropriate sustainable marketing offers and enhancement tools to reveal them as key tourist resources. Macedonia first determines itself by the variety and number of cultural heritage sites, directly inserted in its rural, mountain and urban landscapes. On its small geographical area of only 25 713 km<sup>2</sup>, presently exist: Thousands monuments of culture from the Neolithic to the Ottoman historic periods; numerous archeological sites (with hundreds that are protected; memorial monuments; excellent examples of urban, rural and commercial architecture; vast number of churches and monasteries; medieval buildings, fortresses, bridges, towers; also a large number of mosques; as well as other objects from the 15<sup>th</sup> till the 19<sup>th</sup> century; unique religious masterpieces of great cultural importance – numerous icons inside the churches.

The visibility, accessibility, and knowledge by the Macedonians themselves of these cultural heritage resources and sites are generally little developed, and above all contrasted. Whereas the UNESCO-registered Ancient Town and Lake of Ohrid has highlighted some now popular heritage facilities, and apart from major Macedonian archaeological sites, many other heritage spots of major historic value remain almost unknown, due to their maintenance conditions, geographic location, or/and poor accessibility due to lack of transport connections.

The tourism development's paradoxical stake in Macedonia shows through this symbolic anecdote: Macedonia has now to justify and build contents behind its popular name, present in most foreigners' minds with historic and gastronomic connotations but with very few related actual contents. It has to build a coherent and overall tourist strategic product on a major asset – **diversity**.

## 3. Past activities regarding cultural tourism in Macedonia

Several relevant examples of decentralized cooperation already illustrate the needs and the capacity of the Macedonian actors at local and regional level to enter such programs and benefit from a direct transfer of know-how and of best practices. The example of the French Region of Lower Normandy is certainly

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