



ECO-TOURISM POTENTIAL FOR NEW EMPLOYMENT



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Eco-tourism, as a new trend in the way of travel and in the use of leisure time, represents a responsible journey into a relatively untouched nature area with the aim of enjoying it, as well as appreciating it (including accompanying cultural objects from the past and present), and it promotes the environmental protection. Eco-tourism has a minimal impact on nature and provides the possibility of active socio-economic involvement of the local population in the tourist industry.



Eco-tourism as a new discipline within tourism represents an 'industry in growth', especially in less developed countries, where it is promoted in the function of protected area management, environmental protection and sustainable development.

Many people often ask why eco-tourism should be viewed differently than other forms of sustainable tourism. In essence, eco-tourism must be planned and managed in such a way that it successfully achieves its social and economic goals while ensuring full environmental protection. This requires:



The development of a new product in the tourism sector will ensure the creation of preconditions required to provide something new to the interested users of tourist services, and to enable residents of the valley of the Tamiš River to improve the unfavourable social situation caused by the economic situation, depopulation and aging of the population.

Having in mind the users of the new tourism product - tourists and visitors, it is necessary to prepare a local tourism offer by creating a network of all those that are interested in providing tourist services, developing and promoting innovative tourist activities. This network consists primarily of:

- Tour operators / tourist organizations
- Commercial SMEs and entrepreneurs in tourism (restaurants, shops, service providers, event organizers, etc.)
- Civil society organizations (ecological, bird-watching, sport fishing)
- Local self-government
- Sports clubs and
- Rural tourism and development.



Each of the potential members of the network of tourism service providers has its place and ability to influence the level of employment of the population and the standard of living, since the emphasis, promotion and inclusion of some space in tourism, drives the economy in order to ensure fast and high-quality access to that place, accommodation, supply of energy and goods, maintenance and protection activities, as well as facilities for quality organization of tourist time.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia is an interest, business-professional organization that, with the aim to harmonize and represent the interests of its members and to stimulate economic activities:

carry out activities to improve the competitiveness of the economy,

- promote the development of entrepreneurship,
- prepare business education programs in accordance with the needs of the economy and organizes formal and informal forms of business education,
- establish and promote the economic cooperation of the economy with foreign countries, promote economic potentials and attract foreign investments,
- cooperate with local self-government bodies on defining and realization of development projects of districts and local self-governments - cities and municipalities,
- participate in the organization of local, regional and cross-border economic conferences and events,



- prepare project applications and realize projects according to calls from the European Union, international organizations, funds and other foreign and domestic institutions and organizations.



In accordance with the mentioned activities, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia - Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the South Banat Administrative District, in the implementation of the project Eco Tamiš (Timiș) - a New Tourism Product, plays a key role in promoting the new tourist product and organizing education - lectures, seminars or specialized, thematic training to improve the knowledge and skills of existing and future participants in eco-tourism.

Through these and other project activities, the basic goal of the project will be achieved - to create preconditions for creating new jobs through the development of the new tourism product and to contribute to economic and social development in the valley of the Tamiš River.



The development of the new tourism product, Eco Tamiš, which, among other things, includes hiking, biking, canoeing, sport fishing and bird-watching, will create conditions for increasing the capacity of stakeholders to better support the tourism offer.

Tourism is a significant economic activity since it includes transport, catering, retail trade, travel agencies, utilities, crafts and the rest of the economy related to:

- Construction and maintenance of transport infrastructure (traffic communications for air, water, road, automobile and railway traffic),
- Maintenance and construction of energy infrastructure (power stations, power lines, substations, energy supplies),



- Maintenance and development of communal infrastructure,
- Construction and equipping of accommodation capacities: hotels, private accommodation, campsites, ethno villages



- Providing quality food products,
- Engaging local agricultural capacities for providing quality local products,
- Development and maintenance of a specific tourism offer: beaches, local paths and roads,
- Education and training of employees,
- Production of promotional materials and souvenirs,
- Promotion - advertising the tourism offer,



- Education and organization of control and protection services.

As it can be seen, many different participants must be included in one system - network including entrepreneurs, agricultural holdings, government, NGOs, associations, clusters and local communities that, depending on their role in the realization of eco-tourism, have been classified into target groups:

TOUR OPERATORS / TOURIST ORGANIZATIONS

A tour operator is a business entity that creates and organizes travel arrangements, by joining the services of various service providers, in its own name and for its own account, which is the main source of revenue for it. The main function of the tour operator is organizational, while the main function of a travel agency is intermediary. The tour operator is, therefore, the creator and organizer of an offer, while the travel agency, in contact with customers, intermediates in the realization of the trip.



The tour operator carries out the sale of its services using agents (travel agencies) that directly sell their services to clients and do not bear the risk of unsold capacities, while the tour operator bears this risk. As a rule, the tour operator does not have direct contacts with clients, and its location is not crucial to success, while to a travel agency, the location is one of the most important elements.

The main source of income for the travel agency is the commission, and for the tour operator - the sale of own products.

Tour organisers have great responsibility because they create a brand that sells an ecotourism product. With their promo materials - catalogues where you can see pictures of life in nature and ecosystems, internet presentations, through the distribution of movies and other promo material, they sell their product, but also reduce the impact of their tourism activities on the environment (energy consumption, water consumption, waste avoidance, landscaping).



Local destinations must be prepared to properly manage ecotourism in order to reduce the risks of disturbing their natural and cultural resources and, ultimately, their position in a rapidly growing

international market. The local population is expected to participate in the promotion of local heritage through various touristic contents that will represent the characteristics of the respective region in the best possible way.

Travel organizers take responsibility for their clients during the trip. Every trip must be of high quality and its educational components of eco-tourism must meet the standards of ecotourism (quality guides).



The Tamiš River valley with its forests, marshy land, saline land, flooded pastures, ponds and lakes, with the minimal influence of man is largely preserved - autochthonous natural environment, which can be a real challenge for tour operators and travel agencies to design a unique offer in the tourist arrangement market.

Tourism focused on destinations in nature is essentially a simple journey to areas of beautiful nature, while ecotourism brings

environmental, cultural and economic benefits to the local population. For example, a tourist who goes to nature can watch birds.



But eco-tourists watch birds with a local guide, stay in the local accommodation capacity (ecolodge) and contribute to the local economy. Local guides are usually strongly motivated to present the natural attractiveness of their homeland to the tourists, and with their knowledge, they provoke sincere respect.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS

Local self-governments, along with the Government at the republic and provincial levels, have an extremely important and complex role in the development of ecotourism, which is defined through the activities of various stakeholders, strategies, studies, plans and programs that provide socio-economic development.



Local communities, or local self-governments, with the help of institutions at the provincial and republic levels, can define acceptable models of investment in eco-tourism through various programs such as: program of protection and conservation of biological diversity, development of agriculture and villages and other programs financed through various Funds of the EU.

Under certain conditions, local self-governments can make their natural resources available to entrepreneurs, micro and small

enterprises, agricultural holdings, cooperatives, associations: grazing land, land cultivation, wood and other materials for heating, construction material, reed, willow, harvesting of fruits, hunting, fishing).

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS / ASSOCIATIONS

The specificity of business in ecotourism is a large number of micro and small enterprises, agricultural holdings. The essential issue is their efficient organization and connection in order to achieve the competitiveness of a particular destination (available services and activities at a specific destination, the so-called ecotourism chain of supply). This can only be done by effective linking within clusters, associations or local tourism organizations that will provide logistic and organizational support to apply for certain financial resources with project proposals to domestic and international institutions.

RURAL TOURISM

Instead of a classical journey, the so-called “sunny tourism”, tourists increasingly choose “soft” and “green” tourism - travel to destinations of green rural ambiance, from large urban to small rural areas in the interior. Owing to the development of rural tourism, local populations remain at their homes, new jobs are created, agricultural production is strengthened and products are immediately placed in the tourism industry, and all of these enable the socio-economic progress of rural areas. Rural tourism meets the needs of people from cities seeking free space, offers them a wide range of possibilities (works in the field, sports, games, cultural events), and familiarizes them with natural resources and folklore heritage, as well as with the characteristic crops of the region. The specificity of rural tourism is its regional character based on local values. There are also numerous local festivals and events that show the sense of pride of

the local community in relation to their natural surroundings and cultural heritage.



SPORT CLUBS

The Tamiš River valley is characterized by exceptional eco-tourism potential for organizing active holidays, sport fishing, bird-watching, hiking or cycling. In addition, the Tamiš River abounds with numerous meanders, which are ideal places for rowing sports - kayak and canoe, as well as for boating.

Similar to civil society organizations, sports clubs can also obtain funds necessary for their development and smooth functioning, through project financing, and they can use these funds for the construction of sports grounds, promenades, for the procurement of equipment and sports props (exercise equipment, boats, kayaks / canoes, fishing equipment). In addition to tourists, members of the clubs would also be able to use these facilities.



MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES, ENTREPRENEURS IN TOURISM

Considering that eco-tourism is intended to:

- attract tourists into natural environments that are unique but also affordable,
- be organized with the aim of preserving nature through education,
- ensure changes in attitudes of the local population and management,
- provide employment and
- provide entrepreneurial opportunities for the local population,

We will present below some of the possible areas for the development of small local businesses, including traditional food preparation and other types of craft shops owned by local residents, in which new jobs can be created.

1. Guidance Services / Eco Guides

Eco guides are an important part of the organization of travel, and they must be specially trained for nature tours, they must know the terrain and possible risks, have the skill of quality presentation and interpretation, and promote the principles of sustainable tourism along with the responsible behaviour of tourists. Unlike professional tourist guides, eco-tour guides provide services on the “periphery” of the tourism system and contribute to the emergence of new attractions through their activities. The main roles of eco-guides are to be good motivators and encourage tourists to respect the natural environment and discourage their harmful behaviour, as well as interpreters when explaining natural attractions and pointing to their sensitivity as a resource. Various natural, cultural and scientific concepts are explained, interpreted to tourists in ordinary, everyday language, as a rule, in the form of an interesting story, understandable to the “average” man.

2. Accommodation Capacities / Eco Lodging, Campsites, Green Hotels, Ethno Villages

These are mainly modest facilities that meet the basic needs of tourists, and are located in or near protected natural areas. Accommodation units are made of indigenous materials, in accordance with the traditional way of construction, architecture and features of the surrounding environment. The building criteria in the first place should protect the natural and cultural components of the environment; minimize the impact on the environment during construction; fit into the specific context of the environment; use alternative and sustainable options in water consumption; ensure careful handling of waste and wastewater; apply programs of ecological education of both employees and tourists; contribute to the sustainable development of the local community in the form of various research programs.

Green hotels are hotels that apply and respect the principles of sustainable development in their business. Modern pressures from ecologists, clients and employees, as well as financial moments, have created a tempting space for hotels to operate in a modern way, assuming the responsibility for environmental conservation.

The construction of eco-camps would allow longer stays of groups (pupils, students), and therefore the attractiveness of space would be increased. An even greater contribution to this would be made by museums built in nature, in the open, where it would be possible to frequently change exhibitions, displaying birds, insects, butterflies, rare plants or animals, or indicating the problems related to the protection of water, nature, etc.

Visitors are mainly independent travellers who do not travel with a tourist guide. There are many possibilities for recreation that can be offered here: bird-watching, canoeing, horse riding, cycling, beach trips, educational visits to local museums, zoos, farms.



It must be mentioned here that all open-air recreation sites designed to protect sensitive resources (hiking trails, bicycle paths and forest paths, beaches) are intended to be used by the local population as well.

In order to achieve a complete tourism offer, the local economy can fully engage the local workforce in the following jobs:

- Maintenance and construction of communal infrastructure,
- Construction of accommodation capacities: hotels, private accommodation, campsites, ethno villages,
- Equipping of accommodation capacities,
- Providing quality food products,
- Engaging local agricultural capacities to provide quality local products,
- Building and maintaining a specific tourism offer: beaches, local trails, paths and roads,
- Education and training of employees, provision of consulting services, translation services,
- Production of promotional materials and souvenirs,
- Promotion - advertising the tourism offer,
- Education and organization of control and protection services.



Having in mind that services or goods are provided at a local level, in a limited space, interested people may, with small investments, develop jobs for themselves with their family members or associated with others.

How to Get a Job in Tourism?



3. Beekeeping

Beekeeping, as a state-supported branch of agriculture with an increasing number of people involved in it, can be profitable, but only if a beekeeper respects several rules of this profession. From zero to a minimum of 20 hives, it takes about € 2,500 and 5 to 10 ares of land (€ 100 per hive), plus the cost of equipment. With 100 hives, a beekeeper can support a four-member family.

In beekeeping, we distinguish beekeeping in which a beekeeper relocates his hives to a place near a pasture depending on the seasons, and stationary beekeeping where a beekeeper places his hives mostly in one place close to his premises.

Beekeepers are a specific type of food producers because they do not depend on their land, and they often own very little or no land.





In addition to honey, the important products of beekeeping also include pollen, bee poison, bee wax, royal jelly and propolis. Many products are results of the direct work of bees, but there are also products made with the additional engagement of diligent beekeepers - honey with honeycomb, mixtures of honey, medicinal herbs and propolis, solutions and propolis tinctures, cosmetics based on honey and wax, honey brandy.

4. Production and Processing of Medicinal Herbs

In recent years, there has been growing awareness of the need to change the diet, returning to the traditional nutrition and the production of natural medicines. This is why interest in medicinal and aromatic plants and spices is growing. With constant increases in the demand for these raw materials, there is a growing need for a scientific approach to this issue, which leads to the development of the cultivation of medicinal plants and spices in limited areas.

The Pannonian Plain is the most important agricultural area. The common types of soil here are chernozem and marshy black soil. In these conditions, a great number of medicinal plants and spices are growing. The plain is divided by numerous rivers and canals, which enables the development of many wetland plants and, at the same time, the irrigation of other surfaces. Along the rivers and

canals, in marshy lands, significant medicinal woody species, such as willow, poplar, birch, oak, bay oak, etc., grow, while most common plants in this area are chamomile, marshmallow, henbane, jimson weed, shop valerian, liquorice.



For one hectare:

- Production of marshmallow root – costs: € 2,000, profit: € 1,250 Production of chamomile – costs: about € 600, profit about € 900
- Production of anise – costs: about € 700, profit: € 450
- Production of basil – costs: about € 850, profit: € 1.100
- In the first year, growing mint brings a profit of about € 600, while in the second and third years, the profit is about a thousand Euros.

However, if medicinal plants are further processed (drying, extraction of essential oils, pressing, packaging), the possibility of earning money is multiplied.

5. Production and Processing of Vegetables, Fruit, Dried Fruit Production of Juices and Alcoholic Beverages



Food obtained by processing fruits and vegetables in a traditional way represents a great opportunity for farmers and processors. Small producers are characterized by the production of fruit and vegetable without the use of herbicides and pesticides, artificial fertilizers, without genetic modification of plants, and there is an increasing demand for these products on the market today. In this diversity, small factories that deal with fruit and vegetable processing see their chance on the market.



The demand for healthy and traditional products, fruit and vegetable products, is growing. As with medicinal plants, processing (drying, production of juices, alcoholic beverages, and jams, compotes) significantly increases the possibility of earning money, with minimum investments in equipment.

6. Production of Flowers and Planting Material

The production of flowers and planting material in greenhouses is one of the agricultural activities carried out in controlled and protected conditions, so it is increasingly used in both the world



and our country. As agriculture is one of the most promising branches of our economy, and as indeed the future lies in it, an increasing number of people are choosing to perform this activity. The cultivation of any crops, not just planting material in greenhouses, is a very profitable business. Since this is a protected area that does not depend on weather conditions and is not directly exposed to weather changes, it provides significantly higher yields than the cultivation of agricultural crops in the classical way, that is, in the fields under the open sky.

7. Breeding Sheep, Goats, Pigs / Production of Milk and Dairy Products, Meat and Meat Products



To start this activity, it is necessary to have adequate space (facilities) for the accommodation of animals and pastures for their nutrition. With initial investments for the purchase of a herd of about € 5,000 and food for their fattening (about € 1,000) no additional investment is required.

If the conditions, primarily facilities complying with food production standards allow, it is possible to organize processing and / or production of meat products, and in case of sheep, goats or cows it is advisable to produce cheese, kajmak and other dairy products obtained from milk.

For these activities, it is sufficient to register the farm and prepare appropriate facilities (buildings, greenhouses), while the sale can be done on the spot, at local markets or through arranged cooperation with retailers and wholesalers. A certain part of the activity is seasonal, but good organization and production of products with higher degrees of processing can provide business continuity throughout the year and constant income.

8. Production of Briquettes and Pellets

By the procurement of a briquetting line and production of briquettes from bio-mass (reeds, wheat and soy straw, corn stover, hay, etc.), in addition to a positive financial effect, a very significant effect on the conservation and protection of the environment, as well as significant savings in energy costs, can be achieved. The obtained briquette can be used for own needs (heating of residential or commercial buildings) or for sale on the market. Also, all biological material obtained by the arrangement of the river bank or forests (branches) can be usefully used in this way.



Production of Wood Products (Toys, Wooden Fancy Goods, Packaging, Hives)



For the production of wood products for the needs of eco-tourism, one combined carpenter's machine and hand tools are sufficient. We primarily think of the production of benches, tables, canopies, fences for equipping eco-tourism facilities (ethno hous-

es, campsites, certain places along paths, observation posts, fishing area). In addition, the following products can be made of wood: furniture, stairways, hives, wooden toys, wooden fancy goods (rolling pins, kitchen boards, racks) and various souvenirs for tourists.

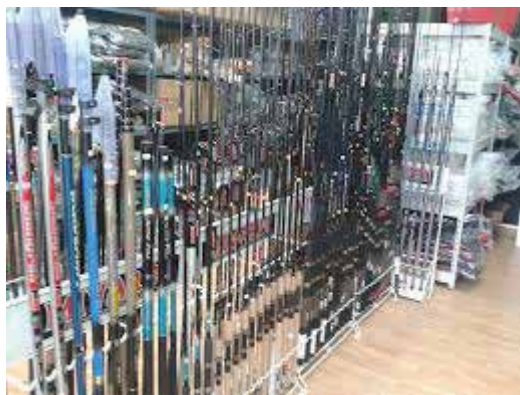
9. Craft Services

In the sector of providing craft services for eco-tourism, there are great opportunities for new jobs. Namely, the construction and maintenance of facilities for the accommodation of guests - hotels, restaurants, require a large number of craft services in the field of civil engineering, from the production of blocks for masonry, concrete elements, building joinery, production of metal structures, to ceramic and plumbing services, house and woodwork painting, electrical and locksmith services, etc.



The assumption is that in every city there are already workshops / companies that perform these types of activities, but the development of eco-tourism creates preconditions for opening new jobs and offering new employment opportunities.

In addition to craft services in the construction industry, motor vehicle, bicycle and motorcycle service and maintenance, towing service, tyre repair workshops, and service and maintenance of air conditioners, household appliances and equipment in cafés, restaurants and hotels are also important.



The trade sector, primarily retail trade, is also interesting because in addition to general stores, there is a need for opening specialized ones: for the sale of fishing tackle, equipment and baits, sale of honey, alcoholic beverages and juices.



In the field of providing personal services: hairdressing and beauty salons, massage, fitness and, very important, health services, primarily dental services, that are significantly cheaper here.

For the said activities, it is necessary to register an entrepreneurial workshop or limited liability company, to prepare appropriate facilities and to provide appropriate equipment and tools. Services can be provided in registered facilities or performed in the field - as needed.

At the end, we have a large area of the provision of services that can be best provided through the work of women's associations. These services include the following:

10. Production of embroidered, knitted and woven products / stockings, shawls, garments /

***Production of costume jewellery, jewellery, souvenirs,
Production of traditional dishes and cakes***



These products are mostly the result of the activities of women at a local level. By preserving and fostering old crafts and cottage industry, and using traditional techniques in the production of handicrafts, souvenirs, garments, various business gifts, or interior furnishings, women from rural areas can make their potentials and creativity renowned, highlighting the key role they play in the promotion of rural development.

As the bearers of the tradition and culture of their micro-environments, rural women, with their inexhaustible creativity and activism, positively influence the improvement of their own social and economic status, and social policy by reducing poverty in villages. Only in the territory of Vojvodina, there are about 180 associations of rural women and about 400 women's associations. These women are engaged in old crafts, agriculture, production of souvenirs and organic foods, they participate in fairs and they work together to empower women entrepreneurship and provide financial independence for women. They represent the strength that can contribute to the success and development of eco-tourism - our new tourism product.



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Project partners

Centre of volunteers' and nature
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www.pgcvp.rs



Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia
Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry
of the South Banat Administrative District
www.pks.rs



Miltonia Association, Romania, Timiș
www.miltonia.ro



Association for Tourism Promotion and
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Attractiveness for sustainable tourism

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