THE IMPACT OF TOURISM IN ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF PROTECTED AREAS

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Abstract

The national park Mavrovo has rich and diverse natural resources which are an important and valuable part of the area. In addition to the territory there are numerous attractive tourist landscapes and ambiental values which together with the cultural and historical heritage enrich the tourist offer of the park. The tourist values of the National Park have been enriched and completed with the numerous accommodations and related tourism infrastructure that has been built in order to meet the traveler's needs. According to the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Macedonia the National Park Mavrovo has a national and international tourist significance. Therefore, the authors consider it necessary to design a tourist development for the area which will improve the competitiveness of the demanding tourism market and to keep the importance of the region for the tourists. For this purpose, the authors made the projections by analysis which was made on the basis of the current situation in terms of tourism development and the basis of the concepts of sustainable tourism development. This approach should enable sustainable tourism management for the protected area and it will allow increased general economic development where tourism will be the main instigator.

Keywords: National Park, development, planning.

INTRODUCTION

The area that is treated in this paper in terms of its planning is a real area of human life, set up, organized and equipped with human labor as a human environment. The area occupied by the National Park Mavrovo due to its exceptional natural beauty as well as the characteristic flora and fauna which is in an aboundends was declared as a National Park in 1949. Since then the territory is a tourist area with great potential and is the main drive of tourism in the Mavrovo-Debar area. Nature-based tourism is increasing worldwide and with it the opportunity to engage these visitors to support and advocate

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for the protection of natural areas (Moore, Rodger, and Taplin 2015). Nature-based tourism (NBT), or leisure travel to natural areas, has shown tremendous growth over the past two decades (Ardoin et al. 2015). Tourism activity in the National Park Mavrovo is present both in the winter and the summer months of the year, therefore there is a need for development of the tourism in the future by overcoming the seasonal nature of the tourist activity by providing alternative forms of tourism which are confirmed by Dimitrievic according to whom: the park is an ideal opportunity for development for winter sports tourism, summer stationary tourism, health tourism, weekend tourism, excursion tourism, residential tourism, weekend tourism as well as fishing and hunting tourism (Dimitrievic 2011). The mountainous and protected area should be based on the multifunctional and the traditional mountainous activities and the gradual integration of the local population for the development of tourism (Maxin, Korac, and Milijic 2013). Particularly significant for sustainable development is public-private partnership and cooperation among all stakeholders in protected areas, according to (Graci 2013). Suitable balance of both public and private sector involvement in tourism planning is vital in ensuring optimal tourism outcomes for destination areas (Shone, Simmons, and Dalziel 2016). Collaboration, specifically through multi-stakeholder partnerships, has been seen as an effective way to support initiatives in tourism development. The successful development of the tourism industry cannot be achieved in isolation but requires a holistic view to be taken of the development of all industries across the region as a whole (Jarvis, Stoeckl, and Liu 2016). Effective governance has been identified as one of the most important factors in sustainable tourism implementation. As governance structures are increasingly becoming network-based, attention needs to be diverted to the effectiveness of partnerships in achieving sustainability in tourism (Farmaki 2015). The formulation and implementation of policies and strategies by government and non-government organizations are key to Indigenous tourism operators gaining a competitive advantage (Fletcher, Pforr, and Brueckner 2016). Sustainable tourism policies may also encourage protected area policies of boosting community well-being and widening actor engagement in policy-making (Mellon and Bramwell 2016). It is therefore important that suppliers of tourism services adopt environmentally sustainable practices; if not for altruistic reasons, then at least in the interest of the protection of the very resources upon which their business success depends (Karlsson and Dolnicar 2016).

The National Park Mavrovo is located in the northwestern part of the Republic of Macedonia with borders of northern latitude of 41°33'01" to 41°52'39" and eastern longitude of 20°31'02" to 20°48'59". This park is the biggest of the three National Parks in the Republic of Macedonia, it has a territory of 723,99km^2 and that is 2,8% of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. The relief of the whole park is dominated by mountainous terrain with altitudes ranging from 525 meters up to 2,764 meters. The National Park is characterized by a good tourist-geographical and transport position within close proximity of corridor 8 and the international road E-65 and only 120 km from the two international airports Alexander the Great–Skopje and Saint Paul–Ohrid.

Because of the remarkable natural tourism potential and the favorable tourist and geographical position, tourism activity in the National Park Mavrovo has been registered as early as the thirties of the last century. The beginnings of tourism in the area are tied to the winter-sports activities and the village of Galicnik, while today on the territory of the Mavrovo–Debar tourist area there are 5 tourist zones with a total number of 16 tourist sites. The long tradition of sports activities is an important part of the development

strategy. Sport-based tourist attractions provide a unique blend of characteristics that can be featured as part of a strategy to connect visitors to places and to host cultures in meaningful ways (Hinch and Ramshaw 2014).

According to (Milenkovski and Gorgievski 2014) "the Mavrovo–Debar tourist region is one of the most developed in the country, the most notable in this regard is the Mavrovo travel Zone…." This further confirms the importance of tourism in the National Park Mavrovo.

Table 1. Zones of the Mavrovo-Debar tourist region

Tourist region	Tourist zone	Tourist sites
Mavrovo–Debar region	Mavrovo zone	Mavrovi anovi
		Mavrovo
		Bunec
		Leunovo
		Nikiforovo
		Strazha
	Radika–Debar zone	Trnica
		Galichnik
		Shilo Verte
		Jovan Bigorski
		Lazaropole
	City tourism center	Debar
	Kosovrasti–Debar lake	Kosovrasti Banja
	Banjishte	Banjishte
		Debar Lake
	Gari–Golem rid	Stogovo–Golem Rid

Source: Data from Spatial Plan of the Republic of Macedonia. 2002–2020.
Ministry of environment and spatial planning. 2010, table 39.

1. METODOLOGY

The basic theoretical assumption in the paper is that with the proper spatial planning of tourism in the territory of the National Park Mavrovo will be achieved with spatial and temporal dispersion of tourist movement and the activation of a greater number of tourism forms will increase the tourist volume which will influence the increased development of other economic sectors as well as improve the living standards of the local population. The data used in the paper is secondary data available from the official State Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of environment and physical planning of the Republic of Macedonia, Register of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Macedonia and the Cultural Heritage Protection Office, Action plans for tourism development in the area of the municipality and other similar data.

When preparing the paper and the processing of data several different methods of scientific research studies in the field of tourism were used: analysis method by which the collected data is analyzed, comparative method for comparing data, statistical method for presenting statistical data and inventory of tourism resources which are subject to valorization and SWOT analysis with which an estimation of the current state and prospects are estimated and the benefits for future tourism development is established.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The basic indicators of the degree of development of tourism in the National Park
Mavrovo is accommodation and the tourism volume which is expressed by the number
of tourists who visit the area.

2.1. Accommodation

In terms of accommodation facilities in the area, there are 19 accommodation facilities
that have different categories and they have 1258 beds in 478 rooms available.

Table 2. Accommodation in the Mavrovo-Debar tourist region

ordinal number	Type of object	Number of objects	Number of rooms	Number of beds
1	Hotel (5 stars)	1	62	160
2	Hotel (4 stars)	6	205	533
3	Hotel (3 stars)	4	103	270
4	Motel	4	23	66
5	Resorts	4	85	229
6	Total:	19	478	1258

Source: Data from Statistical review: Transport, tourism and other services. 2015.
State statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia. 2015: 11, table 19.

The data presented shows a total of 1258 beds, the hotels have 963 beds available,
which represents 76.55% of the total number of beds, followed by the number of beds in
the resorts which have 229 beds and are represented by 18.2% of the total number of
beds and the motels have 66 beds, representing 5.25% of the total number of beds. The
data suggests that most of the accommodation facilities in the area of the National Park
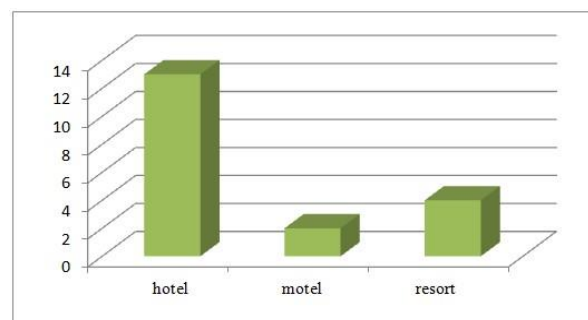Mavrovo are of satisfactory quality.

Figure 1. Categories of accommodation

But to show whether the area has enough accommodation facilities at the national
level it is necessary to compare data with the rest of the country. The National Park
accounts for 478 rooms and the total number of rooms in the country is 26,887 which is
only 1.77%, while in terms of the number of beds, the National Park participates with
1258 beds while the total number of beds in the country is up to 70,297 which is only

1.78%. The next graph is depicting the comparison of the number accommodations in the area with the accommodation facilities in the Republic of Macedonia.
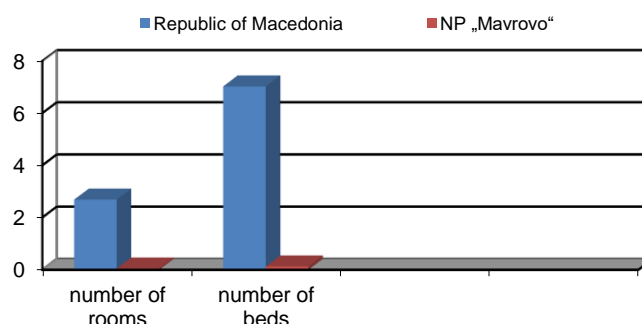

Figure 2. Accommodation capacity in the Republic of Macedonia

According to this analysis it is evident that the analyzed area represents a significant tourist area in the country especially in the Mavrovo–Debar tourist region and it has insufficient number of accommodation facilities, making it necessary to improve the poor conditions.

2.2. Tourist volume

The number of tourists and the realized lodgings is the second indicator of the level of tourism development in the National Park Mavrovo. For us to be able to analyze tourist attendance and the realized lodgings data was used from the State Statistics Office of Macedonia.

According to the data which are shown in the next table, the territory of the national park in 2015 was visited by 21.988 tourists of which 12.384 are domestic tourists, while the remaining 9,604 were foreign tourists.

Table 3. Travel attendance National Park Mavrovo - Republic of Macedonia

Year	National park Mavrovo			Republic of Macedonia		
	Total number of tourists	Domestic tourists	Foreign tourists	Total number of tourists	Domestic tourists	Foreign tourists
2015	21.988	12.384	9.604	701.794	302.114	399 .680

Source: Data from Statistical review: Transport, tourism and other services. 2015. State statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia. 2015: 11, table 04.

According to the data for the realized visits the contribution and dominance of the domestic tourists is noticeable and they participate with 56.32% of the total number of tourists in the region, while the number of foreign tourists is 43.68%. The number of foreign tourists is smaller but at the same time there isn't a big discrepancy between domestic and foreign tourists. A bigger discrepancy can be noticed in the number of tourists that visit the National Park in terms of the number of tourists in Macedonia, so in the year under review the number of tourists who visited the park account for only

3.13% of the total number of tourists who visited Macedonia in 2015. While the number of foreign tourists who visited the park account for 2.4% of the total number of foreign tourists who visited Macedonia in 2015. The disproportionate share of the number of tourists in the park in terms of number of tourists in Macedonia is presented in the following graph.
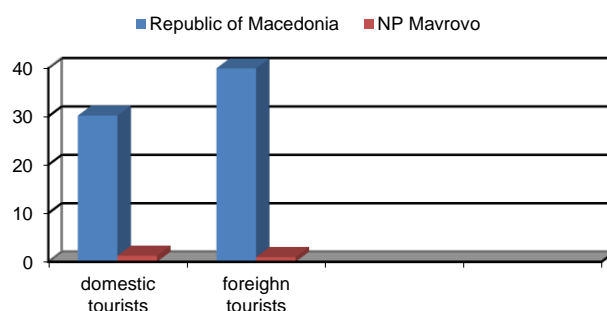

Figure 3. Tourist attendance in the Republic of Macedonia

According to the data presented in the table below, in the area of the National Park in 2015 a total of 41 261 night spent were realized, of which 22,406 night spent were domestic tourists, while the remaining 18,855 night spent were foreign tourists.

Table 4. Realized night spent in the National Park "Mavrovo" in terms of Republic of Macedonia

Year	National Park Mavrovo			Republic of Macedonia		
	Night spent	Domestic tourists	Foreign tourists	Night spent	Domestic tourists	Foreign tourists
2015	41.261	22.406	18.855	2.157.175	1.275.800	881.375

Source: Data from Statistical review: Transport, tourism and other services. 2015. State statistical office of the Republic of Macedonia. 2015: 11, table 05.

The data in the table shows a growing number of realized lodgings of domestic tourists, who achieved 54.29%, while foreign tourists realized 45.71% of the total number of lodgings in the park. Major differences exists in the participation of realized lodgings on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, as the realized lodgings in the park represent only 3.23% of the total realized lodgings in the country. While lodgings realized by foreign tourists in the park account for only 2.13% of the total number of lodgings realized by foreign tourists in the country. By analyzing the data of sightseeing and lodging we realized we can see the average length of stay of the tourists in the National Park, which is 1.87 days, which is less than the average stay of tourists in the country which is 3.07 days. Foreign tourists average 1.96 days in the area of the National Park which again is less compared to the average stay of foreign tourists in the Republic of Macedonia which with an average of 2.2 days. Analysis of the data from tourism volume (tourist visits, realized lodgings, average length of stay of tourists) suggest that in the area of the National Park Mavrovo it is necessary for tourism planning and design that will contribute to increased tourism development and greater participation of tourism volume in the total volume of tourists in the country.

2.3. SWOT analysis

To assess the current tourist development, based on the identified potential factors for the development of tourism, SWOT analysis was used, which assesses the state, the perceived weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats to tourism development in this area.

Advantages:
- Developed infrastructure which connects populated areas with places with a denser population and transport centers,
- the existence of accommodations
- the existence of initiative to develop tourism in the National Park Mavrovo
- the long tradition of the ski center Zare Larevski
- The existence of rich and significant cultural heritage (religious objects, traditional architecture, cultural manifestations, original customs, old crafts, traditional local cuisine, traditional handcrafts and much more.*)*
- The existence of rich and diverse natural heritage (flora and fauna, hydrographic elements, geomorphological elements and so on.)
- Moderate and favorable climatic conditions

Weaknesses:
- Lack of promotional and marketing activities
- Lack of organized tourist offers
- Low communal culture and hygiene
- Low level of maintenance of the ski trails in the winter
- Lack of promotion of alternative forms of tourism
- Lack of organization of the private accommodations
- Damaged infrastructure
- Lack of sidewalks by the local roads
- Low living standards of the local population
- Lack of tourist offers for non-skiers in the winter
- Lack of signs and markings that lead to tourist sites

Possibilities:
- Solid resources for development of various types of tourism which will diversify the tourism offer
- Good conditions for development of extreme sports in the summer and the winter
- Good geomorphological conditions for development of new ski resorts by the way of public-private partnership
- The ability to use renewable energy

Threats:
- Depopulation of settlements by the way of emigration of the young people
- Deforestation in an uncontrolled way
- Uncontrolled fishing
- The extinction of old traditional crafts
- The ruin and collapse of the old traditional architecture
- The lack of regulation of urban planning documentation in accordance to the parameters and the use of traditional principles, the use of materials and compositions of the construction new buildings and the integration in the ambient settings of the rural and natural areas.

CONCLUSION

National parks represent areas that have exceptional natural values and in accordance with their name they have national importance. As a rule all national parks in the world are significant they represent spaces and depending on their function they cause interest for the international visitors. Therefore, national parks represent a category with tourist motives which with its complexity have all the attractive attributes of nature as well as the man made attributes, and according to those values they meet the swapped attribute of value. All these attributes represent the category of values that are the subject of tourism studies and therefore, national parks represent the most complex natural tourist motives

However, the previously analyzed indicators of the level of tourism development is evident that the tourist movement in the National Park Mavrovo has a very small share in the overall tourist activity in the country despite the fact that the park is the bearer of Tourism in the Mavrovo–Debar tourist area. Tourism should be the core business in the area, and it has to be the instigator of the other economic activities and the bearer of the overall development of the area of the National Park.

Taking into account the SWOT analysis it can be concluded that in the area of the National Park Mavrovo there are real opportunities for increased tourism and activating the space, primarily using its advantages. Tourism planning and design should be directed to:

- Enriching the tourist offer in the area through the activation and processing of more selective tourism forms;
- Greater involvement of the local community in the planning process;
- Professional management with the tourism sector locally;
- Improvement of the existing infrastructure;
- Construction of new tourism infrastructure;
- Increasing the quantity and quality of accommodation and other

The authors opinion is that in the area of the National Park Mavrovo there are conditions for projected increased tourism development in the coming period, which will be manifested by increasing tourist movement, which in turn would have a greater share in the total tourism sector in the country.

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