

# Protected Areas in the Function of Tourism Improvement in Western Serbia

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The basic condition for tourism development is healthy and unpolluted environment with its natural and cultural values. Opportunities for tourism development in a certain area are more favorable in conditions when environment is better preserved and more attractive. On the other hand, there are polluted, degraded and devastated landscapes that cannot be returned to primarily state. In recent years, in many developed countries across the Europe, the great attention has been devoted to sustainable development of tourism and the preservation of the environment at the same time. It is assumed that integration of protected areas and their role in the tourism offer of Western Serbia will be improved on the basis of examples, experiences and knowledge of developed countries. The concept of sustainable development implies a balanced economic, social and cultural development without compromising the environment. So, it can be concluded that sustainable tourism has a long-term benefits and effects.

The subject of the research includes definitions and scientific explanations regarding the relevant indicators that might affect the further development of tourism in protected areas of Western Serbia. Special attention will be directed to the importance and the role of protected areas in tourism offer of Western Serbia, the analysis of turnover in tourism and providing the assumptions, potential solutions and determining the guidelines for further development of tourism that could serve as a basis for increasing the tourism offer to a higher level. Tourism in protected areas (National Park "Tara", Parks of Nature "Golija" and "Šargan-Mokra Gora") represents the most significant segment of tourism offer within the Western Serbia which, thanks to the natural, social and anthropogenic tourism values, allows the development of selective forms of tourism (such as excursions, health tourism, event tourism, rural tourism, sport tourism, cultural tourism etc.). The main goal is to raise the awareness of population about the importance of tourism and their involvement and active participation in order to achieve significant contribution to the development of this economic activity.

The paper used the methods of analysis and synthesis, as well as mathematical-statistical and comparative methods. Five groups of EU comparative indicators for sustainable development of tourism (economic, tourist satisfaction, cultural, social and environmental indicators) are analyzed. These indicators demonstrate the actual situation and the potential for tourism development of a certain area in accordance with three main principles of sustainable development: ecological, socio-cultural and economic. Marginal values are defined for each indicator and tourism

situation could be assessed as critical, containable and sustainable. The usage of indicators is based on the coding system by introducing the three zones: red, yellow and green zone. Results are represented in the form of tables and charts.

The level of development of tourism and the quality of tourism offer in protected areas within Western Serbia is marked as containable and it belongs to the yellow zone. National Park “Tara” and Parks of Nature “Golija” and “Šargan-Mokra Gora” are well positioned and recognized as tourism destinations. However, for sustainable tourism development in protected areas of Western Serbia it is necessary to achieve the balance between economy and ecology development goals by using the integrated approach in its planning and management. The results can be applied by tourism organizations, local governments and commercial entities in tourism promotion, but also in defining the subjects, objectives, tasks and implementing the projects and studies related to protected areas. All stakeholders of tourism offer, based on the research results, could make changes and improvements of tourism offer in line with the needs of the modern market, based on the allocation of advantages and disadvantages of researched area.

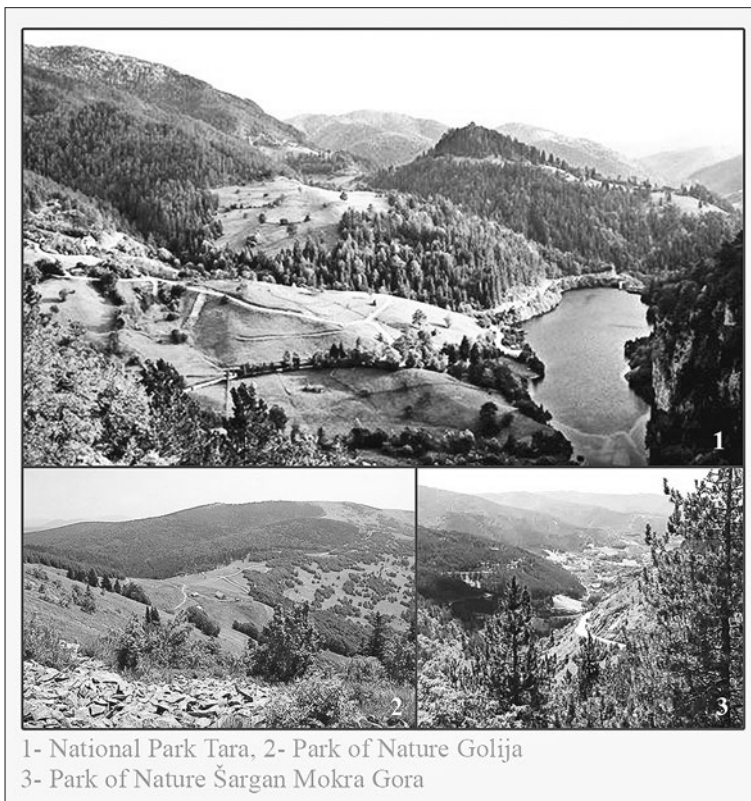


Figure1. Protected areas in Western Serbia  
Source: Authors