

# Attitudes of the Government and Non-Government Sectors Towards Development of Ecotourism in Protected Natural Areas in Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (Serbia)

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## Introduction

Each country tends to create a tourism policy and thus leads the planning and management of tourism development. Researchers opinion on the economic impact of the global ecotourism economy are different and some of them believe that ecotourism is developing faster than the tourism industry as a whole, and that this proportion is more than 20% of the world tourism market. When it comes to the development of ecotourism most responsible factor is the government that provides the funding and the ability to create favorable circumstances for the control and knowledge of how the private sector could work effectively. The development of ecotourism in Vojvodina should be aligned with the expected results of the Twinning Project SR07-IB-EN-02 - Strengthening the administrative capacity of protected areas in Serbia - Natura 2000. The ultimate goal of the project was to create an ecological network of NATURA 2000 in the Republic of Serbia. That would improve the preservation of endangered species and their habitats and raising awareness on the protection of natural heritage as well as increasing the capacity to implement legal standards for the protection of nature.

### *The role of government in the development of ecotourism in APV*

Government must play a leading role in providing the necessary finance and budget, adequately management circumstances which would allow the private sector running smoothly and efficiently. This means that the government should:

- facilitate the efficiency of private sector activity,
- Provide a favorable macro-economic environment,
- guarantee respect for law and order, as well as dispute resolution,
- provide the necessary and adequate infrastructure,
- ensure the development of human resources,
- protect the public interest without obstructing the activities of the private sector with more regulations,
- promote private sector activity and confirm the role of small enterprises and facilitate their business.

### *The type of NGOs dealing with ecology and environmental protection in APV*

With the aim to examine the attitudes of non-governmental organizations and managers of protected natural resources in Vojvodina about their possibilities of development of ecotourism in protected sites, authors were sent questionnaires to all organizations dealing with ecology and environmental protection.

From a group of 84 non-governmental organizations the following types of organizations that deal with ecology and environmental protection in the territory of AP Vojvodina could be singled out:

- Eco-centers,
- Eco movements,
- Eco Society,
- Eco associations,
- Eco-teams (in schools and other organizations),
- Green initiatives and network,
- Volunteer centers (for young people, the unemployed, the elderly),
- Student scientific associations in scientific institutions and faculties,
- Society for a healthy diet,
- Association for environmental green energy (renewable energy sources),
- Association for the Promotion of tradition and cultural heritage.

### **Conducting research and methodology**

In addition to the government in the system of nature protection non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and operators have a strong role in the preservation of natural resources but also in the promotion and organization of ecotourism. The research for the needs of “Feasibility study of development of ecotourism in protected areas Vojvodina” was conducted primarily among the interested potential visitors of protected natural areas on the territory of AP Vojvodina. Also, there were investigated the statements of representatives of the NGO sector and handlers of protected natural areas in Vojvodina (n = 24). From a total of 84 non-governmental organizations from the municipalities on which territory protected natural assets extending only 24 of them responded to the survey. The goal was to provide an opinion on the possibilities for development of ecotourism in Vojvodina’s protected natural areas. The instrument used in the study was closed questionnaire, which consisted of questions divided into six parts. For the processing of data were used descriptive statistical analysis, t-test for independent samples, and factor analysis of variance ANOVA.

### **Results**

- The largest percentage of organizations considered that the nature of the Vojvodina is not sufficiently protected and preserved, and that it is given little attention to these issues.
- Non-governmental organizations believe that nature is degraded to a greater extent compared to the managers of protected natural areas.
- Controls and non-governmental sector protected areas are considered attractive for tourism development (especially ecotourism), though organiza-

tions believe that protected areas do not have all the necessary conditions for the provision of tourism services.

- Controls to a greater extent, believe that tourism is one of the primary sustainable activities in protected areas, although non-governmental organizations to a greater extent, protected areas are considered attractive for tourism development.
- Non-governmental organizations and managers believe that local governments in small measure support actions to protect, which is very negative. And they also believe that the locals are very few trained in the protection of protected natural resources and that they are not motivated to engage in eco-and-rural tourism.
- When it comes to local government, managers believe that the greater attention is going on the protection, while NGOs believe that more attention is focused on promotion campaigns.

## Conclusion

The research results indicate the existence of different views of the respondents and provide the basis for further steps towards the improvement of ecotourism. As a threat, stands out the lack of human resources in organizations that manage protected natural areas and which should work on issues of development of eco-tourism. Also, as a threat stands out the unwillingness of handlebars to treat tourism as a real opportunity. In any case, both remain important stakeholders who are interested in developing ecotourism in Vojvodina. As a good example, among the managers can be emphasized the special nature reserve Stari Begej-Carska Bara and special nature reserve Zasavica. When it comes to the NGO sector, some organizations are very involved and can be a significant support in the development activities of eco-tourism.



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