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**MARKETING MANAGEMENT OF  
THE TOURIST REGION OF SLAVONIA AND BARANJA**

**MARKETINŠKO UPRAVLJANJE TURISTIČKOM REGIJOM  
SLAVONIJOM I BARANJOM**

***ABSTRACT***

*In order to make tourism development planning in certain tourist destinations effective, it is necessary to ensure appropriate legal and institutional frameworks at the state level, and to base development of tourism destinations on partnership and cooperation between public and private sectors, not neglecting attitudes of local people. Application of the new Law on Tourism Communities and Promotion of Croatian Tourism (NN 152/2008.), in its part relating to the obligation of tourism master planning for the local level, should ensure the key development inputs and precede development of spatial plans at the level of tourist destinations. It is questionable whether in Croatia have been created the adequate legal and institutional frameworks for the effective activities of the tourist region of Slavonia and Baranja, since current legislation does not recognize the concept of regions and regionalization. The existing legal framework of joint activities and mutual partnership of the tourism sector of the region of Slavonia and Baranja is based on a voluntary basis, which is insufficient for more significant role and positioning of the region on the tourist market. As part of the strategic marketing plan for Croatian tourism for the period 2010th to 2014th operational plans of individual regions, not sufficiently developed, are set. The lack of a strategic marketing plan for tourism development for the region of Slavonia and Baranja inhibits stronger development of tourism in the region, which only as a whole can constitute a tourist destination that should be uniquely managed. In order to determine the attitudes of the individual tourist boards, amongst directors of tourist boards of the region was conducted the primary research with purpose to investigate opinion of respondents on the need for adoption of a unified master plan at the regional level, as well as supporting the idea of creating a unique tourist destination management organization, and a unique marketing program at the same level. The results showed that the region of Slavonia and Baranja could achieve significantly better tourist results, if moving away from the concept of developing own tourism products by certain counties without sufficient differentiation and recognition. In this respect, efforts should primarily focus on creating a recognizable tourist region with specific tourist subregions within, in which the role of the regional tourism organization (RTO) would*

*be taken by destination management organization (DMO), in charge of promoting the tourism product of the region as a whole.*

**Key words:** *marketing, region, Slavonia and Baranja, tourism product, regional tourism organization, tourism master plan*

## SAŽETAK

*Kako bi planiranje razvoja turizma u pojedinim turističkim odredištima bilo efikasno, potrebno je na razini države osigurati odgovarajuće pravne i institucionalne okvire, a sam turistički razvoj odredišta temeljiti na partnerstvima i suradnji između javnog i privatnog sektora, ne zanemarujući niti stavove lokalnog stanovništva. Primjena novog Zakona o turističkim zajednicama i promicanju hrvatskog turizma (N.N. 152/2008.) u dijelu koji se odnosi na obvezu turističkog master planiranja za lokalne razine trebala bi osigurati ključne razvojne inpute i prethoditi izradi prostornih planova na razini turističkih odredišta. Upitno je jesu li u Hrvatskoj stvoreni adekvatni pravni i institucijski okviri za efikasno djelovanje turističke regije Slavonije i Baranje, obzirom da postojeća zakonska regulativa ne poznaje pojam regije, odnosno regionalizacije. U postojećim zakonskim okvirima zajedničke aktivnosti i međusobna partnerstva turističkog sektora regije Slavonije i Baranje zasnivaju se na dragovoljnoj osnovi, što je nedovoljno za jači proboj i pozicioniranje regije na turističkim tržištima. U sklopu strateškog marketinškog plana hrvatskog turizma za razdoblje 2010.-2014. utvrđeni su operativni planovi po pojedinim regijama, uključujući i Slavoniju i Baranju, koji nisu dovoljno razrađeni. Nepostojanje strateškog marketing plana razvoja turizma za regiju Slavoniju i Baranju koči jači razvoj turizma ove regije koja jedino kao cjelina može predstavljati turističko odredište kojim treba jedinstveno upravljati. U cilju utvrđivanja stavova predstavnika pojedinih Turističkih zajednica, među direktorima Turističkih zajednica regije je provedeno primarno istraživanje pri čemu je istraženo mišljenje ispitanika glede potrebe donošenja jedinstvenog master plana na razini regije, kao i podržavanja ideje stvaranja jedinstvene menadžment organizacije turističkog odredišta i jedinstvenog marketing programa na razini regije. Rezultati istraživanja su pokazali da bi regija Slavonija i Baranja mogla polučiti znatno bolje turističke rezultate, ako bi se odustalo od koncepta razvijanja vlastitih turističkih proizvoda po pojedinim županijama, bez dovoljno diferenciranosti i prepoznatljivosti. U tom smislu bi i napore prvenstveno trebalo usmjeriti na stvaranje prepoznatljive turističke regije unutar koje bi se formirale specifične turističke subregije, te gdje bi ulogu regionalne turističke organizacije (RTO) preuzela menadžment organizacija turističkog odredišta (DMO) koja bi promovirala turistički proizvod regije u cjelini.*

**Ključne riječi:** *marketing, regija, Slavonija i Baranja, turistički proizvod, regionalna turistička organizacija, turističko master planiranje*

## 1. Introduction

The region of Slavonia and Baranja could produce significantly better results in tourism, if it would be moved away from the concept of developing tourism products by certain counties. For it, it is primarily necessary to create appropriate institutional and legal frameworks, and management of the region as a tourist destination let to the Tourist Organization of Slavonia and Baranja, as a united management organization. It was confirmed by the results of primary research conducted among the directors of Tourist Boards in region, which are explained below in detail.

## **2. Institutional and legal frameworks in the tourism business**

### **2.1. Potential impacts of the state on tourism development**

According to Hall<sup>82</sup>, the state government can affect tourism development in many ways one of which the most common is coordination relating to formal institutionalized relationships between existing networks of organizations, interest groups and / or individuals, and may be horizontal (taking place between different government agencies that have responsibility for various tourism-related activities at the same level of cooperation such as national parks, promotions and transfers), or vertical, which takes place at different levels (local, regional and national) within the political and administrative system.

The state impact on tourism has been achieved through legislation and the legislation implementing the laws which are strictly related to tourist activities, as well as laws that affect the tourism indirectly (eg in the field of conservation activities, labor legislation, employment, health, safety regulations, licensing).

Reasons for government intervention in tourism may be different, but the key driver for them are primarily economic benefits that tourism brings in terms of prosperity of the whole community.

### **2.2. Institutional and legal framework for tourism business operators in Croatia**

To encourage the development of tourism, the Croatian Ministry of Tourism for several years, through the Incentive Program for Tourism Development, grant state aid and grant funds for various purposes, although regardless of the support from the state level<sup>83</sup>, the problems in the Croatian tourist activities mainly arise from the lack of understanding the real importance of tourism and its effects and the importance for the national economy at the macro level.

In order to plan tourism development in certain tourist destinations effectively, it is necessary to ensure at the state level appropriate legal and institutional frameworks, but still a destination tourist development should be based on partnership and cooperation between public and private sector, not neglecting any views of local people.

## **3. Strategic marketing plans for tourism development**

### **3.1. The importance of strategic planning**

The goal of strategic planning is to help the economic operator to select and organize work in a way that it has been maintained health despite the unpredictable circumstances in any of the specific business or product lines.<sup>84</sup>

Only a good marketing plan will make it possible for individuals to understand the management process; teach them to act for the team during the process; set realistic goals and identify strategies and tactics for achieving them; create in those who are in the process of

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<sup>82</sup> Hall, C.M.(2000): *Tourism Planning: Policies, Processes and Relationships*, Prentice Hall, Harlow, pp. 31

<sup>83</sup> *Incentive Program for Tourism Development (2011)*, Ministry of Tourism of The Republic of Croatia, Zagreb

<sup>84</sup> Kotler, Ph., Bowen, J., Makens, J. (1998).: *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*, Second Edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ, pp. 69

planning and realization of the plan experience that there is opportunity for improvement their professional careers.

### **3.2. Strategic marketing plans for tourism development in Croatia**

On the Croatian level there have been so far made two strategic tourism marketing plans. The Strategic Marketing Plan for Croatian tourism for the period 2001- 2005 and The Strategic Marketing Plan of Croatian Tourism for the period 2010 - 2014 worked, by order of the Croatian Tourist Board, THR Barcelona and the company "Horwath Consulting" from Zagreb.

The following basic objections to the operational marketing plan for Slavonia and Baranja in the period 2010 - 2014 included in the document from 2010<sup>85</sup> can be emphasised: the region resource base is not adequate, complete and fully established; the further, the structure of accommodation and tourist traffic has not been worked out neither territorially (about counties), nor by type of accommodation; strategies for the region are under-treated; the strategy of competitiveness and the marketing strategy were omitted; operational marketing activities are not sufficiently detailed, while the interest on the necessity of linking economic and out of economic subjects and the need for a unified marketing programs at the regional level that would implement a regional tourism organization has not been discussed sufficiently.

Since by the adoption of the new Law on Tourism Communities and Promotion of Croatian tourism (NN 152/2008), making marketing plans become a tourist community commitment at all levels (Article 32, paragraph 6 and Article 46, paragraph 4 of the Act), it is the question in which way tourism master plans of counties, cities and municipalities, in terms of lack of key tourism master plan for the entire region, will be created. It is difficult to assume that the partial marketing plans for tourism development of certain destinations in the region of Slavonia and Baranja will be together consistent, complementary, or synchronized, and that they will serve the entire tourism development of the region.

## **4. Tourist Board of Slavonia and Baranja in the role of marketing management in the tourist region of Slavonia and Baranja**

### **4.1. Organization of tourist communities within certain regions of the Croatian level**

According to the existing Law on Tourism Associations (N.N. 152/2008), at this moment in the region of Slavonia and Baranja operates five county (Osijek-Baranja, Brod-Posavina, Vukovar-Srijem, Pozega-Slavonia and Virovitica-Podravina), 19 town and 16 municipal tourist boards. The Tourist Board of the Baranja region was established in 2008. Many as 12 city and municipal tourist boards in the region, its tasks carry out without the tourist offices.

### **4.2. The results of primary research conducted among the directors of tourist boards in the region**

To determine the attitudes of the individual tourist boards in the region regarding the possible unified management of the region as a complete tourist destination, and promoting and selling

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<sup>85</sup> *Strategic marketing plan for Croatian tourism for the period 2010 - 2014*, pp. 639-657

the region as a tourist site, in November 2009, independently survey among directors of tourist boards in the region have been performed. Questionnaires were completed by four representatives of county tourist boards; the representative of the Tourist Board of Baranja; 8 representatives of tourist boards of towns, and 3 representatives of tourist boards of municipalities, meaning, representatives of 40% of the total number of tourist boards that operate in the region. Research results are presented in tables (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 1. The existence of Master plans for tourism in the region of Slavonia and Baranja, questions and answers of the respondents

<b>Has the area of your county (city, municipality) adopted a strategic plan for tourism development for the period of 3 years or more?</b>		
	<b>Answers, in %</b>	<b>Answers, in absolute terms</b>
It has not.	87,50	14
It is being worked out.	-	-
It has.	12,50	2
In total.	100,00	16

Source: Research carried out independently, Slavonski Brod, November, 2009

Table 2. Masters plans of tourism in the function of greater affirmation of the region of Slavonia and Baranja in the tourism market, questions and answers of the respondents

<b>Do you think that a strategic plan for tourism development at the regional level would contribute to its greater recognition on the tourist market?</b>		
	<b>Answers, in %</b>	<b>Answers, in absolute terms</b>
Not at all.	6,25	1
Yes, partially.	25,00	4
Yes, definitely.	68,75	11
In total.	100,00	16

Source: Research carried out independently, Slavonski Brod, November, 2009

Table 3. Supporting the idea of creating a unified dmo at the level of the region of Slavonia and Baranja, questions and answers of the respondents

<b>Do you support the idea of creating a unified DMO at the level of the region?</b>		
	<b>Answers, in %</b>	<b>Answers, in absolute terms</b>
Yes, definitely.	43,75	7
Yes, partially.	50,00	8
Not at all.	6,25	1
In total.	100,00	16

Source: Research carried out independently, Slavonski Brod, November, 2009

Table 4. Supporting the idea of financing a unified dmo and a unique marketing program at the regional level of Slavonia and Baranja by local tourist boards, questions and answers of the respondents

<b>Do you think that the body of your tourist board would financially support creating a unified DMO and a unique marketing program at the regional level?</b>		
	<b>Answers, in %</b>	<b>Answers, in absolute terms</b>
Yes, definitely.	12,50	2
Depending on the impact of local politics.	6,25	1
Depending on financial resources.	68,75	11
No.	-	-
It is difficult to predict.	12,50	2
In total.	100,00	16

Source: Research carried out independently, Slavonski Brod, November, 2009

Through the subject research was found that by 87.50% of those surveyed, tourist development of areas takes place without a tourist development plan; that adoption of the master plan for tourism at the regional level of Slavonia and Baranja in the function of its larger market affirmation support nearly 94,00% of respondents, while to the idea of creating a unique tourist destination management organizations at the regional level, in principle, also agree almost 94,00% of respondents, and unreservedly support 43.75% of respondents. However, research results have also shown that only 12.50% of respondents believe that their tourism boards were prepared to support the project financing of regional DMO and unique marketing programs at the regional level, while 75,00% think that it would depend on financial resources (68.75%), and the impact of local policies (6.25%).

## 5. Conclusion

Slavonia and Baranja region could yield much better results in tourism if it would be dropped from the concept of developing their own tourism products by certain counties without sufficient differentiation and recognition. Efforts should primarily be focused on creating a recognizable tourist region with subclusters within and where the role of the regional tourism organization (RTO) would be taken over by the destination management organization (DMO), which would represent the tourist product of the region as a whole.<sup>86</sup>

The future role of the DMO at the level of the region of Slavonia and Baranja should primarily arise from the need to conduct marketing activities related to certain forms of selective tourism whose development is possible in the region, but also from the need to elaborate ideas and define strategies to determine the competitiveness, the development and product design, as well as representing the interests of local communities in terms of ensuring sustainable development and creating an environment in which the local population could live comfortably.<sup>87</sup>

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Law on Tourism Communities and Promotion of Croatian tourism (NN 152/2008)

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<sup>86</sup> For now, only the study of tourism sector from 2002, *Park prirode Kopački rit Plan upravljanja*, by Ružic, D., Meler, M. and Turkalj, Ž., emphasizes in several places the need to connect so. micro destinations of Eastern Croatia in a broader macro-tourist destination, with the aim of strengthening the region's competitive advantage in relation to domestic and international environment (Ruzic, D., Meler, Turkalj, Ž. (2002): *Park prirode Kopački rit, plan upravljanja, sektorska studija Turizam*, Faculty of economics in Osijek, Osijek, University J.J. Strossmayer in Osijek, pp. 56).

<sup>87</sup> Modified according to Magaš, D. (2008): *Destinacijski menadžment Modeli i tehnike*, Faculty of tourism and hospitality management in Opatija, University in Rijeka, pp. 79

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