

## TOURISM IN KOSOVO AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT

**Mustafë Kadriaj**

International University of Struga, Faculty of Economic Sciences, [mustafkadriaj@live.com](mailto:mustafkadriaj@live.com)

**Vehbi Ramaj**

Haxhi Zeka University in Peja, Faculty of Economic, [vehbi.ramaj@unhz.eu](mailto:vehbi.ramaj@unhz.eu)

**Abstract:** Tourism and touristic offers have a global reach and are quite competitive. Given the current development throughout the world of tourism and its impact on the economy of a country, the total income that a country generates in this industry, contributing this way to GDP, among the countries that can benefit from tourism is Kosovo. Tourist product is a package with several elements, whereas the most important elements are: attractions, entertainment services, accommodation, food, travel, transportation and infrastructure development related to them. While the conditions that influence the development of tourism are: the current political situation and political stability, as well as marketing. Although with a touristic passage, Kosovo has not developed such a service because of an economic stagnation in the 1990s, including the last war, where as any other sector tourism was damaged and left out. Once the war ended, Kosovo with all the problems followed, such as administrative and economic, started to rehabilitate itself in the tourism sector as well. Today, we have a sufficient number of tour operators who offer national and international tourists solid offers for tourism.

Given that the economy is the law of the environment, and given that nature cannot continually provide us with prosperity, it is incumbent on every person to work and preserve to ensure their existence, while maintaining nature. Therefore, we as human beings have to know how to administer and work with nature which is limited as a whole as opposed to human requirements. Kosovo began its economic transition after a war that left consequences on people and the economy, so the transition to the market economy had its own challenges where even after two decades. Despite the efforts, Kosovo still does not fully function as a market economy. By integrating into the bigger countryside called Globalization, in order to be competitive with the regional economies and beyond, we must have comparative advantage to be competitive as a country at an international level. In all international and local reports and studies, Kosovo's advantages are continuously provided to the underground, tourism, with particular emphasis on mountain and cultural tourism, as well as the new population as a workforce. The functioning of the contemporary economy, besides being competitive and productive both at the micro and macroeconomic level, besides economic development, we must take care of the environment around us. It is a priority for the Kosovo economy and the life of the citizens to develop tourism based on the beautiful nature, cultural monuments, traditional and unique food for foreign tourists. Through scientific data, reports and professional studies, I will provide solid knowledge for scientific intersections, tourists and businesses in the field of tourism.

**Keywords:** Kosovo, tourism, comparative background, economic development and the environment.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Three centuries ago, economists were ecologists, even though this concept itself was not yet born. "Physical Economists" is a notion that first of all meant "power of nature" or "governance by nature". They claimed that every fortune had its source in agriculture.<sup>62</sup> There are over 100 definitions of sustainable development, but the most knowledgeable and the most classic is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development, otherwise known as the Brundtland Report. According to this definition, "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations to meet their needs."<sup>63</sup> The application of economic concepts, theories, and methods of fundamentally related issues related to tourism characteristics that differ from other accommodation and the essential elements of economic analysis as discipline.<sup>64</sup> According to Barbareso, the word "tourism" appears for the first time in the 19th century, while the activity that implies this word has its roots much earlier, in ancient times. The tourism phenomenon was related to leisure time

---

<sup>62</sup> GURI, GURI, GURI, 2015, p. 47

<sup>63</sup> GURI, GURI, GURI, 2015, p. 66

<sup>64</sup> KADIU, 2013, p. 11

and activities that could be done within it. The first massive movements created the need to organize the journey, which required client information, to concretize all the travel variables in a single, as well as billing it. Thomas Cook was the one who invented "group travel" at affordable prices mainly referring to middle income households.<sup>65</sup> The term touristic means: 1. related to tourism with tourists, for tourists, tourist trips. 2. that draws with the beauties of nature, with the rare things, etc., which is for tourists: a tourist town; tourist places.<sup>66</sup> Tourism - preparation of appropriate facilities for tourism development of several types.<sup>67</sup> Tourism - economic and trade organizations and carrying out actions for realizing holidays or visits to places of interest.<sup>68</sup> Alternative tourism can lead to a better distribution of employment by completely changing the labor market situation in rural areas.<sup>69</sup> The main roles of tourism are economic and social, which are adequately documented and analyzed in tourist literature. The economic role is primarily concerned with tourism businessmen, tourism workers, public and private tour operators, and secondly concerned with the cost of holidays and tourists. The social role of tourism is of interest to all classes of society and it is the role that in theory and practice is not questioned and denied by anyone. Everyone seek to strengthen the role of tourism.<sup>70</sup>

## 2. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

Tourism as an activity appears only when a certain level of socio-economic development of a country is achieved. It is reached and developed when such conditions are created that people temporarily leave their permanent home and temporarily move to temporary residence to rest, entertain or other tourist motives.

The birth and development of tourism is the result of certain factors, which further promote and enable this development. The circumstances that enabled the birth and development of tourism are considered factors of tourism development and are of different nature. A group of tourism factors influence tourism flows, while others make it possible to increase the volume of tourist traffic, while the other group of factors contribute to the formation of new types of tourist movement.

All of these factors can be grouped into three groups:

- Promotional factors or factor of tourist demand,
- Host factors or factors of tourism offer and
- Intermediary factors

This division is made in order to distinguish factors influencing people to become tourists by factors that enable mobility and tourist attitudes. Demand-inducing factors - represent that group of factors that influence the creation of conditions for the emergence of tourist needs. Demand-inducing factors appear in permanent residences of tourists and strongly affect the influx of tourists. Taken from the market aspect these are factors that form the tourist demand.

Bidding factors - since bidding and tourist requirements are two sides of the tourist market, which act in terms of balancing the market. Bidding factors act in such a way as to attract as many people as possible in tourist regions by providing tourist transport by providing a good accommodation and pleasant holidays. These factors directly create the conditions for people to travel for tourist purposes. Tourist supply factors are divided into two large groups:

- Attractive factors;
- Admission factors

Intermediary factors - the third group of factors that have a strong impact on tourism development are the mediating factors. These factors act both in the incentive factors of demand as well as in supply factors and at the same time link these two groups of tourism development factors because they have a mediating role. The intervention of mediating factors in demand and tourism offer, these factors have more functional significance. This group of factors includes:

- Tourist agencies;
- Tourist transport;

---

<sup>65</sup> Polo, Karagianis, Nano, 2015, pp. 79,80

<sup>66</sup> SAMARA, HAXHILLAZI, SHEHU, FEKA, MEMISHA, GOGA, 2006, p. 1116

<sup>67</sup> BËRXHOLI, 2008, p. 126

<sup>68</sup> BËRXHOLI, 2008, p. 127

<sup>69</sup> Polo, Karagianis, Nano, 2015, pp. 80,81

<sup>70</sup> Polo, Karagianis, Nano, 2015, p. 82

- Tourist policy;

Tourist agencies - only deal with touristic activities and represent clean tourist enterprises.

Tourist transport - tourist requirements cannot be realized if there is no transport. Tourist transport is an important factor of the mediating factors which represents the basis for tourist movement and plays a primary role in the development of tourism. Development and promotion of tourism is closely related to transport.

Tourist policy - is a very important factor of mediating factors which affects all sectors of the tourist industry. By the term tourist policy is understood the entire activity of the competent bodies of a country aimed at the realization of the purpose for the development of tourism.<sup>71</sup>

### 3. A GENERAL TOURISM PROFILE IN KOSOVO

Economy and the environment - are inextricably intertwined. For example, economic development is one of the primary reasons for climate change, but it can also solve this problem. Similarly, the economy study is in charge of global warming research and so are economic tools - such as taxes and guidelines - which are likely to encourage people to not pollute the environment in the future.<sup>72</sup> Tourism is one of the world's most important activities, involving millions of people, a huge game of money and generating employment in developing and industrialized countries. The tourism economy introduces new meanings to demand, tourism firms and markets, their global connections and the essential contribution of environmental tourism activities, to provide an analysis of the various influencing areas of tourism and its economic effects.<sup>73</sup> Kosovo has great potential in the development of this sector, despite direct competition with other Balkan countries. Kosovo's specialty in this regard is cultural heritage, mountains, all of these as a separate tourist package.<sup>74</sup> The main destinations of tourists in the state of Kosovo are: the city of Prizren, Rugova Gorge, Mirusha Waterfall, Brezovica Ski Center, Sharr Mountains, Bjeshkët e Nemura.<sup>75</sup> Kosovo's climatic features are determined by its geographical position, from the distance from the Adriatic and from the relief. The highest temperatures during the various summer days reach 37 ° C, while the lowest temperatures in winter fall to -26 ° C. So the temperature differences between summer and winter are great. In Kosovo there are 30 tropical days when the air temperatures go up to 30 ° C. The number of cold, when the temperatures are negative is about 25, and the number of so-called days of frost, when the temperatures go down zero, but throughout the year have no negative values, on average, between 90 and 95 days per year.<sup>76</sup> In general, the climate in Kosovo's territory is diverse, with moderate humidity, medium temperature, considerable sunlight, no stormy hours, and favorable for different forms of human activity:

for catering, tourism, etc.<sup>77</sup> Roads to confront the ecological threat are not just technical, they require a reform of our thinking in order to capture the complexity of the relationship between humanity and nature, and to conceptualize civilization reforms, society reforms and life reforms.<sup>78</sup> Consumers and businessmen have two ways to reduce the economic activity that harms the environment.

One is the "stick" of economic sanctions and the other is the "carrot" of economic initiatives. Economic sanctions are often the most effective way to change policies that harm the environment. When a company is forced to pay for the damage caused by the pollution it created, it will give more thought to the environment before deciding to discharge the waste into the water and the atmosphere. From a review of environmental issues to a global perspective, it is clear that environmental protection is not a good thing purely for human health but will provide the world with a sustainable economic growth in the coming years.<sup>79</sup> Tourism is of great importance in the economic and cultural development of a country. But its development has a negative impact on the environment and especially

---

71

(<http://www.iadk.org/ArkivaeLajmeve/tabid/77/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/522/categoryId/70/language/sq-AL/FAKTORET-E-ZHVILLIMIT-TE-TURIZMIT.aspx>, n.d.)

<sup>72</sup> Conway, 2015, p. 182

<sup>73</sup> KADIU, 2013, p. 15

<sup>74</sup> Gashi, Avdiu, 2016, p. 111

<sup>75</sup> Gashi, Avdiu, 2016, p. 114

<sup>76</sup> BLAKU, 2005, p. 36

<sup>77</sup> BLAKU, 2005, p. 38

<sup>78</sup> Morin, 2016, pp. 99,100

<sup>79</sup> EPPING, 2007, pp. 205,206,207

on natural ecosystems as a result of uncontrolled dumping of waste, damage to natural resources and biodiversity. In order to reduce this impact, in addition to the economic aspect, tourism should pay attention to the protection of the environment, so an advanced form of tourism today is recognized as ecotourism or sustainable tourism. Kosovo still has no strategy for tourism development. Therefore, the main legal act governing the tourism sector is the Law on Tourism (Law No. 04 / L-176). The law aims to establish principles and rules for the development and promotion of tourism as well as the establishment and development of standards of tourist services. The main principles of the law are the protection of the environment and cultural heritage. If we analyze the number of foreign tourists in Kosovo and the nights of stay between 2008 and 2014, we will notice that there is a progressive increase in the number of tourists as well as the nights of stay. In 2014, according to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, about 61 thousand and 300 foreign tourists were registered with about 102 thousand nights of stay, marking an increase of around 10 thousand tourists and about 20 thousand night stays. Increasing the number of tourists and nights of stay is noticed even with regard to local visitors. Compared to 2013, in 2014, according to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, there are about 1000 more tourists registered and about 800 more nights of stay.<sup>80</sup>

#### 4. TOURISM ANALYSIS IN KOSOVO

With some small variations, until the 1970s in many European countries there was little economic analysis of tourism. Also, many researches tended to be described in a way that certain goals and tenets functioned in an inadequate way.<sup>81</sup> (KADIU, 2013, p. 16). The tourism analysis provides us with an opportunity to apply concepts and economic theories using conventional, and alternative methodological frameworks. In this sense, tourism is a tool used to assess the appropriateness of schools of thought, in this discipline and in testing the strength of economic concepts and methods. On the other hand, economic analysis can contribute to a wider understanding of tourism for a long time, as has been shown by those who have worked long in this field, and a number of aspects of the subject from a weak theoretical framework flowing by the lack of proper research.

According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, in the third quarter of 2017 (TM3 2017), 137 hotels that conduct hotel activities in the territory of Kosovo were part of the survey. Most of the hotels are located in the region of Prishtina, Peja, Ferizaj, etc. According to the survey, the capacity utilized at the country level is 12.71%. In TM3 2017, the number of visitors was 34,625 visitors, of which 28.12% were local visitors and 71.88% were foreign visitors. Meanwhile, the number of nights spent in TM3 2017 was 56 816 nights, of which 22.84% were hosts and 77.16% were foreigners. The largest number of visitors and their stay are in Pristina region with 18 742 visitors and 28 524 nights stay. The largest number of foreign visitors is concentrated in Pristina, Peja and so on. Whereas, as far as foreign visitors are concerned, the largest number was from Germany, Albania, Switzerland and so on. (<http://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/add-news/statistikat-e-hotelerise-tm3-2017>, 2017). The number of visitors (local and external) and their nights, for the periods TM1 2008 - TM3 2017. In the TM 3 2017 the number of visitors is 34,625 visitors, 28.12% are the local visitor, and 71.88% are the external visitor while the number HOMES in TM 3 2017 is 56 816 hospitals, 22.84% of hospitals are from locals and 77.16% are foreigners.

**Table 3: Number of tourists (local and international) and their stay during 2008-2016**

Period	Number of visitors		Satying Nights	
	Local	Outside	Local	Outside
2008	19.678	24.626	22.602	46.91
2009	52.631	36.318	54.876	76.042
2010	44.662	34.382	45.123	76.394
2011	42.662	34.382	45.123	76.394
2012	42.044	30.349	44.757	65.584
2013	49.973	48.79	52.008	90.968
2014	46.477	61.313	55.274	102.066
2015	60.477	79.238	81.372	120.669
2016	45.579	83.71	62.211	131.785

The table shows the number of domestic and foreign visitors as well as the stay nights for both domestic and foreign visitors during 2008-2016. In 2016, the number of local visitors decreased by 24.29% compared to 2015, while the visitors' visitor nights decreased by 23.55%. There is an increase of 5.64% for external visitors, while foreign guests stay for 9.21% compared to 2015.<sup>82</sup>

Source: ASK- Seria 3: Economic Statistics, Hotel Statistics TM3 - 2017, pg 7

<sup>80</sup> ([https://www.ammk-rks.net/repository/docs/Final\\_shqipja.pdf](https://www.ammk-rks.net/repository/docs/Final_shqipja.pdf), 2015, pp. 50,51)

<sup>81</sup> KADIU, 2013, p. 13

<sup>82</sup> (<http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3718/statistikat-e-hotelerise-tm3-2017.pdf>, 2017, p. 7)

## 5. TOURISM AS A POTENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN KOSOVO

Kosovo should promote sustainable tourism as a means of economic development and aspire to join the World Tourism Organization that would help Kosovo raise standards and raise Kosovo's image in the world. One of the first priorities will be the functionalization of the Tourism Department. Kosovo is currently the world's most widely recognized gastronomy and culture and heritage. Tourism as an economic sector needs much greater support than it has been to date. According to statistics, Kosovo had about 200,000 visitors last year; a low figure compared with the countries of the region. Albania, for example, had about 3.8 million tourists during the same period.<sup>83</sup> Kosovo has great potential for tourism development as well; summer walking and mountain tours, winter sports, culture, rural experiences, health and cure services, excursions and recreations, mountaineering, exploration, hunting and fishing, tourism for conferences and transports. Ecotourism and agro-tourism also pose great potential for Kosovo. These are some of the natural and cultural attractions from which entrepreneurs can benefit by developing their tourism initiatives:

- Natural attractions such as the Rugova Gorge, the "White Drin Source with Waterfalls and Cave of Radavc Village", Gadime Cave, Mirusha Park and Cannon, National Park "Bjeshkët e Nemuna", Park of Dragash, Sharri Mountains, Parks of Decani, Ravani Park, "Istog spring", Lake Radoniq and many others, Health and rehabilitation complexes such as "Banja e Pejës" with the most quality thermal water source in Kosovo, Holiday and Sport Center, as is the Brezovica Park and the Ski Center;
- Cultural monuments such as old markets, traditional houses (towers, eg "The Tower of Haxhi Zeka"), mosques and churches, public baths (hamams - eg "Hamam of Haxhi Beut"), old bridges made of stone and old mills, especially in Peja, Gjakova, Deçan and Junik, the archaeological finds of the Illyrian and Roman eras in Siparunt, Dresnik, Rakosh, ethnographic regional museums in Peja and Gjakova, traditional costumes, handicrafts, ornaments, handicrafts, wood carving, metal and teraco pieces, porcelain, traditional stone and wood processing and traditional building, cultural heritage such as music, folklore, cultural festivals, Rugova's traditional games, etc.

As a single destination, Kosovo will surely have difficulties into promoting and developing tourism. Experience has shown that for states that have similar conditions as Kosovo, cooperation with regional tourism initiatives and participation in wider packages of tourist services would be the best strategy. This does not mean that Kosovo should only promote the integration of tourism into regional structures. This also implies that individual entrepreneurs or groups of operators should aim to integrate their services and products into the regional network. Kosovo would fit well into a regional tourist network that could cover the Western Balkans or southeastern Europe. As reported by UNDP through the sector profile, most tourists currently come from Albania, Slovenia, Croatia, Germany, the United States, Turkey and other EU countries. Operators and touristic agencies should focus their efforts on a three-tier strategy: i) to take full advantage of regional opportunities by targeting aggressively the neighbors' markets with packages and bids tailored to their needs and their preferences; ii) to integrate services with regional operators and transport companies into their networks and their clientele by attracting tourists to 'expanded walks' in Kosovo; and iii) the use of Kosovo's large diaspora to reach more prosperous tourist market segments, especially in the EU and the US.<sup>84</sup>

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on professional literature, various local and international reports, Kosovo has a natural and cultural-historical potential to become a destination for foreign tourists. To foster tourists' interest, Kosovo has to do much to create economic tourism with an emphasis on tourism specifically, and through the marketing of natural and cultural beauties, in order to become a competitive regional level for tourism in the four seasons. As tourism is a luxury service, Kosovo must take measures in line with the contemporary tourism market to step up with time by focusing on concrete steps such as:

- Internal political stabilization and security, in order to secure tourists during holidays in Kosovo,

<sup>83</sup> (<http://www.ekonomiaonline.com/ekonomi/turizem/mti-turizmi-sektori-me-potenciali-per-zhvillim-ekonomik/>)

<sup>84</sup> (<http://www.ks.undp.org/content/dam/kosovo/docs/AFT/Tregjet%20Potenciale%20per%20Ekспорт.pdf?download.,> 2015)

- Promotion of Kosovo attractions by relevant institutions, as well as marketing by businesses that take part in tourist activities and the organization of fairs of regional character and wider; as well as through Kosovo embassies in states where they are accredited,
- Increasing the quality of services and increasing the tourist package at competitive prices,
- Research comparative approaches at regional and wider level through natural and cultural assets.
- Development of tourism by protecting the natural ecosystem through the prevention of wild construction in protected areas by law.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] BËRXHOLI, A. (2008). *DORACAK I TERMAVE TË GJEOGRAFISË*. Tiranë: SH.B EUGEN.
- [2] BLAKU, R. (2005). *EKONOMIA E RESURSEVE*. PRISHTINË: UNIVERSITETI I PRISHTINËS, FAKULTETI EKONOMIK.
- [3] Conway, E. (2015). *50 Ide Ekonomike, Që duhet t'i dijë çdo njeri*. Tiranë: SH.B PLEJAD.
- [4] EPPING, R. C. (2007). *NJË GUIDË E EKONOMISË BOTËRORE*. Tiranë.
- [5] Gashi, Avdiu, R. (2016, March 5). Ndikimi i menaxhimit strategjik në përmirsimin e turizmit në Kosovë. *Conference proceedings 3-d ICIS, International Conference on: "Interdisciplinary Studies"*.
- [6] GURI, GURI, GURI, M. (2015). *MENAXHIMI EKONOMIK MJEDISOR I NDERMARRJEVE, Njohuri Themelore të Ekonomisë Mjedisore*. Tiranë.
- [7] (2017). <http://ask.rks-gov.net/media/3718/statistikat-e-hotelerise-tm3-2017.pdf>. Prishtinë: Agjencia e Statistikave të Kosovës .
- [8] (2017). <http://ask.rks-gov.net/sq/agjencia-e-statistikave-te-kosoves/add-news/statistikat-e-hotelerise-tm3-2017>. Prishtinë: Agjencia e Statistikave të Kosovës (ASK).
- [9] <http://www.ekonomiaonline.com/ekonomi/turizem/mti-turizmi-sektori-me-potenciali-per-zhvillim-ekonomik/>. (n.d.).
- [10] <http://www.iadk.org/ArkivaeLajmeve/tabid/77/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/522/categoryId/70/language/sq-AL/FAKTORET-E-ZHVILLIMIT-TE-TURIZMIT.aspx>. (n.d.).
- [11] (2015). <http://www.ks.undp.org/content/dam/kosovo/docs/AFT/Tregjet%20Potenciale%20per%20Eksport.pdf?download>. Prishtinë: Ministria për Punë të Jashtme të Finlandës në kuadër të projektit Ndihmë Tregtisë & Programi i Kombeve të Bashkuara për Zhvillim (UNDP) Kosovë.
- [12] (2015). [https://www.ammk-rks.net/repository/docs/Final\\_shqipja.pdf](https://www.ammk-rks.net/repository/docs/Final_shqipja.pdf). Prishtinë: Ministria e Mjedisit dhe Planifikimit Hapësinor.
- [13] KADIU, E. (2013). *EKONOMI TURIZMI*. Tiranë.
- [14] Morin, E. (2016). *Rruga për të ardhem e njerëzimit*. Tiranë.
- [15] Polo, Karagianis, Nano, A. (2015, June). Format e Turizmit dhe Ndikimi i Tyre në Zhvillimin e Ekonomisë së një Vendi. *Balkan Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*.
- [16] SAMARA, HAXHILLAZI, SHEHU, FEKA, MEMISHA, GOGA, M. (2006). *FJALOR I GJUHËS SHQIPE*. Tiranë: AKADEMIA E SHKENCAVE E SHQIPRIË, INSTITUTI I GJUHËSISË DHE I LETËRSISË.