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## THE CHALLENGES OF RURAL AREAS IN SERBIA PROMISING TOURIST ACTIVITIES

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### Summary

*Challenges of rural areas in Serbia are complex categories, so the work set itself a goal to show how these challenges can help its people interested, which are still developing tourism within the region. In order to prove all, work have to use qualitative and quantitative social science methodology with emphasis on induction, conversion multiplier, surveys in the statistical models. With such methodology, work, has distinct hypotheses:*

- *If the rural areas of each country carries a multi-purpose economic dependence, then the rural areas of Serbia must accept tourism as a positive economic challenge, and*
- *Tourism in rural areas, if there is a guaranteed capacity of tolerance, must provide rural area to be feedback of its successful economic development.*

*Work, emphasizing challenges of rural areas in tourist activity, has to give results compatible with evidence of field research and indicate directions of tourism development in Serbia rural areas.*

**Key words:** *rural, space, challenge, tourism, development*

**JEL:** *Q01, Q13, Q26*

### Introduction

The global “construction” of economic and social trends, accidentally or intentionally, changed the physiognomy of tourism activities in all countries. In that race, tourism is becoming more and more, in the underdeveloped countries in transition, the specific factor “imperialism” and, so called, “pleasant colonialism”. He was “pleasant colonialism” when forces neglected, often irresponsible and inactive community to your unproductive space left

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to develop responsible, i.e. sustainable tourism. On the other side, “honorary colonialism” in world tourism, is there where a strong desire for big profits, and it turns the spatial elements of the natural environment in a difficult apartmentisation, concreting, asphaltisation and totally uncontrolled tourism urbanization.

Recognizing that rural area in many countries is the stabilizer of environmental elements that are valuable tourist attraction, people began in the 19th century that it developed the facilities for guests through the summer houses, holiday homes of wealthy and sanatoria, which are mostly used goat’s milk in the treatment of specific patients and motels (for example, “han”) for rest and refreshment of passengers passer. For this reason, tourism in rural areas, particularly Europe, began to grow into an organized economic activity and benefit of tourists, local community and local residents 70 years of the last century. “In many countries, EU Rural tourism from the 1970s is considered a strategy of development of regions and rural areas, which has a very good chance, and that helps in keeping the population in the area, creating new jobs, and ultimately contributes to the socio-economic remaining areas of progress”. (See /4/, p. 84) Since that time, and until 1986, rural tourism has matured and became more complex category of interest to all levels of socio-economic development. Therefore, the following item was born which became a legislative initiative for tourism development in rural areas of Europe. However, this year is designed to give more political definition, as a result of the Council of Europe. Already in 1994, year authors have begun to observe the development of tourism in rural areas, as a new challenge to the successful shaping of economic physiognomy of this range and, thus, laid the theoretical foundations of transforming attitudes in practical realization of rural tourism. “Rural tourism is multi-activity, not just tourism on farms”. (See /9/, p. 451) As you can see, this indicates that the challenges of rural areas in Serbia are very attractive, but it still seems insufficiently understood tourism. With all the theory and practice of one of the most acceptable definition of tourism in rural areas gave the organization, which by its very name indicates its success: „Rural tourism was initially located in a rural area and is primarily a function of agriculture. It is primarily based on agriculture world and outdoors, in contact with nature, agricultural heritage and society. Rural tourism must be in agreement with the environment and the community in which it occurs”. (See /5/, June, 2012)

Analysis and synthesis of the discussions, expert opinions, scientific papers and acceptable application challenges of tourism in rural areas in the early 21st century, becoming” assault” category, which carries both negative and positive parameters. ‘ So for the same term synonyms arise, such as farm tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, nature tourism, green tourism and rural tourism. In all these analyse, there are variations, as follows:

- First, the basis for the distinction makes the distribution of income within the rural communities;
- Secondly, the basis for distinguishing the various factors makes deals (See /3/, p. 1-4)

Rural area of Serbia is naturally compact and anthropogenically highly heterogeneous environment. This gives it a great challenging opportunity for multipurpose utilization of the various subtypes of rural tourism. Provides well-designed tourism management through

the synchronization of the goals, vision, mission and development of appropriate strategies. Therefore, as the most competent definition of tourism in rural areas derive from WTO documents: „The term rural tourism is used in cases where rural culture is a key component of offered tourism product, the product of rural tourism characteristic effort to ensure the visitor personal contact, feeling the physical and human environment in rural areas and, as far as possible, to be given the opportunity to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of local people.” (See /11/, June, 2012)

Tourism, in rural area, is anywhere challenging categories, economic and social, cultural, political and post-modern. Therefore, the rural area of Serbia is challenging attractiveness and socio-economically possible in the development and acceptance of different forms of tourism.

### **Rural areas of Serbia and its challenging tourism functions**

In discussions about the development of rural tourism in the area that suits his purpose, much is the story, a few shows. It seems that in our theory and practice, we are still looking “Aladdin’s magic lamp”, which would shed light on our path to the modern development of the rural area, which includes the activities of the modern multi-purpose structural, socio-economic activities and existence. Therefore, considering all that is emphasized in the previous activities of tourism and other workers in the development of rural tourism in Serbia, we can draw conclusions about the challenging features of rural areas to specifically determine the physiognomy of rural tourism in Serbia. These functions are:

1) Economic, which are divided into two active challenging groups: direct and indirect. Direct functions the challenging rural and tourist areas in Serbia related to the creation of income of rural tourism development, i.e. whether the tax incentive to accumulate in the form of development of investment activity in the rural area, or just maintain the existence of those involved in rural tourism in this area? In our conditions, is still active at the other, i.e. existential function, whereas investment is practically non-existent. All of this claims because rural tourism in Serbia, still, practically overflowing income results from urban to rural areas, while the international effects of the almost negligible.

The next significant, direct challenge lies in the impact of rural tourism on regional development of rural areas of Serbia. That his influence was more related to the natural features of the observed area (about 70% of highland type), and less valued anthropogenic tourist potential of rural areas in the regions of Serbia. It might be better if we consider the background of rural areas in Serbia individual clusters defined in the Strategy of Regional Development of Serbia (2007) and Tourism Development Strategy of Serbia (2005), as the clusters are increasingly attracted international interest, because they are already a real “tourist players” in many European countries (Austria, Slovakia, Hungary - Cluster Land), which reflect its impact on the development of rural tourism in Serbia. Also, the so-called, “border” rural area of Serbia (the one that was on the verge of economic viability and threatening him permanently depopulation) development of rural tourism can revive the economic activity that it generates income brackets, but which is constantly increasing. In those parts of the

rural areas of Serbia where the present dominance of ethnic identity, i.e. in six spatial units that cover the tourist clusters (Vojvodina, Eastern Serbia - Vlach identity, Southeast - Šopsko-torlački identity, Kosovo and Metohija, Central and Western Serbia) regional development, in economic terms, provides market valorisation of ethnographic characteristics of these areas. The most significant economic and tourism challenges of rural areas in Serbia we find in multiplicative effects of tourism on the area. This is especially true of multiplicative compensation and conversion of unproductive agricultural productivity in space travel. Also, additional employment multiplier in many villages, which develop rural tourism, became the primary employment, which is constantly increasing. In this way increases the quality of human labour, and multiplying further expanding the quality of life and quality of tourism products. Multiplier of tourism development in rural areas of Serbia, has a very stimulating and challenging role and typically as the constantly expanding production in other economic sectors, that their surpluses realized in the tourism market with favourable economic effects.

Another economic challenge is our indirect functional effects of rural tourism in other activities that constitute a secondary part of the tourism product. The impact in rural areas of Serbia is reflected through:

- Impact on the construction industry, mainly through the adaptation of existing old buildings This construction must meet this requirement for rural tourism in the long run to preserve ethno-style construction and use of local ecological materials It also has to pay attention to the rural area of Serbia all buildings for rural tourism should fit in the integrity of the original environment of the area However, it is acceptable and that the tourist value of certain buildings in rural areas cannot dominate, but it does not violate (for example, the monastery, monuments, etc.) and to all those objects which violate the ethnic-identity and the natural tranquillity of rural space should be removed from the premises All the more important that every tourist village in rural area supported by the colour, which is characterized by plants in the complex (e.g., sunflower yellow - colours of all buildings), and the integrity of the supply, i.e. that tourists can be stored in a village, and lunch and dinner in the fifth, which is in the same rural catchments area. Construction, in the end, it must engage primarily in the tourism development people from the local community;
- Indirectly challenges of agriculture in all rural areas are reflected through the exchange of goods in tourism and agriculture (food and drink), intangible impact on rural tourism (preserved natural environment), and the housing market surpluses materialized space and other resources, employment, redundancy and the raising of cultural tourism the local community;
- Traffic transport to and visitors from rural areas, and gives the best effect when modern transportation infrastructure, which is, unfortunately, in the tourist and rural areas of Serbia, a major drawback, and
- Wholesale and retail trade, the tourist supply variety of goods, homemade items and crafts products applied, subject to the most so “foreign” lobby, which means not encourage domestic consumption and production of items for tourists, but more than

80% is imported. This automatically means that it can be economic-stimulus challenge of tourism development in rural areas of Serbia.

2) Social challenges of tourism development in rural areas of Serbia are still not enough to become active in Serbia, and we will therefore only mention them. These are, first of all: raising living standards, and steady growth index of quality of life, permanent education of the rural population and its adjustment to permanent change of duties in the modern rural tourism, cultural tourism growth through the constant reduction of the so-called absolute abstainers and travel faster relative growth of tourism abstainers, which means the growth of real and potential tourism demand and supply, energisation level of culture, identity, ethnographic characteristics of the equalization of social milieu, i.e. slow disappearance of social differences in the local population, and constantly fit into active cooperation of tourists, tourism workers and local viewpoint;

3) The cultural challenges of rural areas receive their typical certificate in a development of tourism by completing additional tourism, a marketing presentation characteristics of the population of that area and activation of a growing number of people to deal with both amateur, professional and cultural activities; and

4) Environmental challenges of rural areas are larger and more typical of tourism development, particularly through the revival of eco-tourism activities. In order to become a rural area of Serbia challenging, the potential for rural tourism development on environmental grounds, it must in all parts, as the accommodation units, applied a typical eco-lodgings. Therefore, in our conditions, eco-lodging must presents, from the outside, build rural identity of Serbia, while the interior permits using the modern technical and technological. It must satisfy: protecting natural and cultural components of their environment, during construction performing minimal impact on the environment, fits into specific context of environment, using alternative, sustainable means of water consumption, ensure the proper handling of garbage and waste water; excellent cooperation with local population, applies programs of environmental education and education employees and tourists, and contribute to sustainable community development through research programs. (See /6/, June, 2012)

From everything the response that imposes is that a rural area of Serbia provides challenging activities in the following directions:

- a. challenge of the independent tourism offer, with complete rural-tourist facilities;
- b. challenge of the compatibility of rural-tourist area, with mountain centres, spas, urban and similar forms of tourism;
- c. challenge of marketing mix of rural-tourist area, with the promotion of tourism products facilities in rural areas of Serbia;
- d. challenges of transition rural-tourist area, through the valorisation of tourism next to tourist traffic corridors in the area;
- e. challenges of excursion activities in rural areas, through the development of tourism in mainly hilly area of the space;

- f. challenges of the specific integrity of tourist-rural areas of Serbia, through diffuse resorts, didactic farms, ethno-villages and bio-tourism garden, as well as through identified „the country“ (e.g., The fifth country in Italy), etc.; and
- g. all other challenges, which are a mix of forms and sub forms of tourist activities with „the central leader“ rural tourism in rural areas of Serbia. (See /2/, p. 148)

### Some of the driving challenges in a rural-tourist area of Serbia

Seeking the truth about how much rural areas of Serbia with their travel challenges can make people accepting development of tourism there, we came to the conclusion that people want such a challenge, but many factors in the socio-economic system practically preventing. However, that everything is not so unacceptable research tells us that we conducted with the students of final year of studies from the Economics Faculty in Kragujevac, in the scientific field of general economy and economic development. The study included 128 students, and processed was rural tourism as a significant form of selective tourism in rural areas of Serbia. According to performed survey, the main indicators on the structure of participants and their spatial and urban or rural background have given the following table:

**Table 1.** Basic characteristics of participants in the development of rural tourism in Serbia – Age structure

Age structure			
18-25	26-55	56 and over	Total
40	59	29	128

*Source:* Survey of Students of Economic Faculty in Kragujevac on rural tourism in Serbia, data processing, S. Milenković and S. Utvić, Kragujevac, May-June, 2012.

**Table 2.** Basic characteristics of participants in the development of rural tourism in Serbia – Gender structure

Gender structure		
Female	Male	Total
68	60	128

*Source:* Ibid, May-June, 2012.

**Table 3.** Basic characteristics of participants in the development of rural tourism in Serbia – Districts (See /8/, 2012) and Type of settlement

District	
Raški	31
Šumadijski	26
Moravički	22
Zlatiborski	17
Rasinski	8
Pomoravski	6

District		
Braničevski		5
Kolubarski		3
Podunavski		2
Nišavski		1
Kosovsko-mitrovački		1
Severno-bački		1
Zaječarski		1
Grad Beograd		1
Total		128
Type of settlement		
Cities	Villages	Total
77	51	128

Source: Ibid, May-June, 2012.

As we can see, is more interested in the urban population in these times of crisis for rural tourism (77 respondents), from a purely rural population (51 subjects). At the same time, rural areas that most want to develop tourism are from Raška District (31 interested in, from total number of respondents) and least interested in the rural areas (Nišavski, Kosovsko-mitrovački, Severno-bački, Zaječar District and City of Belgrade, one respondent from each district is interested). This picture is understood, because the Raška District, as part of the attractiveness of rural areas in Serbia, is the most relevant for the development of rural tourism. Consequently, we determined the most important resources, as well as basic and additional starters of rural tourism development in rural areas of Serbia. They are, in fact, well-known and recognized tourism challenges of that space.

**Table 4.** Device resources development of rural tourism in Serbia

The most important resources necessary for development of tourism	
The preserved nature	102
Clean and unpolluted water	72
Ethno content	71
Hospitable local population	63
Traditional gastronomy	61
Rich flora and fauna	50
Rural Councils	37
Developed agriculture	27
Excess of housing accommodation for tourists	21
Beer and Wine Trail	10
Other (roads, swimming pools, professional staff, healthy food, etc.)	7
Unproductive areas	2

Source: Ibid, May-June, 2012.



We are very pleased that our people understand that the basic resource for development of rural tourism in rural areas of Serbia, preserved natural environment (102 respondents gave a voice to this resource). This indicates that are challenges of rural areas in Serbia major, not only for rural tourism, but also for many other forms of selective tourism (primarily ecotourism). On the other side, all the respondents as potential participants in the creation of tourism products in rural areas of Serbia, the votes gave at least non-productive land (only 2 respondents), which means that everyone in Serbia is well understood that agriculture and tourism in rural areas make unique co-existential whole.

By further analysis, in a survey we came to the possible forms of rural tourism in rural areas of Serbia.

**Table 5.** Possible forms of tourism in rural areas of Serbia

<b>In Serbia should develop the following forms of rural tourism</b>	
Complex form of rural tourism	74
The traditional way of life	71
Exclusive stay in villages	52
Fishing in a rural area	38
Hunting in rural areas	35
Participation in agricultural work	32
Eco-rural tourism	27
Wine and gastronomic festivals	24
Tourism agribusiness	24
Diffuse hotel	19
Specific land	19
Activation of pub, pastures, farms, etc.	16
Rural phyto-pharmacology	8
Bird-watching in the rural area	7
Other (additional facilities, farm-sex tourism, etc.)	4

*Source:* Ibid, May-June, 2012.

Develop a global tourism itself causes increasing complexity of tourism demand and supply, which is why the respondents in our survey realized in rural areas of Serbia there is a major challenge for the tourism complex shape with several groups and subgroups, which all arise from the overall characteristics of the rural identity of our country. Even 74 respondents confirmed to have opted for a complex development of rural tourism in Serbia. Received the least votes sub-forms - bird watching, which is currently the most practiced in the U.S. and the UK, while in Serbia this advertising is not yet fully processed and accepted. So for this sub-form of rural tourism, in their development plans 7 respondents declared. The most interesting thing is that our citizens are ready to embrace the latest trends in tourism development in rural areas of Serbia through the so-called diffuse tourism (19 respondents) and the so-called „country specific“ (19 respondents), which is active, for now, only in Italy.

In order to challenges of rural tourism have been confirmed in developmental practice of rural areas of Serbia, the research shows how moves orientation of potential participants in the start-up tourism businesses in rural areas of Serbia:

**Table 6.** Orientation to start businesses in rural tourism of Serbia

<b>When I would launch a rural tourism business, the funds would invest in the following activities</b>	
The construction of ethno villages	79
Construction of ethno restaurants	51
Production of souvenirs and handmade products	49
Organize walking tours through the existing ethno village	42
The construction of ethno-house	38
The organization of gastronomic fairs	28
The formation of zoo with typical animal species	28
Raising plantations	25
The construction of wine cellars	19
Other (construction of roads and trails, additional facilities)	2

Source: Ibid, May-June, 2012.

The data shows that the most attractive challenge in our rural area is construction ethno village, which is considered a good indicator, because, thus, preserve the identity of the people who live in rural areas, with all its characteristics, and, in same time, satisfaction of tourists can be of the highest level. For this type of business voted 79 respondents. Unfavorably is that for construction of wine roads and cellars with wine tasting respondents chose the least, that is, only 19 respondents. This indicates that many viticulture areas must transform its traditions in the tourism challenge, i.e. “it is necessary to establish and develop the Wine Trail, which is a special form of selling wines, catering, tourism and agricultural products of one winemaking region”. (See /1/, p. 470)

Since the development of tourism in rural areas is also a supplementary activity, this research was focused on the following indicators:

**Table 7.** Preferred additional business in the rural tourism of Serbia

<b>From the additional business I would prefer one of the following</b>	
Organic food production	82
Development of ethno-homemade	58
Harvesting and processing of medicinal herbs	57
Organizing excursions to rural areas	54
Harvesting and processing of wild fruits	44
Activate all water mills, rolling mills, etc.	38
Making rural tourism souvenirs	35
Construction and revival of old shed and similar accommodation facilities	26
Establishment of receiving agencies for rural tourism	6
Other (breeding bees and honey production)	1

Source: Ibid, May-June, 2012.

“The largest part of the world food production is based on the protection of plants and animals with various medications. The latest medical findings suggest on harmful effects of these medications on the human body. This is the reason why by conventional food manufacturing also organic (healthy) food production was organized.” (See /7/, p. 338) Rural areas in Serbia even with 80% of its territory are suitable for the production of healthy food for of tourists. Therefore, our survey showed that most of those who would deal with the development of tourism in that area primarily provide healthy food, i.e. high-quality nutrition of tourists (82 respondents) and least respondents (only 6 of them) would set up their receptive tourism agencies. It is, in our opinion, a mistake, and the reason is in inadequate expertise and inadequate educational system for the agency business. Each rural tourist destinations, to well operated, must have at least one receptive travel agency in its area.

From all of said up to now impose the conclusion that there are challenges for tourism development in rural areas of Serbia, and study has shown what people can invest in order to achieve that:

**Table 8.** Forms of invested funds in development of rural-tourism businesses Serbia

<b>From own investment in rural tourism business, I could and would like to invest</b>	
Labor, knowledge	73
Space for accommodation and additional activities	59
Authentic agricultural products	55
Developed agricultural household	43
Financial assets	19
Other (experience, land)	2

*Source:* Ibid, May-June, 2012.

To achieve all this, 98 of them said they would invest their own material and financial resources, while 34 respondents - borrowed funds. So, rural area of Serbia is ready for future acceptance of tourism development with the unique active participation of all factors of socio-economic system of Serbia.

### **Conclusion**

Rural areas of Serbia should, primarily, release of the steady opinion that it is residual part of the country, which population is lower level than the urban and it is the easiest to economize right on it. However, the development of many additional activities in this area in most developed countries shows that it is an attractive, economically challenging and socially stable. Therefore, the penetration of tourism in that area brings a new philosophy of relations between local residents, tourist and tourist workers, which initiates the interest in it in all documents of state economic policy.

The rural areas of Serbia, with its great variety of tourist resources, wants to become challenging for tourism development. That could achieve with the greatest inventiveness of their local communities, entrepreneurial initiatives, on clearly feasible target innovation in

rural tourism. Also, in future development, rural areas of Serbia, in order to satisfy multiple challenges, must realize cluster grouping and systematization of themed rural-tourist entities, so that all regions of rural areas in Serbia together become competitive in the tourism market without unfair competition tourist destinations within them.

The modern world imposes technical-technologically demand to rural areas of Serbia, to network all actors of agro-tourism development, from the smallest, at the local level, to those of the highest, on level of national territory. All the travel society, regional tourism organizations, associations, cooperatives, non-governmental agencies, church and others, must constitute a component network of tourism development interests in all parts of the rural areas of Serbia. It follows, that the challenges of rural areas in tourism activity are also associated activities, primarily through the cluster, tourism stakeholders and partner organizations, in order to ensure the smooth business circulation of labour, capital and other elements of successful tourism development in Serbia. Finally, in order to rural areas of Serbia could realize all the distinctive challenges of tourism development, must comply with accepted systems of standardization and product quality in rural tourism, as well as at each position, with ratified certificates, to allow unimpeded growth and development of tourism as an integral part of the economic system.

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## IZAZOVI RURALNOG PROSTORA SRBIJE PERSPEKTIVNOJ TURISTIČKOJ AKTIVNOSTI

*Svetislav Milenković<sup>3</sup>, Svetlana Utvić<sup>4</sup>*

### Rezime

*Izazovi ruralnog prostora Srbije su kompleksna kategorija, pa je zato i rad postavio sebi cilj da pokaže koliko ti izazovi mogu da pomognu zainteresovanim njegovim stanovnicima, ali i drugima, da razvijaju i razviju turizam u granicama tog prostora. Da bi sve to dokazali u radu, moramo da koristimo i kvalitativne i kvantitativne metodologije društvenih nauka sa akcentom na indukciju, konverziju, multiplikator, ankete u okviru statističkih modela i sl. S' tako postavljenom metodologijom, rad, očito, ima izražene hipoteze:*

- *Ako ruralni prostor svake zemlje nosi višenamensku ekonomsku zavisnost, onda ruralni prostor Srbije mora da prihvati turizam kao svoj pozitivan ekonomski izazov; i*
- *Turizam u ruralnom prostoru, ako ima zagarantovan kapacitet podnošljivosti, onda taj ruralni prostor mora da bude povratna sprega njegovog uspešnog ekonomskog razvoja.*

*Rad, potencirajući izazove ruralnog prostora u turističkoj aktivnosti, mora da da kompatibilne rezultate sa dokaznim materijalom terenskog istraživanja i da označi pravce razvoja turizma u ruralnom prostoru Srbije.*

**Ključne reči:** *ruralni, prostor, izazov, turizam, razvoj*

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