CHAPTER II
RURAL TOURISM IN THE DANUBE REGION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA —
COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES
AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT
Rural areas with preserved nature and reach anthropogenic tradition of different rural areas have always attracted people for holidays and to stay. In recent years that kind of needs increase. A large number of factors affect the growth and development interests people from urban areas. Primarily environmental pollution, the increasing alienation of people from the natural environment, uniformity and standardization that provides a modern way of life in urban city areas, etc. Serbia has obviously great resources opportunities for development rural tourism. The attitude based on the fact of the presence of a large number of natural and human (anthropogenic) sources which are located in rural areas. As one of the important natural attractiveness in Serbia represents the Danube River which extends for 588 km and it is fully navigable. Due to its length, it is necessary to describe Danube in three spatial geographic entities: the upper Danube, Metropolitan area (Belgrade – Novi Sad) and the Lower Danube. Natural attractiveness which are present in all three areas and also significant anthropogenic resources, make base for tourism development. All resources are comfortable for development tourism of special interest. This area has great potential for development of the rural tourism. Attitude based primarily on the size of the territory that covers rural areas. This paper work analysed natural and social resources which are important for the development of tourism with special emphasis on the development of rural tourism in all three areas. Paper work will point out the strategic directions for its further tourist development primarily starting from marketing and management approach to developing rural tourism destinations.

KEY WORDS: destination, tourism, rural area development, agriculture

INTRODUCTION
The Republic of Serbia has not given sufficient attention to development of rural tourism. In different parts rural tourism has taken on different forms. Previous development can be assessed as haphazardly, rather than planned and directed strategically driven.

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Recently started with some projects which aimed to revive the rural areas which burdened with many problems, such as, for example, depopulation, migration to urban centres, and the low level of investment and so on. It is expected that rural tourism will contribute to the elimination of these negative trends. Tourism with synergetic character and multiple impacts on the overall economic and social life will strengthen the Serbian village.

**CONCEPT OF RURAL TOURISM**

In the literature, there is currently no uniform and universally accepted definition of rural tourism. The reason lies in the complexity of the issue, because rural tourism touches on two important industries – agriculture and tourism. By the early nineties was the dominant definition given by the Council of Europe in 1986: “Rural tourism includes all forms of tourism activities in rural areas, not just those that can be strictly linked to the farm, or can be defined as agro-tourism.”

The definition is fairly general, and as such is deficient; therefore it has often been criticized. Roberts and Hall’s (2003) noted that the definition which is, or at the beginning of the nineties adopted by the European Union (European Community), created problems of dual nature:

First, it moved away from the activities predominantly related to the farm from which rural tourism or “draws” its existence. In support of this claim that the rural tourism is often used synonyms “agro”/”agri”/“farm”.

Second, the definition is confusing, because it involves a wide range of recreational activities that take place in a rural setting, whether it is a rural area far from any urban centre, whether it is rural in its immediate vicinity.

In order to effectively illustrate the confusion that carries this approach to define and substantiate their views at the same time raised the question: “Do some recreational activity that takes place in the “Central Park” or the Finnish thematic park “Santa Clause”, may appoint “rural tourism”; given that it takes place in a rural setting, and is not strictly related to the farm?”

Previous research and provides definitions of rural tourism have been published in various scientific journals spectrum. Since some of known are, for example, “Sociology Ruralis”, “Annals of Tourism Research”, Journal of Sus-

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UN FAO (2004) distinguishes the following types of tourism that are taking place in rural areas: ecotourism, agro-tourism, agro-eco-tourism and eco-organic tourism. The division is explained as follows: Ecotourism involves activities that support the preservation and improvement of quality of life resources.

Agro-tourism represents the symbiotic relationship between tourism and agriculture. It is a key element of an environmentally and socially responsible tourism in rural areas. Rural hospitality offers new employment and income generating opportunities for rural populations, including agro-tourism as expression and cultural exchange of agricultural practices, artistic heritage and culinary traditions. Agro-tourism may take several forms: holiday farms, farmhouse bed-and-breakfast, farm camping, mountain resorts, equestrian centres and other forms of rural accommodations. Such facilities are an innovative payment system for environmental services generated on and around agricultural lands.

Agro-ecotourism. While ecotourism is nature-based and agro-tourism is farm-based, agro-ecotourism is a combination of both. The rural landscape, usually a combination of wild and agro-ecosystems, is the most important resource for tourism development. It is obvious that a diversified agricultural landscape, with semi-natural habitats, has a greater aesthetic and recreational potential over uniform, degraded and/or polluted agricultural areas. In Europe, agri-environmental policies often promoted organic agricultural activities as a most effective means for landscape conservation. Agro-ecotourism in certain

locations provides a strong economic incentive to small farmers to commit to biodiversity-friendly agriculture management.

**Eco-organic tourism.** When agro-ecotourism involves around an organic farm, it is referred to as eco-organic tourism. The valorisation of specific elements of the agro-ecosystem landscape offers an additional economic resource for environmental protection. Conversion to organic management in agricultural areas and the development of connected activities such as tourism are increasing. When farms are organically-managed, they increase the motivation for tourists’ visits. New tourist expectations have enhanced the quality of the supply such as diversified farm landscape, environmentally-sound farm-house architecture and local/typical gastronomy.

European Federation of Rural Tourism (“EuroGites”) at the general meeting held on 29th September 2005 on the meeting held at Yalta in Ukraine adopted a “general standards of rural tourism.” Standards are, as pointed out, equal to the area of the whole of Europe and are valid for all members of the federation to the present (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1.** The criteria for defining the framework of rural tourism by the European Federation of Rural Tourism (“EUROGITES”) from 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Position of the household in the natural environment, a village or small town</td>
<td>Less than 5,000 residents in the village / town or in typical / traditional neighbourhoods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rural area with emphasize characteristics of traditional agriculture and the outstanding natural values</td>
<td>Outstanding natural values (natural park, etc.). Traditional agriculture excluded industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tourism is not the main or predominant activity or source of income in the surrounding area.</td>
<td>The ratio of the number of tourist beds and residents in rural areas should not exceed 1:1 ratio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Good environment, quiet and peaceful location, no noise and pollution</td>
<td>Acceptable noise and odours that is characteristic of traditional agricultural production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Authentic accommodation and environment</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Personal care host about the guest (tourists).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Small capacity units</td>
<td>The upper limit capacity is 40 beds, if not legally designated or prescribed by internal standardization by members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Respect the legal criteria for evaluation</td>
<td>Respect for standards adapted to evaluate quality</td>
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<td>No.</td>
<td>Criterion</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Social sustainability in the context of multi-functional activities in rural areas</td>
<td>The application of the criteria of «Agenda 21» for tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Connection with the local community and traditional culture.</td>
<td>Minimum integration activities within the communities in the region, guests have the opportunity to make contact with local realities if they want to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Local products and gastronomy</td>
<td>Available in the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Culture (folklore, handicrafts, customs, heritage, etc.)</td>
<td>Available in the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Excluding criteria:</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Urban and industrial locality and their surroundings.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Areas of extreme mass and developed tourism.</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
<td>– Noise, pollution etc.</td>
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In the documents “Strategy for the Development Tourism in Serbia” (2005), Strategy for Sustainable Rural Tourism Development in Serbia, (2011), Master Plan for Sustainable Rural Tourism Development in Serbia, (2011), the term rural tourism involves a series of activities, services and other services that organize the rural population on family farms in order to attract tourists and create additional income while respecting principle sustainable development and conservation of natural resources.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOWER DANUBE AREA AND THE POTENTIAL FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

As a natural potential that are important for the development of tourism in the “Lower Danube” area, stand out:

- National Park "Đerdap." It is located in the Danube River from Golubac to Kladovo. The total surface area of 63,608 ha. It is one of five national parks in Serbia. It is characterized by a high concentration of ge-

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omorphological, hydrological and biogeographically resources. Around
the national park covers are located protective zones with a total area
90.629 ha;
- Danube River with costal area;
- "Đerdap Lake" – which is the largest artificial lake in Serbia. Depending
on the work of HPP "Đerdap" surface varies from 170 to 253 km2.
- Good geographical and traffic position – European Corridor 7 (Danube)
and the connection to Corridor 10 through Požarevac city;
- moderate continental climate;
- flora and fauna;
- diversity of spatial areas characterized by:
  - urban centres: Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Majdanpek, Kladovo and
    Negotin.
  - numerous of rural environmental entities,
  - widespread rural area.

Some of these natural resources have been put into developing tourism, but
the hope is that tourism will get more and more important role, due to the ef-
fects which can have on the entire economic life of the area.

Tourism from the aspect geomorphology is characterized by a high degree
of attractiveness. In the first place, as well as specific characteristic of this are-
as stand out “Đerdap” as the biggest gorge in Europe. Spatially speaking, Iron
Gate consists of four smaller gorges and three valleys. Special attraction of the
area is reflected in the fact that here measured the biggest depth of the Danube
River in the whole course (2,000 m), which is normally measured near Don-
ji Milanovac city.

As social conditions important for the development of tourism emphasize:
- Potential for the development of urban forms of tourism in the munic-
  ipalities of Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Majdanpek, Kladovo and Nego-
  tin. This area has 121,306 inhabitants per the 2002 Census.
- Then, there are a numerous of rural environmental entities as represen-
  tatives of rural way of life.
- Numerous cultural and historical monuments. It is important primarily
to emphasize archaeological sites, "Lepenski Vir", "Diana", "Golubac
city" remains "Trajan's Bridge" and "Trajan's Tablet", various castles,
and also "Serbian rural architecture."
- Typical architecture in urban and rural areas;
- Multi-ethnic composition of the population – which assumes a wide
  range of different contents related to customs and life of local areas
  where the focus should be in the cultural offer of the area.
- folklore and folk handcrafts – as an integral part of the tradition of local
  population.

According to the available data (National tourist organization of Serbia and
Regional Chamber of Commerce) in the entire area, “Lower Danube” operates
19 facilities registered to accommodate guests. In all, there are 833 rooms that are 1,942 beds. Total operates six hotels with 595 rooms and 1,294 beds. The degree of occupancy was 25.3%. Average length of stay of tourist is 2.4 days.

The majority of guests are domestic tourists. The relative share of foreign tourist traffic is less than 6% of total tourist traffic areas, which can be described as very lower. Official information on accommodation in private houses, primarily in rural area i.e. rural tourism, is not yet available.

The most perspective tourist products in this area include:
- Nautics – The area provides excellent opportunities for the development of boating (Danube River), which could attract large number of tourists interested in the area of Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Donji Milanovac, Tekija, Kladovo, Mihajlovac.
- Excursions – which include visits to archaeological sites, "Lepenki Vir", "Diana", "Golubac" remnants of "Trajan's bridge," as well as hydroelectric power plant "Iron Gate".
- Short breaks – for this kind of tourism the area has the capacity to Silver Lake, Kladovo, Donji Milanovac and the National Park “Đerdap”.
- Business tourism – there are some present activities in the urban centres of the Donji Milanovac, Kladovo, Golubac, etc.
- Rural (agro) tourism – for this kind of tourism there are good prospects in the Negotin area and settlements in the area around the National Park of “Đerdap”.
- Hunting tourism – with investments outside the National Park could be regulated some location with adequate hunting infrastructures and to be available to develop this type of tourism.
- Fishing tourism – the entire area of the Danube basin provides excellent conditions for the development of fishing tourism.
- Photo safari – the National Park “Đerdap” provides ideal conditions for the development of this form of tourism that today there is a great demand in Western European countries and also in the United States and Japan.
- "Food tourism" – the many gastronomic specialties typical for this area.

Vision for the area, “Lower Danube” is that in this area should develop tourism through the principles of sustainable tourism development that valued primarily rich and well preserved natural environment in NP “Đerdap”, and then a rich legacy of anthropogenic entire of area. Tourism should be developed through evaluation of:
- natural resources of the National Park "Đerdap"
- Danube River with all the perspective aspects of tourism that can develop on it, and in its coastal areas,
- unique cultural and historical heritage of the whole area,
- hunting and fishing grounds,
– widespread rural environment.

Strategic basis for the proposed vision for tourism development based on: environmental conservation, biodiversity areas, man-made heritage, different ambient environments, great opportunities for the development of cross-border cooperation with the Republic of Romania, and currently underutilized potential investment in the economy of tourism development.

CONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE LOWER DANUBE

Due to the natural, ecologically and environmental characteristics, different rural areas in the “Lower Danube” area are very interesting and perspective area for the development of rural tourism.

Adequate built houses in a preserved natural environment, characterized by peace and quiet, would represent “natural oasis” for the people from high urban, industrial centres (Belgrade, Pozarevac, Smederevo, Kragujevac, Negotin, Bor, etc.). Sadly, today the entire area of “Lower Danube”, rural tourism is not got a place and role that it could have and should play in the overall development of tourism.

In this regard, special attention should be given to rural tourism and all its manifestal forms (agri tourism, farm tourism, different activities in various rural areas, tourism of special interest, as well as many others). Regarding to this, the first steps could be determined primarily investing in appropriate tourism infrastructure – primarily receptive, traffic, and then the one that would complement out accommodation tourist industry. It is necessary to train the local people to provide appropriate quality services to tourists who would come to the area. An important role in all issue should have: relevant line of Ministries, the National Tourism Organization (TOS), local governments, and representatives from industry who may find their interest in investing in the development of rural tourism.

Numerous villages are the basis on which should be based planning, especially considering the current trends in the development of rural tourism (the so-called “return to roots”, the concept of “healthy organic food”, the growing popularity of the typical ethno issues – music, folk art, naive art, handicrafts, introducing tourists with the old customs, etc.).

The local economy in particular SMEs should find interest in marketing their agricultural and food products to tourists. This would be the connection of Agriculture, Trade and Tourism, strengthen local economies and eliminate some of the many negative trends plaguing the life of the inhabitants of the area.

In the following years, it is necessary to work on the image of the “Lower Danube” area as a tourist destination. This is based on the assumption that area could be subject of making position on potential tourist markets, thereby
caught the attention specific segments of tourism demand. Building tourist image should take place with the construction of a complementary image of Serbia as a country in terms of tourism development on macro and micro level as a tourist destination.

Serbia, unfortunately, is not present at the international tourism market in an appropriate manner however its tourist image is not adequately built. The reasons for this lie in:

− Political situation that was present on the Western Balkans in the past twenty years.
− Insufficient investment in tourism as an economic activity.
− The absence of adequate implementation of the tourism development strategy in the long term, etc.

Strategic positioning of tourist products “Lower Danube region” and their branding must be target driven based on a certain number of products that have been already exploited tourist, or for which there is some possibility that in a short time into developing.

The products: Nautics and cruising and touring excursions, short breaks, business tourism, rural tourism, tourism of specific interest. The main products of special interest tourism would be: hunting and fishing, “photo safari”, “cycling tourism” and events (a good example of the rural events that fit into the increasingly popular concept of “Food tourism”, namely: “Fair honey and wine” held in Negotin, event “St. Tryphon” that takes place in honour of the wine, then the exhibition of honey and bee products, which meets regularly in Kladovo, etc.).

A crucial place at market performance, in the short and long term, should have a domestic market. Such a view is based on the proximity of large urban centres in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Pozarevac, Kragujevac, Smederevo, which are potentially great tourism generating centres. Long term should be focus on the surrounding countries. Primarily Romania, Hungary and Croatia. With Romania should be establish an appropriate level of cross-border cooperation, in view of the Danube River, which is a common “bond” between two countries.

**Characteristics of Metropolitan Area “Belgrade – Novi Sad” and the Conditions for Tourism Development**

This area primarily characterized possibility for developing tourism related to urban resources. This attitude, primarily because Belgrade, Novi Sad, Smederevo, Pancevo, and many other urban centres, located in this region, are the most developed part of Serbia.

The area characterized by numerous natural resources, that are, for the natural and geographical characteristics, features and terrain shape, each other
very different. Of the Pannonia Plain in the north to the mountainous areas in the south area part.

Due to the large number of natural and social resources, based primarily on the set form and scope of this paper work, we will only briefly summarize some of the resources specific to this area.

In the Belgrade city area, as natural conditions important for the development of tourism, can be distinguished:

in the urban area: The old town of Belgrade, old town of Zemun, Coastal area of Danube river, Sava amphitheatre;

then aquatic zone: aquatory of the Danube with the backwaters and canals, aquatory of the Sava River and Sava Lake, Veliko Blato Lake located between Ovca and Borca, Deep Lake Stream in Barajevo;

Park and recreation area: Košutnjak / Topčider Banjička forest, Zemun – Forest Park, Stepin Lug – Forest Park;

Ecology – a significant tourist zone for tourism development: Ada Ciganlija/Ada Medjica/Makiš, Ratno ostrvo/island Čaplja, Ada Huja i Velikoselski wetland, Avala mountain wiht Zavojnica river;

Rural tourism zone are: Srem/Banat, area under the Avala and Kosmaj mountains, Livocko/Obranovacka areas.

In the city of Novi Sad, natural conditions important for the development of tourism are: National Park “Fruska Gora”, the Danube River with a watershed, Nature Reserves Koviljsko Petrovaradin Marsh and Begečka pit.

In the city of Smederevo to the resort “Jugovo” then “Šalanačka Forest” with rare species of flora (it is important to emphasize Querceto / fraxinetum serbicum) and fauna Šalanačka Lakes.

Due to the large number of social resources in this area it will not be mentioned. The most common tourism products currently in this area are:

− Business and MICE tourism.
− Nautical tourism, which is in the development stage. Some infrastructure facilities for the development of this type of tourism are built, and gave some results so far, and some are in the very beginning of construction.
− Special interest tourism – which is based on the cultural history heritage of the city, to different possibilities provided by the National Park "Fruska Gora", art, gastronomy, sports facilities, etc..
− Hunting tourism – which can complement the tourist offer of the region. In this area operates a number of hunting clubs.
− Fishing tourism – which would rely primarily on the location area of the Danube River and on its tributaries, etc..
− Rural tourism and agro-tourism, for which there are objectively good resource perspective, which could be developed in the hinterland towns.

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CONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA “BELGRADE – NOVI SAD”

Development of Rural tourism in this area has assumed different forms. Thus, for example, in the vicinity of Novi Sad, typical farm destination well known as “salash”. Building of this kind of farms are with all the features related to the life and customs of the people who lives in Vojvodina, while in the territory of Belgrade and Smederevo, assumed the form of rural tourist excursion destination.

During the 2004 in aim to promote Serbia as a “transit destination” towards the “Athens Olympic games” was built two typical farms (salash/ranch). They are: “Salash 137”, “Salash 84”, and later were built “Brkin salash” and “Our salash” that complement the tourist offer of this region. Today in this area are present a numerous of farms (ranch/salash) that are aimed to promoting local values of the population who lives in this area. However, if we want more it is not enough.

So far, very little has been done to promote agro-tourism (specific types of rural tourism, typical for villages in these areas). In this area is present a typical rural ambient units which is specific for the region of Vojvodina (North Serbia). These units characterized, for example, architecture, traditions, way of life, and make it different from other parts of the Republic of Serbia.

Exactly, in the villages of Vojvodina, which until now are little present in the Serbian tourist offer, lies a great potential for the development of agro-tourism.

In the Belgrade area until now very little has been developed about rural tourism. The focus of development is primarily placed on excursion in rural tourist destinations. As an area that currently has the most developed rural tourism is allocates one that is located below the mountains Avala and Kosmaj. First of all, it is about hiking in the countryside, farm stay tourism in villages “Babe” and “Koraćica”. These rural tourist destinations are equipped with the infrastructure to meet the needs of tourists staying for no longer up to 4 days.

Those for which travel demand expressed particular interest in the metropolitan area, are “food – tourism” and wine tourism. In this sense evolved “events” that are aimed at promoting local values.

Market research of indigenous food products in Vojvodina, which was partly carried out in Novi Sad points to the fact that some indigenous products more or less known and that they have different representation in the diet of consumers.

As the most famous food products for which there is tourist demand are: Vojvodina ham an original authentic food product. Because of characteristics it is a product with high price and it significantly limits the tourist consumption.
“Petrovac Cullen” (sausages) features local indigenous products in central and southern Backa. Because of the authentic production, meat quality and specific spices has potential to grow into a traditional brand, with good prospects of increasing rank.

“Sremska sausage” is produced in a traditional way in the households and the industrial way capacity. Technology industrial production, industrial prospects taste Sremska sausage significantly differ from those produced by households.

Aspic old indigenous product with extremely seasonal character of consumption (in the winter). Limiting factors of increasing investments are specific modes of transport and attachment for the winter season.

Greaves has a long tradition in the consumption of which is linked to traditional Vojvodina pig slaughter. With the right packaging can increase sales.

Homemade bacon for which the world’s growing demand especially made from pig mangulica due to lower cholesterol content.

Futog sauerkraut has local character and tradition. Demand is highly seasonal.

Mulberry brandy called. “Mulberry” in the past has been the traditional beverage. With the disappearance of the mulberry trees from the streets of villages and towns, it loses its significance. It has characteristics of indigenous products. Having a character organic production has an important perspective on the market. Stricter control of production (no added artificial sugars), better packaging design, and with an emphasis on the organic character of production to marketing activities.

Strudel has been produced by households but today is producing and less bakers and industrial capacity. With the use of high quality raw materials (good quality and special purpose flour poppy) can develop into a top brand.

Pumpkin pie is predominantly consumed by households. There is seasonal consumption. Frozen pumpkin pie has significant prospects of export with the promotional activities that suggest an organic character and high quality.

Steamed rolled cheese has a regional character and is related mainly to domestic production. There are significant differences in production technology and quality achieved in individual micro-sites of production.

Bermet wine production is related to the micro locality Fruska Gora or at Sremski Karlovci. Has a long tradition in manufacturing. With better distribution and marketing activities can become a top brand. The limiting factor is the production. It is assumed that the annual production of 15 to 20 thousand bottles.

Events that are organized in municipalities which gravitate mostly to the Danube River as the topic have a wine. The reason is developed viticulture production and wine production Beočin, Sremski Karlovci, Smederevo, etc. The best known are the following events: “Karlovac grape”, “Grape Banoštorski days”, “Smederevo autumn”, etc.
From tourist events related to agricultural and food products stand out as the most important event following:

Festival “Kuglof” is an event related to the preservation and popularization of cake “Kuglof”. This is a manifestation regularly is monitored with promotion by Karlovac wine and handcraft souvenirs made by the locals population etc.

In the small town of Ruma usually held manifestation “Srem cake.” This is a competitive event for the best cake in Srem.

In place Krčedin are maintained the “Ham Fest”. The aim of the event is to promote one of the most popular pork products.

In the village Kačarevo which is located near the town of Pancevo is traditionally held the event “Bacon festival.” The aim of the event is to promote the bacon and other meat products.

What we particularly emphasizes is the quality system of agricultural and food products as a guarantee of quality. The goal is to get through the promotion of indigenous products and promote local tourism values of certain area. As a rule, such events are accompanied by a rich cultural program, enriched indigenous folklore and other anthropogenic values.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA “UPPER DANUBE” AND THE CONDITIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

Area of the “Upper Danube region” characterized by the following significant natural potential for tourism development:

− Special nature reserve "Upper Danube";
− river Danube with coastal area;
− geographic-traffic situation characterized:
  − Corridor 7 (Danube River);
  − Location on the border of three states of Serbia, Croatia and Hungary;
  − close to the areas Corridor 10, which extends from the Hungarian border to Belgrade and further south;
− moderate continental climate;
− biodiversity flora and fauna;
− Spatial Diversity of areas characterized by:
  − Urban centres: Sombor, Apatin, Bač i Bačka Palanka,
  − Special nature reserve “Upper Danube”,
  − Numerous of rural environmental entities,
  − Widespread rural area.

High level of tourist attractions primarily characterized by Special Nature Reserve “Upper Danube.” It is a marsh field, which is located on the territory of three states: Hungary, Croatia and Serbia. Special Reserve on the northern bordered with the National Park “Danube Drava”, which is located in Hun-
gary, and to the west bordered by a nature park Kopački marsh” located in the Republic of Croatia.

Special nature reserve “Upper Danube” to “Monostorski marsh” and “Apatinski marsh.” The total surface of this area is 19,618 ha. The terrain includes forest areas, meadows, wetlands and river Danube.

Social conditions important for the development of tourism typical for this area:
- For the development of urban forms of tourism are distinguished: the city of Sombor, Apatin, Bac and Backa Palanka. Otherwise, in this area have 130,076 inhabitants per the 2002 census.
- In the area are present numerous rural environmental units that provide tourists the opportunity to learn about the rural way of life.
- Many cultural and historical monuments.
- Architecture typical for this area.
- Multi-ethnic composition of the population (on this area lives 28 nations)
- folklore and folk handcrafts – as an integral part of the tradition of local population.
- Level of development of economy, culture, sports and so on.

According to available data, the National Tourism Organization of Serbia (TOS) and the Regional Chamber of Commerce on the whole area of “Upper Danube” currently there are approximately 1,000 beds. Actively operate two hotels. These are the hotels Internacion in Sombor and Spa hotels Junaković. Fulfilment of accommodation capacities are:
- In hotel “Internacion” 39% ,
- “Spa hotel Junaković” 26%.

The average bed price in the “Upper Danube” is between 20 and 40 euros. Official data on accommodation in private houses (mainly in rural i.e. Rural tourism) are not yet available. It can be expected that this capacity is currently quantitatively meet the needs of tourism demand, but if there was an expansion they were insufficient.

As weakness can be assessed and a shortage of accommodation in the rural tourism, although in recent years in this direction are appropriate minimum steps. For that way they built farms/ranches (salash):
- near Sombor: "Dida Hornjakov", "Art Vištinka farm."
- near Bački Petrovac: “Volič salash”.
- Near Bačka Topola: “Katai salash”.

Most perspective tourist product of this area is:
- Excursion – which would include the visit of the Special Nature Reserve "Upper Podunavlje" as well as a number of cultural and historical monuments.
- Spa tourism – which is primarily concerned with “Spa hotels Junaković".
− Nautical tourism – which is in the development stage. Some infrastructure facilities for the development of this type of tourism are built, and gave some results so far, while others are beginning construction.
− Business tourism – which can be developed in urban centres Sombor and Apatin.

As prospective forms of tourism, which unfortunately have not been fully developed and utilized, are:
− Rural tourism (agro-tourism),
− Tourism of special interest:
  − Hunting tourism,
  − Fishing tourism,
  − Food tourism,
  − Photo-safari,
  − Bike tourism, etc.

Tourism development in this area should be based through the principles of sustainable tourism development that would valorise the rich and well preserved natural environment and allowing tourist exploitation:
− natural resources (primarily special nature reserve "Upper Danube"),
− Danube River with all the prospective aspects of tourism that can be developed on the river and in its coastal areas,
− thermal springs located in and around Junaković spa,
− excellent hunting and fishing grounds across the area,
− widespread rural environment.

Strategic basis for the proposed vision for tourism development is based on:
− Environmental preservation.
− Biodiversity of the areas.
− Different urban centres
− Rural and village environment characteristic for the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina
− Opportunities for the development of cross-border cooperation with Hungary and Croatia.
− So far underutilized potential investment in the development of tourism.
− Tourism products important for the positioning of the area on the tourist market are:
  − Business tourism – which already has some results in Sombor and Apatin.
  − Events – A good example of some of the events that fit into the concept of "Food tourism", which are:
    − “Bodrog Fest” – a festival of food and drink craft products since 2005, held every second Saturday of August.
    − “Ravangrad Fest” – wine and food festival in Sombor,
– “Apatinska fish nights” – the event is held in July each year,
– Events in Backa Palanka, most notably “Pitarijada” (held in mid-January with the traditional pies), “Sausage fest” (held in February each year where the amount in addition to local sausage and other pork products), “Strudel fest” (held in August, with an emphasis on the production of strudel), “Pasuljijada” with various dishes of beans, and so on.
– Transit tourism – is based on natural geography advantages of the areas (corridor 7 and 10, the location of the area on the border of three states, etc.).
– Nautics and cruising,
– Tourism of special interest,
– Spa tourism – basis for planning is already built Spa Hotel “Junaković” and other accommodation facilities that could be built in the area.
– Excursions – primarily focused on the visit of the Special Nature Reserve "Upper Danube" and other cultural and historical monuments in the area.
– Agro-tourism – so far in this area has not been built ethno village or eco-village that promotes traditional local values of the area. Also, very little has been done on the adaptation of existing rural infrastructure for the admission and stay of tourists. If this weakness will be eliminated it could be expected and results in a long term period of time.

CONCLUSIONS
With the intensive development of rural tourism is started from the nineties of twentieth century. It was originally developed in Western Europe and North America and then in other parts of the world. In Serbia, the intensive development of rural tourism began in the second half of the nineties. Today, rural tourism in different parts of Serbia took on different forms.

In some areas of Serbia, rural tourism is based on the activities strictly related to farm and rural tourism offer which is based on life style on the farm. On the other hand, in other areas, it took the form of tourism of special interests, and is often associated with other forms of tourism that have a dominant impact on tourist visits to the certain destinations (winter resorts, spa centres, etc.).

It may be noted that the development of rural tourism in Serbia has occurred spontaneously and through the implementation of the policy of undifferentiated marketing, without any clear market policy and demand. An alternative approach was planned, strategically driven and precisely manufactured tourism development which target specific market segment. This would be achieved much better results in the development of those currently achieved.

One of the significant tourist resource bases in the Republic of Serbia is the Danube River which its course flows and in different parts it makes different
natural geographic units. The Danube coastal areas were developed over time and disappeared many civilizations. As a result, today there is present an important anthropogenic legacy that can be used for tourism development, because it has a high level of tourist attractiveness. Area of Danube region characterized and relatively good preservation of the natural environment. In this area are located two of the five national parks in Serbia (NP “Đerdap” and NP “Fruška Gora”), then there are numerous nature reserves and other natural landscapes of exceptional quality. In this regard, it is important to tourism development based on the principles of sustainable development, in order to clearly present highly valuable natural resources and be protected for future generations. Also at the same time that it will be valorised through tourism development.

Rural tourism is a broader concept than agri-tourism and farm based tourism. It may be noted that farm based tourism is linked to the so-called micro destination; agri-tourism is linked to specific village environmental entities, and rural tourism includes activities related to the widespread rural area as a whole.

In this sense, it is necessary to exist networking and integrated approach to the planning and management of tourism development at all levels.

In this way it is allow application of the principles of marketing and management of tourism destinations in which all stakeholders have an interest in tourism development.

In areas of the Lower Danube, Metropolitan area “Belgrade – Novi Sad” and the Upper Danube basin should be regarded as an integral tourist complexes, because they really are actually in their natural geographic and social conditions.

In this context it should be planning appropriate actions in the future to develop tourism, rural, and all other forms.

It is expected that through the adopted strategic documents (the Strategy of Tourism Development and Master plan for sustainable rural tourism development) this area will get more importance and clearly will present the tourism resources and be financial valorised. For this, it is imperative that provide adequate investments from both, the public and from the private sector of the economy.

REFERENCES