



The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

Papers downloaded from AgEcon Search may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.

No endorsement of AgEcon Search or its fundraising activities by the author(s) of the following work or their employer(s) is intended or implied.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN MALO CRNIĆE MUNICIPALITY, SERBIA: AN ATTEMPT TO ASSESS LOCAL POTENTIALS AND PLANNING PERSPECTIVES FOR LONG-TERM GROWTH¹

Predrag Vuković², Nataša Kljajić³, Anton Puškarić⁴

Abstract

One of the municipalities, located in the eastern Serbia in the Braničevo district, that has not yet used its tourist potentials is the municipality of Malo Crniće. It is surrounded by five other municipalities and consists of nineteen settlements. In line to OECD criteria, or according to the structure of geographical coverage and the type of activity of majority of residents, municipality of Malo Crniće possesses predominantly rural character.

Within the municipality, there is a large number of natural and social attractions that could be put into the function of tourism development. Unfortunately, so far, tourism in mentioned municipality has been developed in spontaneous manner, while all attractions have not been properly valorized in terms of tourism.

The main goal of municipality development has been recognized in connection of economic and non-economic activities, towards the achieving positive multiplied effects through the synergy of all potentials, that will be set in motion “wheel of development”. This is precisely the role and importance of tourism, which must represent a link between all vital segments significant for the development of municipality.

Considering availability of preserved natural environment, one of the principles of tourism development in municipality must be its implementation in sustainable manner. The aim of paper is to indicate strategic directions for

¹ Paper is a part of research financed by the MSTDI RS, agreed in decision no. 451-03-136/2025-03/200009 from 4.2.2025.

² Predrag Vuković, Ph.D., Sci., Senior Research Associate, Institute of Agricultural Economics, Volgina Street no. 15, 11060 Belgrade, Serbia, Phone: +381 11 697 28 58, E-mail: predrag_v@iep.bg.ac.rs, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4723-9815>

³ Nataša Kljajić, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate, Institute of Agricultural Economics, Volgina Street no. 15, 11060 Belgrade, Serbia, Phone: +381 11 697 28 58, E-mail: natasa_k@iep.bg.ac.rs, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2245-8285>

⁴ Anton Puškarić, Ph.D., Research Associate, Institute of Agricultural Economics, Volgina Street no. 15, 11060 Belgrade, Serbia, Phone: +381 64 144 24 70, E-mail: anton.puskaric@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1538-4337>

possible tourism development based on examination of respectable natural and social (anthropogenic) resources.

Key words: Rural areas, tourism, tourist destination, local economy, rural development, environment, sustainability.

JEL⁵: O13, O18, Q56

Introduction

Tourism has been unjustly neglected in the Republic of Serbia for many years (Vuković et al., 2024). Consciously, or largely unconsciously, a policy of undifferentiated marketing was implemented, according to which a uniform tourist product was offered to the market. Mentioned did not consider the specific needs of certain market segments, i.e. it has not met the needs of certain "market niches" (Vukovic et al., 2009; Petković et al., 2022). This resulted in lower tourism revenues than those that could potentially be achieved and, in long run, there was no investment in further tourism development (Pantić, Milojević, 2019). As alternative, there was a strategy of differentiated marketing, which would be directed to specific market segments, with specific needs, so-called strategy of the focus (Paunovic, 2016). Such a strategic approach would result in rationalization of business, while enable higher tourism revenues. As a consequence of implementation of previously mentioned approach, number of municipalities in Serbia have not valorized their tourism resources. One of them is the municipality of Malo Crniće.

Based on the available data from desk and field research, it can be concluded that the municipality of Malo Crniće possesses respectable natural and social resources suitable for the development of tourism. Starting from the synergistic character of tourism, as it links many (non)economic activities, it is justified to expect that through its development positive multiplied effects on the overall life in municipality will be achieved. Tourism would represent the "wheel of development" of this underdeveloped municipality. The main intention of the paper is to point out opportunities and guidelines for the strategic development of the tourism through the analysis of natural and socio-cultural resources.

Literature Review

During the last decades of the 20th century, there was a growing belief that the connection to the economic mainstream and traditional paradigm of economic

5 Article info: Professional Article, Received: 29th March 2025, Accepted: 23rd April 2025.

growth, while neglecting environmental and social aspects, was a significant cause of the increasing economic crises (Roy, 2016). In response, intense search for new approaches has begun, trying to bring fundamental changes at the global level. Although these initiatives were not always free from empty rhetoric and deliberate ambiguity, it was precisely linked to the context that the concept of sustainable development emerged, what became a common framework for numerous theoretical and practical researches (Polukhina et al., 2021). Thus, the Brundtland Commission (1987) developed a suitable definition according to which sustainable development can be described as one that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The UN (UN, 2015) defines sustainable development as those one that includes economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

Gonzalez Sanchez and associates have been argued that within the rural tourism, sustainable development involves implementing practices along the protection of natural resources and socio-cultural (anthropogenic) heritage, while supporting local communities (Gonzalez Sanchez et al., 2021). Sustainable rural tourism is based on the use of local resources, strengthening the local economy, preserving traditional culture and reducing negative environmental impacts (Ivona, 2021; Baloch et al., 2023). According to definition of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2025), sustainable tourism is a form of tourism that considers current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, protecting the needs of tourists, tourism industry, environment and local communities. This approach allows tourism to become a driver of sustainable development in rural areas, by creating new jobs and strengthening communities, while protecting their natural and cultural values. UNWTO (2025) also argues that sustainable tourism has to:

1. Provide optimal utilization of available environmental resources that forms a group of essential elements in tourism development, running and advancing the main ecological processes, while supporting the conservation of natural heritage and biodiversity.
2. Consider, understand and respect the socio-cultural authenticity of observed local community, maintain and protect its built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, while support the inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
3. Provide long-term viability of economic operations and support socio-economic advantages to all interested persons, while make them fairly distributed, or initiate stability in employment, as well as provide income-earning alternatives and available social services within the observed community, supporting the poverty alleviation processes.

Weaver (2006) specifically presents a position of rural tourism, later accepted by the UN (2025) as a general form for all types of tourism. He was argued that the sustainable development of rural tourism requires cooperation between different actors, including local communities, governments and private sector, with the aim of creating a balance between economic development and the preservation of natural and cultural resources. So, sustainable development of rural tourism can be understood as a crucial strategic approach for improving the economic stability of rural areas, while at the same time taking care about the preservation of identity and rural environment of local communities (Widawski et al., 2023; Yanan et al., 2024).

Methodological Framework

Target area of the research was the territory of Malo Crniće municipality, which, with its natural and socio-cultural specificities, possesses a number of respectable natural and social (anthropogenic) resources suitable for the development of rural and other forms of tourism.

The research aim was to analyze the current state of the tourism sector in the municipality of Malo Crniće, as well as to assess the elements of the boarding and non-boarding tourist offer that influence the creation of conditions for stimulating tourist demand. The intention was to shed the light on the prerequisites for creating strategic guidelines for the further development of tourism in mentioned municipality.

In the first phase, research involves desk research, including the analysis of existing scientific literature, strategic documents, or previously completed development studies, as well as other relevant secondary sources suitable for research and comparative analysis. In the second phase, direct data collection, processing and analysis were performed (research was conducted during the period 3rd January - 1st March 2025). Quantitative and qualitative methods were used. After interviewing stakeholders, the obtained data were checked and compared. In the last phase, there were made certain concluding remarks. They could serve as appropriate assessments and recommendations for the complementary development of various types of tourism.

Results with Discussion

General information

Area of the municipality of Malo Crniće covers 271 km², while its altitude ranges from 85 to 350 m a.s.l. Observed municipality is surrounded by the city

of Požarevac, and municipalities Petrovac na Mlavi, Kučevo, Veliko Gradište, and Žabari (Picture 1.).

Picture 1. Municipality of Malo Crniće (geographical location)



Source: IAE, 2018.

The Mlava river flows through the municipality. Spatially and geographically, around the river, which extends into the Stiška Plain, there are numerous hills that are actually the edges of the Homolje Mountains. Municipality characterizes temperate-continental climate with average summer temperatures of 20.5°C, or average winter temperatures of 1.23°C. The largest part of the surface waters has a catchment area

towards the Mlava river (about 90%) and the Pek river (about 10%). Otherwise, as a significant aquatic potential of the municipality are also lakes Zaova and Zmajevac (OMC, 2024).

According to results of last Census (2022), the municipality is settled by 13,853 inhabitants living in 19 rural settlements that are located in the central parts of municipality (SORS, 2023). According to the OECD criteria, rural areas are defined as those with less than 150 inhabitants per square kilometer (Fadic et al., 2019). Based on this criterion, municipality of Malo Crniće belongs to the municipalities with a distinctly rural character.

According to the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Municipality of Malo Crniće for the period 2019-2023, the share of agricultural land within the total land area is 84.6%. Accordingly, agriculture could be marked as the main economic sector in municipality. Agricultural activity occupies about 23,000 ha, where the most of land is privately owned (IAE, 2018). The municipality lies at the main road connecting Požarevac city, and Petrovac and Žagubica municipalities, while through the city of Požarevac it is connected with the European Corridor X.

In the context of tourism development, it is important to note that the territory of the municipality of Malo Crniće is located only one-hour drive from the Belgrade (capital of the Republic of Serbia), as well as Kragujevac, which is the fourth largest city in Serbia. There are close also the cities of Smederevo and Požarevac, as large and potentially significant emissive tourist markets.

Historically, the municipality was firstly mentioned in 1467., in document called the “Turkish Braničevski Notebook”. This document describes currently existing villages Salakovac, Gornje and Donje Crniće, Batuša, Kalište, Kula, Toponica, Kobilje, and Malo Gradište.

Nowadays, the municipality of Malo Crniće belongs to group of underdeveloped municipalities in Serbia. It is stated according to SORS criteria (level of per capita income, rate of employment, or by the level of development of entrepreneurship and industry, underdeveloped or missing elements of social and physical infrastructure, etc.), what in this moment is not conducive for the development of tourism. On the other side, municipality possess respectable resource that could be put in function of development.

Environmental prerequisites for tourism development

Based on the desk research, and data from the Malo Crniće Tourist Organization (TOOMC, 2025), and field research performed in period January - March 2025

(Vukovic et al., 2025), there could be underlined following natural attractions significant for the development of tourism in observed municipality:

- Lake *Zaova* is located 20 km southeast of Požarevac city. This is an artificial lake with total area of 3 ha, fed by water from several small forest streams. Depth of the lake at the local dam is around 5 m, while in other parts it ranges 3-4 m. Lake represents area suitable for picnics, as it is surrounded by forest, while it provides good conditions for development of fishing and other types of tourism of special interest.
- Lake *Zmajevac* is located in the Smoljinac village, about 6 km northeast of the municipal administrative center. The area of the lake is about 3 ha, with average depth of 2.5-3 m, and width of 150 m.
- *Vranjevac* trail is hiking and cycling trail located in the wild nature that could be interesting for fans of these sports.
- *Mlava* river flows through the western part of the municipality from South to North, forming a valley 2-3 km width. River has a rich fish stock, what makes it attractive for the development of fishing tourism.
- *Spatial diversity of the municipality* - it consists of:
 - 19 settlements that are mostly of a rural type;
 - the shores of two lakes, and the *Mlava* river;
 - large part of the municipality's area is covered by agricultural land (84.6%), which is mostly sown with field crops.
- *Great diversity of flora and fauna* - from the aspect of flora, it includes a specific mixture of forest and agricultural plant species. Considering forests, oak, beech and hornbeam trees dominate, while willow and poplar trees have been occurred along the river banks. Forest land within the municipality occupies 1,817.4 ha, or around 6.6% of overall area, what is significantly lower than the national average, 19.1% (OMC, 2025). Among agricultural crops, cereals, corn and sunflower dominate. The fauna that could be found in municipality is very rich, i.e. there lives a number of different animal species, from various types of mammals (deer, wild boar, fox, etc.), to different birds (songbirds, birds of prey, etc.), and reptiles on land. In municipality are active two hunting societies "Mlava" and "Stig", while both of them belong to the Hunting Association of Serbia (HAS), covering hunting area "Podunavlje" (HAS, 2025). Municipality possess rich fish fund, including catfish, pike, chub and other freshwater fish species characteristic for observed area.

- *Relatively good geographical and traffic position* - municipality is located 20 km from the European corridor X, which passes in the immediate vicinity of the city of Požarevac. Corridor connects north and south parts of Serbia, while it is among the most important in Europe linking the north parts of Europe with the Mediterranean area (Vemić, 2005).
- *Moderate continental climate* pleasant to stay in, while considering different seasons. Summers are characterized by dry days and temperatures exceeding 30°C (maximally over 35°C), while winters are cold with temperatures ranging from 0 to -5°C. Generally, area of the municipality has moderate humidity, while precipitation is evenly distributed throughout the year.

Previously mentioned creates good natural prerequisites for the development of various types of tourism, primarily:

- *Rural tourism* - considering the majority of municipality as rural in nature, it is reasonable to expect that rural tourism will move from spontaneous to higher phase of suitable development.
- *Hunting tourism* - rich fauna in this region provides the basis for planning this type of tourism, while this activity must be done in accordance with national legislation and principles of sustainable development.
- *Fishing tourism* - rich aquatic potentials in municipality provides ideal conditions for planning the development of this type of tourism.
- *Excursion* - considering that municipality is located near the cities of Požarevac and Smederevo, while not so far from Belgrade and Kragujevac, with adequate promotional policy and investments, a certain segment of tourist demand could be attracted.
- *Different types of thematic tourism* - strongly depends on management creativity in creating various tourist products that could be offered to local or regional tourism market.

Most of the natural attractions of Malo Crniće have not been used for tourism development, or they are still in their infancy.

Socio-cultural determinants of tourism development

Among the social or anthropogenic attractions significant for the development of tourism in observed municipality, as the most popular could be underlined:

- *Zaova monastery* - first time was mentioned in 1467 AD, although it is claimed its building in the time of Prince Lazar.

- *Brdača* monastery - is located in the area of market place of medieval town of Kula. It is believed to have been founded at the same time as the Zaova Monastery. Characteristic for this monastery is that in the Middle Ages it was collected so-called “copyists” of books, what makes it famous in wider region.
- Monastery *Zmajevac* is located in the village of Smoljinac, while it is dedicated to „Saint Petka“. Exact period of its establishment is unknown, while the monastery is known for its healing water, what attracts a number of people.
- *Vranjevac* memorial - was built in memory of all those who died in the Braničevo District during the First World War and the Second Balkan War. Traditionally, every year on October 18th, there is celebrated the anniversary of the battle at Vranjevac.
- *Bench of love* - was created at the initiative of the Malo Crniće Tourist Organization close to Zaova monastery. It is a place that supposes to animate lovers to visit this tourist destination.
- *Beganovci* fountain - is located in Begunovci, between the villages of Crljenca and Kula. It dates back to the Middle Ages, when the Turks ruled this region, although there are certain records indicating that it dates back to Roman times.
- *Archaeological sites* - located on the edge of lake Zmajevac with excavations from the Bronze Age.

What can further contribute to the development of tourism?

- There are several developed events in the municipality, such as Stiško poselo; Fedras; From the source of clear water; Children’s week; Walking to health mode; Let’s start the circle dance; Memorial tournament; From knee to knee; Motor race; Carriage race of the Siglavy club, etc.;
- Enthusiasm of people employed in the Malo Crniće Tourist Organization who participate in all promotional activities at national level, thereby contributing to building the image of this destination;
- Interest of local population for the development of rural tourism.

Dynamics of tourist movements and current state of accommodation capacities in the municipality of Malo Crniće

Table 1. shows the movements of tourists and the number of overnight stays in the last five years in the municipality of Malo Crniće.

Table 1. Number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays in Malo Crniće in last 5 years (according to SORS data)

Year	Tourism			Overnight stays			Average number of tourists overnights ¹⁾	
	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
2019	273	273	-	2,713	2,713	-	9.9	-
2020	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2021	1,100	1,100	-	1,100	1,100	-	1.0	-
2022	146	125	21	757	573	184	4.0	8.8
2023	146	94	52	622	493	129	5.2	-

Source: Publications "Municipalities and Regions in the Republic of Serbia", SORS, Belgrade, Serbia, for the observed years (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024).

Note: 1) The average number of tourist overnight stays is calculated by dividing the number of overnight stays by the number of tourists. Since that tourist is registered in each place where he/she stays, in the event of a change of place, he/she is re-recorded, i.e. duplicated. Therefore, the average number of tourist overnight stays, calculated in this way, is probably lower than the actual number.

According to presented, there is no data for 2020, considering the occurrence of COVID-19 pandemic in this period. There has also been a noticeable decline in the number of tourists and their overnight stays after the pandemic. The reasons for such a poor performance in the tourism sector should be seen primarily in:

- 1) Lack of adequate infrastructure - primarily the lack of quality roads, public transportation, etc. Municipality is notable for the lack of proper accommodation facilities too. There is not adequate accommodation facility at the entire territory of municipality that can meet the requirements of modern and/or increased tourist demand in terms of quality and quantity.
- 2) Insufficient promotional activity - without investing in promotional mix and its complete presentation to the tourism market, there could not be expected to stimulate tourism demand. Besides, without the existence of adequate marketing strategy, that also include developed social networks and appropriate tourism websites, performance of previous activity is even harder.
- 3) Poor cooperation with the private sector - developing tourism activity requires good cooperation between local authorities and private tourism entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, at the municipal level there is no developed an integrated tourism offer.
- 4) Insufficient state and municipality support towards the development of tourism - with adequate state incentives directed to appropriate projects, development of infrastructural contents, etc., tourism development can be expected. However, the current situation is different, as shown by the data in Table 1.

- 5) Strengthening of unfavorable economic trends characteristic for observed municipality, such are:
 - increased migration from the municipality to larger urban centers in Serbia;
 - lack of investments, especially in the tourism sector;
 - decline in macroeconomic indicators at municipality level, etc.
- 6) Undeveloped tourist image - municipality of Malo Crniće does not have a clear image on tourist market, making it unique and distinctive compared to other tourist destinations in close surrounding.

In order to improve current weak results, it is necessary to invest in infrastructure, marketing, and development of various tourism products at the municipal territory.

Accommodation capacities of the municipality of Malo Crniće

According to existing accommodation and catering facilities in function at the territory of Malo Crniće, next should be highlighted (TOOMC, 2025):

- *Continental* household, located in the Kula village. Household offers five bedrooms, two dining rooms, a restaurant for 30 people, and outdoor kitchen and gym. It serves local cuisine characteristic for this region. In the spacious yard there is set well equipped outdoor children playground for the tourists that stay at the household. Characteristic that makes household different to other is that tourists can buy at the property homemade cheese, brandy, corn flour, honey, various types of jams, souvenirs, etc. This way, sales without intermediaries are enabled, which in Serbia is popularly called “doorstep sales”.
- Restaurant with accommodation *Dama* located in the Slavkovac village. In addition to the restaurant with a classic catering offer, this facility also has four double rooms.
- Restaurant *Lug* is located on the Požarevac - Kučevac main road. Its capacity is 30 beds. All rooms are equipped with wireless internet, a TV and bathroom. Facility also includes national cuisine restaurant, where guests can enjoy the specialties from this region.

In order to improve the competitiveness of Malo Crniće municipality as potential tourist destination, it is necessary to increase the quantity and quality of catering and accommodation capacities. In this sense, improving the development of tourism has primarily to start from the fact that the municipality has ideal conditions for development of rural tourism. So, it is necessary to popularize, as well as to train as many rural households as possible to engage in rural tourism. Besides, it is

important to categorize all rural tourist households in accordance with active touristic legislation (OGRS, 2019), but also to hold appropriate education and training courses making farmers familiar with the advantages of practicing rural tourism. Mentioned requires constant support of municipal authorities, regional chamber of commerce, and Ministry of Tourism.

Based on conversation with representatives of Malo Crniće Tourist Organization, there is certain number of households that are ready to engage in rural tourism, while the interest stems from the positive experiences of other municipalities from the Braničevo District.

The rationale behind sustainable tourism development in the Malo Crniće municipality

Lane (2005) points out that the most conventional tourism plans are guided by the needs of the tourism industry's growth. Mentioned plans are either marketing or capital investment plans. They are designed to increase tourism traffic, number of visitors to certain destination, and create conditions for the growth of employment. Plans are mainly focused to exploiting resources, or land use in the sense of its usurpation for the purpose of tourism development (Boavida Portugal et al., 2016). On the other hand, rural tourism and its development must not be at the expense of the environment. As it is emphasized in the Encyclopedia of Tourism (Jafari, Xiao, 2024), rural tourism bases its development strictly on rural areas, hence the need for their preservation. So, the role and importance of the concept of sustainable development has to be strengthened (Sharpley, 2000).

UNWTO (2018) defines sustainable tourism development as one that meets the needs of today's visitors and local communities, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs in terms of economic, social and environmental well-being. Thus, environmental sustainability is seen as the ability of tourism to minimize its negative impact on the environment, including the protection of natural resources, decrease in pollution, securing the biodiversity and to practice waste-management (Muhanna, 2006; Perkumiene et al., 2023). Economic sustainability implies that tourism should be economically beneficial for all participants in the process, as are local community, entrepreneurs, available workforce and the country as a whole (Pedrana, 2013). In this way, the long-term growth and development of tourism is ensured, along with the fair distribution of economic benefits among stakeholders. Mentioned will include the creation of new jobs, development of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as creation of sustainable sources of income for the local community. Social sustainability considers that tourism should have a positive impact on society, as to be inclusive and fair (Nugraheni et al., 2019).

Previous means that tourism has to support cultural diversity, as to preserve local tradition and customs, or to ensure decent working conditions within the overall sector in certain local community. It should reduce social inequalities and improve the quality of life of local population (UNWTO, 1997).

Reminding that the municipality of Malo Crniće has predominantly rural character, as well as that rural tourism can represent one of the future directions of tourism development, it is clear why the concept of sustainable tourism development is being insisted on. Specifically, as has been repeatedly emphasized by certain institutions that globally monitor the development of rural tourism (e.g. UNWTO, 2020; EC, 2021; EP, 2023), as well as in some professional or scientific literature (e.g. Hall et al., 2015; Kachniewska, 2015; Lopez Sanz et al., 2021), rural tourism has not been developed to the detriment of its environment, because in this way the reasons that attract tourists to visit rural areas will be lost. Previous is one of the basic premises underlying development of rural tourism, while it corresponds to general concept of sustainable development.

Intensification of existing tourist supply of the Malo Crniće municipality

According to the above statements, there are several important activities that could improve and facilitate tourism development:

First - Considering that municipality does not have adequate accommodation and catering facilities, required for meeting the needs of modern tourist market, as well as in line to increased demand in terms of quality and quantity of available number of beds, it is necessary to invest in mentioned segment of tourist offer. Towards that, priority should be in encouraging as many rural households as possible to engage in rural tourism, what will significantly contribute to the strengthening of observed segment of tourist offer.

Second - According to data obtained from the Malo Crniće Tourist Organization, or those gained through on-site inspection, there is necessity to invest in development of catering facilities that offer food and drinks. Besides, it is necessary to improve the quality of the current offer, while through the appropriate promotional activities there has to be emphasized the rich tradition of food preparing characteristic for observed region. In recent years, the concept of “slow-food” tourism has been increasingly promoted worldwide (Fuste Forne, Jamal, 2020). Mentioned also implies that tourists are interested in consuming organically produced healthy food (Shen et al., 2020). Considering ecologically relatively well-preserved nature in this region, this may represent one of the directions for the development of current tourist offer, as a special attraction both for foreign tourists but also for all those who does not have the opportunity to consume food from local cuisine in large urban centers.

Third - Construction of appropriate tourist infrastructure on the shores of lakes Zaova and Zmajevac. Both lakes are surrounded by beautiful natural surroundings, so the construction and equipping the picnic area with required furniture and other supporting infrastructure elements would represent ideal space for people who practice eco and recreative tourism. Besides, there could be established proper zone suitable for fishing, what will also stimulate this segment of tourist demand. According to the Mlava river, intentions could be in building adequate sports and recreational facilities close to river banks (fields for five-a-side football, basketball, handball, tennis, etc.).

Fourth - Development, adaptation and construction of suitable rural houses for rural tourism, what will possibly encourage people from this region to more engage in rural tourism, while reaching additional source of income outside the agriculture. This is in line with the concept of developing multifunctional agriculture, what the EU has been insisting on since the 1990s (Marsden, Sonnino, 2008; Vuković et al., 2016). So, in addition to financial support, it is necessary to provide appropriate education to the local population for mentioned type of tourism. Besides, local and relevant national authorities, regional chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders has to emphasize in all strategic documents that one of the opportunities for tourism development could be rural tourism.

Fifth - Arrangement, adaptation and adjustment of religious sites to the needs of tourism. It has to be underlined that this type of tourism requires the consent of the Serbian Orthodox Church, i.e. harmonization of the methods, rules and regulations of tourist visits with religious rules and principles of behavior (Pavlović, 2020).

Sixth - Development of hunting tourism is in line to fact that two hunting associations are active at the territory of municipality. Serbia has a long tradition in hunting and careful attitude towards available fauna (Gačić et al., 2015). Before the 90', there was a long tradition of hunting tourism for which there was demand both on the domestic and foreign markets. After this period, there are not done so much in further popularization and development of hunting tourism at national level. So, certain investments are required to stimulate tourist demand for mentioned type of tourist offer (Matejević et al., 2022). Besides, development of hunting tourism requires strict compliance with the current Law on Game and Hunting (OGRS, 2023), and other accompanying documents, implying:

- registration of all hunters, present at certain hunting ground as tourists;
- appropriate hunting permits must be issued to each visitor;
- game shooting must be planned in order to monitor the size of animals' population;

- adequate price lists for shooting each venison species has to be determined;
- procedure for removing shot game corps from the hunting area has to be determined; etc.

Seventh - Development of event tourism, considering that there are currently ten events organized at the territory of municipality. Mentioned clearly shows that organized events are good motivation for tourists to visit this area.

Eighth - In order to strengthen the current touristic offer, it is necessary to establish the measures for organizationally connected tourism elements such are catering, trade, agriculture, fisheries, crafts, as well as all other activities that form the tourist offer (so-called appliance of integral marketing).

Conclusions

The municipality of Malo Crniće has at disposal significant natural and social (anthropogenic) resources that can be used for development of different types of tourism. Considering mentioned, tourism could be set as the one of pillars towards the future municipal development. Unfortunately, in current time, the majority of potentially attractive tourist resources have not been fully utilized for tourism development.

Successful valorization of available municipal potentials requires selective and market-oriented approach based on strategic planning of development of Malo Crniće as the tourist destination. Besides, it requires adaptation and adjustment of municipal tourist offer to the needs of appropriate market segments, so-called “market targets”. As the tourist products that may provide adequate results in short-term period (so-called “quick win” products), rural tourism, hunting and fishing tourism, and tourism of specific interests are underlined as the good alternatives.

Considering that the most of municipal territory is covered by agricultural land, strategic planning at local level should involve complementary linking of agriculture and tourism. Hence, proposing to sell the organically produced agri-food products to tourists can be additional content in current tourist offer that may encourage tourists to visit this potentially attractive tourist destination. Nowadays, the so-called “doorstep sales” that excludes intermediaries from the distribution chain, directly confronting producers and end consumers, i.e. farmers and tourists, is also becoming increasingly popular. Nationally, one of the key successes of observed tourist destination is organizational linking of all stakeholders, where each of them fully contributes within their own segment of activity, what would support the development of Malo Crniće as a tourist destination.

In line to fact that the municipality has relatively well-preserved ecosystems, all approaches must respect that tourism development must not be carried out to the detriment of environment, i.e. tourism development must be in accordance with all principles of sustainable tourism. In this way, tourism will be in the service of both, current and future generations.

Based on the findings, it can be recommended to take further research steps, such as obtaining information on the behavior of potential tourists after choosing a given tourist destination, or approaching the information about tourists' preferences regarding the tourist offer that are decisive when choosing a given tourist destination in order to determine future strategic and planning activities.

Considering that Malo Crniće belongs to the group of underdeveloped municipalities, it could be expected that tourism will become one of pillars of the overall economic and social development of the municipality (it is mentioned based on fact that tourism has a synergistic character, as it connects a large number of economic and non-economic activities, having positive multiplied effects on entire economy). In this sense, policy makers should be more focused on investments in development of tourism, in line to well-known maxim "that tourism is as effective as the value of invested in it".

Literature

1. Baloch, Q., Shah, S., Iqbal, N., Sheeraz, M., Asadullah, M., Mahar, S., Khan, A. (2023). Impact of tourism development upon environmental sustainability: A suggested framework for sustainable ecotourism. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 30(3):5917-5930, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-022-22496-w>
2. Boavida Portugal, I., Rocha, J., Ferreira, C. (2016). Exploring the impacts of future tourism development on land use/cover changes. *Applied Geography*, 77:82-91, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2016.10.009>
3. Brundtland Commission (1987). *Our common future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. United Nations (UN), Washington, USA, retrieved at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>, 15th April 2025.
4. EC (2021). *Rural Tourism and the Green Deal: A Path Towards Sustainability*. European Commission (EC), Brussels, Belgium.
5. EP (2023). *Rural tourism*. European Parliament (EP), Brussels, Belgium.

6. Fadic, M., Garcilazo, H., Monroy, A., Veneri, P. (2019). *Classifying small (TL3) regions based on metropolitan population, low density and remoteness*. OECD Regional Development Working Papers 2019/06, OECD, Paris, France, pp. 1-28, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/b902cc00-en>
7. Fuste Forne, F., Jamal, T. (2020). Slow food tourism: An ethical microtrend for the Anthropocene. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 6(3):227-232, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-10-2019-0120>
8. Gačić, D., Prentović, R., Pilipović, V., Ostojić, M. (2015). Hunting tourism and safety aspects of hunting fauna use in Serbia. *Glasnik Sumarskog fakulteta*, (suppl.), 45-54, <https://doi.org/10.2298/GSF15S1045G>
9. Gonzalez Sanchez, C., Verdu, J., Montalvo, S. (2021). Sustainable rural tourism management: A comprehensive approach. *Sustainability*, 13(3):1238, doi: 10.3390/su13031238
10. Hall, M., Gössling, S., Scott, D. (2015). *Tourism and Sustainability: An Introduction*. In: Hall, M., Gössling, S., Scott, D. (eds.) The Routledge Handbook of Tourism and Sustainability, Routledge, London, UK.
11. HAS (2025). *Fauna and hunting associations of the Malo Crnice municipality*. Portal of the Hunting Association of Serbia (HAS), Belgrade, Serbia, retrieved at: www.lss.rs/, 26th March 2025.
12. IAE (2018). *Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Municipality of Malo Crniće for the period 2019-2023*. Institute of Agricultural Economics (IAE), Belgrade, Serbia.
13. Ivona, A. (2021). Sustainability of rural tourism and promotion of local development. *Sustainability*, 13(16):8854, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13168854>
14. Jafari, J., Xiao, H. (2024), (eds.). *Encyclopedia of Tourism*. 2nd edition, Springer, Cham, Switzerland, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74923-1>
15. Kachniewska, M. (2015). Tourism development as a determinant of quality of life in rural areas. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 7(5):500-515, doi: 10.1108/WHATT-06-2015-0028
16. Lane, B. (2005). Sustainable Rural tourism Strategies: A Tool for development and conservation. *Interamerican Journal of Environment and Tourism*. 1(1):12-18.
17. Lopez Sanz, J., Penelas Leguia, A., Gutierrez Rodriguez, P., Cuesta Valino, P. (2021). Sustainable development and rural tourism in depopulated areas. *Land*, 10(9):985, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10090985>

18. Marsden, T., Sonnino, R. (2008). Rural development and the regional state: Denying multifunctional agriculture in the UK. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24(4):422-431, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2008.04.001>
19. Matejevic, M., Blesic, I., Kalabova, M., Ristic, Z., Ponjiger, I., Djeri, L. (2022). Differentiation of the attributes that influence tourist hunters' satisfaction in Serbia. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 27(6):522-535, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2021.1970862>
20. Muhanna, E. (2006). Sustainable tourism development and environmental management for developing countries. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 4(2):14-30.
21. Nugraheni, A., Priyambodo, T., Sutikno, B., Kusworo, H. (2019). Defining social sustainability and socially conscious tourist in sustainable tourism development. *Journal of Business on Hospitality and Tourism*, 5(2):264-276, <https://doi.org/10.22334/jbhost.v5i2.172>
22. OGRS (2019). *The Law on Tourism*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia (OGRS), no. 17/19.
23. OGRS (2023). *The Law on Game and Hunting*. Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia (OGRS), no. 18/23.
24. OMC (2024). *Turistički potencijali opštine Malo Crniće - jezero Zaova i biciklističke staze*. Portal opštine Malo Crniće (OMC), Srbija, retrieved at: www.malocrnice.ls.gov.rs/turisticki-potencijali-opstine-malo/?pismo=lat, 14th March 2025.
25. OMC (2025). *Touristic potentials of the municipality*. Data received upon request, municipal administration of Malo Crniće municipality, Serbia, obtained March 2025.
26. Pantić, N., Milojević, I. (2019). Investments and employment in tourism in the Republic of Serbia. *Menadžment u hotelijerstvu i turizmu*, 7(1):95-104, doi: 10.5937/menhottur1901095P
27. Paunovic, I. (2016). An exploratory study: Analysis of Serbian tourism market and identification of major market segments. *Tourismos*, 11(3):62-86, <https://doi.org/10.26215/tourismos.v11i3.482>
28. Pavlović, D. (2020). COVID-19 and social distancing implications for religious activities and travel: The case of the Serbian Orthodox Church. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 8(7):12, <https://doi.org/10.21427/7tfm-th30>

29. Pedrana, M. (2013). Local economic development policies and tourism: An approach to sustainability and culture. *Regional Science Inquiry Journal*, 5(1):91-99.
30. Perkumiene, D., Atalay, A., Safaa, L., Grigiene, J. (2023). Sustainable waste management for clean and safe environments in the recreation and tourism sector: A case study of Lithuania, Turkey and Morocco. *Recycling*, 8(4):56, <https://doi.org/10.3390/recycling8040056>
31. Petković, G., Pindžo, R., Bradić Martinović, A. (2022). Competitiveness factors of Serbian tourism. *Ekonomika preduzeća*, 70(1-2):113-127, doi: 10.5937/EKOPRE2202113P
32. Polukhina, A., Sheresheva, M., Efremova, M., Suranova, O., Agalakova, O., Antonov Ovseenko, A. (2021). The Concept of Sustainable Rural Tourism Development in the Face of COVID-19 Crisis: Evidence from Russia. *Journal of Risk and Financial management*, 14(1):38, <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm14010038>
33. Roy, S. (2016). A critique on current paradigms of economic 'growth' and 'development' in the context of environment and sustainability issues. *Consilience*, 16(1):74-90.
34. Sharpley, R. (2000). Tourism and sustainable development: Exploring the theoretical divide. *Journal of Sustainable tourism*, 8(1):1-19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580008667346>
35. Shen, C., Chang, Y., Liu, D. (2020). Rural tourism and environmental sustainability: A study on a model for assessing the developmental potential of organic agritourism. *Sustainability*, 12(22):9642, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12229642>
36. SORS (2023). *Census of the Republic of Serbia - 2022*. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS), Belgrade, Serbia, retrieved at: <https://popis2022.stat.gov.rs/en-US/>, 14th March 2025.
37. SORS (n/a). *Municipalities and Regions in the Republic of Serbia for the observed years - 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024*. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS), Belgrade, Serbia.
38. TOOMC (2025). *Touristic and natural potentials at the territory of Malo Crnice*. Portal of the Touristic Organization of the Municipality of Malo Crnice (TOOMC), retrieved at: <https://toomc.org/>, 14th March 2025.

39. UN (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations (UN), Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Washington, USA, retrieved at: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>, 15th April 2025.
40. UNWTO (1997). *Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry*. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain, retrieved at: www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284403714, 22nd March 2025
41. UNWTO (2018). *Tourism for Sustainable Development Goals: Journey to 2030*. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain, retrieved at: www.unwto.org/global/publication/tourism-and-sustainable-development-goals-journey-2030, 25th March 2025.
42. UNWTO (2020). *Tourism and Rural Development: Pathways to Sustainability*. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain, retrieved at: www.unwto.org, 25th March 2025.
43. UNWTO (2025). *Sustainable tourism development*. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain, retrieved at: www.unwto.org/sustainable-development, 15th April 2025.
44. Vemić, M. (2005). The present condition and projection of construction of railway net of the Danube-Morava corridor. *Zbornik radova Geografskog instituta Jovan Cvijić SANU*, 54(1):63-74.
45. Vuković, P., Kljajić, N., Puskarić, A. (2025). *Survey of touristic potentials of Malo Crnice municipality*. Internal documentation, Institute of Agricultural Economics, Belgrade, Serbia.
46. Vuković, P., Kljajić, N., Roljević, S. (2009). Strategic decisions for the development of tourism during the transition period in Serbia. *Ekonomika*, 55(3-4):168-176.
47. Vuković, P., Kljajić, N., Simonović, Z. (2024). Perspectives of the development of tourism in the municipality of Beočin. *Ekonomika*, 70(3):25-42, <https://doi.org/10.5937/ekonomika2403025V>
48. Vuković, P., Simonović, Z., Kljajić, N. (2016). *Complementarity of Multifunctional Agriculture and Rural Development with Rural Tourism and Possibilities for their Implementation in the Republic of Serbia*. In: Models for competitive and sustainable agriculture and rural development in central-eastern European Countries. Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics, Warsaw, Poland, pp. 195-212.
49. Weaver, D. (2006). *Sustainable Tourism: Theory and Practice*. Elsevier, Oxford, UK.

50. Widawski, K., Krzeminska, A., Zareba, A., Dzikowska, A. (2023). A Sustainable approach to tourism development in rural areas: The example of Poland. *Agriculture*, 13(10):2028, <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture13102028>
51. Yanan, L., Ismail, M., Aminuddin, A. (2024). How has rural tourism influenced the sustainable development of traditional villages? A systematic literature review. *Helijon*, 10(4):e25627, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.helijon.2024.e25627>