

## BOOK REVIEW

### **The Challenges of Managing Tourism (Izazovi upravljanja turizmom)**

*Sanda Čorak, editor (2011). Institute for Tourism Zagreb*

“The Challenges of Managing Tourism” is a new book in the Scientific Edition series of the Institute for Tourism, Zagreb. It interprets the special aspects of tourism management in the destination in the conditions when many limiting factors in the environment, as well as problems that are hereditary for years, complicate and slow down the development of tourism in Croatia. In their papers, sixteen authors focused on some aspects of tourism, bearing in the center of their interest destination as a basic unit and the key factor of the tourism experience. In ten papers authors have argued their thesis based on the results of the research, gave the international and domestic experiences, following which they express their ideas by explanations, bringing the conclusions and recommendations on which ways to deal with the challenges of managing modern tourism.

The first two papers deal with specific aspects of tourism destination management. In the paper “**Tourism Destination Management in Croatia – Threats and Opportunities**” I. Kunst critically explains the prevailing practice of development of Croatian destinations which is insufficiently transparent, socially irresponsible and, in long-term, dangerous. Consequently, he stresses the necessity of introducing strategic management at destination level, which would be a qualitative leap in terms of resource use, providing the necessary infra and superstructure, and encourage cooperation between public and private sectors. Specifically, more efficient and socially responsible management of tourism development in the majority of Croatian tourist destinations will be possible only if previously create the necessary level of tourism development process understanding and establish a critical mass of destination supporters of tourism development. They should, as the author thinks, be able to start a series of changes in the so far dominant way of thinking and destination development management. These changes, and in

particular their practical use in the short term, could significantly improve the traditional procedures for creating development decisions in the majority of Croatian tourist destinations.

Inadequate cooperation of stakeholders at the destination level confirmed research discussed in the paper “**Cooperation Between Stakeholders in Tourism Destinations**”. The authors, S. Boranić Živoder, R. Tomljenović and S. Čorak, bring experiences of international research and confirm the assumption of a positive correlation between the level of cooperation and development planning. For the quality of tourist products and long-term competitiveness of the tourist destination it is necessary to develop cooperation between public and private sectors, and the local population, but also to know characteristics of modern tourists, because in this way the offer could better adapt to a highly segmented tourism market. The conducted research showed positive interrelations of cooperation between stakeholders and development planning in destinations, marketing activities, monitoring the effectiveness and adoption of new knowledge. In conclusion it was emphasized that destinations which develop management models and realize good communication and cooperation between interest groups, have better conditions for achieving successful management of tourism development and thus will achieve long term success at tourist market.

The next three papers discuss the managerial and marketing tools that can help Croatian destinations. The authors B. Vrdoljak-Šalamon and S. Čorak in the paper “**Benchmarking – Methods and Application in Tourism**”, with emphasizing the numerous positive international experiences of using benchmarking in tourism, refers to the need for more intensive use of this management tool in the function of better growth of Croatian tourist destinations, especially with regard to several existing research and available data bases that provide a foundation for the benchmarking study. This paper gives an overview of the application of benchmarking in Croatian tourism and examines whether it is conducted and which characteristic has destination benchmarking. The paper demonstrated the usefulness of applying benchmarking for destinations in terms of distinct competitiveness, which characterize the market position of many tourist destinations in Croatia. N. Telišman-Košuta in the paper “**Tourism Destination Branding**”, the relatively new field of destination marketing which attract great attention of researchers and practitioners in tourism, offers insights into topics, discussion and challenges of branding tourist destinations, now actual in the professional and scientific literature, and indicates some of the areas that still need to investigate. The need to strengthen e-marketing are processed D. Krešić, K. Miličević

and S. Boranić Živoder in the paper **“The Influence of Information and Communication Technologies on Tourism Destination Marketing”**. The examples shown insufficient use of new technologies in the Croatian tourist destinations, despite proven positive effects of interactivity, flexibility and rapid access to information in attracting many market segments. The authors conclude that, because of the unquestionable importance of the Internet in destination marketing, strengthen e-marketing activities will become one of the main tasks of the overall activities of tourist destinations.

Sustainable tourism development and its capabilities and limitations are discussed in the next three papers. **“Tourism and the Environment – Theory and Practice of Sustainable Development”** by I. Kunst examines possibilities for the coexistence of accelerated tourism development and socially responsible environmental management in the Croatian context. The conducted analysis suggests that it is important to raise awareness of various social groups and stakeholders at the local level, because it will create a critical mass that will be able to make appropriate development decisions. H. Carić and Z. Klarić in the paper **“Carrying Capacity Research – International and Croatian Experiences”** describe trends in the methodology of carrying capacity. In this way they tried to give a clearer picture of the trends and their use at the international level, as well as in Croatia. Based on these findings, the authors offer guidelines for improvement and possible future use of this methodology. H. Carić and I. Marković in paper **“Integrated Tourism Planning as a Basis of Sustainable Development”** discussed the possibilities of implementation of sustainable tourism using practical marketing and management tools. They are interpreted in a way that explains the fundamental necessity of integrating tourism with three key topics: environmental protection from pollution, spatial planning, and nature (biodiversity) protection. Consequently, the destination management must be based on explicit information and data, and marketing of ecotourism on credible guarantees. Because, as in the final section of the paper points out, tourism must be environmentally sustainable and profitable if it is to provide long-term benefits that can be achieved only by a different approach to tourism planning and development, which must be based on integrated planning.

**“Transport in tourism destinations”** is paper by D. Kراسić, D. Milojević and S. Horak which stressed that there are strong mutual influence of tourism on transport and vice versa. However, there is a lack of knowledge about the impact of traffic quality on the competitiveness of tourism destinations and therefore very few actions are actually

undertaken in improving transport systems with destination themselves. The authors explain the interdependence of tourism and transport in general, with aim to analyze the problems created by traffic for Croatian tourism and destination development. Finally, the authors offer a series of recommendations for alleviating the perceived traffic problems in tourist destinations.

The last paper in respective book is „**Assessment of Tourism Product Competitiveness – Case of Cruise Tourism and City of Dubrovnik**“ by N. Ivandić, Z. Marušić and S. Horak. This paper presents a model of Mediterranean cruise destination competitiveness from the perspective of the specific product and relevant competitive circle of destinations that offer similar products to similar markets. The model is based on „value for money“ indicator of cruise destinations derived from the attractiveness of cruise destinations and costs of call, and on general level emphasizes the prospects for tourism destination management.

Considering the state of tourism in Croatia, which is characterized by different social and economic trends, numerous long-standing and inherited problems and, in particular, the competitive environment, there is a need to create more complex tourism products. They are, however, very important for further tourist development of destinations. This means a large number of different stakeholders who can have the same but often different views on the future of tourism development in particular destination. Managing the tourist destination, at all levels, becoming increasingly complex. Valuable impetus for future considerations about ways of tourist destination development provide papers in the book “The Challenges of Managing Tourism”, based on conducted research and analysis, experiences of others, arguments and results, which represent an appropriate basis for active thinking on the future quality development of tourist destinations, especially those in Croatia. Written understandable and interesting, supported by number of concrete research results and relevant data, the papers in the presented book provide the impetus for efforts to find solutions for efficient management of Croatian tourist destinations and they are valuable contribution to interdisciplinary research of tourism.

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