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## MEASURING SUSTAINABILITY IN DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN DUBROVNIK

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### **Abstract**

*Tourism development for its long-term sustainability is taking into account all current and future economic, social and environmental impacts while addressing the needs of visitors, industry, environment and the host community. The process requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders; from local government, host community, and businesses to visitors. Such continuous development requires planning and constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. For monitoring the implementation of sustainable tourism plan into the development, indicators are very important. The aim of this paper is to identify model of measuring sustainability of cultural tourism in Dubrovnik. Dubrovnik has a long cultural history built on cultural identity which attracts many tourists more and more. In order to identify the current situation of cultural tourism in Dubrovnik, the interview with representatives of local authority and cultural institution has been conducted. According to the results of interviews, the model of measuring sustainability of cultural tourism in Dubrovnik has been identified.*

Keywords: Cultural tourism, sustainable development, measurement, Dubrovnik

### **1. Introduction**

Each of the world's tourist sights has the aim to attract people with their best unique offer in order to be and stay competitive at the market. Having in mind the consequences of unplanned tourism growth and their negative impacts on natural and socio-cultural environment, the implementation of principles of sustainable development is crucial and necessary (Domet, 1991; Hall & Lew, 1998; Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). Such process involves planning and monitoring actions by certain amount of stakeholders. For implementation of planned action, it is very important to establish and preserve good cooperation between all stakeholders in order to maintain results and do necessary improvements when necessary. In the last few decades, governments and representatives of cultural institutions have developed and published strategy plans as a guideline tool for development and enhancements of natural and cultural sights, manifestation or festival in destination.

Dubrovnik is considered as one of the most important cultural tourist destination in Croatia. Besides natural beauty, Dubrovnik has numerous tangible and intangible cultural values that are

used in tourism purposes. The aim of this paper is to analyze development of cultural tourism in Dubrovnik and its measurement of sustainability.

## 2. Sustainable cultural tourism and measuring its sustainability

Sustainable cultural tourism is a tourism, which respects local people, travellers, cultural heritage, and the environment (UNESCO, 2014). It contributes continuously to the preservation of natural resources and cultural heritage, economic prosperity, social wellbeing, cultural values and identity of a local community. Referring to relevant findings of various surveys (WTO, 1996; WTO, 2004; EARTH, 2006; Blackstock et al., 2006; Blancas et al., 2010; Blancas et al., 2011; Lozano et al., 2009; Mauerhofer, 2008; Paracchini et al., 2011; Choi & Sirakaya, 2010; Smolčić Jurdana, 2004; Blažević et al., 2013; Payne, 1993; Miller, 2011; Manning, 1999) there are three dimensions effected in process of cultural tourism development:

- social dimension
- economic dimension
- environmental dimension

Successful management takes all three dimensions into account when developing the sustainable tourism destination. Such continuous process involves tourism planning, implementation and improvement and implies to:

- Participation and consensus of all stakeholders
- Monitoring the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism on destination
- Undertaking necessary preventive or corrective actions (WTO, UNEP, 2005.)

The key challenge is to identify, monitor, assess and manage the impact of tourism on the environment, values and resources. The essence lies in finding a proper balance between achieving the successful financial tourism results on one side and the protection and preservation of the environment, resources and values of destination and local communities on the other side. European Association of Historic Towns and Regions (WTO, 2004) has developed a guideline for sustainable cultural development and those are some of the principles that should be followed (Sharareh & Badaruddin, 2013):

- Municipalities should attach intrinsic value to the cultural heritage of historic towns and cities over and above their importance as tourism assets.
- Authenticity, distinctiveness and the rights and beliefs of local cultures should be respected and support approaches to cultural tourism.
- Cultural tourism as economically important activity should contribute to an overall schedules and agendas of sustainable development.
- Cultural heritage assets should be conserved and contribute to achieving the sustainable cultural development.
- The needs of the local community are critical and cultural tourism should be agreed and owned by the host community and the goals for it communicated to visitors.
- Justice and fairness are crucial for long-term sustainability thus cultural tourism should provide benefits equitably to the local communities.
- Efficient and effective management requires well organized action and all local stakeholders including local government and politics, local group of people and businesses, must be involved in the development of cultural tourism.
- Cultural tourism must respond to the needs of visitors and aim to deliver high quality visitor experience.

In the following part of this article, the history and development of cultural tourism in Dubrovnik is described in order to identify its major benefits and present the way they are currently implementing and monitoring development of sustainable cultural tourism.

### **3. Cultural Tourism in Dubrovnik**

The city of Dubrovnik is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Mediterranean, rich in culture, both tangible and intangible.

The city has a long and interesting history. It was founded in the first half of the seventh century and since then it was occupied by many different nations and destroyed by the wars or natural disaster, such as earthquakes in the 1667. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it became a city-state, which flourished for four centuries, maintaining independence from invaders such as the Turks. The Republic of Dubrovnik became such a powerful force in the Adriatic that it seriously rivaled Venice's dominance in the region. Those golden days lasted until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the nobles were tricked by Napoleon to letting his armies into the city in 1806. All those historical events left behind tremendously unique buildings and architectural masterpieces, which are attracting many people to Dubrovnik for a visit and stay.

In 1979, international worldwide known organization United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recognized Dubrovnik's unique cultural value and added on the World Heritage list. They described Dubrovnik as "the city, which represents a unique example of well preserved urban complex, with a regular distributions of streets and squares dating back to the periods of Renaissance and Baroque" (UNESCO, 2014). Almost two kilometers long City Walls, the main street in Old City center - Stradun, Orlando pillar, the gothic renaissance palace Sponza and the celebrated Rector's Palace made Dubrovnik a special place in Croatia's cultural heritage.

Due to such cultural attractiveness, cultural tourism has become a dominant and important type of tourism in Dubrovnik. It is not only about solid buildings and history that makes this destination unique. It's about atmosphere that each guests experience in this city. According to Dubrovnik Tourist Board Statistics, tourist who is coming to Dubrovnik is looking for authentic experience, wants to meet local people, get to know the culture, their tradition and habit (Dubrovnik Tourist Board, 2014).

Year by year, the number of visitors to Dubrovnik is increasing (Croatian Statistical Bureau, 2014) and cultural tourism has a vast economic impact on destination. A great income is achieved through arts and culture. The prime attractions are the physical resources of the city itself such as Dominican and Franciscan Monasteries, Rector Palace and City Walls. In year 2014, 441.829 tourists have visited Dubrovnik's museums and the income from tickets was 235 459.34 Croatian Kunas (Dubrovnik Tourist Board, 2014.). Additionally such increase of visitors has increased the employment opportunities in Dubrovnik. According to the statistics from the City of Dubrovnik, from 42.615 individuals who live in Dubrovnik and the surrounding areas, 296 are employed full time in the cultural sectors and over thousands seasonally Furthermore 10% of inhabitants are involved as amateurs in work of arts organizations and cultural institution such as Dubrovnik Summer Festival or folklore ensemble Lindjo.

From those stated data it can be concluded that Dubrovnik is developing cultural tourism, which satisfies both visitors and community. The only question remains opened does this cultural tourism satisfies all principles of sustainable development in order to bring the long-term success.

In order to provide reliable information and give instructive feedback on development and organization of cultural sector in Dubrovnik; the interview with representatives of local authority for cultural sector and director of Dubrovnik Summer Festival institution has been conducted.

#### **4. Cultural Management in Dubrovnik**

The City or the local authority is the founder, owner and legislative decision – making body for local cultural infrastructure and arts in Dubrovnik. The City Council appoints the directors members of executive boards, brings statues and other decrees for the cultural institutions. Local culture sector is administered, governed, monitored and to some extent managed by the city's departments of culture and social services.

Cultural sector in Dubrovnik includes eight public cultural institutions: Dubrovnik Summer Festival, Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra, Marin Držić Theatre, Dubrovnik Museums, Museums of Modern Art, Folklore Ensemble Lindo, Dubrovnik Libraries, Dubrovnik Cinemas, thirty two arts organizations and twelve annual festivals. During the interview, Mrs. Ana Hilje person in charge of cultural department has emphasized the fact that the major success of cultural tourism in Dubrovnik is good cooperation between all stakeholders, including local people and visitors. The guideline for their development is strategic plan, which was published in January 2014 with vision and mission statement. It includes four major goals with its implementation actions and monitoring mechanisms. The plan involves active participation of all stakeholders.

One of the example which Mrs. Hilje pointed out as a sample of good cooperation between local people and authority is implementation of time zoning of cruise ship visitors to the Old City. The number of cruise ship visitors to the Old City has been increasing year by year and has negatively affected the way of life of local inhabitants which impaired as well the tourist experience. Local inhabitants have launched an initiative with the local and national authorities for the introduction of the time zoning of visits the Old City center. They limited number of visitors per day on 8 000 people which satisfies requirements of sustainable development (Dubrovnik Port Authority, 2014). This is a sample of positive solution, which was made by good cooperation of local authority and community.

Another issue, which has to be address, is that during the winter, off-season the city is empty and there are no local inhabitants living in it. Before worldwide economic recession, the prices of real estate in the center of the Old City were too high and local inhabitants recognized the opportunity to sell their houses and move to some other parts of the City with some savings. At that time, the city authorities did not conduct any adequate policy, which would encourage local people to remain in the historic city. Thus, the most attractive part of Dubrovnik has remained without its permanent residents, which is resulting in loosing its authenticity year by year.

Current local authority has recognized such issue and took initiative in 2013 with application for a Candidate of European Cultural Center for 2020 (The City of Dubrovnik, 2014.). The aim is to create Dubrovnik as a unique cultural place in Europe, which will bring economic and social life value to the community, memorable experience to the guests and protection and preservation of the environment for current and future generations. The project has already started with its program and for the winter 2014/2015 they organize and invite all local people to join the Winter Festival on the main street. Furthermore, they announced new project "Why Dubrovnik" in which they invite local people to give their opinion how they would like to see Dubrovnik in 2020. Local people can write their opinion or drawings on the paper and leave in the box, which is distributed in all local bars, restaurants, theatre and other public places.

For this event, the institution of Dubrovnik Summer Festival is in a charge as well as for planning and organizing all details for application for Candidate for European Cultural center 2020. This cultural institution is one of the major stakeholders in cultural sector in Dubrovnik. It organizes Dubrovnik Summer Festival once a year during the summer in duration of 45 days and represents a valuable tradition from Dubrovnik through art, music and theatre performances. It is the biggest and the most representative cultural manifestation in Croatia, which has become a member of European Festivals Association (EFA) in 1957 (Dubrovnik Summer Festival, 2014.). Each year the Festival gathers a number of Croatian and world famous actors and conductors which increases local citizens' proud of their city and tradition. In order to attract foreign tourist, which are well educated customers willing to spend money, gain new knowledge and cultural experience, the Festival has implemented mobile subtitling script application to help foreign visitors and hearing impaired people to better enjoy theatrical shows in English and contemporary Croatian. The application was warmly received by audience and the Festival's worldwide popularity is increasing excessively year by year. During the interview, director of Festival, Ivana Medo emphasized that cooperation on local and national level of all stakeholders is one of the major challenges. The Festival as institution is owned by the City of Dubrovnik, which elects managing director. The Ministry of Culture funds the program of the festival and elects the director of music and art to create the program. In this case, the co-operation between local and national authority is very important and has been successful for years. Dubrovnik Summer Festival is one of the examples in cultural tourism in Dubrovnik, which applies the principles of sustainable development. It represents good cooperation of local and national authority that brings the value to both community and visitors.

## 5. Conclusion

There is a general consensus on the need for tourism planning based on the principles of sustainable development. In this context, the measurement model must be created in the way that will facilitate understanding of the current situation of tourist destination and provide improvements for its sustainability. To obtain the necessary information for this task, the concept of cultural tourism sustainable development is first defined and its measurement model. The aim is to have all stakeholders engaged in the planning, development and management of sustainable tourism that follows a destination approach to heritage conservation and focuses on empowering local communities.

This paper illustrates how the city of Dubrovnik, as an important cultural destination on whole Mediterranean manages its sustainability between all stakeholders. The results from conducted interviews present that cooperation exists. They have created and published the Strategy Development Plan as a guideline tool. Furthermore, for long-term development and success, they are currently preparing the application to become the Cultural Center of Europe 2020. This can be opportunity for the city to generate considerable cultural, social and economic benefits and help foster urban regeneration, change the city's image and raise its visibility and profile on an international scale. All these steps currently done by stakeholders prove that the City of Dubrovnik has noted the need to manage tourist destination by implementing the principles of sustainable cultural development. The future line of work can be marked by the determination of specific sustainable cultural indicators that will evaluate tourism cultural activities in Dubrovnik and encourage all stakeholders to prevent problems and design corrective measures for further sustainable development.

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