



OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND SMALL ENTERPRISES IN DOJRAN MUNICIPALITY IN MACEDONIA

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Abstract:

Tourism is distinguished as a priority area of intervention in the municipality of Dojran. This is primarily due to its importance and the role in the economic development of the municipality and the fact that wider population and economic entities are involved in tourism.

In terms of the activity performed, the majority of small enterprises in Dojran region or 57.5% are registered as enterprises for accommodation and realization of activities for preparing meals and serving food, 15% carry out trade entrepreneurial activity from the area of wholesale and retail trading, 7.8% produce plant and animal products and deal with hunting and services, fishery and aquaculture, 6.7% of small enterprises are pursuing entrepreneurial activities in the field of land transport and 4.3% of small enterprises are pursuing other entertainment activities.

Part of the structures and capabilities that make tourism (tourism facilities and infrastructure, natural resources, *etc.*), represent strong side of the municipality, where the advantages should be used as a platform for taking measures and actions for its strengthening, and treats (unused touristic capacities, insufficiency of skilled labor, *etc.*) should be used to work on elimination of such occurrences and building a foundation for their improvement and transformation into strengths. The promotion of tourism and small-size enterprises in the municipality will affect the realization of other economic and social strategic goals, set out in other priority areas.

Key words:

tourism destination,
tourism,
small enterprises.

1. INTRODUCTION

Besides tourism development and urbanization, the quality and diversity are also important parts of urban infrastructure. Therefore, in tourism planning, greater importance is assigned to planning sustainable development of urbanization that will meet the expectations of both the hosts and guests.

In the case of Dojran, local economic development largely depends on the quality of tourism offer of Lake Dojran. By raising the water level in the lake, Dojran has increased the number of tourist visits in recent years, and is gradually but surely returning the glow of Dojran, regarding the Lake Dojran. The lake tourism is considered an important development priority for the Southeastern region, because it offers numerous opportunities for business development and new jobs, but also because it supports the goal of regional development in exports and direct investment. The local government in Dojran in the Strategy for Local Economic Development and Rural Development Strategy has set out the priority objectives to improve the living conditions, especially for the citizens who are directly or indirectly involved in tourism, where the ultimate goal will be increased income from tourism and increasing number of domestic and foreign tourists. All this leads to realization of the goals set.

Maintaining manifestations, such the D Festival, Dojran authenticity, Dojran Fig Festival, and many others, give hope that some of the goals are achievable. Such events need to be supported and expanded with the promotion of Dojran dairy farm for fish (mandra).

Through sustainable development, local government should aim to reduce the negative effects on the environment with the aim of long-term keeping and protecting of biological diversity. It's a question of long-term sustainable tourism because it leads to a net profit for the social, economic and cultural environment in the region of the municipality of Dojran. However, the local population has to support the efforts of local authorities to actively participate in such development, as every benefit for the city is their personal benefit.

Dojran will become economically self-sufficient and environmentally developed municipality and wishful tourism destination, providing necessary conditions for the welfare of all its residents and visitors.

The municipality is committed to improving the quality of life, through raising public awareness, strengthening and development of its own capacities. It boasts great potential for socioeconomic development, strives to develop all types of tourism, environmental protection and promotion of agriculture through implementation of strategic goals and

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implementation of projects in different areas and attracting new investments. The living standards of the local population will be improved through development of tourism and environmental protection.

The goals will be achieved by involving the public, private and civil sectors in developing their strategy and partnerships for implementation of programs and projects.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPALITY OF DOJRAN AND LAKE DOJRAN

The municipality of Dojran is located in southeastern region of the Republic of Macedonia, on the western shore of Lake Dojran. Being positioned in the southern part of the country, the municipality borders with Greece. It covers three sides between the mountain Belasica at north (1883m), Mount Karabaliija at west (697m) and Mount Krusa at east (860m), while it is open through Dojran Valley to the south. The terrain is mostly hilly.

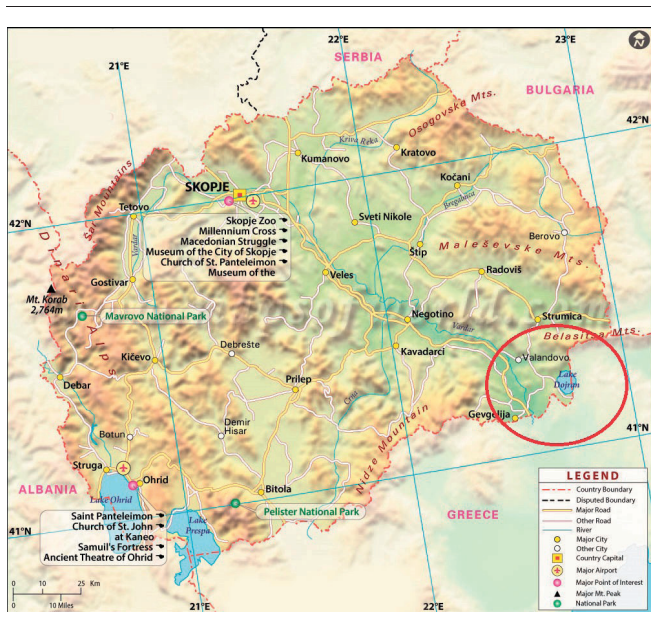


Figure 1. Map of Macedonia and Dojran Lake

Dojran has very rich historical and cultural past. The overall climate in Dojran is characterized by warm and dry summers and wet winters. The annual duration of sunlight is 2440 hours (Nikolovski, 1990, p. 101). This area is characterized by the amount of rain caused by the Mediterranean climatic influence, mostly in November, 88 mm, and the least in July, 33.5 mm. The municipality is composed of 13 administrative units, New Dojran, Old Dojran, Sretenovo, Furka, Crnicani, Nikolic, Gjopcheli, Kurtamzali, Durutli, Organdzali, Sevendekli, Dzumabos and Caushli.

The diameter of the lake is 9 km long and 7 km wide. The average depth is 6, 7 mm, and the largest 10 m. The lake is at 146 m asl, and the west coast is 160-250 m asl. The natural values of Dojran were perceived by the scientific and expert public in Macedonia and as a result, the lake was proclaimed for "Natural Monument" – a third category of protected area according to the World Conservation Union (IUCN). In terms of biodiversity, Lake Dojran has a particular importance of aquatic and mud macrophyte vegetation

in the coastal part. According to the Strategy for protection of biological diversity in the Republic of Macedonia¹ and the Action Plan, this type of habitat is a priority for Macedonia and is to be put under protection.

Its contribution has the newly built system JPVHS Dojran² in 2002 for filling the lake. Although it now works at a lower intensity of about 400-600 liters per second (projected for 1000l/s), its contribution to the improvement of the situation is apparent.

This year, with heavy rains, the lake level has increased significantly, and has brought back the old look of the former tourism city of Dojran.

3. FISHING AS THE MAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DOJRAN FOR DEVELOPING RIVER TOURISM

Fishing in Dojran has always been the main economic activity for locals and residents of the surrounding areas who are actively involved in recreational fishing. In the past, the world scientific literature represented the lake as one of the most productive lakes in Europe, playing an important role in providing the local population with fish. The average annual catch represented 50% of the total national fish catch in the Republic of Macedonia (before starting the intensive construction of artificial ponds). Dojran is also known for its unique method of fishing with unique methods that only old fishermen called "Masters of the Lake". Since ancient times, local residents have been using special fish traps, with different shape, design and size (dairy farm for fishes (mandra)). The fishermen are hunting waterfowl, and cut their primary feathers and keep them close to the dairy farm for fish (mandra). These birds are actually used as a pursuer of fishing traps. This old fishing technique is very effective because only one dairy farm for fish (mandra) can catch from 20.000 to 30.000 kg of fish.

These data apply to the annual catch of fish from the lake and show a trend of reduced fish catch, as can be seen from the table below:

Table 2. Data for fish catch until 2003

Year	Amount of cached fish (in tons)
1999	145
2000	72
2001	66
2002	25
2003	88

These data are as of 2003, as the enterprise concerned with fishing, ceased its activity due to bankruptcy in late 2003, and now there is a new decision to use – a concession to fish stocks in the fishing area of Dojran was awarded in October 2005 for the first time.

- 1 Strategy for the protection of biological diversity in the Republic of Macedonia and the Action Plan are adopted by the Government in 2003 with implementation period until 2010
- 2 Public Enterprise for water supply of hydro system Dojran established in 2002 to save Lake Dojran from ecological disaster



4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURSIM DEVELOPMENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DOJRAN

Tourism is the most important industry in the municipality of Dojran. A trend of re-increasing the number of tourists and overnight stays has been observed in the last few years, as a result of increasing water level of Lake Dojran.

Dojran is a tourist resort with about 4.000 populations, with majority of tourists coming from our country and eastern part of Macedonia, as well as from the neighboring countries: Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Netherlands, America and other countries.

The development of tourism in this area is influenced by many factors, such as the natural values of Lake Dojran, the beneficial climate condition, proximity to the main European corridor E-75 Skopje – Thessaloniki, regional road links with Gevgelija, Valandovo and Strumica, border crossing – Dojran, as well as the small-size enterprises (enterprises for accommodation and realization of activities for preparing meals and serving food, wholesale and retail trade enterprises, producing machines and supplies, plant and animal products and dealing with hunting and services, fishery and aquaculture, *etc.*).

Small enterprises have a great capacity for rapid change of the type of business that is performed in order to always meet the requirements of customers / tourists. Direct contacts are established with customers, suppliers and employees to strengthen the relations between the owners of the company with external entities. Through direct contacts, the owner recognizes the characteristics of consumers, their needs and requirements and adjusts the operations of the enterprise. Specifically for small business owners in the Dojran region, the information received from direct contacts is very important because it can be used to quickly adjust the company to the needs of tourists.

The simplicity of the decision-making process comes from the fact that all decisions of the enterprise are carried by the owner who is also the manager. Because of that, decisions are made quickly and the commencement of operations or change of already adopted decisions depends on the will of the owner of the company. The advantages in the operation of small enterprises or their strengths need to be used in order to enrich the tourist offer and tourism development in the Dojran region. Hence, bearing in mind the results of the conducted practical research on the number of small enterprises, it is necessary to encourage the process of starting the entrepreneurial activity through establishment of small enterprises in the services sector based on the web technology for promotion of tourism offer, small business - travel agencies for animation of tourists, offering daily engagements to fully meet the leisure tourists, the establishment of small enterprises that would offer a completely new line of products and services, recreational facilities, small enterprise rehabilitation services and treatment spa and fitness centers.

If we made an overview of the types of tourism in Dojran, or how tourism can positively influence the development of Dojran, we would notice that lake tourism is a predominant form.

Lake tourism is mainly tied to recreational tourist activities. These activities take place in a form of swimming

and sunbathing on the lake which, according to climate, hydrological and other previously listed features. Besides that, there're conditions that allow for long and pleasant walks along the lake that offers striking aesthetic properties of natural values and fresh and pleasant air. This kind of tourism, especially in Dojran, emphasizes seasonality because it depends on climate characteristics in the tourism area. Here, the emphasis is placed on summer tourism rather than on winter tourism, which attracts only athletes who prefer outdoor sports.

Due to the proximity of the main European corridor and border crossing, Dojran is a tempting destination for transit tourists as well.

Transit tourism covers clientele (mostly from Serbia, Bulgaria, Slovenia and fewer tourists from Germany) that this place uses as a passing station towards their targeted destinations.. These tourists are retained for several reasons, such as longer or shorter break from the trip, an overnight stay, breakfast.

Therefore, it is of vital importance to discuss possible ways to retain such tourists to spend more time here. Above all, it is necessary to pay special attention to those facilities that will highlight tourist value and attract attention and open curiosity for learning the values offered by the city.

Tourism is an increasing biological and cultural need, product of awareness and culture, market of satisfaction, imitations of life full of surprises, experiences and adventure. Culture in general and special cultural and entertainment events, galleries and museums, historical monuments and other forms of entertainment are more connected and intertwined with tourism. There is quite developed **cultural and entertainment tourism** that contributes to avoiding monotony and boredom among visitors. They need entertainment and dynamics during their stay. Part of entertainment alternative tourism, includes visits to cultural and historical monuments.

This kind of tourism itself pulls **gastronomy** as its offer is part of the culture. This offer is included in the program of cultural and entertainment tourism.

Because of the fact that the tourist stay depends on the needs, desires and possibilities of visitors, it is necessary to devote special attention to leisure activities, *i.e.*, sports and recreational activities. There are two types of programs of **sports and recreation tourism** where visitors are direct participants and directly involved in the same and other type where visitors are relatively passive viewers. We have **hunting and sport-fishing tourism**, which includes hunting and fishing activities that attract tourists for overnight stays.

Excursions and student tourism prevail in May and feature a predominantly low power consumption and extremely small radius of movement. The picnics are organized in the exact place.

As underdeveloped types of tourism, that have enough potential to be funded, and attract more visitors are **health thermal and herbal tourism**. It is already well-known that the percentage of seaweed and iodine at the lake is large. Moreover, there are many illegally collected herbs near the hill that rises above the town. A good program can upgrade this kind of tourism and bring benefits to all visitors.



5. TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

The tourists can choose between hotel accommodation and private accommodation. Hotel accommodation is accounted to quite small percentage due to the fact that most of the existing hotels are ruined and closed, while private housing in recent years has slowly began to meet customer needs. For this purpose, the registration of accommodation capacities has been conducted for years and they're ranked by the municipality. According to the new Law on hospitality and Law on tourist activity, there is an authorized municipal inspector who supervises the application of these laws.



Figure 2. Touristic table

As for the categories and criteria that need to be fulfilled by the service providers in order to obtain a Decision of categorization, and with that a categorization of the current accommodation, the commission comes on site, issues the categories according to the Rules and conditions for categorization of facilities for hospitality activity (Official Gazette of RM num. 62/2004). There is the first and second category with the number of pelicans, two (comfort) and one (standard) for houses, apartments and rooms for rent.

At each entrance of the hospitality facility, you may notice purple board with the registration number and category, according to the Register, and accurate data on the number of apartments, number of rooms, telephone number.

6. SPORTS – RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AS PART OF TOURIST OFFER OF DOJRAN

Although Dojran is a small resort, it still has quite developed sports tourism. The already built hotels with the conditions necessary for this kind of tourism, despite small investment for development in this sector, succeed every year in attracting a large number of athletes and sports enthusiasts.

Sports tourism has made a lot of progress in recent years, and the tourists themselves embrace this type of tourism, because of their free time now is filled with different kinds of sports and recreational activities, improving their health and human habits by practicing everyday use of sport not only when they can but in everyday use.

Based on the development of sports tourism in Dojran, besides some of basic sports, such as football, other important sports events are maintained. Other sports that are still practiced include triathlon (compilation of three sport units: running, biking and swimming). Dojran has all the

necessary conditions for sports development.

Apart from the significant sports events, various seminars are held in Dojran as major contributors to development of sports tourism.

According to the data presented, Dojran has lots of opportunities for the development of sports tourism. Besides the sports that have been developed, Dojran offers excellent opportunities for development of other sports. Mild winters and favorable terrain allow stay of athletes from other sports such as athletics, cycling, canoeing, beach volleyball, motorcycling and other sports.

7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH TOURISM

The lake with its healing properties (although not sufficiently studied), and favorable climate enables development of medical tourism for treatments of a number of diseases: bronchial, cardiovascular, rheumatic, skin and others. With GUP³, from the research made for the purpose of building a Center for the rehabilitation of patients with pulmonary, cardiac and rheumatic diseases, is planning a construction by the lake in Star Dojran with total area of 0.46 ha.

Apart from of the guests who have already stayed in Dojran, and felt better after bathing and putting mud from the lake, especially noticeable is the treatment of the wounds on the body. The healing features of mud in Dojran have been known for a long time, because the combination of lake water rich in seaweed and iodine and the Mediterranean climate has always been natural remedy for wrist pain. The elderly population in Dojran remembers that some of the guests in the 80-ties dived for mud from the bottom of the lake and later spread it on their body.

Research samples from the black mud from Dojran were taken to the Bulgarian Institute several years ago under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Ministry of Health, which confirmed that this mud has healing properties and can be used for treating rheumatism, degenerative diseases of the immune system and chronic dermatitis.

Many medical personnel recommend Dojran for post-operative rehabilitation during the summer. Dojran is suggested as the ideal place to stay for postoperative patients suffering from respiratory diseases, but also from rheumatism and sciatica. Some have found the cure in the lake water, some in the lake mud.

Lately, the idea has emerged to develop eco-health tourism in Dojran through delivery of attractive, alternative, natural, sustainable and environmental health - recreational services to all tourists who visit Dojran, as well as for attracting owners and visitors from spa centers and users of organic cosmetics.

Competition and this type of service in these areas will enrich tourist offer and open the possibility of connection with the existing tourist facilities in Dojran, Gevgelija and Strumica. The only thing required is quality, good marketing and promotion of cosmetic products and mud processes, whose production ensures long-term and sustainable profitability of the initiative and launching onto the broader market as a recognizable, respected and desirable brand that will significantly contribute to the economic development and prosperity of Dojran and the entire region.



8. CULTURAL ENTERTAINING AND MANIFEST TOURISM

In order to overcome the monotony of lake tourism, there are quite many historical monuments as a result of its long history. Some of the landmarks of this city are: the Clock Tower, St. Ilija, Bath – Turk hammam, an outdoor museum (all bunkers, shelters and observation made by the strongest material reinforced with obstacles for a closer look of the suffering of the local population, the destructive power of war of the World War I), Museum of World War I, Koleda/Vasilica (Old New Year), St. Trifun, April Fools' Day, Dojran gourmet festival, Fig festival (Festival of jam from wild figs), The D Festival, Dojran authenticity, Skillfully Woman, Dojran handshakes and many more.

9. CONCLUSION

The analysis of Macedonian tourism offer, and tourism offer of Dojran, indicate insufficient care for the content of tourist residence, which is lagging behind the developed tourism countries.

The development of tourism in Dojran region is of great importance to small enterprises that are an important factor for the development of the national economy. They create new opportunities for growth and development and are essential factors for improving the economic situation in the local communities. The advantages of small businesses are to be put into operation to encourage development of the local community or tourism development in Dojran region. The research results show that the number of small enterprises is continuously increasing in the municipality of Dojran, but it is necessary to streamline the activities of small enterprises.

Dojran features natural, material and human factors for tourism development, which are insufficiently explored. As for the hotel accommodation in Dojran, there are few hotels – the number of hotel rooms to the number of the population is an indicator of the investment in tourism in one country and in Dojran.

Each participant in tourist movements, besides fulfilling the basic needs for food and accommodation, has shown an interest in other circumstances, and because of that it is necessary to pay special attention to the leisure time of visitors, meaning the time that should be filled with various activities. All these activities must be related to sports and recreation, cultural and entertainment activities, sightseeing and walking tours, and in line with other activities that would lead to enriching the content of stay. In this context, we are speaking of animation in the tourism, which represents one of the most important factors for tourism development.

Tourism development can be observed in the context of sustainability. Lake tourism is quite developed, but it demands daily efforts on expansion, purification, grading, landscaping and equipping of beaches and coasts, hygiene of paths for strolling along the lake shore. As an alternative tourism on the lake, there are various water activities in the lake (swimming, water skiing, various water games, etc.)

The cultural-historical monuments are present, which means we just need to give visitors information about their

existence, information that will initiate interest and desire even in those visitors for whom familiarity with cultural and historical values is not one of the main reasons to travel. Some of the manifestations can be maintained precisely near the historic environments, and these monuments have an inspiring effect.

The tradition of hunting fish with birds – dairy farm for fish (mandra) can be a real tourist attraction. A part of the local population is interested in renovating the fishing shacks and their adjustment to visiting tourists, and they are authentic to Dojran and the Lake. Inside of them, it is possible to cook fish on a reed, a specialty one can hardly resist, and other ways of preparing fish, which are typical for Dojran.

It is of vital importance for each visitor to communicate the shortcomings and advantages during their stay before leaving Dojran, as well as their ideas for better development and progress of tourism destination. Dissatisfied guests will not only make a negative assessment of Dojran, but will recount to their friends, and colleagues negative impressions, while the satisfied guests will certainly use other services and will plan to return to the resort, but most importantly of all, they will perform positive travel propaganda.

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